

Transition from Early Years to Primary School for children with Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND)



Frequently Asked Questions

★ What information do I need to know about when considering transition from early years to primary school?

There is a lot of information available, however, you should begin by looking at the mainstream [primary school admissions guidance](#) where you can find more information about the processes if your child has special educational needs.

★ Choosing a school for your child:

Mainstream

Most children will be expected to be educated in a mainstream school. Every mainstream school receives delegated SEND funding to support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities in their school.

The way primary schools are structured can vary so we would recommend you visit different schools, including any in your catchment areas, to consider which site you feel will best suit your child's needs. We recommend you meet with the school SENCo and discuss your child's special educational needs.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), you may name a mainstream school of your choosing. However, if you have chosen a school that is not your nearest suitable school, transport is unlikely to be provided regardless of distance from your home address. Please see the [Transport Assistance](#) policy for more details.

★ Mainstream with resources & specialist schools

A small number of children who have an EHCP may require a place within a resourced base attached to a mainstream school, or a place in a specialist school. For more information about EHCPs, including how to make a parental request for assessment, please see [here](#).

★ What if I and/or the school feel my child needs a specialist place but they are going to a mainstream school?

Most children with SEND will be educated in their local mainstream school with additional support put in place. Most children will begin their education journey in mainstream reception, and the school will use their delegated SEND funding to put in additional support. If your child requires a higher level of support than the school is able to provide from resources already available, the school can begin the [EHCP needs assessment process](#).

Reception Year is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and will be focussing on play as well as preparing for transitioning into Year 1. It is often the best place for supporting children's development in these early years. Please remember that all schools can put in a wide range of support to ensure a positive transition.

★ **My child has been receiving Early Years Inclusion funding when attending their early years setting. What funding is available for schools to support my child?**

All maintained schools receive funding from the government called delegated SEND funding, and they have access to resources and services to support children with SEND.

If the school feels that your child needs support above the resources already available, it will gather evidence using the graduated response and request an EHCP needs assessment. For more information about EHCPs, including how to make a parental request for assessment, please visit the [Reading SEND Local Offer EHCP page](#).

★ **The school has told me that my child must have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for them to be able to support my child in school.**

Most children with SEND will have their additional needs met at school with resources ordinarily available. Education settings, parents or other professionals can request an EHCP needs assessment if required. Most of the time, the local authority requires evidence of a graduated approach in supporting your child's needs. Please speak with your early years setting or school's SENCo for further guidance. The process prior to requesting an EHCP needs assessment can take place at your child's early years setting. Your child's new school may need to continue this process, if appropriate, to ensure evidence of a graduated approach and use of ordinarily available resources. You can find out more about the EHCP process [here](#).

★ **I have been told that my child can start school a year later. How do I find information about this?**

You can find information about your options for starting school [here](#) under "who should apply". It is the local authority's view that, for most children, it is in their best interest to be educated with their chronological peer group.

You can choose to defer your child's start to Reception, thus allowing another one or two terms at nursery for your child, and then starting Reception later in the same academic year. However, they will still transfer to Year 1 in line with their chronological age group. If your child is summer-born you can apply to offset your child's entry into reception to start a whole academic year later.

There are two guidance documents we recommend you read before you consider applying to change your child's school admission date:

- [Defer/Offset Guide](#)
- [Requesting to be educated outside of your child's year group](#)



★ **What information should be shared about my child to help the school prepare for them?**

We have a recommended SEND Transition Passport that professionals who work with the Early Years Services will use to share information about your child. Best practice would be for a meeting to occur to include parents/carers, the child's current setting, the new school teacher/SENCo and professionals who have been supporting your child. This will ensure that conversations are held about the support your child may need, and how the school can prepare to support your child's transition. This should occur at the earliest opportunity once school places are confirmed. Please email early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org for a copy of the Early Years Transition process which includes the SEND Transition Passport.

★ **My child has been receiving speech and language therapy sessions. Will they continue at school?**

Speech and language therapy support is different when your child attends a school. This is because schools receive support from their link speech and language therapist to support their staff to implement the strategies that your child may need on a more regular basis. This means your child will be receiving the right support and intervention without having to wait to be seen by a speech & language therapist. Some children may still require specific therapy, and this will be organised via the school SENCo and the speech and language therapist. More information is available in Appendix A.

★ **How can I help my child prepare for the transition to school?**

Please do not worry about focusing on all of these suggestions. Support your child with what they are able to do, and if you are concerned about any of these suggestions, speak to your school's SENCo about support and adjustments that can be made.

