



Leicestershire  
County Council

# Early Years Learning (0-5) SEND Standards

A Guidance Document  
for Parents and Carers



This guidance document aims to provide parents and carers of children aged 0-5 with Special Educational Need and Disabilities (SEND) what they can expect as a minimum standard from Early Years provision across Leicestershire.

Every parent should expect people who provide support for their children to make sure that support is the best it can possibly be; likewise every child and young person has the right to expect a good education, and the support they need to become independent adults and succeed in life.

Through the Special Educational Needs and Disability reforms (SEND reforms), the government is requiring Clinical Commissioning Groups and local authorities to work together to integrate services across the 0-25 age range. Under the new system there is a much clearer emphasis on offering help at **the earliest possible point**, with children and young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities and their parents or carers fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve.

The system for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities has changed. Following the introduction of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) and the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014](#) the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities reforms (SEND reforms) came into effect from 1st September 2014. Also as part of the SEND Reforms the Government published [the 0-25 Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 2014](#) (0-25 SEND Code of Practice) which is statutory guidance which local authorities and other local service providers across Education Health and Social care, have a legal duty to follow. Early Years Providers must follow the [Early Years Foundation Stage](#).

The SEND Reforms recognises that the most important people in any child or young person's life are their parents/ carers - you know your children best of all and you should be fully involved in decisions that affect your child or children from **the earliest possible point**.

**Choosing the right type of childcare** can be daunting for any parent. As a parent or carer of a child with a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND), we recognise that you will want to feel some assurance that your child's needs are met. To assist you we have put together some things that may be helpful for you to consider.

Your first step could be looking at the Leicestershire [Local Offer](#) to search for appropriate [childcare](#) in your local area. The Local Authority has worked hard with local childcare providers in getting them to complete their individual setting's Local Offer which can be found on the Family Information Directory. By accessing this information you will be able to find out more about individual settings or child minders, and how they are able to support you and your child. Contact details are available so you can have personal conversations and arrange visits before your child starts.

Types of things that the setting may discuss with you include:

- Who you should to contact to arrange a visit
- What times are best for you to make a visit
- Where you could find out more information about the setting - such as a Welcome booklet, prospectus, website, Facebook page, local school

It is important for you to feel that you are listened to, that your needs are met, and that you feel that you can easily talk through any concerns you may have to ensure that your child settles quickly.

We would recommend that you take time to talk to and meet all the staff who could be taking care of your child. You could ask them what they do for all children to make them feel safe and secure, such as:

- Offering home visits
- How they encourage children to use comforters in their provision
- Key person
- All About Me information

You may want to request that the setting offers your child more settling in sessions or a phased entry. Any early years setting will ensure that they have open communication with you to let you know how your child is settling in.

If you feel confident – your child is more likely to feel confident. The Family and Childcare Trust have produced a [Guide to Childcare for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#). The booklet is free to parents who can order a copy by emailing: [info@familyandchildcaretrust.org](mailto:info@familyandchildcaretrust.org).

## Medical conditions

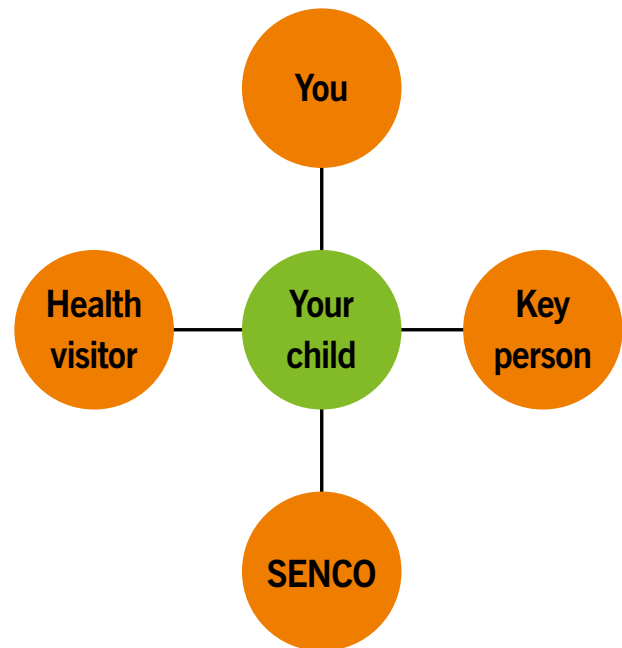
All early years providers should take steps to ensure that children with medical conditions get the support required to meet their health needs. If your child has a complex health needs you should complete, alongside a key person, your child's medical plan, outlining what action should be taken and what medical attention should be sought if required.

