

# Croydon Parent Partnership Services

Offering independent information, advice and guidance for parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs



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## **Guidelines for Parents: What Are Special Educational Needs?**

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## Introduction

All children and young people may experience learning difficulties at some point. This is not unusual. For most children the difficulties are temporary and are soon overcome with help and encouragement from home and school.

The term 'Special Educational Needs' is used to describe learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for children to learn than most children of the same age. Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) are likely to need extra or different help from that given to other children their age. This help is known as special educational provision.

Children are not considered to have SEN just because their first language is not English, although some children for whom English is not a second language may also have learning difficulties.

## What types of difficulties are covered by the term SEN?

Children may have difficulties in one or more areas. Here are some examples:

**Thinking, understanding and learning:** these children may find all learning activities difficult, or have particular difficulties with some learning activities such as reading and spelling.

**Emotional and behavioural difficulties:** these children may have very low self esteem and lack confidence. They may find it difficult to follow rules or settle down and behave properly in school.

**Speech, language and communication:** these children may have difficulty in expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying to them. They may find it hard to make friends or relate to others. They may find it difficult to make sense of the world around them or to organise themselves.

**Physical or sensory difficulties:** these children may have a disability or a medical condition that has an impact upon their learning. They may have a visual or hearing impairment.

## What happens if a child has SEN?

The first and most important thing to remember is that all children with SEN are entitled to receive a broad, balanced and suitable education which includes the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum (for children aged 3 to 5) or the National Curriculum (for children aged 5 to 16).

Most children with SEN have their needs met in a mainstream school or early settings, although some children with more complex needs benefit from the more specialist help offered in a 'special' school.

You will be told if the school thinks your child has or may have SEN and how the school will be helping your child. Your views are very important and so are your child's own views. The school should make sure that you are involved in all decisions that affect your child because you have a vital role in supporting your child's education.

### **What can I do if I think my child has SEN?**

If you are worried about any aspect of your child's development or learning, talk to your child's teacher, headteacher or any other professional working with your child.

**If you would like further information about SEN or just to talk to someone about your concerns, please contact the KIDS Croydon Parent Partnership Service.**