



# ***Oaklea Montessori's Local Offer for Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities***

*At Oaklea Montessori, we value every child and recognise that some children have special needs and others have challenges with some form of disability. Oaklea Montessori CIC adheres to the legal requirements set out in the Code of Practice document. This 'local offer' is intended to help you understand how we can help if your child is in need of support and care in this way and what services are available to you. At the heart of Maria Montessori's approach is the desire to meet children where they are and to assist them in fulfilling their potential in life. We hope you will find this information helpful.*

<p><b><i>How do we know if children need extra help?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Oaklea staff team work very closely with each individual child and their family. Each child has a designated key person, who through close observation and recording will plan the next steps for your child's development in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage ages and stages of development.</li><li>• This relationship and careful monitoring process enables us to identify any potential concerns as early as possible. Where we do identify a potential concern, we will discuss them sensitively with the child's parent or carer at an appropriate time in order to decide what, together, we should do and how best to do it.</li><li>• We naturally have close links with the Essex Child and Family Hub. Sometimes a concern may be raised by them or other outside professional agencies (e.g. speech &amp; language therapy or a health visitor). Where we feel an outside agency may be helpful to a child we discuss possibility the child's parents or carers; we only share information outside agencies with the consent of a child's parents or carers.</li><li>• We have regular Celebrate Evenings for each child, which provide opportunities for parents or carers to discuss their child's development, and for us or them to raise any concerns. An opportunity to discuss developmental progress also occurs at Integrated Reviews for 2-year olds, supported by key person and health visitors.</li></ul>
<p><b><i>What should you do if you think your child has a special educational need or some form of disability?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Firstly, try not to worry! We understand how difficult it is considering whether your child may need special help and we will do what we can to help and support you.</li><li>• Please speak to your child's key person and their room leader if you feel your child may have any form of special educational need or disability. They will be pleased to help and offer support. They will also work with you to involve others as necessary.</li><li>• We have nominated Special Educational Need Co-Ordinators (SenCos) in our settings. You can find their details at the end of this document. You child's key person and room leader will respond to and assist you with any concern you may have, but you may always contact the relevant SenCo.</li></ul>

