



HOUNSLOW SENDIASS

Information Advice and Support Service

What is SEND? Factsheet

Summary

This factsheet is designed to explain what Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) is.

At various points throughout their education, many children and young people will need extra help. In most cases, schools and settings will help them overcome any difficulties by providing work that is more suitable for their level of ability.

However, some children and young people will have a learning difficulty or disability that requires special educational provision. This provision is something that is in addition to and different from what is available to pupils of the same age. These children and young people may be identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN).

A child or young person has special educational needs and disabilities if they have a learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support. We abbreviate this to SEND.

What is SEND?

SEND stands for special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities (D). It is important for you to think of them as two different parts. Not all SEN are a disability, and not all disabilities are SEN. Your unique situation determines what type of help is available to support you.

In [s20 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#), SEN is defined without specific examples being given. This is because the scope for SEN is so wide.

It is important to remember that not all SEN comes from a diagnosis.

A child or young person must have both of the following for them to have SEN:

- a learning difficulty or disability
- the need for special educational or health provision because of their learning difficulty or disability

Legal Definitions

The term Special Educational Needs (SEN) is described in law in the Children and Families Act 2014 as:

1. A child or young person has special educational needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.
2. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she: (a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the

same age, or (b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions.

3. A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age (or would be likely if no special educational provision were made).
4. A child or young person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been spoken at home.

Many children and young people who have SEN may also have a disability. A disability is described in law (the Equality Act 2010) as: 'a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term (a year or more) and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' This includes, for example, sensory impairments such as those that affect sight and hearing, and long-term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, or epilepsy.

The four broad areas of need

The Department for Education has identified four areas which fall under SEND within the [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK](#). Your child's learning needs could fall into one or several of these four areas and this could change over time.

1. Communication and interaction:

Children and young people with speech, language, and communication needs (SLCN) who may have difficulty understanding and communicating with others. Autistic children or young people may have social interaction differences and/or differences in the way they communicate with others.

2. Cognition and learning:

Children and young people who learn at a slower pace than others their age, or those with a specific learning difficulty (SpLD), that affects one or more specific areas of learning, such as:

- Dyslexia
- Dyscalculia
- Dyspraxia

3. Social, emotional, and mental health difficulties:

Children and young people may experience social and emotional difficulties, which are evident through withdrawal or isolation or through distressed behaviour, which may be disruptive or disturbing to others.

The code states these behaviours may reflect underlying mental health difficulties, such as:

- anxiety or depression
- self-harming
- substance misuse
- eating disorders
- physical symptoms that are medically unexplained
- attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

- attention deficit disorder (ADD)
- attachment disorder

4. Sensory and/or physical needs:

This includes children and young people with a disability that prevents or stops them from making full use of general educational facilities. For example, those with:

- visual or hearing impairments
- multi-sensory impairments
- physical disabilities

What is SEN support?

Every child with special educational needs should have SEN support. This means help that is additional to or different from the support given to other children of the same age. The purpose of SEN support is to help children achieve the outcomes or learning objectives set for them by the school. Schools should involve parents in this process.

Education Health Care Plans (EHCP)

Many children and young people will need extra help at some time during their education. In most cases schools and settings will be able to meet individual needs through SEN support from their own resources and expertise.

However, some children and young people may need support that goes further than SEN support, known as an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) Plan. Prior to an EHC plan being produced, an Education, Health and Care needs assessment must take place. More guidance about this assessment can be found here (include link).

If you feel that your child may have SEND, [Hounslow SENDIASS](#) are here to offer free, impartial, and confidential information, advice, and support. We can also help families navigate through the EHC needs assessment process.