

# Early Years SENCO Handbook

## Early Years SEND Toolkit



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# Introduction

The Early Years SENCo Handbook has been produced to provide a comprehensive resource and guidance for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and their managers in Early Years settings.

The handbook will support SENCOs and managers in meeting their responsibilities for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The Handbook should be used alongside the Ordinary Available document to support and enhance inclusive practice and ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved for all children.

The handbook can be read from start to finish or can be used to focus on specific issues as and when they are needed. It has been divided into sections to help navigate the handbook and links to additional resources and helpful websites have been included.



# Chapter one

## Legislation and Legal requirements

This section outlines the key parts of legislation and statutory responsibilities which apply to all eligible providers in relation to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

### Equality Act 2010

The [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. The Equality Act protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society. The act brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single act. Combined, it is a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. One of the main pieces of legislation which is merged into The Equality Act is the Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Disabled children must not be treated less favourably than children without a disability without justification. Providers must make 'reasonable adjustments' to prevent disabled children being at a substantial disadvantage. This duty is anticipatory. As a body exercising public functions, all eligible providers are bound by the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### Children and families Act 2014

Part 3 of the [Children and Families Act \(2014\)](#) updates SEND legislation for both children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The duties of local authorities are outlined in their identification and assessment of children and young people in partnership with health and social care. Local parties, such as Early Years Providers, are required to cooperate with local authorities in their duties, including contributing to the local offer. 'A child who is under compulsory school age has a special educational need if they are likely to have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision when they reach compulsory school age or they would do if special educational provision were not made for them' (Section 20, Children and Families Act 2014).

### Statutory framework for early years

The [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#) sets standards for the learning, development and care of all children from birth to 5 years old. All schools and Ofsted-registered Early Years Settings must follow the EYFS, including childminders, preschools, nurseries and school reception classes. The EYFS framework supports an integrated approach to early learning and care. It gives all professionals a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education and childcare experiences to all children

The Early Years Foundation Stage is based on principles of inclusion which means that Early Years Providers oppose discrimination and prejudice and welcome all families and children. 'Providing an inclusive setting that promotes equality of opportunity does not mean that all children should be treated the same, but that the unique skills and abilities of each child should be recognised and developed, and that inclusion is not optional: children have defined entitlements in this area and settings have legal responsibilities.' (EYFS 2017)

'Practitioners must consider the individual needs, interests and 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 of the areas of learning and development'.

## SEND Code of Practice 2015

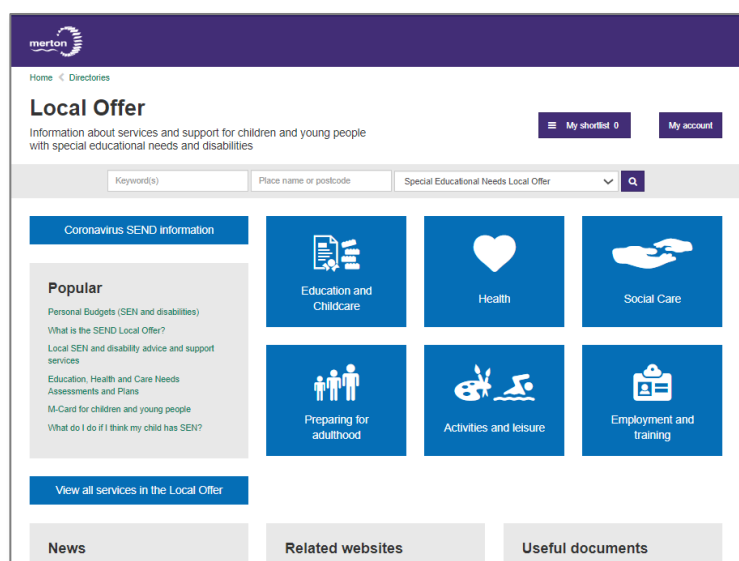
All Early Years Settings funded by the local authority must have regard to the [Special educational needs and disability code of practice](#). It explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools and colleges to provide for those with special educational needs under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. All schools and Early Years Settings must have regard to the SEND Code of Practice when taking decisions relating to pupils with SEN or disabilities. The Code is applicable to Children and young people from birth to 25 years. 'Inclusive practice is about doing what is necessary to enable children and young people to develop, learn, participate and achieve the best possible outcomes irrespective of whether that is through reasonable adjustments for a disabled child or young person or special educational provision for a child or young person with SEN.' (SEND Code of Practice 2015)

According to the Code, in a maintained Nursery School, the SENCO must be a qualified Teacher. In non-maintained Early Years Settings, a SENCO must be identified. Childminders should be encouraged to identify a person to act as a SENCO.

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) states that; 'Early Years Providers must provide information for parents on how they support children with SEN and disabilities and should regularly review and evaluate the quality and breadth of the support they offer or can access for children with SEN or disabilities' '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.'

Settings can meet these requirements through the development of a setting local offer and a SEND Policy.

# The Local Offer



The Code of Practice requires all local authorities to have a Local Offer. Local partners must cooperate in its development and review. In Merton all Early Years Providers are encouraged to produce their own local offer as a way of contributing to the local authority's Local Offer and to meet the responsibility to provide information as described above.

A setting's local offer should act as the prospectus for the SEND provision. It should enable parents/carers to compare what is available to meet SEN and disability needs between one setting and another.

A setting's Local Offer should include information about:

- the setting
- accessibility and inclusion
- early identification and early intervention
- teaching and learning – provision and practice
- supporting transitions
- staff training

It is the setting's responsibility to regularly review and update their local offer. In Merton SENCO can do this themselves by logging in to their accounts using this link [How to get a listing on the Merton Directories | Merton directories](#)

If you have any difficulties or do not have an account, please contact [FSD@merton.gov.uk](mailto:FSD@merton.gov.uk)

## SEND Policy

When producing their SEND Policy, the setting should have regard to the requirements of the:

- [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice \(2015\)](#)
- [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)

Maintained Early Years Settings should also refer to other relevant statutory requirements.

A setting's SEND Policy should include information about:

- the setting's commitment and philosophy regarding SEND.
- the name of the SENCO.

- how the setting promotes equality and inclusion, including reference to the duties under the Equality Act 2010.
- a link to the setting's local offer or detailed information about qualifications and experience of practitioners in meeting the needs of children with SEND.
- how the setting addresses concerns raised by parents and children.
- how the setting follows the 'graduated approach' to identify and support children with emerging difficulties, for example using information from the Progress Check at age 2.
- how the setting works with parents to understand their child's individual needs and how they are encouraged to contribute to their child's learning.
- a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND using the graduated approach of assess, plan, do, review.
- arrangements in place to support children with SEND including accessing sources of funding such as DAF, SENDIF etc.
- monitoring and recording of progress of children with SEND.
- referring to and working with other agencies.
- transition arrangements, whether to a new room, initially coming into setting or moving to a different setting.
- the key person policy.
- the behaviour policy

The Equality Act (2010) requires providers to make reasonable adjustments where disabled children may be at a substantial disadvantage compared to other children who are not disabled. The duty to make reasonable adjustments is anticipatory and continuing.



# Chapter two

## Role of the SENCO

This section outlines the role of the SENCO in relation to the expectations of the EYFS and SEND Code of Practice as well as what the SENCO role is like 'on the ground' for practitioners in early years' settings in Merton.

### Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023)

The EYFS Section 3.68 – Special educational needs – states that:

'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 SEN Code of Practice.'

### Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)

The SENCO role is clearly outlined in the SEND Code of Practice.

5.53 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.

5.54 '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 external professionals or agencies beyond the setting'

## Being a successful SENCO

A successful SENCO will:

- have a clear understanding of their role and full range of responsibilities.
- have good planning and organisational skills.
- be supportive of colleagues in their day-to-day work with children through observations, setting targets and implementing targets.



- support the ongoing professional development of colleagues during staff meetings and planned training.
- work in close partnership with parents.
- seek outside support and advice when it is needed.
- convene Team around the Family (TAF) meetings where multi agency support is required.
- work closely with outside agencies.
- make the most of SENCO meetings and training.

## The role of the Manager

When the manager and SENCO are different, it is essential that the manager is fully aware of the importance of the SENCO role. In order for the SENCO to carry out their duties effectively they will need:

- a clear job description that sets out and their responsibilities and what is required in the setting
- have non-contact time to observe children; liaise with staff in the setting, liaise with parents and professionals, and to complete paperwork
- to attend the Merton 'Role of the SENCO Training' and the refresher SENCO training every 3 years
- ongoing support in their professional development through supervision and through regular appraisals
- allocated time at staff meetings to discuss and support staff in their work with individual children and SEND issues
- dedicated time to attend termly SENCO Meetings
- opportunities to contribute to SEND policy and procedures

## Getting Started

### **Don't try to do everything at once!**

- Step back and make a list of what you need to do.
- Decide what the priorities are.
- Make a timeline of when you are going to get tasks done.
- Talk to your manager and share your plan.
- Contact your Inclusion Officer who will signpost you to the role of the SENCO training.
- Think about how you can involve parents.

## Setting up the SENCO file

It is recommended that you keep a folder of all the paperwork you will need. This can be kept as a paper copy or electronically. This should include:

- The settings SEND policy
- The settings behaviour policy

- Setting's local offer
- Provision mapping on improving inclusive practice
- SEN register – template (Appendix 1)
- Contact detail for Inclusion team
- Referral forms & contact details for other professionals
- Merton SEND local offer information
- Assessment Tools
- SEN support plan (Appendix 2)
- Monitoring form (Appendix 3)
- EHC needs assessment paperwork (Appendix 4a, 4b, 4c)
- EHCP planning and monitoring form
- EHCP Bi-annual review paperwork (Appendix 5a, 5b, 5c)
- Transition report
- One page profile (Appendix 6)
- ABCC charts (Appendix 7)
- Behaviour plan (Appendix 8)

## Keeping Records

High quality record keeping is essential in Early Years settings, particularly for children with SEND. Practitioners have a duty to maintain clear, up to date written records of all concerns and action taken. Settings should refer to their own policy and procedures on 'keeping & storing records'

The SENCO should have an overview of all children who are having targeted intervention and/or for whom special educational provision is made. This should be recorded in line with current GDPR legislation and the setting's own policies.

It is good practice to keep a written chronology of significant events such as meetings, telephone calls, appointments and requests made in supporting the child. It is important to also record the outcomes of such events. A chronology forms part of the evidence of the Graduated Approach.

### Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)

5.50 states 'Practitioners must maintain a record of children under their care as required under the EYFS framework. Such records about their children must be available to parents and they must include how the setting supports children with SEN and disabilities'.

## Early Years Setting Provision Map

A Provision Map is a tool which provides an overview of the range of provision, resources and support that an Early Years setting makes available to young children with SEND.

A Provision Map shows the different levels of intervention and support that settings can provide for all children within the four areas of need identified in the SEND Code of Practice. It should link closely to the setting's Local Offer.

The SENCO should ensure that the Provision Map is up to date, developed and shared with other practitioners and accurately reflects current provision.

## A whole team approach

It is the responsibility of all practitioners to identify and support children with SEND. The role of the SENCO is to support practitioners and co-ordinate effective, inclusive practice in their early years setting.

The SENCO needs to ensure that all practitioners understand how the setting:

- responds to any cause for concern and identifies and responds to special educational needs
- focuses on improving children's progress and outcomes
- implements SEND support and the cycle of assess, plan, do, review
- meets the requirements for record keeping in a way that supports the participative decision-making process and at the same time avoids excessive paperwork

It is essential that everyone, including parents, work together to best meet the needs of individual children with SEND. Children are more likely to have better outcomes when there is a whole team approach with effective communication that involves parents, key staff and other professionals.

## Training

Merton provides a range of training course for SENCO and practitioners to help develop their knowledge and practice on a range of SEND needs and interventions.

Training programme is updated termly. Course information and booking can be found [Childcare workforce information, training and support : Training | Merton Council](#).



# Chapter Three

## Working in Partnership with Parents

This section outlines the importance of the development of a positive relationship with parents, this is highlighted throughout all Early Years and SEND legislation.

### Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2023)

Practitioners are expected to engage with the parents of all children in the setting. Where there is a cause for concern about the child's progress the focus on parents' participation increases.

Overarching Principles, page 6 '... children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.'

An inclusive approach is evident in the EYFS which promotes practitioners in Early Years settings to be responsive to individual needs and to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEND.

It also specifies that information should be made available to parents about how the setting supports children with SEND. This includes involving parents in identifying needs, deciding outcomes, planning provision, reviewing progress and requesting advice from other professionals.

### The Children and Families Act (2014)

The Children and Families Act (2014) part 3, reinforces the requirement to engage with and involve parents in decision making.

### The Special Educational Needs & Disability Code of Practice (2015)

5.28 'Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or where a child's progress gives cause for concern, practitioners should consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting... All the information should be brought together with the observations of parents and considered with them.'

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

5.39 'Where professionals are not already working with the setting, the SENCO should contact them, with the parents' agreement.'

5.40 'Where it is decided to provide SEN Support, and having formally notified the parents (see 5.38...), the practitioner and the SENCO should agree, in consultation with the parents, the outcomes they are seeking, the interventions and support to be put in place, the expected

impact on progress, development or behaviour, and a clear date for review. Plans should take into account the views of the child'.

5.43 'The impact and quality of the support should be evaluated by the practitioner and the SENCo working with a child's parents, and taking into account the child's views. Parents should have clear information about the impact of the support provided and be involved in planning the next steps.'

## Wishes, views and feelings of parents

Parents have a wealth of knowledge about their children and may be the first person to raise a concern about their child's progress. It is important that early years providers enable parents to share their knowledge about their child and that this will be valued and acted upon.

It is a requirement of the EYFS for each child to be given a key worker. The key person has responsibility for working with a child on a daily basis and are in a unique position to respond to any concerns parents may have about their child's development. It is likely that the child's key person will be the first practitioner in the early years setting who parents talk to about their concerns.

It is important that all staff are alert to emerging difficulties of young children, listen and respond to parent's concerns about their child's development.

## Wishes, views and feelings of children

Children make their wishes, views and feelings known in different ways. Practitioners can use a range of strategies including observations, children's choices and photographs to show how the child communicates their wishes, views and feelings.

The views of the child are an important part of any action taken through SEND support. The gathering of the child's views should be used to inform ongoing discussions and decisions.

## Promoting the participation of parents in decision-making

The importance of parental participation throughout the cycle of assess, plan, do, review is promoted throughout the SEND Code of Practice. This should happen at the very early stages when a decision is being made about whether a child has SEND. Discussions with parents around initial concerns would usually be carried out by the key worker and/or SENCO. This should be done in a sensitive way that is respectful of the views of parents and in an environment that provides confidentiality.

