



Graduated Approach for children with SEND in the early years

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Introduction to the document

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) provides an outline of High Quality Teaching and SEND Provision. It sets out what is expected of settings, in line with their Free Early Education Entitlement (FEEE) for children with SEND.

This document should be used to:

- Demonstrate best practice in relation to High Quality Teaching
- Support early identification and the graduated approach to meeting children's needs.
- Support consistency within settings, and expectations within this
- Used to support conversations with parents and families
- Used to support the application of Inclusion Funding
- Used when writing Targeted SEN Support Plans and EHCPs

The document is split into the following sections:

- Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)
- Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)
- Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)
- Learning Disability (LD)
- Physical Disability (Phy)
- Hearing Impairment (HI)
- Vision Impairment (VI)
- Medical Need
- Sensory Need

In each section there is a description of the type of SEND, what High Quality Teaching would look like in relation to this and next steps in terms of Universal Support and Targeted SEN Support.

Further information can be obtained through the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team at Leicestershire County Council.

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/early-years-sen-inclusion-service>

To enable children with the best start in life, it is your responsibility as professionals to identify any emerging and developing needs early. This should not be left for the next professional. This is in line with your provider agreement and the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

SLCN

When a child presents with Speech, Language and Communication Needs, these could include, but are not limited to:

- Can demonstrate aspects of solitary play
- Can be withdrawn, having little interaction
- May be disruptive/destructive
- May be attention seeking in inappropriate ways
- May have no or poor eye contact
- May have less expressive communications, such as little facial expressions
- May have a stammer when getting out their words or talking
- May avoid situations with lots of language
- May appear to follow others when given verbal instructions
- May have selective mutism

It does not include children who are learning English as an additional language, children who have sensory impairment or children who have a diagnosis of ASC.

Inclusive Practice for Children with SEND in the Early Years – Quality First Teaching

Language

- Adjusting language to suit all children's needs
- Giving children time to process information and respond
- Wherever possible, use visual aids and cues, signing, signs and symbols, objects of reference, Makaton etc
- Create a language rich environment which promotes language development
- A Multi-sensory approach to language is best practice

Environment

- Use visuals within the environment to make every area accessible
- Develop quiet spaces where children can have calming time
- Be aware of over stimulation within your environment, e.g. not too busy displays
- Having a choice board available so children can choose activities that are not available
- Activities should include sensory and tactile play
- Your environment needs to be welcoming to children, parents, carers and professionals

Role of the Adult

- To be an enabler so that children can access the environment, other adults, peers and learning
- To have a good knowledge of child development so that the assess, plan, do, review model can be followed
- Encourage inclusion in all aspects of the day
- To champion the children and to be an advocate for their support
- To plan for reasonable adjustments so children can access the learning and environment
- Be prepared to be flexible

Supporting Behaviour

- Understanding that all behaviour is communication
- Looking into why behaviour is happening as opposed to trying to tackle the behaviour itself
- Understanding and knowing the child is key
- Ensure all adults are consistent
- Ensure there is a clear structure to the day
- Use positive behaviour strategies

Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional speech, language and communication needs through:

- Reinforcing key vocabulary
- Expanding children's key words and speech
- Provide a quiet, distraction free areas to encourage language
- Implement visuals around the environment and throughout teaching
- Implement a social communication group
- Keeping language and instructions clear and simple
- Give children time to process and respond
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
- Seek unnamed advice from the Duty Desk (0116 305 7136) Monday to Friday 9am- 12pm or the SEND Drop In Events

Targeted SEN Support

Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Use of specific objects of reference
- Seek training to develop staff knowledge, understanding and skills
- Run an assessment and implement a targeted plan
- Refer to SALT for advice and next steps
- Implement specific individual interventions from SALT or other professionals
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Seek advice from Area SENCO
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team



Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC)

ASC

When a child presents with ASC, this could include, but is not limited to:

- **Communication/Social**
Struggle to regulate emotions, difficulties making friendships, inappropriate behaviour, lack of eye contact, social intent not apparent, lack of social barriers and can obsess on relationships.
- **Sensory**
Self-stimulating, sensitivity to the seven senses, lack of sense of space, avoidance or seeking of sensory input and difficulty with sleep.
- **Flexibility of Thinking**
Rigid routine, repetitive play, struggles with change, own agenda, not wanting to try new things, lack of empathy, no apparent sense of danger and may have intense special interests.
- **Language**
Struggle to follow instructions, echolalia, no language, few vocalisations and demonstrating negative behaviours as a form of communication.

