

## SEND support for EYFS Childcare Providers

This guidance refers to children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The Special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice (2015) 0-25 years, considers the needs of all children.

Suffolk's Directorate of Health Wellbeing and Children's Services provides support for children with Special Educational Needs and disabilities (SEND).

If, **following discussion with your SENCo**, further advice is needed the setting can contact the Early Years and Childcare Service for advice and general support. They can be contacted via your cluster leads or by completing an **IAA – other enquiries form**

<https://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/early-years/eyfs-in-suffolk> for advice on any of the following:

- identifying children with special educational needs (SEN)
- writing and revising a SEN policy
- differentiating the curriculum to meet the needs of individual children.
- developing an assessment system through observation
- record keeping
- writing an Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- setting targets
- monitoring IEPs
- approaches to use with parent
- liaison with other statutory agencies and onward referrals
- filling in CAF (Common Assessment Framework) referrals

**For specific individual child support and advice please complete an IAA referral**  
[www.suffolklearning.co.uk/early-years/sen-in-suffolk/referrals](http://www.suffolklearning.co.uk/early-years/sen-in-suffolk/referrals)

### Special needs policy

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 section 3.73

'Providers must make the following information available to parents and/or carers: how the setting supports children with special educational needs and disabilities.'

SEND Code of Practice (2015) section 5.4

'Providers **must** have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN.'

SEND Code of Practice (2015) section 5.12

'All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEN or disabilities and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care.'

SEND Code of Practice (2015) section 5.20

'Early years providers and educational provision should have arrangements in place that include a clear approach to assessing SEN. This should be part of the setting's overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all children.'

It is important to have a strong system of observation and assessment planning for all children as required by the EYFS (2017). The setting's SEND policy should include in detail for parents and staff the agreed arrangements for the graduated approach. See SEND Code of Practice (2015) section 5.38.

Use the [SEND code of practice \(2015\)](#) and the additional local authority guidance on SEN policy development to support the review of your own SEN policy.

## **Childcare Provider Named SENCo**

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 section 3.67

‘Maintained nursery schools must identify a member of staff to act as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and other providers (in group provision) are expected to identify a SENCO.’

## **Early Years SENCo training**

Specific training to support the named person with the coordinating role can be found on [www.suffolkcpd.co.uk](http://www.suffolkcpd.co.uk). Please also see the [SENCo training guidance](#).

## **Working in partnership with parents**

EYFS practitioners have a key role in working with parents/carers to identify the specific care and learning needs of their child. Parents/carers know more about their own children than anyone else and their contributions must be valued. They hold vital information and have a critical role to play in their children’s care and learning.

The EYFS framework requires practitioners to review children’s progress and share a summary with parents. This starts as early as the child begins attending a childcare provision with the first formal assessment, the progress check, at age two.

As soon as a child is identified as needing additional support the parents must be informed. The provider must work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs. (SEND Code of Practice section 5.37) Parents need to know that they can rely on others for information and support. What matters most to parents is that the help and support they receive is well planned. Where families are involved with Early Support, they will already have a great deal of information that they can share with providers in the family held records.

## **Parents must be supported to:**

- play an active and valued role in their child’s education
- feel free to comment on any aspect of their child’s education
- have access to information, advice and support during assessment and any related decision-making
- gain knowledge of their child’s entitlement to education, support and provision. The provision should provide family centred support and consider the individual family’s needs and the best way to support them

## **This means practitioners need to:**

- have positive attitudes to parents
- be sensitive to parents
- be respectful of parents’ knowledge
- be knowledgeable about information, advice and support and help make it available to parents
- provide information that is user friendly
- provide information about Early Support <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/early-support-family-resources>
- provide parents with information about Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/send-and-the-local-offer/sendiaass/>

Suffolk SENDIASS is an impartial service that can provide support and advice about a child/young person’s SEND needs.

Information sharing with parents will be ongoing from the time a child first starts in the provision. If a positive relationship is established at this time it will be much easier to discuss any concerns that the practitioners may have about a child's development, behaviour or care and learning needs, and parents will feel confident to raise their concerns with the childcare provider.

Practitioners, with support from the provision's SENCo, must ensure that any proposed extra support is fully discussed and agreed with the parents.

When talking with parents, it is important to consider:

- privacy
- confidentiality
- time

The form **Views of parents/carers** is included in the [Initial Concerns](#) section and can be used to guide discussion. The practitioner may also use the document **Questions to ask before SEN Support**. Actions that arise from these discussions can be recorded on the **Checklist of Action**.

For the **Views of Parents** form, parents could, for example:

- complete the form at home and bring it to the provider
- give his/her views orally which are then recorded at the provision
- bring examples of the child's work, drawings or favourite toys from home
- show photographs or a video of their child playing at home

Parents may also find it helpful to bring a friend or supporter to meetings.