Settings must work in partnership with parents to establish the support needed when they have identified a child as having SEN. Parents are part of the decision making process about the next steps within a graduated approach. SEN Support Plans should be used to agree the next steps of

learning in the setting and wherever possible at home. A SEN Support Plan should include SMART targets, strategies and an agreed date when progress can be reviewed.

Parental views should inform when other specialist advice and involvement should happen. This could be from Speech & Language Therapist, Health Visitor, Paediatrician, Occupational therapist etc. When referrals are being made to involve other professionals, it is important to make sure that written consent from parents is obtained.

Having TAF (Team around the family) meetings is a way of involving parents in discussions and key decision making with other professionals.

[Merton's Safeguarding Children partnership- Guide to holding TAF meetings](#)

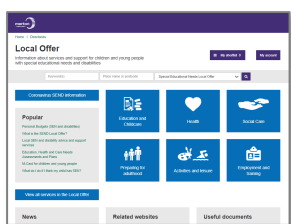
## Information and support to enable parents to participate in decision-making.

The importance of the child and their parents, being provided with the information and support necessary to enable them to participate in decision-making is embedded in the Children and Families Act and the SEND Code of Practice.

The availability of information to parents about how a setting supports children with SEND is a requirement of the EYFS. There is a range of information that is shared with parents. This will include policies and the practical arrangements of each setting along with information about their own child. The setting must gather information when they think a child may have SEND needs so that this can be shared and considered with parents. The sharing of information continues to be crucial to effective decision making throughout the SEND process.

[Tips for developing positive relationships with parents](#)

## Additional resources for supporting parents



### Merton's Local Offer

The Local offer website has a range of information on support and services that parents can access within Merton.



### Family Hubs

The Merton Family Hub is a place where families and young people can access the support, help and advice they need, for all stages of family life.



## Family Information and Support Hubs (FISH)

Service for families to access a range of support and information.

## Merton Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service (MIASS)

MIASS (Merton Information, Advice and Support Service) is co-commissioned by Merton Council and the NHS to provide free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and their parents/carers who live in Merton.

## Parenting courses and groups

Merton provide a range of courses that parents can be referred to when they may need additional support to manage their child's behaviour or needs. This can be accessed through the local children's centres who offer a parenting course, and groups run by trained co-ordinators.

## Parent guides

There are a range of guides that have been developed that you can share with parents around stages of development, supporting their child's development and challenges such as fussy eating.

## Documents and Resources

- [What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents](#)
- [Resources for Parents - Foundation Years](#)
- [Having a child, parenting and adoption - GOV.UK](#)
- [Children with special educational needs and disabilities \(SEND\): Overview - GOV.UK](#)
- [New baby and parent resources - Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust \(clch.nhs.uk\)](#)
- [Family Hub \(merton.gov.uk\)](#)

# Chapter Four

## The Graduated Approach



This section outlines the process of early identification and the graduated approach in supporting the learning and development of young children with SEND.

The graduated approach should be led and co-ordinated by the setting SENCO working with and supporting individual practitioners in the setting....'

SEND code of practice; 0-25 (2015) 5.45

## Early Identification

Early identification is about identifying the needs of young children and providing the appropriate intervention and provision, through the 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' cycle.



### Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice (2015)

'It is particularly important in the early years that there is no delay in making any necessary special educational provision. Delay at this stage can give rise to learning difficulty and subsequently to loss of self-esteem, frustration in learning and to behaviour difficulties. Early action to address identified needs is critical to the future progress and improved outcomes that are essential in helping the child to prepare for adult life.'

'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. The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point, and then making effective provision, improves long-term outcomes for children'.

SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 (2015) 5.4

## Getting Started

Quality early years provision is essential in enabling settings to be alert to children's emerging difficulties. Good processes and inclusive practice ensures that the gathering of information provides the best possible start for all children. Ongoing observation, assessment & planning within the EYFS, is the key to early identification.

### Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (2017)

'...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.'

## Assess, Plan, Do, Review

The 'Assess, Plan, Do, Review' Cycle can be summarised as follows:

### Assess

- Gathering information from all those involved, including the parents and child. Carrying out an analysis of this information to identify strengths and needs.

### Plan

- Identifying and agreeing outcomes and the interventions and support to be put in place.

### Do

- Working together to put the agreed interventions and support in place.

### Review

- Evaluating the effectiveness and quality of the agreed support and its impact on the child's progress.

# SEN Support Plans

SEN Support Plans can be an effective way of providing a summative overview of children's needs, outcomes and provision in place. It will provide information, advice, outcomes and necessary provision to meet the child's needs and outlines support for their learning and development.

There are a variety of SEN Support Plan formats and settings should use or develop a format which best fits in with their own planning. In Merton we have a template plan (Appendix 2) that SENCO's can use or adapt.

SEN Support Plans should contain the following information-

- Child's name
- DOB and age
- Start date and review date
- Parental views, wishes and feelings (assess)
- Child's views, wishes and feelings (assess)
- What the child can do / strengths / areas of interests (assess)
- Areas for development (what the child needs support with) (assess)
- Long term outcome(s) (plan)
- Specific target(s) (plan)
- Strategies/resources/role of the adult (do)
- Evaluation/review (evidence of progress towards target/s) (review)

There is no fixed time period for reviewing how well the support and interventions are going although a review date should be set when the plan is agreed. In Merton it is recommended that a review should take place every 6-8 weeks or at least on a termly basis.

The impact and quality of support should be evaluated by the key person and the SENCO working with the parents and taking into account the child's views. This should be at an SEN Support Plan Review meeting. By having an SEN support plan meeting it provides an opportunity to agree any changes to the outcomes, targets set and support for the child in light of the child's progress and development. It is important that parents are given clear information about the impact of the support provided and are involved in planning next steps and future targets.

When organising the initial and subsequent SEN Support Plan meetings, the SENCO should consider the following:

- Identifying the best time and day for the parent to attend, so they feel involved and informed
- Arranging for someone such as a family relative to attend, if the parent requires translation
- Ensuring there is somewhere to meet in private, and without interruption
- Asking if parents would like other professionals or agencies involved

It is important that the SEN Support Plan is a practical document used on a daily basis by all practitioners in the setting so that it is a meaningful and practical tool in supporting the development of the child's learning. Information about progress towards identified target(s) should be gathered on an ongoing basis and NOT left until the review date. In Merton to help with monitoring progress we have a monitoring form (Appendix 3).

# Assessments

Settings can use a variety of assessment tools to track the progress of all children. Accurately assessing, tracking and recording the progress of children with SEND is particularly important to enable emerging needs to be identified and appropriate strategies put into place. See chapter 6 for example assessment tools.

## Setting outcomes and targets

An outcome identifies something all involved would like to child to be able to do in 12 months time and should be based around their areas of need.

A target identifies the next small steps the child needs to achieve to progress towards the outcomes identified and to move their development forward. This means targets are short term and are activities designed to support children's progress towards achieving outcomes. Targets should:

- be built into the provision on offer within the setting (e.g. use of enhancements etc.)
- be planned for in small group times and sometimes may need to be planned for short periods of 1:1 time. Approaches and strategies for practitioners to use should be built into all aspects of the settings practice.