<p><b><i>How does Oaklea support young children with special educational needs or disabilities?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are many practical things we do to put our special educational needs policy into practise. Actually, most of them are really helpful for children who don't have special educational needs or disability and this helps everybody feel included.</li> <li>• We operate with a higher ratio of adults to children than the legal requirement. This enables us to know our children better and spend more time observing them, which gives us more opportunity to spot and meet their needs as they arise.</li> <li>• We invite parents or carers invited to complete an 'All About Me' form as they start at nursery. This provides us with important information as we get to know your child</li> <li>• We involve parents or carers in creating a 'One Plan' for their child</li> <li>• The Montessori approach uses practical real-world objects and equipment that allow sensory exploration and development of skills that are required in everyday living.</li> <li>• Our sessions are flexible, offering a broad range of experiences which children access according to their need. For example, developmental movement play, quiet cosy times in the book corner, outdoor learning etc.)</li> <li>• Oaklea Montessori has disabled access throughout our buildings.</li> <li>• We are delighted to have close links with the Essex Child and Family Hub, facilitating additional family support</li> <li>• Every child is encouraged to develop care-of self-skills such as dressing, toileting, hand-washing, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>How does Oaklea create learning &amp; development opportunities for individual children with special educational needs or disabilities?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fact that each child is unique is at the heart of our Montessori ethos. Our aim and practice is to 'follow' the child developmentally and plan uniquely for each individual, building on their needs and their progress</li> <li>• Our staff have clearly defined roles in the classroom, which enables us to spend more quality time focussed on the children</li> <li>• There can be considerable differences in needs, natural inclinations and abilities between children of different ages. We therefore facilitate vertical age groupings as much as possible. For example, a 3 year old with some developmental delay may benefit more from joining an activity with 2 year olds. This happens naturally as 2, 3 &amp; 4 year-olds together share the same rooms.</li> <li>• The Montessori approach creates a planned and ordered environment for the child to work in, taking into account the needs of the child</li> <li>• The Montessori materials on the shelves in our classrooms are carefully arranged to enable children to explore and learn in ways that are progressive, allowing them to develop in highly individual ways</li> <li>• Carefully preparing the environment means that areas of the curriculum are clearly defined, so children can see easily what they can access. This especially benefits children who are visual learners.</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>How does Oaklea work in partnership with parents of children with special educational needs or disabilities?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We aim to work with parents and carers of children with special educational needs or disabilities at a number of levels, many of which are the same for every child in the nursery and are designed to make everybody feel included. These include daily conversations at the door, providing 'to-and-fro' books, sending home photos of the day's activities to promote discussion at home, telephone conversations and the introduction of our new software: connect, iconnect and parentzone. Our aim is to celebrate what is achieved on a daily basis and involve parents and carers as much as possible.</li> <li>• Every parent or carer is invited to regular ITCH meetings to celebrate their child's progress and discuss their needs.</li> <li>• In addition, we involve parents and carers of children with special educational needs or disabilities in a range of further activities centred on assessing and meeting their needs. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Identifying and addressing needs as early as possible and tracking progress through regular reviews</li> <li>○ Regular meetings with parents/carers and other professionals when necessary to address specific needs and set achievable goals for the child</li> <li>○ Support in submitting an Education &amp; Health Care Plan (EHCP) where required, when transitioning into school</li> <li>○ Supporting children with SEND as they transition into school, by arranging meetings with the school SENCo and class teacher</li> <li>○ 'Team around the child' meetings, incorporating outside professional agencies to focus on the particular needs of the child and his/her family</li> <li>○ Working with the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service, (formerly Children's Centre) to provide additional support to the family in partnership with the parents or carers</li> <li>○ Arranging a parent forum for parents or carers of children with special educational needs or disabilities where this would be helpful</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b><i>How does Oaklea ensure the safety and wellbeing of young children with special educational needs and disabilities?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The safety and wellbeing of every child in our care is our primary priority. We are always very mindful of the privilege of caring for your child.</li> <li>• Risk assessments routinely carried out in all areas of the nursery and our Policy Documents contains more details of these</li> <li>• We usually operate with a higher ratio of adults to children than the legal requirement and, as well as allowing more time and attention for each child, this reduces the risk in the nursery through increased levels of supervision</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have staff who are trained in paediatric first aid and others with specialised training in, for example, the use of 'Epi-Pens', epilepsy awareness, replacing and removing hearing aids, bolus reading and diabetic monitoring. Other specialised training will be provided as needs arise</li> <li>• We have designated people responsible for safeguarding and child protection</li> <li>• Medicine is administered strictly in accordance with our administration policy, which includes specific consent via a medicine administration form</li> <li>• We complete and implement a Health Care Plan with the support of parents or carers. This is routinely reviewed</li> <li>• Our approach for every child includes developing self-care regarding hygiene, toileting and hand washing. This is an essential part of developing a child's independence. A sleep or rest is incorporated into the day in response to the needs of each individual child</li> <li>• We cater for dietary requirements and supply a healthy snack and a healthy cooked lunch</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>What training and experience do staff at Oaklea have that helps them support young children with special educational needs and disabilities?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our staff bring a range of experience and personal knowledge of special educational needs and disabilities, allowing them to address a child's needs with empathy and understanding</li> <li>• Our Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator (SENCo) fulfils a specific and vital role within Oaklea operating to the Code of Practice and with training and particular experience (e.g. attending speech and language therapy sessions)</li> <li>• We provide a range of training to staff depending upon need. This training may include, but is not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Code of Practice (SENCo)</li> <li>○ SENCo networking meetings</li> <li>○ Inclusion Development Plan training (speech &amp; language; moderate learning difficulties, behaviour management, autism)</li> <li>○ Good Beginnings Course</li> <li>○ Makaton Training</li> <li>○ EpiPen / Bolus Training</li> <li>○ Visual Strategies training</li> <li>○ Implementing recommendations advised by Occupational Therapist and other external professionals</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We regularly review our training needs and build staff development into our Development Plan, Staff Performance Reviews &amp; Supervisions</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>What specialist services and expertise can Oaklea access to support children with special educational needs or disabilities</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We want children with special educational needs and disabilities to have access to the best possible support and care, and this sometimes involves specialist services and third-parties with specialist expertise. We always involve the parents or carers before seeking support from outside agencies and services and respect the confidentiality of parents or carers and the child</li> <li>• Such specialist services available to Oaklea include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Area SENCo</li> <li>○ Health visitors</li> <li>○ Specialist teachers</li> <li>○ Family support workers</li> <li>○ Speech and language therapists</li> <li>○ Physiotherapists</li> <li>○ Occupational therapists</li> <li>○ Community paediatrician</li> <li>○ Essex Child and Family Hub outreach workers</li> <li>○ Educational Psychologist</li> <li>○ Social Services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Other specialized services can be accessed as the need arises and in response to each individual case</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>How does Oaklea include children with special educational needs or disabilities in community-based activities and outings?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our aim is to include every child in any community-based activity or outing, catering for the safety, wellbeing and needs of every child (whether or not they have special educational needs or disability)</li> <li>• We routinely undertake risk assessments before any outing, and these include the needs of <i>all</i> the children</li> <li>• Every outing is tailored, taking into account the risk assessment and needs of every child, for example by arranging bespoke activities, one-to-one support where needed, appropriate routes and special access where necessary</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>How accessible is Oaklea's environment?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our buildings are wheelchair accessible with a disabled toilet available. Disabled parking is also available</li> <li>• The environment is maintained to ensure good acoustics, calm, ordered and spacious</li> <li>• Our Montessori prepared environment has child-sized facilities, such as tables, chairs and accessible equipment</li> <li>• We are able to access specialized resources to support your child through the Toy Library and the area SENCAN team</li> <li>• We welcome children and their families where English is an additional language</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>How does Oaklea prepare and support children with special educational needs or disabilities when they join the nursery or move on to another setting or school?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We recognise how important transition from home to nursery or from nursery to another setting or school can be. Many of us remember our own experiences. We therefore have a clear transition policy and work hard to give every child positive experiences as they join us or move on to school or another setting. Children at Oaklea move from one room to another depending upon their age, and this is another transition over which we take care.</li> </ul> <p><b>Joining Oaklea</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We provide a welcome letter to parents or carers with information about starting nursery and our routines, which allows parents and carers to prepare their child</li> <li>• We use an ‘all about me’ form that parents or carers complete to enable us to get to know what each child likes and can do before they start</li> <li>• We make optional taster sessions available to provide opportunities for children to become familiar with the nursery before joining</li> <li>• Reassuring phone calls to parents / carers as the need arises</li> </ul> <p><b>Moving Between Rooms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transitions are supported by each child’s key person or familiar adult.</li> </ul> <p><b>Going to School</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a child approaches the time to move on, we involve parents or carers, the class teacher, any teaching support assistant, the school’s SENCo and any other outside professionals already supporting the child, arranging ‘team around the child’ meetings and visits as necessary</li> <li>• In order to provide a familiar face and support, we can arrange for the child’s key person at Oaklea to attend school visits where required</li> <li>• We have a ‘transition box’ for children to explore that contains photos of school classrooms, cloakrooms, playgrounds, teachers etc., as well as school uniforms for the children to dress up in</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>How does Oaklea organise its resources to meet the needs of children with special educational needs or disabilities?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The heart of the Montessori approach is to enable any child to develop their fullest potential, something that is inherent in the way we prepare the nursery environment, structure and present materials, observe and build upon each child’s current abilities and sensitivity for learning. In this sense, every child has special (unique) educational needs and abilities that need to be developed. Our fundamental approach and organisation of</li> </ul>

