



What to do if you are
worried about your
child's learning and
or **development**



Support for SEND
Our Graduated Response (0 to 25 years)

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Introduction

Welcome to this booklet for parents and carers who are worried about how their children are doing in their early years setting, school, or college.

The booklet has been put together by parent carer organisations and the educational psychology service. It answers the questions that we ask when we are worried about our children's learning or development and what can be done to help.

The booklet will help you understand how children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) should be supported, and the provision that the local authority expects to be made available. Any provision or support should be provided in line with the strengths, needs and aspirations of the child or young person and is not dependent on any formal diagnosis.

The information it contains is good practice for all schools and educational settings.

“Our vision for children with special educational needs and disabilities is the same as for all children and young people – that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college, and lead happy and fulfilled lives.”

‘The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice’ (2015).

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What should I do if I am worried about my child's learning?

All children and young people learn at different rates and are better at some things than they are at others. If you have any worries about your child at nursery, school or college, the first step is to talk to your child's teacher or key worker.

If you are still concerned, you may also like to talk to the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO). If your child is not yet in an educational setting, talk to your health visitor.

The SENCO is the person responsible in a school or childcare setting for helping to make sure that the needs of children and young people with SEND are met.

They are not responsible for teaching them, but for giving advice and support. They will be able to say what support is already in place and discuss with you what should happen next. Setting staff will discuss your concerns with you and talk with you about what can be done to help. Most children can get the help they need at

the 'universal level' of support (available to everyone), through high quality teaching and by making 'reasonable adjustments'.

If you are concerned about your child or young person's health, we would recommend initially contacting your health visitor or GP (0 to five years) or, the school nurse or GP (five years and above).

NHS health services offer a variety of support to early years settings and schools that can be accessed as part of the graduated response or SEND support.

This includes universal services (available to all) such as your health visitor, dentist and GP and specialist services including speech and language therapy (SALT), physiotherapy, occupational therapy, paediatricians and children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).

When needed, a referral to these specialist services will usually come from your school, or sometimes via your GP.

What does having special educational needs and disability (SEND) mean?

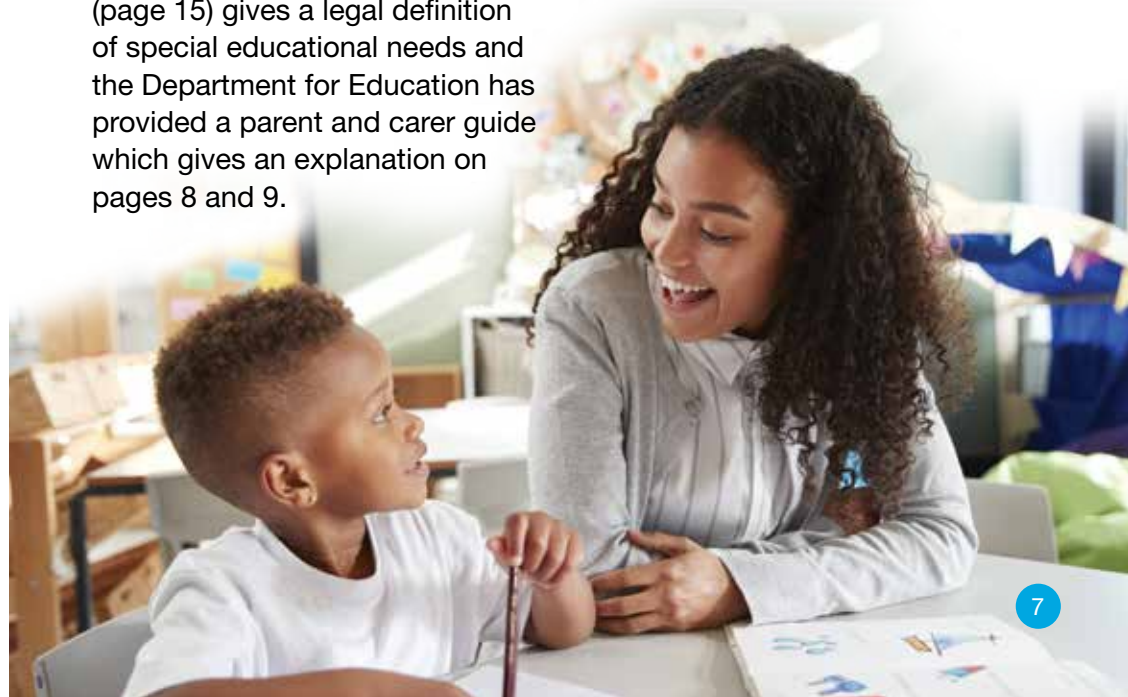
Special educational needs (SEN) is a term used when a child or young person has learning difficulties that makes it harder for them to learn than most children and young people of the same age.

