

Identification, assessment and support for children with SEND 2025

Coten End Preschool has regard for the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) (DfE and DoH 2015) which states that local authorities must ensure that all early years providers fund in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors are aware of the requirement on them to meet the needs of children with SEN and disabilities. When securing funded early education for two, three- and four-year-olds local authorities should promote equality and inclusion for children with disabilities or SEN; this includes removing barriers that prevent access to early education and working with parents to give each child support to fulfil their potential.

The term SEN support defines arrangements for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. We are required to offer appropriate support and intervention and to promote equality of opportunity for children that we care for. Children's SEND generally falls within the following four broad areas of need and support:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and/or physical needs

Procedures

We have a designated member of staff to be the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCo). Our SENDCo is: Anne-Marie Holmes

Parents are able to contact Anne-Marie by telephoning the setting on 01926 491873 or on her secure email address at senco@cotenendpreschool.org.uk or by message via our Famly app.

- The SENDCo works closely with our manager and other colleagues and has responsibility for the day-to-day operation of this policy and for co-ordinating provision for children with SEND.
- We ensure that the provision for children with SEND is the responsibility of all members of the setting.
- We ensure that our inclusive admissions practice ensures equality of access and opportunity.
- We provide a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum for all children.
- We apply support to ensure early identification of children with SEND.
- We use the graduated approach system (assess, plan, do and review) applied in increasing detail and frequency to ensure that children progress.
- We ensure that parents are involved at all stages of the assessment, planning, provision and review of their children's special education including all decision making processes.

- We where appropriate, take into account children's views and wishes in decisions being made about them, relevant to their level understanding.
- We provide parents with information on local sources of support and advice e.g. Local Offer, Information, Advice and Support Service.
- We liaise and work with other external agencies to help improve outcomes for children with SEND.
- We have systems in place for referring children for further assessment e.g. Early Help Assessment and Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment.
- We will provide resources (human and financial) to implement our Policy.
- We ensure that all our staff are aware of our Policy and the procedures for identifying, assessing and making provision for children with SEN. We provide in-service training for parents, practitioners and volunteers.
- We raise awareness of our special education provision via our website and or promotional materials.
- We ensure the effectiveness of our special educational needs provision by collecting information from a range of sources e.g. action plan reviews, staff and management meetings, parental and external agency's views, inspections and complaints. This information is collated, evaluated and reviewed regularly.
- We provide a complaints procedure.

Graduated approach

Initial identification and support (identifying special educational needs)

- Ongoing formative assessment forms part of a continuous process for observing, assessing, planning, doing and reviewing children's progress.
- Children identified as having difficulty with one or more areas of development should be given support by applying some simple strategies and resources.
- For most children application of some simple differentiation approaches will be enough to build confidence and help the child develop, 9.12a SEN Support: Initial record of concern form can be used for this purpose.
- If despite applying differentiated strategies a child continues to struggle and is showing significantly more difficulty with learning than their peers or has a disability which requires specific adjustments, then the key person should raise a concern with the setting's SENCo and they will speak with the child's parents.

Observation and assessment of children's SEN

Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or their progress gives cause for concern, educators should consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting.

- Information can be collated from formal checks such as the progress check at age two, observations from parents and observation and assessment by the setting of the child's progress.
- When specialist advice has been sought externally, this is used to help determine whether or not a child has a special educational need (SEN).
- The child's key person and SENCo/Manager use this information to decide if the child has a special educational need.
- If the decision is that the child does have a SEN and the parents are not already aware of a concern, then the information is shared with them. Once parents have been informed, they should be fully engaged in the process, contributing their insights to all future actions for their child.
- Please note that once a referral has been made, if you do not attend your appointment the preschool will be unable to refer you again and you will have to arrange help to do this via other agencies.

Planning intervention

- Everyone involved with the child should be given an opportunity to share their views. Parents should be encouraged to share their thoughts on the child's difficulties and be involved in the decision as to what will happen next.
- A first intervention option may be to carry on with applying differentiated support and to review the child's progress at an agreed date. If the child's needs are more complex, then the decision maybe to go straight ahead and prepare what support is needed. An action plan or IEP (individual Education Plan) with detailed evidence-based interventions to be applied will be drawn up and simultaneously external referrals will be made.
- If relevant, the child should be included in the development of the plan but only at a level which reflects their stage of comprehension. Inclusion of children with SEND helps build self confidence and trust and supports their rights to be involved in decisions about their care.
- The IEP or action plan ensures that children that are identified or suspected of having a SEN will receive the right level of support and encouragement with their learning and development as early as possible to help achieve the best outcomes for the child and it should detail the frequency of interventions, who will apply them and with what resources. A review date (every 6 weeks) should be agreed with the parents so that the child's progress can be reviewed against expected outcomes and the next steps agreed. A copy of the plan is stored in the child's file.
- If a child requires specific medical interventions during their time in the setting, a Health care plan should also be completed and integrated into the general plans to ensure the child's medical needs are known and safely met.

- The action plan can be used if further assessment is required including a statutory Education Health and Care (EHC) Assessment, and development of an EHC plan.

