

Newsletter

December 2024



Merry
Christmas

&

■ Happy New Year ■

Family Party

Grow Family Christmas party was a wonderful success, creating a warm and festive atmosphere for families to enjoy together. Santa's grotto, welcomed children meeting Father Christmas in his gingerbread house grotto. They shared their Christmas wishes and were thrilled to receive small gifts.

A magician also added to the festivities, as did a crafts area, where children and parents worked on making decorations, designing festive cards, and crafting keepsakes to take home, which added a lovely personal touch to the celebrations.

Altogether, it was a heartwarming occasion filled with laughter, and festive spirit, leaving everyone feeling full of Christmas cheer.



Christmas Meal

A truly wonderful Christmas meal night out was enjoyed at Ego Mere Green, the restaurant provided a warm and inviting atmosphere, laughter and good conversation filled the air as everyone soaked up the relaxed yet festive ambiance. The evening was a perfect blend of food, excellent company, and Christmas spirit.

Raffle

Thank you to our volunteers, companies and individuals who managed to obtain/give prizes for our raffle we managed to raise £700. Thank you to all involved this is a truly amazing amount of money.

AGM

On the 12 December we held our 1st Annual General Meeting, where we gave an overview of the Accounts, discussed the feedback from the recent survey (see below), went through Grow's plans for the next 12 months, voted on amendments to the Constitution and voted in Committee members. Thank you to all who attended so that we could vote through the needed changes.

SEND Library

This term we have added the following items to the Library:

Equipment:

- Trampoline
- Discussion Cards and Cubes
- Balance Spinning Top
- Emotion Bottles
- Working Memory Game

Books

- An A-Z of ADHD
- The Dyslexic Advantage
- Brain Brilliance
- Good Autism Practice

Books:

- Supporting Children & Young People Through Autistic Burnout
- When the Naughty Step Makes Things Worse
- Don't put us away
- A Critical Guide to the SEND Code of Practice
- Ready Steady Connect
- What if it's not Dyslexia?



Christmas

Please note that Louise and Janet will be taking time off over Christmas the office will close from Lunchtime on the 19 December and reopen on Tuesday 7 January.

Upcoming Events

Please book onto the events so we can manage numbers

Morning Meets 9.30-11.30am:

- 20th Jan - Our Place Sutton Coldfield
- 27th Jan - Featherstone Children's Centre Erdington (Guest Speaker - STICK)
- 3rd Feb - Our Place Sutton Coldfield
- 24th Feb Featherstone Children's Centre Erdington

Evening Talks - 7pm - 9pm

Four Oaks Methodist Church

- 9th Jan - MindJam,
- 16th Jan - Libby Hill (SaLT) PDA,
- 23rd Jan - SEN Legal - ONLINE SESSION
- 13th Feb - Occupational Therapy (Part 1)
- 27th Feb - Occupational Therapy (Part 2)

Dad's Group

22 Jan - Al Coates - Parenting SEN children from a Dad's perspective

Sleep Workshop

10 Feb - 10am-2pm
Four Oaks Methodist Church

Pilates

10th, 17th, 24th, 31st January
7pm-8pm
Four Oaks Methodist Church

Walk and Talk 10-11am (Visitor's Centre, Town Gate) No need to book

- 17 Jan
- 24 Jan
- 31 Jan
- 7 Feb
- 14 Feb
- 28 Feb

Half-Term Park Morning 10am-12noon

19th Feb - Harvestfields B75 5TJ No need to book

Please visit our website
www.growfamilyservices.org/whatwedo
to book on any of the events

Walk and Talk in Sutton park



Details:

- ✓ Every Friday starting 17th January 2025
- ✓ 10am - 11am
- ✓ Meeting point Visitor Centre - Towngate
- ✓ Kids and Dogs welcome to join

No need to book just come along

www.growfamilyservices.org



PILATES

with Emma Hunter

Fridays in January

- 10th,
- 17th
- 24th
- 31st

7pm - 8pm

Four Oaks Methodist Church
Lichfield Road,
Sutton Coldfield

These will be relaxed sessions, no previous experience of pilates required. Please bring your own mat.

to book www.growfamilyservices.org/



SLEEP WORKSHOP

Monday 10 February 2025

10am - 2pm

Four Oaks Methodist Church,
155 Lichfield Road
Sutton Coldfield, B74 2UU
Opposite Four Oaks Train Station

Come and join us for a workshop on SLEEP delivered by Cerebra. This workshop is designed to help families understand and manage sleep difficulties in children. This workshop is led by a Sleep Practitioner and covers practical strategies for improving children's sleep.

