

St.Albans Steiner Kindergarten
Early years offer

1. How does the setting know if children need extra help and what should I do if I think my child may have special educational needs?

Parents and staff in the Kindergarten work closely together; any concerns are discussed and plans to support the child and the parents are agreed and any signposting or outside agencies can be involved. All the staff are very experienced in working in early years. Zanna Millicheap, the lead Senco, has an MA in Early Years and is a post grad qualified teacher. (She also trained as a nurse at Great Ormond Street Hospital.) If your child has an identified special need before joining our setting, the staff will work with you to ensure that everything is in place (eg special equipment, staff training, classroom organisation etc) before your child joins us. Your child's key worker will work with Zanna to continually monitor and review your child's development and progress in the setting through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EFYS) framework. We are a Steiner Kindergarten and have exemptions from some of the formal abstract learning of the EYFS (Numbers, Letters and phonics). We have worked closely with other professionals, such as health visitors, speech and language therapists, educational psychologists and other healthcare professionals to ensure that your child is given appropriate support and that we provide the very best care and developmental opportunities for your child.

2. How will the setting staff support my child?

Zanna Millicheap (Manager) is very experienced with children with behaviour issues. The kindergarten staff are very child focused and aim to support all children. We have a wealth of experience and knowledge between us all and each child is treated and respected as an individual, with his/her own needs. There is 3 qualified teachers, 1 qualified Early Years teacher, 1 with an NVQ level 5 in Early Years and another volunteer who has an NVQ 3 in Early Years.

3. How will I know how my child is doing?

You are always welcome to discuss your child's progress informally at the setting or by telephone or email. We will also review progress via parent consultations at least twice yearly. Before your child joins the Kindergarten we welcome you to a Parent and Child group that takes place every Friday, (Where the child and the Parents can meet some of the members of Staff). We hold parent evenings, meals and sessions when you are invited to join in. There are many formal ways of communicating about your child's progress but nothing is better than an informal chat at the end of a session, so we are always available to speak to should there be any concerns.

4. How will the learning and development provision be matched to my child's needs?

Through the EYFS we will observe and assess your child and then plan their learning and development provision around our observations. We will follow advice from other professionals on how to support your child's particular needs and the SENCo will ensure that training is accessed for staff, wherever possible, to support your child's learning.

5. What support will there be for my child's overall wellbeing?

We will involve other professionals (e.g. health visitors) to ensure that we support your child in all areas of their development. There is a strong emphasis on providing a caring environment, with older children helping some of our younger children. If your child has any specific medical needs our staff will undergo any training – e.g. epipen training, replacing breathing tubes, gastrostomy feeds, asthma management, etc – and we will administer any medication prescribed by a hospital paediatrician or GP. We have a behaviour management policy that outlines the procedures used at the Kindergarten; however, if specialist help is required to manage behaviour, we can request the support of the inclusion development officer employed by the local authority.

All staff have a positive approach to all children's individual learning and development and are sensitive to their needs. Unwanted behaviour and the testing of boundaries is often part of growing up, and we will work closely with you to put strategies in place to support and enhance your child's positive behaviours.

6. What specialist services and expertise are available at or accessed by the setting?

Zanna has been working in the Kindergarten for the last 25 years, We are all trained and experienced staff, and we are all on continual professional development so attend trainings and courses regularly. We have very good links with our local children's centre and we work with a wide range of agencies such as advisory teachers, autism advisory teachers, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists, health visitors, GPs etc. We also have a good relationship with the local feeder schools and this will make the process of moving to a new setting much easier for your child.

7. What training and/or experience do the staff, supporting children with SEND, have?

All staff have experience with working with children with special needs. The core members of staff have years of experience supporting children with a wide range of needs and disabilities and have attended specialist workshops on various conditions, such as Autism & Asperger's, ADD & ADHD, Speech & Language difficulties, etc.

8. How will my child be included in activities outside the setting?

Your child will benefit from all activities outside the setting for which full risk assessments are carried out. We will discuss your child's needs with you to ensure they can be included in all the daily activities within kindergarten. We have a large garden, half grass and half paving slabs, and there are areas shaded by trees, the garden is easily accessed from the kindergarten and the whole setting is wheelchair friendly. When we go on outings, parents are always invited to join us.

9. How will I be involved in discussions about and planning for my child's learning and development?

Your child's key worker will be available to discuss your child's needs; however, it may be necessary to arrange a mutually convenient time for a

meeting. Team Around the Family meetings are carried out regularly. If outside professionals come in to see your child we try to organise a meeting at the end of that visit for a brief discussion. If this is not possible, any reports are always copied and given to you. Parental consent is always obtained before we refer to any outside agencies.

10. How accessible is the building / environment?

The Kindergarten environment is very accessible and meets the current disability regulations. There are no stairs in our building and we have ramp access. We have purpose built toys and equipment at a level accessible by all children, whatever their circumstance. Our garden is accessible. We do have a disabled toilet with wheelchair access within the community centre.

11. How will the setting prepare and support my child with transitions between home, settings and school?

We encourage parents to visit the Kindergarten and join the Parent and Child group that runs on Friday mornings during term time. When it is time for your child to leave us to start nursery school or school, we will contact the new setting and invite them to visit your child at preschool. During this visit the teacher or key person from the school will meet and play with your child and discuss their development and progress with us. We can also arrange home visits if necessary.

12. How will [the setting's] resources be used to support children's special educational needs?

All equipment and toys are moveable and can be made accessible; they are age and stage appropriate. The Kindergarten has a high staff/child ratio, so your child will receive plenty of adult support. We are also a very inclusive setting and have a range of resources/strategies in place to support children with a range of needs. We work with a strong routine so the children soon learn what happens and when and transitions during the session are calm and flow easily due to the children knowing the routine, older children supporting the younger ones, etc.

3. Who can I contact for further information about the early years offer in the setting?

Zanna Millicheap; Telephone number 01707 275337 or www.stalbanssteinerkindergarten facebook 'St Albans Steiner Kindergarten'.

For further information on the local authority's Local Offer of service and provision for children with special educational needs and disability go to www.hertsdirect.org/localoffer