



Early Years SENCO Toolkit

Learning Improvement Service

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Section 1: Context and purpose

The Learning Improvement Service is committed to promoting and supporting the inclusion of all children within all early years providers. Many providers are already working successfully with children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

This toolkit has been produced to ensure that all early years Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs) are fully aware of their role and feel confident to work within both national and local SEND frameworks.

Training related to this toolkit will be available for Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) setting SENCOs and childminders on an annual basis. The toolkit will be updated when required with relevant changes at national and local level online.

Aims

The main aim of this toolkit is to provide guidance for all early years SENCOs. The toolkit is relevant for all early years SENCOs including the PVI sector, childminders, maintained provision, academies and children's centres.

The toolkit outlines information and expectations of early years providers when working with children with SEND whether undiagnosed or diagnosed.

The effectiveness and quality of programmes depends largely on communication and collaboration between all people involved in the process.

Margetts, K 2004

How to use the toolkit

The toolkit recognises that early years providers will be at different stages in their planning and practice for children with SEND. Some information will already be familiar to you and incorporated into your setting.

The toolkit has ideas for developing good practice in relation to children with SEND, which may also be appropriate for other children.

Use the toolkit as a reference guide, selecting information as and when you need it.

You will find that some information is repeated in sections throughout the toolkit. Such information is important to more than one area.

There is no expectation that you will implement all the suggestions and guidance in the toolkit immediately. Developing your SENCO role, and in turn effective inclusive practice, is a continuing process which will take place over time.

Definition of phrases used within the toolkit

Throughout the toolkit we refer to 'services', 'professionals', 'practitioners', 'SENCOs', 'providers' and 'parents'.

The word 'service' means any service used by a family, including health, education, social care, statutory services, public services, and services provided by voluntary or community groups (Early Support, 2012, p.5).

A 'professional' is any individual working within a service. It can include frontline staff, team managers and strategic leaders.

A 'practitioner' means any adult regularly working within your educational establishment, either paid or voluntary. This may include students.

The abbreviation 'SENCO' describes a practitioner who has responsibility for coordinating SEN provision within an educational establishment.

The word 'provider' describes all kinds of providers of early years education in the maintained and PVI sectors that a local authority funds. This may include nursery, maintained and independent schools, PVI settings, childminders and academies.

The word 'parent' describes families of all kinds and from every community, culture, background, or heritage (Early Support, 2012, p.5). It also recognises the important role of parents, extended family and carers, for example, step-parent, foster parent, adoptive parent, co-parents in the case of same sex families, guardians, other primary carers (may or may not be family members), non-biological parents, etc.

List of abbreviations

CDC	Council for Disabled Children
DfE	Department for Education
DH	Department of Health
EHA	Early Help Assessment
EHC plan	Education, Health and Care plan
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
EY SAT	Early Years Specialist Advisory Teacher
CSCP	Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership
NCB	National Children's Bureau
NHS	National Health Service
PVI	Private, Voluntary and Independent
SAT	Specialist Advisory Teacher
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
SENDIASS	SEND Information, Advice and Support Service
SLT	Speech and Language Therapy
TAC	Team Around the Child
TAF	Team Around the Family
UNCRC	United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

Section 2: The Role of the Early Years SENCO

Many SENCOs initially feel like they have drawn the short straw and can become overwhelmed by the presumed magnitude of their responsibilities. This section aims to help and support you to understand what your role is as the SENCO. One of the most important points to remember is that you do not have to do everything yourself. You are the coordinator and as such, you can enable your colleagues to carry out their responsibilities – delegate!

SENCOs work within a wide variety of early years providers and therefore some of the advice within this section may need to be adapted to suit your individual circumstances.

So, what does a SENCO need to do the role effectively?

The SEND Code of Practice states:

A maintained nursery school must ensure that there is a qualified teacher designated as the SENCO in order to ensure the detailed implementation of support for children with SEN. This individual should also have the prescribed qualification for SEN Coordination or relevant experience.

DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*, para 5.52

The EYFS 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.

DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*, para 5.53

The SENCO is required to be familiar with documentation relating to SEND including:

- Statutory Framework for the EYFS (2023)
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- The Equality Act (2010)

It may also be useful to be familiar with the information detailed within:

- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England (December 2015)
- Special educational needs and disability – A guide for parents and carers (August 2014)

Also see sections 3, 7 and 8.

The role of the SENCO

Each of these aspects of the role is explored below. Consider the questions to help you identify any areas you need to develop further.

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

DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*, para 5.54



Ensuring all practitioners understand their responsibilities to children with SEN and your approach to identify and meeting SEN	Notes
What knowledge and experience do you and your colleagues have of supporting children with SEN and their families?	
Has everyone read and understood your SEN policy? When is it due to be reviewed? Is it reviewed annually? (See Appendix 3 – SEN policy example)	
Does the SEN policy refer to the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and The Equality Act 2010?	
Does your SEN policy truly reflect your day to day practice? Are all your colleagues doing what it says in your policy?	
How do you ensure that the SEN policy is implemented by all your colleagues?	
Have you and your colleagues taken actions to make your provision inclusive and welcoming?	
Do you and all your colleagues have a good understanding of child learning and development? Does everyone use this knowledge to identify any changes that may need to be made?	
How do you find out what a child’s individual interests and preferences are? Do you build these into plans for their learning and development?	
How is children’s learning and development monitored? What action do you take if concerns arise?	
Can you and your colleagues carry out a range of observations to identify individual needs? Can everyone use observations to plan SMART targets and strategies/ interventions in learning and development for children’s specific individual needs?	
Is everyone familiar with the SEND Code of Practice and find the information they may need from it? Does everyone understand the graduated approach (assess, plan, do and review cycle)?	
Were there any actions relating to SEN identified during your last Ofsted inspection?	
Do you know how to request an EHC plan assessment? Do you know how to organise and lead a review meeting?	
Is there a system in place to allow for good SEN record keeping?	
Do you monitor the quality and effectiveness of support and interventions provided for children with SEN? (see Appendix 4.1 - SEN Staff Observation Record and Prompts)	

Advising and supporting colleagues	Notes
Do you know and understand the key parts of your SENCO role? Is it written into your job description?	
Do you know about the relevant legislation, regulations and the statutory guidance relating to young children with SEN in early years settings?	
Do you know where you could get more information from?	
Do you know who the area SENCOs are and how to contact them?	
Do all of your colleagues understand what the role of a SENCO is?	
Do all of your colleagues know what their role is in supporting children with SEN and what to do on a day to day basis? <i>(see Appendix 4.2 – SEN Staff Self- assessment and Feedback Forms)</i>	
Are you given regular opportunities to share SEN information and updates, e.g. is SEN an agenda item at your regular staff meetings?	
Have you brought back information from training, shared it with colleagues and taken some action as a result?	
Have you supported your colleagues to complete an SEN Support Plan alongside parents?	
Have you supported your colleagues to set up a healthcare plan? Did you involve parents and external professionals?	
Have you supported your colleagues to set up a risk assessment linked to an individual child? How do you ensure everyone in your provision is implementing it?	
Do you ensure that all SEN Support Plans and other documentation is in place, followed and regularly reviewed? <i>(see Appendix 4.3 – Monitoring SEN Support Plans)</i>	
Do you keep a SEN overview? Is it up to date?	

Ensuring parents are closely involved throughout and that their insights inform action taken	Notes
Do you have experience of listening to parents and taking part in sensitive two way exchanges of information?	
Have you completed an SEN Support Plan with parents and involved appropriate colleagues in the process?	
Do you have experience of planning jointly with parents?	
Have you completed a request for external support alongside parents?	
Do you arrange TAC meetings to keep parents informed and involved?	
Have you informed parents about the information they can find on the SEND Local Offer including local support groups?	
Do you seek parental feedback about how well they feel their child's needs are met within the setting? <i>(see Appendix 4.4 – SEN Parental Questionnaire)</i>	

Liaising with services / professionals	Notes
Do you jointly plan with parents and other people to give a good transition experience: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Before a child begins? ● When a child changes room within your provision? ● Before a child leaves? 	
Do you know who the specialist services are that you might need to contact?	
Do you know how to request support from specialist services, including the EHA form and Children's Physical Health and Development Team form?	
Do you have experience of liaising with professionals/services beyond your provision who are involved with a child?	

