

1 Introduction

The Elizabeth Foundation (TEF) was established in 1981 and is a registered charity which provides parent-centred services for young children with any degree of deafness. Through our Ofsted rated 'outstanding' nursery services, deaf children develop their listening and speaking skills. Our specialist team provides emotional, educational and practical support to parents of children throughout their preschool years.

The Elizabeth Foundation is committed to using the multi-sensory oral approach, engaging all of a child's senses in learning activities that support them in developing their listening, language, speech and communication skills. The charity remains dedicated to providing family-focused services that encourage learning through fun, practical, everyday experiences.

Nursery sessions include a mix of structured and focussed activities as well as unstructured play and social activities.

OUR MISSION

TEF facilitates early diagnosis for babies and pre-school children with any degree of deafness, providing comprehensive educational and support services to them and their families. This enables the children to develop their listening and spoken language skills and gives parents the confidence and knowledge to make informed decisions on behalf of their child.

2 Pre-admission visit

All potential children are offered a pre-admission visit so that parents can assess the suitability of the programme for meeting their child/family's needs and for the education team at The Elizabeth Foundation to feel comfortable and confident that our programme can meet the needs of the family. This involves a visit by parent(s)/carer(s) with their child, when they meet a member of the education team, to gather information about the individual needs of the child and discuss suitability of the programme for their family.

3 Admissions Criteria

Children attending our weekly baby, toddler and pre-school programmes have been diagnosed with a level of deafness requiring the use of hearing technology such as hearing aids or cochlear implants.

In addition to our weekly nursery services, we also offer monthly Listening Groups for children with conductive hearing loss and/or unilateral hearing loss, children with Down syndrome and children with severe/complex needs. Children attending these services may not require hearing technology.

Families seeking support from the charity are made aware of our approach to teaching, which is founded on the development of listening and spoken language. This methodology compliments the use of sign language, which is recognised and responded to in nursery sessions, but is not

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actively taught in the nursery sessions. Additionally, our programme is very structured in nature, incorporating the repetition of language, visual cues, eye contact and focussed learning that are essential for developing the early listening skills of deaf children. Every attempt will be made to ensure each child's individual needs are considered within our programme. However, if a child's needs are such that our structured programme or our learning environment is felt to be detrimental to their learning, then a programme/setting more suited to their needs would be recommended. Each case will be assessed individually and places are offered on a case by case basis, at the final discretion of the CEO.

The charity receives no government funding and must therefore self-fund for one-to-one support for those children with more need in the preschool programme. We therefore cannot accept children who require one-to-one support until appropriate funding, staffing and training can be put into place so that all children, staff and volunteers are kept safe in education.

If a deaf child is one of twins, or part of a multiple birth, where one or more children is hearing, parents are offered a placement for the hearing sibling(s) in the baby nursery if this is possible. However, once a child moves to toddler and/or preschool sessions, places for hearing siblings are not available due to limited capacity.

TEF has a non-catchment-area-governed admissions policy, which means that children may attend TEF regardless of their home address. Parents must, however, arrange their own transport to and from the family centre. Families must commit to attending on a weekly basis (or monthly basis for Listen groups) and we are unable to offer drop-in or irregular attendance at sessions. We accept parent referrals for all of our programmes.

4 Admissions Procedure

Parents are made aware of the services of the charity from many sources, including but not exclusive to audiology, ENT, local sensory support team, cochlear implant team, health visitor, and/or speech and language therapy team. Parents must initially visit TEF together with their child prior to admission. If they are accepted onto the programme, they will then be asked to complete the enrolment forms as a condition of enrolment.

TEF core services cater for three distinct age groups within three separate nurseries. These are detailed in the following sections.

4.1 Baby Nursery

Age Group: Approximately 0 to 18 months dependent on individual needs.

Parents or carers will remain with their child for the entire session, participating in each activity with their child. The number of babies attending this nursery is dependent upon demand where staff will be deployed accordingly.

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During their involvement in this programme, all personal care, that is, nappy changing, feeding etc is the sole responsibility of the parent or carer. This is a parent/infant programme and at no time is a baby left with a member of TEF staff.