## SEND in the early years (0-5)

All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEND and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care. Every child has individual needs requiring varying levels of support that needs to be planned for to respond to their needs - this is sometimes called a Graduated Response (see [Jargon Buster](#)).

It is important that you and the professionals caring for your child work together. You need to feel comfortable about sharing information and discussing things that will benefit your child – this should be with your child's key person.

We also understand that as your child's main carer you should feel comfortable about sharing information with the staff member responsible for co-ordinating SEND provision - the SENCO (see [Jargon Buster](#)).



### **You should ensure you inform staff with regards to your child's likes and dislikes.**

Early years providers should regularly review and evaluate the quality and breadth of the support they offer or can access for children with SEND.

You may hear about what your child has done, enjoyed and learnt by regular communications on a daily, weekly termly basis through:

- Display boards.
- Learning journeys.
- Daily diaries.
- Informal chats.
- Progress summaries.
- Progress Checks at Two.
- Parent Evenings.
- Text messages.
- Shared experiences (if the child attends more than one provider).

## Birth to age 2 - Early identification

Between 24 and 27 months you will be invited to a developmental review by your health visitor. If your child attended their review and the health visitor identified that your child needed further support, it is important that when your child starts at a new provision, you share this information with the provider so that they can plan for and meet the needs of your child.

It may be that your child attends an early years provision at the same time as the health developmental review takes place. If this is the case, your child's key person will ensure that a "progress check at age two" is completed. They will provide you with a short written summary of your child's development in the prime areas. This should be shared at the appointment.

Afterwards, if any significant needs or emerging concerns have been identified, your child's key worker should develop a targeted plan to support your child's future learning and development and share these with you and any other professionals taking care of your child.

## Early Years Provision

In Leicestershire your child's child-minder, nursery or preschool will have completed a Progress Summary, in order to record what your child likes to do, how they like to learn as well as how well they are learning to communicate, make friends and learn to move.

The provider will introduce you to a named "key person" – who will be your first point of contact for your child. They will be your families regular contact point during the time your child is at that setting. Time should be made for the key person to share your child's progress with you and for you to contribute to the Progress Summary report and will share this with you. We feel it is important that the report identifies ideas relevant to support learning and development both in the setting and at home.

Your child's key person will plan **differentiated learning activities** (see [Jargon Buster](#)) as outlined in the EYFS adapted from development matters, modifying the environment (where applicable) to meet the individual needs of your child.

This could be through:

- Discussing a range of resources available in the setting
- How they can adapt your child's learning by writing individual learning plans or small group activities
- How they make use of indoors and outdoors to support learning
- How they respond to your child's interests
- Seeking and implementing advice of professionals