SENCO survival top tips

- You are the coordinator – do not try to do it all yourself – delegate to your colleagues.
- Chat to other SENCOs when you get the opportunity.
- Ask others for help – for example, Area SENCOs, health visitors, speech and language therapists, etc.
- Communicate effectively – remember to listen as well as speak.
- Revisit this toolkit regularly.



Section 3: What are your statutory requirements?

This section covers the legislation, regulations and the statutory guidance relating to children with SEND in early years providers. All early years providers have to work within the statutory framework which states:

Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. Maintained nursery schools and other providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice. Maintained nursery schools must identify a member of staff to act as SENCO and other providers (in group provision) are expected to identify a SENCO.

DfE (2023) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, para 3.68

The following tables can be used as a self-audit tool to explore your provision’s understanding of your duties linked to young children with SEND.

SEND Code of Practice	Notes
<p>DfE and DH (2015) SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years – <i>Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities</i>. (especially chapter 5) gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25</p>	
<p>DfE (2014) Early years: guide to the 0 to 25 SEND code of practice – <i>Advice for early years providers that are funded by the local authority</i>. gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-early-years-settings</p>	

Relevant legislation and regulations	Notes
<p>The following sections of the Children and Families Act 2014:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Section 29: Co-operating generally: governing body functions ● Section 34: Children and young people with SEN but no EHC plan ● Section 35: Children with SEN in maintained nurseries ● Section 66: Using best endeavours to secure special educational provision ● Section 67: SEN co-ordinators ● Section 68: Informing parents and young people ● Section 69: SEN information report ● Section 100: Duty to support pupils with medical conditions. <p>legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted</p>	

Relevant legislation and regulations (continued)	Notes
<p>The Equality Act 2010 – Quick start guide for service providers gov.uk/government/publications/disability-quick-start-guide-for-service-providers</p> <p>CDC (2015) <i>Disabled children and The Equality Act 2010: What Early Years providers need to know and do, including responsibilities to disabled children under the Children and Families Act 2014</i> councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/help-resources/resources/disabled-children-and-equality-act-2010-early-years</p>	
<p>DfE (2023) <i>Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage</i> gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2</p>	
<p>The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014 legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/pdfs/uksi_20141530_en.pdf</p>	



The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)	Notes
<p>The following articles of the UNCRC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Article 2: All the rights in the Convention apply to children without discrimination ● Article 3: The best interests of children should always be a top priority ● Article 12: Every child has the right to express his or her views and these views must be taken seriously ● Article 18: Parents are the most important people in children’s lives and must always do what is best for them. Governments must do all they can to help parents look after children well ● Article 23: Disabled children should enjoy a full and decent life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation in the community ● Article 31: Every child has the right to rest, play, and to do things they enjoy <p>ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx</p>	
<p>One page version in child friendly language sites.unicef.org/rightsite/files/uncrcchildfriendlylanguage.pdf</p>	

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)	Notes
<p>The following articles of the UNCRPD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Article 3 sets out the general principles of the Convention, including: full and effective participation and inclusion in society; respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities. ● Article 7: Children with Disabilities: includes all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children. <p>un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html</p>	

Both UN Conventions are reflected in UK legislation for children with SEND in the Equality Act 2010 and Children and Families Act 2014.

For further information see 4Children and CDC (2015) *SEN and disability in the early years: A toolkit – Section 2: Statutory requirements* councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/early-years-toolkit-merged.pdf

Section 4: Support for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) - A Graduated Approach

Support for all children

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential.

DfE (2023) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, para 1

In order to meet the needs of all children, providers need to provide high quality differentiated teaching and experiences, which are based on practitioner knowledge of the child, gained from careful observation and information from parents. Each child is unique and ongoing formative assessment should inform the planning of the experiences offered. There are several non-statutory documents that can be used throughout the early years as a tool to support making best-fit judgements about whether a child is showing typical development for their age, may be at risk of delay or is ahead for their age.

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests and the stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.

DfE (2023) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, para 1.11

Initial concerns

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.

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

It is particularly important in the EYFS that there is no delay in making any necessary special educational provision.

DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*, para 5.4, 5.36-5.37

Observe the child and reflect on your provision

If a practitioner is concerned that a child is delayed in an area of learning they may find it useful to conduct some observations of the child focussing on the area of concern. It is also important to consider the child's attitude to, and engagement with, the learning. Information from the observations should be used to reflect upon whether the child's needs could be better addressed by adapting the way the practitioners approach learning (i.e. teaching), offering further experiences or altering the learning environment (e.g. to better match the child's preferred way of learning). (See *Appendix 1 – Early years SEND processes*)

Gather information from parents

Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests and the stage of development of each child in their care, and must use this information to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child in all areas of learning and development.

DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*, para 5.5

You will need to sensitively talk to parents about any concerns you have at an early stage. Ensure there is sufficient time and a private place to hold these discussions. Information they give you may shed some light on the child's behaviour or progress, for example, a new baby, temporary accommodation or illness in the family may all impact upon a child's sleep pattern. Parents will also be able to talk about the child's behaviour and interests at home and in other situations. They may also want to discuss any concerns they may have. This will enable you to get a more holistic picture of the child.

At this stage you may wish to consider starting to use the EHA forms to ensure a full assessment of the child and family's needs are considered and recorded. If you are only using the EHA form internally alongside parents, then registration of the EHA is not necessary. Registration of any EHA is only required when services external of your provision are requested, or become involved, and the EHA is shared wider. (See *Appendix 1 – Early years SEND processes*)

Note: If you think that housing, family or other domestic circumstances are having a detrimental effect on the child's behaviour or development it may be appropriate to submit an EHA form in order that the family can access multi-agency support. See cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/ for further advice on this.

Gather information from other professionals if appropriate

If the child has been seen by a health visitor, either due to parental concerns or as part of a regular health review, it may be appropriate to contact them to discuss your concerns. You must have parental permission to do this. Alternatively you or the parents can make a request for support from audiology, the community paediatrician, the speech and language therapy department or other health services via the Cumbria Children's Physical Health request for assessment form. This must be signed by the parent. The form can be downloaded from the SEND Local Offer.

Reviewing the information and deciding whether a child has SEN

The key person, SENCO and parents should discuss the information gathered. Consider the following questions:

- Is the child having difficulty in one or more area of learning that is significantly greater than that of their peers?
- Does the child have a disability that is preventing them accessing the facilities of the provider? (See Making adjustments for children with SEN)
- In order for the child to make progress, is the provider going to have to make changes that is additional to, or different from, that which is normally made available?

If the answer to the last question is yes, it can be considered that at this point in time the child has a SEN.

If a child with an already identified SEN is to start at your provision you should begin the graduated approach before they start. This can be done by gathering as much information as possible from parents and other professionals already involved with the child. You should also discuss with the parents how best to manage the settling in process, which may have to be different to that offered as the norm. Assess all the information and plan with the parents the strategies and outcomes they wish for the child. (See Supporting children with medical needs – individual healthcare plans).

High quality (Quality First) teaching to meet the needs of children with SEN

High quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised will meet the individual needs of the majority of children. Some children need educational provision that is additional to or different from this. Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching and is compromised by anything less.

Early years providers should know precisely where children with SEN are in their learning and development. They should:

- ensure decisions are informed by the insights of parents and those of children and young people themselves
- have high ambitions and set stretching targets for them
- track their progress towards these goals
- keep under review the additional or different provision that is made for them
- promote positive outcomes in the wider areas of personal and social development, and
- ensure that the approaches used are based on the best possible evidence and are having the required impact on progress

DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*, para 1.24-1.25

Early years provision should offer an inclusive approach to learning and teaching, which is differentiated for all children. All practitioners are responsible for meeting the needs of all children.

High quality teaching (sometimes known as Quality First Teaching) :

- requires both a relevant curriculum and practitioners who understand, and are able to implement, the curriculum requirements effectively
- requires practitioners to build positive relationships with parents, through mutual respect, in order to work effectively with them and their children
- should build on what children already know and can do
- encourage a positive attitude and disposition to learn
- should allow opportunities for children to engage in adult planned activities and also those that children plan or initiate themselves
- allows time for children to become engrossed, work in depth and complete activities
- requires practitioners to be able to observe and respond appropriately to children, informed by their knowledge of learning and development and understanding of possible next steps.

