

During the **Free Play sessions** we offer a range of activities and play opportunities. During the morning, a member of staff usually takes a couple of service users to the shops to get the morning fruit. We feel this is important for the service users to be independent as much as they can.

We feel some structure is important, especially for service users with autism. However, the service users lead the play and adults support them if required.



### Choices of Activities

- For service users to enjoy play scheme we feel that it is important for the service users to have as much choice as possible in the activities they do during a day at the schemes.
- There are a variety of toys and equipment on offer such as books, sports, sensory toys, games equipments, creative, water and sand play, music and construction.
- The staff may plan some activities and provide the resources for these. However, these are an option for the service users and they do not have to participate.
- By having this approach the service users are: having **FUN**, being as independent as they can and therefore, helped to develop self esteem and self confidence.

### Trips and Outings

The same policy is adopted for taking the service users out on trips or outings. The staff have some ideas in mind; however, we go with the service users interests (and carry out the relevant risk assessments, procedures, costing and travel arrangements in order for this to happen). Trips include: swimming, Kid Zone, farms and theme parks.

### Communication

Communication is vital so the schemes use a variety of methods to promote service users communication; including: verbal (speech), Makaton (signing) and PECS (Picture Exchange Communication Systems). We use PECS and support the service users with their own communication methods.

### Communicating with Parents and Carers

Communication is so important to ensure that we get as much information as needed to ensure the service users are well cared for and their individual needs met. To help us, a personal profile is completed and asks for:

- likes,
- dislikes,
- personal care issues,
- medication,
- communication,
- behaviour and so on.



A medical consent/medication and an emergency contacts form are also completed to ensure we have all the relevant details of the needs of the service user.

Comments are welcome from parents/carers and feedback and evaluations are greatly received and taken into consideration.

### Who provides the playschemes?

We have a good mixture of qualified/non-qualified experienced staff employed by SNAP at each site. We work to a 1:3 staff ratio, or higher if it is needed. All staff have a CRB check and other relevant checks and work inline with SNAP policies. All staff and volunteers are supervised.

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Special Needs Activities and Play  
**SNAP Hertfordshire Limited**

**Special Needs Activities and Play**  
To be Registered as a Charity and affiliated to Royal Mencap



Information  
Leaflet  
about our playschemes

**Check out our new website for  
more details:**

[www.snapherts.org.uk](http://www.snapherts.org.uk)

## Introduction

This leaflet explains our values and beliefs for the playschemes.

### Background Information on the holiday schemes

The scheme offers a service to young people aged 3 to 19 years old, who have learning disabilities of varying severity. Some service users may also have physical or sensory disabilities and/or behaviour that is challenging.

The schemes are based in local schools and provide play opportunities for over 200 young people. The schemes run during the Easter, Christmas and Summer school holidays in Dacorum, St. Albans/Harpenden and Welwyn Garden City/Hatfield Areas.

We also run a **monthly Saturday Club** in Hemel Hempstead and St. Albans. This group is designed for children who are 8 years – 18 years.

The play scheme teams work to provide a varied and interesting programme that is implemented by staff and volunteers.

On each site the scheme has access to basic school facilities but has its own toys and equipment.

### OFSTED

We recently had three of our four Ofsted inspections (summer 2007) and we received three **'good'** judgements (*the provision is strong*).

Check out our reports on our website.

**Please note:** *The term service users in this publication means any child or young person who is 3-19 years and accesses the schemes.*

## Aims and Objectives

Our main aim is to:

- to provide a safe, stimulating and exciting programme for children and young people aged 3 – 19 years old, with due regard to their ability, race, creed, colour or gender.

1. To provide good quality childcare/play service during Summer, Christmas and Easter school holiday periods.
2. To provide service users with quality experiences, while their parents have respite time.
3. To provide affordable holiday play service for service users who are unable to access other suitable play activities.
4. To work in partnership with parents/carers and all other relevant organisations.
5. To provide a secure and creative environment for service users to develop emotionally, physically, intellectually, creatively and socially.
6. To provide a varied selection of activities and games including: sports, music sessions and multi-cultural activities.
7. To ensure our policies and procedures are followed and assessed for their effectiveness.
8. To offer training to staff members and placements for childcare/nursing students.
9. To offer opportunities of employment to the community.
10. To work within an equal opportunities framework.



## Importance of Play

We offer playschemes because we recognise the importance of play. Service users use play to develop and practise skills, use their initiative and build social relationships. It is a time when they are free to experiment, make up their own rules and explore the world around them.

### **Special Needs Policy**

We recognise that all service users have the right to play and that those with special needs may require support in order to participate fully.

The Playscheme aim to promote an environment in which service users are:

- Seen as service users first
- Fully accepted and integrated
- Encouraged and enabled to be as independent as possible.

### **A Typical Day at Playscheme**

10 am	Service users arrive.
10am – 11am	Activities include arts and crafts, sports and sensory toys.
11 – 11.30	Snack (if service users choose)
11.30 – 12.15	Activities include arts and crafts, sports and toys.
12.15-12.45/1pm	Lunch
1pm -3pm	Activities include arts and crafts, sports and sensory toys.
3pm	Service users go home.

**Please Note:** *If trips are organised you will be informed, as times may vary.*