



PLAYWISE LEARNING CIC

FOR UNIQUE
CHILDREN

IMPACT REPORT

March 2025



Welcome from the Directors



Yvonne Charalambous
Director of Business & Operations



Pam Fry MBE
CEO and Director

Our families continue to inspire us to do more every day. We hear on a daily basis some of the challenges that families face. The economic crisis is taking its toll on so many families we are working with and in so many different ways.

The pressures on families in general continue to be increasing. Raising a child with additional needs or disability is already an emotional journey but factoring in educational, financial and healthcare challenges adds to the demands placed on parents.

The manifestation of these hardships is that parents and carers need our support more than ever - to provide educational, practical and emotional support - at the right time.

PlayWise has been successful at making a dent on the stress levels of parents and carers and the wider family as our services continue to be needs led and adapted to meet their families specific needs and not as a 'one size fits all'.

We have successfully achieved grants from the National Lottery, Sutton Community Fund, St. James Place Financial services and major donations from organisations such as Kingswood Golf Club.

Without the support from these organisations, there is no doubt that we could not deliver the support we provide to as many, so we are as ever, so grateful.

Our community continues to

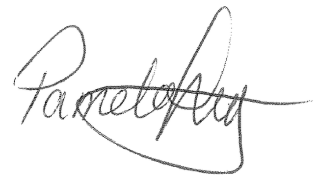
support in so many ways too. From donations, voluntary work and promoting PlayWise which is helping us to go from strength to strength.

One of our proudest moments was to celebrate our 5 years of being an independent CIC within Sutton. Our 5th birthday was celebrated in style, a party for the children, a party for the adults and a staff celebration as we seriously could not do this without our incredible team.

We are excited to see what the next year holds for us

With kindest wishes,

Pam Fry, MBE
Chief Executive Officer



Yvonne Charalambous,
Director of Business & Operations,



PlayWise Learning CIC
March 2025

What a fantastic year we have had. It just keeps getting better and better!

We have had a bumper year of activities/ events/ outings and interventions.

Our numbers continue to increase steadily (as does our staffing) and we are now providing more support than ever before.

We continue to be surrounded by incredible families and as always have fantastic support from our community.

We are now providing 9 community groups per week, delivering interventions to over 300 children and are commissioned by Merton Early Years team as a training provider which is really exciting news.

This year, for the first time, we welcomed Mela, our work experience student who received Portage as a child. What an absolute star she is - and we are delighted to offer her a voluntary position at our Wigglewise group each week.



PlayWise Learning CIC

'Reducing the impact of disability on family life, living and learning'.

PlayWise is a not-for-profit organisation based in the London Borough of Sutton, working with and supporting children and their families on their pathway into the world of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability).

We know that life with a disabled child is very rewarding but at times, also challenging and for some even overwhelming and that life's pressures can at times seem insurmountable.

We provide a highly experienced and knowledgeable team of professionals who have expertise in child development and SEND. They work holistically with children and their families on all areas of development and well-being. We work in partnership with parents/ carers to improve children's independence and build family resilience whilst enhancing social integration through the provision of groups and safe spaces where everyone is welcome.

We offer a variety of services delivered in a range of different ways, including groups, hands on teaching in the home, support in the community or in the PlayWise hub or through education services in nurseries and schools. By providing quality holistic services we help families to improve levels of parental confidence, increase levels of independence, reduce isolation, maximise learning potential and ultimately improve outcomes for children and families.

98% parents have seen positive changes in their child, such as learning new skills, interest in play with children, adults or toys, or progress in language and communication

99% Parents report that they feel more positive, happy, calm, relaxed, supported, listened to and confident since accessing a PlayWise Intervention

90% Parents report improvements in mental health and well-being since supported by PlayWise Staff

98% of parents rate PlayWise as a good or excellent service and 100% would recommend PlayWise to other parents/ families



What we offer:

Home Based Interventions:

Hands on Teaching services
Portage Home visits (0-3)
PIP (Portage Intervention Plus) (0-8)
*(Including EOTAS -
Education Other Than At School)*

Hub Based Interventions:

PlayWise Memberships
Training/ Workshops
7 Groups per week in Hub
Peer Networks
EarlyBird
Santa's Grotto
After School sessions

Community Based Interventions:

3 Community based groups per week
Post Diagnosis Support
Community Outings

Education Based Interventions:

Subscription Services for schools/ nurseries
Training
Nursery provision



PlayWise Home Based Interventions

Our home interventions (Portage and PIP) are based on the principles of Portage and work in partnership with families.