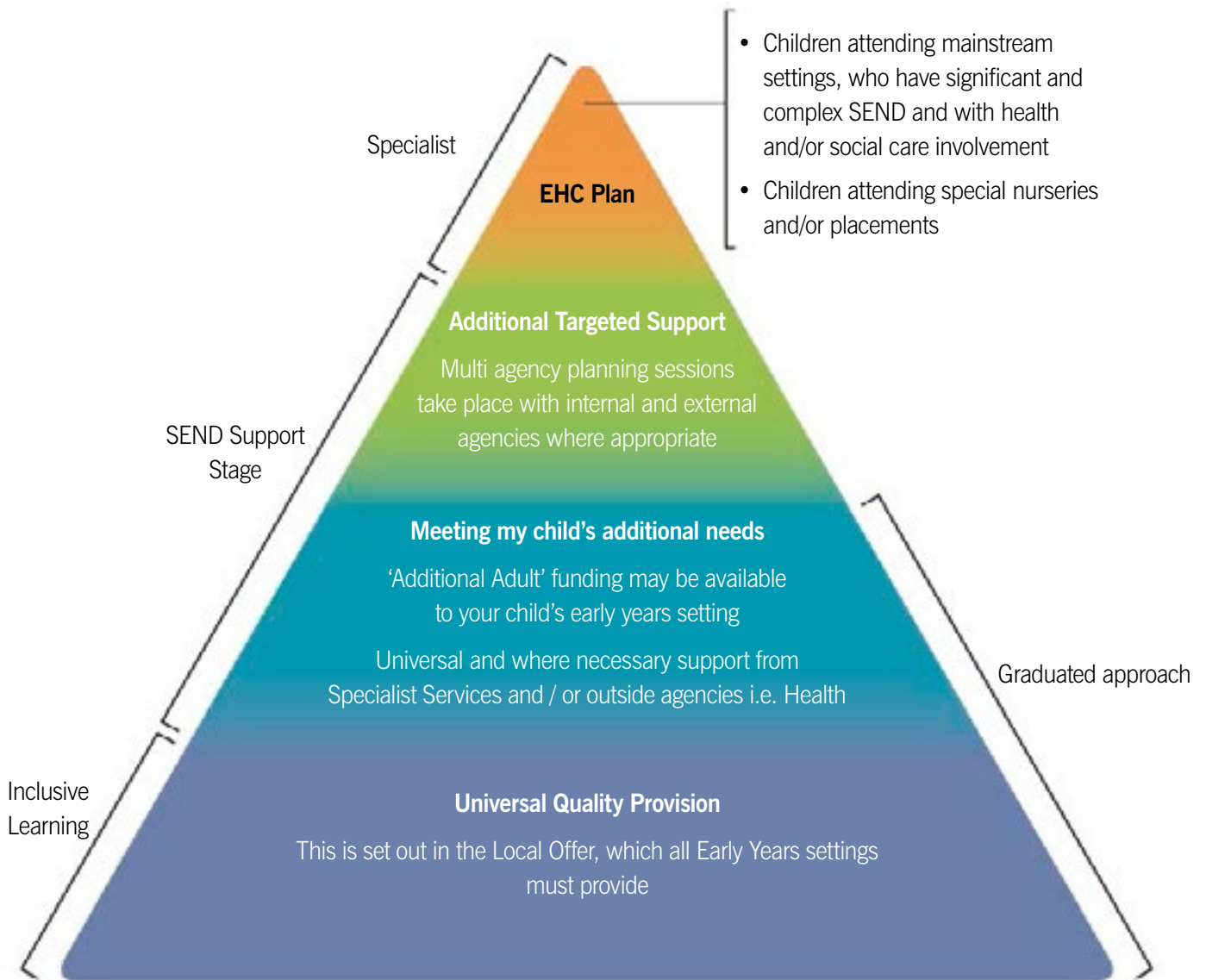
In Leicestershire we have adopted a **universal and targeted approach** (see [Jargon Buster](#) Appendix 1). When children have been identified as having additional needs (educational, health or social care) then the key person will plan specific activities to support your child. This may be in small groups.

## SEND Support in the Early Years

SEND Support is part of what is known as the '**graduated approach**' (see [Jargon Buster](#)). This graduated approach includes regular reviews and the involvement of specialist expertise, when required.

All early years settings - must continually monitor and support children to ensure that they develop and learn as appropriate, identifying any developmental issues, working with you to address any identified problems, use their best endeavours to support your child - using their resources, drawing in extra help if needed (SEND Support).

## Early Years - SEND Model of Graduated Support



If you are concerned about your child's progress you should discuss these with your child's key person or SENCO. Together with the concerns you have raised and the information they have gathered about the child's progress, they may decide to make special educational provision. All this information will form part of your child's one page profile, and becomes part of the [SEND Support Plan](#) which could feed into the [Education, Health and Care \(EHC\) Plan](#).