To help your child develop independence, support them to do the following if they are able to:

- Getting dressed independently every day – practise closing buttons, putting on socks and shoes on the right feet, putting a coat on and zipping up
- Going to the toilet and wiping their bottom on their own – simple clothing like elasticated waistbands are easier to get on and off
- Cutting food using a 'real' knife and fork and pouring a drink from a plastic jug
- Tidying up their toys and doing simple household chores – giving them responsibilities will help them to become more independent
- Help them to recognise their name in writing and to consistently respond to it verbally. Create a coat and shoe peg at home with their name on it to help get them used to having something similar at school – it seems like a simple thing, but it'll help when we ask your child to go and fetch their coat.

You can practise some of the skills your child will develop in early years in a way that suits your child's interest and play.

- Lots of the learning in Reception happens through play. Get down onto the carpet so you're at their level and **enjoy some play** with your child. **Follow their lead** with what they're doing or how they're playing. Then, try to get them to follow your lead and create games together. This will help them to get used to **playing and engaging with other children**.
- Do some **drawing, painting or mark making** together- have fun making marks with everything from mud to gravy!
- Do **turn-taking activities** such as playing with a toy – this helps them to get used to taking turns and to understand the concept of sharing.
- If your school has shared a simple timetable with you, you could start to offer snacks and lunch at similar times. This will help your child's body to **adjust to a school routine**
- Try to **encourage your child to eat with others**, even if it's just a snack.
- Talk to your child, taking turns to talk and listen as much as you can. This may mean being with your child, tuning in to them and **sharing moments** together.
- Talk to your child in your **home language**. Don't worry about talking in English if this is not what you do normally. If your child can talk well in your home language they will pick up English more quickly at school.
- If you are using screens to stay in touch with family and friends, **include children in video calls** and activities. Getting them to have conversations with relatives and friends is a good way to combine screen time while helping children to improve their speech.

Support your child to develop an interest in stories, sounds and numbers

- **Read to your child every day** - we get most of our new words from what we read. Research shows that reading stories is one of the best things parents can do to help children do well at school. A bedtime story helps bedtime routines and gives a great opportunity to snuggle together and feel connected. It's great to get to know some stories well, so don't worry if your child asks for one book over and over again. This will help them later in school when they start to learn to write
- When reading, **turn the pages together and look at the pictures**. There are some great videos from schools in Reading with our brilliant teachers reading some amazing stories. Snuggle together and have a listen.
- **Explore rhyming words** and sing songs together - action songs are fun!
- Count items out together and **talk about numbers** you see around you.

Routine and consistency help children to adapt and this will help ease the transition into reception. About four weeks before the start of reception, try to set a morning routine with your child. **You can start with small steps and gradually add to the routine:**

- **Get up at the same time** every day and have breakfast if possible. Try to have a set bed time
- Dress your child in the **school uniform** and put their 'school' shoes on them
- Prepare a '**school lunch box**' – you can choose one together if you don't have one yet
- Try to get a **bedtime routine** - the first few months of school are really exhausting for children and good sleep habits will keep them healthy and benefit their learning in the long term. The NHS website offers good ideas to help your child with sleep www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/healthy-sleep-tips-for-children/
- Try to **limit screen time** each day, especially at night. Screen time can be very exciting and engaging for children but can be addictive and stop children being as curious and creative as they are when screens are not around. Children will do best in school when they are used to interacting with other people and are happy and excited by a range of activities.



Help your child to get to know the school and staff faces

- Many children like to know what their school and teacher look like before they start. If your school has shared photos/videos of the teacher, play area and classroom with you, **look at these together.**
- Your school may offer you a phone or video call instead of a home visit. This is a great opportunity to get to know key staff and for **your child to meet their teacher.**
- Look up the route to school and if it's within walking distance, try it out as your daily walk. **Point to the school** and tell your child they'll be going there soon.
- Show your child you are excited about school and **talk to them positively about starting school.** Children look to parents for reassurance, so try not to worry out loud to your child about starting school and talk to the school team about any concerns you have.

Appendix A

Speech and Language Therapy in Schools

The Early Years' Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) team feels that your child needs to be followed up by the mainstream schools' SLT service when they start at school. Advice and recommendations to support your child when they start will be sent to your child's new school. All the information about your child will be transferred to the therapist linked to your child's new school when they start in September 2022.

How does the school service work?

- Each school has a speech and language therapist linked to it.
- The speech and language therapist provides support to the school at three levels: universal, targeted and individualised. Please see over the page for further information.
- Individual appointments take place in school – these may be virtual or face-to-face. The therapist will contact you after the appointment to give feedback and discuss your views.