Separate information providing specific details of the programme is available on request from Julie Hughes CEO. Sessions will usually last for approximately two hours, although parents/carers of very tiny babies, can arrive, and leave the session at their convenience.

4.2 Toddler Nursery

Age Group: Approximately 18 months to 30 months dependent on individual needs.

Parents or carers will remain with their child for the entire session, participating in each activity with their child. During their involvement in this programme, all personal care, that is, nappy changing, feeding etc is the sole responsibility of the parent or carer.

This is a parent/toddler programme and parents remain as the sole carer for their child. Parents may leave the room on occasion to meet 1:1 with the nursery leader to update developmental information and at those times, parents are nearby with the nursery assistant staying with the child to play. Separate information providing specific details of the programme is available on request from Julie Hughes CEO.

Each session runs from 10.00 am to approximately 12.30pm and there is a maximum of six children in each session.

4.3 Pre-School Nursery

Age Group: Approximately 30 months to statutory school age

Parents or carers leave their child for the duration of the nursery day but are very welcome to remain and observe lessons from the observation room.

The duration of each session is from 9.30 am – 2.30 pm., inclusive of a break for lunch, which is provided by the parents.

Numbers are again dependent upon demand and numbers of staff are deployed accordingly. There will be a maximum of 8 children in each pre-school session.

Note: Please note that the numbers of sessions offered to each family is dependent on the availability of space within a particular group and on a child's individual needs.

4.4 Dual Placement

TEF works collaboratively with other nurseries and/or pre-schools to facilitate the meeting of each child's needs. A child may attend sessions at TEF as well as another nursery.

4.5 Finance

TEF is a registered charity and is very proud that all of the services offered, remain free of charge to parents of children in the baby group.

The parents of children who attend the toddler and pre-school nursery sessions are requested to pay a session contribution, which is invoiced monthly.

4.6 Demand for services

If demand is such that nursery services are full to capacity, every attempt will be made to provide support to a family through a combination of our therapy services and online programme, called Let's Listen and Talk. A blended approach will continue until a placement becomes available in the nursery setting.

4.7 Safeguarding

Information about Safeguarding will be provided to parents upon enrolment in our core services. If you would like more information about our Safeguarding Policy, please see our website www.elizabeth-foundation.org where you can view the policy in full.

5. Review and monitoring

The management of each child's education journey is managed by their nursery leader, teacher of the deaf and/or speech and language therapist. Termly listening and language assessments take place, paired with nursery observations and evaluations, which all inform the creation of an Individual Education Plan for each child, which is updated termly. Parents are included in the education, record-keeping and decision-making process for their child's IEP. This document is formalised only after it has been discussed and agreed by parents/carers. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's learning through participation in the baby and toddler sessions. Specific preschool teaching areas have one-way mirrors and parents are encouraged to observe sessions, both group and one-to-one. Resources and parent education sessions are provided to support parents with their active engagement in their child's learning. All achievements are celebrated and concerns are talked about openly and honestly with parents so that they can be addressed accordingly and in a timely fashion.

A child's needs can change over time. If at any point a family and/or the education team feel the programme is no longer able to meet the needs of a child, this will be discussed between the family and the appropriate team members so that a more suitable setting or programme can be identified. We reserve the right to withdraw a placement at any time, if appropriate. This would only take place after consultation with the family.

We make every effort to work in partnership with parents/carers to provide support to deaf children and their families. If a parent/carer has concerns about any of these processes or decisions made through these processes, then please do contact the CEO to arrange a meeting to discuss this in more detail. The CEO can be contacted at Julie.Hughes@elizabeth-foundation.org

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[foundation.org](https://www.theelizabethfoundation.org) In accordance with our complaints procedure, if you are not satisfied the outcome of a meeting with the CEO, you will be put in contact with the Chair of the Board of Trustees to discuss things further.

6. Transitioning

Throughout each child's time with us, the staff at TEF work in partnership with a host of other professionals, including each family's local network of support. When it comes time to transition into statutory services, a very detailed education report is created to support each child's move into reception year at school.

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