



EY SENCO Briefing Autumn Term 2025

earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk



1

Agenda



1. Local and National Updates

2. Transitions updates

3. ‘Little Link’

4. EY SENIF and guidance for 25-26

5. Exceptional Support Requests (ESR)

6. New AET training and ‘our mission’

7. Training calendar incl NASEN

8. Ofsted Framework and SEND

9. SENCO qualification in the Early Years

10. Watch this space ‘SENCO Champion’

11. Local Area Inspection

12. New SEND team link

13. Safeguarding

2

Local and National Updates

- SEND White paper due to be published autumn 2025
- Updates Universal Provision Document (Ordinarily Available Provision - OAP)
- Survey on factors influencing EHCP applications [Yourvoicebucks – EHCPs Yourvoicebucks.](#)
- [Parents survey EHCPs](#) – please consider sharing with your families

Survey closes on 2nd November 2025

As of 14/10/25 only
21 setting/school
responses and 9
parents/carers



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3

Celebrating High Quality Transitions in Schools and Settings

- **Early planning and understanding of the cohort**
- **Prioritising SEN needs with honest communication with parents**
- **Smooth transition strategies: visits, social stories, visual aids**
- **Early engagement with transitioning settings and accurate admissions data**
- **Reception environment planning with sensory and communication adaptations**
- **Impact: settled cohorts in Reception, better understanding of needs and differences.**



4

Early SEN Inclusion Fund

- Early Years added to the original funding pot for 24-25
- A total of 2,087 children were supported through the Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYSENIF) and of these children 1,085 continue to need support.
- 80% of settings completed an evaluation form (late evaluation form now being used)
- 158 settings indicated that children other than those targeted for Inclusion Fund support benefited from the Inclusion Fund



Buckinghamshire Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund (EY SENIF)
Essential guidance for applications 2025-26

All local authorities are required to have a SENIF for all children eligible for the entitlements and who have SEN, regardless of the number of hours taken. These funds are intended to support local authorities to work with providers to recognise and support the low-level and emerging needs of individual children with SEN who are taking up the entitlements.

Early Years Entitlements: Local Authority Funding of Providers Operational Guide 2025-2026:

Settings should always refer to the [Early Years Ordinary Available provision](#) and other resources [SEND Resources | Early Years](#) to ensure quality teaching and an inclusive provision is at the heart of their offer to all children in their setting. A well-trained SENCO is essential to supporting your setting and is considered part of ordinarily available provision-funding.

Funding allocated is a contribution towards the cost of delivering specific, evidence-led interventions and/or provision identified to support children's emerging needs. Each decision is based on the information provided but we will also use information on training attendance and engagement with implementing any advice given as a factor in supporting these decisions.

It should enable individual children, or groups of children to achieve identified outcomes and be used in conjunction with any other funding received by the setting e.g., setting's own budgets, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Disability Access Fund (DAF) payments etc.

EYSENIF is not for individual children in settings who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), are under assessment or those in Reception classes.

Any training completed should have a continued impact on the setting's capacity to meet similar needs in the future. When using EYSENIF for training there is an expectation that learning will be shared and embedded within your setting and will be a key part of the evaluation process.

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Exceptional Support Request

- New form and e-mail
- Triage group (specialist teacher and EY SEND advisors)
- Criteria and expectations

Key Questions:

- Describe the child or young person's needs, ensuring that you include detail on:
- why the need is immediate/why the need is unpredicted/ how the need requires special education provision that exceeds available resources?
- How any additional funding has been used (DAF/EYPP)? Provisional DAF
- Send an up-to-date costed SEN support plan/provision map (or equivalent) detailing provision in place to meet the child/young persons needs and sent it to ehcenquiries@buckinghamshire.gov.uk
- Provide details of any meetings and/or discussions you have had with external professionals regarding the child or young person

Exceptional Support Request



Exceptional Support Request Form

Autism Education Trust Training
eycpd.buckinghamshire.gov.uk





Autism Education Trust

Regional Partner

Our Mission is that every SENCO and Manager has completed an Autism course in the last 2 years.
And ideally MORE!! * link to additional free training

