SECTION 1

Child and Young Person Development

The main stages of child and young person development

From birth through to adulthood children continually grow, develop, and learn.

A child's development can be measured through social, emotional, intellectual, physical and language developmental milestones.

All children and young people follow a similar pattern of development so the order in which each child advances from one milestone to the next will be roughly the same. However, each child will develop at a different rate and their development may not progress evenly across all areas. Therefore teaching practices aimed at child development should seek to simultaneously address each one of the developmental areas.

In general, child development progresses:

- From head to toe. Beginning at the top of the body and gradually moving downwards

- From inner to outer. Firstly gaining control of muscles close to the trunk/head and then moving outwards so the large muscles in the shoulders and upper arms/thighs are first and the extremities last

- From simple to complex; children progress from simple words to complex sentences

- From general to specific; emotional responses involve the whole body in young babies but may involve only the face in an older child

Areas of development

It is important to understand how children develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually to know that all areas of development are equally as important as each other, and that all impact on one another.

Physical development includes movement skills, gross motor skills, fine motor skills and eye hand co-ordination.

Children's physical development can be supported by:

- Providing space and some equipment for the development of movement skills and gross motor skills and adequate supervision

- Providing material and equipment for the improvement of fine motor skills

- Providing cooking, sewing, woodwork and other activities to enhance hand-eye coordination.

Social and emotional development includes forming relationships, learning social skills, caring for others, self reliance, making decisions, developing self confidence and dealing with emotions.

Children's social development can be supported by:

- Giving praise for achievement
- Giving children guidance but respecting their choices
- Giving them the chance to meet and spend time with other children and adults
- Providing activities that involve sharing and taking turns
- Giving support and encouragement and the right amount of supervision
- Providing opportunities to share in decisions
- Listening to children and taking them seriously
- Providing opportunities where children take responsibility

Emotional development can be supported:

- By being warm and affectionate towards them
- Giving them the opportunity to express how they feel
- Making them feel secure and valued
- Giving children time and attention to adjust to new situations

Intellectual development includes attention span, understanding information, reasoning, developing memory, logical thinking and questioning.

As children mature changes in the ways they think about their world can have a profound effect on their ability to cope with the demands of school and daily life. Their ability to process greater amounts of complex information gives them the opportunity to learn new skills and gain new knowledge.

Children's intellectual development can be supported by:

- Developing the memory by talking about what has happened in the past
- Talking about what the child sees, hears, smells, touches and tastes

- Looking at and touching animals and plants
- Playing games like "I spy"
- Looking at machinery and computers with the children
- Providing make believe play by having dressing up clothes, a playhouse of pretend shop
- Providing creative art/craft activities
- Asking and answering questions and suggesting ideas

Language development includes understanding and acquiring language, developing vocabulary and body language.

Language development can be supported by:

- Asking open ended questions
- Discussing books, pictures, objects or sounds
- Asking children to recall something from the past
- Asking children to give information about themselves

Milestones

Milestones mark the achievement of certain mental and physical abilities such as walking or being able to form a sentence, and signal the end of one developmental period and the beginning of another.

Researchers who have studied the accomplishment of many developmental tasks have determined the typical ages that are associated with each developmental milestone. However, they have also found that the time spans in which some milestones are achieved can vary, with some milestones being more variable than others.

Following is a general guide to how children develop within the following age ranges:

- 0-3 years
- 3-7 years
- 7-12 years
- 12-19 years

Development – Ages 0-3 years

Physical development

By 6 months a child will:

- Turn their head toward sounds and movement
- Watch an adult's face when feeding
- Smile at familiar faces and voices
- Reach up to hold feet when lying on their backs
- Look and reach for objects
- Hold and shake a rattle
- Put everything in their mouths

Between 6 months and 1 year:

- Move from sitting with support to sitting alone
- Roll over from their tummy to their back
- Begin to creep, crawl or shuffle on their bottom
- Pull on or push against adult hands or furniture to reach a standing position
- Raises arms to be lifted
- Turn and look up when they hear their name
- Pat and poke objects when playing
- Pass objects from hand to hand
- Look for things that have been hidden or dropped
- Reaches hand towards source of food

Between one and two years:

- Begin to walk
- Sits alone indefinitely
- Feed themselves
- Push and pull toys while walking
- Wave goodbye
- Point or make noises to indicate wants
- Enjoy a picture book

- Shake head for 'No'

- Uses thumb and first two fingers to grip

- Bangs objects together

- Crawl upstairs

- Stoops to pick things up from the floor

- Begins to show preference for one hand

- Builds tower of few bricks

- Holds crayon in palm and makes marks on paper

Between two and three years:

- Kneels to play

- Throws

- Kicks ball

- Builds larger brick tower

- Pour liquids

- Uses pencil to make marks and circular scribbles

Social and emotional development

Newborn to 3 months:

- Responds to adults especially mothers face and voice

- Smiles, concentrates on adults face during feeding

- Very dependant on adults for reassurance and comfort, quietens when held and cuddled

Between 6 and 9 months:

- Enjoys company of others and games like peek-a-boo

- Shows affection to known carer, but shy with strangers

Between one year and two years:

- Likes to please adults and to perform for an audience

- May become anxious or distressed if separated from known adults

- May use comfort object

- Mostly cooperative and can be distracted from unwanted behaviour

- Plays alongside other children

Between two and three years:

- Developing sense of own identity, wanting to do things for self

- Demanding of adult attention, jealous of attention given to others, reluctant to share playthings or adults attention

- Acts impulsively, requiring needs to be met instantly, prone to bursts of emotion tantrums

- Enjoys playing with adult or older child who will give attention, beginning to play with others of own age for short periods

Intellectual development

Between 0 and 3 years:

- Beginning to realise others are separate beings from themselves

- Imitates others and tries out ways of behaving in play

- Becoming more confident but still needs adult reassurance

Language development

Between 0 and 3 months:

- Makes a variety of "happy" sounds

- Will respond to a variety music and other sounds

- Babies watch their carers face especially the mouth and try to copy its movements

Between 6 and 12 months:

- Babbling sounds begin

- Baby will make four or five different sounds and will turn its head towards the source of sounds

- Will show feelings by squealing with pleasure or crying

- Laugh and chuckle to show enjoyment

Between one and two years:

- Move from using single words to putting them together as a phrase

- A child will understand key words in the sentences used

- In the second year children start to understand the use of conversation and begin to copy carers

- Children's understanding outstrips their ability to express themselves
- By two they could be using anything from 30 to 150 words

Between two and three years:

- Put words together into a sentence
- Begin to ask questions what? Why? etc
- Can join in well know songs or verses and put actions to words
- They could be using several hundred words by their 3rd birthday
- Can scribble and make marks on paper with a crayon

Meeting the baby's needs

Newborn babies mainly learn through sound and sight. They pay attention to voices, music, rattles, and tinkling mobiles. Many things are needed in order for an environment to be sufficiently stimulating for babies to successfully develop. These include:

- Encouragement and attention to what the baby is trying to say
- Patience. Giving enough time for baby to try to communicate
- The presence of language in the baby's environment
- The provision of things to look at and someone to look at them with
- Varied visual experiences

Development - Ages 3-7 years

Physical development

Three years:

- Jumps with feet together
- Walks on tip toes
- Walks up and down stairs
- Catches a gently thrown ball
- Climbs with increasing confidence
- Paints
- Threads beads on a lace
- Gains control over eating tools

Four years:

- Pedals
- Throws with aim
- Uses scissors
- Holds a pencil and can draw people/houses

Five years:

- Hops
- Kicks with aim
- Catches ball
- Handles pencil with control
- Copy shapes and write some letters
- Sews stitches

Six to seven:

- Skips
- Rides bicycle
- Jumps from height
- Climbs confidently
- Writes
- Threads needle
- Can do buttons, shoe laces

Social and emotional development

Three to four years:

- Becoming more independent and self motivated
- Feels more secure and able to cope with unfamiliar surroundings and adults for periods of time
- Becoming more cooperative with adults and likes to help
- Sociable and friendly with others, plays with children and more able to share
- Beginning to consider the needs of others and to show concern for others

Four to seven years:

- Makes friends but may need help in resolving disputes
- Developing understanding of rules, but still finds turn-taking difficult
- Enjoys helping others and taking responsibility
- Learns lots about the world and how it works, and about people and relationships
- Makes friends (often short-term) and plays group games
- Needs structure and a routine to feel safe
- When behaviour is 'over the top', they need limits to be set

Intellectual development

Three to four-years:

- Understand two or three simple things to do at once, e.g. 'Fetch a glass of water, give it to your brother and take the empty glass back to the kitchen'
- Sort objects by size, and type, e.g. animals, or by colour or shape

Five to seven years:

- Begin to understand about sameness and difference in various aspects of life
- They begin to understand that differences can exist side by side
- They can begin to see different perspectives on the same subject, for example the same amount of water can look different in different containers

Language development

Three to four years:

- Start to use pitch and tone
- May start to use the past tense
- Vocabulary extends towards 1000-1500 words
- Marks made with crayons become more controlled

Four to five years:

- Grammar is becoming more accurate
- Children's questions become more complex

- More able to use language to communicate their own ideas
- Understand that books are a source of pleasure and use pictures to help them follow the story
- May begin to recognise their own name and a few frequently seen written words
- They can hold a pencil steadily and copy shapes and form some lettering

Five to seven years:

- Fluent speaker able to make up stories
- Can handle books well
- Understand that text carries meaning
- Recognise an increasing number of letters linking them to sounds

Meeting the child's needs

The main thing children need from play is to have fun. It is important that play is not turned into a 'lessons'. The best way to play with children is to provide an interesting environment, the practitioner should have time to play and follow the child's lead.