Any support offered to your child during the **SEND Support Stage** should take the form of a four-part cycle. Here the provider/key person will ensure that a robust observation, assessment and review process is used to help identify your child's starting points, strengths and needs.

**Assess:** Your child's difficulties must be assessed so that the right support can be provided. This might mean getting advice and further assessment from someone like an educational psychologist, a specialist teacher or a health professional.

**Plan:** Your child's setting needs to agree, with your involvement, how your child will benefit from any support they get. Any milestones, achievable next steps and their expected outcomes are also identified and shared with you.

**Do:** The setting will put the planned support into place, and your child's key person or SENCO will remain responsible for working with your child on a regular basis, to track their progress and check that the support is being effective.

**Review:** The support your child receives should be reviewed regularly. Together with your child, their key person or SENCO, you should decide whether the support is having a positive impact.

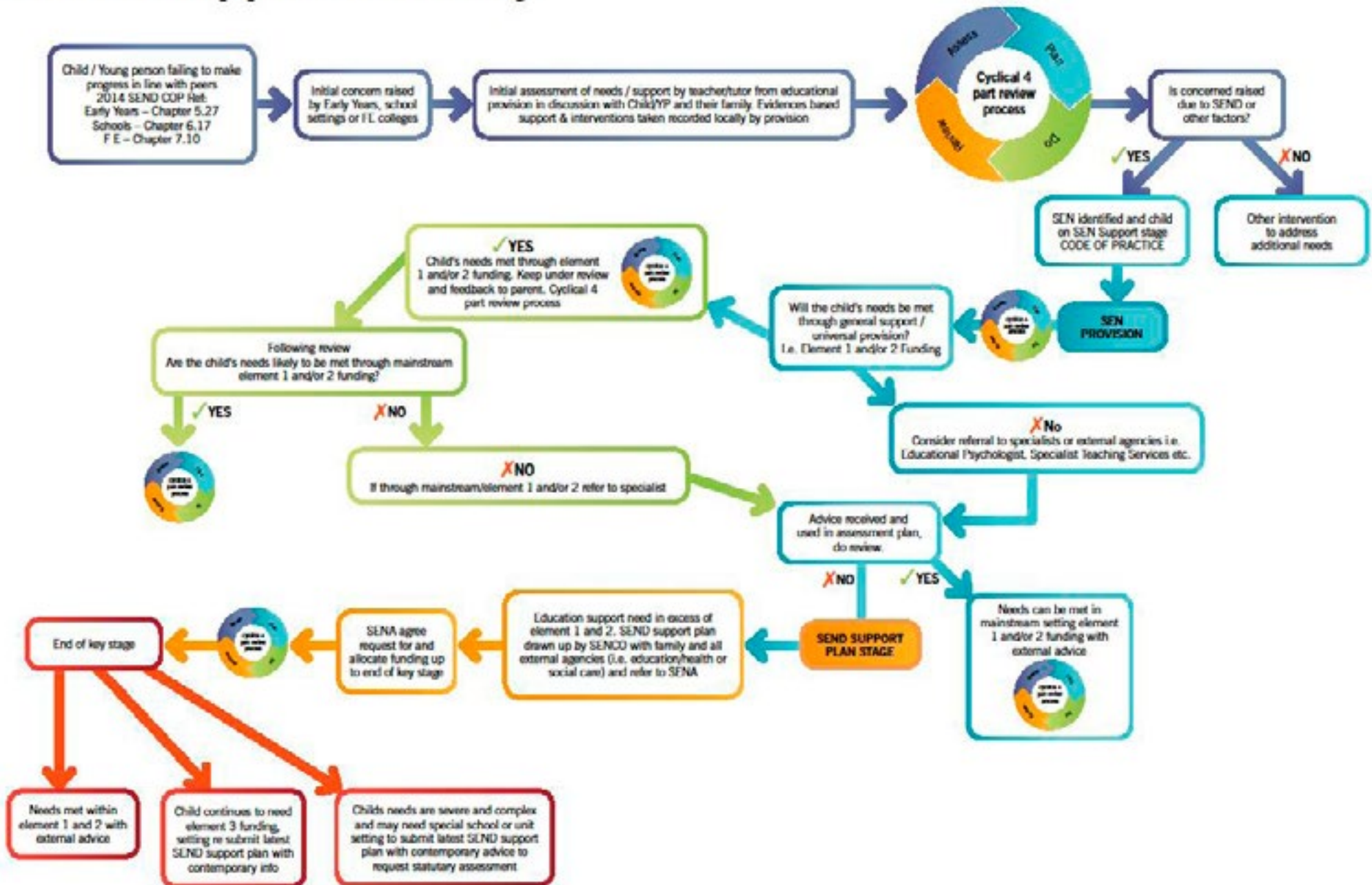
Your child should be allowed to develop at their own pace. Together with your child's key person, a [SEND Support Plan](#) may be written to enable the child to reach the next milestone.

