

Criteria for referrals from Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent settings for support from the Early Intervention Team

Meeting the needs of children who have (or may have) special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) in the Early Years

Children will progress at different rates during the Foundation Stage (birth to five years). By the end, some will have achieved beyond the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Others, for example, those who are younger or who may not have attended a pre-school setting, may still be working towards them.

Those making slower progress may include those for whom English is an additional language or who have particular learning difficulties. It should not be assumed that children have Special Educational Needs just because their progress is slower than others. However, they will need carefully differentiated learning opportunities to help them develop essential skills, together with regular and frequent monitoring of their progress.

Setting staff responsibilities

When a child appears not to be making progress either generally or in a specific aspect of learning, then it may be necessary to present him/her with different opportunities or use alternative approaches to learning. It is important to remember that we all, including children, have different styles of learning. It is our responsibility as EY practitioners to find the best way for children in our care to learn and not expect them to learn in the way that we present activities.

Persistent difficulties may indicate the need for a level of help above that normally available in an early education setting. You could try seeking advice and sharing concerns with the child's health visitor initially.

Early Years providers are expected to assess children's special educational needs and if there are significant concerns, they should develop a targeted plan. There is expected to be a graduated response which includes an Assess Plan Do Review cycle. This should be started as soon as concerns are identified and settings should not wait until they have referred to other agencies, including STePS.

All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEN or disabilities and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care. (Code of Practice, July 2014 paragraph 5.12)

Settings must maintain records for all children according to the EYFS framework. For children with SEN, settings must know precisely where the child is in their learning and development. If there are significant concerns the setting should develop a targeted plan to address them. Settings should maintain a Graduated Response File for children with identified concerns.

Early Years Settings must listen and understand when parents express concerns about the child's development and 'where a setting identifies a child as having SEN' they must work in partnership with parents to establish the support the child needs.

Requesting support from the Early Intervention Team

We would expect setting staff to have worked alongside parents and supported the child through the graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review) identified in the Code of Practice 2014 before considering a referral to the Early Intervention Team. When requesting support, complete the referral form in consultation with parents and ensure they sign to give their consent, return along with copies of relevant observations, assessments, and reports as well as evidence of targets you have been working on. We are likely to request more information if it is unclear how delayed the child is or in which area the difficulties lie.

Very young children may have had home visiting support from The Early Intervention Team. They may support transition of the child into your setting and usually this support will end at this point because setting staff have a responsibility to provide SEN support. 'All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEN or disabilities and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care.' (Code of Practice, July 2014 paragraph 5.12).

If a child needs support and meets the criteria for referrals below, please complete the referral form in consultation with parents and return along with copies of relevant observations, assessments and reports as well as evidence of what you have been working on-remember to include as much detail as you can and information about the child's developmental level. The latest STePS referral form is always available on the PVI page of the School Information Portal

Criteria for referrals

- For setting referrals, the child must attend a Derby City setting and be supported through the graduated approach (assess, plan, do, review) identified in the Code of Practice 2014.
- There must be evidence of moderate to severe delay or disability in at least two areas of development.
- There must be evidence of the setting providing targeted support and of partnership working with parents.
- Support for a child attending a private, voluntary or independent setting can be requested once the child is 2 years and 6 months. Where children are under 3 this should be discussed with your Early Intervention Practitioner to establish what needs have been identified and what support you have already put in place.
- Children with Profound and Multiple Needs can be referred by settings at any age and should be discussed with your Early Intervention practitioner before making a referral.