



Information Advice and Support

Who does what for families with children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability?

This leaflet explains who does what for families
with children with SEN(D).



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Advice & Support
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There are lots of new professionals who may come into your life once you know that your child HAS Special Educational Needs and/or Disability. Here is a list of professionals and what they do:

Advisory Teachers

Advisory teachers support children in mainstream schools with visual and hearing impairments from birth to 16, and a physical/medical impairment and Down's Syndrome from ages 5 to 16.

Clinical Psychologist

A Clinical Psychologist is a health professional who helps people with specific problems with learning or behaviour difficulties.

Communication Support Worker

A Communication Support Worker works alongside teachers to provide Sign Language support for young deaf children in nursery or school.

Dietician

A Dietician is a health professional who gives advice about nutrition and swallowing or feeding difficulties.

Early Support Worker

An Early Support Worker is an education professional who can come to the home of pre-school children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and their families. The Early Support Worker can come from a range of professional backgrounds. They may be teachers, therapists, nurses, health visitor or volunteers with relevant experience.

Educational Psychologist

An Educational Psychologist is a psychologist who is specially trained in child development and how children learn. They help children who find it difficult to learn or understand or communicate with others. They can assess your child's development and provide support and advice.

General Practitioner (GP)

A GP is a family doctor who works in a surgery, either on their own or with other GPs. Your doctor deals with your child's general health and can refer you to clinics, hospitals and specialists when needed. They may also support applications for benefits or other types of help.

They visit families at home to give help, advice and practical assistance about the care of very young children. Some areas have specialist health visitors who have particular experience and expertise supporting families with a young disabled child.

Independent Parental Supporter

This is a volunteer who has been trained by the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) to support parents and help them to understand the Special Educational Needs process. They can help by providing information and coming to meetings with you.

Learning Disability Nurse

Learning Disability Nurses are specialist nurses who work with children and adults with a learning disability and with their families. They can help you find services for your child.

Learning Support Assistant/Teaching Assistant

A learning Support Assistant or Teaching Assistant is someone who works alongside teachers. They support individual children or small groups to help them learn and take part in activities in schools or nurseries.

Paediatrician

A Paediatrician is a doctor who specialises in working with babies and children. They are often the first point of contact for families who find out that their child has an impairment or medical condition. Paediatricians may give you a diagnosis about your child's condition, answer any questions you may have and refer you to specialist services.

Paediatric Neurologist

A paediatric Neurologist is a doctor who specialises in how the brain works in very young children.

Paediatric Occupational Therapist

A Paediatric Occupational Therapist helps children who have difficulties in carrying out the activities of everyday life, for example sitting in a chair, holding a spoon or fork or drinking from a cup. They carry out assessments to see if your child would benefit from using specialist equipment like adapted cups, buggies or chairs. They can also advise you on lifting and handling your child safely.

SEND Information, Advice and Support (SENDIASS) Officer

A SEND Information, Advice and Support (SENDIASS) Officer provides support and advice to parents whose children have special educational needs. They provide accurate and neutral information on a full range of options available to parents and do not take sides. They are there to help parents make informed decisions about the child's education. Where the parents want an Independent Parental Supporter, the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service should provide one.

Physiotherapist

A Physiotherapist is a health professional who specialises in physical and motor development. They can assess your child and develop a plan that might include helping your child control their head movement, sit, crawl or walk. A Physiotherapist may see your child at home or in other settings, like a nursery.

School Nurse

A School Nurse is a medical nurse, based in a school, who provides support for children's medical needs.

Social Worker

A social Worker is a professional who provides practical help and advice about counselling, transport, home help and other services. They are normally employed by the Local Authority. Social Workers may also be able to help you with claiming benefits or getting equipment you need at home.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

SENCO's are members of staff at a nursery, playgroup or school who coordinate special educational needs activities and services. They make sure that children with special educational needs receive appropriate support.

Speech and Language Therapist

A Speech and Language Therapist helps children with speech and language problems. They also offer advice to parents about developing communication which may be verbal (using speech) or non-verbal, using signs or other communication aids. Some speech and language therapists specialise in feeding, eating or swallowing disorders.