To book a place please visit
<https://www.growfamilyservices.org> or
<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/grow-family-services/t-1nggxnm>

Feedback on Grow



WhatsApp

You said positive... You said negative...

- Knowing you are not alone
- Friendly and non judgmental
- An easy way to communicate
- Supportive
- Lots of information
- Share experiences
- Someone can help
- Gain knowledge
- Informative
- Messages coming through late at night
- Volume of messages too many
- Overwhelming
- Too big
- Not enough boundaries
- Too public
- Sometime too political / medical /personal

Changes we will be making

- Joining form will be required
- Group rules will be put in place
- We will put a system in for Grow posts so they do not get lost



Website

What you like...

- Can book on events
- Easy to navigate and use
- Holds lots of information
- Know where to get information
- Know what's on and what services I can access
- Everything is on one place

You said you would like to see...

- Case studies
- Links to other services
- SEN Library a bit easier to access

Improvements we are making:

- Useful information section will be expanded
- The catalogue for the Library will be revamped



Facebook

You said positive... You said negative...

- Updates on events
- Information
- Easy to use
- Can catch up on my terms
- Lack of engagement



Coffee Morning

What you like...

- A place to chat
- No agenda
- Like minded people
- Friendly
- Safe space
- Feels like a community
- No judgement
- Advice

What you would change...

- Meetings back in Mere Green
- Change of days
- Better events in Birmingham/Walsall
- Venue with parking
- Some guest speakers
- Different venue
- Bigger rooms

Answering your questions:

- We have joined Family Hubs and as part of that we can use the rooms in the Family Hubs free of charge - at this point we have no plans to returned to a paid room in Mere Green
- Until we consistently are full in the room their are no plans to change venue to a bigger space
- We do plan on putting some Guest Speakers in place for day group STICK will be at both coffee mornings in the new year.
- Changing days, we are restricted on availability.
- We do not run services out of Walsall and have no plans to. We have coffee mornings in Sutton Coldfield and Erdington at present.



Evening Talks

What you like...

- Variety of speakers
- Support
- Relaxed environment
- Friendly
- Time and Venue
- Meeting other parents
- Professional support
- Learning about relevant topics
- High quality
- No judgement
- Easy to book
- Great advice we would not be able to access ordinarily

What you would like to improve...

- More tickets
- Moderator - so all questions get asked
- Start later
- More chat at the end
- More informal meets
- Time
- Change days
- Bookings get full but then people cancel last minute
- Questions in advance
- Some virtual meetings

Changes we will be making:

- Virtual meetings - we will be trialling this at the end of January with the SEN Legal event.
- Booking will only open 2 weeks before the event
- People encouraged to save questions until the end and/or submit in advance
- We will be having an informal evening meet termly.
- We will be working in as many guest speakers off the request list as we can.

There is only Louise and Janet running these services mainly on a voluntary basis, both of whom have SEND children themselves.

In order for the service to Grow, improve and add in additional events we need volunteers either casually or on a regular basis. If you can help assist running a coffee morning, help with admin, organise an event, help with funding or anything inbetween we would love you to join the team.



SEN Library

What you like...

- Love trying before buying
- Lots of resources
- Can use without buying
- Borrowing books
- Great to see if the kids will use it
- Great list of items/variety

Barriers to accessing...

- Forgetting to order in advance
- Deposits for larger items
- Time
- Not able to pick up/drop off items
- Location
- Items being out

Changes we will be making:

- Deposits for larger items will be scrapped
- Have regular office days
- Items can be reserved and taken to groups or dropped off at groups meetings.
- The catalogue will be revamped and more user friendly.

Grow

Things you would like us to do:

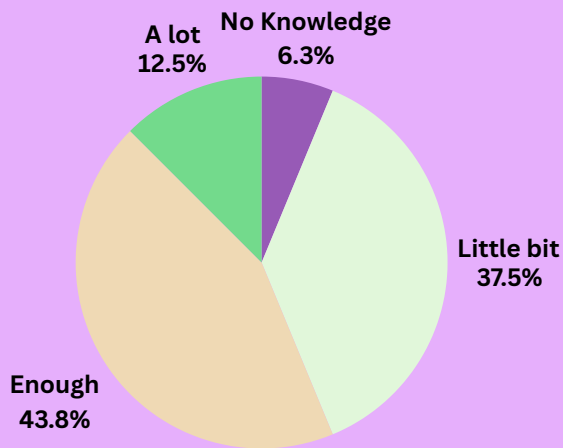
- Termly Newsletter
- Information about school holiday clubs
- Video guides
- More sessions with the kids
- Advocacy service
- Well-being events
- Mental Health awareness
- Daytime family event
- Walks and talks
- Things in school holidays
- Social Events/Day trip
- Careers advice/internships

