

Medical conditions

5.11 All early years providers should take steps to ensure that children with medical conditions get the support required to meet those needs. This is set out in the EYFS framework.

For Health and medicines refer to Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2021) 3.45 to 3.47

Further information can be sought from Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings (2005)

SEN in the early years

5.12 All early years providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with SEN or disabilities and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care. These requirements are set out in the EYFS framework. The EYFS framework also requires practitioners to review children's progress and share a summary with parents. In addition, the 'Early years outcomes' is an aid for practitioners, including child minders, nurseries and others such as inspectors, to help them to understand the outcomes they should be working towards. Links to the EYFS framework and the guide to early years outcomes are provided in the References section under Chapter 5.

5.13 Some children need support for SEN and disabilities at home or in informal settings before, or as well as, the support they receive from an early years provider. Provision for children who need such support should form part of the local joint commissioning arrangements and be included in the Local Offer.

From birth to two – early identification

5.14 Parents' early observations of their child are crucial. Children with more complex developmental and sensory needs may be identified at birth. Health assessments, such as the hearing screening test, which is used to check the hearing of all new-born babies, enable very early identification of a range of medical and physical difficulties. Health services, including paediatricians, the family's general practitioner, and health visitors, should work with the family, support them to understand their child's needs and help them to access early support.

5.15 Where a health body is of the opinion that a young child under compulsory school age has, or probably has, SEN, they **must** inform the child's parents and bring the child to the attention of the appropriate local authority. The health body **must** also give the parents the opportunity to discuss their opinion and let them know about any voluntary organisations that are likely to be able to provide advice or assistance. This includes the educational advice, guidance and any intervention to be put in place at an early point and before the child starts school.

5.16 This support can take a number of forms, including:

- specialist support from health visitors, educational psychologists, speech and language therapists or specialist teachers, such as a teacher of the deaf or vision impaired. These specialists may visit families at home to provide practical support, answering questions and clarifying needs
- training for parents in using early learning programmes to promote play, communication and language development
- home-based programmes, such as Portage, which offer a carefully structured system to help parents support their child's early learning and development

5.17 Early Support supports the better delivery and co-ordination of services for disabled children, and their families, including training for professional or trained independent volunteers providing a single point of contact or key working. (See References section under Chapter 2 for a link to the Early Support Programme.)

5.18 From September 2014, 2-year-olds for whom Disability Living Allowance is paid will be entitled to free early education.

5.19 Information about these services should be included in the Local Offer.