



How we support the rights of the child

We support lots of children and families daily, from SEND, mental health, this can mean that the children we are working alongside are no longer accessing education, due to their needs not been met by the setting they have a place at. This can have a devastating impact on the family itself, with a parent having to give up work and become a carer. The child can then spiral with their mental health, leading to severe anxiety, depression and PDA (pathological demand avoidance).

Our services can help support the child in supporting their mental health and understanding their triggers, with the aid of animals and insects.

What articles we cover

Article 23 - (disabled children). Disabled children have the right to enjoy a full life. With dignity, and to participate as far as possible in their community. The government should support disabled children and their families.

How we support Article 23 – Twice a month we hold community SEND sessions for the families and children who live in the area. These sessions are proving to be very popular, as most areas do not have a facility like it. Unlike some SEND events, you do not need to be claiming certain benefits, or have an official diagnosis. The current wait time in England for diagnosis of ASD from referral is spiralling, with some families waiting several years. 'Berkshire NHS Trust has 2,081 autistic children's referrals still awaiting their first appointment after 60 weeks on average' (CHS Healthcare, 2024.)

These sessions were created by us to offer support to the families and children, giving them a hands-on experience with our animals and lots of other sensory play, including, play doh, slime, paint, jelly, bubbles.

The sessions also aid the children with their social interaction, confidence, and belonging.

Article 28 - (Education). Every child has the right to education. Primary education should be compulsory and free. Different forms of secondary education should be available to every child. School discipline should respect children's dignity and rights.

How we support Article 28 – Many children that we work with are not currently accessing education, most of the time this is due to their needs not been met by the setting they have a place at. We support parents through meetings and making sure they understand the law and their children's

rights. We work closely with families ensuring the child's my support plan or EHCP is up to date and all professionals who are involved with the child have got up to date information. We do this via signposting the family to other services, helping write emails to the correct services or joining them in meetings for support. This support is vital to the family and the child's needs been met within the setting enabling them to access education.

Article 29 - (Education and Children's Development). Education should help develop every child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to the full. It should develop children's respect for their own rights and those of others, for their parents, for their own culture and the culture of others, and for the natural environment.

Within our sessions both community and one to one, we focus on developing children's social skills, communication, and give them the opportunity to explore different activities. Ranging from animal therapy, art, and sensory play. We encourage the children to explore what they enjoy, whilst using intervention to help them understand their own feelings and emotions, help develop empathy, understanding and care for others and animals.

We are passionate about the natural environment and encourage all families and children to get outside, provide activities to grow their own, and let them interact with insects and bugs that support our eco system. From building bug hotels, to looking under felled trees to see what insects support our environment.

We feel our services also supports article 31. (play and cultural and artistic activities) **Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in cultural activities.**

We are passionate about the work we do and the services we provide, ensuring voices of children and families are heard. It is important to us that the families we work with are aware of their rights and their child's rights. As many families are not aware of the rights of the child, or even how to access services and funds they are entitled too to support them. Our role sees us trying to break down barriers, so no one gets lost in the system and every child has access to the support they deserve.

References

CHS Healthcare, 2024. Available at: www.chshealthcare.co.uk/the-current-state-of-autism-diagnosis-waits/ (accessed 17th of January 2024).