## Involving specialists

If your child continues to make less than expected progress, despite evidence-based support and interventions that are matched to your child's need your child's key person or SENCO may consider involving appropriate specialists, for example, health visitors, speech and language therapists, Portage workers, educational psychologists or specialist teachers. These specialists may be able to identify effective strategies, equipment, programmes or other interventions which could enable your child to make progress towards desired learning and development outcomes. The decision to involve specialists should be taken with you as your child's parent/carer.

If your child does need an EHC Plan, we (the Local Authority) will seek advice from your child's early years setting to help support making decisions about undertaking an EHC Plan needs assessment and preparing an EHC Plan. We will also consider whether your child's current early years provider can support the child's SEND or whether they need to offer additional support through a plan. If you have any concerns about this process or the support offered to your child to help with their progress you should make contact with the [SEND Information Advice & Support Service \(SENDIASS\)](#).

# SEND Support Pathway



## Transition to school

SEND support should include planning and preparing for transition, before a child moves into another setting or school. This can also include a review of the SEND support being provided or the EHC Plan. To support the transition, information should be shared by the current setting with the receiving setting or school. The current setting should agree with parents the information to be shared as part of this planning process.

The types of things the setting should consider to aid a successful transition are:

- What key information will be shared and with whom.
- Key person to support visits to new environment.
- Providing photos of new room/ people.
- Learning journey shared with receiving teacher.
- Transition summary shared.
- Friendship groups identified.
- Key medical information shared, with parental permission.

## Funding for SEND Support in Early Years

From the summer term 2017 up to 1140 hours of [Free Early Educational Entitlement \(FEEE\)](#) is available for eligible parents of 3 and 4 year olds. Non-eligible children will still be entitled to access 570 hours of FEEE annually. Additionally eligible 2 year old children, including those children in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) can also access up to 570 hours of FEEE during the year.

Find out more information about funding for 2 year olds and the 30 hours entitlement.

If your child has complex and significant needs – your child’s childcare providers may be able to apply for some top up funding to enable your child to access the curriculum and meet their full potential.

## New measures are being introduced for 2017-18 to support children with SEND

### Disability Access Fund

The [Disability Access Fund \(DAF\)](#) aims to enable more children with SEND to access to early years places. DAF can be used by your childcare provider to make reasonable adjustments to their settings; this should be of benefit to your child or to the children attending childcare.

### SEN Inclusion fund

The SEN Inclusion Fund is a requirement on Local Authorities to set up a fund to better address the needs of individual children with SEND.

### Disability Access Fund (DAF) Eligibility

3 and 4 year olds will be eligible for the DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- The child is in receipt of child disability living allowance and;
- The child receives Free Early Education entitlement (FEEE).

### Entitlement

Childcare providers of three and four year olds eligible for the DAF will be entitled to receive a one-off payment of £615 per year. The DAF is not based on an hourly rate and is an additional entitlement. All early years childcare providers who are eligible to receive funding for the 3 and 4 year old early entitlement education are also eligible to receive the DAF.

