



Press Release

Date: Tuesday, 12 December 2023

EA attend Non-statutory Specialist Nursery Provision Christmas event at Mencap Centre

Children from the newly formed Non-statutory Specialist Pre-school Provision at **Mencap Belfast** had a wonderfully festive Sensory Santa event on Tuesday, 12th December 2023.

This class is one of 4 voluntary sector provisions established as part of a Pathfinder project by EA to provide pre-school provision for children with SEN. Kids Together, Solas and SENSspace are also involved in the Project.

Education Authority Chairperson, Barry Mulholland, said: "I am delighted to have been invited to this very festive event and have the opportunity to see all the children thriving in their pre-school education setting.

"The Education Authority is working with Mencap and a range of other providers in the delivery of pre-school education for children with statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) to ensure they are happy, learning and succeeding.

"These organisations have extensive experience working with children and young people with SEN and their families, which enables them to put the most appropriate support in place, to ensure that each child thrives in their education.

"They are delivering pre-school education to all children in the setting in line with the CCEA pre-school curricular guidance for Northern Ireland and work closely with EA Services to ensure that the needs of children are met."

Mencap NI Director, Grainne Close said: "We are delighted to welcome Senior Officials from the Education Authority and local MLAs to this special event to recognise the opening of our new pre-school provision. It is a great opportunity to show the work Mencap NI does with children and young people from all ages and stages.

"Mencap NI has over 50 years' experience delivering Early Years services to children and young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and their families. This new provision in partnership with the Education Authority allows us to extend our provision into pre-school education.

“The new provision is delivered by a highly qualified teacher led team of professionals, with over 25 years’ experience working within a pre-school environment. We want to ensure that all children we support can live happy and healthy lives in the right educational setting.”

Ends...

Notes to Editor

All organisations must meet prescribed standards for delivery of quality pre-school education in line with the CCEA pre-school curricular guidance, prior to providing educational provision on behalf of the EA.

EA is facing unprecedented financial pressures and significant additional investment is needed to transform our SEN system and ensure that children benefit from high-quality and cost-effective provision. It is essential that there is a sustainable funding model that will allow us to meet the needs of our children and young people with SEN and their parents.