Practitioners should talk to children about where they have been, what they did and what they saw. They should listen with interest when they talk and join in conversations. Practitioners should read books to children and talk about what's happening in the pictures, letting them act out the story.

Four to five-year-olds are learning to sort things into groups, so they can play games of sorting objects, e.g. sort spare buttons into shapes and colours or play animal lotto.

There should be opportunities to learn to ride a three-wheeled bike, or two-wheeled bike with stabilisers and opportunities for outdoor physical activity, such as walks in the park, ball games or visiting playgrounds. Materials should be provided for painting and drawing. Praise and encouragement should be given to children when they consider others feelings and play well with others.

Development - Ages 7 -12 years

Physical development

- Run, jump, skip, hit a ball, climb and swing
- Enjoy playing team games by age eight
- May misjudge their ability before age nine

Social and emotional development

- Becoming less dependent on close adults for support – able to cope with wider environment
- Enjoys being in groups of other children of similar age, strongly influenced by peer group
- Becoming more aware of own gender
- Developing understanding that certain kinds of behaviour are not acceptable and why and a strong sense of fairness and justice
- Want to fit in with peer group rules
- Start to form closer friendships at about eight years old
- like to play with same-sex friends
- Need adult help to sort out arguments and disagreements in play
- Can be arrogant and bossy or shy and uncertain

Intellectual development

- Will read to themselves
- Will take a lively interest in certain subjects by nine

Language development

- Will need help in tackling the complexities of spelling
- Vocabulary will grow if adults introduce new words and new ways of using language
- Speak fluently and describe complicated happenings
- Read out loud
- Know the different tenses and grammar

Meeting the child's needs

- Listen to their stories

- Encourage them in a realistic way

- Watch them in their physical endeavours

- Give them a little individual time each day

- Provide space and equipment for the development of movement skills

- Provide materials and equipment for the development of fine motor skills such as crayons, paint brushes water play, Lego, bricks, puzzles etc

If a young girl is going through early puberty, her social development may not be keeping pace with her physical growth. Some 12 year-old girls can look almost grown-up but they are still children underneath. She may encounter peer pressure to act older than she feels and may have difficulty resisting group pressure to smoke, drink or get a boyfriend. She needs support and a listening ear to help her resist doing the things she knows she's not ready for.

The pre-teenager is starting to know his/her own mind. Their wisecracks are evidence that they are testing out their verbal fluency and abstract thought processes.

As they near their teens, they are increasingly able to motivate themselves and they are also able to concentrate longer so will be able to work more intensely on homework. They make short-term goals and work towards them and learn to plan for project completion dates.

Pre-teens become modest about their bodies and seek privacy. They may also become shy and blush at any attention that they consider unwarranted. The pre-teen may also start to become interested in the opposite sex. This increased vulnerability can leave the child feeling hypersensitive.

The pre-teens will compare their physical development with that of everybody around them. They desperately want to be normal but are unsure what normal should be. The girls at school are shooting past the boys in height and everybody is at different developmental stages.

Development - Ages 12-19 years

Adolescence is said to be the period between childhood and adulthood. It actually starts from the age of 11 and lasts up until the age of 19 or 20 years.

Adolescence is actually a transition period because it is at this stage that teenagers gradually detach themselves from their parents. They feel matured and want to venture out there on their own but unfortunately they still lack clearly defined roles in society. This is when the feelings of insecurity, anger and frustration begin.

A lot of youngsters react differently to the changes that come with adolescence, but quite often adolescence is a very turbulent period and parents and practitioners alike should try to help make this transition period a memorable one for the adolescents.

Physical development

Young people will also see many physical developments changing the appearance of their bodies. Everyone's rate of growth is different. During adolescence, coordination and strength increase greatly and by age 19 or 20 the adolescent has full adult motor capacities

Boys

Adolescence for boys usually begins later than for girls and usually occurs around fourteen years of age. However, at the end of this growth period, boys are usually bigger than girls. Boys at this age are beginning to develop sex characteristics such as deep voices and body hair and also experience muscle growth and start to take on a manly physique. Testicle and scrotum growth begins in early to mid-puberty. Penis growth starts a bit later but continues for a longer period.

Some boys move through puberty quickly while others worry about their lack of development. These variations can be difficult for slow developers to handle. It's important that adults reassure them that their rate of development is not related to final physical potential.

Girls

After initial breast budding around the age of 10, a girl's breasts gradually begin to swell. Her pubic hair will begin to grow, darken and become curlier. Their bodies become more rounded, developing the curves of womanhood.

