



SEND JARGON GUIDE



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SEND TERMS, SUPPORT AND NAVIGATING THE SYSTEM

Plain English explanations • Practical tips • Trusted support



CLEAR TERMS

Plain English
explanations of key
SEND terms and acronyms.



CONFIDENT PARENTS

Understand your child's
needs and the support
available.



BRIGHTER FUTURES

Practical tips and trusted
information to help you
make informed decisions.

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A quick guide to understanding
the language of SEND.

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WELCOME



You don't need to know everything today.

The world of SEND can feel like a different language. Abbreviations, acronyms and professional terms can be confusing and overwhelming.

This guide is here to help.

We break down the jargon, explain who's who, and walk with you through the key steps of your child's journey.

You are not alone – and you are your child's best advocate.



**Clear terms. Confident parents.
Brighter futures.**

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



This guide is here to support you at every stage of your SEND journey.



1. BROWSE

Use the contents or the A-Z pages to look up any term you come across.



2. UNDERSTAND

Each term is explained in simple language so you can feel clear and confident.



3. TAKE ACTION

Use the tips, contacts and resources to get the right support for your child.



4. COME BACK

Keep this guide handy – you can return to it whenever you need.



A little knowledge today
can make a big difference
tomorrow.

A-C



Common SEND terms explained simply.



ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

A neurodevelopmental condition that can affect attention, impulsivity and activity levels. Everyone with ADHD experiences it differently.



Annual Review

A meeting held at least once a year to review your child's EHCP, discuss progress and decide whether any changes are needed.



AP – Alternative Provision

Education arranged for a child who cannot attend a mainstream school because their needs cannot currently be met there.



Autism

A lifelong neurodevelopmental difference that affects how a person communicates, interacts with others and experiences the world. Every autistic person is unique.



Behaviour Support Plan (BSP)

A personalised plan used by schools to understand and support behaviours that may be linked to a child's additional needs.



BSL (British Sign Language)

The visual language used by many Deaf people in the UK.



CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

An NHS service that provides assessment and support for children and young people experiencing emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.



Child in Need (CIN)

Support provided by Children's Services for children who need additional help to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development.



Cognition and Learning

One of the four broad areas of SEND. It relates to how a child learns, understands information and develops academic skills.

D-E



Common SEND terms explained simply.



Diagnosis

A formal identification of a medical condition by an appropriately qualified healthcare professional.



DLA (Disability Living Allowance)

A benefit that helps with the extra costs of caring for a child under 16 who has additional care or mobility needs because of a disability or health condition.



Direct Payments

Money provided by the Local Authority so families can arrange some of their own support instead of receiving council-arranged services.



Draft EHCP

The first version of an Education, Health and Care Plan sent to parents before it becomes final. Parents have the right to comment and request changes.



Dyslexia

A learning difference that mainly affects reading, spelling and writing skills.



Dyspraxia (Developmental Coordination Disorder – DCD)

A condition that affects movement, coordination, organisation and planning skills.



Early Help

Support offered to children and families before difficulties become more serious.



Education Psychologist (EP)

A specialist who assesses how a child learns, thinks and develops, then recommends strategies and support for school and home.



EHC Needs Assessment (EHCNA)

The legal assessment carried out by the Local Authority to decide whether a child needs an EHCP.



EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan)

A legal document describing a child's education, health and social care needs, the support they must receive and the outcomes they are working towards.



EOTAS (Education Otherwise Than At School)

Education arranged by the Local Authority when a child's needs cannot reasonably be met in any school setting.



Equality Act 2010

A law that protects disabled people from discrimination and requires schools and services to make reasonable adjustments so disabled children can access education and opportunities.

F-O



Common SEND terms explained simply.



Family Voice

When parents and carers share their experiences and views to help improve services for children and families.



Graduated Approach

A 4-step process used by schools and the Local Authority to identify, assess, plan and review support for children with SEND.



High Needs

A term used by Local Authorities to describe children whose SEND requires more intensive support and resources.



Holistic Approach

Looking at the whole child – their education, health, wellbeing and family life – when planning support.



Inclusion

Ensuring all children, including those with SEND, can take part fully in school and community life.



Intervention

Extra support or strategies put in place to help a child improve specific skills or overcome difficulties.



Mainstream School

A regular school that most children attend. Many mainstream schools support children with SEND.



Needs

The additional needs a child has that require extra support or adjustments.



Personalised Support

Support that is tailored to meet a child's individual needs, strengths and goals.



Person-Centred

Placing the child and family at the centre of decisions about their support and future.

P-Y



Common SEND terms explained simply.



Parent Carer

A parent or carer of a child or young person with SEND.



Provision

The support, resources and services put in place to meet a child or young person's needs.



SEN (Special Educational Needs)

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability that makes it harder for them to learn than others of the same age.



SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)

A teacher in a school who leads on support for children with SEND and acts as a key point of contact for families.



SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

A term which includes all children and young people who have SEN and/or a disability.



Special School

A school specifically for children and young people with more complex needs.



Short Breaks

Planned breaks or activities for a disabled child or young person, giving their family or carers a rest.



Support

Practical, emotional or educational help to enable a child or young person to achieve the best possible outcomes.



Transition

The process of preparing for and moving between key stages in education or into adulthood.



Young Carer

A child or young person who looks after a family member who has a disability, illness, mental health condition or addiction.

WHO'S WHO IN SEND?



Key people and services you may come across on your child's SEND journey.



SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)

A teacher in a school who leads on SEND support. They work with staff, parents and external professionals to make sure your child's needs are met.