Some parents may find it difficult to talk about their concerns for a variety of reasons. Most will respond to sensitive support and a good listener. However, where difficulties occur, the childcare provider is required to ensure that parents are provided with access to signers or interpreters and translated information material.

The Department of Education has issued a [guide for parent and carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities](#) (August 2014)

## **Initial concerns**

Ideally, collecting information will begin before a child first enters the setting and will continue to be updated and supplemented over time. It will include information provided by a range of people including practitioners, the setting SENCO, parents/carers, the child and other professionals, where appropriate. The information collected will give a picture of the child's strengths and identify any educational concerns relating to learning, development, progress, behaviour, communication, mobility or sensory impairment.

With parents' permission, health professionals already working with the child can be contacted for further information. If families are engaged with the [Early Support](#) approach they will have useful information to share from the family held records.

Where a child attends more than one childcare provision it will be necessary to keep separate records and IEPs. It is good practice for the IEP to be written together by both providers to ensure consistency of support for the child. This includes children who have a dual placement with a specialist nursery. It will be extremely useful if this information can be shared between the providers with parents' permission. It will be important for the childcare providers to bear in mind the numbers of meetings parents are being asked to attend and to be flexible in their approach.

## **Health Care Plans**

Some children may have needs that relate to specific medical conditions, for example, diabetes, epilepsy or multiple allergies. These children should have a Health Care Plan written in consultation with the parents and any other professionals involved to identify how you will make special provision for them to manage their condition within your setting. This will make it clear to all

staff what actions need to be taken to help the child remain as healthy as possible.

The Early Years and Childcare Service will be able to help non-maintained sector childcare providers to consider what needs to be included in the care plan, in consultation with the child's parent/carer. A risk assessment may also be needed. These forms are on the SEN guidance webpage in the section [Health Care Guidance](#)

## **The graduated approach to meeting the needs of young children**

SEND Code of Practice (2015) section 5.38

'Where a setting makes special educational provision for a child with SEN they should inform the parents and a maintained nursery school **must** inform the parents. All settings should adopt a graduated approach with four stages of action: assess, plan, do and review.'

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) recommends a graduated approach to meeting the needs of all children. This recognises that a child with SEN may continue to need extra support. Their needs may change and more specialist support may be required to meet the child's additional needs.

Practitioners will monitor the progress of all children as part of their work. Through regular observation, ongoing assessments will be made of children's learning and progress as well as their response to learning opportunities, the learning environment, routines and staff.

Practitioners use their own record-keeping systems to record significant achievements and share them with parents. These assessments will alert practitioners when children are not making adequate progress.

Practitioners should take specific action to help children with SEN and disabilities make the best possible progress. Adapting the curriculum slightly to suit a child's individual needs may help them.

If a child does not make the expected progress practitioners should discuss this with parents (see *Initial concerns* above).

Extra SEN support may be required. This extra support will be recorded on an additional targeted plan (IEP, behavior plan, health care plan, targeted individual planning.)

If a child's rate of progress continues to cause concern the SENCo, following discussion with parents/carers and with their agreement, may need to get advice and support from external agencies. The additional advice and support will inform any individual agreed plans.

**Parents must give informed consent for a setting to request external support.** This means that they need to understand fully what will be involved.

When a professional from an external support service is visiting the provision, they will need to see the child's progress records. This will show them which strategies have already been used and which targets have been set and achieved. Advice will be given verbally on the day and a formal report will follow. The report will go to parents and the setting may receive a copy.

Providers should keep a record of when advice has been sought and from whom on the Record of SEN Support form in the section [Individual Education Plan](#). Records of the actions taken from these interactions should also be included on this form as well as additional meetings/phone calls with parents/carers

## **Individual Education Plans (IEP)**

All children receiving SEN support will require an Individual Education Plan. This plan will identify targets and the strategies, resources and activities that will be used by practitioners and parents to enable the child to overcome barriers to learning.

In drawing up this individual plan, the provisions named SENCO will talk to the child and the parents and keyperson. Guidance and sample plans are available in the section [Individual Education Plan](#). The IEP should include:

- a maximum of three or four short-term targets for the child
- teaching strategies

- resources
- equipment
- any specific activities
- adult support, including parental support at home
- a review date, and parental signatures and date of the time of the agreement

When the child's progress towards the target is reviewed the summary progress outcome should be recorded on the IEP. An IEP is a working document and will include details of interventions and strategies used that are **additional to** or **different from** those provided for most children.

IEPs and any targeted plans must be shared with parents and include information on how the parents can help the child achieve their targets. Parents will be asked to sign the IEP and give their permission for the information on the IEP to be shared with others.