These children and young people may need extra, or different help from that given to others. If they have a disability which makes it difficult for them to use the same facilities as others of the same age, they also have special educational needs.

The SEND Code of Practice 2015 (page 15) gives a legal definition of special educational needs and the Department for Education has provided a parent and carer guide which gives an explanation on pages 8 and 9.

The Equality Act 2010 gives a definition of disability:

- a child or young person has a disability if they have a medical or physical impairment that is substantial and has a long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities
- children or young people with a disability do not necessarily have special educational needs, for example if a child uses a wheelchair, it will not necessarily affect their ability to learn.



How will the setting know if my child has SEND and what support my child needs?

Staff will use what is called the Graduated Response; **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle.

They assess the progress of all children and young people to help them to plan and give appropriate support.

They then monitor and review their progress to see how well they are doing.

Where a possible special educational need is identified, your child's teacher or key worker will discuss moving your child to SEND support level, where the **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle becomes increasingly targeted and personalised. (See What is SEND support? Pages 16 and 17).

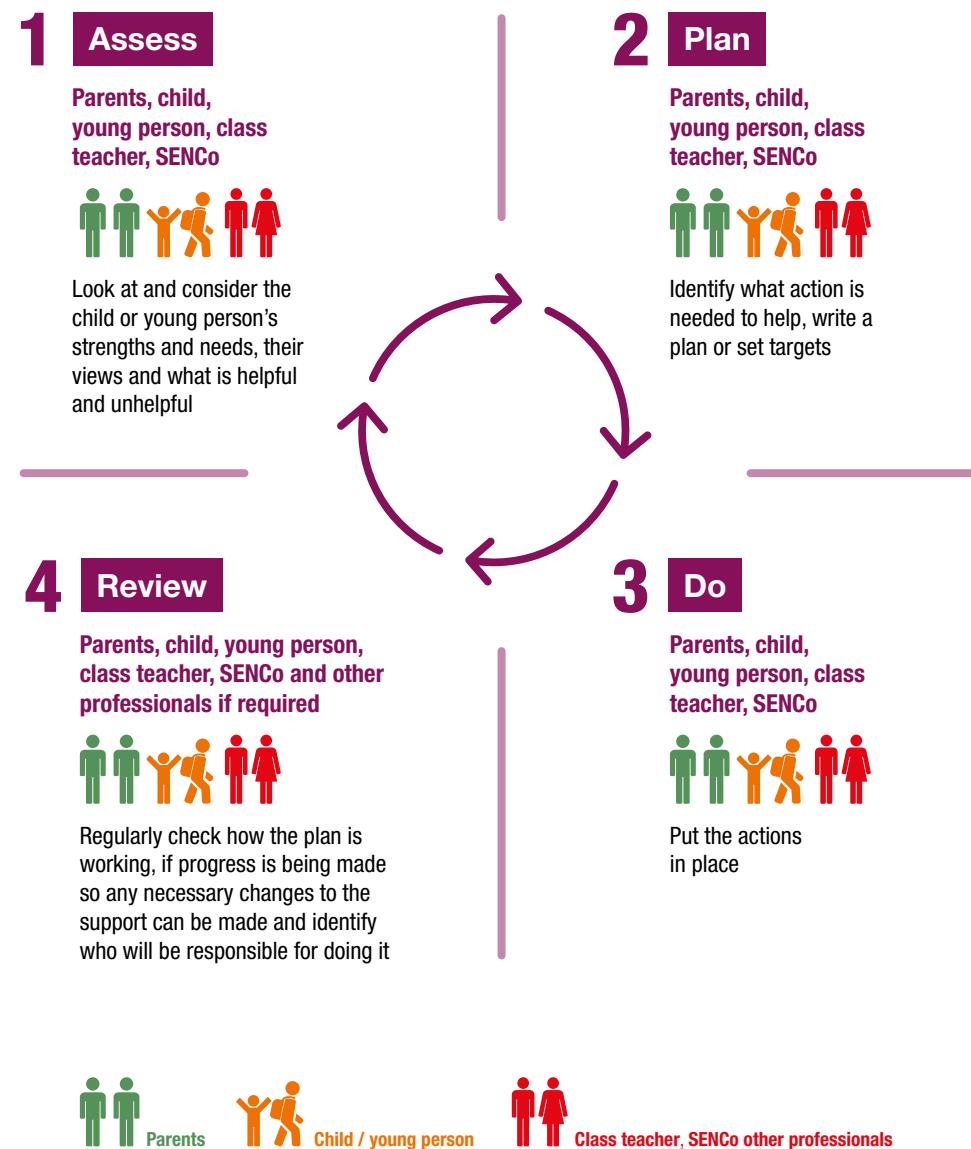
It is very important that the setting or school includes parents and carers and the young person or child (where appropriate) in this process. This will help them gain a full understanding of the child or young person's strengths and areas of need, their interests, and motivations, what's working and not working and their hopes and aspirations.

