

# Early Years SENDCo

## The role of the SENDCos in an early years setting is to:

- ensure all practitioners in the setting understand their responsibilities to children with Special Education Needs and/or Disability (SEND) and the setting's approach to identifying and meeting SEND;
- advise and support colleagues;
- ensure parents are always consulted and informed throughout and that their insights inform action taken by the setting;
- liaise with professionals or agencies beyond the setting.

## Now you're a SENDCo

### An effective SENDCo:

- is an experienced member of the team and is a senior leader
- has an understanding of their role and an awareness of the full range of responsibilities
- knows which tasks to delegate and is supportive of colleagues
- has good organisational skills
- is able to stand back and take an overall view of a situation
- a well and plans ahead
- is approachable
- Works in partnership with parents, others in the setting and outside agencies
- Seeks support and advice when required
- Makes the most of opportunities to network with SENDCos in other settings and attends all statutory training

### SENDCO qualities:

- a belief in every child as an individual with the potential to develop
- a passion for promoting equal opportunities for every child
- patience and tenacity

### SENDCo expertise:

- time management
- communication skills
- the ability to use observation to inform assessment and planning
- the ability to plan and organise

### What a SENDCo needs to know:

- thorough knowledge of child development
- knowledge of the needs of children with SEN – gained through experience
- awareness of effective strategies and techniques
- knowledge of the SEND Code of Practice
- awareness of the support and advice which may be offered by other agencies

## Key tasks for SENDCos

### 1. Implementing the SEND policy

The SENDCO is likely to have had a lead role in developing and writing the policy and should be aware of what it contains. They then take the lead in ensuring that all staff are aware of its contents and work within the guidelines it provides. The SENDCO will also find ways of making sure that parents are aware of the policy.

### 2. Record-keeping

A key part of a SENDCO's role is to decide what information to record about the developmental progress of a child with additional needs – and the format to be used. They will also need to be aware of the issues around information sharing and confidentiality.

### 3. Coordinating people and processes

An individual child with additional needs may have regular input from other professionals. Whilst the child is attending the early years setting, the SENDCO is responsible for making sure that this input is coordinated.

### 4. Meetings

A central task within the SEND process is setting up meetings. First it's important to know the purpose of the meeting – this will help the SENDCO invite the relevant people. It is important that notes are taken. Introductions will need to be made and parents should be put at ease. Each representative will make their contribution. At the end of the meeting actions need to be agreed.

### 5. Writing individual development plans

Once observations have been made and concerns raised it is important to create an MDP (My Development Plan). Think carefully about how the curriculum can be successfully adapted, designed or developed to be ambitious and meet the needs of pupils in SEND. How the curriculum can support development of the knowledge, skills and abilities of pupils with SEND. How does this support pupils to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence.

## SENDCO survival tips

*The role of SENDCO in an early years setting can be challenging but there are ways of making it much more manageable...*

Don't try to do everything at once. Step back and take an overview. Decide on your priorities. Make a timeline and take action step by step.

Don't try to do it all by yourself. Delegate to colleagues – but make sure you explain clearly what they need to do. Ask therapists and advisory teachers for advice. Network with other SENDCos. Speak to the SEYT or CDS for advice.

Communicate. Remember – this involves listening as well as expressing yourself. Learn. Termly SENDCO statutory training with the SEYT must be attended. Take up other training opportunities when you can. Reflect on your own practice. Ask yourself, "What works well – and why?" See what works for others. Listen to parents – you can learn a lot from them.

**Teaching, Learning and Supporting a Child with SEND is  
EVERYONE's Responsibility**