

A guide to 'Outcomes' – SEN and EHCP

Outcomes are a central part of the special educational needs reforms introduced through the Children and Families Act in September 2014 with a focus on helping children and young people with SEND to make progress towards what they hope for their futures.

Why are they called 'outcomes'?

The Lamb inquiry in 2009 identified that outcomes for children with SEND were poor in terms of education, training and employment, in having access to leisure or play opportunities or being part of the local community. Local authorities, schools and parents tended to focus on support hours rather than the progress that the support was intended to achieve. So, the reforms tried to move the focus away from how many hours of support a child received to what parents of children with SEND and the children themselves wanted the support to help them achieve.

An outcome within the SEND code of practice is defined as 'the benefit or difference made to an individual as a result of an intervention'.

In plainer language, an outcome describes what children or young people with SEND want to be able to do as a result of the support they are receiving that they cannot do now.

Outcomes should be decided based on what child, young person and their family want for their future and should be:

- Personal/bespoke and not a description of provision or service being provided
- A building block towards the longer term hopes for the future
- Something those involved have control and influence over
- SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound)
- Focussed on the learner (what is important to them and for them)
- Written in the future tense or as though I am now able to do it
- Express what will be different (or is expected to be different) after a specific time period
- Reflect shorter-term stepping stones towards longer-term hopes
- Not limited to learning

Key questions for practitioners to ask when deciding whether it's an outcome

- Does it have a clear time-frame for achievement?
- Is it clear how everyone will know it has been achieved?
- Does it relate to child's identified special educational/ health/ social care needs?
- Does it help child/young person make progress towards their hopes for the future?
- Is it clear why it is important for the child or young person?
- What does it give the child? do for child? make possible for child?
- Where, when, and with whom do you want it to happen?
- What is stopping – alternatives?
- Does it just describe provision? If so it is not an outcome

The most **unhelpful type of outcomes** are ones that you can't tell if they've been **achieved or not**. For example:

- For Sarah to be happy and fulfilled
- For Dan to improve his fitness and wellbeing
- For Jemima to improve her literacy and numeracy skills
- Masood will develop his fine and gross motor co-ordination

How will we know whether it has been **achieved**? How can we measure those things?

Deciding on outcomes for a child

- Start by thinking long term. What are hopes for the child's future?
- What do we want their life to look like when they are adults?
- What are the things that will make the biggest difference to their life?
- Start by thinking of one thing the child can't do now that they need to be able to do to get closer to those hopes for the future (aspirations).
- Consider any barriers - Look at what is standing in the way and what needs to be done to help them achieve it. It's important not to set too many outcomes as research shows that the most effective EHCPs are those that are concise and clear.
- Outcomes should flow from the aspirations expressed in Section A of the plan and there should be a 'Golden Thread' directly through the aspirations, needs, outcomes and provision.

For example:

*Kyle who is 11 says he wants to have more friends = **aspiration***

*Kyle has difficulty with social skills and communicating his feelings and so gets angry and frustrated = **needs***

*Kyle by end of year 9 will have a small group of friends he spends time with at break times, work cooperatively with 2 other students for 30 minutes without adult support = **outcome***

*Kyle will work in a small group for 15 minutes each day playing games with support of TA. His teacher will setup a circle of friends with similar interests so they can play at break times. He will have a 15 minute session each week with a key worker to work through an anger management programme = **provision***

Outcomes should be tailored to the age, needs and aspirations of each child.

By the end of year 9 Charlie (12 years old) will make his own way to school each day.

Sam (3 years old) engages in a play activity with another child and an adult on a daily basis, by the time he is in reception.

Some people think outcomes work better if written in the first person and written as though they have been achieved to keep people focusing on helping the child progress towards the outcome.

Rather than *'by the end of the autumn term of Year 7 Sam will hold simple conversations with his friends in the playground'* write *'by the end of the autumn term of Year 7 at secondary mainstream school, I am holding simple conversations with my friends in the playground'*.

For year 9 and above outcomes should focus on higher education and paid employment; developing independence; good health; and friendships, relationships and community participation.

For example:

By the end of his current course, Marcus (19 years old) will have attended 3 work-based interviews and updated their CV.

By age 18, Sarah will prepare a simple breakfast (cereal or toast) on every college day morning.

*Russell will take his medication himself at college by the end of the year.
By the end of the year Jay is choosing a healthy meal and cooking it using written instructions.*

*By the end of KS3 Lucy (14 years old) walks to familiar shops for small errands daily.
By age 14 Mary will be able to use her mobile phone to let her parents know where she is when she goes out with friends in the evenings.*

Reviewing outcomes

At the SEN Support level of SEN, outcomes are part of the assess, plan, do, review cycle of support and should be agreed with parents and child at the planning stage and reviewed at the review stage three times a year meeting with school to discuss child's progress.

For children and young people with EHCPs the annual review of the plan must focus on the child or young person's progress towards achieving the outcomes specified in the EHC plan.

As children grow and progress, their aspirations change and the outcomes should be changed to reflect this.

Reference document: [SENDIASS parent's guide to Outcomes](#)

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