



The leading provider of play and social opportunities for children and adults with disabilities and additional support needs (ASN) across Clackmannanshire.

Parent's Handbook

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CONTACTING US

Maria Malcolm, Senior Project Manager
Gemma Roach, Session Delivery Manager
Linda Morley, Financial & HR Administrator
Kathryn Auld, Clerical Officer
Robyn Miller, Admin & IT Officer (Development)

Address: 19 Broad Street, Alloa, Clacks FK10 1AN
Website: www.playalloa.co.uk

Tel: 01259 721511
Email: connect@playalloa.co.uk

ALL ABOUT US

Play Alloa is a charitable company based in Clackmannanshire since 1992 providing play and social opportunities for children and young people with disabilities and additional support needs.

Play Alloa Philosophy and Approach

Play Alloa believes that by allowing a child/adult time to relax, have fun, be themselves and freely choose their own play/social experience, in a non-judgemental and supported environment, we can help to increase confidence and self esteem, allowing for participation in more mainstream activities.

Aims and Objectives

1. To provide a range of opportunities where children/adults can play and socialise in an age appropriate and inclusive way.
2. To increase awareness of disability issues and promote inclusion and understanding in the wider community.
3. To offer respite and support to families and carers.
4. To provide valuable voluntary and work experience opportunities for the carers of tomorrow.

GROUPS

Saturday Club (Alloa) - provides fun and activities for children and young people aged between 5yrs & 16yrs. This club caters for the varying needs of the individuals who attend. There is no actual age limit to move from one group to the next as it all depends on the needs of the individual. Currently we operate between 10.30am & 1.30pm. The club runs approx 32 Saturdays per year, with no provision during the school holidays. A £5 donation is requested for every session.

Saturday Club (Tillicoultry) - provides fun and activities for children and young people aged between 5yrs & 16yrs. This club caters for the varying needs of the individuals who attend. There is no actual age limit to move from one group to the next as it all depends on the needs of the individual. Currently we operate between 10am & 12.30pm. The club runs approx 32 Saturdays per year, with no provision during the school holidays. A £5 donation is requested for every session.

Senior Group - meet on a Monday evening at the Broad Street Centre between 7pm & 9pm. This group takes the form of a 'drop in' where the youngsters who attend play a big part in what is offered. The main focus of this group is social interaction & independence both in the group and as part of the wider community. We currently operate 32 weeks per year. A £5 donation is requested for every session.

Youth Club - These groups are aimed at young people aged 12-16 although ages are variable. The group meets on a Tuesday (Tillicoultry) and Thursday (Alloa) from 6.30-8.30pm. These groups focus on developing health and wellbeing including accessing new and varied sports facilities, healthy snack and working together. A £5 donation is requested for every session.

Adult Social Drop-In Sessions - These sessions are for adults and are held on a Tuesday and Thursdays. They operate from 10-12pm. A £5 donation is requested for every session.

Wednesday Schools Active Lifeskills Group These sessions work towards developing life skills, confidence and accessing physical activities in the community. This groups runs on weekly Term-time with o provision during the school holidays. A £5 donation is requested for every session.

Wee Play Alloa (Parent/Carer/Toddler Group) - A group for parents/carers with ALL their pre5 children including those who have additional support needs. Some fun supported play alongside parental/carers support. Parents are expected to stay with their children during sessions although a Play Worker and volunteer support will be provided. The sessions will run on a Monday 10-12.00. A £3 donation is requested for each session.

Holiday Playschemes - operating during the Summer school holidays. These are usually made up of fun and games at our home base as well as occasional trips and outings. Dates/Times/Fees are issued separately.

Play Alloa also provides a **Volunteer Befriending Project** and monthly **Parent Information Workshops**.

MANAGEMENT

Management - we are managed by a board of directors who adhere to current childcare legislation as set by The Scottish Executive, The Care Commission & Clackmannanshire Council.

Staff Team. Currently we have a team of 31 staff, made up of a Senior Project Manager, Session Delivery Manager, Development Officer, an Administrator, Finance Officer, 3 Session Co-ordinators and 23 play workers. This number rises during the playschemes when we may need to employ extra staff to help with trips and outings etc. We also support around 26 volunteers.

All staff/volunteers who are employed by Play Alloa must first have a PVG check. Most of our team have childcare qualifications, whilst the remainder attend training to ensure that they are up to speed in current childcare practices & procedures.

