

Neurodiversity in Early Education

Dr Lesley Curtis OBE

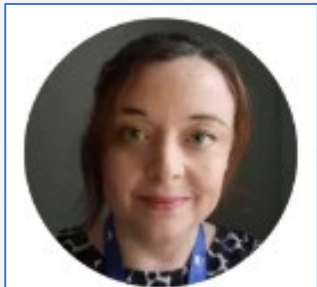
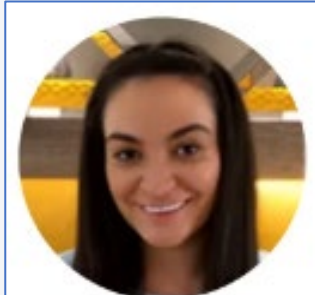
Headteacher of Everton Nursery and Family Centre

Emma Weaver

Deputy CEO – ADHD Foundation Neurodiversity Charity



The Neurodiversity Early Years and Key Stage 1 Team



Dedicated to promoting early identification and support for young children presenting with emerging characteristics of neurodevelopmental conditions.

Building knowledge and skills within the Early Years and Key Stage 1 workforce through training, coaching and play based therapeutic intervention.

Services provided to Children Centre's, PVI Early Years Settings and Schools.

Our aim is to ensure that neurodiversity is recognised, celebrated, and supported, taking a needs-led approach across the Early Years and Key Stage 1.

The Early Years - A critical stage

During the first 7 years of life, a child experiences a period that is critical in child development.

Experiences at this stage shape the way a child views themselves, the world around them and lays the foundations for future learning and development.

Each child develops in their own unique way.

Along with experiences, genetics and environments support the shaping of this development.



Special Education Needs in the Early Years

Special Educational Needs at this stage of life often focuses on “**deficits,**” “**delays**” or “**impairments**”.

We often hear children being described as “**Not meeting age related expectations**” or “**Falling outside of normative development.**”

Deficit driven language focuses our attention on "what's not right **within** the child."



Why Neurodiverse-friendly practice is important?

Neurodiversity recognises that **no two minds are the same** and that not all children will take the same developmental pathway.

A neurodiverse-friendly approach embraces a child's **holistic development**, considers their **motivators, strengths, differences** and **areas requiring support**.

To be truly neurodiverse-friendly we must take a **strengths-based** approach to development.

We must recognise what motivates the child and use this as the foundations for future learning.





“The language of inclusion is changing, and we are repositioning children with special educational needs from problems back to learners.”

(Heiskanen et al., 2018)

SEN in England (2022)

Just under **1.5 million pupils in England** have special educational needs.

An increase of **77,000** from 2021 to 2022.

Pupils with an EHC plan made up almost **one quarter (24%)** of all pupils with SEN in January 2022.

The percentage of pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has increased to **4.0%**.

50% increase since 2016

The percentage of pupils with SEN but no EHC plan (SEN support) has increased to **12.6%**.

14% increase since 2016

The most common type of need for those with an EHC plan is **autistic spectrum disorder** and for those with SEN support is **speech, language and communication needs**



Everton Nursery School and Family Centre



Neurodiversity Early Years Award
2023



Standard 1 – Whole Team Training "Neurodiversity in the Early Years"

Standard 2- The setting can demonstrate effective practices that have been implemented to support emerging traits of Neurodivergence.

Standard 3 – The setting can demonstrate the parent/carer partnership and how they support parents/carers to access support and develop knowledge.

Standard 4 – For the setting to consistently recognise and celebrate the achievements of young children with emerging/identified neurodevelopmental conditions.



"No job is more important than working with children in the early years".

Development Matters 2021.



Can you remember being 2,3 or 4?







Educational Visits



Allotment



In Harmony



Forest School



Woodwork



Nurture Dog



Heuristic Play



Yoga



Pond exploring



Food Preparation



P.E.



Eco School









"When we give every child the best start in their early years, we give them what they need today. We also set them up with every chance of success tomorrow".

Development Matters 2021.



Thank you!



Early Years Neurodiversity

