

Childminders guide to SEND

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child or young person's ability to learn. They can affect their:

- behaviour or ability to socialise,
- learning and development
- ability to understand things or communicate
- concentration levels,
- physical ability

SEND is the responsibility of the childminder, the law says that you must make reasonable adjustments to meet the child's needs and that you can not discriminate against the child because of their SEND needs i.e. you can't offer less hours, refuse to take them or not allow them to access everything other children receive, even if this means they need more help.

<https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2023/07/Equality-Act-Guide-for-EY.pdf>

Identifying if one of your children has SEND

As a childminder you will understand child development and so will notice if a child in your care is not making expected developmental progress. All children develop at different rates, and doing things for the first time at different ages is expected. If a child has a significant delay in one or more areas of development, it may be time to do a more formal assessment of the child's level of need. In Solihull you can use the Solihull Assessment Toolkit to help with this. You can find this on our Solgrid Early Years web page [key resources for setting SENCOs \(solgrid.org.uk\)](#) this will help you to see where the child has a delay and how significant the delay is.

Supporting the child

The code of practice says there should be a graduated approach to meeting the needs of children with SEND. This means we should start with the parent, childminder or setting helping to give the child more opportunities to practice a skill. So, for example, if you notice a child is not talking you will provide lots of opportunities and encouragement for that child to talk. You might plan in some 'friendly sabotage' or set up some [games](#) to [practice language](#), etc. In this stage, where you provide extra support for that child's development, we call it the *setting support* stage of the graduated approach. That means you are doing more than quality first teaching i.e. providing the child with something more than you normally would. There are lots of example of the sort of support you could provide in a document called the graduate approach document <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2023/07/Graduated-Approach-final-Feb-2023.pdf>

Where to get help and how

If you have put in extra support for a child at the setting support stage of the graduated approach, but the gap between them and other children their age is not reducing, then you may need to seek support from other outside agencies. This next stage is called the *specialist support* stage of the

graduated approach. Who you refer to will depend on the child's SEND needs for example you could need to refer to a speech and language therapist, OT or a physio therapist [Speech and Language Therapy – Solihull Children's Community Therapies \(uhb.nhs.uk\)](#) there is guidance on their site as to when and how to refer. You can encourage a parent to go to their GP for a referral to a paediatrician. Also look at the [Speech, Language and Communication Pathway](#) on Solgrid.

If a child has a significant developmental delay in 3 or more areas, you can refer to the Early Years Team via early years TAC at this link- [Early Years Team Around the Child \(EY TAC\) \(solihull.gov.uk\)](#). You can do this yourself or you can talk to the child's Health Visitor who can also do a referral. To do a referral you will need to provide the child's levels of development and you can get these using the Solihull assessment toolkit (or equivalent) or a health visitor may have them from their health checks. Video guide- <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/send/send-training-support/>

You need parental consent for any referral.

If the child is accepted by The Early Years Team, they will visit the child in the family home as well as in yours. They will model strategies and give advice. They will write a SEND support plan to help the graduated approach. <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/eyc/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2024/02/Solihull-EY-SEND-Support-Plan-BLANK-.docx>

As a childminder, if you have a child with significant SEND needs in 3 or more areas of development, we advise you write a SEND support plan for the child. This will show all the extra support you put in place. If you follow the link above to our web page, it will advise you how to write a plan. The purpose of the plan is to provide evidence of the graduated approach. If you have this evidence you may be able to apply for extra support and funding for the child, and it will support an application for a health referral or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) if it is needed.

Early Years Inclusion funding

If you have put in extra support, and have written a SEND support plan, you may be able to apply for inclusion funding. This is to help you pay for the support a child with SEND may need. There are two levels of inclusion fund. When and how to apply is explained here [Inclusion Fund \(solihull.gov.uk\)](#).

EHCPs

Only children with the most significant level of SEND will need an EHCP. Most children with SEND will never have a EHCP. To apply for an EHCP, you will need to have evidence of SEND support plans being in place over an extended period of time. You will need to share reports from outside agencies to support the application for an EHCP. You need to evidence that the child's level of SEND need is very high ie they are functioning years below their peers and that they need additional resources (people time and things) to access any learning. There is further information here- [Education, Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\) Explained | solihull.gov.uk](#)

A child will need an EHCP before being considered for a place in a special school. Most children will be best supported in mainstream provision. **If you need support with any stage of the SEND graduated approach, please do not hesitate to contact the early years team for any support and advice (eyenquiries@solihull.gov.uk).**