Your child does not have to take up the full 570 hours of early education they are entitled to in order to receive the DAF. Children in receipt of the DAF will be eligible where they take-up any period of free entitlement.

Local authorities provides funding to all early years settings providing a place for each child eligible for the DAF in their area at the fixed annual rate of £615 per eligible child. This is payable as a lump sum once a year per eligible child. If your child is eligible and attends two or more providers, it is likely that the Local Authority will ask you to nominate a main childcare provider to receive DAF payments.

- Childcare providers receiving DAF should not be offset against any other funding which the Local Authority may provide for children eligible for the DAF.



- If your child moves from childcare provider to another within the financial year, your child's new provider will not receive DAF funding in the same financial year.
- If you live in one Local Authority area but attend childcare in a different Local Authority area, it is this Authority that is responsible for DAF funding and eligibility checking.

## From the local authority perspective

We will ensure that all providers we fund in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors are aware of the requirement on them to have regard to the SEND Code of Practice and that this reflects the need to provide suitable support for settings in meeting their duties to support children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities. The majority of Early Years settings in Leicestershire are Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI).

**Child minders and those in group provision on domestic premises** are encouraged to identify a person to act as SENCO, and child minders who are registered with a child minder agency or who are part of a network may wish to share that role between them.

It is only maintained settings who are statutorily required to accommodate children with EHC Plan. However, we will work with Private, Voluntary and Independent settings to support children with SEND and assist them to implement their EHC Plan.

## Requesting an EHC Plan

If your child has a complicated and long term need which covers education, health and more complex care needs, completing an [EHC Plan](#) may be appropriate. However, there are other issues, such as speech and language delay or behavioural problems, which are not necessarily caused by a special educational need or disability.

## Appendix 1

### Jargon Buster

Since the SEND reforms came into force in September 2014, many key terminologies have come into place and have been used throughout this document.

**Differentiation:** The provider will plan meaningful play experiences that challenge him or her at an appropriate level. It will be personal for your child and cater for their needs.

**EHCP/EHC Plan - Education, Health and Care Plan:**

If your child needs more support than is available through special educational needs (SEN) support, the EHC Plan sets out what the special educational needs and disabilities are and the extra help needed.

**Graduated Approach:** A model of action and intervention that recognises a continuum of provision in early education settings, schools and colleges to help children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities.

**SEN - Special Educational Needs:** A child or young person with a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. Mainstream post-16 institutions often use the term learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD). The term SEN is used in this Code across the 0-25 age range but includes LDD.

**SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disability:**

Children and young people who have SEN may have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 – that is ‘...a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. ‘Long-term’ is defined as a year or more, and ‘substantial’ is defined as more than minor or trivial. There is often a significant overlap between disabled children and those with SEN.

**SENCO - Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator:**

A qualified teacher in a school or maintained nursery school who has responsibility for co-ordinating SEND provision.

**Send Support Plan:** Introduced to distinguish the complexity of needs of children and young people with SEND. A SEND support plan is developed between professionals, the young person and their parents/carers, and will be available to children and young people with SEND but not the complex difficulties requiring an EHC Plan.

**Special educational provision:** Provision that is different or additional to that normally available to pupils or students of the same age, which is designed to help children and young people with SEND to access the National Curriculum at school or to study at college.

**Special school:** A school which is specifically organised to make special educational provision for pupils with SEND. Special schools maintained by the local authority comprise community special schools and foundation special schools, and non-maintained (independent) special schools that are approved by the Secretary of State under Section 342 of the Education Act 1996.

**Targeted:** The provider will offer specific support to those who need it, for example targeted social communication groups.

**Universal:** The provider will make this available for everybody in their setting as part of their everyday offer.

### Useful documents

For a greater understanding around Equality Duty and Human Rights, parents/carers could refer to the following documents:

- This should be read in conjunction with chapter five of the Department for Education Guidance on the [Equality Act 2010](#). This covers the Equality Duty as it applies to providers.
- There is also more generic guidance on the Equality Duty on the [Equality and Human Rights Commission's website](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities guide for parents and carers](#)