



Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support in the Early Years

For many children, an early years setting is their first experience of learning with a group of children away from their home and family. An early year's setting may be a private day nursery, a pre-school, a nursery class at a school or a child-minder. A parent and toddler group is different as, here, parents and carers meet together and stay with their children.

Staff at the setting have a responsibility for supporting every child's learning, including children with special educational needs. Staff will also have regard to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework.; this sets the standard that all Ofsted registered early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

How will the setting check my child's progress?

Your child will have a progress check between the age of 2 and 3 years, their progress will be reviewed, and you will be given a short written summary of their development. As well as this formal check, the setting should assess your child's progress against the EYFS on an ongoing basis. If there are any significant emerging concerns (or identified SEN or disability) practitioners should work with you to develop a targeted plan to support your child.

What happens if my child needs extra help?

It is important to understand that all children develop and make progress at different rates. Practitioners will talk to you about your child's strengths and any areas of difficulty where they might need extra help.

If you or the setting is concerned that your child is not making expected progress it is possible they may have Special Educational Needs (SEN). If this is the case, your child may need support which is **additional to**, or **different from**, other children of the same age. **SEN Support** is the standard term used for the specific help that your child will receive.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years is the guidance that early years settings, who receive local authority funding, should follow in such cases.

Settings have a duty to tell you if your child needs SEN Support and they must involve you and your child as fully as possible in any decisions.

What is the “Code of Practice”?

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years is the guidance that early years settings, who receive local authority funding, should follow where they identify that a child may need support that is additional to or different from other children of the same age.

The Code of practice identifies four broad areas of need:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical needs

One or more of these may be relevant to your child’s needs and they will inform any plan of support that is put in place for your child.

What should I do if my child already has identified needs before starting at the setting?

The SEN Code of Practice 5.4 recognises the benefits of early identification – “identifying need at the earliest point, and then making effective provision, improves long-term outcomes for children”

If you are aware that your child has SEN, or think that they may do, talk to the lead professional involved with your child about how information will be shared with the Early Years setting, and how provision will be made. The SENCO at the Early Years Setting should work with you to identify outcomes for your child, and to agree on what interventions and support should be put in place.

How will my child be supported in an Early Years setting?

Following any assessment, your child’s needs, agreed outcomes and support may be set out for them in a plan; there will be a cycle of ongoing assessments, planning, doing and reviewing. This cycle is known as the ‘graduated approach’.

Your child’s plan will be reviewed regularly, for example termly, and will continue until the support is no longer needed, the plan ceases or your child’s needs are assessed as being more complex and longer term. If this is the case, a statutory Education Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment may be requested from the Local Authority and this can lead to a statutory EHC plan being written for some children.

How can we be involved and where can we get support?

Starting on the educational journey with your child can seem a daunting task but it is important that you are involved. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice stresses the importance of taking into account the views of parents and children including in the developing and reviewing of any plans.

Your child's view is important; this will help you and the setting to understand more about how to support your child. This can be scribed by you the parent, or your child can draw a picture of their likes and dislikes, or perhaps they can make a collage from magazine or catalogue cuttings.

What will happen when my child moves to Primary School

Before applying for a primary school place, you will be able to visit schools to find out if the provision they offer would be suited to your child's needs, take a list of questions with you. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or key worker at the Early Years Setting will play an important part in this process; they will support in the planning and sharing of information regarding your child. The SENCO should ensure that you are involved fully in this process, and that your knowledge of your child and their needs are also included. For more information on how to apply for a primary school place and deadlines for this to be done by can be found here <https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/admissions/admissions.aspx>

Will my child receive SEN Support when they start at school?

SEN Support in schools follows a similar process (or graduated approach) to the one offered by Early Years settings. Schools in Cheshire East must have regard to the same Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years. All relevant information from your child's Early Years Setting will be passed on to the SENCO at their primary school; including the plans which have been in place.

What if I have concerns around the support my child is receiving?

If at any stage you have concerns about the support your child is receiving in their early years setting you can ask to talk to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator or setting Manager; if these concerns are when the child moves to school then discuss them with the SENCO or the Headteacher; they will be able to listen to and respond to those concerns . What is extremely important is that all of those involved work together in the best interests of your child in order to help them thrive and achieve.

What other information will be useful for me to be aware of?

Early Years Funding:

<https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

Early Years Statutory Framework (EYFS):

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf

The SEND Code of Practice:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/350685/Early_Years_Guide_to_SEND_Code_of_Practice_-_02Sept14.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Early Years SEND Information and SEND Toolkit on the Local Offer:

You can find out further information on the EHC process on the Cheshire East website.

The Cheshire East Local Offer includes information about the support and provision that families can expect from a wide range of agencies for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities (SEND) from birth to 25 years old

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities/education/supporting-send-in-education/special-educational-needs.aspx>

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities/education/supporting-send-in-education/sen-and-disability-in-the-early-years.aspx>

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