Play Alloa acknowledges that some of our youngsters require medication during their time with us. This may be on a regular basis or as and when necessary. If your son/daughter requires medication then you must fill in a 'Medication at Play Alloa' form (available from the session co-ordinator or project manager) giving permission for medication to be stored and administered at Play Alloa.

Only prescribed medication can be administered. During the session all medication will be kept by the session co-ordinator in a safe but reachable place.

LONG TERM AIMS FOR PLAY ALLOA

The main aims of the service are:

- To provide a varied range of fun, stimulating and educational play & leisure opportunities within a professionally managed and caring environment for children and adults with additional support needs.
- To promote equal access to play and leisure activities for all children and adults.
- To provide respite from the stress and other related problems experienced by parents, guardians or carers of children with additional support needs.
- To maximise opportunities and to work in partnership with other agencies to encourage inclusion of children and young people within mainstream play and leisure activities.

At all times the safety of the children & young people is of paramount importance.

JOINING PLAY ALLOA

An application form/registration form can be obtained from the project manager. This is usually completed at or shortly after a meeting with the project manager. This meeting will be set up at a mutually agreed time where the needs of your youngster will be discussed in order that our project manager can build a picture of your son/daughter, which in turn will ensure that they can get the most out of their time with us at Play Alloa.

It may be necessary for the project manager to contact your son/daughter's school or social worker for more information - this will only be done with your permission.

A mutually agreed date will then be set for your son/daughter to start Play Alloa.

SETTLING IN

When you have been given a date to start Play Alloa, you will be met by the project manager who will introduce you to the Session Coordinator and the rest of the staff team.

Settling in can be a traumatic experience for any as they may not only be coming along to a new place for the first time but also meeting lots of new people. We are keen that each new person is happy to join us and are never unhappy or upset, as this can prejudice their views of what we ultimately have to offer.

No two people are the same and each will be given the individual attention they need to help them settle in and enjoy the experience Play Alloa has to offer.

Your son/daughter will be helped / guided / shown around the toys & equipment on offer as well as introduced to other service users in the group.

You can be assured that all children / Service Users are closely supervised whilst at Play Alloa.

WELCOME & DEPARTURE

At the beginning of each session you must accompany your son/daughter to the registration table where a note of their attendance will be recorded by the session co-ordinator.

RECORDING

At the end of the session you must let the Session Coordinator know that you are leaving with your son/daughter. The Session Coordinator speak to you and let you know what they have been doing, if there are any issues which need further discussion and any general information regarding the session.

We maintain a record book for every child attending Play Alloa as well as for adults attending certain groups. These are mainly for evaluation and monitoring our service as well as assisting us with anecdotal evidence for funding applications. These are available for you to look through on request.

CLOTHING

We want your son/daughter to feel comfortable whilst they are with us. Some of our toys and equipment are floor based, therefore, children may be crawling around the floor - we do partake in messy arts & crafts or baking on a regular basis and these can prove quite an attraction. With this in mind please do not send your son/daughter in their 'Sunday Best' clothing. Clothing and personal items are left at the group at the owners own risk. We have a small stock of Play Alloa tops/fleeces etc which are available to buy on request.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

All our service users will be treated as individuals. Self-awareness will be encouraged along with appreciation of how their behaviour affects others.

The group rules will be explained to your son/daughter so that they understand the limits and boundaries to which they will adhere.

The rules will be consistently and fairly reinforced to ensure a safe environment where people can develop a positive self-image.

All staff will provide positive role models and encourage self-expression, exploration and learning.

When a service user does not observe a group rule they will be told firmly that their behaviour is not acceptable and why. They may be distracted from the scene for a time to play with/participate in a different activity.

Occasionally a service user may have to be removed from an activity or from another service user for their own safety, or that of another service user. This will be done as sensitively as possible without any harm being done to the individual service users concerned.

Service users are never humiliated, threatened or smacked. The emphasis is on praising positive behaviour, rather than dwelling on unacceptable behaviour.

When a service user presents with unacceptable behaviour on a regular basis the Session Coordinator will speak to parents privately to determine whether or not there are specific circumstances or factors triggering the behaviour. We will work together to help the service user any way we can.

PLAY/SUPPORT WORKER ROLE IN THE PLAY SESSION

The Play or Support Worker in the session will make sure that the activities provided cover the needs of all the children/adults within the session thus ensuring a safe stimulating environment for all.