### **Reviewing IEPs or other targeted plans**

IEPs must be kept 'under review'. The local authority in Suffolk recommends a review every six to eight weeks, but this should be flexible and work as part of the graduated approach of assess, plan, do and review. (see SEND Code of Practice (2015) sections 5.39 to 5.46).

Parents must be consulted at each IEP review. The IEP progress sheets for setting/home will inform the review process.

At the IEP review:

- discuss the progress the child has made towards the targets set both at home and at the setting and record the information
- discuss which strategies resources and activities have been most successful
- agree the next step
- record the outcome of the review including notations of parents and child's views and any significant supporting discussion.
- where necessary create a new IEP with parent/carers

The Record of IEP Meetings form can be used to record the above.

### **Strategies to support children**

There are many ways in which a child with SEN can be supported to make the most of the opportunities provided.

Some approaches that could be used include:

- changing the grouping of children for a particular activity or sequence of activities
- changing the routine of the session
- supporting the child during play/language activities
- allowing additional time for staff to plan
- allowing time for staff to observe the child
- taking time to monitor provision
- supporting staff to attend training courses
- providing staff development in the setting
- making different learning materials or specialised equipment available
- providing additional adult support so that all staff have more time to meet the children's needs
- a behaviour support approach, agreed with parents and all staff and recorded on a behaviour plan
- dual placements for children with complex needs

## Involving children

The SEND code of practice (2015) states that children must be involved in discussions and decisions about their support. This, and working in partnership with parents, is a theme throughout the code of practice.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children should be able to express their views and opinions in any matters affecting them. Getting very young children to express their thoughts and feelings can be a challenge, especially for those who find it difficult to communicate.

Some suggestions are:

- a child's drawing of themselves or things that they like to do
- helping the child to take photographs of their favourite places, activities and people in the setting
- asking the child and recording what they say about things they find hard or that make them feel sad or worried and help that they would like
- observing and taking photographs of the child engaged in activities and talking together about these
- using a computer to record what the child enjoys doing
- talking to parents/carers and others working with the child
- role play
- making a video of the child
- making a recording of the child talking or singing a favourite rhyme (parental consent must be given before taking photographs or making videos)

## Needs assessment for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

SEND Code of Practice (2015) section 5.49

'Where, despite the setting having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child, the child has not made expected progress, the setting should consider requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment (see Chapter 9, Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans).'

Occasionally, despite the best efforts of parents, practitioners and input from other professionals, a child will be unable to access the curriculum without further formal support. At this time, the setting SENCo needs to discuss with the child's parents and other professionals whether to make a request for a needs assessment. A needs assessment is a detailed multi-agency assessment that is carried out to find about the child's special educational needs and to set out what provision will be necessary to meet these needs in an [Education, Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\)](#).

If a needs assessment has been requested (by parents/carers, the childcare provider or an external professional), the early education provider will be asked to provide pre-school educational advice. The childcare providers named SENCo can request support to complete this, if necessary, from the Early Years and Childcare Service.

Pre-school educational advice will include:

- a summary of the child's main areas of strength and difficulty
- relevant factors from the child's history
- relevant home/pre-school factors
- details of action already taken by the childcare provider
- details of provision made in the setting for the child
- recommendations for outcomes for the child to work towards
- recommendations for the facilities and resources to help the child achieve their outcomes

This advice together with the assessments of other involved professional will be considered in

forming the final content of the EHCP.

A child who is referred for a needs assessment should continue to be supported through the current individual plans incorporating any outside professional advice.

For a child in the EYFS, a review of the EHCP will need to take place every six months. This will be led by the setting SENCo, who should bring together all the professional parties involved with the child. Reviews are a place to share progress and involve parents and child in reviewing and, if necessary, revising the content of the EHCP.

### **Involving children in reviews**

Including children in their reviews can present some challenges. Some suggestions as to how this can be done are given below:

- children's views can be gained before the meeting using methods described earlier
- children could be invited to part of the meeting to share their achievements and future targets.
- children could suggest targets for themselves to be included on the form

### **Transitions between settings**

To support a child's learning and development and to ensure continuity and consistency in provision, it is strongly recommended that the transitional IEP be written jointly with the receiving childcare provider. This IEP can then transfer with the child into the new placement and will continue to the first review.

Following this review, the receiving setting or school takes responsibility for meeting the child's special educational needs.

If a child is transferring to a maintained nursery school, nursery or reception class, the responsibility for liaison rests with both the early years provider *and* the receiving school. With permission from parents, the childcare provider should seek to contact the receiving school prior to writing the transitional IEP. The receiving school should be made aware of any children with SEN.

Choosing a school is an important decision for parents/carers. The Early Years and Childcare Team and the Suffolk SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) can assist parents by ensuring they have all the information available about local school provision.

Also see the [Transitions](#) section.