



Brent

Identifying and assessing children's needs in the early years

All early years providers (day nurseries, pre-schools, playgroups, registered childminders, day care and maintained nursery schools and classes) have duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. They must have regard to the 0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice to:

- Promote equality of opportunity for disabled children
- Provide inclusive practice
- Remove barriers to learning
- Ensure children with medical conditions get the support they need
- Make reasonable adjustments including the provision of auxiliary aids and services to ensure disabled children are not at a disadvantage compared with their peers.

The code of practice sets clear expectations on early years settings to give young children with special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND) a good start by adopting a **graduated approach** with four stages to identifying and effectively meeting the needs of all children. At each stage, parents/carers should be engaged with the setting, contributing to assessment and planning, in order to fulfil their child's potential.

What is the graduated approach?

Assess:

- Every early years setting will have an overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all children
- There will be ongoing formative assessments of children based on observations, which will be used to inform future planning
- The Early Years Foundation Stage includes two specific times for providing written assessments for parents and other professionals:
 - A) Progress check at age two
 - B) The Early Years Foundation Stage profile at the end of reception
- Following assessment from progress, where there is cause for concern, practitioners will work in partnership with parents/carers to agree how the child should be best supported and to ensure progress is regularly reviewed.

Plan:

Early years staff, usually the SENCO and parents/carers will develop a plan (SEN Support) to ensure children receive the appropriate level of support. This may include:

- Provision mapping – an overview of how provision (i.e. activities, resources, routine, staffing and organisation) meets the need of your child
- Individual Plan – recording specific and measurable targets and strategies implemented to support targets over an agreed period of time
- Any plan agreed will include a date to review your child's progress with yourselves (parents/carers) and the early years staff.

Do:

The early years setting will ensure that a child's individual key person and SENCO are able to implement the agreed plan and monitor the impact on your child's progress.

The Individual Plan will be informed by your child's interests and needs and will be implemented as part of your child's daily activities alongside other children. The SENCO and or key person will record on-going specific details of the progress your child is making towards the agreed targets.

Onward referrals to outside agencies such as a speech and language therapist, occupational therapist and community paediatrician, may also be made to contribute to the assessment of the child and the implementing of their Individual Plan.

Many children with additional or special educational needs will not require special resources or enhanced staffing. However, some children with complex needs may benefit from an enhanced staffing ratio for a time-limited period or from accessing additionally resourced provision.

Review:

The effectiveness of the support and the impact on your child's progress will be reviewed in line with the agreed date. This review will include parents/carers, practitioners and relevant professionals and is generally known as a Team around the Child meeting.

At the meeting the targets on the Individual Plan will be reviewed in order to plan next steps and agree any changes in the light of your child's progress and development.

The possible outcomes of the review may be:

- The child has made significant progress and further plans are no longer needed
- The child has made some progress but it has been agreed to continue to implement another plan
- The child has made little progress. It may be agreed that additional plans are required and that other professionals may need to be involved to offer more specialist advice

The consent of parents/carers will always be sought before seeking the involvement of other professionals.

Please speak to your child's early years provider for further information about how they support children with SEND.

Confidential and impartial help and advice is available from Brent SEND information advice and support service (SENDIASS) at www.brent.gov.uk/sendiaass