

# The Scottish Centre for Children with Motor Impairments



## Inreach Programmes – Early Intervention Programmes

### **EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME**

#### **The Context of Early Intervention - Child Development**

During the first few years of life a child develops physically and physiologically and begins to establish the abilities which will enable them to function independently. Such increasing maturity is dependent upon brain development, which begins in early prenatal life, but is a lifelong process as experiences shape neurological function, with information stored, memory established and skills learned throughout life.

The young child's physiologically malleable brain is open to a myriad of learning and enriching influences. This also means however that the young child's brain development is vulnerable to any potentially negatively disruptive influences associated with developmental problems or trauma.

For the child affected by neurological mal-development or trauma, resulting in motor impairment, intervention in the early years of a child's life is important in assisting them to develop their physical and cognitive abilities. As the Centre considers early intervention is important for the long-term development of the neurologically impaired child, the Centre has established an 'Early Intervention Programme' which provides assessment, therapeutic input, advice and evaluation for children with an age range of a few months to four years and for their parents.

#### **Parent & Baby Service (Children under 1 year)**

As part of the Early Intervention Programme a service, which operates on a weekly basis, is offered for babies under the age of one year, accompanied by their parents. This programme addresses all aspects of the child's development, but has an emphasis on developing the child's movement abilities and postural control. The programme also incorporates parent/child interaction within a motivating and fun environment encouraging parents' awareness of how to encourage functional movement patterns and to understand the appropriateness of correct positioning of their child throughout the day and night.

This programme also enables parents to meet others in a similar situation and to access the Centre's Family Support Service.

This service is offered free of charge through charitable donations and funds raised by the Friends of the Craighalbert Centre. For more information on fundraising, [please click here](#).

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## **Parent & Child Service (1 – 4 years)**

The Parent & Child element of the Early Intervention Programme is offered for children between the ages of one to four years, attending with a parent for up to four three-hour sessions per week. A happy, secure, informal and enjoyable environment is established which allows staff to work with children and their parents.

The focus is on establishing good posture, developing balance and movement control and introducing functional abilities in order to establish skills that can be applied for play, learning and the child's later life. Success in developing such abilities will increase a child's confidence and self-esteem. In addition, the child's educational development is addressed in the context of Scottish Government guidance for this age group.

These sessions also allow parents to have a constructive, informal but detailed interaction with staff assisting parental understanding of their child's current condition and developmental possibilities. Parents are also guided in employing the activities from each session in the home environment.

The activities undertaken in the group aim to:

- assist the development of looking, listening and other communication skills
- develop good patterns of movement
- develop an upright posture with midline orientation
- promote hand function
- establish feeding, toileting and dressing routines
- assist both the child and parents in developing positive attitudes and
- introduce the child to an appropriate [pre-nursery curriculum](#).

The programme also enables parents to meet others in a similar situation, and to access to the Centre's Family Support Services.

## **Pre-Nursery Group - Child Only Service (age 2- 3 years)**

As indicated above, the Centre's current pre-nursery provision normally requires the attendance of a parent. Although the engagement of a parent is desirable and beneficial, it is also recognised that many parents are unable to attend due to work and family commitments. The Centre is therefore currently investigating the possibility of providing a pre-nursery service for children aged two to three years to attend without parental attendance. Please visit again soon for updates.

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## **Week-long/Weekend Programme (3 - 18 years)**

As children and young people with motor impairments grow and mature, their physical characteristics and functional capabilities may change. The Centre therefore offers custom-designed and age-appropriate programmes for children and child young people, which have an emphasis on developing physical and functional abilities with the aim of enabling them to gain or sustain access to an appropriate curriculum in their local mainstream school.

Children and young people aged from 3 to 18 years engage with the 'through-year' programme, attending in age-group cohorts. These programmes are designed for children/young people who are either unable to travel to the Centre on a daily basis, or those for whom full-time placements are not appropriate, and all attend local mainstream schools or nurseries. Currently 40 children and young people attend from all parts of Scotland. These programmes are highly successful with some children/young people continuing to attend for over 10 years.

The child/young person's physical abilities are maintained, developed and enhanced through a programme which is highly physical and incorporates hydrotherapy. Social skills are also developed through varying forms of communication, social interactions, and discussion groups establishing age-appropriate social interactions, group rapport, sharing information and establishing long-term social contacts. Peer support is encouraged which is both guided and spontaneous and is facilitated by Centre staff. The programme also promotes personal independence, incorporating a range of self-help skills. In addition, 'study time' is incorporated into each day of the week-long programme to enable the child and young person to continue with their school studies. Young people engaging with the programme have successfully continued with 'Standard Grade' studies while attending.

The programme is organised into one-week placements for up to four times a year, with complementary weekend programmes, known as 'Saturday Schools', which are held one Saturday per month (ten per year). Each week-long placement and Saturday school is custom-designed to ensure activities are age and ability appropriate.

The changes which occur within the individual and the increasingly complex social environments they encounter, also challenge the parent's understanding of their child's ability to engage with the wider environments. Parents are therefore encouraged and welcomed to participate in all aspects of the programme, providing the opportunity for the continuing education of parents through advice and guidance from Centre's staff.

Support for Learning Assistants from the child/young person's local school or nursery are also encouraged to attend to ensure an effective transfer of activities from the Centre into the child's local classroom. At the conclusion of each week-long placement, a detailed report is produced on the child's progress and Centre staff undertake visits to each child/young person's school to discuss progress and developmental needs.

As children, young people and their parents come to the Centre from all parts of Scotland, residential accommodation is available within the Craighalbert campus.

To view forthcoming dates for Weekend Programmes, [please click here](#).

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## **Siblings Group**

Over recent years there has been an increasing awareness of the needs of the brothers and sisters of children with additional needs. Many parents have expressed concerns that their “non-disabled” children are, to some extent, forced to “miss out” on the normal range of parental attention. Research also confirms that siblings of children with additional support needs also have personal needs which require attention, understanding and support.

The Centre has therefore established a ‘Siblings Group’ which is an innovative development currently available to brothers and sisters (aged 3 to 12 years) of children who attend the Inreach Saturday Schools. Through this service, these ‘able bodied’ children and young people are able to take part in sessions which explore their emotions associated with having a disabled sibling.

The aim is to provide an opportunity to explore, within a secure environment, the implications (both positive and negative) of having a brother or sister with additional support needs. This exploration is undertaken through a range of methods depending on age, aptitude and interests through play, art and music.

This service is offered free of charge through charitable donations and funds raised by the Friends of the Craighalbert Centre. For more information on fundraising, [please click here](#).

For further information about any of the above services, please contact:

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