This means that everyone can work together towards appropriate targets.



The Graduated Response; Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycle

This cycle can take from four weeks to a term.



What levels of support are there?

There are three main levels of support:

1. **Universal provision** forms the basis for all provision and support in educational settings. It consists of high-quality teaching and making reasonable adjustments.

It is based on inclusive approaches to teaching and learning and helps all pupils and especially those with SEND.

2. **SEND support** is for children who need more help than is normally available to the rest of the class. Information from the 'Assess' stage of the graduated approach will help to pinpoint the kind of provision that is likely to be most effective in meeting the pupil's needs and will help to provide clear outcomes for the end of the intervention.

These outcomes are then reviewed after a term or half term. If children or young people do not make satisfactory

progress with targeted SEND support, setting staff, after discussion with the family, will seek advice from external agencies and put this into practice.

3. **Statutory provision** is for children and young people who need more support than is available at SEND support level and whose needs are complex and long term.

For more information visit BCP Council's Local Offer for details on the Graduated Response and the Education, Health and Care Plans.

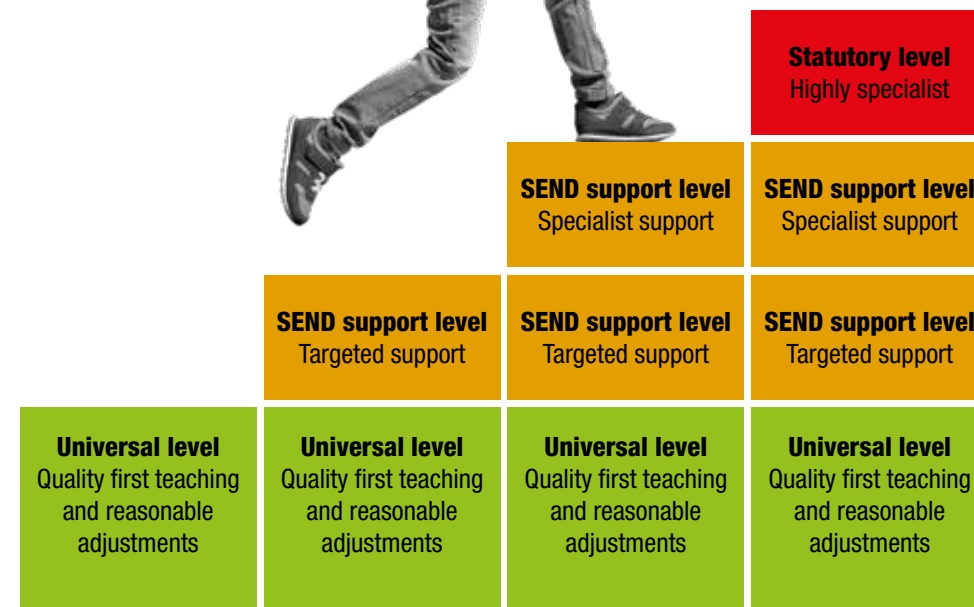
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Three levels of support

About 4% of pupils

About 12.5% of pupils

All pupils



(Percentages are from UK Government statistics 2022 found at: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/special-educational-needs-in-england>)

What support should all children get (universal support)?

