



Roundabout Pre-School and Playgroup

Statement of Policies and Standards

February 2004

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UNDER FIVES ROUNDABOUT
ST LUKE'S CHURCH CENTRE, VICTORIA ROAD, CAMBRIDGE CB4 3DZ
Registered Charity No 1027240

Introduction

As a sessional day care provider caring for children under the age of eight years, Roundabout Pre-School and Play Groups are regulated by the Early Years Directorate within the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted). We are required to comply with National Standards published by the Government which represent a baseline of quality for all providers. There are 14 National Standards, each of which is accompanied by a set of supporting criteria giving information about how the required quality outcome is to be achieved.

In this document, each National Standard is set out in bold at the start of each section, followed by an explanatory 'focus' statement supplied by Ofsted. Thereafter the policies based on the Standards and their supporting criteria are set out. Where particular additions or explanations have been developed for use in Roundabout Pre-School/Playgroup, these are shown in italics. If you have any questions relating to these policies, please do not hesitate to raise them with a member of staff or a member of the Committee of Management.

Please note that in this document, the word 'parent' should be taken to mean parent or carer.

The phrase 'registered person' technically refers to the person in ultimate charge of the registered setting i.e. in the case of Roundabout Pre-School/Playgroup, the Chair of the Committee of Management. In effect, so far as parents are concerned, it means the providers of the day care i.e. the group leaders, who are employed by and responsible to the Committee of Management, and to whom the Chair has delegated the day to day running of the group.

Standard 1 - Suitable person

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

The quality of the provision depends upon the suitability of the adults providing day care. OFSTED makes a judgement about the suitability of all registration applicants and registered persons. Responsibility for deciding on the suitability of other prospective staff rests with the registered person.

The registered person must comply with all conditions of registration, including any which require them to submit to a vetting procedure whereby the information supplied is verified with the relevant sources. The vetting procedure, which includes police checks, will enable the early years child care inspector to determine the suitability of those caring for, or having regular contact with, children.

The registered person, their staff and volunteers must not have been convicted of an offence, nor been the subject of an order which disqualifies them from registration under the provisions of the Children Act 1989.

The staff, volunteers and the whole Committee of Management go through the police check process. We also encourage parents to be checked if they wish to help in the Pre-School/Playgroup, since that increases flexibility for the staff.

The registered person must ensure that any person who has not been vetted is never left alone with children. *In practice this means that, for example, adults who have not been police checked may not accompany children to the toilets or supervise them in any other area without another adult who has been checked being present.*

The person in charge who is present must have a qualification appropriate to the post, or must be training towards an appropriate qualification and be able to demonstrate the timescale for achieving it. In addition, all managers, staff and volunteers must be suitable, both mentally and physically, to care for children and must have the appropriate experience, skills and ability to do their jobs.

In recent years Roundabout has supported its staff during training on a day-release basis, whereby a qualified member of staff covers for a member who is at college one day per week. Sam Capes is currently studying for her CACHE level 4 qualification; Zoe Norman completed her CACHE Level 3 in February 2007; and Ronit Naim is working towards her CACHE LEVEL 3.

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.

Where organisation is effective appropriately experienced and qualified staff have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities. Relevant induction procedures and opportunities to receive further training help staff develop their skills in organising provision that meets children's individual needs.

The registered person must demonstrate that staff are deployed effectively within the premises to ensure the safety, welfare and development of children. There must be clarity about who is the person in charge of the setting at any time.

Group size – In the Playgroup the group must never exceed 12 children, in the Pre-School the maximum is 24 though usually set at 22; and children should have consistent staff.

Operational plan - An operational plan must be developed and kept under review in the setting. This will include how staff will be deployed within the setting, how and what activities will be provided and how the continuing training needs of staff will be met. This plan must be available to parents.

We have two copies of our Operational Plan. The Playgroup copy is kept in their filing cabinet and is on display during sessions in the foyer. The Pre-school copy is kept in the main cupboard and displayed outside the room during sessions. Our long-term plan for activities for the children is displayed in both groups and may be viewed at any time.

Accessible individual records must be kept on the premises containing the name and address of staff members, any volunteers and committee members, and information about recruitment, training and qualifications.