The Graduated Approach

If it is agreed that the child has a SEN, the parents, SENCO and key person should discuss the nature of those needs. This assessment is the first stage of the graduated approach to supporting the child.



Assess - using all the information you have gathered from parents, other professionals (if involved), observations, progress checks or any other assessments you have carried out, discuss with parents the child's strengths and needs. Special educational needs are generally thought of within four broad areas:

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

See section 7 for tools to support assessment.

Plan – the SENCO, key person and parents should agree:

- the outcomes they wish the child to achieve
- the small steps (targets) the child needs to be able to achieve whilst working towards the longer term outcomes and how you will know if the child has achieved them
- what support and interventions will be provided to achieve these outcomes
- what the parents could do at home to help the child achieve the outcomes
- a date for progress to be reviewed (the period between reviews may vary from child to child but, as a guide, could be every six weeks/half termly)

Interventions, strategies and support would generally still be provided by the key worker, with guidance from the SENCO or other professionals as appropriate. Remember to take into account the views of the child, e.g. by trying to engage them through things that interest them. The SENCO should identify and address any colleague's development needs.

This information should be recorded in a written plan, often known as a Support Plan. A blank format of an Early Years SEN Support Plan, suitable for use within early years, can be found on the SEND Local Offer, along with a leaflet for parents and guidance for practitioners.

Do – the practitioner, usually the child’s key person, implements the agreed strategies and support. In addition they would observe and record the child’s progress towards achieving their targets.

Review – the SENCO, key person and parents should meet together on the agreed date to review the child’s progress.

- Has the child achieved their targets?
- If the child has yet to achieve the target, does it need to be altered because it was too challenging - do the steps need to be smaller?
- If the child has yet to achieve the target, was this because the support/strategy was ineffective and needs altering?
- Does the provider need advice from an external professional regarding more effective strategies/support?
- If the child has achieved their target, agree any changes to the targets and to the strategies/ support. Does the outcome need changing to make it more challenging?
- Does the child continue to need SEN support or will they continue to make enough progress by accessing the differentiated provision you offer to all your children?

Continue the cycle of assess, plan, do and review. The frequency of reviews, detail of interventions or support of other professionals can all be increased if necessary. Always ensure the parents are fully involved in the process and take into account the views of the child.

Making adjustments for children with SEN

The Equality Act of 2010 requires settings to promote equality of opportunity and not to discriminate against, harass or victimise disabled children. The definition of a disability is...

...a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial or long term effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Government Equalities Office (2010) *Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know? Disability quick start guide*, page 4

As well as long-term medical conditions, it also includes mental impairments including learning disabilities such as autism spectrum condition and speech and language impairments. The definition therefore covers a wide range of conditions and a greater number of children than many realise.

The Equality Act 2010 requires that providers do not discriminate:

- directly
- indirectly
- for a reason arising as a consequence of a disability
- by failing to make a reasonable adjustment.

Reasonable adjustments

Providers must make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled children are not at a substantial disadvantage compared with their peers. You should think ahead and consider what adjustments might be necessary in your provision so that disabled children can be fully included.

The reasonable adjustments duty covers:

- adjustments to any provision, criterion or practice (policies, organisation, resources etc.)
- alterations to physical features (this does not apply to schools as they have separate duties under their accessibility plans)
- provision of auxiliary aids and services (hearing loops, rails, special seats etc.)

The duty to provide these alterations and services rests with the provider, from within their own resources. Equipment is often available on loan from the occupational therapy service or other health services. You cannot charge parents for reasonable adjustments. The concept of **reasonableness** takes into account a number of factors including cost and availability of resources (in relation to the size and budget of the provider); the interests of the other children; health and safety risks; and practical considerations.

Risk assessments should be undertaken to ensure the safety of both the disabled child and the other children in the provision and adjustments made to minimise any risks.

If a child with a disability is to start at your provision you should work closely with the parents, and other professionals, to ensure the child is not at a disadvantage. You cannot charge the parents for any adjustments you need to make.

Accessing funding

Inclusive practice is part of everyday provision and may require practitioners to alter routines or differentiate planning to meet the needs of the child. However some child's needs may be such that they require increased staffing levels in order for them to be safe, have medical needs met or achieve their learning potential.

From April 2017 two funding streams were introduced:

- Disability Access Fund (DAF) - to support 3- and 4-year-old children accessing free early education, and
- SEN inclusion fund - to support 2, 3- and 4-year-old children accessing free early education ([Cumberland Early Years' SEND Inclusion Funding \(SENIF\) Guidance](#))

Further information for both of these funds can be found on the SEND Local Offer.

For those children who continue to require significant support a request for an EHC assessment may be appropriate (see the Cumbria SEND Handbook and Criteria). The request for this is made by ticking the box on the appropriate EHA form; gaining written parental/carer's consent; and submitting this alongside all the required evidence (see appendix 1 of the Cumbria SEND Handbook and Criteria). This assessment may conclude that the child's needs could only be met by a package of support.

Supporting children with medical needs – individual healthcare plans

If a child is to start who has medical/health needs it is vital that you collect as much information as you can before they start in order to keep them safe. Information regarding what the needs are, and how they should be managed, should be recorded on an individual healthcare plan. This information should be gathered from a healthcare professional, such as the GP, health visitor, specialist nurse or consultant. Any training required by the practitioners, in order to manage the child's needs, should be undertaken before the child starts.

All practitioners who will come into contact with the child should be made aware of the child's needs, how to manage them and what to do if they become unwell or need emergency treatment. Parent's wishes should always be taken into account, though if these differ from the health professional's recommendation the provider should make it clear to the parents that the provider must follow the professional's advice.

Templates for a healthcare plan can be found within the following document: DfE (2014) Templates: Supporting pupils with medical conditions available on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website

Requesting advice and support

If at any stage in the assess, plan, do and review cycle you feel you need further advice and support you are able to request this by submitting an EHA form. This can be downloaded from the Cumbria Safeguarding Children Partnership website cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/earlyhelp.asp

This should be completed with as much detail as possible and must be signed by a parent/guardian and then returned to the early years team manager within your locality:

School Early Years EHA requests Area SENCO/EYSAT please send via the LA Returns folder on the School Portal. This can be done by logging in to the School Portal, click the "Returns" on the top link bar, then select **"Returns to LA" - Schools Portal > Returns to LA**

PVI requests for Area SENCO/EYSAT please return securely via Egress to LIS Business Support colleagues as follows:

- LIS.businesssupport@cumberland.gov.uk

or through your local office at West Cumbria House or Cumbria House for the attention of your area Early Years Team Manager.

Early Years and Childcare Team Manager

Learning Improvement Service

West Cumbria House, Jubilee Road, Lillyhall, Workington CA14 4HB

Early Years and Childcare Team Manager

Learning Improvement Service

Cumbria House, 117 Botchergate, Carlisle CA1 1RD

It should include information regarding the child's current learning and development, for example, recent assessment information, a current SEN support plan/individual education plan, any information from health professionals that is relevant, etc. (See Appendix 1 – Early years SEND processes)

On the page where services are requested, tick the box for the service you require.

In addition, you must register that you have submitted an EHA form by completing the online registration form. This is also obtained from the CSCP website. Follow the instructions on the form about how and/or where to send it.

The EHA forms will be allocated to an appropriate professional (e.g. area SENCO, early years specialist advisory teacher, educational psychologist, etc.), who will contact you to arrange to visit the child at your setting. The professional will talk to you, the child's parents and observe the child. They may give advice on suitable strategies and targets for you to work on with the child or may contact further professionals to give specific advice.

If the child's needs cannot be met from the resources within your provision you may need to consider whether the child would benefit from being assessed for an EHC plan. You will need to explore the early years section of the Cumbria SEND Handbook and Criteria (this is available to download from the SEND Local Offer) to explore the child's individual needs with regards to the criteria. The professional can support with the EHA process if necessary.

Further information on this can be found on the CSCP website within the Early Help section and the SEND Local Offer.



Section 5: Involving parents and other professionals

In order to have the greatest positive impact on a child's learning and development it is vital that providers have effective partnerships with parents. This is particularly important where there is a cause for concern about a child's progress.

Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, practitioners must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners must consider whether a child may have a special educational need or disability which requires specialist support. They should link with, and help families to access, relevant services from other agencies as appropriate.

