



Supporting children with speech, language & communication needs (SLCN)

Speech, language and communication needs and the Special Education Needs System (England)

We often receive calls from parents asking about the systems for supporting their child. This factsheet attempts to give an overview of the special educational needs (SEN) system. The Communication Trust have produced [Communicating the Code](#) which gives more information about the SEN Code of Practice and processes involved.

I have just met with my child's setting and we're both worried about her communication. What happens next?

You can talk through the areas your child is doing well in and also what they are struggling with. Together you can make a plan about how to support your child. The school or setting's SENCo (Special Education Needs Co-ordinator) or Inclusion Co-ordinator (INCo) may be involved in developing a support plan. This often involves referring on to speech and language therapy services to find out more about your child's needs; it may be that the setting gives your child some targeted support and monitors how they are doing with their communication skills. It may be a combination of these two.

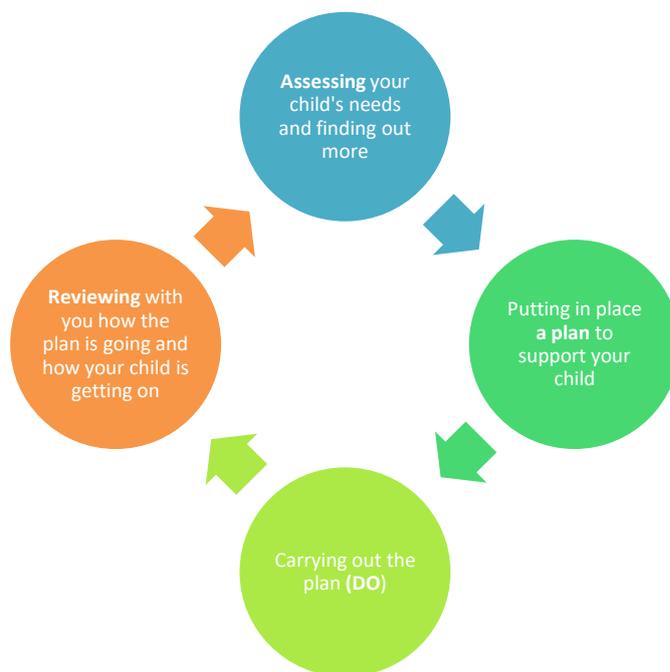
I CAN Help enquiry service www.ican.org.uk/help

Call 020 7843 2544 to arrange a free phone call from one of our speech and language therapists or email enquiries@ican.org.uk

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Visit this website for information about children's communication.

Schools and settings follow the Special Education Needs Code of Practice. This gives guidance about the process of supporting children and recommends a step by step approach. This is known as a graduated approach to supporting your child involving:



Find out more about this approach [here](#).

How does the school assess my child's needs?

Schools and settings use different tools so it is best to talk to them about assessment approaches. Assessment usually involves:

- Checking and monitoring your child's progress, often using published checklists.
- Observing and using their professional knowledge about how children develop.
- Discussing with you as you know your child best.

Schools and settings may have specific ways of assessing your child's speech, language and communication skills. Some of these assessments recommend the different types of support e.g. referral on to a speech and language therapist. It is best to discuss this with the individual school or setting as they can show you how they assess your child's progress. There is also the [Progress Checker](#) you can use at home to check your child's progress. If you are worried about your child's speech and language contact your local speech and language therapy service to talk about assessment.

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My child is seeing a speech and language therapist. Both school and the therapist have talked about an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) what does this mean?

An EHCP aims to ensure that your child gets the support they need to help them make progress and get the most out of what school and beyond have to offer. It is a way of co-ordinating the support that is centred around your child and targeted to their needs.

Find out more [here](#) and from the links below.

Will my child need an EHCP if they have speech, language and communication needs (SLCN)?

Many children with SLCN can be supported in their school or setting without an EHCP. Meeting with everyone involved in supporting your child will let you discuss the next steps.

What support is there for children without an EHCP?

SEN Support will be the support available in nursery and school for children and young people who have special educational needs but do not have an EHCP. Additional SEN support is support to meet a student's needs so that they can meet their individual goals. You can find out what's available near you from your local authority [Local Offer](#).

How can I get an EHCP for my child?

You can request an Education, Health and Care assessment for your child from your local authority with a view to developing an EHCP. Find out more [here](#).

Not all children with speech, language and communication needs will benefit from an EHCP and it may be that the local services available can meet their needs. This is what the assessment aims to find out.

What happens during the assessment?

Your Local Authority will collect evidence from everyone involved in supporting your child, including you. This includes your child's educational setting, speech and language therapy, educational psychology. They will then make a decision about whether to develop an EHCP.

How old can a child be to get an Education, Health and Care plan?

The EHC Plans can apply to children from birth and, if needed, will continue into further education and training, and for some young people up to the age of 25.

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My child has been assessed but isn't receiving an EHCP - what happens next?

If your child has been assessed with a view to developing an EHCP but the decision is not to go forward with an EHCP you can appeal this decision. This process usually involves [mediation](#) before going to a [Special Education Needs Tribunal](#). Find out more about parents' rights and what's involved [here](#).

Who can help me with the EHCP process?

Every local authority provides Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS). This service offers independent information, advice and support on a range of issues like the EHCP process. You can find out more from your local authority website.

You may also want to contact other parents in a similar situation - you can do this through [Afasic](#) and your local [Parent Carer Forum](#).

The organisations below offer independent information and support about the EHCP process.

How will I know what services are available for my child in my local area?

Local authorities (LAs) publish a 'Local Offer' and this is usually available on their website. The Local Offer must have, in one place, information about provision LAs have for children and young people in their area who have SEN. The Local Offer has information on the services that are available, including education services, health services and social care and support information on how to access these services. Schools must also publish a 'local offer'; information on how they are able to include all children in their setting. This is often available on their website but you can contact schools to ask for more information. There is information available on the [I CAN website](#) about what high quality teaching for children with SLCN should look like.

Find out more about the process of supporting children with SLCN and EHCPs from these organisations:

[The Communication Trust](#)

[IPSEA](#)

[Afasic](#)

[SOS SEN](#)

[Special Needs Jungle](#)

[Ambitious about Autism](#)

[National Network of Parent Carer Forums](#)

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