Universal provision is the foundation for all provision in educational settings and is based on high quality teaching. It is often called 'Quality First Teaching' or ordinary available provision.

This includes strategies, resources and adaptations to the curriculum and environment that teaching staff use, to remove barriers to learning for children and young people.

Universal provision is based on inclusive approaches to teaching and learning which benefit all children but are essential for those with SEND.

Reasonable adjustments for individual needs are made to ensure schools and settings are, for example, dyslexia-friendly, communication-supportive and are adaptive for any sensory and physical needs that pupils may have.

Strategies for high quality universal provision in the classroom include:

- a well-organised classroom with labelled resources including picture symbols
- displays which support learning (e.g. word lists, punctuation pyramids and multiplication grids)
- assessment of prior learning to support the planning of learning objectives for all pupils
- instructions are being given in small chunks with visual cues and understanding is checked
- alternatives to written recording used routinely
- activities being broken down into manageable amounts
- a strong focus on the importance of positive relationships
- adaptations to resources (such as large print)
- consideration of sensory needs

- effective use of praise for the celebration of all achievement including effort
- memory supported by explicit demonstration and modelling of memory techniques
- teaching assistant support being planned for, and used to maximise learning
- adopting a positive and proactive approach to behaviour, as described in the Education Endowment Foundation's Improving Behaviour in Schools guidance report <https://eef.li/behaviour>
- adaptations to policies as needed (e.g. uniform, homework and behaviour policies)
- adjustments being made to help all children and young people learn (as in the examples on pages 15 and 17)
- the staff in the setting model positive attitudes, beliefs, and practices and all behaviour is understood as a means of communication.

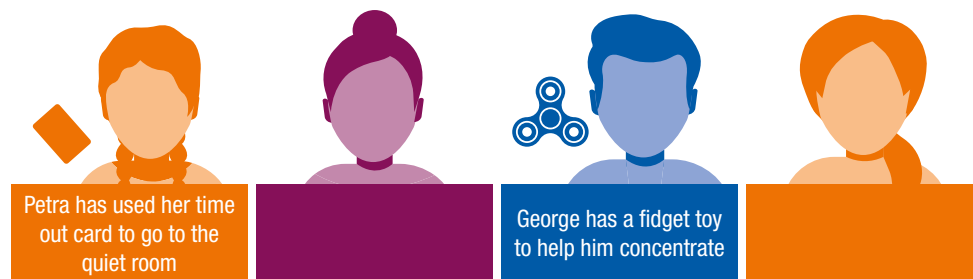


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The graduated response to special educational need is important because as a parent I can be sure that everyone from the teaching assistants, to the teachers, the SENCO and all other professionals working with my children are all on the same page and doing their best to support and help them and that I am fully involved in the process.

”

Universal support



What is SEND support?

If your child is not making enough progress at universal level, their teacher and key worker and possibly the SENCO will discuss with you placing your child at SEND support level. This stands for special educational needs and disabilities support level and is for children who need more help than is normally available to the rest of the class. The SEND support for each child is different because it is designed to meet the needs of each individual child. It should be set out in a plan – sometimes called an Individual education plan (IEP) and should include the actions and support needed to help the child or young person make expected progress towards agreed targets.

Plans need to be specific and clear about targets, actions and who does what. The plan should be reviewed with you at least once a term. Regular communication between school, or childcare setting and the family is vital.

BCP Council advocates using a person-centred approach to the

Graduated Response; **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle which means preparing, supporting and encouraging the child or young person to have as much choice and control over their own life as possible and focuses on their strengths, motivators and skills as well as their needs.

