

# Portage in Haringey

## What is Portage?

Portage is a home visiting service for pre-school children with additional needs and their families.

The Portage model of learning is characterised by the following attributes:

- regular home visiting;
- supporting the development of play, communication, relationships and learning for young children within the family;
- supporting the child and family's participation and inclusion in the community in their own right;
- working together with parents/carers within the family, with them taking the leading role in the partnership that is established;
- helping parents/carers to identify what is important to them and their child and plan goals for learning and participation;
- keeping a shared record of the child's progress and other issues raised by the family;
- responding flexibly to the needs of the child and family when providing support.

## Why have Portage in Haringey?

Haringey has an established Early Support Programme which aims to bring existing services together to provide a better coordinated service to families who have babies or children with complex health needs or a disability.

The programme is available to children who are:

- under 5 and who have complex health needs or a disability
- over 5 who are new to the borough and have a disability
- Over 5 who develop a disability following an accident or illness

Through the Early Support Programme, professionals work with families to plan services to meet their children's individual needs. It encourages regular multi-agency planning meetings and reviews with families. These meetings enable families to get together with professionals to discuss their involvement and plan for the future.

Parents/carers are the first educators of their children and this aspect of their role may appear more challenging if their child has additional needs because of a disability or severe/complex developmental delay. A child learns from birth and Portage can help parents/carers by providing activities and games that are best suited to their child at each stage of their development. Portage takes place in the children's homes because this is where they spend most of their time.

Portage will be used as an early intervention with these children with the following aims.

- Work with families to help them develop a life and experiences for themselves and their children in which they can learn together, play together, participate and be included in the community in their own right
- Play a part in minimising the disabling barriers that confront young children and their families
- Support the national and local development of inclusive services for children

### Criteria for Access to Portage

A similar criteria for eligibility to the Early Support programme will be used for the Haringey Portage Service, i.e.:

1. The child lives in the Borough of Haringey.
2. The child is under 5 and has complex health needs or a disability from one of the following groups:
  - Neurodisability (i.e.: cerebral palsy, chromosomal and genetic conditions and syndromes)
  - Neurodevelopment disorders (i.e. autism)
  - Severe physical and/or learning difficulties/developmental delay
  - Profound and multiple disabilities
  - Severe sensory impairment (blind or deaf)
  - A degenerative illness or complex and severe health problems that are life limiting
3. The child is receiving or has been referred for multi-agency input from 3 or more disciplines as outlined in the table below.

<u>Health</u>	<u>Other</u>
Physiotherapy Service	AND worker
Speech and Language Therapy Service	Social Worker (Disabled Children's Team)
Occupational Therapy Service	Visually Impaired Service
Dietician	Hearing Impaired Service
Children's Community Nursing Team	Children's Centre or Special School
Clinical Psychologist	Early Years inclusion team
Consultant Community Paediatrician	Family Support workers
Hospital Consultant	Autism Team
Specialist Health Visitor	Educational Psychology Service
Life Force	Markfield
	Other voluntary groups

### Outline of Portage Service in Haringey

- Portage Workers to be allocated children through the IASP meeting for delivery of the Portage programme.
- The Portage intervention will start with a Team Around the Child meeting involving the parents/carers, allocated Portage worker and any other professionals known to the family.
- Long and medium term outcomes will be agreed and set for the child at this meeting. (Long term = up to 2 years; medium term = 1 year) The overall aim of the outcome setting will be to narrow the gap between the child's current development and that of a typically developing child. Short term objectives for the Portage Worker will also be agreed.
- Portage to be offered in six week blocks to families with the Portage Worker visiting the home for about an hour each week.
- The Portage Worker will then stop the home visits for four weeks while the family continue to carry out the activities and consolidate the learning with their child.
- The Portage Worker will then review the child's progress and introduce the next set of targets for the next six week period.
- This cycle of six weeks of input and 4 weeks of consolidation will continue until either the child has achieved the long term outcomes or is ready to transfer to an early years setting.
- It may be judged that an alternative visiting schedule is more appropriate for meeting the families needs.
- Three times a year, a Team Around the Child meeting will be convened to review the progress of the child against the original outcomes and agree new ones, as appropriate.
- If the child is transferring to an Early Years setting, the setting will be invited to a Team Around the child meeting to support a smooth transition for the child.

## Training

- 4 Workers to receive the 3 day Portage training and form the core of the Haringey Portage Service.
- Portage training to be offered to the following:
  - Educational psychologists – to enable them to provide Portage casework supervision for the Portage Workers
  - Autism specialist teacher – to enable autism specialist Portage casework supervision for the Portage Workers
  - Children Centre workers – to enable them to apply the principles and approaches in the centres so that there is continuity for the children
  - Autism support worker – to enable continuity for the children on entry to school

## Evaluation

The Haringey Portage Service will use the following tools to evaluate the impact of the service:

- Parental feedback of service using a standard questionnaire
- Progress of individual children measured against the Development Matters Areas of Learning Month Bands

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