When writing outcomes and targets careful use of language, especially when writing targets, allows skills/development to be broken down into manageable chunks and makes it possible to evidence children's small steps of progress more easily. Outcomes and targets should always be S.M.A.R.T. in the way they are written.

What is SMART?

- **Specific** can you easily identify what the child will be able to do/say when they have met the target?
- **Measurable** can you easily tell whether or not the child has achieved the target?
- **Achievable** Is the target the appropriate next small step based on where the child is currently 'at'? Is the target 'do-able'? Have we got the resources? Have we got enough time? Have we got the right environment?
- **Realistic** does the target work towards the outcomes that have been identified
- **Time-related** is there a specified number of times or length of time by which the child will have successfully achieved the target

When setting targets, it can also be helpful to think in terms of;

- **WHO** is going to do it?
- **WHAT** are they going to do?
- Under what **CONDITIONS**?
- **WHEN** and to what **DEGREE OF SUCCESS**?

Practitioners also need to think about the activities, resources, strategies and approaches they are going to use to support the child when working towards the targets that have been set. Careful observation should be used to inform target setting and outcome planning.

Examples of outcomes and targets and how they relate to each other:

| Outcome (12 months)   | Target (6-8 weeks)   |
|---|--|
| By the end of nursery Sam will be able to direct and maintain his attention at adult led activities (particularly those not of his choosing) for 10 minutes.                          | Sam will sit with support for 1 minute of the attention bucket, showing interest by looking at 2/3 objects, once every session.                      |
| In 12 months times Jack will independently feed himself with a fork and knife and drinking from an open cup at all mealtimes.   | Jack will sip 20 ml water from an open beaker without any spillage when an adult provides hand over hand support, at every mealtime                  |
| By the end of nursery Lina will be able to spontaneously use simple sentences in a range of situations so that she is able to communicate her wants, needs and views more effectively | Lina will verbally fill in a repeated missing word to a familiar rhyme 2/5 times when the adult sings and pauses, during a 1:1 session, twice a day. |

Guidance for writing outcomes and targets

- A Guide to Support with Writing Next Steps (Appendix 9)

## Education, Health and Care Plans

For some children their delay will continue to or possibly grow despite support and interventions being in place. In these situations it would be necessary for the SENCO, in consultation with parents and any external professionals involved, to consider whether an education, health and care plan may be appropriate.

An application for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) is known as an EHC Needs Assessment (EHCNA) Request. Where an EHCNA request is made, the child will need to demonstrate a significant delay (around 12 months) and have evidence of professional involvement and strategies/ programmes that have been implemented, the success/non-success of them, over a reasonable period of time.

An EHCNA request can be made by the child's parents or by the SENCO:

- Appendix 4a – EHCNA Schools/Setting Referral
- Appendix 4b – EHCNA Parent/Carer Referral

See also Appendix 4c for information about the EHCNA Timeline

Once completed paperwork should be sent securely to Merton SEND team:

[SENReferrals@merton.gov.uk](mailto:SENReferrals@merton.gov.uk)

If the LA agree to assess the child will be issued a case officer who will coordinate the assessment process. The process is to gain maximum information about the child and their needs. This will be by seeking information from a paediatrician, educational psychologist and anyone else who might be involved with the child.

Once this information has been collated a draft education, health and care plan is created which is reviewed by panel, who then decide whether the evidence provided meets the criteria to issue the plan.

If a child is issued an EHCP then the SENCO needs to ensure that the child is supported to meet the outcomes and provision set within the plan.

## Annual reviews

It is the responsibility of the setting to manage the annual review.

The review should take place six monthly until the child is 5 years old, it should then be reviewed every 12 months. You should inform the SEND team of when the review will take place and professionals working with the child should be invited.

The aim of the review is to ensure the information within the plan is still accurate and relevant to the child and to review the progress made towards the outcomes set. Where appropriate if an outcome has been met a new outcome should be agreed.

Following the meeting review paperwork should be completed and sent to the SEND team.

Merton EHCP Bi-annual review paperwork (Appendix 5a, 5b, 5c)

## Transitions for all children with SEN support or EHCP

Transitions need to be managed carefully and sensitively, in particular to ensure the social and emotional wellbeing of the child. Changes to the environment and key caregivers need to be carefully planned and carried out in a sensitive way. It is important to consider and involve parents and carers in this process so that they are reassured and able to contribute to an effective transition.

The SENCO, along with key staff, should plan and prepare for transition prior to a child moving into another setting or school, or even between rooms within settings. Part of this process would involve a Transition meeting to discuss successful strategies, progress and adjustments required.

To support transition consider using a one-page profile. (Appendix 6)

# Chapter Five

## Seeking additional support and advice

| Service name               | Description  | Contact information / referral process   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Early Years Inclusion team | <p>The Early Years Inclusion Teams role is to support the continuous improvement of inclusive practice around the Ordinarily Available (OA) guidance.</p> <p>There is a Core Offer available to all schools (nursery classes) PVI settings and childminders. There is also additional inclusion advisory support available for schools (nursery classes) PVI settings and childminders with high numbers of children on SEN support, who have SENDIF funding or have an EHCP.</p>  | <p><a href="mailto:providers@merton.gov.uk">providers@merton.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="#">Inclusion Advisory Support Request Form</a></p>   |
| Portage service            | <p>Portage is an educational support service for children with significant additional needs and disabilities and their families. Designed around the individual needs of a child, Portage helps parents and carers to become more skilled in supporting their child's development, either individually or as part of a group.</p> <p>Portage supports your child's cognitive, physical, communication, social and self-help skills.</p> <p>Families and their children can also attend our Portage Support Groups. Here you can continue to develop targets and skills for your child alongside other children with significant needs and their families. They can help your child learn to socialise in a small group and help them prepare for moving on to nursery.</p> | <p>Portage is for children from birth to three years old who do not yet go to nursery and who have Special Educational Needs or disabilities affecting two or more areas of development. Children must be under the age of three when referred to the service and live in the London Borough of Merton.</p> <p><a href="#">Portage Parenting Service</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:fsd@merton.gov.uk">fsd@merton.gov.uk</a></p> |

| Service name                        | Description  | Contact information / referral process  |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Educational Psychology service (EP) | <p>Educational Psychologists (EPs) are applied psychologists registered with the Health Care Professions Council (HCPC) who have a background in Education and Child Development.</p> <p>EPs have skills and qualifications in the use of a range of psychological and educational assessment techniques and in different methods of helping children and young people.</p>  | <p>Referral process</p> <p>PVI &amp; Childminders via the Early Years Inclusion service</p> <p>School via the school SENCo. Referrals are for any child who is attending a Merton setting.</p> <p><a href="#">Merton Educational Psychology Service</a></p> <p><a href="mailto:edpsy@merton.gov.uk">edpsy@merton.gov.uk</a></p>   |
| Speech and Language therapy (SALT)  | <p>A service that works with children and young people who have difficulties with speech (talking clearly), language (understanding what other people are saying or expressing themselves) and communication (knowing how to use language with different people and for different purposes)</p> <p>Speech and Language Therapists also work with children and young people who use other ways of communicating such as signing, pointing at pictures or symbols, or using electronic devices.</p> <p>Speech and Language Therapists also help children and young people who have difficulty in swallowing food and drink, and who need help in eating and drinking safely.</p> | <p>Referrals need to be made to the speech and language therapy team in the borough where the child's GP is in.</p> <p>Merton speech and language therapy team contact:</p> <p>Telephone 03300 539 264</p> <p><a href="mailto:CLCHT.MertonICNTeam@nhs.net">CLCHT.MertonICNTeam@nhs.net</a></p> <p><a href="http://SpeechandLanguageTherapyforChildren.clch.nhs.uk">Speech and Language Therapy for Children (clch.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="#">SALT Referral form</a></p> |