Date	Event Title and booking link	Time	Venue
Tue 02 Dec 25	AET Leading the Way in Good Autism Practice *	13.00 -15:00	Microsoft Teams
Tue 16 Dec 25	AET Making Sense of Autism Fully Funded	19:00 – 21:00	Microsoft Teams
Mon 19 Jan 26	AET Making Sense of Autism Fully Funded	13:00 – 15:00	Microsoft Teams
Wed 11 Feb 26	AET Good Autism Practice *	9.30 – 15.00	Gateway, Aylesbury
Tues 17 Mar 26	AET Autism and Play	19:00 – 21:00	Microsoft Teams
Tue 24 th Mar 26	AET Making Sense of Autism Fully Funded	19:00 – 21:00	Microsoft Teams
Wed 22 April 26	AET Good Autism Practice	09:30 – 13:00	Hazlemere Golf
Mon 8 June 26	Making Sense of Autism - Planning for Transitions Fully Funded	16:00 – 18:00	Microsoft Teams
Thurs 25 Jun 26	AET Autism and Play *	10:00 – 12:00	Microsoft Teams
Mon 20 Jul 26	AET Making Sense of Autism – Fully Funded	19:00 – 21:00	Microsoft Teams



SEND Training
eycpd.buckinghamshire.gov.uk

New courses

Start Date	Event Title and booking link	Time	Venue
Mon 20 Oct 25	I'm not the SENCO what should I be doing?	10:00 – 12:00	Microsoft Teams
Wed 5 Nov 25	Seeing Beyond Behaviour	13:00 – 15:00	Microsoft Teams
Wed 19 Nov 25	Sensory and Motor Strategies	13:00 – 15:00	Microsoft Teams
Thurs 11 Dec 25	Trauma Informed Practice	19:00 – 21:00	Microsoft Teams
Tue 27 Jan + Tues 3 Feb 26	SENCO New & Aspiring SENCOs	09:30 – 15.00	Southcourt Baptist Church
Fri 13 th Feb 26	Early Years Autism - One day	10 – 3 pm	Newfield – Foxes Piece School
Wed 25 Feb 26	Seeing Beyond Behaviour	13:00 15:00	Microsoft Teams
Mon 23 Mar 26	Trauma Informed Practice	19:00 – 21:00	Microsoft Teams
Mon 27 Apr 26	Transitions - Moving In and Moving On	16:00 – 18:00	Microsoft Teams
Wed 06 May 26 + 13 May 26	SENCO New & Aspiring SENCOs	09.30 – 15.00	Hazlemere Golf Club
Tue 19 May 26	Sensory and Motor Strategies	16:00 – 18:00	Microsoft Teams
Thurs 16 Jul 26	Trauma Informed Practice	19:00 – 21:00	Microsoft Teams
Wed 22 Jul 26	Seeing Beyond Behaviour	19:00 – 21:00	Microsoft Teams

NASEN – National Association for SEN

A charitable membership organisation that exists to support and champion those working with, and for, children and young people with SEND and learning differences.
They provide free resources and support for all members.

Free training course – [Meeting the needs of Every Child](#) -



- 22nd October 2025 1 – 3pm
- 5th November 2025 9.30 – 11.30
- 10th November 2025 6 – 8 pm
- 26th November 2025 9.30 – 11.30

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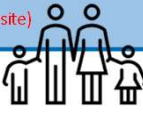
This DfE funded online course is FREE to access and will provide Early Years Practitioners with an overview and understanding of inclusive practice for SEND in Early Years settings.

The 2-hour webinar will cover the following topics:

- What do we mean by SEND?
- Responsibilities of a setting towards children with SEND
- The role of the SENCO and the key person
- What effective inclusive practice looks like in an Early Years setting
- How to use NASEN's free resources and materials

Ofsted Toolkit

(Briefing on New Ofsted Framework currently taking place – booking via [website](#))



Inclusion

Inspectors evaluate how well settings identify and support: Children with **SEND**, including those receiving SEN support and those with an **Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan**. Children facing other barriers to learning or well-being, including those with protected characteristics.

Key indicators of effective inclusion:

- **High expectations** for all children, including those with SEND.
- **Early and accurate assessment** of children’s needs.
- **Reducing barriers** to learning and well-being, involving specialists when needed.
- **Collaborative working** with children, parents, professionals, and staff.
- Inclusion of **children’s and parents’ views** in decision-making.
- Inspectors also work closely with the **SENCo** to evaluate how well the setting identifies and supports children with SEND.

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[Early years inspection toolkit](#)

Ofsted Toolkit

Curriculum and Teaching

Inspectors assess whether the curriculum:
Is **inclusive and accessible** to all children.
Supports **individual development**, including for children with SEND.

Leadership and Governance

Leaders are expected to:
Ensure systems are in place to **identify and support children with SEND**.
Promote a culture of **continuous improvement** and **inclusive practice**.
Adaptive and **responsive** to the setting's changing needs and circumstances so that they have a consistent focus on securing excellence for all children.



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[Early years inspection toolkit](#)

13

Ofsted Toolkit

Achievement:

Children, including disadvantaged children, **those with SEND**, those who are known (or previously known) to children's social care, and those who may face other barriers to their learning and/or well-being generally **achieve well from their starting points**. They receive the necessary support to reach developmental goals and/or age- and stage-appropriate end points of the curriculum.