Our Staffing Files are kept in the Pre-School Filing Cabinet.

Staffing ratios - The minimum staffing ratios for children aged 3 and over is one member of staff to 8 children. For children aged 2 to 3 years, it is one member of staff to every 4 children. These ratios include any children of staff or volunteers. Regular volunteers or parents attending on a planned and regular basis can be taken into account in the normal staffing ratios. There must always be a minimum of 2 adults on duty. Staffing levels must be maintained during outings but, according to circumstances, it may be necessary to exceed them. The registered person must ensure that suitable contingency arrangements are in place to cover emergencies and unexpected staff absences, and sufficient suitable staff and volunteers to cover staff breaks, holidays, sickness etc.

We have a list of emergency cover options and ask those on the list to undergo a CRB check. We very much appreciate parental help within the Playgroup and Pre-School, as it widens the range of experiences we can offer the children and also allows the staff greater flexibility in developing their work with the children. We produce a termly rota for parent helpers, with the number of turns on the rota being proportionate to the child's attendance at the group. We encourage parents to join us on any outings to increase our ratio to 1:4 in pre-school and, if appropriate, one to two in playgroup. We also encourage parents to offer to be available as emergency cover on particular days, so that this can be easily arranged when required.

Registration system - The children and staff attending each session must be recorded in a register, showing times of arrival and departure.

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.

Children's care, learning and play are supported best where the registered person and staff are clear about the main purpose of the provision. The development of children's emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities is promoted effectively when they take part in a wide range of activities. Staff meet children's needs through sensitive and appropriate interactions that promote children's self esteem. Staff plan first hand experiences that enable children to make choices as they develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. Children's care, learning and play are supported well by staff who monitor children's progress regularly and use this information to provide for their individual needs.

We encourage children to be confident, independent and to develop their self esteem. The staff will select resources and provide activities, play opportunities and first-hand experiences which allow children to build on their natural curiosity as learners, develop their language and mathematical thinking, use their imagination and develop social relationships. All staff will help children to learn about what is right and wrong.

We encourage the building of positive relationships with children and their parents to facilitate a good understanding of individual needs and home circumstances. We listen to and value what children say, talk with them about what they are doing and have high expectations of what they can achieve. The staff observe what children do and use their observations to plan the next steps for the children's play, learning and development.

Experience has shown that if a child attends for only one day a week, it is not beneficial either to the child or the group. We therefore accept children for a minimum of two days per week.

We organise resources so that they are readily accessible to children and deploy staff to support children's play and learning. *For instance, a variety of craft materials and tools are openly available for self-selection by the children during the first part of each session.*

We give children opportunities to be active as well as time to relax. We understand and use the Early Learning Goals (from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)).

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.

The environment should be warm and welcoming for children, staff and parents. It should be safe and secure, with well organised space, used appropriately to promote children's development.

The premises should be welcoming and friendly to children and parents. They should be clean, well lit, adequately ventilated and maintained in a suitable state of repair and decoration. The premises are for the sole use of our Group during the hours of operation. There is access to a telephone on the premises. Rooms are maintained at an adequate temperature and there is adequate storage space for equipment. We operate within local planning and building control requirements.

Indoor play - The minimum space per child required is 2.3 square metres for children aged 3 years and over, and 2.5 square metres for those aged 2-3 years. Provision is made for children who wish to relax or play quietly, equipped with appropriate furniture. Play areas are large enough to give scope for free movement and well spread out activities. There are separate areas for different activities.

Outdoor play - Outdoor play space is safe, secure and well maintained.

Toilet facilities - There must be at least one toilet and one wash hand basin with hot and cold water available for every ten children over the age of two years. *We exceed this requirement.*

Staff facilities - There are arrangements whereby staff may talk to parents confidentially. *Staff may ask parents for a word at the end of any session, or any parent is free to raise concerns with the staff whenever they wish. The group leaders are also available to be contacted by telephone out of hours to discuss matters in confidence.*

Kitchen - There is a kitchen area which is adequately equipped for the preparation and storage of snacks and drinks for children and staff on the premises. Food preparation areas conform to environmental health and food safety regulations. Children do not have access to the kitchen area unless it is being used solely for a supervised children's activity.

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.

The provision of a range of safe and well-maintained furniture, equipment and toys that meets the varying needs of children is important to their development and learning.

We ensure that sufficient, suitable toys and play materials are available to provide stimulating activities and play opportunities for the children in all areas of play, learning and development. These are appropriate for the ages and individual developmental needs of the children.

Furniture, toys and equipment on the premises are in good repair and conform to BS EN safety standards or the Toys (Safety) Regulations (1995) where applicable. There are sufficient numbers of child-sized chairs and tables to allow flexible arrangements for groups of children to play and eat together.

We seek to enlarge and improve our range of equipment and activities each year and are always open to suggestions. We aim to provide the very best we can for the children at Roundabout. We sometimes borrow items from local book or toy libraries to vary our selection. We are always grateful for boxes, empty food cartons etc for creative recycling by the children.

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.

The safety of children is paramount at all times. An awareness of children's constantly developing abilities helps to ensure appropriate safety measures are applied to avoid dangerous situations.

We take reasonable steps to ensure that hazards to children on the premises, both inside and outside, are minimised and we are aware of, and comply with, Health and Safety regulations. Staff are trained to have an understanding of Health and Safety requirements for the environment in which they work. We have a named Health and Safety Representative (Liz Lord)

Risk assessment - We conduct a risk assessment of the premises and this is reviewed if there is a significant change or if we suspect that it is no longer valid.

Gas/electricity - Gas, electrical and other appliances and fittings conform to safety requirements and do not pose a hazard to children.

Security - The premises and outside play area are secure and children are not able to leave them unsupervised. The registered person has an effective system for managing access to the premises, ensures that it is used and keeps a record of visitors. Children are supervised at all times.

The two entrance doors to the Pre-School room are locked after the children arrive and, apart from during outdoor play time, remain locked until the staff admit the parents at the end of the session. Visitors are admitted only by the staff and under their supervision, and their visit is noted in the register, including arrival and departure time. The gates in the garden are locked or fastened securely and checked by a member of staff before the children are allowed out to play.

Outside area - We ensure that children can play safely outside through a combination of supervision and protection from hazards. Any outdoor water activities are closely supervised at all times. We do not keep hazardous indoor and outdoor plants on the premises. If any become present outside the premises they are made inaccessible to children.

Fire safety - There are clearly defined procedures for emergency evacuation of the building, known to all staff and fire drills are carried out periodically. We comply with any recommendations made by the Fire Safety Officer. Records are kept to his satisfaction in a fire log book for inspection and certificates obtained. Fire doors are not obstructed and fire exits are clearly identifiable and easily opened from the inside. Adequate fire detection and control equipment is readily available.

Outings and transport - We ensure that there are operational procedures for the safe conduct of any outings provided. Records about vehicles in which children are transported, including insurance details and a list of named drivers, are kept. Drivers using their own transport have adequate insurance cover.

Insurance - We carry public liability insurance for this setting. *The certificate is displayed on our Pre-School notice board at the top of the stairs.*

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.

High standards of hygiene and the prevention of the spread of infection are essential to maintaining good health. Where the registered person and staff have a secure knowledge of the setting's policies and arrangements for health and hygiene and a commitment to adhering to their agreed procedures, they are likely to promote children's good health.

Hygiene - The premises and equipment are clean. Staff are informed and aware of the importance of good hygiene practice in order to prevent the spread of infection. Staff are informed of and kept up to date with hygiene procedures. Children are encouraged to learn about personal hygiene through the daily routine.

One aspect of hygiene is the regular cleaning of toys, dressing up clothes etc., and we appreciate offers of parental help with this e.g. during holiday periods.

Animals - We ensure that any animals on the premises are safe to be in the proximity of children and do not pose a health risk.

Sand pits - Sand pits are protected from contamination and the sand is clean.

Food handling - Those responsible for the preparation and handling of food are fully aware of, and comply with, regulations relating to food safety and hygiene.

Parents assisting the staff by preparing fruit and drinks are asked to be particularly aware of food safety rules (see posters displayed in the kitchen). Food Hygiene courses are arranged for staff and parents are invited to attend.

