



Making sense of SEND

What is a Special Educational Need?

There are two questions to ask when thinking about whether a child or young person has SEN.

1. Do they have a learning difficulty or disability?

A child or young person has a learning difficulty or 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 the facilities normally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or post-16 institutions.

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.





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2. Does that learning difficulty or disability call for special educational provision to be made?

Special educational provision is any **educational or training** provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for other children or young people of the same age. This is a wide definition, and could cover a wide range of things, for example:

- having materials provided in a larger font
- needing one-to-one support
- communicating through sign language
- needing small class sizes

Some children or young people may need additional support which is **not** special educational provision; for example they might need certain treatments or medicines administered at school because of a medical condition they have. In order to be classed as having SEN, they must require support with **education or training** which is different from that given to other children or young people of the same age.

If the answer to **both** of these questions is yes, then the child or young person has SEN. Children and young people with SEN are entitled to extra support with learning at nursery, school or college.





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Some examples of SEN are:

- emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD);
- Autism, including Asperger Syndrome;
- Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADHD/ADD);
- specific learning difficulties such as Dyslexia;
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder;
- communication difficulties;
- medical needs such as Epilepsy and Cerebral Palsy;
- mobility difficulties.

If your child has SEN, they may need extra help in a range of areas, for example:

- reading, writing, number work or understanding information;
- expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying;
- making friends or relating to adults;
- behaving properly in school;
- organising themselves;
- sensory or physical needs which may affect them in school.





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Definitions of SEND in law

Section 20 Children and Families Act 2014

defines a child as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) if he or she *“has a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special education provision to be made for him or her”*.

In the Equality Act 2010 a person is classed as disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- **Normal day-to-day** means things that people do on a regular basis, for example mobility, dressing or cleaning (physical co-ordination), and having a conversation.
- **Long-term** usually means the impairment should have lasted or be expected to last at least a year.
- **Substantial** means not minor or trivial.
- **Physical impairment** includes sensory difficulties such as visual or hearing impairments
- **Mental impairment** includes learning difficulties, autism, dyslexia, speech and language difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