Record keeping

If a child has or is suspected of having a SEN, a dated record should be kept of:

- the initial cause for concern and the source of this information, (the progress check at age two and/or outcomes of previous interventions). 09.13a SEN support: Initial record of concern form can also be used for this purpose drawing information from other sources
- the initial discussion with parents raising the possibility of the child's SEN
- the views of the parents and other relevant persons including, wherever possible, the child's views;
- the procedures followed with regard to the Code of Practice to meet the child's SEND e.g. SEN action plan, referrals to external agencies and for statutory assessment
- evidence of the child's progress and any identified barriers to learning
- advice from other relevant professionals; and all subsequent meetings with parents and other persons and any subsequent referrals

Records may include

- observation and monitoring sheets
- Signed permission form from the parent to refer (accepted or not accepted) If you do not accept we will not be able to refer your child.
- expressions of concern
- risk assessments
- access audits (01.1b)
- health care plans (including guidelines for administering medication)
- SEN action plans
- meetings with parents and other agencies
- additional information from and to outside agencies
- agreements with parents
- guidelines for the use of children's individual equipment; Early help CAF referrals
- referral to the local authority identifying a child's special educational needs and request for statutory Education, Health, Care (EHC) needs assessment; and a copy of an EHC plan

Seeking additional funding/enhanced/top up

If the child's needs cannot be met from within the setting's core funding, then it will be at this point that the evidence collated will be used to apply for top up/enhanced funding from the local authority's inclusion fund. If a new or existing child is disabled, then the setting should check if the family is in receipt or have applied for Disability Living Allowance. If so, the setting will be able to apply to their local authority for the local Disability Access Fund.

Statutory education, health and care (EHC) assessment and plan

Statutory assessment

- If a child has not made expected progress, then the next steps may be for the child to undergo an Education, Health and Care Assessment. If a child is under compulsory school age, the local authority will conduct an EHC needs assessment if they consider that the child's needs cannot be met within the resources normally available to the early years setting.
- Children aged under age two are eligible where an assessment has indicated that the child is likely to have SEN which requires an EHC plan when they reach compulsory school age.
- When a child's needs appear to be sufficiently complex, or the evidence suggest specialist intervention then the local authority is likely to conclude that an EHC plan is necessary
- The local authority should fully involve the parent and must seek advice from the setting in making decisions about undertaking an EHC assessment and preparing an EHC plan.
- Settings should prepare by collating information about the child's SEND including:
 - documentation on the child's progress in the setting
 - interventions and support provided to date
 - evidence of external agency assessment, support and recommendations
 - parental views and wishes (and where appropriate those of the child)

The information will then be submitted to the local authority to allow them to accurately assess the child in the context of the support already given.

- The local authority must inform the child's parents of their decision within eight weeks of receiving a request for an assessment and give its reasons for their decision. If the local authority decides to conduct an assessment, it must ensure the child's parents are fully included right from the beginning and are invited to contribute their views. If the local authority subsequently decides not to conduct an assessment it must then inform the parents of their right to appeal that decision, of the requirement for them to consider mediation should they wish to appeal.
- If the local authority decides that a statutory EHC plan is not necessary, it must notify the parents and inform the provider, giving the reasons for the decision. This notification must take place within 16

weeks of the initial request or of the child having otherwise been brought to the local authority's attention.

- If the decision following an assessment is to compile an EHC plan the local authority should consult collaboratively with the parents in the preparation of the plan ensuring that their views and their child's preferences are taken into account and that plans describe positively what the child can do and has achieved to date.
- Plans are evidenced based and focus on short term outcomes and long-term aspirations for the child including family and community support. Parents have the right to request a particular provision for their child to be named within their EHC plan.
- If an early years setting is named, the local authority must fund this provision. They cannot force a setting to take a child and can only name the provision in the EHC if the setting agrees.
- Local authorities should consider reviewing an EHC plan for a child under age five at least every three to six months. Such reviews would complement the duty to carry out a review at least annually but may be streamlined and not necessarily require the attendance of the full range of professionals, depending on the needs of the child. The child's parents must be fully consulted on any proposed changes to the EHC plan and made aware of their right to appeal to the Tribunal.

External intervention and support

Where external agency intervention has been identified to help support a child with SEND then this intervention should be recommended in writing by a suitably reliable source such as a speech and language therapist, paediatrician or educational psychologist.

Further guidance

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) (DfE and DoH 2015). Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years Statutory guidance for organisations which work with and support children and young people who have special educational needs or disabilities (January 2015) www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013): Statutory guidance from the Department for Education which sets out what is expected of organisations and individuals to safeguard and promote the welfare of children
- The Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2 (Care Planning Placement and Case Review) and Volume 3 (Planning Transition to Adulthood for Care Leavers): Guidance setting out the responsibilities of local authorities towards looked after children and care leavers
- Equality Act 2010: Advice for schools: Non-statutory advice from the Department for Education, produced to help schools understand how the Equality Act affects them and how to fulfil their duties under the Act.
- Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012): Technical guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission