

# EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS FOR UNDER FIVES

Deciding whether a child under 5 needs support through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) can feel challenging. Collaboration between parents, early years settings, the local authority, and specialists is key to understanding your child's needs and securing appropriate support.

## CRITERIA FOR AN EHCP

The SEND Code of Practice states that the local authority must:

“Consider whether there is evidence that despite the early years provider, school or post-16 institution having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess, and meet the special educational needs of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress.”

This means early years settings must have accessed all available support, such as specialist advice and funding for additional support. If a child still hasn't made expected progress, an EHCP may be necessary.

For children under 2, the SEND Code of Practice highlights:

“Children aged under two are likely to need special educational provision in accordance with an EHC plan where they have particularly complex needs affecting learning, development, and health and are likely to require a high level of special educational provision which would not normally be available in mainstream settings.”

For these children, their needs are typically significant, and health professionals are often already involved in their care.

For children aged 2–5 years attending early years provision, the local authority will assess whether the setting can meet the child's needs with their existing resources and funding. If not, an EHCP may be required.

If a child is not attending an early years setting, the local authority must collect as much information as possible and consider whether the child's needs will require support through an EHCP when they begin attending a setting or school.



## HOW IS A REQUEST MADE?

Parents and early years providers can follow the same process to request an EHCP assessment as for a school-aged child or young person.

## REVIEWS FOR EHCPs

Local authorities must review an EHCP annually.

For children under 5, it is recommended to review the EHCP every three to six months to ensure the plan remains relevant and appropriate. These interim reviews are usually informal and do not need to involve all professionals unless necessary.

If a child is transitioning to school, the EHCP must be reviewed and amended in time for the transfer. This process must be completed by 15th February in the year the child starts school. This ensures the plan reflects the child's current needs and outlines the support they will require in their school setting.

## NAMING A PLACEMENT

Parents can request a particular maintained nursery school be named in their child's EHCP. The local authority must name the school unless:

- It is deemed unsuitable for the child's age, ability, aptitude, or SEN.
- The child's attendance would negatively impact others' education or use of resources.

Parents may also choose an independent, private, or voluntary early years setting. If the local authority agrees the placement is appropriate, it can name this in the EHCP and must fund the provision. However, independent and private settings are not obligated to accept the child, and the local authority cannot enforce their agreement.



## WHERE CAN I GET SUPPORT?

For impartial advice and guidance contact Shropshire SENDIASS

