



Children with SEND

Identification, Assessment and Support for Children with SEND

We have regard for the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) (DfE and DoH 2015) which states that local authorities must ensure that all early years providers that they fund in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors are aware of the requirement on them to meet the needs of children with SEN and disabilities. When securing funded early education for two, three- and four-year-olds local authorities should promote equality and inclusion for children with disabilities or SEN; this includes removing barriers that prevent access to early education and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential. Following the impact from Covid-19, we will review and update children's SEN support plans more frequently to ensure their progress and well-being.

The term SEN support defines arrangements for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We are required to offer appropriate support and intervention and to promote equality of opportunity for children that we care for. Children's SEND generally falls within the following four broad areas of need and support:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs

For the purpose of this policy, Michelle Hardy is the named SENCo Caterpillar Nursery. Julie Byrne is the nursery manager and supports children specifically with speech and language difficulties.

Graduated Approach

Initial identification and support (identifying special educational needs)

- Ongoing formative assessment forms part of a continuous process for observing, assessing, planning and reviewing children's progress.
- Children identified as having difficulty with one or more area of development should be given support by applying some simple strategies and resources.
- For most children application of some simple differentiation approaches will be enough to build confidence and help the child develop. However, if a key person shows some concerns around a child's holistic development, this should be recorded on an **Initial record of concern form**, which must then be shared with the SENCo.
- The SENCo and/or Nursery Manager will review the initial concern, alongside the key person and next steps will be made; including a discussion with parents.

Observation and Assessment of Children

Where a child appears to be below expected levels, or their progress gives cause for concern, practitioners should consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting.

- Information can be collated from formal checks such as the progress check at age two, observations from parents and observation and assessment by the setting of the child's progress.



- When specialist advice has been sought externally, this is used to help determine whether or not a child has an additional need.
- The child's key person and SENCo and/or nursery manager use this information to decide if the child does require some intervention to support their learning and development.
- If the decision is that the child does need support, and the parents are not already aware of a concern, then at this stage the information is shared with them. Once parents have been informed, they should be fully engaged in the process, contributing their insights to all future actions for their child.

Planning Intervention

- Everyone involved with the child should be given an opportunity to share their views. Parents should be encouraged to share their thoughts on the child's challenges and be involved in the decision making for next steps.
- A first intervention option may be to carry on with applying differentiated support, using a **Low Level Individual Support Plan (LISP)** and to review the child's progress at an agreed date. If the child's needs are more complex, or there is no significant progress through low level intervention, then the decision maybe to prepare a **High Level Individual Support Plan (HISP)**, with detailed evidence-based interventions being applied straight away and simultaneously external referrals made.
- If possible, the child should be appropriately included in development of the action plan but only at a level which reflects their stage of comprehension.
- Any child on any level of support ensures that children who do demonstrate having an additional need are identified and will therefore receive the right level of intervention and encouragement for their learning and development as early as possible.

Involving the Child

- The SEND Code of Practice (2015) supports the rights of children to be involved in decisions about their education.
- Inclusion of children with SEND helps build self-confidence and trust in others.
- Ascertaining children's views may not be easy, and a range of strategies will be needed, including observation.
- Accurate assessment helps identify children's strengths and possible barriers to learning.
- The key person and SENCo/nursery manager will work in partnership with parents and other agencies to involve the child wherever appropriate.
- Children are involved at appropriate stages of the assessment and to their level of ability.
- Establishing effective communication is essential for the child's involvement.

SEN Individual Support Plans (ISPs)

- All ISPs should show what support is required to help achieve outcomes for the child using SMART targets.
- A review date (at least termly) should be agreed with the parents so that the child's progress can be reviewed against expected outcomes and next steps agreed. This will usually take place during the child's focus week, unless there has been a significant change.



- A copy of the plan is stored in the child's file so that any other member of staff or an inspector looking at the file will see how the child is progressing and what interventions have been or are being applied.
- If a child requires specific medical interventions during their time in the setting, a health care plan should also be completed and integrated into the general plans to ensure the child's medical needs are known and safely met.
- The support plan should provide an accessible summary of the child's needs, which can be used if further assessment is required including a statutory Education Health and Care (EHC) Assessment, and development of an EHC plan.

Preparing an ISP

- If external agencies are already involved at this stage, then they should also be invited to help decide on what appropriate interventions are needed to help meet outcomes for the child. The SENCo/nursery manager should take the lead in coordinating further actions including preparation of the action plan and setting short-term targets.
- Where there are significant emerging concerns (or an identified special educational need or disability) targeted action plans are formulated that relate to a clear set of expected outcomes and stretching targets. This will be completed on the *HISP*, where additional assessments, including the Developmental Journal and Teaching Talking Profiles, can be monitored and recorded.
- The *LISP*, highlights areas in which a child is progressing well; areas in which some additional support might be needed and any areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay (which may indicate a special educational need or disability). It describes the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or concerns. Whilst the *HISP*, also documents the same as a *LISP*, it is expected at this stage that external agencies within the local authority are involved, and additional assessments of children will be required and recorded.
- Planned intervention should be based on the best possible evidence and have the required impact on progress with longer-term goals covering all aspects of learning and development and shorter-term targets meeting goals.
- The plan should focus on the needs of the child, the true characteristics, preferences, and aspirations of the child and involvement of the parents with a clear set of targets and expected outcomes for the child. Effective planning at this stage should help parents and children express their needs, wishes, and goals:
 - focus on the child as an individual and not a label
 - be easy for children to understand and use clear ordinary language and images, rather than professional jargon
 - highlight the child strengths and capacities
 - enable the child, and those who know them best, to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
 - tailor support to the needs of the individual
 - organise assessments to minimise demands on families
 - bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach

External Intervention and Support



Where external agency intervention has been identified to help support a child with additional needs, then this intervention should be recommended in writing by a suitably reliable source such as a speech and language therapist, paediatrician or educational psychologist.

Record Keeping

If a child has or is suspected of having additional needs, a dated record should be kept of:

- the initial cause for concern and the source of this information, (the progress check at age two and/or outcomes of previous interventions).
- the initial discussion with parents raising the possibility of the child's additional needs.
- the views of the parents and other relevant persons including, wherever possible, the child's views;
- the procedures followed with regard to the Code of Practice (2015) to meet the child's needs e.g. ISPs, referrals to external agencies and for statutory assessment.
- evidence of the child's progress and any identified barriers to learning
- advice from other relevant professionals; and all subsequent meetings with parents and other persons and any subsequent referrals

Records **must** include the following:

- Observation and monitoring sheets
- Expressions of concern
- Assessments, including focus week and 2 year development check (where appropriate)
- ISPs
- Chronology
- Intervention Log
- Meetings with parents and other agencies
- referral to the local authority identifying a child's special educational needs and request for statutory Education, Health, Care (EHC) needs assessment; and a copy of an EHC plan

In addition, records may also include:

- Risk assessments
- Health care plans (including guidelines for administering medication)
- Additional information from and to outside agencies
- Individual Behaviour/Biting Logs
- Forms used to refer to services, including *SPA, WPAS & SaLT*
- Teacher Talking Profiles
- Pathway to Change – Early Help Documentation



Seeking Additional Funding

If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core funding, then it will be at this point that the evidence collated will be used to apply for top up/enhanced funding from Warwickshire County Council Inclusion Grant. If a new or existing child is disabled, then the setting should check if the family is in receipt or have applied for Disability Living Allowance. If so, the setting will be able to apply to their local authority for the local Disability Access Fund, the term after turn 3.

Statutory Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment and Plan

Statutory Assessment

- If a child has not made significant progress, despite interventions put in place, then the next steps may be for the child to undergo an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment.
- If a child is under compulsory school age, the local authority will conduct an EHC needs assessment if they consider that the child's needs cannot be met within the resources normally available to the early years setting. This application is made by the SENCo in partnership with parents and other professionals involved in the child's care and education, including the individual key person.
- Children aged under age two are eligible, where an assessment has indicated that the child is likely to show significant delay in their development by the time they reach compulsory school age, to access an EHC needs assessment, either through the parents or other professional, including health and education.
- When a child's needs appear to be sufficiently complex, or the evidence suggests specialist intervention, then the local authority is likely to conclude that an EHC plan is necessary.
- The local authority should fully involve the parent and must seek advice from the setting in making decisions about preparing an EHC plan.
- Settings should prepare by collating information about the child's SEND including:
 - documentation on the child's progress in the setting
 - interventions and support provided to date
 - evidence of external agency assessment, support and recommendations
 - parental views and wishes (and where appropriate those of the child)

The information will then be submitted to the local authority to allow them to accurately assess the child in the context of the support already given.

- The local authority must inform the child's parents of a decision as to whether to accept the EHC needs assessment within **six weeks** of receiving a request and give its reasons for their decision. If the local authority decides to conduct an assessment, it must ensure the child's parents are fully included right from the beginning and are invited to contribute their views. If the local authority subsequently decides not to conduct an assessment it must then inform the parents of their right to appeal that decision, of the requirement for them to consider mediation should they wish to appeal.



- If the local authority decides that a statutory EHC plan is not necessary, it must notify the parents and inform the provider, giving the reasons for the decision. This notification must take place within 16 weeks of the initial request or of the child having otherwise been brought to the local authority's attention.
- If the decision following an assessment is to compile an EHC plan, the local authority should consult collaboratively with the parents in the preparation of the plan ensuring that their views and their child's preferences are taken into account and that plans describe positively what the child can do and has achieved to date.
- Plans are evidenced based and focus on short term outcomes and long-term aspirations for the child including family and community support. Parents have the right to request a particular provision for their child to be named within their EHC plan.
- If an early years setting is named, the local authority must fund this provision. They cannot force a setting to take a child and can only name the provision in the EHC if the setting agrees.
- Settings, alongside the local authority, should review an EHC plan for a child under age five at least every three to six months. Such reviews would complement the duty to carry out a review at least annually but may be streamlined and not necessarily require the attendance of the full range of professionals, depending on the needs of the child. The child's parents must be fully consulted on any proposed changes to the EHC plan and made aware of their right to appeal to the Tribunal.

Transition to School or Other Setting

“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.” - SEND: guide for early years settings.

- Any child transitioning to another setting (school or early years provision) must have a plan in place to support the move.
- Documentation in relation to the child's specific needs should be transferred appropriately to the new setting, with permission from parents.
- The SENCo and/or key person should make arrangements to meet with all individuals currently involved as well as those becoming involved in the care and education of the child. This may include a settings SENCo or the class teacher/key person.
- Where opportunities allow, the setting SENCo or key person should attend 'National Transition Day' for those children who are going to a mainstream setting, alongside the child who may have significant needs. This will allow the child to feel secure in a new environment with a significant adult in place.
- Where parents of children with an EHC needs plan have named a particular provider/school, transitions will be tailored and specified to the particular setting.
- Transitions to other settings should be seamless and collaborative – and therefore successful.