

The graduated response: recommended process and paperwork for supporting children with SEN/D in the early years

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The graduated response cycle

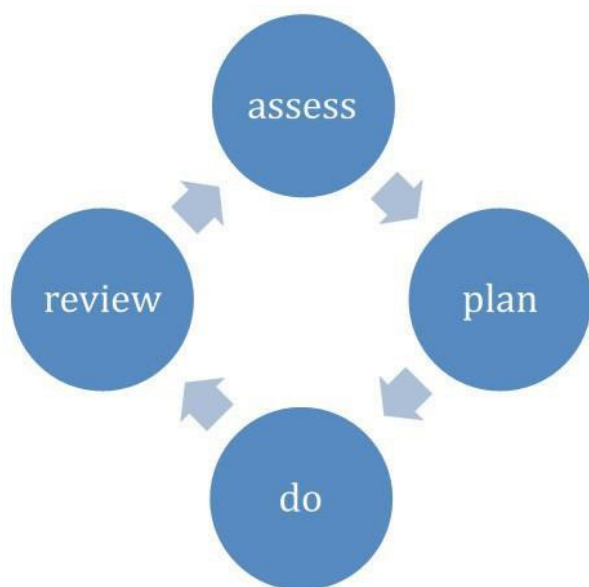
All early years providers must have a clear approach to assessing children's special education needs and/or disabilities (SEN/D), and this approach should be understood and followed by the whole staff team within group settings.

The early years special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) within a setting should take the lead in supporting practitioners to identify children with delayed development at the earliest opportunity. This should be part of the setting's overall approach to monitoring the progress and development of all children.

The graduated response cycle should be initiated when a child is not making adequate progress despite high quality group provision planning. It is the settings approach to supporting children with SEN/D. The child and the family must be involved at all stages.

The legal definition of Special Educational Needs within the SEND Code of Practice 2014 is: "A pupil has SEN where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, this is provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age."

The graduated response cycle is split into the 4 stages of **assess, plan, do, review** is a continuous cycle of support that includes making adaptations to remove any barriers to learning for individual children.



Due to the rate of progress within early years we recommend that the graduated response cycle is reviewed and adapted as required with the SENCO, key person and parents every 6 weeks.

This document provides an overview of each stage of the process with the recommended paperwork to accompany each stage.

If a child meets criteria for an education health care plan on entry into school reception class, the evidence of the graduated response cycle will be requested from the child's early years provision, so all paperwork must be completed accurately and smartly in order to demonstrate the progress, or lack of progress made despite your high quality SEN/D interventions.

The information contained within this document will support you in delivering the SEN/D cycle within your setting. It contains recommended core paperwork to support delivery of each cycle, along with links to additional resources and paperwork.

Graduated response cycle	Template paperwork included
Assess	Observation paperwork Professional passport to play (transition information) Early support overview tracking sheet Group provision map example
Plan	Individual support plan and individual provision map All about me Overview of graduated response funding levels
Do	Record of intervention
Review	Minutes of review of intervention

It should form the basis of your settings SEN/D folder and should be readily available for staff and parents to refer to. It should not be used for individual children's details; these should be stored separately.

Please expand on the information contained in the folder, and we have provided a list of suggested sections and possible content at the end of the document.

An electronic copy of the folder is also available to download from the [early years inclusion a-z on our website \(opens in new window\)](#)

Any future changes or updates to the content will be available on our website in the early years inclusion A-Z and promoted via the early years - WCF Facebook page.

Cycle 1: assess

Assessment plays an important part in helping parent carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs and to plan activities and support.

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process, it allows practitioners to identify the child's level of achievement, interests, and learning styles so that the setting can shape the child's learning experience reflecting the observations.

A team around the child (TAC) meeting should be held for children with complex needs, before they start so the SENCO can gather all relevant information and link with the specialist agencies who are supporting the child. A passport to play can be used for recording this information, and action plans should be created. Training and inclusion funding may be available from various services, and further advice is available in the transition section of the WCF Website. Electronic copies of the 'transition toolkit' are available in the [early years inclusion A-Z \(opens in new window\)](#).