The Play or Support Worker will partake in and observe the service user as appropriate, but not interfere in the flow of play. They will also make observations about their development and the effectiveness of the activities provided and this will inform future planning.

THE ADULT:CHILD RATIO IN THE PLAYROOM

Given the individual needs of the children and adults who attend Play Alloa, we are unable to put an accurate figure on the adult:service user ratio within the sessions. A few of our members require 1:1 support - this will be agreed at the initial meeting with parents if necessary and may be dependant on staffing. The majority function well in small groups. In the main the ratio can be deemed to be 1:2 or 1:3.

PARENTAL / CARER INVOLVEMENT

Parental involvement in the group is important because it provides a vital link between home and the group. All service users find the transition from home to the session far easier if the parents share in the new experience.

If you have a specific skill you may wish to share with us then please speak to the session co-ordinator or project manager.

Working parents, who are unable to attend sessions, will be encouraged to be involved by joining the committee, helping with fundraising activities, reading newsletters etc.

CHILD/SERVICE USER PROTECTION

It is the duty of all adults within the group to protect all children/service users from physical abuse, neglect, sexual or emotional abuse.

All staff, committee members, parents & carers have a responsibility to take action to safeguard the welfare of children/service users. When concerns about a child/service user arises Clackmannanshire Child Protection Guidelines will be followed. A copy of these can be read on the Clackmannanshire Council website.

To ensure the safety of the children/service user during the session, unregistered adults will not be permitted to be in sole charge of children. They will not take small groups or individuals into another room or the toilet. All staff and volunteers will be PVG/Enhanced Disclosure checked as applicable.

LINKS WITH OTHER AGENCIES

Given the nature of our group it must be pointed out that there will be strong links with other agencies eg. Social Services, Clackmannanshire Council, Crossroads, ILS, local schools etc. No contact will be made with other agencies regarding your son/daughter without your prior permission/knowledge.

ROLE OF THE BOARD

Play Alloa is run by a Board of Directors consisting of a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary as well as up to four other directors. The board of Play Alloa are the employers of all staff and as such have the responsibility to each of them to ensure that all employment law etc is adhered to eg. Taxation, National Insurance etc. We employ a Manager to run the group on a day to day basis but ultimately the responsibility for the group lies with the Board of Directors.

COMPLAINTS

Play Alloa has a complaints Policy. The policy can be summarised as follows:

- A complaint is anything a parent/carer wishes to call a complaint - often a complaint may be a question or concern which may be resolved informally over a chat.
- A formal complaint must be made in writing and will be acknowledged in writing. It should be sent to the committee chairperson.
- The committee will endeavour to reach a decision with 28 days.
- A parent / carer has the right to appeal if dissatisfied with the result.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality is vitally important to maintain trust between parents, staff & committee.

Any information given to the staff & committee by parents / carers in confidence, will be treated as such. All written material contained within the children's personal file will be kept under lock and key. Only relevant information regarding your child's progress at Play Alloa will be shared with staff. Eg. Nature of their special need, medication required at the group, general requirements.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Play Alloa operates by adhering to our groups Policies & Procedures. These can be seen at any time by speaking to the project manager. The Policies Manual is also available in the Parent Information Base for viewing. We will actively ask your opinion on these policies at various times through the year but please feel free to comment at any time.

NOTICE BOARDS & INFORMATION

At Play Alloa we operate an open door policy as far as possible - parents /carers are more than welcome to have a chat with the team on how their son/daughter is progressing or about Play Alloa in general. This will generally be best at the end of the session. A newsletter is issued to keep parents / carers up to date with what is happening within the group. This will include forthcoming events, holidays & visitors etc. There is a notice board outside the Play Alloa base where information will be displayed. Up to date information can be found on the Play Alloa website (www.playalloa.co.uk) or on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/playalloa.

FUNDRAISING

Although we currently receive a small amount of funding from Clackmannanshire Council, we mainly depend on the generosity of grants, trusts, business and individuals to support our services and developments.

COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS

Please don't wait until something is wrong before you talk to us. A small concern can escalate into a huge problem if you let it fester. We don't always get it right but we do try hard. Working together with children, adults, families, carers, staff & committee will help make Play Alloa a fantastic place for your sons and daughters to come along to.

If we are doing it well - please tell us ...