DfE (2023) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, para 1.12

Parents have vital knowledge and experience to contribute towards building up a complete picture of their child's needs and how best to support them. It is important that practitioners listen and respond to any concerns that parents express about their child's development.

Local Authorities, early years providers and schools should enable parents to share their knowledge about their child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon.

DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and Disability Code of Practice: 0-25 years*, para 1.7

Top tips for working with parents

- Build supportive relationships with parents, being mindful of their feelings and emotions.
- Plan plenty of time to talk to parents, both at regular meetings and informal opportunities, such as when they collect their child. Be aware of confidentiality and sensitivity when discussing issues if other parents are present.
- Focus on the child's strengths and the things they enjoy, as well as the areas of need.
- Acknowledge and respect the parent's views – seek constructive ways to solve any problems.
- It may help parents to have a friend, family member or supporter with them during discussions about their child.
- Use a variety of ways to gain information from parents. These may include diaries; verbal communication; home to setting sheets; photographs from home; or electronic methods of communication.
- If parents are to attend meetings with people they do not know, such as other professionals, it may be helpful prior to the meeting for the key person or SENCO to discuss with them the purpose and format of the meeting and the outcomes the parents want from the meeting.
- Ensure that all communication is respectful and non-judgemental. Be aware of your facial expressions, tone of voice, body language and choice of words used.

Parents should be involved from the earliest discussions about whether their child has SEN, and throughout the four stages of the graduated approach (the cycle of assess, plan, do and review). In consultation with the key person and SENCO, parents should agree the outcomes they want for their child, the interventions/strategies that will be put in place and the date that the impact of these will be reviewed. If appropriate, the SENCO should also support parents with the decision as to whether to request an EHC plan assessment and help them through this process. (See section 7 for further materials to support parents).

The SEND Local Offer

The SENCO should also be aware of the SEND Local Offer website and be able to use it to signpost parents to other support services available if necessary.

SEND Information, Advice and Support (IAS) Service

If parents need support accessing other services for their child, or with making informed decisions about the next stage of their child's education, they can get support from the SEND IASS.

Cumbria SEND IASS offers up to date information, impartial advice and practical support to parents of children with special educational needs or severe medical conditions including disabilities, which affects the way their child can access education. This support now includes signposting to health and social care advisory services. Confidential and impartial support is offered to parents so they can make informed decisions about their child's education.

Their contact details can be found on their website: sendiass.cumbria.gov.uk/aboutcumbriasendiass.asp

Working with professionals

There are a number of professionals who might work with children with SEN or provide advice to early years providers including:

Early Years Area SENCO - may be the first professional the provider or parents meet. Their role is to provide advice and support to the provider, and the SENCO, on inclusive practice and appropriate strategies and next steps for individual children. This support can be accessed by completing the EHA form and ticking the early years box to request support. The area SENCOs also provide training and support for new PVI SENCOs and funded childminders and ongoing CPD/updates for existing PVI SENCOs and funded childminders.

Early Years Specialist Advisory Teachers - these teachers may assess children as part of the EHC plan assessment process. They also give regular advice to providers regarding children who already have an EHC plan in place. There are also other Specialist Advisory Teachers (SATs) linked to specific disabilities, such as visual and hearing impairment, and physical disabilities.

Speech and Language Therapists - work with children who have communication and language difficulties or who have difficulties with eating, drinking and swallowing. They may work in clinics and provide advice to parents, or may visit children in their provider to advise those working with the children day to day.

Health Visitor - qualified nurses who specialise in working with children under five and their parents. They are usually linked to GP practices. They may see children at a clinic or on home visits. They also undertake regular developmental checks and inoculations.

Educational Psychologist - may provide specialist assessment of learning difficulties and advise on teaching strategies and behaviour management. They would be involved in EHC plan assessments.

Other professionals - depending on the needs of the child and parents, providers may also come into contact with other professionals, including community paediatricians, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, community nursery nurses, family support workers, portage workers, and social workers.

Top tips for working with professionals

- Keep a list of names and contact details of everyone involved with the child. Be clear about their role and how best to contact them (email, phone, working days, etc.).
- If speaking on the phone, prepare a list of the questions you want answering.
- Keep a folder of all reports/letters from the professionals. Add any advice given into a SEN Support Plan. Make sure all practitioners who work with the child are aware of this advice.
- All professionals have large caseloads. Be prepared to be persistent and patient.

Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings

If a number of professionals are involved with the child it is useful to meet together, along with the parents, to review the success of the support and strategies the provider has put in place and to discuss the way forward. These meetings are usually called Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings (sometimes called Team Around the Family - TAF). They may be instigated by the SENCO or by another professional, such as a health visitor or social worker. They are often held at the child's provider if there is a suitable space, but may be held elsewhere, such as in a children's centre or the family's home. The outcomes of these meetings should always be recorded so that everyone is clear about what was agreed. There is a suitable format for this which is downloadable from the Early Help section of the CSCP website within the supporting documents section – (b) family action plan and review: cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/professionals/earlyhelp/earlyhelpassessmentsignsofwellbeingandsuccessdelivery.asp

At the first meeting a **lead professional** should be nominated who will organise future meetings and record decisions. The lead professional does not have to undertake all the actions recommended – these would be done by the most appropriate professional. It is best however if the lead professional is known and trusted by the parents, as they will support the parents to work with the professionals.

Not all professionals involved with the child need to be invited to every meeting, it would depend upon the ongoing needs of the child. New professionals might be invited to future meetings, such as school staff when the child is about to transition into school. The parents must always be invited and should be an integral part of any discussions involving their child.

Section 6: Transitions

Transitions can be challenging for all children, as they move from the familiar to the unfamiliar. This may be when they initially start at a nursery or childminder; when changing providers or moving from room to room within the provision; or starting school. It is important that you plan transitions to make them as smooth as possible to enable a child and family to have a positive experience.

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.

DfE and DH (2015) *SEN and disability code of practice: 0-25 years*, para 5.47

From home into an early years provider

Two-way liaison between a child's family and provider is essential as are planned transition activities. Initial transition activities give children and parents an opportunity to become familiar with your provision and may include:

- **Orientation visits** - Children will access learning opportunities much more quickly where they have an understanding of their environment including adult expectations. Parents should have the opportunity to meet staff, particularly their child's key person, both to discuss the child's need and also to begin to build a trusting relationship. All children may also benefit from short 'settling in' visits and phased entry.
- **Shared events** - can be arranged allowing for 'getting together' opportunities. Such events need not necessarily be specially planned. They may coincide with events which take place throughout the year, e.g. a fire engine visit, a puppet show, a summer picnic, a trip to the beach, etc.
- **Printed/online information** - such as new starter packs, information on websites/Facebook etc. Information on daily routines, photos and information about staff, virtual tours, online storytime sessions etc, can all help parents feel more confident about leaving their child in your care and help them to prepare their child for the transition.

The Transition Toolkit

The early years team have developed a range of useful resources to help early years providers support children and families during transitions. These include wall planners to remind providers of actions they could be taking, tips sheets for settings, schools and parents, information on supporting children for whom transitions may be especially challenging (including children with SEND), a useful template for transition support plans and an 'Information to share' template for passing information on to new providers/schools as well as many other useful resources. Although primarily written to support children with the transition to school, many of the resources are useful for transitions at other points, including moving into year 1.

The toolkit is available to view and download [here](#).



The toolkit highlights 3 important principles to remember when supporting children with transitions:

1. One size doesn't fit all

Any plan that you have for transition should be flexible enough to meet the needs of all children and families. The document 'Transition support for all' highlights the minimum recommended arrangements for all children, plus the enhancements that would be good practice for children who may be especially anxious, have short term needs, have an open Early Help or an EHCP. The document 'Points to consider when supporting enhanced transitions' gives further practical advice on this.

2. Transition is a marathon, not a sprint

Successful transitions may need time. Settling a child into their first early years setting may take several weeks. Similarly, transition to school is not just a process that happens in the last few weeks of a child's pre-school year. Helping children to be resilient, confident learners, who settle well into school is a process that takes a long time. The 'Transition year planner - Early Years settings' and the 'Transition Year Planner - Reception classes', can support this thinking. The document 'Developing Independence and Resilience' suggests ways that settings can support children to develop the vital skills necessary for successful, stress-free transition.