| Service name              | Description  | Contact information / referral process  |
|---------------------------|--|---|
| Occupational therapy (OT) | <p>The NHS children's and young people's occupational therapy teams caters for children aged from 0 to 19 years who have a wide range of disabilities, disorders and delays including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>physical disability</li> <li>sensory needs</li> <li>profound and complex learning disabilities</li> <li>motor coordination difficulties</li> </ul> <p>Intervention is offered to children on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting, depending on what is appropriate. The children's and young person's occupational therapy teams work in children's homes, health centres, nurseries and schools.</p> | <p>Referrals need to be made to the occupational therapy team in the borough where the child's GP is in.</p> <p>Telephone 03300 539 264</p> <p><a href="mailto:CLCHT.MertonICNTeam@nhs.net">CLCHT.MertonICNTeam@nhs.net</a></p> <p><a href="http://MertonCentralLondonCommunityHealthcareNHSTrust.cldh.nhs.uk">Merton Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust (clch.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="#">OT referral form</a></p>             |
| Physiotherapy             | <p>Merton Children's Physiotherapy is a service that works with children and young people who have a delay in their gross motor skills (e.g. not walking, problems with running); a neurological impairment (e.g. cerebral palsy,); difficulties with balance and coordination or musculoskeletal disorders (fractures, strains, pain).</p> <p>Physiotherapists also work with children and young people who have complex medical needs (e.g. wheelchair users)</p>  | <p>Referrals need to be made by a medical professional. Referrals will need to be made to the Physiotherapy service in the borough where the child's GP is.</p> <p>Telephone 03300539264</p> <p><a href="mailto:CLCHT.MertonICNTeam@nhs.net">CLCHT.MertonICNTeam@nhs.net</a></p> <p><a href="http://Physiotherapyforchildren.cldh.nhs.uk">Physiotherapy for children (clch.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p><a href="#">Physiotherapy referral form</a></p> |



| Service name   | Description  | Contact information / referral process   |
|--|--|--|
| Merton CAMHS Early Years Service (based in Merton CAMHS) | <p>Merton CAMHS Early Years Service is an early intervention service for children under the age of five. We support children for healthy emotional and social development.</p> <p>We offer appointments with children, carers and families. We also understand children through their behaviour and play. We work with parents/carers to set goals together. We offer advice and support in understanding and improving concerns.</p> <p>Please note that we will not offer medication, diagnoses or diagnostic assessment (e.g. ASD or ADHD), but can make a referral to other professionals if required.</p> <p>For more information, please see Appendix 10a – Merton CAMHS Early Years Service Leaflet</p> | <p>Address:<br/>Birches House, Birches Close,<br/>Cricket Green, Mitcham, CR4 4LQ<br/>Telephone: 0203 513 6062</p> <p><a href="mailto:mertoncamhs@swlstg.nhs.uk">mertoncamhs@swlstg.nhs.uk</a></p> <p><a href="#">Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - Website</a></p> <p>Professional referrals are made via the CAMHS Single Point of Access (SPA) by using the eReferrals system or by emailing <a href="mailto:MertonSPAreferrals@swlstg.nhs.uk">MertonSPAreferrals@swlstg.nhs.uk</a> with the <a href="#">Merton CAMHS SPA Referral Form</a></p> <p>CAMHS offer a consultation line to professionals who wish to discuss whether to make a referral for a young person: 020 3513 6067. For more information, please see Appendix 10b – Merton CAMHS Early Years Service: Referral Criteria</p> |
| Merton multi-sensory team                                | A team of specialist teachers for visual, hearing and multisensory impairments. They work with identified children, parents and education settings to offer advice and support.  | <p>Children are referred via health services. There are usually referred to the multi-sensory team of the borough they live in.</p> <p><a href="mailto:SEN@merton.gov.uk">SEN@merton.gov.uk</a></p>  |
| Health Visitor   | Health Visitors offer a range of health promotion, health protection and safeguarding interventions to protect and promote the health of families in the borough.  | <p>Children are supported by Health visitors in the borough they live in.</p> <p>0330 053 9264</p> <p><a href="mailto:clcht.hcadminmerton@nhs.net">clcht.hcadminmerton@nhs.net</a></p> <p><a href="http://clch.nhs.uk">Health Visiting (clch.nhs.uk)</a></p>   |
| GP   | The family's GP can support around any medical needs and make referrals to services such as hearing checks or paediatric developmental referrals.  | <p>SENCO can use the example GP letter to support parents to request a referral for a developmental paediatric assessment from their GP.</p> <p>Example GP letter (Appendix 11)</p>  |

| Service name   | Description   | Contact information / referral process  |
|--|---|---|
| Family Information Service Hub (FISH)                | Specialist advisors will offer support and guidance, helping parents to access relevant information and services to help them on a range of topics.   | Sessions are available online and face-to-face (in person). Booking is required, Merton residents only.<br><a href="#">Mondays in person at Church Road Children's Centre</a><br><a href="#">Wednesdays in person at Acacia Children's Centre</a><br><a href="#">Tuesdays and Thursdays - telephone or video call</a><br><a href="#">FISH website</a> |
| Merton Information, Advice & Support Service (MIASS) | Provides free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support to children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and their parents/carers who live in Merton. | This service is for Merton residents.<br>Telephone 0208 543 8854<br><a href="mailto:miass@merton.gov.uk">miass@merton.gov.uk</a><br><a href="#">MIASS (Local Offer website)</a>   |
| Merton SEND Team                                     | The Merton SEN Team carries out the following duties:<br>Assessments for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)<br>Issue of EHCPs, if appropriate.<br>Updates to EHCPs, including ceasing plans where appropriate   | Merton SEN Team is for children who live in Merton. For children who live in other borough please contact that boroughs SEND team.<br>Telephone- 020 8545 4810<br><a href="mailto:SEN@merton.gov.uk">SEN@merton.gov.uk</a>  |
| Family Hubs  | The Merton Family Hub is a place where families and young people can access the support, help and advice they need, for all stages of family life.  | Merton Family Hubs are available for Merton residents only.<br><a href="#">Family Hubs   Merton Council</a>   |

# Chapter Six

## Strategies and Interventions

This section outlines strategies and interventions to support early child development. It is divided into the four sections of development.

## Assessment tools

Settings can use any tools to help them assess if a child is delayed in their development. Below are some tools that may help a SENCO to make an assessment and identify a child who might be delayed.

- Merton Ordinarily available guidance
- Merton communication audit
- Development matters non-statutory guidance
- Universally speaking

## Communication and Interaction

Communication and interaction underpin all areas of development. Practitioners need to provide language rich environments to support and extend children's communication and language skills. The ability to understand and use language as the key to all future education. Children need language not only to communicate but also as a tool for thought and the ability to communicate is the basis of social and emotional well-being.