Medicine - *It is our policy that no medication will be administered to children by our staff, except that in exceptional circumstances when a child has a chronic/ongoing illness we may be able to administer medication, including inhalers for asthma. This will be discussed on an individual basis as part of the child's care plan. In all other cases, if medication is required during the course of a session, a parent must attend to administer the medication for their child, having discussed this in advance with a group leader.*

First Aid - There is a first aid box complying with the Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations 1981, the contents of which are checked frequently and replaced as necessary by a designated member of staff. This is kept in an accessible place out of the reach of children. There is at least one member of staff with a current first aid training certificate on the premises or on outings at any one time. The first aid qualification includes training in first aid for infants and young children.

All Roundabout staff attend a 'First Aid for Childcarers' course. The qualification is valid for 3 years and is updated as necessary.

Written parental permission is requested, when a child joins the Pre-School/Playgroup, to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future. A record is maintained, signed by the parent, of any accidents.

Sick children - *Children who are ill or infectious may not attend the Pre-School until they are well again or the infectious stage has passed (e.g. in the case of chicken pox, all spots are dry). A child who has sickness or diarrhoea should be clear of symptoms for **two days** before returning to the group. For those in the Playgroup we ask that children should not attend the group if there is sickness/diarrhoea in the family. Children with untreated head lice are asked not to attend the group until treatment has commenced. In cases of doubt, parents are asked to contact a group leader to discuss the timing of a child's return to the group.*

Smoking - No smoking is allowed on the premises.

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.

Adequate and nutritious food and drink are essential for children's well being. The registered person and staff have a good understanding of children's dietary and religious requirements and meet these appropriately to promote children's healthy growth and development.

Fresh drinking water is available to children at all times.

Parents are asked to advise staff about any special dietary requirements, preferences or food allergies a child may have. Where these exist, the staff make a record and take heed of the information provided.

We provide the children with a drink of milk or water (at their choice) and a snack of fruit / vegetables each day. In pre-school we ask parents to assist us in providing this by signing a rota to provide fruit for a week each term and in playgroup parents are asked to bring a piece of fruit each day their child attends.

Standard 9 - Equal opportunities

The registered person and staff actively promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice for all children. We have a named Equal Opportunities representative (Karen Crane).

Children need to feel valued and be free from discrimination. Where the registered person and staff are committed to equality they recognise that children's attitudes towards others are established in these early years. They understand relevant legislation and plan to help children learn about equality and justice through their play. The provision is carefully organised and monitored to ensure all children have access to the full range of activities. Family members and staff work together to share information, for example about cultures, home languages, play activities and children's specific needs.

We periodically review our equal opportunities policy which is consistent with current legislation and guidance. All staff and volunteers understand and implement this policy and it is available to parents.

Our equal opportunities policy is for children, parents and all adults working within the Pre-School/ Playgroup. We believe everyone is of equal value regardless of ethnicity, intellectual and physical ability, gender, age, and social circumstances. Our policy aims to enhance and improve the educational progress and self-esteem of all children and the morale and commitment of staff and parents.

All children and adults are treated with equal concern and the registered person has regard to relevant anti-discriminatory good practice. We promote equal opportunities with regard to employment, training, admission and access to the resources, activities and facilities available.

Staff liaise with parents to ensure that all children's records contain information which enables appropriate care to be given.

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. We have a named Special Needs Representative (Sam Capes).

Children with special needs are most likely to have their needs met where the registered person and staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of the individual needs of every child in their care. Staff work together with parents and other relevant parties to organise the environment and plan activities to ensure all children take part at a level appropriate to their needs.

We have regard to the Code of Practice (1994) for the identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs.

All children are different and some find pre-school easier than others. If we are concerned about a particular child, we will make contact at an early stage to discuss the situation.

Staffing arrangements are designed to meet the needs of individual children who attend and who have special needs.

The physical environment is, as far as is reasonable, suitable for children with disabilities. Children with special needs have access, alongside their peers, to the facilities, activities and play opportunities provided whenever reasonable, in order to promote their welfare and development.

Staff consult with parents about the need for any special services and equipment for the children in their care. We ensure the privacy of children with special needs when intimate care is being provided.