Once a child is in the setting observations will play a key part in assessing the developmental profile of the child, and we have provided a range of formats for you (post its, observation records, summative record of observations). These should feed into the early support tracking which breaks down the EYFS areas of development into smaller, more achievable steps which can also help with planning appropriate next steps for the child. These should be shared with parents, so they are aware of where their children are developmentally. Download the early support tracking documents from the [early years inclusion a to z \(opens in new window\)](#).

An early support tracking overview sheet can be downloaded to record the child's progress over time and should be reviewed and updated as and when the child achieves the step.

A group provision map can also support planning, by identifying the different cohorts of children. Group activities targeted specific areas should be implemented and linked to individual children's needs. An example and the blank provision map are available from the [early years inclusion a to z \(opens in a new window\)](#)

The SEND Code of Practice describes the **assess** stage as follows:

5.39 assess

In identifying a child as needing SEN support, the early years practitioner, working with the setting SENCO and the child's parents, will have carried out an analysis of the child's needs. This initial assessment should be reviewed regularly to ensure that support is matched to need. Where there is little or no improvement in the child's progress, more specialist assessment may be called for from specialist teachers or from health, social services or other agencies beyond the setting. Where professionals are not already working with the setting, the SENCO should contact them, with the parents' agreement

Core document to download

- [Observations of children: post it note observations \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Observations of children: observation record \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Summative record of observation \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Blank transition action plan \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Early support developmental profile overview \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Early support tracking in specific areas – PSED, communication and language, thinking and physical \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Group provision map \(opens in new window\)](#)

Additional resources to download

- [Benefits of inclusion \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Normal entitlement – good practice guidance \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Speech and language pathway \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Information on transition \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Information on two year integrated developmental check \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Key person guidance \(SEAD\) \(opens in new window\)](#)

Cycle 2: plan

Once the need for SEN/D support has been identified, it is essential to differentiate for individual children.

In consultation with parents, the SENCO and key person should agree:

- the outcomes they are seeking,
- the interventions and support to be put in place,
- the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour,
- a clear date to review.

We have provided recommended templates to download for recording individual planning; individual provision maps / individual support plans etc.

Ensure that individual planning is linked to your whole setting planning, so you can demonstrate how it incorporates and differentiates for individual children's developmental needs.

The plan should also consider the views of the child, highlighting their preferred activities and learning styles to engage them fully in the interventions. A passport bubble / all about me sheet can be completed to capture this information, which should be readily available to all staff.

Children with additional needs are eligible for inclusion funding and practitioners should allocate the correct graduated response level to the child's nursery education funding (NEF) record and plan appropriate spend throughout the term. (An overview of the criteria can be downloaded from the link below). Settings have autonomy on how they spend the funding, however actions and spend must demonstrate an impact on the child's development. Funding can be used for employing additional staffing for high levels of supervision or several individual or group interventions, training in matter of inclusion, purchasing specialist agency input, and specific resources to benefit the child.

More information on all aspects of the funding, including how to apply for children not in receipt of NEF, can be found within the local inclusion fund – ordinarily available in early years guidance document on the [early years inclusion a to z \(opens in new window\)](#)

The SEND Code of Practice describes the **plan** cycles as follows:

“5.40 Plan

Where it is decided to provide SEN support, and having formally notified the parents, (see 5.38 above), the practitioner and the SENCO should agree, in consultation with the parent, the outcomes they are seeking, the interventions and support to be put in place, the expected impact on progress, development or behaviour, and a clear date for review. Plans should take into account the views of the child. The support and intervention provided should be selected to meet the outcomes identified for the child, based on reliable evidence of effectiveness, and provided by practitioners with relevant skills and knowledge. Any related staff development needs should be identified and addressed.

5.41

Parents should be involved in planning support and, where appropriate, in reinforcing the provision or contributing to progress at home.”

Core documents to download

- [Individualised planning guidance for children with additional needs – support plan and individual provision map \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [All about me \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [EYFSS – overview of levels of provision and levels of need \(opens in new window\)](#)

Additional resources to download

- [Local inclusion fund guidance – inclusion supplement \(opens in new window\)](#)

Cycle 3: do

This is where you carried out your planned interventions. You should record your planned interventions and we would advise to record it on the record of intervention sheets.

