



Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Policy

Introduction

The Government's 'Early Learning Goals' sets out what most children will have achieved by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Children will progress at different rate during the Foundation Stage and it is important to remember that at the end of this stage some children may still be working towards the goals. Such children will need differentiated learning opportunities to help them progress and regular monitoring of their progress but do not necessarily have specific special educational needs (SEND).

Monitoring of individual children's progress throughout the EYFS is essential. Where a child appears not to be making progress then it may be necessary to use alternative approaches to learning. Ongoing difficulties may indicate the need for help above that which is normally available for children within the same group.

The SEND Code of Practice does not assume that there are set categories of SEND. Children will have needs and requirements which may fall into one or more of the following areas:

- Generalised development delay
- Speech and language difficulty
- Social/communication difficulty
- Sensory difficulty e.g.: hearing/sight
- Delayed social emotional development
- Physical impairment
- Medical problems

When there is evidence that a child's rate of progress in any of these areas is inadequate then further action needs to be taken. If inadequate progress is identified, then SEND support will be put into place. This is a graduated approach depending on the needs of the child. It involves parents, key persons, and the Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in identifying the needs of the child, planning the provision to be given to the child and seeking expertise at whatever point it is needed.

The Department for Education Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 Years, January 2015 can be downloaded via this link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND Code of Practice January 2015.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf)

This policy will be reviewed when changes arise. A copy of this policy can be obtained from the Nursery Offices or downloaded via our website.

Support

When a child has been identified as having SEND it is the responsibility of the Nursery to identify a child's needs and to begin, through liaising with colleagues and parents/carers, to provide planned support specific to the child. Using EYFS, The Key person/SENCO will be able to identify children who, despite receiving appropriate early education, still show cause for concern.

A child may cause concern if he/she is:

- making little or no progress even where teaching approaches have been personalised
- continues working at levels significantly below those expected for children of a similar age in certain areas
- presents persistent emotional and/or behavioural difficulties
- has sensory or physical and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of personal aids and equipment
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties and require specific individual interventions in order to access learning
- if key person, in consultation with parents/carers, decide that a child needs further support to help them progress, they should the seek the help of the Early Years SENCO
- the Early Years SENCO, with colleagues, will then collect all know information about the child and if needed seek help from external professionals, with the agreement of the parents.

Intervention

The SEND Code of Practice describes the concerns that would lead to SEND support being considered.

The Child:

- makes little or no progress even when teaching approaches are targeted to improve the child's identified are/s of weakness
- continues working at a level significantly below those expected in certain areas for children of a similar age
- present persistent emotional and/or behavioral difficulties which are not reduced by behaviour management techniques usually employed
- has sensory or physical difficulties and continues to make little or no progress despite the provision of personal aids and equipment
- has communication and/or interaction difficulties and requires specific individual interventions in order to access learning

When an area of weakness has been identified then the Key Person is responsible for making arrangements. Key persons should:

- Share views, ideas and information about the child with other members of staff
- Complete detailed observations
- Raise concerns with parents/carers
- Agree actions

The Early Years SENCO and the child's key person, in consultation with parents, will then put into place the following procedures.

Procedures

Acorns 2 Oaks models its approach on the guidelines given in the SEND Code of Practice 0 to 25 Years (2014). This is a graduated approach in the form of a four-part cycle: Assess, Plan, Do, Review

1. Assess

Once a child has been identified as needing SEND support:

- The key person, with the SENCO, will carry out a clear analysis of the child's needs.
- This analysis will draw on the key person's assessment, tracking progress of the child and attainment and behaviour.
- A comparison will be made as to the child's development related to that of his/her peers.
- The views and experiences of the child's parents will also be taken into account when assessing the child's needs.
- Advice will be sought from external agencies where relevant.
- Assessment to be reviewed regularly

2. Plan

Once it has been decided to give a child SEND support, parents will be formally notified and invited in for a meeting with the key person and the SENCO. Adjustments, interventions, and support will then be put in place.

At this stage of the cycle support, staff will be made aware of the child's needs, the expected outcomes, the support required and any strategies or approaches to be used. The parents will be made fully aware of the planned support and interventions.

3. Do

Key Persons will be responsible for working with the child on a daily basis and working closely with the support of the SENCO.

4. Review

Support and interventions will be reviewed termly in discussion with the Key Person, SENCO and parents. Interventions will be evaluated, and support revised in light of the child's progress and development.

The arrangements put in place might include:

- The use of different learning materials or special equipment
- Some individual or group support or staff development and training to introduce more effective strategies.

The strategies to be used will be recorded in the form of an Individual Support Plan (ISP). This will include information about:

- The short-term targets set for the child
- The provision to be put in place
- When the plan is to be reviewed
- The outcome of the action taken

The ISP will focus on three or four key targets and will be discussed with the parents. The ISP's will be reviewed regularly, at least once a term, and the aim is to consult parents as part of the review process.

It is also important that throughout the process, regular monitoring by the Key Person takes place, to ensure that the support is effective. If at any of these reviews, it is agreed that the child is now making adequate progress the child will be taken off SEND Support, but staff will continue to be closely monitored to ensure progress continues.