By 13, some girls are almost physically mature, but there are wide variations in the ages when puberty begins and ends. A few girls may begin to develop as early as 8 and others may show no obvious changes until late teens. The average age of the onset of menstruation is around 13.

Some girls have reached full physical maturity by the age of 14 or 15 and some are only beginning the process Depending on the age of pubertal onset, the teenage girl may be almost physically mature at 15 and is likely to be close to her full adult height. She may have a woman's figure, although her breasts and hips may still become fuller.

Social and emotional development

The teenager may become self-conscious as changes in their body shape take place, odour occurs and possibly acne develops as a result of oilier skin. So, more than anything, they need reassurance.

Emotional maturity is constantly shifting, moving them between childish needs and adult desires. They aren't just being awkward for the sake of it. Their bodies and emotions are experiencing drastic changes.

The adolescent is preparing for independence and beginning the move away from parents and close carers towards their peers. They become less concerned about adult approval and turn instead to their friends. Many teens develop very close friendships within their own gender. Most also develop an intense interest in the opposite sex. They see security in group-acceptance and follow peer group dress and behaviour codes. Having the same 'labels', collecting the same items and playing the same computer game etc. are very important. Taken out of the emotional security provided by family, they are subject to all the whims of their peers, including potential rejection.

A phase of intense questioning and uncertainty usually occurs as adolescents begin to reappraise parental and community values, beliefs and biases. No longer are they accepted without question. Each one has to be personally accepted or rejected to become part of the young person's own value system. Parents are sometimes fearful of this increasing questioning and their children's increasing freedom and independence.

Intellectual development

This is a time of maturing of the mind and behaviours as young people develop more responsibility for their thoughts, words and actions and start to think ahead to future occupations, marrying, and having children of their own.

During adolescence, the primary tools for knowledge acquisition are the ability to make connections between different pieces of knowledge and being able to make connections with the world as they see it. The pace of development is dependent on how much guidance is given with regard to helping the brain to make the connections between knowledge and practical application in daily life. The more support they receive the faster their pace of growth will be.

During adolescence, education should attempt to distil learning into a moral, social, economic and cultural code that will form the basis of the individual's identity.

During adolescence, young people increasingly take personal responsibility for finances, accommodation, employment and interpersonal relationships. The process of transferring responsibility from parental shoulders to the maturing adolescent should reach completion at adulthood.

Language development

A teenager's constant sarcasm and supposed witticisms can become irritating, but they are just testing their new, sophisticated language skills. They may also develop an interest in satire and other slightly off-beat forms of humour. Their logical thinking ability is also maturing and they may enjoy practicing their new intellectual and verbal skills through debating, either formally or informally.

Meeting the young person's needs

Most teenagers want reassurance when the dramatic changes of puberty kick in. Being a late or early developer can be tricky and schoolmates can be tactless and competitive. The practitioner can help the child find more productive ways to exercise their skills by encouraging them to debate and voice their opinions on current events or controversial topics.

Why it is important to track developmental changes

Any developmental delays must be addressed quickly so that interventions can be introduced as soon as possible.

It is important to keep a close check on a child's developmental changes for the following reasons:

- Generally, children need to learn developmental skills in a consecutive order. A delay in one skill will have a knock-on effect on other skills. For example, a child needs language skills before she will be able to write.

- Sometimes if a child has a delay in one area (i.e. speech) it can affect other developmental areas (i.e. social and emotional). Early identification and intervention of problems in one area will therefore helps to ensure that a child makes progress across all areas of development.

- Early intervention helps the child to develop good self-esteem. Without early intervention, a child may possess a poor self-image which may make them reluctant to participate in school activities. For example, a child who has poor language skills may feel embarrassed to speak in front of their peers and teacher.

Influences that affect children and young people's development

Developmental delays

Child development refers to the step-by-step progress that children make during predicted time periods. Practitioners measure a child's acquisition of physical, social and emotional, intellectual and language skills against expected levels of progression, which are called developmental milestones.

A developmental delay is said to occur if a child does not reach a milestone within a certain expected time period. For example, if the normal age range for a child to handle a pencil with control is 5 years, but at 6 six years old the child still cannot control it properly, this would be considered a developmental delay.

Delays could occur in the child's physical, social and emotional, intellectual and language development. Delays might happen in one or more areas of development or they could place in all areas. Additionally, because growth in each area of development is related to growth in the other areas, if a difficulty arises in one area, a child is put at greater risk of developmental delay in other areas of development.

Factors that influence a child's development

The majority of children encounter few difficulties, but some are brought up in circumstances that make them more vulnerable to developmental delays than others.

A child's development can be influenced by:

- **Risk factors** which are likely to increase their susceptibility to delays
- **Protective factors** that decrease the likelihood of delays

There are a number of factors that will affect the development of the physical, social and emotional, intellectual and language skills that are required for later life. A child may be more vulnerable to poor life outcomes because of risk factors that originate from their own personality and behaviour as well as factors that stem from their family, home, learning and community environments.

Risk factors and protective factors

Factors that can affect a child's development can be grouped into four main areas as follows:

- **The child** – health, personal characteristics, motivation and behaviour

- **Their family / home circumstances** – relationships with parents, siblings and carers and the home environment in which the child lives. A strong family groups can teach and provide role models for children, and can provide a source of social and emotional support for adults as well as children

- **Their learning background** – exposure to formal education at play groups, nursery and school and informal learning in the home environment

- **Their community environment** – the socio-economic conditions of the environment where the child lives, the available resources and opportunities and community safety, structure and values

Negative experiences in one or more of these four circumstances can be harmful to brain development and affect the child's ability to acquire the core skills necessary for reaching developmental milestones and can result in the child requiring additional support.

When a child lives in an environment where there are a high number of risk factors present, their vulnerability to developmental delay increases. Similarly if few protective factors are present, the chance of a child experiencing developmental delay also increases.

The four contexts are often inter-related meaning that as the number of risk factors increases, a child is put at greater risk for developmental delay. For example; the community in which they live can affect the quality of their home environment and the parent's ability to provide and care and attention for their children. The inability of parents to provide a positive home environment can adversely affect the child's ability to engage with school and learning.

The fact that these four contexts are inter-related makes it important to take a holistic approach when looking to support child development and meet the needs of more vulnerable children.

Political solutions

Recent Governments have focused much attention on reducing the number of children living in poverty and lessening the impact of poverty on child development and life chances. As a result of their studies, the Government set up a programme called Sure Start, which is a series of children's centres located in areas of poverty and deprivation aimed at helping children and their families. These centres provide a number of services e.g. education, health and social services, who all work together with families to improve children's futures.

Other Government initiatives that aim to reduce the impact of poor economic well being and other factors on a child's development include:

- **Financial support**. Family tax credits to help families financially

- **Children's and Young People's Trust**. This has joint working between all agencies at local authority level

Monitoring development and making interventions

Monitoring development through observations, making assessments and targeting interventions can help lessen the likelihood of delays for children who are already at risk and can also prevent children who are not at risk from becoming at risk.

Observation

Observation involves watching and listening to a child or young person in order to gather information about their behaviour and their stage of development.

Methods of observing children and young people

Some methods used to make developmental observations are as follows:

- **Checklist** – the child's development is checked against a list of specific 'milestones' that should be reached at a certain stage

- **Graphs and charts** – these are quick and easy to collate, but they can only provide general information

- **Naturalistic** – a factual description of what the observer sees and hears during the normal course of naturally occurring events

- **Structured** – a factual account that describes how a child tackles a pre-set activity

- **Focus child** – the focus is on one child for a specific amount of time. Events are recorded using pre-coded categories

- **Time sample** – the recording of information at regular intervals throughout a session

- **Event sample** – a description of specific types of behaviour or events over a period of time

- **Diary/longitudinal study** – these are separate observations done over a period of weeks or months

Because children usually acquire developmental milestones or skills during a specific time frame or "window", practitioners can predict when most children will learn different skills. If a child is not learning a skill that other children of the same age are learning, that may be a "warning sign" that the child may be at risk for developmental delay.

Early diagnosis of developmental delays will enable the education system to cater for those individuals who require some form of specialist education in terms of extra resources.

Early intervention services

Early intervention services include a variety of different resources and programmes that provide support to enhance a child's development. These services are specifically tailored to meet a child's individual needs.

Services include:
- Assistive technology (devices a child might need)
- Audiology or hearing services
- Counselling and training for a family
- Educational programmes
- Medical services
- Nursing services
- Nutrition services
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy
- Psychological services
- Respite services
- Speech/language

Identify and meet any additional educational needs

The Education Acts and the SEN Code of Practice provide frameworks for settings to identify and meet any additional educational needs.

The Education Act 1996 states that a child or young person has special educational needs if *"he or she has a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her".*

Children with special educational needs all have learning difficulties and/or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most other children of the same age. These children may need **extra** or **different help** from that given to other children of the same age. The extra or different help could be a different way of teaching certain things, some help from an extra adult, or the use of a particular piece of equipment like a computer or a desk with a sloping top.

Children may require extra or different help because they suffer from one or more difficulties such as:

- Physical or sensory difficulties
- Emotional and behavioural problems
- Problems with thinking and understanding
- Difficulties with speech and language
- How they relate to and behave with other people

These problems could mean that a child has difficulties with all of their school work or problems could arise in particular areas of their work such as:

- Understanding information
- Reading, writing and number work
- Expressing themselves or understanding what others are saying
- Behaving properly in school
- Organising themselves
- Forming relationships with other children or with adults

Many children will require extra help at some point during their education. Schools and other organisations can usually help most children overcome any barriers their difficulties present both quickly and easily. But there

are a few children who will require extra help for most or all of their school years.

