

What is a SENCo

A guide for parents to understand the role of a SENCo in the early years.

All early years settings, including private, voluntary and independent setting as well as childminders are expected to have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. (SENCo).

A SENCo in a school must be a qualified teacher. Those working in other providers (in the private, voluntary and independent sector) do not have to be a teacher.

What is the role of an early years SENCo?

The DfE guidance there are key areas of responsibility for early years SENCos.

- help all staff in the setting understand the systems and responsibilities around SEND
- advising and supporting colleagues about children with SEND and pass on advice from others.
- ensuring parents are involved in all support and that their opinion is listened to and acted on by the staff.
- refer to and meet with professionals or agencies, such as speech and language therapists or the Early Years Team.

Early years SENCos are not

- there to teach or work directly with all the children in the setting with SEND.
- experts in all types of SEND needs and expected to know all the correct strategies to support a child.
- the first person you need to talk to with any concerns about your child's progress

If you are concerned about your child with, SEND you should talk with your child's keyworker first. If you are still concerned you can ask to book a meeting with your settings SENCo. The SENCO must follow [a graduated approach](#) to SEND. This means they must assess a child's difficulties, plan some support to help them make progress. put the support in place for a reasonable amount of time and then review if the support has helped. The SENCo must do this a few times before they can make referrals to other services. This will take time, but they can't rush this process. Referrals will be turned down if the SENCo has not got the correct evidence. A SENCo is responsible for writing the SEND support plans that show they have followed the graduated approach. They are then responsible for filling in and sending off referrals. They will advise parents when they have all they need to do this.

SENCo are responsible for sourcing advice and training that there setting needs to support SEND. They will need to seek out advice or training for all staff working with that child

SENCos are responsible for sharing all paperwork with parents and for having regular meetings with parents to update them on their child's progress and what the setting is doing to support their child