



What is **SEN?**

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What is SEN?

Special educational needs (“SEN”) impact on a child’s or young person’s ability to learn. The ways in which SEN effects the ability to learn depends on the types of SEN a person has. SEN can have a bearing on a person’s ability to comprehend, concentrate, read, write and/or do physical things such as writing.

The law states someone has SEN when, if they are of school age or a young person:

1. They have a learning difficulty and/or a disability

A person has a learning difficulty or a disability if they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age or they have a disability which makes it difficult for them to use facilities usually provided in mainstream schools or colleges.

The law defines what a disability is. Someone has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day to day activities.

2. Their learning difficulty or disability requires extra help or “special educational provision” to be provided for them.

For children aged 2 or more, and for young people, special educational provision means any educational or training support that is additional to, or different from, that which would be provided generally for other children or young people of the same age.





Does your child have SEN as defined by the law?

If your child potentially has SEN as defined in law, there are a few points to think about, such as:

- Do they have a learning difficulty or disability?
- Does special educational provision need to be made?
- How old is your child, and how will this affect their needs?

In particular, your child's age will affect whether they will be considered to have SEN, as different rules will apply depending on the circumstances.

Let's look at the above questions in more detail, to see how they can be used to make an assessment for SEN as defined in law.

Does your child have a learning difficulty or disability?

A child who is of school age (aged five or more) could have a learning difficulty or disability if the following applies:

- They struggle with learning far more than other children of the same age.
- They have a disability or health condition that makes it difficult for them to use school facilities in the same way as their peers.
- They have a mental or physical impairment which makes it difficult for them to carry out normal, everyday activities, or it has a detrimental and/or long-term effect on their physical or mental health.



Does special educational provision need to be made?

If your child is under two, 'special educational provision' applies to educational or social care support of any kind.

'Special educational provision', for a child aged two or more or a young person, means educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in mainstream settings.

Children over the age of two with a learning difficulty or disability can receive special educational provisions, including:

- Providing written materials in larger print that is easier to read
- Having personal support
- Sign language communication
- Being in a different class or year group

Every child is unique, and the support they receive will be tailored to them, so provision offered by schools are wide-ranging. In order for a child to be classed as having SEN, the adjustments provided to them must be educational or training-based, and the support provided has to be different than that given to other children of the same age.



In some cases, a child may need medical-related support, such as having certain medications given to them because of an ongoing health condition. As this support isn't education-based, it isn't classed as 'special educational provision'.

What kinds of learning difficulties constitute SEN?

A child may have more than one learning difficulty or disability. Here are some examples:



Learning, thinking and understanding concepts

Some children may have difficulty with focus and concentration, spelling and reading. For instance, they may have a condition such as dyslexia.



Behavioural and emotional difficulties

Some children may struggle with confidence, or they may find it difficult to follow instructions or do as they are told when in school because of a condition like ADHD.



Communication and language difficulties

Some children might find it hard to express themselves and communicate effectively or understand what other people are saying to them. This may cause problems with social interaction and making friends or their ability to connect with their environment.



Sensory or physical impairments

A child may have a physical disability or medical condition that affects their ability to learn, such as visual impairment.

Ready to get the support your child needs?

Our team is here to help.



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