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.

Children benefit most where adults adopt a consistent and positive approach to the management of their behaviour. By establishing clear boundaries according to the child's level of understanding, children become aware of the setting's routines and procedures and know what is expected of them.

A summary statement on behaviour management is included within the Pre-School/Playgroup booklet which is given to parents when their children join. A fuller version is available on request. This is fully understood and followed by all staff and discussed with parents. We have a named Behaviour Management Representative (Zoe Norman).

Our aim is to encourage good behaviour. Children are praised for good behaviour. On occasions when a child's behaviour is not acceptable, an adult will explain why the behaviour is unacceptable. Parents will be informed when they collect the child. Please feel free to discuss this with the child's keyworker or another member of staff.

We aim to create an environment that encourages good behaviour. Adult handling of behaviour is consistent and developmentally appropriate, respecting individual children's level of understanding and maturity. Physical punishments, or the threat of them, are not used. Adults do not use any form of physical intervention, e.g. holding, unless it is necessary to prevent personal injury to the child, other children, an adult or serious damage to property. Any incident is recorded and the parent informed of the incident on the day.

Standard 12 - Working in partnership with parents and carers

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

The relationship between the child's parents and the registered person is crucial to the child's well-being, development and progress. Children benefit most where there is a trusting and mutually supportive partnership. The registered person and staff welcome parents into the setting and there is a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise.

Information is given to parents which includes:

- basic written information about the setting, e.g. the admissions policy, hours, contact information, staffing, routines etc.;
- the role of parents, including any expectations that parents participate on the management committee or as volunteers;
- details of policies and procedures which are available to parents;
- a written complaints procedure which includes the address and telephone number of the regulator;
- information about activities provided for children.

This information is included in the Pre-School/Playgroup booklet which is given to parents when their children join.

Volunteers or committee members are given full information and guidance on their roles and responsibilities.

There is a system in place for the regular exchange of information between parent and staff member. Appropriate and prompt action is taken on any concerns raised and a record of all complaints is maintained. Staff are aware of the need to maintain privacy and confidentiality. Parents have access to all written records about their children.

Whenever possible, information is provided for parents about activities provided for the children through wall displays, photographs and examples of children's work.

Children are only released from the care of the Pre-School/Playgroup to individuals named by the parent.

We ask that parents inform a group leader at the start of the session if someone other than a usual carer is coming to collect their child from that session.

If a child is identified as a child in need (section 17 of the Children Act 1989) the registered person, usually with parents' permission, gives appropriate information to referring agencies.

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. We have a named Child Protection Representative (Ludmila Stanleyova)

The welfare, safety and protection of children are paramount. Where the registered person and staff recognise their responsibilities towards those in their care, they will be aware of their individual roles and understand the procedures they must follow if they suspect abuse or neglect.

The protection of the child is our first priority.

We have a written statement, based on the Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) procedures, stating staff responsibilities with regard to the reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect and including contact names and telephone numbers. It includes procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. These procedures are shared with parents before admission to the Pre-School.

It may be helpful for parents to know that the law (Children Act 1989) requires all staff to pass on information which raises concerns that a child may be at risk from non-accidental injury, neglect, emotional or sexual abuse. This procedure is intended to protect children. Parents will normally be informed before any confidential information is passed on. The child's interest comes first in such situations.

All staff are aware of possible symptoms of children at risk and are aware of their responsibility to:

- report concerns according to ACPC procedures without delay; and
- keep concerns confidential to as few people as need to know.

Standard 14 - Documentation

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

The registered person and staff maintain useful records that underpin the successful management of the setting. Staff observe children's development and keep records that help them meet each child's needs. Children's records are openly shared with parents and their contributions are valued.

Records relating to individual children are retained for a reasonable period of time after the children have left the provision. The records are always available for inspection by the early years child care inspector.

The early years child care inspector is informed of the following at the earliest opportunity:

- any changes to the registered person, for example a new committee member
- a change of the person in charge of the children (manager or group leader)
- any significant changes to the premises;
- any significant changes to the operational plan;
- allegations of abuse by a member of staff or volunteer, or any abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises;
- any other significant events.