Any planning should be based on what is important to your child and what is important for them and their family. In this way educational settings make sure that planning and actions are **'done with'** the child or young person and their family, rather than **'done to'** them.

Sometimes one cycle of the **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** process is enough, and the child or young person starts to make progress with the support that has been put in place. For others however, when the review stage is reached it's clear that expected progress isn't being made, so further SEN support is needed, and the cycle continues and the help and support will be gradually increased.

If the child or young person does not make satisfactory progress despite ongoing targeted support, the school or setting will involve relevant external agencies, for example an advisory teacher or speech and language therapist.

Examples of SEND support may include:

- additional adult support for particular lessons or at certain times, like playtime
- the use of a personalised work area
- structured activities to develop social skills in small groups
- adaptations to the physical environment or access to additional resources
- one to one or small group evidence-based interventions for reading, spelling, writing or numeracy, several times per week
- support from a mentor or key worker

- a sensory diet (planned activities to meet sensory needs)
- regular reviews of the support, at least termly, with the relevant people, including parents and carers.

Some pupils have more long term and complex needs and they will need several **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycles to make progress and some may ultimately need an education, health and care needs assessment.

Settings, parents and young people aged between 16 and 25 can request that the local authority carries out an education, health and care needs assessment (EHCNA), if they think that the child or young person needs more support than is available at SEND support level.

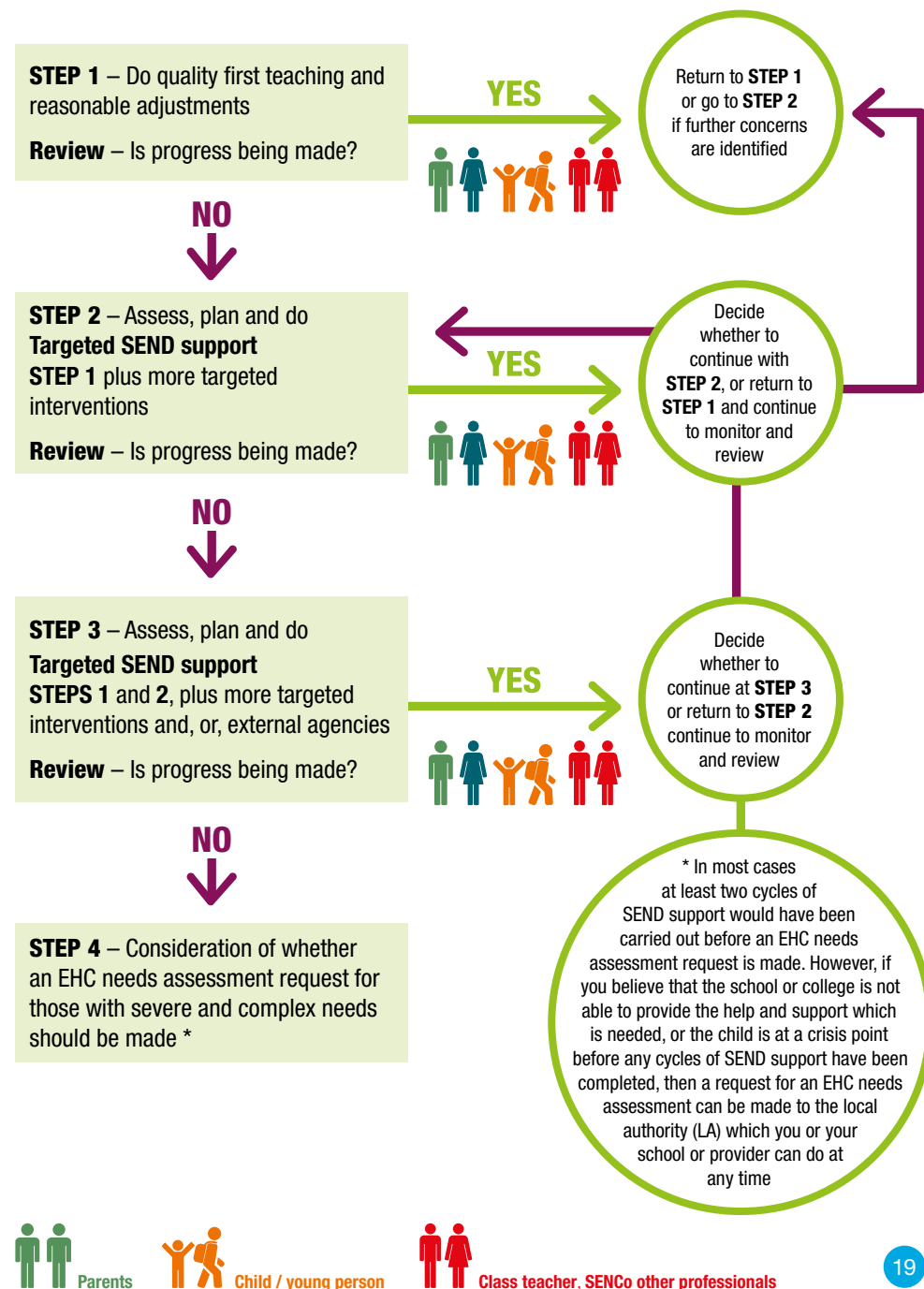
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Our little one wouldn't be where she is today without the amazing hard work from all those involved, they have all done such a good job and I'm very grateful.

