Reasonable Expectations for Early Years settings and provision

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Reasonable Expectations
for Early Years settings and provision

The information set out in this document is designed to support early years providers to understand the steps they are expected to take if they identify a child who may have special educational needs or a disability (SEND).

The Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0 – 25 years which was revised through the Children and Families Act 2014, sets out the statutory guidance for early year’s provider’s duties, policies and procedures relating to children and young people with SEND. It also details the actions that they should take to meet their duties in relation to identifying and supporting all children with special educational needs and disability (SEND) whether or not they have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. It states that all children are entitled to:

» achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, and

» become confident young children with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make the transition into compulsory education

All early years providers must follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and the learning and development requirements unless an exception has been granted. The Code of Practice also sets out that all early years providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities; they must also ensure that they provide information to parents and work in partnership with parents to establish how they will support children with SEND needs. They must promote equality for disabled children.

Identification

Birth to Two years

Many of the most complex needs are identified at birth and the range of early health screening tests, such as the hearing test for example, support the identification of medical and physical needs. Professionals and services should recognise the importance of parents’ knowledge and understanding of their children, listen to their worries and concerns and support them in understanding and addressing these concerns.

Children in their earliest years change and develop quickly and often short term, low level support through universal services can address issues early, therefore avoiding the need for higher level interventions. It is important that the range of health professionals, such as health visitors and GPs, and services are aware of the range of universal early help services and support available to children and their families, along with understanding the referral and access pathways. Refining and simplifying pathways and access will be a key area of development as part of the integration of the Boroughs early years delivery and Public Health Nursing Service.

Two to Five years

Children in this age group will have a physical development check at 2.5 years undertaken by the public health nursing service (Health Visitor or Nursery Nurse). The information from this check is shared with parents who are encouraged to share this with their child’s nursery setting or childminder, and in Blackburn with Darwen this information is routinely shared with children’s centres (with parental consent). Children’s Centres will make contact with parents where an issue is identified to offer support and signpost/handhold into relevant and appropriate services.

Early Years providers will also undertake a ‘two year progress check’ for those children accessing early years provision. This progress check identifies a child’s strengths and any areas where the child’s progress is slower than expected. If concerns are identified then practitioners should develop a plan to support the child.
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Quality Early Years Provision
The earliest years in a child’s life are crucial for laying firm foundations to support children to achieve all that they can. In Blackburn with Darwen we expect all settings to work to create, maintain and improve their provision in order to offer the highest quality learning and development experiences in a rich learning environment for all children and their families.

Children who experience high quality provision are well placed to achieve better outcomes at school and develop better social, emotional and cognitive abilities necessary for life-long learning improving and their resilience. There are clear expectations that all settings will work to ensure that all children are supported to achieve and that where children need additional support to do this, the setting will take all reasonable steps needed.

All early years providers in Blackburn with Darwen use the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS). The framework provides parents, practitioners and teachers with a well-rounded picture of a child’s knowledge, understanding and abilities. It is particularly helpful for children with SEN and should inform plans for future learning and support the identification of the need for additional support.

Early Help and Intervention
Central to Blackburn with Darwen’s Early Help strategy is the principle of ‘the right help, at the right time and in the right place’. This principle particularly applies to children in their early years where learning and development needs may be identified. A well-co-ordinated response, as needs begin to emerge, could reduce the need for higher level intervention or will support the progression of requests for specialist support in a timely manner.

The tool we use in the Borough to ensure co-ordination of services and support for children and their families is ‘CAF’ (Child and Family assessment and plan). CAF provides an opportunity to assess the holistic needs of children and their families in one place and to detail plans to address unmet needs or to co-ordinate the ongoing package of support. It offers an opportunity to ensure that social issues that may be impacting on a child’s development are addressed or strategies to support children’s development are co-ordinated and implemented both in early learning settings and at home. Team around the Family (TAF) meetings also provides parents with a central communication point ensuring that their voice is heard. A key component of CAF is the Child’s voice, their wishes and feelings, which again provides us an opportunity to ensure that children are part of their learning journey and to influence and shape what happens for them.

A key outcome and ambition for children who live in Blackburn with Darwen is set out in the Early Help Strategy as:

“Children and young people are ready for school, attend school regularly and attain in line with their age and ability, supporting them to build resilience to support key transitions”

In order to achieve this ambition quality learning opportunities for all children are essential, as is the early identification of those children who will need more support than their peers to make progression.

Good quality delivery of the EYFS provides the opportunity for continuous assessment alongside formal assessment processes. This approach offers the opportunity to identify needs and to seek to address them on an ongoing basis. Early Years practitioners understand that children develop at their own pace and that where children are not at the same level of development as their peers it does not necessarily indicate that a child has a learning difficulty or disability that would require special educational provision.
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If practitioners do identify issues the first step should be to develop an understanding of any other factors that are impacting on the child such as an underlying learning or communication difficulty or any family or environmental factors that may be contributing to behavioural issues. A timely and swift response in seeking to address children’s needs in the early years is essential. Settings should adopt a graduated response through four stages of action:

**Assess : Plan : Do : Review**

This approach should be multi-agency and involve parents and carers alongside key professionals who know the child. This should be lead and co-ordinated by the setting SENCo. It should be informed by the EYFS and the Code of Practise. A well-co-ordinated early help response could prevent the need for higher levels of intervention and the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). These actions work as a cycle and can be repeated to maintain an effective response to the needs of the child.