3. You can't do it alone

Successful transition requires partnership working between nurseries/ childminders, schools and families. No one partner is responsible. Other agencies may also need to be involved, especially when the child has additional needs. Transition processes work best when good relationships are established between all parties, who respect each other's contributions.

Section 7: Useful supporting materials

<p>Requests for support and making referrals</p> <p>Cumbria EHA form and process cumbriasafeguardingchildren.co.uk/earlyhelp.asp</p> <p>Cumbria Partnership NHS Trust: Children's physical health and development team – Request for assessment form <i>Available to download from:</i> search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/cumbria/fsd/files/childrens_physical_health_and_development_team_request_for_assessment_referral.pdf</p>
<p>Information for parents and carers <i>Please note: A lot of the information in this section is also useful for practitioners</i></p> <p>Contact For families with disabled children - Contact exists to help families feel valued, supported, confident and informed. contact.org.uk/</p> <p>SEND Local Offer fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0</p> <p>SEND Alliance Cumbria (SENDAC) – Giving parent carers a platform to shape SEND services sendac.org/</p> <p>Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) sendiass.cumbria.gov.uk/aboutcumbriassendiass.asp</p> <p>DfE (2014) Special educational needs and disability: A guide for parents and carers gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-parents-and-carers</p> <p>Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets (available to download from the Council for Disabled Children website councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/ - type the title of the document into the website's search function:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Autistic spectrum disorders ● Behaviour ● Cerebral palsy ● Childcare ● Deafness and hearing loss ● Down syndrome ● General information ● If your child has a rare condition ● Learning disabilities ● Living without a diagnosis ● Looking after yourself as a parent ● Multi-sensory impairments ● Neurological disorders (in three parts) ● People you may meet ● Speech, language and communication needs ● Useful contacts ● Visual impairment (in four parts) <p>IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Education Advice) ipsea.org.uk/</p> <p>What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents foundationyears.org.uk/files/2021/09/What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf</p>

Tools to support assessment

NHS North Cumbria Integrated Care – Speech and Language Therapy

Speech, language and communication screening tools

- 24-29 months
- 30-35 months
- 36-41 months
- 42-47 months
- 48-59 months
- 60-71 months

Available to download from the SEND Local Offer:

localoffer.cumbria.gov.uk/kb5/cumbria/fsd/advice.page?id=RrlMcq6WEnw

DfE (2021) Development Matters

gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2

Early Years Coalition (2021) Birth to 5 Matters

birthto5matters.org.uk/download-or-buy-a-copy/

Progress check at age two

DfE (2022) Progress check at age two

gov.uk/government/publications/progress-check-at-age-2

From your local council: Support for Childminders, Early Years and Childcare Provision

- Two year old joint review
- Two year old toolkit

legacy.cumberland.gov.uk/childrenservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/earlyyearsandchildcare/supportforearlyyearsandchildcareprovision.asp

Early Support Developmental Journals

A copy of the SEND Early Years Developmental Journal and guidance can be downloaded via the SEND Local Offer:

search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/cumbria/fsd/files/send_early_years_development_journal_2021.pdf

Word version and guidance:

fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/advice.page?id=KG4-_27SJ_0

Further development journals can be downloaded from the councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/ - type the title of the document into the website's search function

- Multiple needs
- Down syndrome
- Deafness
- Visual impairment
- Also google Developmental Journal for Multiple Needs or Deaf Babies and Children

SEN Support Plan and Guidance

fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/advice.page?id=EOY7vybMwV8

Online training and self-reflection tools to support practice

AET (Autism Education Trust) early years autism competencies framework sets out the skills, knowledge and understanding that staff require to work effectively with children with autism. The framework has been designed to enable individual staff to consider which competencies they have already and which they need to develop. It is hoped that working on these competencies will improve outcomes for children with autism in the early years.

autismeducationtrust.org.uk/

CDC (Council for Disabled Children) eLearning

councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/what-we-do-0/e-learning

Disability matters

disabilitymatters.org.uk/

nasen

Early Years Training and Resources offers a range of training opportunities and resources specifically for leaders and practitioners, working in the Early Years (EY). nasen is also currently working alongside, The Council for Disabled Children, Speech and Language UK, National Children's Bureau, Contact, School Improvement Liverpool and Dingley's Promise, as part of the DfE-funded EY SEND Partnership.

nasen.org.uk/early-years



Section 8: Resources and further references

Useful documents, publications and websites

Contact: A-Z medical conditions – search from a list of 800 medical conditions

contact.org.uk/conditions/

Asthma
Asthma UK asthma.org.uk
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
ADDISS – the National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service addiss.co.uk
ADHD Foundation adhdfoundation.org.uk
HACSG – The Hyperactive Children’s Support Group This organisation focuses on dietary causes of ADHD, although these are not accepted universally by other experts and organisations. hacsg.org.uk
Autism
Autism Education Trust - a not-for-profit organisation supported by the Department for Education that offers education professionals training, practical tools and a wealth of free resources to better support autistic children and young people aged 0 to 25 autismeducationtrust.org.uk
ASC in the EYFS – Information for Early Years Settings (Cumbria’s Early Years Team) <i>Available to download from the SEND Local Offer</i> fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/advice.page?id=EOY7vybMwV8
Early Support ‘Information for Parents’ Booklets: Autistic spectrum disorders councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-autistic-spectrum
National Autistic Society – the section for Professionals contains some useful information for Practitioners working with young children with ASC autism.org.uk
National Strategies Inclusion Development Programme Booklets – Guidance for practitioners in the EYFS: Supporting children on the autism spectrum foundationyears.org.uk/files/2011/10/Inclusion_Development_Programme_Autistic_Spectrum.pdf
The following website is useful positivelyautism.com for some free teaching ideas and materials

Behaviour
Cumbria County Council: Supporting children with behaviour cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/1459/7037/38477/38481/45121121657.pdf
Early Education Learning Together Series: Helping children with their behaviour early-education.org.uk/helping-children-with-their-behaviour/
Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Behaviour councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-behaviour
National Strategies Inclusion Development Programme Booklets – Guidance for practitioners in the EYFS: Supporting children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties dera.ioe.ac.uk/757/7/sen_idp_besd_eyfs_0001010_Redacted.pdf
Cerebral Palsy
Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Cerebral palsy councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-cerebral-palsy
Scope scope.org.uk
Coeliac disease
Coeliac UK coeliac.org.uk
Cystic fibrosis
Cystic Fibrosis Trust cysticfibrosis.org.uk
Deafness and hearing loss
Early Support Developmental Journal: Deafness councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/deaf-babies-and-children-development-journals
Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Deafness and hearing loss councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-deafness-and
Talk to your baby – For parents and carers of children who are deaf wordsforlife.org.uk/parents-and-carers-children-who-are-deaf
The National Deaf Children's Society ndcs.org.uk
Developmental delay
Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Learning disabilities councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-learning

Diabetes
<p>Diabetes UK diabetes.org.uk</p>
Down syndrome
<p>Down's Syndrome Association downs-syndrome.org.uk</p>
<p>Early Support Developmental Journal: Down syndrome councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/downs-syndrome-development-journal-early</p>
<p>Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Down syndrome councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-downs-syndrome</p>
Duchenne muscular dystrophy
<p>There are 20 known types of muscular dystrophy, with Duchenne being the most common in children.</p> <p>Muscular Dystrophy UK muscardystrophyuk.org</p>
Dyslexia
<p>British Dyslexia Association bdadyslexia.org.uk</p>
Dyspraxia (development co-ordination disorder)
<p>Over the past few years, there has been a change to the terms used to describe what was previously known as dyspraxia. The term 'development co-ordination disorder' is now used by some professionals.</p> <p>Dyspraxia Foundation dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk</p>
Early Support Early Years Generic Development Journal
<p>Early Support Developmental Journal: Generic early years councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/inclusion-send/early-years-developmental-journal</p> <p><i>NB: a print friendly format is available to download from the SEND Local Offer</i> fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/advice.page?id=EOY7vybMwV8</p>
Eczema
<p>National Eczema Society eczema.org</p>