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The Graduated Response flow chart



What can my child be supported for?

There are four main areas of need and many children and young people will have needs in a number of these areas. Their needs may also change over time.

1. Communication and interaction

Children and young people with speech, language and communication difficulties may have difficulty saying what they want, or understanding others.

2. Cognition and learning

Children or young people may have difficulty learning, remembering or applying skills and knowledge. They may learn differently from others and have difficulty with literacy or numeracy or learn at a slower pace.

3. Social, emotional and mental health

Children and young people may have difficulty managing their emotions, with social interaction and may be experiencing mental health problems. They may

have difficulty making friends or relating to adults. They may be withdrawn, isolated or find regulating their behaviour difficult.

4. Sensory and physical

Children or young people may have visual or hearing impairments or have physical difficulties which affect their learning. They may also have difficulties with sensory processing.

Considering these primary needs is a useful first step, but a more detailed understanding of an individual child is required for action to be really effective.

Teachers should understand the individual characteristics of pupils' needs, and how these relate to their classroom environment and the content that they are teaching.

What do I do if I have concerns about the support my child is getting?

It's best to try to solve things directly with your child's teacher or key worker and SENCO first. Set out your concerns and ask for their agreement to make improvements. If this doesn't work, you might want to then escalate your concern to the headteacher.

At some schools, the headteacher is also the SENCO. If this is your situation, or if you have escalated your concerns to your headteacher and this hasn't worked, you could then contact your schools lead governor for SEND. Every school has one, and you can find out on your school's website how to contact them.

You may also wish to contact SENDiass for free, impartial, and confidential information, advice and support for children and young people (up to the age of 25) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and their parents and carers, living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole.

sendiass4bcp.org



What can I do to support my child?

- try not to let your child see that you are worried but that you are listening to their concerns
- talk to and work with your child's nursery, school or college, let them know about your concerns and what you think might help
- let the nursery, school, or college (setting) know about any challenges at home that might be affecting your child
- discuss how you and the setting can do things in a similar way or use similar language to provide a consistent approach
- talk positively about your child's setting and the staff whenever your child can hear
- talk positively about your child and their progress whenever they can hear. Ask to share your concerns and worries with others when your child is not present so they are not able to hear
- talk to your GP or health visitor if you have any concerns about your child's health
- praise any small steps of progress and all attempts to learn
- you may find it helpful to ask a friend or family member to go with you to meetings with school and other professionals. This can help you to remember what was said, and to ensure that you get to say what you want to
- you may find it helpful to take with you a list of things you want to talk about in the meeting
- look after yourself, all children can be demanding, and worries can be exhausting
- children and young people with special needs and disabilities, just like everyone, will learn through play, exercise, social activities, family meals and all the other experiences you can bring them.

We all learn best when we are relaxed and having fun.





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Educational Psychology Service

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