



## **THE AVENUE CENTRE Charity No: 800817**

A Charity and part of the yearly help offering commissioned by SCC funded by Children in need and other grants.

**Criteria:** Mothers or carers (e.g. Grandmother/Aunt) and expectant Mothers. Babies/Children accompany their mother/carer till school age and if there are siblings up to the age of 8 years, they can attend in school holidays.

It is a referral only basis, but it is open to all postcodes and not time limited although the family must be able to travel to the centre.

We are part of SCC early help offer and the Centre Coordinator attends panel.

Referral agencies include social workers, refuge, HV, Homeless Health Care, Family Nurse Partnership, Sure Start 0-19, and others working with families.

Once a place is offered the parent will be given a start date usually within 2 weeks but have been known to start the in the same week as the referral.

Open for sessions: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 10.15 am – 12.15 pm. SO17 1XQ

It is a group run setting where we support parents with positive parenting, confidence/self-esteem, building positive relationships and keeping themselves and their children safe, child behaviour and development and many other relevant topics. We build relationships that are trusting, respectful and non-judgemental.

We have many years of various related training and experience and also trained to deliver the Incredible years programme.

The Centre is open to clients three times a week and parents are asked to commit to their place.

The two-hour sessions are planned and run by a Coordinator where parents/carers can expand their learning about many subjects and from each other.

Children learn and socialise through play in the fully equipped playroom by qualified playstaff who are DBS checked and have attended food safety level 2 and Paediatric first aid training.

The environment is calm, safe, and inclusive for adults and children.

We have weekly Makaton signs that are taught to the children and parents.

There is a healthy & varied menu offered to the children each session.

Records are kept according to ofsted and GDPR guidance.

Parent/carer and children benefit from some respite from each other.

We have found set courses can be a barrier for some and so adapt the learning styles holistically.

Clients are asked to set achievable goals and all issues are covered so as not to single individuals out. They realise that they are not alone and often their experiences can be similar. Our motto is.....” You don't know what you don't know”. Why would you know something if you have never been taught? Often, we assume someone must know the basics. Never assume!

They are listened to and when need be, challenged positively.

If they have a parenting issue it is addressed with researched guidance and cascaded in an understandable and manageable way for positive outcomes. Often other parents will share what they have tried and if it has worked for them, opening a group discussion. It is the same with any other topic we address and with all issues and concerns. If they need

to discuss something they do not want to discuss in the group a one to one is organised.  
We offer clothes washing and drying facility for mums/carers to use when attending.  
We are flexible and adaptable.  
We invite guest speakers in and if a professional would like to visit that can be arranged.  
We signpost parents to relevant outside agencies and courses. Referral form by request

#### *Dec 2022 Feedback from a client*

*“Thank you for being a lifeline you have helped change the course of my life. Thank you for being a pillar of strength and support, a listening ear in difficult times, a warm smile and a welcoming place where I have been able to grow, and we feel safe”.*

#### **FEEDBACK FROM A VOLUNTEER**

As I volunteered with you for a short while but got to see the level of commitment and knowledge you and your team share with the families who use your service, I wanted just to acknowledge this. It is difficult to say in a nutshell all that you do, but I think the most important thing is the position you hold outside of local authority and perhaps other services, which enables you to quietly and comprehensively support parents and children who might otherwise find themselves isolated and in crisis. This support focuses on enabling parents to be responsible for and to help themselves in the long run, and so helps prevent dependency and perhaps further need for services.

This includes:

- Advice and information about child development and parenting
- Healthy eating
- Practical skills like cooking and budgeting
- Signposting to other accessible, local services
- Support to maintain emotional wellbeing and to increase understanding about mental health
- Help to write a CV and gain employment
- Advice and links (including presentations) from services who can help keep parents/women and children safe, such as Yellow Door and the Police,
- Opportunities for the parents to help and be useful towards others, to build their self-esteem and develop strengths
- Journal-keeping and goal setting so as to enable parents to have hope and aspiration and pass this to their children

All of the above is done in a creative, assertive and kind way, mindful of safeguarding obligations as well as respecting the individual service-user's right to make unwise decisions and/or to be responding according to their culture or life-experience.

The Parent Coordinator is an inspiration - very skilled at communicating and in maintaining a relationship with parents which is supportive, kind and also has boundaries so as to be able to challenge and offer advice where required. The Playroom staff are dedicated and professional you can see how much the children enjoy the time spent in the crèche. I still feel sad that I couldn't continue to volunteer due to the changes in my work commitments.