The law says that children do not have learning difficulties just because their first language is not English, but of course some of these children may have learning difficulties in addition.

To help make an early identification of those children who may have special educational needs, schools must regularly measure children's performance and progress. These assessments can be made by referring to:

- Ongoing observation and assessment monitored by the teacher

- Standardised screening or assessment tools

- The outcomes from baseline assessment results

- The objectives specified in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy Frameworks

- The level descriptions within the National Curriculum at the end of a key stage

A graduated response to possible SEN

The SEN Code of Practice recommends that schools and LEAs should provide a graduated response to helping children who appear to have learning difficulties. It suggests that interventions are gradually increased, seeing whether less intrusive interventions can help initially, before commencing any statutory assessment and statementing procedures.

The aim of any intervention is to provide as much help as is required, but not to intervene more than is necessary. The three levels of support that are set out in the Code of Practice are:

1. School Action (or Early Years Action for younger children)

2. School Action Plus (or Early Years Action Plus for younger children)

3. Provision outlined in a statement of SEN

School action

Once practitioners have identified that a child has special educational needs, the setting should intervene through School Action (or Early Years Action for younger children). At this level of support the class teacher, the school's special educational needs coordinating officer (SENCO), a

Learning Support Assistant (LSA) or another member of the school's staff gives the child extra help. The child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) which gives details of the targets the pupils must work towards and the action/support that is required to help them to achieve those targets. IEPs will usually be linked to the main areas of literacy, mathematics, behaviour and social skills.

The parents must be consulted and involved so that they too can help their child at home, in line with what the school is doing. The aim of School Action is to make it possible for the child to progress to the point where they no longer need extra help.

School action plus

If the intervention made as a result of School Action is not helping the child to meet his/her targets, the SENCO may need to seek advice and support from external sources, such as teaching support services and other agencies. An Educational Psychologist might be consulted to plan what forms of intervention might best help the pupil achieve the targets set out in his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP). This kind of intervention is referred to as School Action Plus (or Early Years Action Plus for younger children). The aim of School Action Plus support is to enable a child to progress so that they move from School Action Plus to School Action, or no longer need any extra help at all.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

Children who are recognised as having SEN are entitled to an Individual Education Plan (IEP) as part of the School Action or School Action Plus process. An IEP should record what is different from, or additional to, those arrangements that are in place for the rest of the group or class.

An IEP is written by the class teacher to help the parents and the school identify the child's needs and to target areas of particular difficulty. Typically they focus on three or four targets that match the child's needs. This document records the strategies that are to be employed to enable the child to progress. It should also show the steps that are to be taken to support the child's learning and set a date for reviewing their progress.

It will normally include information about:

- Learning targets for the child to reach in a given time

- Who will support the child and how that support will be organised

- What materials and methods should be used

- How success in the target areas will be measured

- What contribution a parent can make

- The review date

- Outcomes (recorded at the review)

It may not always be possible to set measurable targets for every area of the curriculum, nevertheless, where targets are used, they can help individual pupils to focus energy and resources on raising standards in critical areas of the child's school life.

Individual plans help a pupil to gain access to learning because they set out how that pupil will:

- Participate fully in any physical or practical activities

- Use all their available senses and experiences to develop understanding

- Be supported to develop communication, language and literacy skills

- Be helped to manage their behaviour and to take part in learning effectively and safely

- Be helped to manage strong emotions enabling them to participate in learning

Where appropriate, teachers should work closely with representatives of other agencies.

A statutory assessment

In a great many cases, the individual needs of a child with SEN can be met via access to specialist approaches and equipment or to alternative or adapted activities that are available through School Action or School Action Plus. But there are a few exceptional circumstances, where children require more support than these two processes can provide.

If the child does not make the expected advancement despite these measures, the school can ask the local education authority (LEA) to carry out a Statutory Assessment of special educational needs. The Statutory Assessment is a formal process where the LEA seeks advice from a number of different sources, for example:

- Educational advice

- Parental advice

- Medical advice

- Psychological advice

- Social services advice

- Any other advice which is considered desirable

At the end of the process the LEA will decide whether or not to issue the child with a statement of special educational needs. This statement describes all the child's needs and special help requirements.

Possible outcomes of the assessment

If the statutory assessment confirms that the provision made by the school or early education setting is appropriate but the child is not progressing, or not progressing sufficiently well, the LEA should consider what further provision may be needed and whether that provision can be made within the school's resources or whether a statement is necessary.

The following are examples of possible approaches:

1. *If the LEA concludes that, for example, the child's learning difficulties call for:*

   - *Occasional advice to the school from an external specialist*

   - *Occasional support with personal care*

   - *Access to a particular piece of equipment such as a portable word-processing device, an electronic keyboard or a tape-recorder*

   - *Minor building alterations such as improving the acoustic environment*

The LEA may feel that the school could reasonably be expected to make such provision from within its own resources through School Action Plus.