There are 5 stages of Speech, Language and Communication Development and these are interdependent. Each stage underpins the next and children need to be secure in each stage to develop good speech, language and communication skills. The 5 stages are:

1. Attention & Play
2. Interactions
3. Understanding
4. Words & Talking
5. Speech Sounds

## Visuals

Using visual cues, including pictures, objects, gestures and signing helps children to understand language as well as giving children a way of asking a question, making a comment about their environment or planning what they want to do. Visuals help to

- Share messages clearly
- Create structure
- Lower Anxieties
- Supports child's independence and self esteem

**What is a sign** – the movement or shape made by your hand used to accompany a particular word.

**What is a symbol** – a simple picture used to represent a word or idea in order to convey information

### Levels of symbolic understanding

Real object – associate object with an activity

Photographs / realist colour pictures – children who can match object to photo/picture can be helped to use photo/pictures to support understanding and communication

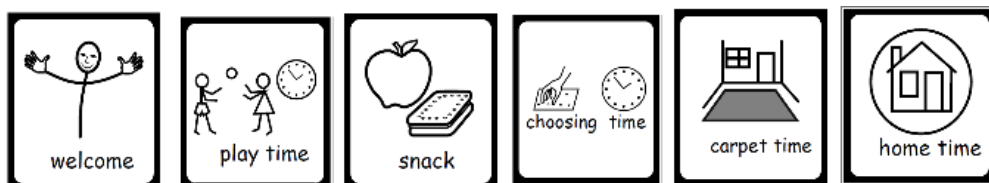
Symbols – children who can match object or photos to the corresponding symbol (will take time to teach) will benefit from symbols to support understanding and communication.

Written words – children who recognise a number of symbols a may begin to recognise the word linked to the symbol

## Timetables

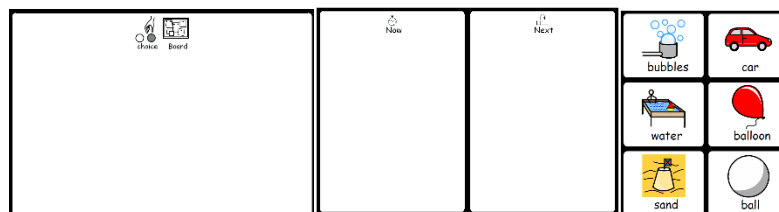
Universal visual timetables should be displayed in a clear unobstructed place within the environment and children who need extra support should have their own timetables. These visually support children with the structure of the day, which not only supports children's communication & interaction needs but also their cognition and learning needs, such as memory/recall.

### Universal timetable:



Some children will need a more individualised timetable, and symbols may not be meaningful. For these children practitioners should consider using photographs or real objects.

### Now/next and choice boards:

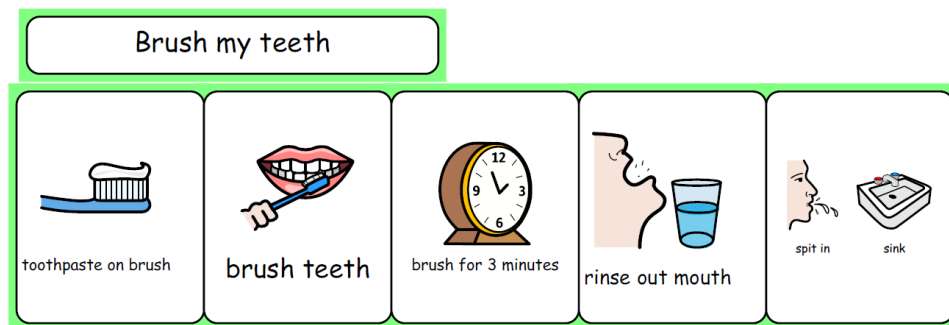


## Social stories

Social stories were first developed for use with children with ASD, the approach has also been successful with children other social and communication delays and differences, as well as individuals developing as expected.

Social stories can be used to:

- develop self-care skills. For example how to clean teeth, wash hands or get dressed),
- social skills and academic abilities. For example sharing, asking for help, saying thank you.
- help someone to understand how others might behave or respond in a particular situation
- help others understand the perspective of an autistic person and why they may respond or behave in a particular way
- help a person to cope with changes to routine and unexpected or distressing events. For example absence of teacher or moving house.
- provide positive feedback to a person about an area of strength or achievement in order to develop self-esteem
- as a behavioural strategy. For example what to do when angry.



## Communication friendly environments

A Communication Friendly Environment is a space that encourages and promotes good communication. It focuses on the role of the environment (including practitioners) in supporting speaking and listening skills, emotional well-being, physical development and general engagement. A communication friendly environment will be well organised, clearly labelled offering independent choosing and support child to follow instructions with clearly defined areas. There will be cosy quiet spaces that give children a chance to think and talk together as well as minimal background noise.

- Merton top tips for communication friendly environments (Appendix 12)
- [Communication Checklist](#)

## Interactions

Good interactions are crucial to supporting good communication and language skills. Practitioners need to think about the following to ensure good interactions with children.

### OWLing

#### Observe



Watch the child carefully so that you can really see what they are interested in.

Watch how the child communicates- watch for nonverbal communication as well as sounds and words

#### Wait



Practitioners should count to 10 in your head, lean forward and look expectant this gives the child the opportunity to start an interaction with verbal or non-verbally. It gives the children time to process your message/ words and formulate their response.

#### Listen



Pay close attention to what the child is saying, so that you can respond appropriately. It will make the child feel valued and what they say is important, so they will want to continue to communicate with you.

To improve interactions practitioners need to

- Be at the same level
- Be face to face
- Be an active listener
- Be a responsive partner

General strategies poster for supporting communication and interactions.

General strategies to support communication and language (Appendix 13)

General strategies to support communication and language Poster (Appendix 14)

[Top tips video - BBC Tiny Happy People](#)

## English as an Additional Language

“Children whose home language is not English, providers MUST take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning supporting their language development at home.” The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework

[Understanding the steps of learning for children with English as an Additional Language in the Early Years \(Birth to Five Matters\)](#)

## Language groups

There are 3 language group levels

### Language Group 1

Language level 1-2 years. To improve attention, listening and early vocabulary.

### Language Group 2

Language Level 2-3 years. To improve the understanding and use of phrases and sentences.

### Language Group 3

Language Level 3-5 years to extend language and narration.

Children should be assessed prior to attending a language group to determine which level they should attend. The Language Group Levels Assessment Tool (Appendix 15) will help you to decide which level would be appropriate for each child. The children can then be grouped together to form your language groups. Children should then be reassessed each half term to review progress and to ensure that they are still attending the correct group.

**Generally children should not spend longer than 1 term in one language group level.**

Groups should take place in a quiet area with as minimal distractions as possible. Groups should last between 10-20 minutes depending on the level and children's ability. Children should take part in a group ideally twice or more a week.

An evaluation should be completed after each group to review how the group went and how the children coped with the activities. This evaluation should then inform the activities in the next group. For example if in the group you were using objects, and the children completed the activity well, next time you might use photos. However if the children found it very easy then you will want to do a more challenging activity next time.

## Talking tables

Talking tables is based on the work of Fleur Griffiths to improve children's speaking and listening skills within nurseries. It is inclusive and open to all children within the session should they wish to participate. This intervention activity will help to support all language levels within mixed or differentiated groups.

[Making Time to Talk - Fleur Griffiths](#)





## Letter and sounds phase 1

This pack provides a range of pre phonics activities to support children's communication and language skills and provide them with the skills for learning phonics.