We work hands-on with children and parents/ carers to support their children in all areas of learning and development and to help reduce the impact of their child's disability on family life.



We support families with the following:

- Managing Behaviours
- Sensory needs
- Language and communication difficulties
- Managing routines and family life
- Community outings
- Finding a nursery
- Supporting referrals to other services
- Access to groups and activities
- Meeting other parents on a similar journey
- Emotional and practical support



94% families report to having a better understanding of their child's needs and diagnosis as a result of PlayWise home interventions.



85% of respondents report that they have a better access to financial support and benefits.



92% of respondents report that they feel more confident in their parenting of their child with SEND.

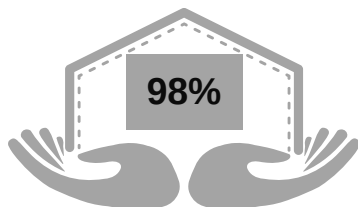
PlayWise Hub Based Interventions

Membership:



The PlayWise Hub

The PlayWise Membership was designed to bring families together to develop a peer support network of families on a similar pathway into the world of SEND, and provide practical and emotional support



98% of parents said that joining the PlayWise membership has reduced their sense of isolation and increased their support network



89% of parents said that the membership has given them a fun, safe and non-judgemental place to play for their SEND child.



97% of parents said that in joining the PlayWise membership they have seen positive benefits for themselves, their child or wider family

Whilst the PlayWise Membership brings families together and providing practical and emotional advice and guidance, the added value is demonstrated below as our members have reported the following:

“Honestly I really do not know what we would have done / do without you. The way every member of staff has time to talk to us and interact with our children is never unnoticed. You are all so amazing, I have learnt so much you have been the most amazing support to all of us and we love playwise so so so much. The most incredible team and just so so grateful. You just make life feel “normal” for us whilst we with you and other families. So so amazingggg!!”

“I was so worried about how I would cope in the summer holidays. I have two young children and with my autistic son’s high care needs, I cannot safely take them both anywhere fun that other families would go in the holiday by myself. Playwise was our lifeline. We visited the hub multiple times a week. The boys could play safely and happily with toys appropriate for both of them. It is the only safe place I know where I can let them play independently and get a moment to sit down and socialise with other parents too. It made me feel part of a community rather than just alone. I got great advice from other parents too!”

“At Playwise we feel we are part of the community and we feel valued by all means. I feel my voice is listened and my needs understood. We are getting the right support whenever we ask for. It is a place to seek whenever we need anything”

Playwise Education Based Interventions - Training



PlayWise currently delivers workshops on the following SEND topics:

Autism

Inclusive circle Times

Identify and managing difficult behaviours

Understanding the Sensory World around us

Let us Play too!

The Importance of Visuals

Intensive Interaction

Sign-A-Long

Understanding Speech and language development in your child

Sleep! Whats that?

Toilet Training

Understanding SEND

Supporting Families in the Community

National Portage Association 2 day workshop

EarlyBird

We have delivered training to Sutton Early Years Providers, HAFS practitioners in Sutton and Southwark, Merton Early Years and Settings and Epsom and Croydon schools and nurseries.

“This training was awesome. It was practical, relevant and directly linked to the children I am supporting. The workshop was fun and engaging and I have learned so much”

School Teacher, Croydon School

“I’ve learned so much today. The Signalong Training was brilliant, I cannot believe how many signs I have learned. I’m definitely going to be using this in my work for All children - not just those with SEND. Thank you Pam - just brilliant!”

Nursery Manager, Merton

“I love the small groups of training and how personalised it was made to fit our cohort and setting. All the staff really enjoyed the face to face learning and the chance to work together as a team to unpick the behaviours we are seeing in our setting”

Early Years Practitioner, Nursery, Epsom



**PLAYWISE
TRAINING
BROCHURE:
COURSES &
WORKSHOPS**

FOR ALL PARENTS/ PROFESSIONALS
LIVING & WORKING WITHIN
SUTTON AND SURROUNDING
BOROUGHS

**PlayWise Learning CIC;
For Unique Children**

Reducing the impact of disability on
family life, living and learning

Our Reach/ Outputs 2024/25



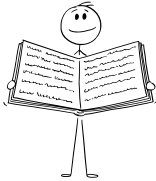
We reached 327 children directly through our hands-on teaching services (PIP & Portage)



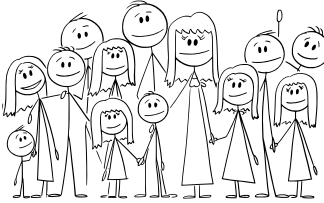
Total number of child attendance in community Groups: 426



We provided a key worker who supported 160 families with completing DLA forms and Blue Badge Applications



We delivered 40 training courses to professionals, hospital staff, conferences, childminders, schools and nurseries.



