

HEREFORDSHIRE'S PORTAGE SERVICE – updated March 2024

Portage

The Portage Early Education Programme is a home teaching scheme for families with a child aged 0-5 years with a disability.

The portage worker will listen to parents and identify long term goals and then use small steps to support the child with their development. The aim of each home visit is to decide on an activity which the family can practice and enjoy together. The activities are based on play and are grounded in everyday situations to provide fun and success for the child.

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

- regular home visiting; **Parents must be willing to take part in the home visiting scheme and make time for weekly or fortnightly home visits**
- 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 within the family, with them taking the leading role in the partnership that is established;
- helping parents 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;

Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that is likely to last for at least 12 months. This affects their daily living including mobility, manual dexterity, speech, hearing, sight and memory.

REFERRAL CRITERIA:

- **The child is 0 – 5 years of age.**
- **The child is functioning within the severe developmental delay category.**
- **The child is not in a setting or in setting for less than 15 hours**
- **Portage may be offered to children with rare/complex/ profound medical conditions which do not fit with the above delay in development.**
- **Priority will be given to vulnerable children, children in care, children of military families and children with a Child Protection Plan.**
- **Children will be accepted onto the waiting list up to and including the Spring term before they start school**

Referrals can be made by professionals using the Portage referral form. Please send to the educationandbusiness@herefordshire.gov.uk or via anycomms to 'Early Years Inclusion'

Please ensure all Portage referrals have been discussed with parents and information given to them about the service <http://www.portage.org.uk> or Herefordshire Portage leaflet.

ALL REFERRALS WILL BE CONSIDERED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS.

EXIT CRITERIA

Each case will be reviewed regularly and an exit from the programme will be considered using the factors below:

- The child is reaching his/her developmental milestones or making good progress towards those milestones
- The parent/carer no longer wishes for their child to receive Portage
- The parent/carer is confident in applying the Portage skills to support their child's development
- The child and family are being supported by other agencies e.g. Blackmarston or Westfield nursery class; Child Development Centre group or regular outreach; high level of funded support at mainstream pre-school
- The child attends a Nursery for 15 hours or more
- The child reaches school entering age.

For all queries please contact:

Samantha Price Early Years SEND Senior Lead – Samantha.Price@herefordshire.gov.uk

THIS CRITERIA WILL BE REVIEWED MARCH 2025