<p>English as an Additional Language (EAL)</p> <p>Cumbria County Council: Virtual School and Equalities Learning Team – Early Years cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/1459/7037/17792/43777124926.pdf</p> <p>EAL Guidance (Cumbria’s Early Years Team) fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/advice.page?id=EOY7vybMwV8</p> <p>I CAN Help factsheets: English as an additional language speechandlanguage.org.uk/media/3312/supporting-children-learning-english-as-an-additional-language.pdf</p> <p>National Strategy Publications: Supporting Children Learning English as an Additional Language dera.ioe.ac.uk/6695/2/A9REC02_Redacted.pdf</p>
<p>Epilepsy</p> <p>Epilepsy Action epilepsy.org.uk</p>
<p>Fragile X</p> <p>This is an inherited genetic condition, which is called ‘fragile X’ because of the X chromosome is slightly damaged.</p> <p>Fragile X Society fragilex.org.uk</p>
<p>Hydrocephalus</p> <p>Hydrocephalus occurs when the fluid in the brain is unable to flow freely away. This causes a build-up of fluid and thus pressure in the brain.</p> <p>Shine shinecharity.org.uk</p>
<p>Gifted and talented</p> <p>National Strategy Publications: Finding & Exploring Young Children’s Fascinations birthto5matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Finding_Exploring.pdf</p>
<p>Health referrals</p> <p>Cumbria Partnership NHS Trust: Children’s physical health and development team – Request for assessment form <i>Available to download from the SEND Local Offer</i> search3.openobjects.com/mediamanager/cumbria/fsd/files/childrens_physical_health_and_development_team_request_for_assessment_referral.pdf</p>
<p>Living without a diagnosis</p> <p>Early Support ‘Information for Parents’ Booklets: Living without a diagnosis councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-living-without#:~:text=This%20is%20an%20Early%20Support%20information%20resources%20on,where%20you%20can%20get%20further%20information%20and%20support.</p>

<p>Medical guidance</p> <p>DfE (2014) Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions: <i>Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England</i></p> <p>DfE (2014) Templates: <i>Supporting pupils with medical conditions</i></p> <p>gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3</p>
<p>Multiple needs</p> <p>Early Support Developmental Journal: Multiple needs</p> <p>councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/transition-adulthood/development-journal-children-multiple-needs</p>
<p>Neurological disorders</p> <p>Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Neurological disorders (<i>in three parts</i>)</p> <p>councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-neurological</p>
<p>Information for parents and carers</p> <p>Note: A lot of the information in this section is also useful for practitioners</p> <p>Contact</p> <p>For families with disabled children - Contact exists to help families feel valued, supported, confident and information</p> <p>contact.org.uk/</p> <p>SEND Local Offer</p> <p>fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=5-1</p> <p>SEND Alliance Cumbria (SENDAC) – Giving parent carers a platform to shape SEND services</p> <p>sendac.org/</p> <p>Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS)</p> <p>sendiass.cumbria.gov.uk/aboutcumbriasendiass.asp</p> <p>DfE (2014) Special educational needs and disability: A guide for parents and carers</p> <p>gov.uk/government/publications/send-guide-for-parents-and-carers</p> <p>Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets (available to download from the Council for Disabled Children website councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/ - type the title of the document into the websites search function:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Autistic spectrum disorders ● Behaviour ● Cerebral palsy ● Childcare ● Deafness and hearing loss ● Down syndrome ● General information ● If your child has a rare condition ● Learning disabilities ● Living without a diagnosis ● Looking after yourself as a parent ● Multi-sensory impairments ● Neurological disorders (<i>in three parts</i>) ● People you may meet ● Sleep ● Speech, language and communication needs ● Useful contacts ● Visual impairment (<i>in four parts</i>)

<p>Information for parents and carers (continued) <i>Note: A lot of the information in this section is also useful for practitioners</i></p>
<p>IPSEA (Independent Parental Special Education Advice) ipsea.org.uk/</p>
<p>What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents foundationyears.org.uk/files/2021/09/What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS-complete-FINAL-16.09-compressed.pdf</p>
<p>Rare conditions</p>
<p>Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: If your child has a rare condition councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-if-your-child-has</p>
<p>Sensory processing</p>
<p>Cumbria County Council: Supporting children with sensory processing needs in the early years cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/1459/7037/18016/4450511357.pdf</p>
<p>Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Multi-sensory impairments councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-multi-sensory</p>
<p>GOV.UK: Help for early years providers – Sensory food education help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/get-help-to-improve-your-practice/sensory-food-education</p>
<p>SEN Support Plan</p>
<p>Early Years SEN Support Plan (blank), guidance and parents leaflet – available to download from the SEND Local Offer: Blank plan and guidance: fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/advice.page?id=EOY7vybMwV8 Parents leaflet: fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=5-1</p>
<p>Sickle cell anaemia</p>
<p>Sickle cell anaemia is a genetically inherited blood condition that affects the red blood cells in the body. Children with sickle cell conditions are likely to have bouts of severe pain caused by abnormally shaped blood cells becoming blocked in the small blood vessels.</p> <p>Sickle Cell Society sicklecellsociety.org</p>
<p>Sleep</p>
<p>Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Sleep councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-sleep</p>

Speech, language and communication
<p>BookTrust: Bookstart booktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/programmes-and-campaigns/bookstart/</p>
<p>Cumbria County Council: Supporting children's speech, language and communication development in early years settings and schools cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/1459/7037/17935/439869131.pdf Cumbria's speech and language pathway – universal, targeted and specialist service offer cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/1459/7037/17935/44524152443.pdf</p>
<p>Early Support 'Information for Parents' Booklets: Speech, language and communication needs councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/early-support-information-speech-language</p>
<p>GOV.UK: Help for early years providers – Communication and language help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/communication-and-language</p>
<p>Speech and Language UK resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategies for developing speech, language and communication ● Information for speech, language and communication needs ● Check your child's progress ● Resources for speakers of other languages <p>speechandlanguage.org.uk/talking-point/parents/</p>
<p>National Strategies Inclusion Development Programme Booklets – Guidance for practitioners in the EYFS: Supporting Children with speech, language and communication needs foundationyears.org.uk/2011/10/supporting-children-with-speech-language-and-communication-needs/</p>
<p>Talk to your baby talktoyourbaby.org/</p>
<p>The Communication Trust speechandlanguage.org.uk/talking-point/for-professionals/the-communication-trust/</p>
<p>Words for Life wordsforlife.org.uk</p>
Spina bifida
<p>Shine shinecharity.org.uk</p>
Toileting
<p>ERIC - Information and support on childhood bedwetting, daytime wetting, constipation and soiling to children, young people, parents and professionals eric.org.uk/</p>
<p>Warwickshire County Council (2018) Guidance on special toileting needs in schools and early years setting headsup.warwickshire.gov.uk/assets/1/wcc_send_toileting_guidance_april_2018.pdf</p>

Transitions

Cumbria County Council: The transition toolkit

legacy.cumberland.gov.uk/childrenservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/earlyyearsandchildcare/supportforearlyyearsandchildcareprovision.asp

Kirklees Council (2019) Kirklees guidance for transitions in the Early Years

kirklees.gov.uk/beta/working-with-children/pdf/childcare-providers/transition-guidance.pdf

Visual impairment

Early Support Developmental Journal: Visual impairment

councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/updated-developmental-journal-babies-and#:~:text=The%20Developmental%20Journal%20for%20babies%20and%20young%20children,authors%20Dr%20Alison%20Salt%20and%20Dr%20Naomi%20Dale%29

RNIB and Early Support: Information about vision impairment – guide for parents

media.rnib.org.uk/documents/APDF-ENG021603_Early_Support_Parents_Information_0.pdf

Royal National Institute of Blind People

rnib.org.uk

Talk to your baby – For parents and carers of children who have visual impairments

cdn.literacytrust.org.uk/media/documents/2017_07_19_free_ELYresource_-_Talk_To_Your_Baby_visual_impairment.pdf

Visual timetables

I CAN Help factsheet: Visual timelines for parents

speechandlanguage.org.uk/media/3305/visual-timelines-factsheet-parents.pdf

I CAN Help factsheet: Visual timelines for practitioners

speechandlanguage.org.uk/media/3316/proofv2_ican_help_factsheet_visualtimelines_130422.pdf

Useful publications

SEND Toolkit

fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/advice.page?id=EOY7vybMwV8

SEND Handbook – January 2022

fid.cumberland.gov.uk/kb5/cumberland/directory/advice.page?id=mIP9J0iAfbY

GOV.UK: Help for early years providers – Meeting the needs of all children

help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/get-help-to-improve-your-practice/meeting-the-needs-of-all-children

Pen Green Centre for Children and their Families: Guidance document on the importance of supporting children which offers a practical toolkit with examples of how to support them and potential frameworks you could use to identify, support and assess children with SEND
pengreen.org/a-celebratory-approach-to-working-with-children-with-send/

Further reading and bibliography

Durham County Council: SEN Planning Tool for Early Years

durham.gov.uk/media/31602/SEN-planning-tool-for-early-years/pdf/SENPlanningToolEarlyYears.pdf?m=637109757343170000

Early Support (2012) Multi Agency Planning and Improvement Tool

Available from: councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/schools-colleges-and-fe/mapit-multi-agency-planning-and-improvement

Margetts, K (2004) Planning Transition Programmes. In Fabian H, and Dunlop, W (Eds) *Transitions in the Early Years*: London: Routledge Falmer.