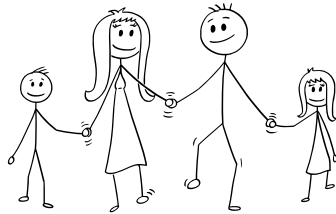
We reached 168 families through our PlayWise membership



We are working with 19 schools and nurseries/ preschools in Sutton and have delivered over 390 support hours in settings.



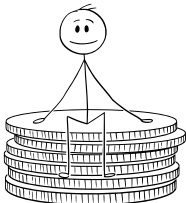
We have supported 79 children to access nursery/ preschool provision



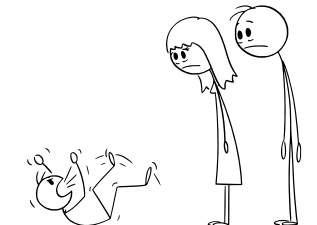
We delivered Parenting Support in the form of EarlyBird Programmes and Post Diagnosis Support to 55 parents in Sutton.



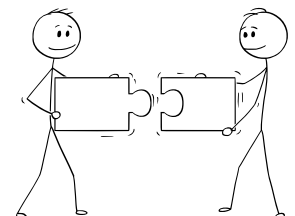
We have made 72 referrals for children to therapy services, short breaks, charity and other services.



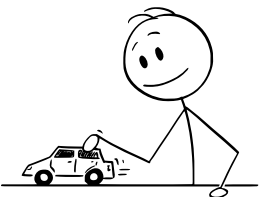
32 families have used the PlayWise lottery Grant Support Fund to access PlayWise services for free.



We have delivered 26 workshops and training sessions for parents and carers (including guest speaker sessions)



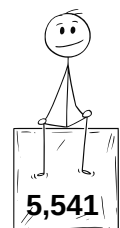
532 families have accessed advice, guidance & support this year



1450 child visits to the hub over the last year



We have provided over 2130 hours of free play sessions in the community hub for PlayWise members



Total number of support hours delivered across all PlayWise services over 2024/25: 6,32

Our Impact 2024/ 25



We provide hands on teaching interventions such as Portage & PIP - maximising children's learning potential, improving family resilience, improving parent confidence and emotional health & well being.



We provide a wide range of groups in a variety of settings within the community - reducing social isolation, improving family resilience, improving peer networks and building community capacity.



We provide a key worker role to support families - increasing emotional & practical support, reducing the impact of poverty and increasing financial resilience, (particularly related to disability) improving social integration and increasing independence.



We deliver training courses for Early Years & Health Professionals - increased understanding of needs of SEND children, improving the quality of interventions in the community, increasing confidence of working with disabled children in the settings and improving relationships between parents and the settings.



We offer a PlayWise membership service - Improves family resilience, reduces social isolation, reduces stress, improves mental health and well being and reduces dependency on statutory services.



We provide training & support to Early Years settings/ schools - building capacity to provide inclusive practice for SEND children, providing integrated strategies into everyday practice, developing appropriate activities and responses so that children achieve the best they can.



Key transitions - increasing parental confidence, improving knowledge & understanding, providing links, removing barriers and ensuring children have access to EYFS in a nursery setting



We deliver EarlyBird & Post Diagnosis Support Programmes - increasing understanding of their child's needs, improving peer support networks, improving family resilience, improving parental mental health and well being, reducing reliance on statutory services and embedding long term practical skills.



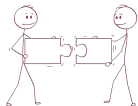
Referrals to short breaks/ paediatric therapy services/ charities and other support - ensures that children and their families receive the right support at the right time. Children access early intervention, families receive support to prevent problems escalating and develop long term strategies.