	<p>resources is, therefore, very well aligned to the particular needs of children with special educational needs or disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Montessori equipment we use offers a wide range of opportunities for children to learn, meeting their needs and matching their abilities. The materials can be refined further if there is particular need, and we will consider doing this when such needs arise</li> <li>• Similarly, providing funding is available, we are happy to buy additional resources to meet particular needs</li> <li>• Our approach and ratios of adults to children provide time and opportunities for children to repeat activities and refine their skills</li> <li>• We make considerable use of developmental movement play (DMP), music and sensory (messy) play, all of which provide variety and alternative ways of learning and developing</li> <li>• We have child-sized, child accessible resources and equipment</li> <li>• In the nursery there are many activities which support physio-type exercises, pincer grip refining, muscle strengthening and hand-eye co-ordination activities. There are also many activities that develop gross and fine motor control</li> <li>• We offer visual strategies</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>How does Oaklea decide what support is appropriate for children with special educational needs or disabilities?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The support needs for children with special educational needs or disabilities become apparent at different times and change over time too. We adopt what is known as an early support approach, aiming to identify needs and put support in place as early as possible to maximise the benefits to the child concerned.</li> <li>• Our decision-making processes operate in partnership with the child (child’s voice) and their parents or carers, beginning before the child joins the nursery and extending into a child’s transition to school or another setting</li> <li>• Discussions may be triggered by parents or carers or arise from our regular observation of the child, review of their One Plan or Health Care Plan.</li> <li>• We review any needs identified with parents or carers and arrange any ‘team around the child’ meetings or contact with specialised services or external agencies as required. This may also involve collating evidence and providing support for parents to apply for an Education and Health Care Plan at the point of entry into school.</li> <li>• We work with parents or carers, specialised agencies or third parties to put the required support in place and then review their effectiveness and continued need on an individual basis, involving parents or carers in subsequent reviews</li> </ul>