How will my child be supported?

- The speech and language therapist's recommendations will be based on your child's needs.
- A therapy plan with advice/strategies will be provided and targets will be set for your child to work towards.
- Your child may be discharged from the active caseload if they do not need ongoing specialist support directly from the speech and language therapist. If needed, your child may still access targeted and universal support from school staff, which is guided by the speech and language therapist.
- If your child is discharged, further advice and support can be accessed through the school service if needed in the future.
- For children with EHCPs, they will be able to receive the recommended SLT provision in school as outlined in their EHCP.

Will school do anything to help my child?

We will support school staff to carry out the recommendations in your child's therapy plan. This may involve providing training. Sometimes we will ask school staff to carry out specific activities with your child during the week at school and sometimes we ask school staff to use strategies in the classroom. Every school should have details of their 'Local Offer' on their website of what is available in your child's school to support children's communication in the classroom.

When will my child be seen for the first time?

The school speech and language therapist will meet the school SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) and decide which children need to be seen first. New children are generally given the first term to settle into their new school before they are seen for the first time by the school therapist. School staff will have advice and resources to support your child's needs while they are settling in.

What can I do to help?

You are welcome to attend your child's appointment. Please contact the speech and language therapist to arrange this. Please also contact the therapist if you have any questions. Therapists are often out in schools during the day and they will get back to you as soon as they can. It is important that you try the activities/strategies that are detailed in your child's therapy plan at home.

What do I do if I am concerned about my child's speech and language skills?

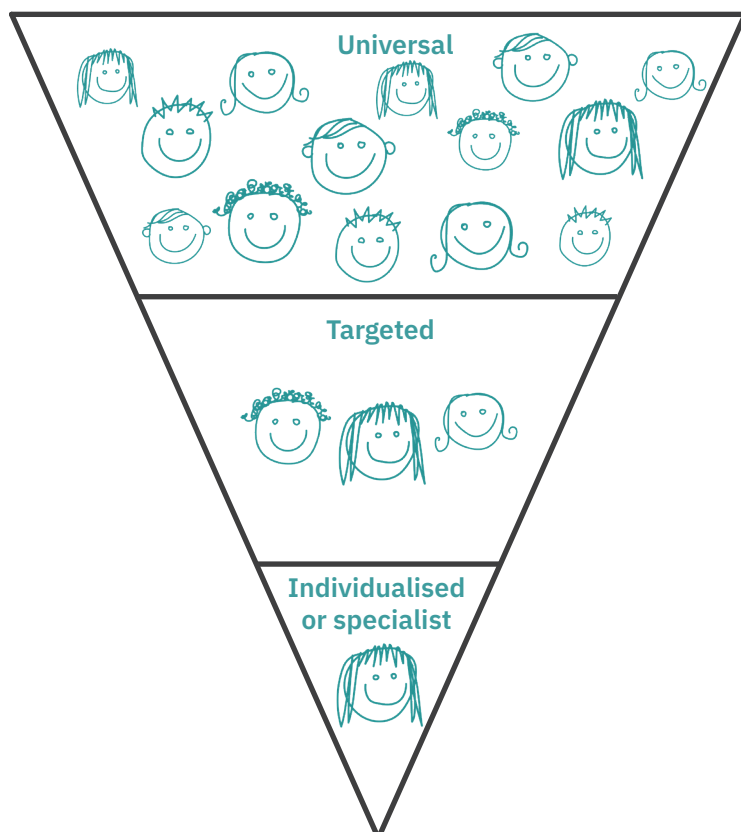
Talk to your child's teacher or the SENCo at the school. You can also contact the CYPIT Reading administrator on 0300 365 4000 or phone your child's named speech and language therapist (contact details are included in your child's report/therapy plan).

Working with the CYPIT Speech and Language Therapy Service to support your child

You are your child's
first teacher

Your child is best supported by
the people who are with them
all day, everyday

The speech and language therapy team provide support at three different levels which are represented in this pyramid.



The **universal** level focuses on all children and ensuring that every child and young person has opportunities to develop their speech, language and communication skills. This may include access to appropriate information, staff training and creating communication friendly environments.

Targeted interventions offer additional support for children and young people who are felt to be vulnerable in relation to speech, language and communication. This may involve small group and individual targeted interventions.

Individualised or specialist interventions are appropriate for children who need more specialist support in addition to the universal and targeted levels. This often involves a highly individualised and personalised programme of work, with specific recommendations from your child's speech and language therapist.

For more information about our service and information to support you to help your child, visit: cypf.berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk