

Appendix 7: Headline and detailed recommendations arising from the Early Education research activity

Early Education were commissioned to provide research based evidence of best practice in relation to early years education, to understand the current position in Kent and to provide recommendations on how the Kent system could reflect and implement what is considered to be best practice based on the research undertaken.

Key recommendations include:

- Early and accurate identification of SEND is desirable.
- Offer a simple and unbureaucratic system for accessing SEND and specialised teacher support, including writing EHCPs within PVI, mainstream nursery, and reception classes so that practitioners can access support quickly and without delay.
- Create a clear and well-communicated graduated offer accessible to parents and providers.
- Reinstate the Area SENCO role with clarity of role and responsibility.
- Review all SEND professionals roles, responsibilities, and line management and align effectively.
- Provide systems and paperwork that support the 'tell it once' approach and bureaucracy at a minimum to get support.
- Review all SEND professionals roles, responsibilities, and line management and align effectively.
- Simplify record-keeping, ensuring the 'tell it once' approach.
- Simplify bureaucracy in accessing support and funding.

More detailed information is outlined below:

Headline	Recommendation
1) Best inclusive practice in the early years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EYFS is an inclusive curriculum and all children should be able to access it in mainstream settings. • There are concerns that the children most likely to benefit from early years education, including those with SEND, are the least able to access places. Improve outreach and access to vulnerable families. • High quality early years education has direct links to the levels of qualification of staff – improve staff qualifications and CPD. • High quality early years education is also directly linked to knowledge and confidence in pedagogy and curriculum frameworks, strengthen access to qualification, initial training and CPD across PVI and schools. • Other specific features that enhance inclusion are: the key person role and partnership with parents, ensure settings and schools have good practice in these areas.

<p>2) Training and qualifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the use of the guidance for the minimum EYE level 3 qualification.^[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-educator-level-3-qualifications-criteria/early-years-educator-level-3-qualifications-criteria • Use the currently available funding for PVI's to undertake the L3 EY SENCO qualification. (SENCOs in schools are required to have the NASENCO [(becoming NPQ SEN)] qualification but it is a qualification that is not mandatory in PVI's). • Encourage PVI's to adopt the Department for Education published recommended job description for the early years SENCO role, (currently not statutory) and employ accordingly. • Build confidence and support systems for EY practitioners through Collaborations and SENCO forums. • Ensure comprehensive and on-going training is provided for the whole early years teaching community in inclusive practice and offer a Kitemark incentive.
<p>3) Early Intervention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice occurs when health, social care, and education services offer an integrated approach to early identification. • Early identification diagnoses problems accurately, puts in early support, reduces further complications, reduces later costly interventions and improves outcomes. • Ensure information and support services are clearly communicated online, and that outreach services are finding and supporting vulnerable and hard to reach families early. • Offer a simple and unbureaucratic system for accessing SEND and specialised teacher support, including writing EHCPs within PVI's, mainstream nursery, and reception classes so that practitioners can access support quickly and without delay. • Health visitors are a valuable resource for early intervention as they work with families from birth. Ensure sufficient health visitors and integrate the 2 year check. • Portage is an effective intervention service for children birth to five able to support transition. Ensure access where there are gaps.
<p>4) Joint Working</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage settings to adopt Department for Education published recommended job description for the early years SENCO role (currently not statutory) and employ

	<p>accordingly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build confidence and support systems for EY practitioners through collaborations and SENCO forums. • Joint working across health, social care, and early years including the integrated 2-year-old check (Social care, Health, and Early years). • Use family centres as a hub for multi-agency networking and collaboration across settings and services.
5) Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track children, service use and frequency, parent satisfaction, area differences, no's of children with different assessments, 4 categories, and levels of need. • Track provision: places offered, take up of funding, which settings and schools are inclusive, sufficiency, settings under threat. • Track progress of children and outcomes. • Track destinations, no's of referrals, no's of EHCPs, no's of tribunals. • USE the data to be proactive in tackling the gaps.
6) The graduated response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The practice of 'observation, assess, plan' provides a framework for practitioners working in the EYFS to establish through ordinarily available provision if a child may have SEND. Ensure all settings have support to provide this. • Create a clear and well-communicated graduated offer accessible to parents and providers. • Provide a 'named person' to support the child and family, reinstate the Area SENCO role with clarity of role and responsibility. • Review all SEND professionals roles, responsibilities. and line management and align effectively. • Work with health and social care strategically to reduce waiting lists and provide interim support. • Review systems and information on EHCPs so that parents and providers are clear on the steps and trusting of the support available.
7) EHCPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EHCPs need accurate assessment, quality plans and timely reviews. It should not be assumed that they lead to special school but that support is put in place. • Meet children's needs in mainstream without the need for an EHCP in many cases. Early identification, good support and communication with the family will enable this (where there are well-organised systems of support and easier

	<p>access to funding, there are more children with SEND being educated in the mainstream nationally)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put systems in place to support parents earlier and negotiate provision better-this will save money, including on funding special school places and independent schools as well as tribunals.
8) Inclusive Mainstream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality early years education settings can meet the needs of children with a wide range of SEND and in all but very exceptional cases children should be integrated into EY settings. • Early years settings with highly qualified staff and with specialist support are the most likely to meet those needs effectively, they can offer assessment places for children early identified and can act as hubs to support smaller settings and childminders. The co-location and joint working of SEND services alongside education and childcare settings should be developed. • ARPs attached to schools are a positive way forward, improving inclusive practice and enabling transition for EY children but children in the EYFS (nursery and reception) should be in mainstream classes. • Parents need help and reassurance that their child’s needs can be met within mainstream provision. • Greater accountability is needed to challenge settings and schools and ensure that the legal requirements to include children are being met, both in terms of admission and in terms of their experience in a setting or school.
9) Transitions and school readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a network of local early years specialist hubs within each district which are centres of excellence in inclusion, • Maintain services which minimise transitions for children whilst offering effective interventions for children with SEND within the home, the EY setting and school. • Provide named support at transition times. • Ensure parents are given clear information about nursery and school options and are able to visit possible settings • Where discrete services are required for children with complex needs and disabilities, position these alongside mainstream • Clarity is needed among all stakeholders about the term, “school-readiness” being the measure used at the end of reception.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of expectations is needed for parents, providers and schools as children transition between home, setting and school. • Offer developmentally appropriate provision for children throughout the EYFS phase.
10)Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure online websites and information are accessible, that information is up to date and that routes to support are easily navigable. • Ensure any website, email or phone line enquiry is answered promptly and helpfully. • Ensure websites link effectively e.g. Local Offer and Parents forum websites. • Provide 'named' staff who can help parents and providers navigate the system. • Simplify record-keeping, ensuring the 'tell it once' approach • Provide integrated outreach services for vulnerable and hard-to-reach families