<p><b><i>How does Oaklea involve all parents or carers?</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We welcome the involvement of parents and carers in the life of the nursery, a welcome supported by our Parents policy</li> <li>• Most parents or carers are primarily involved directly with the welfare, wellbeing and progress of their children in the nursery. Such involvement includes (but certainly isn't limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Celebrate Hour, Two-Year Checks and Integrated Reviews</li> <li>○ Parentzone</li> <li>○ Key person planning is annotated with parent/carer comments or requests</li> <li>○ Daily conversations at drop off and pick-up about a child's achievements</li> <li>○ One Planning is created and updated with parent /carer comments and requests</li> <li>○ Providing information to help children at home with a variety of subjects, including potty training and the use of dummies, for example</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We also welcome the involvement of parents and carers in the wider life of the nursery, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Parent surveys and parental suggestions</li> <li>○ Fund raising events</li> <li>○ Christmas and other festival related activities</li> <li>○ Parents, carers or grandparents are invited to share experiences and expertise with the children (parentzone)</li> <li>○ Parent Forum meetings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Who should we contact for further information?</i></b></p>	<p><b>Oaklea Montessori CIC</b>  Senco Lead – Manager &amp; Director: Mrs Hanni Heather Tel: 01255 880135 (option 3)</p> <p><b>Oaklea Montessori, Ramsey (also Head Office)</b>  Manager &amp; Director: Laura Grosvenor Tel: 01255 880135 (option 1)  Email: admin@oakleamontessori.co.uk  Your child's key person Tel: 01255 880135 (option 1)  SenCo: Miriam Saxon Tel: 01255 880135 (option 1)</p> <p><b>Oaklea Montessori, Colchester New Town</b>  Manager &amp; Director: Dawn Lewis Tel:01255 880135 (option 2)  Email: colchester@oakleamontessori.co.uk  Your child's key person Tel:01255 880135 (option 2)</p>



SenCo: Marie Zolouva Tel:01255 880135 (option 2)

**Oaklea Montessori, Colchester St John's**

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