We provide free support through grants - ensures families on a low income can access the right support at the right time - increases financial resilience, improved social integration, reduced sense of isolation



Parent Workshops & Training - increased understanding/knowledge, improved social integration, reduced sense of isolation,



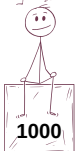
Advice, Guidance & Support - reducing isolation, reducing poverty, improved mental health & well being, improved social integration



PlayWise Hub Visits - improved social communication, improved social integration, improved play skills, improved sense of belonging, improved health & well being, reduced parental stress levels



PlayWise Free Play Sessions - reduced sense of isolation, improving peer networks, improved mental health and well being, improving social interaction and contact, reducing parental stress levels, increased opportunities for play and learning



PlayWise hours of support - Increased sense of belonging within a SEND community, better access to services and support, reduced stress levels and isolation, increased social connection and peer support

PlayWise Plans.....

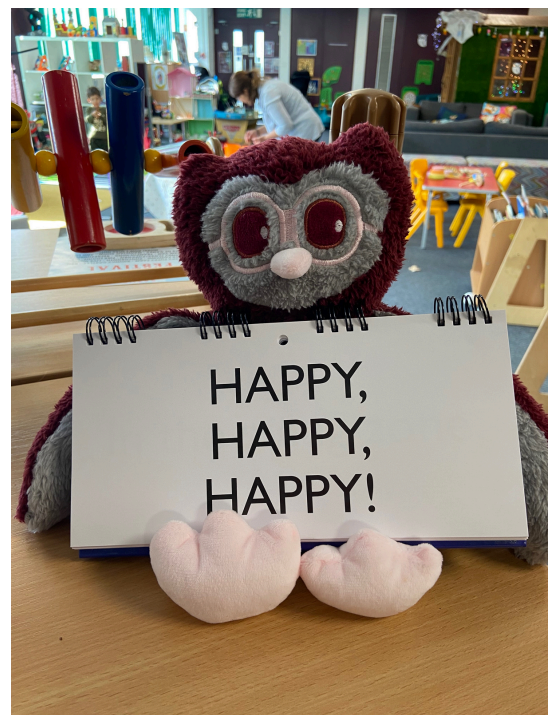
FUTURE LOADING

2025

Our Plans for the Future...

We have achieved everything (and more!) that we wanted to achieve in 2024/25 - including Autism coffee morning drop ins, a wider training offer, increased services and reach to families, monthly drop in clinics (in partnership with health), removed booking forms except for school holidays and provide a member of staff available during all Members sessions to support form filling, advice and guidance with parents/ carers. so what does the next year look like for PlayWise?:

- We have everything crossed that the next year will see us developing into a new and bigger venue to deliver more for our families.
- We plan to deliver more training and subscription services within Merton
- We plan to apply for more grants to expand our reach and the support available within Sutton
- Increase our merchandise offer
- Develop more health and well-being activities for parents for good mental health
- Develop new groups and programmes to provide additional learning opportunities for children
- General expansion of service and interventions



Thank you

We couldn't possibly finish this impact report without a saying a special 'thank you' to the incredible people and community we work with.

Firstly - A huge thank you to those of you that have donated or raised money for PlayWise - every donation gets reinvested back into PlayWise to help us provide more community projects and support for our children and families

A huge thank you goes to Rob and Dan who have completed a fundraiser for PlayWise, and everyone else that has contributed to our fundraising efforts.



Christmas Meal Appeal (community Fundraiser)



Rob McNaught



Dan Guirey

Total Funds Raised: £7500

Thank you also to our commissioners for continuing to fund our services and to the businesses that continue to support us so well and to our community that are constantly raising our profile and sharing our social media posts to make sure that no family misses out on support when they need it the most. We really couldn't do it without you. We look forward to working with you again over the next year and developing new partnerships as we continue to expand our community.



An even bigger thanks and a lot of love goes to our PlayWise families (new and existing). We are privileged to work with some pretty incredible parents, carers and children. We learn from families every single day and become better professionals for listening to, working in partnership with and being a part of a child's educational and learning journey - no matter their starting point. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of that journey.



The Dream Team -

Seriously the most passionate and hardworking group of professionals ever!



Not forgetting Fran & Dure - Its mission impossible to get a whole team photo!



PLAYWISE LEARNING CIC
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PlayWise Hub. Floor 1A, Sutton Central
Library, St. Nicholas Way, Sutton, SM1 1EA

PlayWise Learning CIC (Community Interest Company) provides support to parents and carers of young disabled children, and the professionals that support them, with a wide range of services. This will help reduce the impact of disability and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and support families on their journey. PlayWise offers new, innovative and bespoke interventions for families either at home, in our wonderful community hub in central Sutton or in the child's own learning setting. PlayWise supports children aged 0-8 years.