It is at this point that settings should consider the initiation of a CAF as the tool to support the co-ordination of this work. This will also support claiming of SEN inclusion funding and where an EHCP is needed, CAF is an effective way of co-ordinating the gathering of information and progress updates from parents and professionals involved with children.

The next chart gives an overview of what this process should involve and considerations for the Assess Plan Do Review cycle (further information and support about Assess, Plan, do, Review can be accessed through the advice and guidance sessions held in each neighbourhood or the Early Years SENCo Cluster meetings).
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What this means?</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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| A holistic assessment of the child will allow practitioners to understand what the child's needs are, what the underlying factors are and provide information for practitioners to understand what may be going on. Analysis of this information will support the planning for the child. | • Is what you are seeing an underachievement or SEN?  
• Could there be any communication issues / vision problems?  
• What do baseline assessments (i.e. ROSCO) tell you?  
• 2 year development check?  
• Review Child's data across areas of learning?  
• What is happening at home?  
• What have other practitioners observed?  
• What are parents telling you?  
• What is the child telling you?  
• Is attendance good?  
• Have there been any health issues for the child?  
• Observe staff/environment/peers are there any issues presented?  
• What behaviours are you observing and are there any triggers for this behaviour? | This assessment may be at a setting level to begin with. Where low level or emerging needs are identified it is recommended that this assessment be part of the CAF process. This will support settings to access the SEN inclusion fund and to bring together other key services such as Health Visiting. |

### Assess

| A plan should be detailed to support the child to progress. This should be shared across the whole setting and with parents/carer | • The plan should be specific about the issues you are trying to address – i.e. behaviour and your approach/actions needed to support the child’s progress.  
• There should be timescales set for actions to be undertaken and review points identified.  
• Your plan should also set out what outcome you are aiming to achieve  
• This will ensure a timely response should the approaches not improve the outcomes for the child. | Advice and guidance on plans can be taken, where necessary through the EY Send Support team’s advice and guidance sessions that take place every week. This will provide the opportunity to support planning and define action planning.  
The TAF plan is structured to produce a SMART plan. |

### Plan

| Early Years practitioners remain responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. With support from the SENCO, they should oversee the implementation of the agreed actions set out in the plan. | • Ensure that all staff working (especially in the setting) with the child are sighted on the plan  
• Ensure that continuous provision/ planned focused time presents opportunities for the child to consolidate any new learning/development  
• Ensure that staff questioning supports progression  
• Communicate with parents  
• Listen to the voice of the child  
• Keep effective records against areas of learning/ review the plan to support  
• Consider wider interventions and support | There is a range of support available to compliment the delivery of the EYFS and support children and their families through the Children’s Centre Offer such as Chatter Chums, Positive parenting, Play and Stay groups, and Henry.  
If you have identified additional staff training as a requirement consult the Early Years Training offer, speak you’re an Advisory Teacher. |

### Do

| Regular reviews of the actions taken and progress made will ensure that where interventions are not making positive impact then the plan can be changed or further support sought in a timely manner. | • What are observations and recordings telling you?  
• What has the impact of the interventions been?  
• What is the child telling you?  
• What are parent’s views?  
• Has progress been made?  
• What are the next steps?  
• Is a further cycle needed?  
• Has progress been made against baseline assessments i.e. Rosco? | If progress is made you may need to consider a further review period to ensure that the progress has been embedded.  
Where no progress is made you should consider initiating a CAF with parents’ consent and taking advice and guidance through the Advisory Teachers Advice and Guidance session, again with consent. |

### Review
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Support for families and practitioners working with children who have SEND or have emerging needs

There is a range of universal, targeted and specialist support available for children and their families across Blackburn with Darwen that can support children with low level and emerging needs through to SEND.

**Health Visitors:** Have extensive knowledge regarding early childhood, health and development. They offer a range of advice, guidance and support and can link children and their families into other services.

**Children Centres:** Deliver a range of universal services open to all children 0-5 and their families such as play and learn sessions, toy and book library service, advice guidance and support on a range of issues. They also deliver targeted programmes focused on supporting children’s development or parenting for example ‘Chatter chums’ which supports early language development.

**Portage:** A home visiting education service for pre – school children with additional needs. This programme provides a structured system to help parents to support their children’s learning. The service also offers groups utilising the same structured support.

**Early Years Send Support Service:** Offers advice and guidance sessions to all EYFS providers to support them in undertaking their statutory duty. The service also provides training for providers on SEND. Where children have SEND this service will provide higher levels of support based on levels of need which may include a worker to work with them in their nursery setting.

