



Good Beginnings: Early Years Autism-friendly Setting *Bronze Award*

Testimonial: TOAD HALL DAY NURSERY, RAYLEIGH

Why we wanted to do the award

- At the time of doing the award, we had never had a child in the setting with autism, but it was an area of interest highlighted by many of our staff
- Development of the setting's practice - many staff have been with us a long time, so this was motivating for the staff
- There's a lot of information about autism in the media and on television
- As a well-established setting, we wanted to progress further and offer good provision to the parents of children with autism who might want to use our services

The benefits for staff

- There are plans for all staff, if they haven't already completed autism online, to do so
- Rapid increase in staff's knowledge about autism and identifying any early signs
- Increased confidence to raise concerns with parents
- Included in internal training sessions and as part of induction, where staff are given set tasks to read, watch and also research for themselves
- Gave them a sense of achievement, eg making visual aids for the setting
- All staff were involved, including part-time, full-time and the management team
- From our initial training and having completed the award, we were able to identify specific staff who needed support in this area, and those interested in this area of need were able to take responsibility to develop this

The benefits for children

- Lots more visual aids are used in daily practice
- Level of understanding of differences between themselves and others
- Helping each other, recognising who needs help and supporting them in daily practice

The benefits for the parents

- Information available to read and request, with many resources available on site for loan
- Improved relationships between staff and parents

- Parents coming forward to ask questions about concerns about their child
- Advising them not to google!
- Increased understanding of needs linked to the diagnosis

The benefits for the setting

- Links to outside agencies and other setting
- Research projects and societies that have supported us to achieve our award
- Parents recognise the award in the setting
- Visual aids used in daily practice
- Networking with other settings
- Recognition for our achievement - presentation of award at ceremony
- Revisiting autism Inclusion Development Programme (IDP) – a great resource to use and refer to

What we got from the award

- A better understanding of autism
- Staff's confidence in this area was initially identified as lacking, but progressed significantly during and following completion of the award
- Impact on practice on a daily basis
- Staff's confidence increased, including new staff contributing as part of their induction
- Development of visual aids in each room and around the nursery
- The use of visual aids also impacted other children's development

“We would really recommend to other settings to complete this.”