

Early Years Advice and Guidance: Physical and Medical Needs



Early Years Advice and Guidance for Physical and Medical Needs



Children with physical and medical needs develop skills at their own rate, dependent on their condition, early interventions (both medical and therapeutic), access to medication, access to specialist equipment and opportunities to access expertise in their individual diagnosis.

Children with Physical and Medical Needs may:

- Have difficulties with fine and gross motor skills, developing these at different rates
- Need specialist equipment
- Need time out to attend appointments, see therapists (physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy) or have medication administered
- Need reasonable adjustments to be made to the environment to suit their individual needs

Children with Physical and Medical Needs may find it difficult to:

- Access the full early years environment and all areas of learning
- Physically keep up with their peers in both play and learning activities
- Develop gross and fine motor skills without specialist equipment
- Catch up with missed learning

The key person will need to:

- Have full knowledge of all physical and medical needs including the relevant training. For example, training in the following areas: Manual Handling, administering medication, Epilepsy Awareness, Gastrostomy feeds etc... Please see separate sheet for contact details.
- Encourage a handover time with specialists. This can be short sessions where specialists can advise staff of all the individual needs and handover any specific and relevant plans. These plans can then be used to inform planning and environment design.

- Encourage a handover time with parents and carers. This can be short sessions where the parent can spend time with the key person in the environment and advise staff of all the individual needs. Make sure you have any hospital protocols and have a clear emergency health care plan signed by parents/ carers that is explicit in case of emergency. Make sure that all medical and professional reports are up to date. Check with the relevant professional if you are unsure.
- Plan the environment carefully, taking into consideration any specialist equipment. Consider storage space for equipment. Make sure you are aware of who to contact regarding equipment maintenance and repairs. Consult the relevant professionals.
- Consider each area of learning in the environment and how easy they are to access if using specialist equipment. For example, a specialist seat, Kaye walker, corner seat. Plan for soft flooring to enable positional changes and floor time. You may plan in time where the sand tray could be on the floor or at a lower height.
- Plan for 'environment positions' and where the children will sit during group times and planned activities. Sometimes equipment can block other children's view of the teacher. How can you support everyone equally to achieve independence during this time?
- Plan for individual position changes. These could be written into a therapist's plan. Take note if a child requires postural changes. For example, time on the floor, time in a standing frame and time actively sitting at a desk with support. Consult the relevant therapist for advice and support. These postural changes can then be weaved into your daily planning.

Settings should consider facilitating visiting specialists i.e. providing room to work to enable children to maximise their attendance within education.

Team Contact Details

<https://gateshead-localoffer.org/>