

A graduated approach to identifying and planning for SEN in the early years

When emerging concerns are raised by parent or staff in an early years setting the SENCO will:

Wave one - Universal

- Talk to the key person and other staff that work with the child
- Consider what is happening in the child's life by talking to the parents / carers
- Carry out observations of the child in their everyday play and activities
- Think about what is developmentally appropriate considering age/stage

Consider the environment and routines, including reasonable adjustments that can be made to ensure inclusive practice This may result in one of three following options A, B or C

A Concerns resolved, no further action or

B Some areas of concerns identified.

Actions may include:

- Meeting with parents / carers and keyperson to discuss concerns and gather the views / understanding of the parents
- Focussed observation and assessment
- Use of some targeted strategies to support access to learning; Makaton, Now and Next Board, Visual Timetable, Turn Taking Games
- Agree measurable and timebound targets for the child and monitor progress
- May consider initiating an EHAP
- May consider referrals to external agencies such as children's centre and Early Start SEND for parent support and /or SALT

Outcome: Child begins to make progress, continue support and monitor

C Wave Two – Targeted significant areas of concerns identified.

Actions may include:

- Meeting with parents / carers to discuss identified concerns and plan next steps
- Support families to access the Local Offer
- EHAP is initiated
- Child is placed on SEN register at SEN support
- Referrals to external agencies, such as SLT, CDT, EP service, Early Start SEND
- Individualised learning plan is put in place with regular review dates, keeping records of the Assess, Plan, Do, Review,

Outcome:

Child makes progress, continue SEN Support and monitor or

Continue Assess, Plan, Do Review, Cycle

- Implement strategies given by external partners
- Monitor progress and impact of targeted support
- TAF meeting to bring together parents and external agencies
- Referral to Early Start SEND for inclusion funding and support

Outcome

Child makes progress, continue SEN support using the Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle. The setting may consider closing the EHAP or

Wave three – Specialist

Child continues to make little or no progress, presenting needs are increasingly complex. Actions may include:

- Referral to external agencies such as CDT or EP service if not already made
- Continue Plan, Do, Review cycle in collaboration with the parents and guided by advice from external agencies
- Request an Education, Health and Care Plan by completing the ERSA
- Consider referral to CIN Nursery Panel for specialist provision

Jackie Carolan, Early Start SEND & Inclusion Manager



Page not found or type unknown

[A graduated approach to identifying SEND in EY workflow.pdf \(pdf\)](#)

Related content

[Special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\) and inclusion](#)

Was this page useful?

- Yes
- Neutral
- No

Last updated: 25 Jul 2025
