Top Tips from the Toddler Project

Top Tips for INCLUSION

*Church Toddler Groups are often respected for the unconditional love and care they show to young families. These qualities will attract families who might struggle to find a welcome elsewhere. Every child is unique and individual, but some families have children with special and additional needs that need to be considered. Aside from a warm welcome and supporting the parents, what top tips do our Toddler Group leaders have for including families with special and additional needs?*

**Talk** – We build a close relationship with the child and their accompanying adult. They appreciate our inclusive approach and help us understand how to include their child.

**Partially deaf/hearing** – We made sure that a child who was partially deaf was near the front for the singing, and we demonstrated the crafts on a one to one basis with her.

**Down Syndrome** – We found that a child with Down Syndrome happily joined in with the other children and didn’t require additional support or provision at this age.

**Autism** –Autism Spectrum Disorder/Condition can affect the way children engage with people and the world around them. Each child will need differing support strategies, but we made sure there was a quiet area and shorter activities and favourite toys available. WE also worked with the parent to provide appropriate surfaces and graphics.

**Cerebral Palsy** – We made sure that there were clear pathways amongst the toys and activities so that the child could get around safely.

**Multiple needs** – We had a child who was unable to walk or talk and had limited sight. We made sure there were tactile toys, lots of floor space for him to roll, and found that music time was very important.

**Behavioural needs** – We felt it was most important to help the child’s parent feel welcomed and reassured that this was a place where they wouldn’t be asked to leave. Working with the parent, we became sensitive to providing distractions and alternative activities if necessary.

**Developmental delays** – We don’t make any special provision but aim to be inclusive and provide additional support alongside the parent/carer. Building relationships to understand the needs is crucial. We take the lead from his Auntie (who brings him along) in touching and speaking to him.

**Accessibility** – One of our children is in a wheelchair so we try to keep all our activities on a flat surface with space for them to manoeuvre. A toilet that accommodates a wheelchair and a carer is important.

**Diabetes** – We don’t make any specific provision because Gran deals with the medical needs. However, we do make sure that the team are aware of the child’s needs and are vigilant that he doesn’t eat anything he shouldn’t.

**Food allergies** – We give parents notice of any activities involving food so that they can arrange to access and provide suitable food products in good time. The carer is responsible for giving the child food at snack time, but we make sure all the helpers know about the allergy.

**Additional information**

[The Additional Needs Alliance Facebook Group](https://www.facebook.com/groups/additionalneedsalliance/)

[Additional Needs Alliance website](http://additionalneedsalliance.org.uk/)

[Urban Saints Additional Needs](https://www.urbansaints.org/ADDITIONALNEEDS)

[Down Syndrome](https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/)

[The Autism Education Trust](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/teachers%20guide.aspx)

[Cerebral Palsy](http://www.cerebralpalsy.org.uk/)

[Childhood diabetes](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/Children-and-diabetes/)

[Childhood food allergies](https://www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms/42-childhood-food-allergy)

[Churches for All](http://churchesforall.org.uk/)

