

'Say and Play' Pre-school Group

'Say and Play' is designed for 2 year 6 months - 6 year old children with a range of communication difficulties.

Referral

We have an open referral system but welcome referrals from GPs, consultants and other professionals.

Times.

'Say and Play' runs for three terms a year and generally follows the term dates of local schools.

Groups are held:

From: 9.15 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. and 12.45 p.m. 3.00 p.m..

At: Edenside clinic, 33 Edenside Road Bookham, Surrey.

Aims.

The main aim of 'Say and Play' is to develop each child's individual potential, especially in the areas of speech and language. This will be carried out in an environment, which is structured to stimulate each child's desire to communicate. The atmosphere is warm and caring. Children are never forced to speak or do something, which is beyond their capabilities, but are given a supportive environment, which provides them with the necessary skills enabling them to develop their communication.

The children.

Acceptance into a group is usual dependent upon assessment, which will determine which group(s) at 'Say and Play' is the best environment for them. If group therapy is not felt to be appropriate, we can provide individual therapy sessions. We welcome copies of reports from other professionals to give us a complete profile of each child's needs.

We run different groups throughout the week which cater for various communication difficulties:-

- Receptive and expressive language delays/disorders.
- Children with pragmatic difficulties who may/may not have autistic spectrum disorder.
- Children with pronunciation difficulties including Dyspraxia.

Structure.

Most groups run twice a week enabling the children to have twice weekly therapy.

Acceptance into a group is not dependent upon children being toilet trained.

Each child has an individual therapy plan with specific goals. Although the children in each group will have similar communication needs there will inevitably be some differences. The aims and objectives of each activity will vary according to each child's specific needs.

The children are helped using a combination of small groups and individual therapy. Sessions are structured to provide the following opportunities for the children:-

Play. This is developed to extend the children's symbolic development, as this is an important part of language development.

Social skills. These are developed to include turn taking, sharing and communication: not just between child and adult but also between children.

Listening skills. These are worked on as a critical part of therapy. Listening skills will be developed to expand the children's auditory discrimination, memory and sequencing skills which are a prerequisite for language development.

Comprehension. This is built up to expand the number of words a child can understand in one sentence. Specific work is also carried out to extend the children's knowledge of concepts, grammar and vocabulary.

Concept work. This is usually carried out using hands-on experience to make concepts of words such as heavy/light: wet/dry: soft/hard: big/little become real for the children and therefore aid their comprehension and use.

Expressive Language. Work on expressive language frequently reflects areas covered in comprehension. The children are given specific models to help them to use appropriate syntax, grammar and morphology.

The children are continuously helped to make their language more mature and age appropriate. Activities involving role-play are frequently carried out in which the children are encouraged to develop their communication skills in order to accept, direct, question, refuse and used language for social purposes.

Speech. For children with pronunciation problems a programme is drawn up to develop their speech system to more closely approximate the correct target form.

Signing. Signing systems such as Makaton and Cued Articulation are used when necessary as a support for the children's receptive and expressive language. They are never used without the spoken word.

Behaviour Management.

At 'Say and Play' we are very keen for our children to develop their speech and language skills in a happy, caring and positive environment. Our policy is to treat each child with respect.

We recognise that individual children may have behavioural needs as part of their communication difficulties which means that sometimes children find it hard to behave in socially acceptable ways in the groups and individual therapy sessions. In order to deal with this we use a combination of positive reinforcement and the provision of choice in order to effect appropriate change. When necessary we will use 'time out' and specific behavioural modification strategies. This is not a punishment but an opportunity for a child to have some space and to come back into the session when they are ready.

If further guidance is needed we draw up an individual behavioural programme in association with parents. The rationale behind this is continuity of management of the children across therapists and across situations i.e. at home, at Edenside Clinic and possibly also in your child's nursery or playgroup.

Parental support.

Parents are given the opportunity to discuss their child's progress at the end of each session. Ideas and suggestions for activities are given to carry through at home and playgroup or nursery school. These ideas are written and put inside a blue folder. We strongly recommend you take this folder to your child's nursery.

Parents can request additional meetings with their child's key speech and language therapist for more in-depth discussions about their child's progress, present management and future plans.

Training is given on relevant aspects of therapy, such as the Makaton Signing System, Cued Articulation and the Hanen programme. The latter is a well respected course which helps parents to develop their child's communication skills. We run Hanen courses on a regular basis when there is a sufficient number of parents.

School/Playgroup/Nursery Liaison.

As already mentioned we aim to liaise on a weekly basis through the blue folder, which contains ideas for home and school. We would also appreciate any comments from teachers.

Where appropriate, termly visits are carried out to exchange information and to give advice. Teachers are welcome to visit 'Say and Play' to observe the children in the group and discuss effective methods of carry-over into their school environment.

Liaison with other professionals.

Copies of all our reports are sent to parents and involved professionals including any other speech and language therapists who are/have been involved with your child. Educational psychologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists are encouraged to come and observe the children and share their expertise.

Staff.

There is a minimum of two adults in attendance at each group. One of these will always be a fully qualified and experienced Speech and Language Therapist. A Speech and Language Therapy Assistant will support her. Generally when there are four/five or more children, two Speech and Language Therapists run the groups, thus providing a very high ratio of therapists to children.

Additional support is provided by Speech and Language Therapy Students on a regular basis.

Reassessment/Progress Reports.

Children's progress is noted at the end of each session and a termly summary of this is circulated. Standardised assessments are carried out at approximately six monthly intervals and written up in a detailed report, which also comments on your child's progress. Your child's key Speech and Language Therapist will arrange a convenient appointment time to enable this to be carried out as generally we do not carry out standardised assessments during group sessions.

Future management.

We advise on children's future speech and language therapy needs and provide reports whenever there is a request for one as part of the Statementing Procedure. We are happy to attend case conferences to discuss and advise on children's needs.

Safety.

There is always one adult in attendance with an up-to-date first aid certificate.

Fee structure.

Fees are invoiced termly in advance. Invoices must be settled by the first day of term. Regrettably refunds cannot be given for children withdrawn part way through the term or for missed sessions.

Fees sometimes can be reclaimed against private medical health insurance policies.

All our costs are detailed in our Terms and Conditions.

On arrival.

1. Take your child to the toilet before escorting him/her to the therapy room.
2. Send your child with a small bag containing a change of clothes and nappy if required. Please hang these on a peg with his /her coat.
3. Break time will be held mid-session when drinks and biscuits are provided so please inform us if your child has any food allergies. Children coming for the afternoon sessions are encouraged to bring a small packed lunch. This enables them to have some social interaction with the other children when they first arrive and enables them to recharge their batteries if they have been at school or playgroup in the morning and have not had time to go home for lunch.
4. Weather permitting the children will be able to go outside to play. Please provide outdoor clothing and shoes/boots for this purpose.
5. Please discourage your child from bringing possessions to the group in order to avoid disruption and the upset of losing or breaking them.
6. If your child requires medication to be given by us during the group session, please send it with a letter giving written permission for us to administer it.

'Say and Play' feel that this poem expresses our overall approach to the children:-

If a child lives with criticism, she learns to condemn

If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight

If a child lives with ridicule, she learns to be shy

If a child lives with shame, he learns to feel guilt

If a child lives with tolerance, she learns to be patient

If a child lives with encouragement, he learns confidence

If a child lives with praise, she learns to appreciate

If a child lives with fairness, he learns justice

If a child lives with security, she learns to have faith

If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself

If a child lives with acceptance and friendships he or she learns to find love in the world.