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Role of the Adult

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- To plan for reasonable adjustments so children can access the learning and environment
- Be prepared to be flexible

Supporting Behaviour

- Understanding that all behaviour is communication
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Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional ASC needs through:

- Social communication groups
- Child interest led activities
- Environmental checklist
- Create and use of a sensory processing profile
- Allow sensory opportunities
- Create a sensory lifestyle, adapting the environment where necessary
- Visual timetables
- Structured and consistent routines
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
- Seek unnamed advice from the Duty Desk (0116 305 7136) Monday to Friday 9am- 12pm or the SEND Drop In Events

Targeted SEN Support

Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Seek training to develop staff knowledge, understanding and skills
- Specific visual inputs, such as now and next
- Development of 1:1 adult-led activities
- Using object of reference
- 1:1 input when required to access learning opportunities
- Plan regular multiagency meetings, including outside agencies and parents and families
- Support parents accessing other agencies, such as paediatric services.
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Seek advice from Area SENCO
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team/Early Years Autism Outreach Team



Social Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

SEMH

When a child presents with Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs, these could include, but are not limited to:

- Children who find it difficult to regulate their behaviours and emotions
- May be withdrawn, overactive and/or poor concentration
- May have 'triggers' that they respond to
- May present spikey, inconsistent developmental profiles
- May present extreme emotions
- Children who may present with eating or sleeping difficulties
- May find following instructions difficult
- May seek or reject reassurance from an adult
- May partake in self-harm activities
- May struggle to make and maintain friendships

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Role of the Adult

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Supporting Behaviour

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Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional SEMH needs through:

- Devising a targeted plan
- Creating appropriate social stories
- Group activities labelling emotions
- Starting a behaviour diary/observations to keep logs
- Social communication groups
- Implementing visual choices and resources
- Implementing reward schemes
- Set up a communication book to pass between setting and home
- Positive behaviour strategies and calming language
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
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Targeted SEN Support

Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Seek training to develop staff knowledge, understanding and skills
- Adapt daily routines and environments to meet specific needs
- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Undertake and review Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ's) and Boxall profile for the individual
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Seek advice from Area SENCO
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team



Learning Disability (LD)

LD

When a child presents with Learning Needs, these could include, but are not limited to:

- Can have poor memory skills
- May be unable to retain basic play/development skills
- Can have a lack of communication, concentration and confidence to try new skills
- Can demonstrate limited play activities, often very repetitive
- Can be reluctant to take risks or problem solve
- Can appear very isolated, often disconnected from others
- Can often request adult assistant
- Can display unwanted behaviours
- Would usually present with significant developmental delays
- Can sometimes avoid group activities
- Difficulty retaining and/or generalising skills

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Role of the Adult

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Supporting Behaviour

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Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional learning needs through:

- Opportunities to practise and consolidate learning
- Differentiation with all activities, including play activities in the environment (small steps approach)
- Assessment tools undertaken to identify specific gaps
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
- Seek unnamed advice from the Duty Desk (0116 305 7136) Monday to Friday 9am- 12pm or the SEND Drop In Events

Targeted SEN Support

Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Modelling specific activities on a 1:1 basis to assess copying capabilities
- Prepare a bank of appropriate resources set to 'fill gaps' identified in learning from the assessment tools.
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Seek advice from Area SENCO
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team



Physical Disability (Phy)

Phy

When a child presents with Physical Needs, these could include, but are not limited to:

- Cerebral palsy
- Club foot
- Achondroplasia
- Spina bifida
- Hypermobility
- Duchenne muscular dystrophy
- Batten's disease
- Loss of limb
- Hirschsprung's disease
- Degenerative disease
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Child may not be meeting physical milestones
- Child may be very clumsy, often falling over
- Child may have spatial awareness difficulties

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Environment

- Use visuals within the environment to make every area accessible
- Develop quiet spaces where children can have calming time
- Be aware of over stimulation within your environment, e.g. not too busy displays
- Having a choice board available so children can choose activities that are not available
- Activities should include sensory and tactile play
- Your environment needs to be welcoming to children, parents, carers and professionals

Role of the Adult

- To be an enabler so that children can access the environment, other adults, peers and learning
- To have a good knowledge of child development so that the assess, plan, do, review model can be followed
- Encourage inclusion in all aspects of the day
- To champion the children and to be an advocate for their support
- To plan for reasonable adjustments so children can access the learning and environment
- Be prepared to be flexible

Supporting Behaviour

- Understanding that all behaviour is communication
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- Understanding and knowing the child is key
- Ensure all adults are consistent
- Ensure there is a clear structure to the day
- Use positive behaviour strategies

Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional physical needs through:

- Time to practise skills
- Allow opportunities of rest throughout the day
- Reasonable adjustments to allow access
- Having appropriate equipment
- Ensuring the children can be included in all activities at an appropriate level
- Ensuring staff are trained in moving and handling and a moving and handling plan is in place, if appropriate
- Set up a communication book to pass between setting and home
- Signpost parents and families to appropriate support groups
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
- Seek unnamed advice from the Duty Desk (0116 305 7136) Monday to Friday 9am- 12pm or the SEND Drop In Events