[National strategies - Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs: Guidance for practitioners in Early Years Foundation Stage](#)

Although this document was published in 2009 and refers to some outdated documentation, it still contains useful and relevant strategies and information on supporting children's speech, language and communication needs.

## Useful Websites

- [Speech and Language UK: Changing young lives](#)
- [SLCF - The Communication Trust \(slcframework.org.uk\)](#)
- [ICAN CHARITY](#)

## Curiosity approach

The Curiosity Programme is a fun-filled interactive way of supporting a child's attention, language and social communication. It teaches the child about the word, how to get on with people and how to communicate. It is an approach designed by Gina Davies, Speech and Language Therapist.

[Curiosity Programme – Attention Autism Ltd](#)

## Intensive interaction

Intensive interaction was developed in the 1980s in the United Kingdom by Dave Hewett and Melanie Nind, who were working at the Harperbury Hospital School for children with severe learning difficulties.

Intensive interaction is when the intensive interaction practitioner plays with the child, responding to what the child does by imitating and joining in, much like a parent imitates and takes turns with a baby. The practitioner develops the play into activities and games that explore and practise communication skills.

The interaction goes at the child's pace and follows the child's interests, and the practitioner pauses to watch what the child does next before responding. **The session stops when the child has had enough.** To start with, the sessions might last just a few minutes, but they get longer as the child's skills develop.

Intensive interaction happens whenever there's a chance to do it. For young children, this might be several times a day.

Intensive interaction often takes place as part of the child's day and does not necessarily require additional resources, just an adult, space and time.

[Information sheet on Intensive Interaction \(Merton Mencap website\)](#)

[Video on Intensive interaction \(YouTube\)](#)

## What's in the bucket

What's in the Bucket is an adapted model of [Attention Autism](#), an intervention model designed by Gina Davies, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. It aims to develop natural and spontaneous communication through the use of visually stimulating and highly motivating objects. It also supports the idea of gaining the attention of ASD learners for gradually longer periods of time.

Merton stages 1 – 4 guide (Appendix 16)

Activity and resource list (Appendix 17)

Blank planning sheet (Appendix 14)

There are lots of videos on YouTube that show different stages of the bucket.

For example:

What does stage. 1. look like?

[Attention Autism Strategies - Stage 1 The Bucket \(youtube.com\)](#)

The rules- Stage. 1.

[Attention Autism Strategies - When things get tricky. \(youtube.com\)](#)

What adults do -Stage 1

[Attention Autism Strategies - What the adults do in a session \(youtube.com\)](#)

How to use a whiteboard

[Attention Autism Strategies - Drawing and getting the message across \(youtube.com\)](#)

Attention bucket - Stages 1 and 2

[Attention Autism Session - Stage 1 & 2 \(youtube.com\)](#)

## Workstations

A workstation is part of the TEACCH approach that has been used successfully for many years, to teach children with autism. The approach focuses on individual's strengths to enable them to develop independent learning skills, support weaknesses and to reduce stress.

The workstation incorporates structure, routine, visual cues and limits distraction, to develop independence, organisational skills, the concept of finished and the generalisation of skills.

- Information sheet on setting up a workstation (Appendix 19)
- Workstations (Appendix 20)
- [Video on the TEACCH approach including workstations](#)

## Social, Emotional and Mental Health

Behaviour can be really challenging for practitioners to manage. It is really important to remember that the first step in managing behaviour is understanding that all behaviour is a communication. Interpreting that communication can help you identify triggers and patterns of unwanted behaviour which can lead you to plan more effective strategies for managing a behaviour.

### Rules, Praise and Ignore:

This is a simple yet effective whole setting approach to managing unwanted behaviour. It consists of 4 easy steps.

Step 1 Making Rules Positive,

Step 2 Teaching the Rules,

Step 3 Learning to give descriptive praise for acceptable behaviour and

Step 4 Ignoring low level behaviours.

Rules, Praise & Ignore Handout (Appendix 21)

### Emotion Coaching:

Emotion coaching is a strategy used by practitioners to help children better understand their feelings and to help them identify ways of self-regulating their responses (behaviour). This involves following the appropriate steps to support children to:

- Name and label emotions
- Validate all emotions as natural
- Set appropriate limits for behaviour
- Problem solving with the children to develop more effective behavioural strategies

[Emotion Coaching - Bath Spa University](#)

[Video: The Brain Flip \(YouTube\)](#)

### Self-Regulation:

Self-regulation is the ability to manage your own emotions and behaviours in ways that are socially acceptable and help us to calm. It is really important that we understand the process of regulation as some children do not have a natural regulation process and often need co-regulation from an adult in order to soothe and respond to a demand more appropriately. This sometimes involves providing resources and support to children to manage big emotions.

[Self-Regulation Video \(YouTube\)](#)

## Emotional Toolkit:

Emotions toolkit is a pack of activities used to support children to learn initially about the 4 most basic emotions: happiness, fear, anger and sadness. It is important that we still continue to validate and emphasise all emotions for children, and we do not insist on children only ever feeling one of the 4 basic emotions. Using the 4 basic emotions will help children to show empathy and gain an understanding of these emotions.

[Emotion Coaching - Bath Spa University](#)

## Attachment Theory and Nurturing Support:

John Bowlby Attachment theory (date) and has had a huge impact on our work with children in the Early Years. Attachment difficulties can occur in children from a young age and can impact their behaviour when at a setting. Within our settings we need to provide a nurturing environment where children can feel safe and secure enabling them to thrive, it is not about blaming or criticising parents. To understand more about John Bowlby Attachment theory follow the video link. For more information on the principles of Nurture follow the link to Nurture UK.

- [Attachment Theory \(YouTube\)](#)
- [What is nurture? Discover more about the Six Principles of Nurture \(nurtureuk.org\)](#)

## The Behavioural Checklist:

When identifying children with unwanted behaviour, it is important that you use a range of universal inclusive strategies to support children in the first instance. This includes observing staff interactions, consistency applying boundaries and implementing agreed strategies such as Rules, Praise & Ignore and involving parents in implementing behavioural support strategies at home. The checklist is designed to be used by SENCO's and Managers to ensure consistent strategies are implemented in the first stages of behavioural difficulties.

- Behaviour Checklist Handout (Appendix 22)

## Biting, Turn Taking and Tantrums:

All children go through stages of development where perceived unwanted behaviours may be age and stage appropriate for example biting, tantrums and difficulties with turn taking. Using assessment tools can help to identify if a child is displaying typical development. Many factors can affect a child's behaviour. A range of resources are available via the links below:

- [Biting Advice Sheet \(Early Years Alliance\)](#)
- [Early Years FAQ's: How Do I Support Children that Bite? \(Twinkl\)](#)
- [Stop children biting and hitting: Top tips and strategies for parents \(BBC Tiny Happy People\)](#)

## Additional Behavioural Resources:

### Visuals:

The use of visuals can support children's understanding of expectations and rules within the setting.

See Communication section (page 26) for information and resources

### ABCC Charts:

Recording behavioural incidents on an ABCC chart provides data for us to interpret and identify the potential triggers and patterns of unwanted behaviours. This allows us to plan and differentiate the event that the child finds challenging. Remember you should record both wanted and unwanted behaviour observed over a two-week timescale.

