Early Years and Childcare Service

Working in partnership for children and families

Portage Information for Families

Portage is a home-visiting educational service for young children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).



An Early Years Portage and Inclusion Specialist will come to see you in your home, usually once a fortnight. They will play with your child, talk with you about your child's development and give you ideas for play/teaching activities that could stimulate your child's development. You will jointly decide on the outcomes that you are hoping to achieve, and the specialist will support progress towards these and/or signpost other appropriate services.

During the first few visits you and the Portage and Inclusion Specialist will look at your child's current skills and level of development (for example language skills, motor skills and behaviour). With this as a starting point, goals will be set. In subsequent visits, you and your child will show the Portage and Inclusion Specialist what you have been doing since the previous visit and discuss this. The Portage and Inclusion Specialist will join in a play session with your child. You can talk about his/her development. You will then decide together which activity you will carry out until the next visit.



Your child's development and long-term goals will be reviewed and recorded at regular intervals. Activities will be individually designed for your child, aiming not only to be within his/her ability but also to be enjoyable. New skills will be broken down into small steps; this way your child will be continuously building on success.

Your Portage and Inclusion Specialist will also provide guidance around applications for Disability Living Allowance and charity grants to which you may be entitled and referrals for assessments and other services that are appropriate. They will also support transition into an early years setting.

Please note that we are an education service that also provides some practical and emotional support to families. We cannot advise on issues outside our area of expertise such as housing or benefits, but will do our best to signpost to the appropriate service.

The service will end when either your child achieves identified outcomes, when your child starts at an early years setting or if you decide that you would no longer like the service.

Bristol's SEND Local Offer

earlyyears.sensupport@bristol.gov.uk