Targeted SEN Support

Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Seek training to develop staff knowledge, understanding and skills
- Develop specific small group work to encourage social interaction
- Individual sessions to teach and practise specific skills
- Follow therapy plans if applicable, including feeding back to external professionals and use of equipment
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Seek advice from Area SENCO
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team



Hearing Impairment (HI)

HI

When a child presents with Hearing Impairment Needs, these could include, but are not limited to:

- Hearing loss which is not aided (such as glue ear or single sided hearing loss)
- Has a fluctuating hearing loss
- Requires equipment to support their listening, for example hearing aids, cochlear implant etc
- Has difficulty adapting to environments with high levels of background noise
- May have delayed language and communication skills
- Find it difficult to listen in background noise
- May not have enough hearing to fully access spoken language
- May miss hear and misunderstand
- May have difficulties with social interactions.

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- Create a language rich environment which promotes language development
- A Multi-sensory approach to language is best practice

Environment

- Use visuals within the environment to make every area accessible
- Develop quiet spaces where children can listen
- Be aware of over stimulation within your environment, e.g. avoid playing music in the background
- Having a choice board available so children can choose activities that are not out
- Activities should include sensory and tactile play
- Your environment needs to be welcoming to children, parents, carers and professionals

Role of the Adult

- To be an enabler so that children can access the environment, other adults, peers and learning
- To have a good knowledge of child development so they can successfully follow the assess, plan, do, review model
- Encourage inclusion in all aspects of the day
- To champion the children and to be an advocate for their support
- To plan for reasonable adjustments so children can access the learning and environment
- Be prepared to be flexible

Supporting Behaviour

- Understanding that all behaviour is communication
- Looking into why behaviour is happening as opposed to trying to tackle the behaviour itself
- Understanding and knowing the child is key
- Ensure all adults are consistent
- Ensure there is a clear structure to the day
- Use positive behaviour strategies

Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional hearing needs through:

- Create quiet, calm and distraction free areas where the child can access learning
- Use of hearing equipment as required in the setting
- Try to reduce sound bouncing around (reverberation) by using soft furnishings
- Sit the child close to the adult lead
- Make sure the child can see your face when you talk to them
- Remember listening is tiring for children with hearing impairment
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
- Seek unnamed advice from the Duty Desk (0116 305 7136) Monday to Friday 9am- 12pm or the SEND Drop In Events



Targeted SEN Support

Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Seek training to develop staff knowledge, understanding and skills
- Support to generalise speech and language skills as a 1:1 or small group, where there is an opportunity to develop speech and language
- Intensive communication work
- Checking the equipment is working well on a daily basis
- Adult to model language in quiet environment
- Follow advice of Specialist Teacher for Hearing Impaired Children/ Educational Audiologist
- Pre tutoring / post tutoring for stories needed for children who have significant linguistic delay as assessed by teacher of deaf
- Specific and targeted interventions planned on a 1:1 basis
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Seek advice from Area SENCO, who may pass your enquiry to the specific HI team.
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team (if Hearing Impairment Team is not already involved)

Vision Impairment (VI)

VI

When a child presents with Visual Impairment Needs, these could include, but are not limited to:

- Impairment of sight, which cannot be fully corrected
- May need enlarged texts around the environment
- Visual impairment may result in the appearance of delayed physical and cognitive responses.
- May be physically tired
- May find it difficult to make and maintain friendships
- May struggle with early literacy and pre-writing skills
- May struggle to make the connection between phonemes and graphemes when learning phonics

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- Create a language rich environment which promotes language development
- A Multi-sensory approach to language is best practice

Environment

- Use visuals within the environment to make every area accessible
- Develop quiet spaces where children can have calming time
- Be aware of over stimulation within your environment, e.g. not too busy displays, Visual impairment may result in the appearance of delayed physical and cognitive responses.
- Having a choice board available so children can choose activities that are not out
- Activities should include sensory and tactile play
- Your environment needs to be welcoming to children, parents, carers and professionals

Role of the Adult

- To be an enabler so that children can access the environment, other adults, peers and learning
- To have a good knowledge of child development so they can successfully follow the assess, plan, do, review model
- Encourage inclusion in all aspects of the day
- To champion the children and to be an advocate for their support
- To plan for reasonable adjustments so children can access the learning and environment
- Be prepared to be flexible

Supporting Behaviour

- Understanding that all behaviour is communication
- Looking into why behaviour is happening as opposed to trying to tackle the behaviour itself
- Understanding and knowing the child is key
- Ensure all adults are consistent
- Ensure there is a clear structure to the day
- Use positive behaviour strategies

Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional visual needs through:

- Adapting the setting to take account of sources of light and positioning of both the child and the staff members
- Using relevant equipment
- Providing consumable materials, for example Braille paper
- Build rest breaks into the day
- Access to indoor and outdoor environment to remain safe
- Prepare resources
- Using tactile adaptations, e.g. story sacks with physical objects
- Engage with central training offered by vision support team or through QTVI for the child
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
- Seek unnamed advice from the Duty Desk (0116 305 7136) Monday to Friday 9am- 12pm or the SEND Drop In Events

Targeted SEN Support

Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Seek training to develop staff knowledge, understanding and skills
- Implementing a quiet work station
- Support mobility skills
- Adult to provide commentary and opportunities for additional experiences
- Modify activities to specifically meet the individual child's needs.
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Follow specialist advice of ophthalmologists / qualified teacher of visually impaired
- Seek advice from Area SENCO, who may pass your enquiry to the specific VI team.
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team (if Vision Support Team is not already involved)



Medical Need

Medical Need

When a child presents with Medical Needs, these could include, but are not limited to:

- Epilepsy
- Diabetes
- Tracheostomy
- Gastrostomy
- Oxygen dependent
- Severe allergies
- Brittle bones
- Haemophilia
- Severe asthma
- Children with cancer
- Children with life-limiting conditions
- Metabolic disorders
- Prada-Willi syndrome
- Incontinence conditions
- Catheterised conditions
- Cystic fibrosis
- Hydrocephalus
- Heart conditions
- Birth Trauma
- Down Syndrome

Children may tire easily and appear unwell. Knowing the child and the condition is vital.

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Environment

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Role of the Adult

- To be an enabler so that children can access the environment, other adults, peers and learning
- To have a good knowledge of child development so that the assess, plan, do, review model can be followed
- Encourage inclusion in all aspects of the day
- To champion the children and to be an advocate for their support
- To plan for reasonable adjustments so children can access the learning and environment
- Be prepared to be flexible

Supporting Behaviour

- Understanding that all behaviour is communication
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- Use positive behaviour strategies

Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional medical needs through:

- Close work with parents and health professionals involved
- Access necessary medical/health training
- Ensure all medical policies are in place
- Ensure health care plans are implemented
- Look creatively at how a child can be included in all elements of the learning
- Signposting parents to other services and support
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
- Seek unnamed advice from the Duty Desk (0116 305 7136) Monday to Friday 9am- 12pm or the SEND Drop In Events

Targeted SEN Support

Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Seek training to develop staff knowledge, understanding and skills
- Continue to liaise with professionals around the medical needs
- Implement and review a Health Care Plan
- Adapt the curriculum to meet individual needs
- Putting additional support in place to allow the child to access the curriculum
- Encourage small group interventions to build friendships and ensuring the child's well-being is being catered for
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Seek advice from Area SENCO
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team



Sensory Need

Sensory Need

When a child presents with Sensory Needs, these could include, but are not limited to:

- Can appear withdrawn
- Can display stimming or self-stimulatory behaviour
- Can have limited listening and attention skills
- Can be very repetitive in their language and actions
- Can display Pica activities
- Can be sensitive to touch or sounds
- May respond to pressure such as weighted blankets
- May self-soothe through rocking or head banging
- May avoid textures such as messy play

Children may appear to have periods of 'sensory overload' when they are being overstimulated. This is when a 'sensory break' may be appropriate.

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Environment

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Role of the Adult

- To be an enabler so that children can access the environment, other adults, peers and learning
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Universal Support

Meeting the child's additional sensory needs through:

- Observing and assessing what their specific sensory needs are
- Plan in sensory activities /play for the children
- Develop a calm area where children can go when they are experiencing sensory overload
- Write a targeted plan
- Complete a sensory toolkit, including a sensory audit
- Discuss concerns with parents/families
- Use the Early Learning Guidelines to monitor progress
- Seek unnamed advice from the Duty Desk (0116 305 7136) Monday to Friday 9am- 12pm or the SEND Drop In Events

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Before applying for Inclusion Funding, or beginning the EHCP process, the expectation is that the SENCO and/or practitioners would carry out the following:

- Individual or small group support for a series of 'chunks' throughout the day.
- Seek training to develop staff knowledge, understanding and skills
- Review the above generic strategies put into place and develop more specific strategies
- Work with other involved professionals
- Build in specific sensory activities during the child's day
- Support families with DLA applications if appropriate
- Review and monitor progress
- Seek advice from Area SENCO
- Apply to the Early Years Referral Panel for additional support from the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team



Your notes

Your notes

Toolkit

Directory of conditions

<https://contact.org.uk/medical-information/conditions/>

Sensory Processing Profile

<http://www.aettraininghubs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/10.2EY-sensory-processing-profile-Leics.pdf>

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

<https://www.sdqinfo.com/>

Early Years SEND Information

<https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/early-years-sen-inclusion-service/early-years-settings/extra-help-for-pre-school-children>

Useful telephone numbers

Name:

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Leicestershire
County Council