Plans for the future:

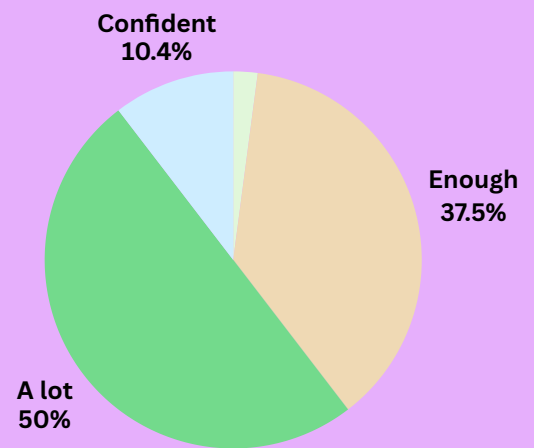
- Starting this month we will be producing an end of term newsletter.
- Watch this space for an Advocacy service we are in talks about this.
- Well-being events and Socials we are able to put these on as and when we get funding specifically for these. Pilates (4weeks) will be starting in the New Year.
- Walks and Talks will be starting in the new year.
- In the school holiday we do hold a park morning where you can come along for a chat while the kids play.
- Careers/Internships there is already a service set up for this in Birmingham and we have no plans to introduce.
- Any information we receive regarding activities, clubs, holiday clubs etc we share on Facebook and Whatsapp.

Knowledge and understanding of how to support your child

Before Grow

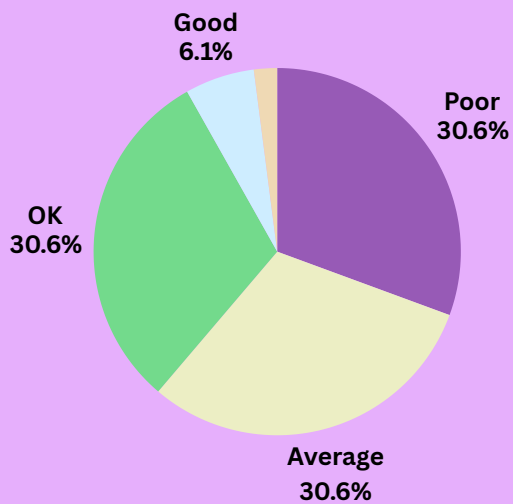


After Grow

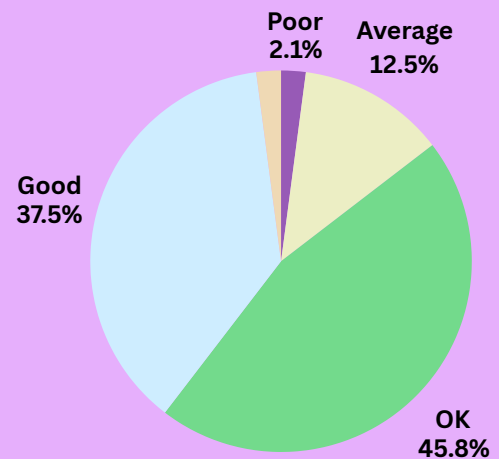


Mental Health and Well-being

Before Grow




After Grow



You rated
us 4.9 out
of 5

The Festive Season



The festive season can be extra hard for parents/carers as there is pressure to have a 'perfect' Christmas. The festive period (with all its demands, unpredictability and changes in routine) is often associated with increased anxiety and burnout for children with additional needs - and their families.

Sensory processing issues (bright lights, smells, food, loud music, busy places) which may ordinarily be manageable can become overwhelming and adjustment can be difficult to manage.

The festive season can be a real struggle if socialising becomes difficult to manage, and near impossible at times. This and can lead to feelings of isolation and exclusion.

For some children Christmas can be a reminder of past Christmas experiences – good and bad – bringing back experiences of the past which can all be too much, leaving them feeling vulnerable.

For children with additional needs the festive season often highlights what is different in their behaviour and parents/carers are often on high alert supporting their child with behaviour, helping them cope and stay safe.

So, if you can't put Christmas decorations up, you have to politely decline invitations and stay at home, you are sat in a different room at a party away from the noise/bright lights/smells, you can't have a traditional Christmas dinner, you can't open presents, or if Santa is just too much, it is ok, you are doing what you need to do to support the needs of your child and your family. Do YOUR family's Christmas.

Be proud - you are doing a great job. Keep going, you have got this, but be kind to yourself. Remember to put yourself first and make sure your cup is full before filling the cups of others.

