

Making school e

parents of children with additional needs



Background and context

A school and children's centre wanted parents of children with additional needs to attend and be included in nursery events. Each term they hold learn together days where parents are invited to come in the setting and spend a session with their child. They had noticed that this was sometimes difficult for children with social communication needs and their families which was distressing for the children who struggle with the event and for their parents, especially those who are still coming to terms with the differences in their child's learning journey due to a SEND.

What did they do

Planned a learn together day in the Autumn term and made a list of barriers that children with SEND and their families may experience on the day. These included the change in routine and the dysregulation some of the children face because of this, the sensory overload caused by the nursery environment being full of parents and the isolation and 'otherness' felt by parents of children with SEND.

Changes we planned to help children cope with the differences presented by the event:

- Some of these changes included creating several safe space' in the nursery environment for children to access if feeling overwhelmed during the event; preparing children for the change using visual timetables, children who struggle with sensory overload were offered alternatives to being in the main nursery environment pre-emptively.
- They offered a separate event targeted at SEND families and gave the option to attend either as they are working with many families who are in the early stages of coming to terms with the differences their children may face through their education due to an additional need and knew that not everybody would be ready to attend a specific SEND event.
- The SEND event offered some nurturing activities for parents and time for them to sit together and build connections. This was very successful and parents requested more opportunities to meet and the setting now run regular parents get together with nurturing treats.

What was the impact? What changed?

The school found it useful to look at the potential barriers that SEND children could face during events, and feel they been successful in creating a more inclusive program of events for SEND children and their families this year. Over the year they have seen some of the SEND parents visibly become more relaxed within the nursery, and their attendance has increased over the year.

The school benefited from listening to what the parents asked for and supporting them to join in with things the way they want to be supported. The process of identifying barriers and making necessary adjustments is now included in the planning of all events and embedded in practice and sustainable going forward.

Parents: The school or nursery considers the needs of parents of children with SEND when planning events increased from 64% to 82% / The school or nursery has lots of opportunities for parents to attend events at school which are accessible for my child increased from 64% to 73%

Staff: A timetable of events is made available to parents making it clear which events are suitable and relevant to parents and carers of pupils with SEND increased from 48% to 82%.

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