



Office for Standards
in Education

DAY CARE INSPECTION REPORT

URN 650140

INSPECTION DETAILS

Inspection Date 16/01/2004
Inspector Name Susan Catherine McGarry

SETTING DETAILS

Day Care Type Full Day Care, Out of School Day Care
Setting Name Stepping Stones Play and Learn Group
Setting Address Wilson Marriage Centre, Barrack Street
Colchester
Essex
CO1 2LR

REGISTERED PROVIDER DETAILS

Name Mrs Carol Nice

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality and standard of day care. When making judgements, inspectors have regard to how well the provider meets the National Standards for under Eights Day Care and Childminding. A list of these is attached. The report identifies strengths and areas for improvement.

This inspection report must be made available to all parents.

Information about the setting

Stepping Stones Play and Learn Group opened in 1991. It operates from two rooms, in a Community Education Centre, in Colchester. The group serves the local and surrounding area.

There are currently 73 children on roll. This includes 28 funded 3 year olds and 14 funded 4 year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting currently supports children with special needs and who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times for full day care provision and out of school club and offers respite care during the holidays. Sessions are from 09.30 until 14.45 and 15.30. until 18.00.

Nineteen full and part time staff work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. Two staff are currently working towards early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the Area SENCO and a teacher from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). Portage and Essex Good Beginnings are both used within the setting.

How good is the Day Care?

Stepping Stones Play and Learn Group provides a good standard of care for children.

There are very high staffing levels in all the aspects of the provision which includes an out of school club and holiday respite scheme. There is an effective staff team and extensive use of key workers to provide children with a secure and reassuring environment in which they are well cared for. The setting is warm and welcoming to all the children and their families. There are good levels of resources and equipment for children to access including a sensory room and sensory garden. There is an appraisal system in place and training needs are identified for the staff. Policies and procedures are accessible within the operational plan however, there are some which require updating and further additions are required. Records are readily accessible, stored securely and confidentiality is observed.

Most of the procedures ensuring children's safety and security within the setting are in place. However, there is no policy for outings and the medical policy requires

updating to include all aspects of the national standard. All members of staff hold a relevant first aid qualification. Healthy snacks are prepared by the staff and the children provide their own packed lunches. There is a strong commitment to meeting the individual needs of children through the Additional Needs policy.

There are a broad range of activities and experiences provided. Children are able to relax in the after school facility. There are individual education plans alongside Early Years Action and Action Plus for all children attending. These are regularly reviewed. Children are supported by adults who respond sensitively to their individual needs and interests. They are provided with praise and encouragement.

Partnership with parents is well established. They are extremely well supported by the staff. Strong links have been established with professionals to ensure continued support for all.

What has improved since the last inspection?

There were no actions identified at the last inspection.

What is being done well?

- There are very high staffing levels in place, including an effective key worker system. The staff have established strong, sustainable working relationships with the parents in order to support the children who attend the out of school club (often children who attended the provision before starting full time education) and the full day care provision.
- Children are provided with a broad range of activities and play experiences which are suited to their developmental needs. These are planned, well resourced and often enable children to access them independently whenever it is possible. Children are often taken out into the community to access the local facilities such as the library and shops, they are regularly taken swimming and there is a lot of liaison between receiving schools and the children with additional needs who attend the group.
- There is a warm and welcoming environment which includes access to a sensory room and garden. Children are provided with specialist equipment provided either by statutory agencies or made by parents. Space is used effectively within the setting so that children can move freely and safely.
- There is a positive and proactive approach to meet children's individual needs and to support the commitment to inclusion which the setting holds. All the staff have received SENCO training. Additional provision is made through reflexology sessions, a mother and toddler group and constant contact is maintained with other professionals from the statutory bodies.

An aspect of outstanding practice:

The provision for children with additional needs is excellent. Specialist skills have been developed by the staff, in working with and supporting both the children and their parents. Activities and experiences are planned so that all children are included

with the support of specialist equipment, high staffing levels and their additional needs, which have been carefully considered and identified. Detailed records are maintained and progress is recorded and shared on a regular basis through Early Years Action and Action Plus.

What needs to be improved?

- the operational plan to include an induction programme for new staff, job descriptions, roles and responsibilities and staff deployment, an outings policy and details of risk assessments conducted and reviewed
- the registers to identify times of arrival and departure for children and staff
- the policies for health, behaviour management and complaints.

Outcome of the inspection

Good

CONDITIONS OF REGISTRATION

All registered persons must comply with all conditions of registration included on his/her certificate of registration.

As a result of this inspection conditions of registration have been imposed / varied / removed and a new certificate of registration will be issued.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE NEXT?

The Registered Person should have regard to the following recommendations by the time of the next inspection

Std	Recommendation
2	Include within the operational plan an induction programme for new members of staff, copies of job descriptions, roles and responsibilities for the staff, a copy of the risk assessment conducted and an outings policy.
2	Ensure that times of arrival and departure are included on all registers.
14	Review and update policies in line with requirements for standards 7,11 and 12.

SUMMARY OF NATIONAL STANDARDS

STANDARD 1 - SUITABLE PERSON

Adults providing day care, looking after children or having unsupervised access to them are suitable to do so.

STANDARD 2 - ORGANISATION

The registered person meets required adult: child ratios, ensures that training and qualifications requirements are met and organises space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively.

STANDARD 3 - CARE, LEARNING AND PLAY

The registered person meets children's individual needs and promotes their welfare. They plan and provide activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities.

STANDARD 4 - PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The premises are safe, secure and suitable for their purpose. They provide adequate space in an appropriate location, are welcoming to children and offer access to the necessary facilities for a range of activities which promote their development.

STANDARD 5 - EQUIPMENT

Furniture, equipment and toys are provided which are appropriate for their purpose and help to create an accessible and stimulating environment. They are of suitable design and condition, well maintained and conform to safety standards.

STANDARD 6 - SAFETY

The registered person takes positive steps to promote safety within the setting and on outings and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents.

STANDARD 7 - HEALTH

The registered person promotes the good health of children and takes positive steps to prevent the spread of infection and appropriate measures when they are ill.

STANDARD 8 - FOOD AND DRINK

Children are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Food and drink is properly prepared, nutritious and complies with dietary and religious requirements.

STANDARD 9 - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children.

STANDARD 10 - SPECIAL NEEDS (INCLUDING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES)

The registered person is aware that some children may have special needs and is

proactive in ensuring that appropriate action can be taken when such a child is identified or admitted to the provision. Steps are taken to promote the welfare and development of the child within the setting in partnership with the parents and other relevant parties.

STANDARD 11 - BEHAVIOUR

Adults caring for children in the provision are able to manage a wide range of children's behaviour in a way which promotes their welfare and development.

STANDARD 12 - WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

The registered person and staff work in partnership with parents and to meet the needs of the children, both individually and as a group. Information is shared.

STANDARD 13 - CHILD PROTECTION

The registered person complies with local child protection procedures approved by the Area Child Protection Committee and ensures that all adults working and looking after children in the provision are able to put the procedures into practice.

STANDARD 14 - DOCUMENTATION

Records, policies and procedures which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision, or to promote the welfare, care and learning of children are maintained. Records about individual children are shared with the child's parent.