2. *Where the LEA concludes that a change of placement may be indicated for the child, even if such a change involves moving from a mainstream school to a specialist resource at the same school or another mainstream school, they should consider drawing up a statement*

3. *If the LEA concludes that, for example, the child's learning difficulties call for:*

   - *Regular and frequent direct teaching by a specialist teacher*

- *Daily individual support from a learning support assistant*
- *A significant piece of equipment such as a closed circuit television or a computer or CD-ROM device with appropriate ancillaries and software*
- *The regular involvement of non-educational agencies*

The LEA may conclude that the school could not reasonably be expected to make such provision within its own resources and that the nature of the provision suggests that the LEA should formally identify in a statement the child's needs, the full range of provision to be made and the review arrangements that will apply.

4. *Where the LEA concludes that a day or residential special school placement might be necessary, they should draw up a statement*

The LEA's conclusions will, of course, depend on the precise circumstances of each case, taking into account arrangements for funding schools in the area.

Special Educational Needs – Code of Practice

Statement of special educational needs

Within 12 weeks of beginning an assessment the local authority should normally inform the parents whether they are going to write a statement.

Where the local authority has carried out an assessment and decided that the school could not reasonably be expected to make such provision within its own resources, they will record all the information they have in a statement of special educational needs (usually just called a 'statement').

A statement of special educational needs sets out a child's needs and the help they should receive. It is set out in six parts:

1. Part one gives general information about the child and lists the advice the authority received as part of the assessment
2. Part two gives the description of the child's needs following the assessment
3. Part three describes all the special help to be given to meet the child's needs

4. Part four gives the type and name of the school the child should go to and how any arrangements will be made out of school hours or off school premises

5. Part five describes any non-educational needs the child has

6. Part six describes how the child will get help to meet any non-educational needs

The parents are sent a draft statement before the local authority completes the final version. It will be complete except for part four, which will be left blank. Parents then have 15 days to review the draft statement and have the right to disagree with its contents and to say which state school, non-maintained special school or independent school, they would like their child to go to. If parents have any issues they wish to discuss they can ask for a meeting with the local authority, after which they will be given another 15 days to ask for a further meeting if they consider it necessary. Within 15 days of their last meeting, they can send in any more comments.

The local authority must complete the final statement within eight weeks of making the draft statement. It will send a copy of the final statement to the parents, this time part four will state the name of a school which their child will attend. The statement starts as soon as the local authority completes it.

Annual review meeting

The statement is reviewed annually to ensure that any extra support continues to meet the child's needs. The child's school will invite the child and his/her parents to the review meeting and ask them to comment on the child's progress over the past year. During this meeting they will all look at written reports and consider whether the child's statement needs changing at all.

Following the meeting, the school will send parents a copy of its report which recommends any agreed changes to the statement. The local authority will also receive a copy.

Definition of disability

The **Disability and Discrimination Act** defines a disabled person as someone who has *"a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."*

"Long term" means at least 12 months. "Substantial" means "more than minor or trivial."

This definition covers pupils with physical, intellectual or mental impairments. This might include those children who have a sensory impairment, a learning disability, ADHD, tourettes syndrome, severe dyslexia, diabetes, epilepsy, incontinence, AIDS, severe disfigurements or progressive conditions like Muscular Dystrophy.

How is disability different from special educational needs?

A child who is defined as having a disability might have a condition which leads to a learning difficulty. That difficultly may require a special educational provision to be made. However, not all children who are defined as disabled will have SEN. For example, pupils with severe asthma, arthritis or diabetes may not have SEN but will have disability rights.

Many children who have SEN will also be defined as being disabled. But this is not always the case.

Duties under the Disability and Discrimination Act

Disability and Discrimination Guidance issued to schools sets out the extent of the duties and action that schools should take. The duties specified under the DDA are there to ensure that disabled pupils are not discriminated against and seek to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled pupils.

Since September 2002 it has been unlawful for schools to discriminate against disabled pupils in respect of:

- Admissions to school
- Education and related services
- Exclusions from school

To make sure that schools comply with their duties under the Disability and Discrimination Act, Ofsted, the schools' inspectorate, now judge the extent to which a school carries out its obligations, whenever they undertake a school inspection.

Schools and Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are also under a duty to develop Accessibility Plans and Strategies which must set out how the physical environment, the curriculum and any written information it provides will be made more accessible to the disabled.

Formulating an accessibility plan

Each school's governing body is responsible for developing an accessibility plan and for implementing the actions set out in it. The plan could be a separate document or it could be included in the school's existing Special Needs Policy. The key points of the Accessibility Plan that explain how the school makes itself accessible to disabled pupils should also be included in the school prospectus and the governing body's Annual Report to Parents.