Safeguarding:

SEND is specifically considered under safeguarding:
Recognition that children with SEND may have **additional vulnerabilities**.
Ensuring staff are trained to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns for children who are **non-verbal** or have communication differences.
Multi-agency working to support children with complex needs.

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[Early years inspection toolkit](#)

14

SENCO qualification Level 3 in the Early Years



- Knowledge based course
- 5 months to complete
- Support from training centre
- Initial face to face meeting in setting with manager to discuss expectations, learning styles and evidence needed
- Must have completed SENCO training/AET training/higher priority given to those attending briefings
- Expressions of interest
- Invitation to the qualified SENCO Network (next date Jan 13th @ Hazelmere Golf Club)

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Level 3 Award for Special Educational Needs Coordinators in Early Years Settings (NCFE)



[Expression of interest for Early Years Qualified SENCO Qualification](#)

NEW – Inclusion Champion/Inclusion Award

Qualified SENCO Network

13th Jan @ Hazelmere Golf Club – more info to follow



Conference for OOS/Wraparound – spring term

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16

Local Area SEND Inspection



Last inspection- March 2022

Areas of strength

‘There is a good track record of identifying SEND in early years. Notifications from health practitioners ensure that children with additional needs are identified early and supported into settings that can provide well for them.’

Early Years Notifications – do you know the children in your setting that have had them?

‘Early years practitioners are confident and knowledgeable about how to identify potential needs and how to act on these initial concerns. Providers are very positive about the support they receive from the early years SEND team. Support for children identified through the ‘assess, plan, do, review’ process is led by children’s needs rather than formal diagnosis. This means children get the support they need when they need it.’

Out of School sector/Childminder Conferences were also mentioned in the strengths section



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NEW SEND TEAM LINK

[SEN TEAM Keeping Connected Newsletter](#)

The Buckinghamshire SEND team have a regular newsletter and the latest one can always be found on our website. It is usually updated on a Friday and, although not all information is relevant to Early Years, it is the main communication from the iSEND team and will be where you can read any updates about the SEND Portal and any changes in processes for SEND funding



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Safeguarding Updates

- Safeguarding reforms September 2025
- Keeping Children Safe In Education & Early Years Safeguarding & Child Protection Guidance both updated in September 2025
- The Safeguarding Partnership have recently reviewed and updated the Continuum of Need. The updated version has now been published on the BSCP website
- [New LADO poster is available](#)
- Sector updates has a weekly question to use in team meetings - collated on new web tile

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Frequently Asked Questions 1

Question:	Response:
How do I express an interest in the Little Link Pilot.	You can access the Little Link trial here . But if you would like to be considered for inclusion in any Little Link Pilot that we are able to run please mail earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk with your setting name and contact details.
Can I fund Little Link by applying for EY SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF).	No – we are unable to allocate SENIF for programmes like Little Link or for other assessment packages or assessments/therapy from other professionals.
Where can I find more information about SEND Courses?	Special Educational Needs » Buckinghamshire Council Early Years Training
How do I express an interest for the Level Three SENCO training	Expression of interest for Early Years Qualified SENCO Qualification
When is the out of school conference?	The out of school Conference is on Saturday 28 th February – further details to follow shortly.
Where do we find the new LADO Poster?	LADO-E-flyer-updated-June-2025.pdf
How do I get added on to the SENCO update mailing list.	Please email earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk from a work email address and ask to be added to the list.
How do I get added to the Sector Updates Mailing list	You can sign up here to receive the Sector Updates



Frequently Asked Questions 2

Question:	Response:
How do I get added to the Sector Updates Mailing list	You can sign up here to receive the Sector Updates
I am currently doing my qualification with Best Practice. Will I be able to attend the SENCO network event in January?	Yes – anyone completing the qualification or who as completed it with an alternative training provider can email earlyyears@buckinghamshire.gov.uk and give details of your training provider, dates of training and your preferred email address for correspondence and ask to be added to the Qualified SENCO Mailing list.
We applied for an Exceptional Support Request on the old form. Do we need to reapply using the new form.	Contact the SEN team to see if your application is being processed, and if it is there is no need to resubmit. However, if it is not being processed, please submit a new application on the new form.
How long does it take to process Exceptional Support Requests?	There is no official time scale for these requests, but with the new systems in place it is hoped that there will be less delay in informing settings of decisions.
Is Making Sense of Autism funded for one staff member per setting or could multiple practitioners attend?	Multiple members of your teams can join the same or different Making Sense of Autism sessions.

