



# Early-Years Programme



ACORN CHARITABLE TRUST  
Embracing Neurodiversity



# What is the Early-Years Programme?

Our Early-Years Programme is for neurodiverse children aged 18 months to 5 years who may be struggling with their learning or with meeting developmental milestones. A Case Supervisor provides a comprehensive assessment and, in collaboration with the child and their family, develops a therapy programme based on the child's interests, strengths and areas needing support. Our programme provides a one-to-one, child-led approach, implemented by a trained therapist. Our therapists believe that every child should be celebrated as an individual and that differences should be embraced. Learning opportunities are fun and engaging so that your child will be motivated to participate in the learning process. Therapy sessions can take place at our centre, your home or at your child's educational setting.

Our programme teaches functional skills across the following domains:

- Language and communication
- Social relationships
- Motor development
- Personal independence
- Cognitive and academic skills

Our programme also supports children to overcome behavioural barriers. Our approach is based on over 30 years of research that has shown us that behavioural supports are effective in teaching important skills to neurodiverse individuals.



## What is Early Intervention?

Our Early-Years Programme is based on Naturalistic Developmental Behavioural Intervention (NBDI). It combines the science of learning and behaviour with child development to enhance motivation, engagement and learning. The focus of our Early-Years Programme is to teach skills across a range of developmental areas, that increases the young person's quality of life.

Scientific research has shown that the experiences children have during their first few years of life are critical to brain development. During these early years a child's neural circuits are more flexible or "plastic", which means their ability to take in new information and learn is at an all time high. Therefore, if your child is showing signs of autism or developmental delays, the earlier you can provide support, the better.

# Assessment Process

## **STEP 1 - PRE-ASSESSMENT**

Prior to your initial assessment, we will send you a Client Details Form, Terms of Service and Consent Form to complete. We will also ask you to complete a developmental questionnaire. This will help us obtain basic information about your child and their needs. We will also ask you to share any reports or documentation that may be relevant, such as a paediatrician's report.

## **STEP 2 - INITIAL ASSESSMENT**

You and your child will meet with one of our Case Supervisors to complete an assessment. We work with you to comprehensively understand your child's strengths, support needs and what is important to them. Depending on their needs, the assessment may occur across multiple settings (e.g., centre, home, school, community).

## **STEP 3 - REPORT & FEEDBACK**

Following the assessment, your Case Supervisor will put together a report that will summarise the findings from the assessment and outline our recommendations for therapy services, including the number of therapy hours per week and initial therapy goals. We will meet with you to discuss this report and organise your child's start date for therapy sessions.



# Therapy Sessions

Therapy sessions are run by one of our trained therapists who work 1:1 with your child. The goal of the initial therapy sessions is for the therapist to build a relationship with your child. Therapy sessions are typically two hours in length, though hours may differ on a case-by-case basis. The goal of the therapy sessions is to have as much fun as possible and support your child's learning. This means that our therapists will constantly be following your child's interests to capture their motivation and engage them in the learning process. We know that when learning is fun we see the best results!

## CENTRE SESSIONS

Therapy sessions at our centre will take place during the following time slots:

- 8:45am - 10:45am
- 11:00am - 1:00pm
- 1:30pm - 3:30pm
- 3:45pm - 5:45pm

We ask you to pick your child up 15 minutes before the end of your therapy session as the therapist uses the last 15 minutes to put away the resources, write any notes and finalise data.

Our centre is designed especially for therapy sessions and as such, has plenty of different toys and activities to use throughout sessions. We have multiple therapy rooms where we run 1:1 therapy. We also have a gym space that is fantastic for supporting motor development and social interactions.

## HOME/KINDERGARTEN SESSIONS

Therapy sessions can take place at your home or your child's educational setting if your child's Case Supervisor believes this setting is appropriate and best for your child. Session times may differ to those listed above in order to accommodate travel time. If you would like therapy sessions to take place at kindergarten, your child's Case Supervisor will meet with the kindergarten to observe the space and discuss how therapy sessions can look in this setting.





# Parent Training

*"I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a good teacher"*

- Temple Grandin

At Acorn we want to maximise your child's learning and success. We know that in order to achieve this, parental involvement is key as you are your child's best teacher.

We recommend ongoing parent training with your child's Case Supervisor so that you can continue to support your child's learning and development.

# Clinical Oversight

Your child's therapy plan will be overseen by a Case Supervisor. The amount of clinical oversight will be based on the number of weekly therapy hours.

Depending on your child's weekly number of hours of therapy, you will either have fortnightly or monthly progress meetings. These team meetings will include your child's case supervisor, therapist(s), parents/caregivers and the child. The purpose of these meetings is to review progress, introduce new therapy goals, problem-solve and ensure everyone is working together to achieve the best outcomes for your child.

Weekly therapy hours*	Approximate monthly case supervision hours	Number of monthly progress meetings
6	4	1
8	6	1
10	6	1

*\*Additional hours can be calculated on an individual basis.*

# Monitoring Progress

We want to ensure that you have an ongoing understanding of your child's progress and development.

We will provide you with progress reports outlining your child's progress.

This report will be emailed to you and can be discussed in the subsequent progress meeting.







# Service Information

## Assessment

- Parent Interview
- Developmental Assessment
- Assessment Report
- Developing Therapy Plan
- Feedback meeting to discuss report & plan

*Occupational Therapy and/or Speech & Language Therapy Assessment can be provided at an additional cost.*

## Therapy

- Therapy session with trained therapist

*Recommended hours will be provided following the assessment. We have a minimum of 6 hours per week.*

## Supervision

- Case management
- Progress review
- Supervision of therapists
- therapy plan updates
- interdisciplinary consultation
- progress meetings with case supervisor, family, therapists



# Additional Services

Additional services can be added to our Early-Years Programme. For example, you may choose to see one of our Speech Language Therapists or Occupational Therapists. We can also provide additional parent training or have our team provide training to your child's educational setting. In addition to Speech Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy, we also offer the following 1:1 additional services:

- Toilet training
- Eating/feeding services
- Sleep support

Please speak to your child's Case Supervisor or our Clinical Manager if you are interested in additional services for your child.



Building a future in which all neurodiverse children and youth can fully participate, belong and thrive.

## CONTACT

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