Tassoni, P (2015) Supporting children with special educational needs: A Penny Tassoni handbook. United Kingdom: Hodder Education.

4Children – A guide for working with parents of children with SEND

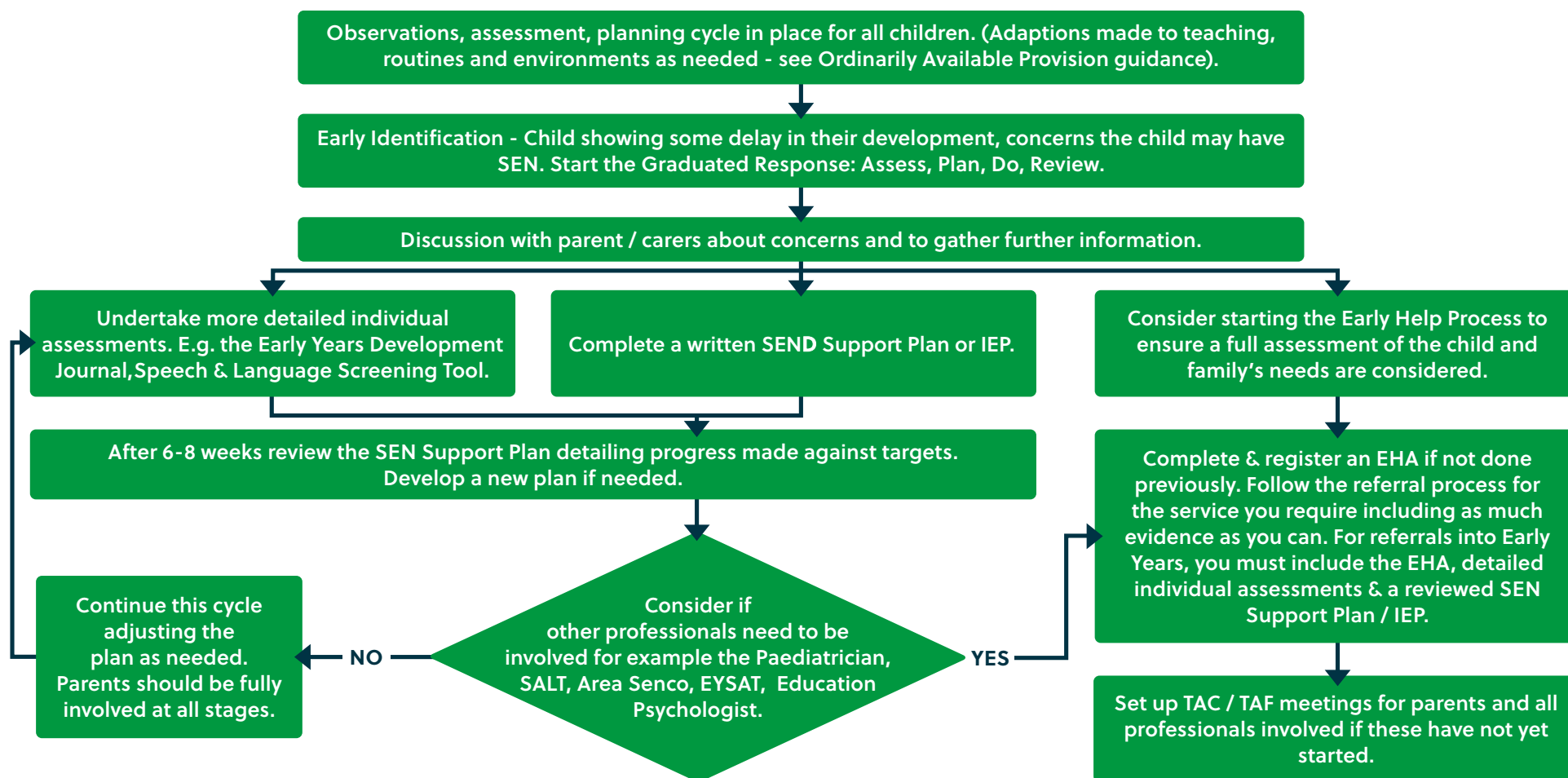
5f2fe3253cd1dfa0d089-bf8b2cdb6a1dc2999fecbc372702016c.ssl.cf3.rackcdn.com/uploads/ckeditor/attachments/6908/Guide-for-working-with-parents-of-children-with-SEND.pdf

4Children and CDC – SEN and disability in the Early Years - A toolkit

councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/early-years-toolkit-merged.pdf

Appendix 1: Early Years SEND Processes

For more information please consult the Early Years SENCO Toolkit



If despite having taken appropriate and focussed action to identify, assess and meet the SEN of the child, they have not made expected progress, consideration should be given to requesting an EHC needs assessment following the information provided in the SEND Handbook and Criteria.
For advice and support prior to a referral please contact an Area SENCO.

Appendix 3: SEN policy example

Special Educational Needs Policy

At _____ we believe that all children, regardless of their individual requirements, have the right to a broad, balanced and purposeful early years' experience which is based on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and differentiated to meet the needs of individual children.

Our intention is to welcome all children into our inclusive setting. In order to achieve this, we aim to identify any requirements a child might have and to work closely with the child, their parents/carers and other agencies if this is necessary.

We will work to the requirements detailed within the:

- **Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage** – Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five (2023)
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) code of practice: 0 to 25 years** – Statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (January 2015)
- **Equality Act 2010**

We will have regard of the information detailed within:

- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions – Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England (September 2014)

Our aims and objectives are to

- Ensure a happy, caring and secure environment for everyone who works in or visits our setting.
- Ensure that everyone in our setting, their opinions and their talents are respected and valued.
- Admit children with SEN after a familiarisation period which is appropriate to the child's requirements. Parents may stay with the child initially, according to the requirements of the child.
- Identify children's SEN as early as possible, using a variety of observations, assessments and monitoring procedures, according to the child's requirements. Assessments and identification of SEN will be carried out by the appropriate member(s) of staff. Parents will be involved with and informed of each assessment.
- Work together with parents to plan ways of supporting the children in managing their requirements, deciding on programmes or plans of action according to each child's requirements.
- Differentiate and adapt our activities and environment when necessary, to ensure the inclusion of children with SEN. Any adaptations will be made according to the requirements of the child.
- Ensure that our plans for each child with SEN are appropriate, closely monitoring their progress to make sure that the plans remain appropriate, relevant and effective for the child's progress.
- Emphasise and encourage positive behaviour by everyone in the setting. This includes adults as well as children.

Identifying special educational needs

The setting is aware that children progress at different rates and monitors individual children's progress. When a child is not making progress, different opportunities and alternative approaches will be tried in consultation with parents/carers and the SENCO. The **graduated approach**, as detailed within the SEND Code of Practice 2015, with four stages of action (assess, plan, do and review) will be adopted.

As part of the graduated approach process, whilst always working alongside a child's parents/carers, we may:

- Devise, implement and review a Special Education Needs (SEN) support plan. A SEN support plan will be reviewed at least half termly/six weekly alongside a child's parents/carers. Appropriate changes will be made where necessary.
- Acknowledge when we cannot meet the child's requirements in our setting and discuss with their parents/carers the request for support from outside professionals or agencies. No outside professional or agency will be contacted without the parents' permission.
- Work together with the outside professionals/agencies, the child and the parents/carers to plan and use appropriately revised SEN support plans to support the child.

