



SEND in Early Years

0 to 5 Years old



Giving
disabled children
a brighter future

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Getting support for your child with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) as early as possible is important to see the best outcomes for your child. Early years providers should regularly review and evaluate the quality and breadth of the support they offer or can access for children with SEN (Special Educational Needs) or disabilities.

All children are entitled to an education that enables them to:

- Achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes
- Become confident young children with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make the transition into compulsory education

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework for children 0 to 5 years. All early years providers must follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS and the learning and development requirements, unless an exemption from these has been granted.

Early Years Providers

Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN.



Maintained nursery schools

Maintained nursery schools must co-operate with the Local Authority in reviewing the provision that is available locally, and in developing the Local Offer.

Maintained nursery schools must:

- Use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need
- Ensure that children with SEN engage in the activities of school alongside children who do not have SEN
- Designate a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating SEN (Special Educational Needs) provision (the SENCO, or Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
- Inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child

They must also prepare a report on:

- the implementation of their SEN policy
- their arrangements for the admission of disabled children
- the steps being taken to prevent disabled children from being treated less favourably than others
- the facilities provided to enable access to the school for disabled children, and
- their accessibility plan showing how they plan to improve access over time



Assessments

The EYFS profile provides parents, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child's knowledge, understanding and abilities. A profile is usually completed for children in the final term of the year in which they turn five. It is particularly helpful for children with SEN and should inform plans for future learning and identify any additional needs for support.

Medical conditions

All early years providers should take steps to ensure that children with medical conditions get the support required to meet those needs. This is set out in the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) framework.

SEN support in the early years

It is particularly important in the early years that there is no delay in making any necessary special educational provision. Delay at this stage can give rise to learning difficulty and subsequently to loss of self-esteem, frustration in learning and to behaviour difficulties.

Early action to address identified needs is critical to the future progress and improved outcomes that are essential in helping the child to prepare for adult life.

Where a setting identifies a child as having SEN they must work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs.



Transition

SEN support should include planning and preparing for transition, before a child moves into another setting or school. This can also include a review of the SEN support being provided or the EHC plan. To support the transition, information should be shared by the current setting with the receiving setting or school. The current setting should agree with parents the information to be shared as part of this planning process.

Local authorities must ensure that all providers delivering funded early education places meet the needs of children with SEN and disabled children. In order to do this local authorities should make sure funding.

Early identification

Parents' early observations of their child are crucial. Children with more complex developmental and sensory needs may be identified at birth. Health services, including Paediatricians, the family's General Practitioner, and health visitors, should work with the family, support them to understand their child's needs and help them to access early support.

Where a health body is of the opinion that a young child under compulsory school age has, or probably has, SEN, they must inform the child's parents and bring the child to the attention of the appropriate Local Authority.

The health body must also give the parents the opportunity to discuss their opinion and let them know about any voluntary organisations that are likely to be able to provide advice or assistance. This includes the educational advice, guidance and any intervention to be put in place at an early point and before the child starts school.



Funding for SEN support in the early years

Local Authorities must ensure that all providers delivering funded early education places meet the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities. In order to do this Local Authorities should make sure funding arrangements for early education reflect the need to provide suitable support for these children. Early years providers should consider how best to use their resources to support the progress of children with SEN.

SENCO in the early years

A maintained nursery school must ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as the SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) in order to ensure the detailed implementation of support for children with SEN.

The EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) framework requires other early years providers to have arrangements in place for meeting children's SEN. Those in group provision are expected to identify a SENCO. Childminders are encouraged to identify a person to act as SENCO and childminders who are registered with a childminder agency or who are part of a network may wish to share that role between them.

The role of the SENCO involves:

- ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to
- children with SEN and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEN
- advising and supporting colleagues
- ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform
- action taken by the setting, and
- liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting



Where can I get support?

Contact your local SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service).

SENDIASS provides free impartial, confidential and accurate information, advice and support about education, health and social care for children, young people and their parents on matters relating to special educational needs and disability.

Visit our SENDIASS website: <https://www.kids.org.uk/sendiasm>

Get help from our other guides here:

EHC plans - (Explains what an EHC plan is and how you can get one).

EHC Needs Assessment - (Focuses on what an EHC needs assessment is and how you can request one).

Choosing a primary school - (Explains the transition from the early years to choosing the right primary school for your child).