Early years practitioner (normally the key person) remains responsible for working directly with the child daily, with support from the SENCO.

The SENCO should oversee the implementation of interventions as part of the SEN/D support and discuss with parents during routine conversations at pick up and drop off.

The SEND Code of Practice describes the **do** cycles as follows:

5.42 “The early years practitioner, usually the child’s key person, remains responsible for working with the child on a daily basis. With support from the SENCO, they should oversee the implementation of the interventions or programmes agreed as part of SEN support. The SENCO should support the practitioner in assessing the child’s response to the action taken, in problem solving and advising on the effective implementation of support.”

Core documents to download

- [Individualised planning for children with additional needs – record of intervention \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [All about me \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Local inclusion fund - overview of levels of provision and levels of need \(opens in new window\)](#)

Cycle 4: review

This is the process of looking back over a **six-week cycle**, to record any progress the child has made.

- a) To discuss how successful the targets were and whether they should be continued or tweaked to have more impact.
- b) To assess the impact and quality of the support – has it been effective and what has been the impact of this on the child’s progress.
- c) This is an opportunity to plan the next phase/next steps of interventions, which supports the child’s needs and development.

- d) It is an opportunity for parent / carers to contribute their thoughts and wishes to any forward planning to aid the progress of the child. Include child's views / like's / dislike's

THE SEND Code of Practice describes the **review cycles** as follows:

A: "The effectiveness of the support and its impact on the child's progress should be reviewed in line with the agreed date. The impact and quality of the support should be evaluated by the practitioner and the SENCO working with the child's parents and taking into account the child's views. They should agree any changes to the outcomes and support for the child in light of the child's progress and development. Parents should have clear information about the impact of the support provided and be involved in planning next steps.

B: This cycle of action should be revisited in increasing detail and with increasing frequency, to identify the best way of securing good progress. At each stage parents should be engaged with the setting, contributing their insights to assessment and planning. Intended outcomes should be shared with parents and reviewed with them, along with action taken by the setting, at agreed times.

C: The graduated approach should be led and co-ordinated by the setting SENCO working with and supporting individual practitioners in the setting and informed by EYFS materials, the early years outcomes guidance and early support resources (information is available at the National Children's Bureau website – see the references section under Chapter 5 for the link).

D: Where a child has an EHC plan, the local authority must review that plan as a minimum every twelve months. As part of the review, the local authority can ask settings, and require maintained nursery schools, to convene and hold the annual review meeting on its behalf. Further information about EHC plan reviews and the role of early years settings is in Chapter 9, education, health and care needs assessments and plans."

Core documents to download

- [Individual planning documents - minutes of intervention \(opens in new window\)](#)

Additional resources to download

- [Template agenda for team around child / transition meeting \(opens in new window\)](#)
- Early years pupil education plan (for children who are looked after): email the inclusion team for the latest version on eyinclusion@worcechildrenfirst.org.uk. The early years pupil education plan will shortly be available as an on-line form on Welfare Call.

Suggested additional sections

Please use this folder as a basis for your settings SEN/D information. You can compile all the relevant information in one place, making it easily accessible for all staff and parents to understand your processes.

Please store children's individual information in separate files, to ensure privacy so that they are accessible only to parents and relevant staff.

You can download a "new to role of SENCo" sheet from the [early years inclusion a to z \(opens in new window\)](#)

It includes several additional documents that can be included in a SENCO folder such as:

- SENCO communication sheet
- Normal entitlement guidance
- Early support tracking documents
- SEND policy template

We suggest the following sections should be added for a robust SEN/D folder and we have created an overview sheet with further links to further relevant information and resources that can be included:

- Specialist agencies in Worcestershire
- Parents
- Speech and language
- Personal, social and emotional development/social emotional and mental health
- Transition
- Training

You can create additional sections as and when they become relevant to your setting. Please review your SENCO/SEN/D folder on a regular basis to ensure information is up to date