[](https://www.staffs-iass.org/home.aspx) Fact Sheet 2

SEND in the Early Years

**The ‘Early Years’**

The term ‘Early Years’ is often used to refer to the Early Years and Foundation Stage, or the EYFS.

The EYFS sets the standards for learning, development and care of a child from birth to 5 years old. During the Early Years, children are mostly taught through games and play. Their learning is divided into key areas:

* communication and language
* physical development
* personal, social and emotional development
* literacy
* mathematics
* understanding the world
* expressive arts and design

The EYFS ends after a child’s Reception Year.. When children begin Year 1, they are in Key Stage 1 and begin to follow the framework for the National Curriculum.

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**Assessments during the Early Years**

Children’s progress is reviewed when they’re between 2 and 3 by an early years practitioner or health visitor. Nursery staff and class teachers continually assess children. The assessments are based on classroom observations – children are not formally tested at this stage. Early Years and Nursery settings base their observations on the early learning goals, which can be found in the [early years framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2).

At the end of Reception, teachers will compile an EYFS Profile which provides parents, teachers and professionals with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities. For children with SEND, this can be a useful document in identifying a child’s needs informing plans for future learning or identifying any future support.

**SEND Support in the Early Years**.

Chapter 5 of the SEND Code of Practice, sets out the requirements for Early Years settings to identify and respond to the needs, or emerging SEND needs, of children. Early years providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEND The benefits of early identification are widely recognised. It is widely recognised that identifying SEND needs early on, and putting in place early support and interventions, can hugely benefit children as they get older.

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All Early Years settings have duties under the Equalities Act 2010. Maintained nursery schools must:

• use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need

• ensure that children with SEN engage in the activities of school alongside children who do not have SEN

• designate a teacher to be responsible for co-ordinating SEN provision (the SEN co-ordinator, or SENCO)

• inform parents when they are making special educational provision for a child

The Early Years Senco

Early Years Settings should have a SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator), who is responsible for the organisation of SEND within the setting.

Nursery settings also have access to an Early Years District SENCO. The Early Years Area SENCO can support individual Early Years settings with advice and strategies for support. They can also help to co-ordinate services, parents and professionals within individual settings.

The Early Years Area SENCO may refer children to the Early Years Forum.

**The** **Early Years Forum**

The Early Year Forum is a made up of a Panel of different professionals with experience of the EYFS. Children can be referred to the Early Years Forum by an Education, Health or Social Care Professional e.g. Area Senco, Nursery Senco, Health Visitor.

The Panel will discuss the information submitted for each child and ensure that they are getting the correct amount of support. If the Early Years Forum agree that more, or different, support is needed, they will arrange for that to be put in place.

Further information on the Early Years Forum can be found on the Staffordshire Local Offer.