Adequate progress can be defined in several ways where:

- The child closes the attainment gap between the child and his/her peers
- The child's progress is similar to that of peers starting from the same attainment baseline, but less than that of the majority of peers
- The child's progress matches/betters his/her previous rate of progress
- The child demonstrates an improvement in self-help, social or personal skills
- The child demonstrates improvement in behaviour

Outside agencies may need to be consulted if a child requires help beyond the expertise of the school staff. These agencies may:

- Provide specialist assessments.
- Give advice on the use of new and specialist strategies/materials or provide support for particular activities
- Give guidance on when external agencies may be approached.
- Help will be sought from outside agencies if it appears that the child continues to:
Make little/no progress in specific areas
Work at an Early Years Stage substantially below that expected of children of a similar age
Show emotional/behavioral difficulties which interfere with the child's own learning or that of a group, despite having an individualized behaviour management programme.
Have sensory/physical needs and required additional equipment or regular visits.

In Early Years, the SENCO will have responsibility for:

- Liaising with colleagues where a child raises a cause for concern.
- Ensuring liaison with parents and other professional, along with colleagues, of a child with SEND.
- Advising and supporting colleagues.
- Ensuring that relevant background information about individual children with SEND are collected, recorded and updated.
- To help plan future support for the child in discussion with colleagues.
- Ensure appropriate ISP's are in place.
- Ensure appropriate records are kept including a record of children on SEND Support.

The Role of Early Years SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)

The SENCO has a key role in supporting colleagues and coordinating the response of the setting to the children with SEND. The Early Years SENCO role will vary depending on the size, structure and employers' requirements in the setting. The following is an overview of the typical role.

1. Ensuring all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEND and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEND. The Early Years SENCO will:
 - Work with the manager of the setting to regularly review the SEND policy and practice within the setting and agree how it will be improved.
 - Be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the settings SEND policy, and for coordinating provision across the setting.
 - Implement SEND support and the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review to meet the outcomes identified for the child.
 - Support individual practitioners in implementing the approach for individual children.
 - Meet the requirement for record-keeping in a way that supports a participative decision-making process.
 - Draw on a range of sources, including the views of the child, supported by reliable evidence of effectiveness, to inform their advice and support to colleagues on different approaches to improving children's progress.

2. Advising and supporting colleagues. The Early Years SENCO will:
 - Support practitioners to assess their skills and competencies, identify any gaps and implement next steps in professional development.
 - Ensure all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with SEND
 - Work actively and effectively within the Assess Plan Do Review SEND support in Early Years cycle.
 - Clarify the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEND
 - Understand how the setting responds to any cause for concern and identifies and responds to special educational needs.
 - Know how the setting works in partnership with parents to identify a child as having SEND.
 - Lead on how the practitioner and the SENCO agree, in consultation with the parent and the child, the outcomes they are seeking for the child.
 - Identify and use training and other sources of support available to help explain the duties to colleagues.
 - Link with others who have a role in supporting the development and delivery of training both for individual settings and on a wider basis.

3. Ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting. The Early Years SENCO will:
 - Make sure parents receive the information, advice and support that they need in order to participate in the SEND decision-making process.
 - Ensure parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting.
 - Involve parents in the discussion of any early concerns, in identifying any SEND, and agreeing:
 - ◆ the outcomes being sought for the child
 - ◆ the interventions and support to be put in place
 - ◆ the expected impact on progress, development, behaviour
 - ◆ date for review

4. Liaising with professionals or agencies beyond the setting. The Early Years SENCO will:

- Understand the local offer, including the provision that the Local Authority expects to be available from providers of all relevant early-years education.
- Understand the support available including:
 - ◆ education
 - ◆ health and social care services for disabled children and children with SEND
 - ◆ services assisting providers to support young children with medical conditions
 - ◆ childcare for disabled children and children with SEND
 - ◆ services providing parents and children with information, advice and support on SEND
 - ◆ support groups who can support parent carers of disabled children.
- Link with the local authority to liaise over individual children and links on wider strategic issues such as securing sufficient expertise and experience on SEN and disability locally
- Understand how funding supports settings in meeting children's SEN and disability.
- Liaise with professionals or agencies beyond the setting, including, but not limited to:
 - ◆ SEND support or learning support services including 'Local Offer'ⁱ
 - ◆ Sensory support services or specialist teachers
 - ◆ Therapies such as speech and language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.
 - ◆ Support available to parents to aid their child's development at home, including such services as Portageⁱⁱ
 - ◆ Independent Advice and Support Services (IASS)
 - ◆ Local voluntary agencies that provide support to children and their families.
 - ◆ Social Care Services
 - ◆ Area SENCO, inclusion officer, or equivalent where available.

5. Continually develop own practice

Effective practitioners reflect on their own practice and undertake continuous professional development. The Early Years SENCO will:

- Understand:
 - ◆ own responsibilities to children with SEN, their carers/parents
 - ◆ the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEN
 - ◆ how to determine reliability of evidence of the effectiveness of provision
- Assess own skills and competencies, identify any gaps and next steps in professional development.
- Identify and use training and other sources of support to address own development needs.
- Keep up to date with meeting the setting's needs.

ⁱ Local authorities must publish a Local Offer, setting out in one place information about provision they expect to be available across education, health and social care for children and young people in their area who have SEN or are disabled, including those who do not have Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

ⁱⁱ An early intervention service that seeks to work closely with parents to meet their child's needs at home and in a range of informal and formal education setting.