Where, despite having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the SEN requirements of a child, a child has not made expected progress, we will consider requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan assessment. This will be discussed with everyone involved, especially the child's parents/carers.

Roles and responsibilities

The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), who is _____, will work within the requirements of the documents detailed above.

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

(SEND Code of Practice, 2015)

Training and resources

The SENCO:

- Has completed the local authority early years training 'All Our Children' for new SENCO's
- Attends the local authority Early Years SENCO Networks which are held regularly throughout the year
- Will access any relevant training as required

The setting provides a range of resources which aims to meet the requirements of all the children in our care. If specialist equipment is required the SENCO will discuss this with parents/carers and professionals/agencies as to where, and how, it can be obtained.

Dealing with complaints

If parents and/or carers have a complaint about the way we are working with their child who has SEN, they should speak to the key person initially, and if they are still not happy, they should approach the SENCO. The SENCO will look into the complaint and report back within a week. If parents and/or carers continue to be dissatisfied, the SENCO will refer the matter to the Manager to take further action as appropriate.

Reviewing the policy

We will review this policy on an annual basis and make any appropriate changes to ensure it is relevant to our setting and the children we care for.

Date completed: _____

Signed (SENCO): _____

Signed (Owner/Manager/VMC): _____

Review Date: _____

Appendix 4: SEN Monitoring tools

It is recommended that settings have processes in place which enable them to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of their provision on the outcomes of children with special educational needs. Appendix 4 contains a series of monitoring tools which SENCOs may find useful in helping to reflect on their setting's SEN provision and practice, focusing on a continual drive for improvement.

4.1 SEN Staff Observation Record

This form can be used to record an observation of a practitioner who is supporting a child with SEN. This could involve the SENCO /manager watching the delivery of a specific planned intervention or it could be a more general observation of SEN support.

Information from the observation can be fed in supervisions and appraisals and can be used as part of the setting's overall self-evaluation and improvement planning.

4.2 SEN Staff Self-assessment and Feedback Form

The purpose of this form is to help evaluate a practitioner's confidence and knowledge of SEN and their day to day practice with a child(ren) they are supporting. It helps to identify strengths and also areas for further continuing professional development.

This form can be used in different ways:

1. As a self-assessment tool to help a practitioner who is working with a child with a SEN, to reflect on their confidence and knowledge of different aspects of their role
2. As a framework for supervisions and appraisals for a practitioner who is working with a child with SEN. It provides a number of questions which can be selected from to guide discussions. The idea is not to use all the questions listed but to select those which may be appropriate to the practitioner's role and circumstances. Questions can be chosen and given to the practitioner in advance of the meeting so they have time to consider their responses.
3. Either or both sections of the form can be used.

4.3 Monitoring SEN Support Plans

This form can be used in different ways:

1. As a self-checking tool for practitioners to use when they are completing a SEN Support Plan
2. As a format for SENCOs to monitor the quality and accuracy of SEN Support Plans completed by other practitioners. The resulting information will help SENCOs identify good practice in writing SEN Support Plans as well as highlighting specific training needs.

4.4. SEN Parental Questionnaire

The questionnaire can be used to gain parental views about the quality of SEN support for their child. It will help settings to reflect on their SEN practice and provision, identifying areas of good practice and also aspects for further development. Information from the parental questionnaires can be used to feed into the setting improvement plan.

Appendix 4.1(a)

SEN Staff Observation Record

Observation of the effectiveness of support and interventions

SENCOs / Managers can use this form to record an observation of a support assistant working with a child with special educational needs, feeding back after the observation.

Alternatively, with the support assistant's agreement, video the support assistant working with a child with special educational needs and then later reflect together on the effectiveness of the support and intervention, recording key points below.

Context of the observation:

Activity:

Interactions:

Outcomes:

Summary/points for action:

Appendix 4.1(b)

SEN Staff Observation Record : Prompts Observation of the effectiveness of support and interventions

Context of the observation:

- Observation or Video recording?
- SENCO / Manager feedback or joint reflection through video playback?
- Where?
- Grouping?
- Planned activity/ incidental support?

Activity:

- Written plan in place and followed?
- Appropriateness of play opportunity / resources?
- Activity links to individual SEN Support Plan
- Appropriate differentiation – matched to ability?
- High expectations?

Interactions:

- Adult:child interactions?
- Appropriateness of communications?
- Appropriateness of strategies used?
- Positive behaviour management?
- Encouragement of social interactions?
- Promotion of independence?
- Support for child's wellbeing and involvement?
- Adaptability of adult?

Outcomes:

- Child's engagement and motivation?
- Skills / dispositions?
- Impact on child's progress?
- Record / sharing of achievements?

Summary/points for action:

- Highlight good practice
- Summarise any follow up actions (including the need for peer to peer support, CPD, visits to other settings, additional resources etc.)

Appendix 4.2

SEN Staff Self-assessment and feedback form (for staff working with children with special educational needs)

Self-reflection: How confident do you feel?

(Tick the box to indicate your confidence with 1= not confident at all 5= extremely confident)

	1	2	3	4	5
I am confident with understanding the child's strengths and needs					
I am confident with knowing how to meet the child's needs					
I am confident in talking about the child's progress					
I am confident in writing the child's support plans					
I am confident in supporting the child's parents / carers					

The following may be some of the questions you may choose to discuss with a SEN Support Assistant during supervisions, appraisals or appraisal reviews

1. How do you see your role when you are working with a child who has SEN?

2. Are you fully aware of the strengths and difficulties for the child you are supporting? How is this information communicated to you?

3. Are you involved in writing and reviewing the child's SEN Support Plan? How confident do you feel about this?

4. Are you aware of all the targets and strategies for the child you are working with?

5. Do you feel confident that you can successfully implement a variety of strategies to support and motivate the child?

6. How confident do you feel in supporting the child with a range of interventions, including planned activities?

7. Are you involved in planning specific interventions and support for the child? How confident do you feel about the planning?

8. Do you have access to appropriate resources for supporting the child?

9. How do you monitor and record the child's progress? How effective do you think this is?

10. How confident do you feel when talking to the child's parents and supporting and advising them on home learning?

11. Do you feel confident in approaching other staff if you are unsure of what you are being asked to do or if you have concerns regarding a particular child?

12. Do you feel you have made a difference in helping the child you support to make progress in their learning and development?

13. Are there any areas of your work related to SEN that you would like to change or would like further advice or training on?

Any further comments?

Appendix 4.3

Monitoring SEN Support Plans

Name of Child: _____

Name of Practitioner completing the plan: _____

Date: _____

Action	Completed (tick) / comments
Is background information accurate and complete?	
Have details about additional funding been included?	
Is there a review date for this plan?	
Is there a date for the EHA to be updated?	
Have parents contributed to the plan and signed it?	
Are the child's strengths and needs at home as well as at the setting included?	
Is information written from the child's point of view?	
Are long term outcomes comprehensive?	
Has external advice from other professionals been followed? Are these people named on the plan?	
Are targets SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound)?	
Do new targets take into account reviewed information about the child's progress on their previous plan?	
Are there specific details about who will support the child and how ? Does this include ways that parents / carers can support at home?	
Are there specific details about everyday strategies which will be used to further support the child?	

Monitored by (name): _____

Role: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 4.4

Monitoring SEN Support Plans Monitoring Form

Parent/Carer Questionnaire

Name of Parent(s) / Carer(s): _____

Name of child: _____

	Please tick (✓)		
	Yes	Partly	No
1. The setting has a clear understanding of my child's needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The setting keeps me informed about my child's progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Staff give me advice and tasks to help my child at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Staff listen to my ideas, opinions and concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I am pleased with the progress my child is making	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. My child is happy at the setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I know the staff who support my child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. know how support staff help my child	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I am happy with the help my child receives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I am involved in drawing up my child's Individual Support Plan and it is explained to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I receive a copy of the Individual Support Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I am involved in reviewing my child's needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall, what the setting does for my child is:

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Unsatisfactory
- Poor
- Unacceptable

Any other comments:

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire.

If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised through the questionnaire in more detail, please speak to your child's key person or the setting's Special Educational needs Co-ordinator.