**Specialist services:** Educational Psychology, hearing or visual impairment teachers

Blackburn with Darwen are currently bringing together its local authority teams and services such as Children’s Centres, Portage, Quality Improvement Team, and Early Years SEND Support Service and the delivery of the Healthy Child Programme through Health Visitors and Health Nursery Nurses (or Public Health Nursing service) to create an integrated service for all our youngest children and their families. The new service will be based in children’s centres ensuring that access to the range of services is at a locality level.

**A graduated response**
The graduated approach to intervention and support recognises that children learn in different ways and can have different levels of special educational need and not all children will need a specialist intervention or support. Early Years providers and settings have a range of skills, knowledge and expertise that they can use to address emerging needs, before drawing on wider services, support mechanisms and specialist provision, gradually increasing the level of intervention as they better understand a child’s needs and building the most appropriate response.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Expectations of settings</th>
<th>Support from LA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduated Response for Two Year olds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High level, complex needs</td>
<td>• Refer to SALT • Refer to Paediatrician</td>
<td>SSA support in setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At a chronological age of 24-35 months, therefore working at approximately 30% of chronological age</td>
<td>Multiagency support through EY support Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Send regular updates to TAF meetings/Forum</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High needs/severe developmental delay causing concern in one or more of the three prime areas</td>
<td>Teacher support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Request SSA support through • Advice and Guidance sessions • Initiate CAF process • Multiagency working</td>
<td>Portage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children aged 2+ years assessed against the EYFS at a developmental level of 8-20 months in one or more of the prime areas of learning or working at step 5-7 on the Early Support Developmental Journal</td>
<td>Follow up advice and guidance as and when needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure that all staff working (especially in the setting) with the child are aware of the plan to support the child</td>
<td>Setting visit from member of EY Send Team Access to advice and guidance from Advisory Teachers at drop in sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At a chronological age of 24-35 months, therefore working at approximately 30-60% of chronological age</td>
<td>Training programme provided by the LA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate needs/developmental delay causing concern in one or more of the three prime areas.</td>
<td>Access to children centre services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are observed? • Is a further cycle needed? • Has progress been made?</td>
<td>Discuss with linked/child’s own Health Visitor</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High level, complex needs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Possible Education Health Care Plan</strong></td>
<td>SSA support for up to 15 hours and Advisory Teacher support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Children aged 3+ years assessed against the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at a developmental level of 0.11-8/20 months in one or more of the prime area of learning or working steps 1-6 on the Early Support Developmental Journal | • Refer to SALT  
• Refer to Paediatrician  
• Request SSA support through ES forum  
• Send regular updates to the TAF meetings / ES forum | Multiagency support through EY support through CAF |
| At a chronological age of 36-50 months+, therefore working at approximately 30% of chronological age | **Initiate CAF process**  
**Multiagency working** | | |
| High needs/severe developmental delay causing concern in one or more of the three prime areas | **Assess, Plan, Do review**  
**Access advice and guidance sessions**  
**Access to targeted Children Centre provision – chatter chums, parenting** | | |
| Children aged 3+ years assessed against the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) at a developmental level of 16 to 26 months in one or more of the prime areas of learning or working at steps 7-8 on the Early Support Developmental Journal | **EYFS tracking**  
**Utilise training offer to improve skills and knowledge of team** | SEN inclusion funding (eligibility criteria applies) Follow up advice and guidance as and when needed.  
Setting visit from member of EY Send Team |
| At a chronological age of 36-50 months+, therefore working at approximately 40-50% of chronological age. | **Access/signposting to children centre services**  
**Quality learning environment** | Access to advice and guidance from Advisory Teachers at drop in sessions  
Access to Children Centre services  
Discuss with linked/child's own Health Visitor | |
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Recording keeping
A key element of supporting children through a graduated response/assess, plan, do review cycle, is effective record keeping. This will ensure that progress for the child, or lack of can be clearly identified. It will support any requests that need to be made to request support or specialist service’s and ensure that ongoing progress and developments can be shared. Good recording will also support any contributions to the CAF process or EHCP if one was required. Most importantly it will ensure that providers are able to feed back to parent and provide for them written updates (as required by the EYFS guidance) regarding their child.

Examples of records that may support include ROSCO assessments, behaviour assessment, evaluated plans, targeted plans, next steps and records of any reviews and EYFS profile data.

Transitions for children in their early years need careful management and planning. This could be from home to nursery, between nursery rooms or into school. Effective information gathering and record keeping about the support any individual child needs are keep to making sure that these transitions are managed effectively, therefore reducing the impact on the child.

Further information and support
Further information about aspects of supporting children with emerging or identified SEND is available through the Advisory Teacher Team. The Team hold regular ‘drop in sessions for any EY practitioner each week in each area of the Borough. Contact your usual Advisory Teacher for further details. In addition the team will be hosting a regular SENCO meeting from December 2017 to provide updates and ongoing support for those undertaking this role in Early Years cluster provision. There is a range of training available to Early Years settings around SEND issues available through the Early Years training brochure.

All statutory documentation that drives this area of work can be found through the government website:

www.gov.uk

Documents such as Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 0 – 25 years and the Equality Act 2010