Educational Psychologist (EP)

A specialist who assesses how your child learns, thinks and behaves. They may recommend strategies and support for school and home.



Local Authority (LA)

The council responsible for arranging and funding support for children and young people with SEND in your area.



Social Worker

A professional who supports children and families when there are safeguarding concerns or additional needs at home.



Speech and Language Therapist (SaLT)

A specialist who helps children and young people with communication, speech, language and swallowing difficulties.



Occupational Therapist (OT)

A specialist who helps children develop the skills they need for everyday activities, such as dressing, writing and sensory support.



CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)

An NHS service that supports children and young people with emotional, behavioural or mental health difficulties.



Family Voice / Parent Carer Forum

Groups of parents and carers who share their experiences and views to help improve local services for children with SEND.

TOP 10

TIPS FOR PARENTS



Simple tips to help you feel more confident and informed on your child's SEND journey.



- 

1 Learn the jargon
Understanding SEND terms helps you feel more confident when speaking to schools and professionals.
- 

2 Ask questions
There are no silly questions. You have the right to understand everything about your child's support.
- 

3 Keep records
Keep copies of all letters, reports, plans and emails. It helps if you ever need to challenge a decision.
- 

4 Work in partnership
Build a positive relationship with school and professionals. You are all working towards the same goal – your child's wellbeing.
- 

5 Attend meetings
Make sure you attend and prepare for meetings. Your input is important and your voice matters.
- 

6 Get everything in writing
If something is agreed, ask for it in writing. This helps avoid misunderstandings later.
- 

7 Know your rights
Familiarise yourself with your rights under the SEND Code of Practice and other relevant legislation.
- 

8 Look after yourself
Caring for a child with SEND can be demanding. Make time for you – you can't pour from an empty cup.
- 

9 Connect with other parents
You are not alone. Speak to other parent carers and join local support groups.
- 

10 Celebrate the wins
Celebrate every small step forward. You know your child best and you are doing an amazing job.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Quick answers to some of the questions parents ask most often.

1



My child doesn't have an EHCP. Can they still get support?

Yes. Schools must provide appropriate SEND support, even if your child does not have an EHCP.

2



What's the difference between SEN and SEND?

SEN means Special Educational Needs.

SEND means Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

3



Who should I speak to first if I'm worried?

Start by speaking to your child's class teacher or nursery key worker. You can also ask to speak with the school's SENCO.

4



Can I ask for an EHCP assessment?

Yes. Parents, schools and young people over 16 can request an EHC Needs Assessment from their Local Authority.

5



What if I disagree with a decision?

You have the right to ask questions, request a review or challenge certain decisions. Independent advice is available from SENDIASS and IPSEA.

6



Can my child receive support without a diagnosis?

Yes. A diagnosis is not required for a child to receive SEND support in school.

7



How can I prepare for a SEND meeting?

Write down your questions, take notes, and don't be afraid to ask for clarification if you don't understand something.

8



Where can I get more help?

Speak to your school's SENCO, contact your local SENDIASS service or visit one of the organisations listed on the next page.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS & WEBSITES



National organisations that offer trusted information, advice and support for families of children and young people with SEND.



Contact

Support, advice and information for families with disabled children.

 www.contact.org.uk



IPSEA

Free legal advice and support on education for children and young people.

 www.ipsea.org.uk



National Autistic Society

Information, resources and support for autistic people and families.

 www.autism.org.uk



Council for Disabled Children

Driving change for children and young people with SEND.

 www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk



Family Fund

Grants and support for families raising disabled or seriously ill children.

 www.familyfund.org.uk



SOS!SEN

Charity supporting families with SEND through helplines, forums and guides.

 www.sossen.org.uk

LOCAL SUPPORT



SENDIASS

Independent information, advice and support about SEND and education in your area.

 www.sendiass.org.uk



Local SEND Local Offer

Information about services and support available for children and young people with SEND in your local area.

 [Search your local council website](#)



SCAN FOR TRUSTED SEND RESOURCES

Access all of the organisations featured on this page, along with additional trusted websites, guidance and helpful resources for families of children and young people with SEND.

Scan the QR code to visit the Fusion of Hearts SEND Resource Hub.

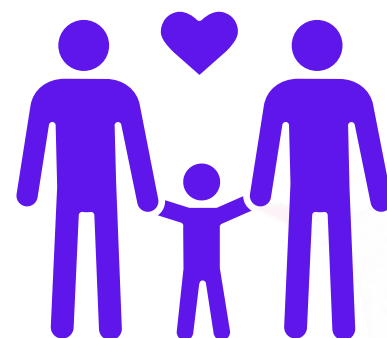
We regularly update our hub with trusted organisations, useful websites and practical information for SEND families.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES. EMPOWERING FUTURES.



At Fusion of Hearts CIC, we support families of children and young people with SEND through information, advocacy, workshops and practical guidance.

Our aim is to help families feel informed, confident and empowered at every stage of their journey.



WE CAN SUPPORT FAMILIES THROUGH:



SEND ADVOCACY

Support with school meetings, letters and understanding your rights.



EHCP GUIDANCE

Help with assessments, reviews, amendments and appeals.



PARENT WORKSHOPS

Practical sessions that build knowledge and confidence.



FAMILY SUPPORT

A welcoming space to connect, learn and feel supported.



RESOURCES & INFORMATION

Parent-friendly guides, templates and trusted information.



OUR MISSION

To empower families with the knowledge, confidence and support they need to navigate the SEND journey and ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive.



GET IN TOUCH

We're here to listen, support and walk this journey with you.



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