



## Childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities: Provider case studies

### Unique Kidz and co After-school and holiday club

#### A unique service for unique children

Unique Kidz and co in Morecambe, Lancashire was set up by two mums in 2009 who have children with disabilities. Both were very frustrated at the lack of childcare available for their children, so they set about developing a social enterprise offering after-school care and a holiday playscheme. In addition, they also offer weekend trips, projects for under 5s, sibling support, as well as specialist training for professionals. They have won numerous awards and been rated Outstanding by Ofsted twice.

They currently have 140 children registered with them, about 15 children attending each evening and about 30 a day during the holidays.

Parents are charged £8 for an after-school session and £33 for a full day between 8am–6pm during the holidays. The cost of providing this care is about £20 per hour per child. They cover the shortfall through grant funding, donations and service level agreements with social services – they are the only service in Lancashire offering this kind of service.

***Recognising transport as a major problem for families, they purchased a disabled access minibus in 2009.***

#### Solving transport issues

Many parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) report that transport to after-school childcare is a major issue that prevents their children from accessing services or them being able to work a full day.

Recognising this as a major problem for families, they purchased a disabled access minibus in 2009. Staff with MIDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training/D1 entitlement collect children from their schools and are accompanied by trained play workers/passenger assistants. They have recently purchased a second disabled access minibus to enable them to collect all the children and accommodate more wheelchairs.

Several children are also taken home by staff if the parents are unable to get to the session on time.

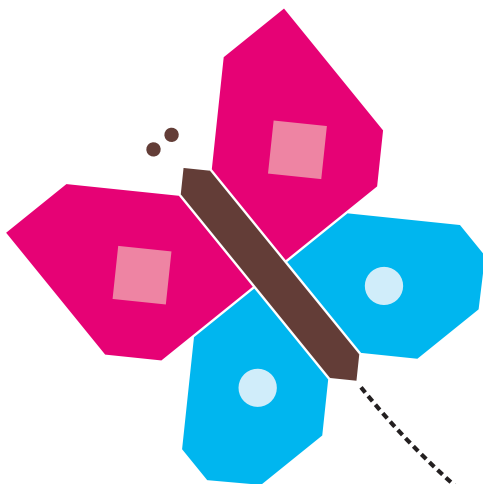




### Training staff to meet the needs of children

The philosophy of Unique Kidz and co is to never turn a child away because of their needs. If staff require additional training to ensure that a child can be supported whilst in their care, they will draw on in-house expertise, local professional networks, occupational therapists and the local special school. They pride themselves on the high level of training that their staff team receive, which covers in-depth knowledge about medical issues, behaviour management, handling and communication techniques, as well as creative activities, drama, music and sports.

As a trusted specialist service they also offer training to other local services, childcare providers and professionals. They offer workshops and consultancy on inclusive childcare and encourage mainstream childcare services to look to the specialist sector for ideas, tips and resources on being inclusive.



### Activities for all

Children can join in with a full range of games and activities from sports, arts, music, outdoor play, messy play, dressing up, reading and games. Siblings are very welcome and whilst some do attend, many families use the after-school club and holiday clubs as respite and to catch up with family things.

Unique Kidz and co run regular coffee mornings and play sessions for local families with children with SEND. Many families can become isolated and report that their children rarely get invited for play dates or parties. To support families and alleviate this isolation, these informal sessions give children a chance to play with other children and offer parents much needed friendship and support.

Families trust the services; it gives their children somewhere fun and safe to play with staff who are passionate about the children they care for.

***"We wouldn't survive without you. Thank you so much for providing such a wonderful service, I don't honestly know what we would do without you."***

To find out more about Unique Kidz and co visit:  
[www.uniquekidzandco.org.uk](http://www.uniquekidzandco.org.uk)

***For further information and resources on inclusive childcare visit: [www.familyandchildcaretrust.org](http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org)***