- Blank ABCC Charts (Appendix 23)
- Example ABCC chart (Appendix 24)

## Behaviour Support Plan:

Creating a Behaviour Support Plan can be crucial to ensure practitioners and parents have an agreed strategy for managing a particular behaviour or behaviours, identified from the ABCC chart. This ensures the consistency of the approach used. The behaviour support plan becomes a central document for implementing and monitoring a child's challenging behaviour.

- Behaviour Support Plan (Appendix 25)

## Risk Assessment:

A risk assessment may be used if a child's behaviour presents a danger to either themselves, their peers or the adults they are with. This ensures the safety of all those who may be at risk of harm through challenging behaviour. This should be completed by a senior leader/manager who has responsibility for keeping everybody safe and well from harm or potential hazards.

- Risk Assessment for challenging behaviour (Appendix 26)

## Social interaction groups

Social interaction groups can support children who may have limited attention and listening skills, limited language and social skills. The group provides a structured way of teaching and supporting children to develop skills such as sharing and turn taking, waiting, listening and concentration and always for them to see and imitate what other around them are doing.

- Guidelines for running a social interaction group (Appendix 27)
- Example session plan (Appendix 28)
- Blank session plan sheet (Appendix 29)

## Sensory and Physical

- Supporting children with sensory processing difficulties booklet (Appendix 30)

## Sensory audit

| Visual Impairment  | Current Situation | What needs to change (if necessary) |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rooms which children frequent are well lit</li><li>• Communal areas (hallways/bathrooms etc) have effective lighting and there are no areas which are less well lit</li><li>• Glare coming in through windows is reduced through effective use of blinds</li><li>• Signage on doors etc are in large print</li><li>• Stair edges/handrails/door handles/doorways are marked or painted in contrasting colours</li><li>• Where children or adults with visual impairment are in attendance, room layouts remain consistent</li><li>• Staff know some strategies they could use to support a child with visual impairment (e.g. providing a commentary when showing a picture, identifying times when children will need more support such as routine changes etc)</li></ul> |                   |                                     |

This audit is to help you to assess your environment and how well it enables the participation (current or in the future) of children who may have a sensory impairment or sensory integration difficulties or who may have other physical development needs. It does not cover all aspects and is not intended to replace any advice or recommendations made by professionals in relation to

individual children but is aimed at helping you to audit your current provision to identify what changes may be necessary.

## Brain breaks

Brain breaks are amazing organising activities for all children.

Brain breaks help to improve children's attention, learning and gross motor co-ordination.

Brain breaks should be done every 30-45 minutes for 5 minutes or when you notice children becoming restless, distracted, fidgety or daydreamy.

[brain breaks \(Twinkl\)](#)

## Backward and forwards chaining - self-help skills

When teaching a new skill we often start at the beginning. This can be challenging for children who are struggling to master a skill. One way of learning a new task while giving a child a sense of achievement is to use the backward/forward chaining technique. Backward/forward chaining is breaking down a task into small steps and teaching each individual step one at a time.

Backward/forward chaining has been found to be particularly useful when learning self-care skills and helpful when teaching younger children and those who have difficulty learning new skills.

[Information on backward and forward chaining.](#)

## Disco dough gym

Dough Gym is a daily physical intervention that combines the use of large pieces of dough with a series of hand and finger exercises. These strengthen and develop children's fine and gross motor dexterity, hand-eye co-ordination, proprioception, balance, low load control, grip and most importantly, their self-esteem.

Disco dough gym handout (Appendix 31)

## Useful Websites

- The Sensory Integration Network - [www.sensoryintegration.org.uk](http://www.sensoryintegration.org.uk)
- YouTube: lots of videos with information on this area, in particular Brain Highways has very accessible information on the vestibular and proprioceptive systems

# Glossary

**Early Years Foundation Stage 2023 (EYFS):** The Early Years Foundation Stage framework supports an integrated approach to early learning and care. It gives all professionals a set of common principles and commitments to deliver quality early education and childcare experiences to all children.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities code of practice (SEND):** The Code is applicable to Children and young people from birth to 25 years. It explains the duties of local authorities, health bodies, schools, and colleges to provide for those with special educational needs under part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

**Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO):** A SENCO is a qualified teacher in a school or maintained nursery school who has responsibility for co-ordinating Special Educational Needs (SEN) provision. In early years setting a nominated person will be assigned to perform the role of SENCO.

**Special Educational Needs support plan (SEN support plan):** A SEN plan is the system used by schools and early years settings to assess and provide appropriate support for children with special educational needs.

**Disability Living Allowance (DLA):** Disability Living Allowance is a benefit paid for children who need additional care or supervision because they have a disability or health condition. DLA is awarded based on mobility and care needs, not based on diagnosis.

**Disability Access Fund (DAF):** Disability Access Fund is an annual payment made to providers to support a child's access to funded early education. It can be used to make reasonable adjustments to their setting and/or help with building capacity, be that for the child in question or for the benefit of all children attending the setting.

**Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP):** The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) provides additional funding for settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged children taking up a funded early education place.

**Family Information and Support Hubs (FISH):** This is a service for families to access a range of support and information that they need.

**Merton Information, Advice and Support Service (MIASS):** It is co-commissioned by Merton Council and the NHS to provide free, confidential, and impartial information, advice and support to



children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and their parents/carers who live in Merton.

**Team Around the Family (TAF):** This is a meeting between a child, young person, their family, and the group of practitioners who are working with them. The purpose of the Team Around the family meeting is to share information and to create a solution focussed plan that will support the needs of the child and their family.

**General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR):** It is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information from individuals who live in an outside of the European Union.

**Assessment tools:** This is to track the progress of all children. Accurately assessing, tracking, and recording the progress of children with SEND is particularly important to enable emerging needs to be identified and appropriate strategies put into place.

**Monitoring Form:** This enables practitioners to assess and review the developmental level of children's progress.

**Special Educational Needs (SEN) register:** Children who require additional teaching and support alongside the standard curriculum and if they are not making less than expected, are added to the SEN register, and identified as requiring special educational support.

**Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs):** The Educational Health Care Plans are for those children (0-16) or young people (16-19) with special educational needs who require support beyond that which an educational setting can provide at special educational needs support.

**Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) Bi- annual review:** The annual review is the statutory process to check on whether the needs and provision specified in the EHCP are still up-to-date and relevant for the child. The review must take place at least every 12 months, and for children aged up to five years reviews should take place more frequently.

**Local Authority / Authorities (LA):** Local authorities are administrative offices which provide services and facilities within their local areas.

**One-page profile:** A one-page profile can help the new setting provide better child-centred care and support.

**Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH):** This aims to provide structure and visual support to help autistic learners understand what they are learning and what is expected of them.

**Attention Bucket:** This contains full of motivating and exciting toys and gadgets of high interest to children, supporting them to gain shared attention using simple, repetitive language to teach the child independently focus on an adult led activity.

**Antecedent Behaviour Consequence Chart (ABCC):** ABC charts are observation tools that record what happens before, during and after a behaviour that may be challenging, and help to understand the causes and consequences of behaviour.

**Behaviour plan:** This is an effective school-based plan tool that are used when a child is regularly displaying behaviour that challenges.

**English as additional Language (EAL):** An EAL is either British born, but has grown up speaking another language a home, or has come to the UK from another country and does not speak English as a first language.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Inclusion Fund (SENDIF):** This funding is available to settings to support them to address Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and promote inclusion. Funding may be used for staff training, additional learning resources or specialist equipment which will help staff to best support and ensure that the child makes progress.