This plan must describe the school's strategies for:

- Maximising access to the school curriculum. This covers not just the teaching and learning that takes place in the school, but also the wider curriculum such as participation in school visits, after school clubs, or sports and leisure activities

- Improving the presentation of written information such as timetables handouts, textbooks and information sheets that are handed out to disabled pupils

- Improving physical access to the school environment - this also includes any physical aids that assist a pupil's access to education

The regulations made under the DDA 2005 also place specific duties on schools and local authorities to publish a Disability Equality Scheme (DES). A DES is a set of plans and strategies designed to meet the needs of other disabled users of the school premises and services such as disabled staff and disabled parents.

Individual plans for pupils with disabilities

Not all pupils with disabilities will necessarily have special educational needs. Therefore an IEP issued as part of School Action or School Action Plus is not always necessary. Many disabled pupils learn alongside their peers with little need for additional resources other than the aids which they use as part of their normal daily life, such as a wheelchair, a hearing aid or equipment to aid vision.

When teachers are required to develop individual plans for pupils with disabilities, they must ensure that these pupils are enabled to participate as fully and as effectively as possible within the national curriculum.

Individual plans for pupils with disabilities should enable effective participation by:

- Identifying those aspects of programmes of study and attainment targets that may present specific difficulties for individuals

- Allowing sufficient time so that pupils can complete tasks satisfactorily

- Planning opportunities that aid the development of skills in practical aspects of the curriculum where necessary

Referring concerns about children/young people

The relationship between the learning support practitioner and the teacher is all-important. For both parties' to perform effectively there has to be mutual respect and consideration and good two-way communication.

As part of the ongoing communications between yourself and the teacher, you should make sure that you are given information relating to your job's role, responsibilities and boundaries. This includes ensuring that you:

- Understand the importance of the support that you provide

- Understand your own role and its limits

- Know about local resources and how to access information

- Know about organisational procedures and relevant legal frameworks

- Are aware of appropriate referral routes within your own setting and to other agencies

This information will enable you to react in an appropriate manner if you identify any situations that arise which are outside your area of responsibility.

Situations outside your area of responsibility

When supporting children and young people to participate in programmes and activities, it is important to observe and monitor any changes in their behaviour or attitude and seek extra support and advice when the support they require is outside your area of competence or responsibility.

You must take appropriate action:

- To address any problems that arise when implementing the agreed programmes and support activities

- When you identify any changes in children and young people as they participate in programmes and support activities

- When children and young people identify any changing needs, wishes and preferences for programmes and support activities and the support they are receiving to participate in them

Always seek additional help to address your own personal and emotional needs when supporting children and young people to participate in programmes and support activities.

Interventions to support the Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN) of children

Speech is the generation of the patterns of sounds that form the words and sentences (language) that are used to express thoughts. Some children and young people may have difficulties using the correct speech sounds even if they possess well developed communication and language skills.

Language is the structure in which words are used. The language system is made up of several components:

- **Grammar** - how words are amalgamated to make sentences, and how they change to convey different tenses

- **Vocabulary** - is the set of words that are used

- **Pragmatics** - the appropriate use of language in different situations, for example understanding what a question is and that it requires an answer

- **Semantics** - understanding that words can have different and wider meanings and can be used in many different ways

These skills are necessary for both the understanding and the production of words and sentences, and children may have difficulties in any of these areas.

Communication describes the different methods that can be used to pass on information to others, such as words (spoken or written), sounds, pictures, symbols, non-verbal communication such as gestures or a signing system.

Causes of speech, language and communication problems

Speech, language and communication problems might occur for a variety of reasons including:

- Speech and language delay, impairments or disorders
- Specific learning difficulties e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia
- Autistic spectrum disorder
- Permanent sensory or physical impairment including deafness and visual impairment
- Moderate, severe or profound learning difficulties affecting a child's ability to communicate and interact with others

It is essential that all practitioners who work with children and young people have the appropriate skills and knowledge to be able to promote speech, language and communication development, identify any children who are experiencing difficulties and effectively support children and young people who have additional speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

Effects of speech, language and communication problems

Difficulties with speech, language and communication affect children in a variety of ways according to the severity of the problems they experience. Difficulties in these areas have the potential to influence the child's ability to perform in one, some or all of the following areas:

- Read, write and spell
- Make new friends, socialise and interact with others
- Access play and learning opportunities
- Listen to and understand information and instructions
- Learn new words and use them appropriately
- Understand concepts and ideas
- Answer questions and share their thoughts and ideas with others
- Ask for explanations or assistance

As a result children with speech, language and communication problems may require some, or all, of the following support:

- Flexible teaching arrangements
- Help in acquiring, comprehending and using language

- Help in articulation

- Help in acquiring literacy skills

- Help in using augmentative and alternative means of communication

- Help to use different means of communication

- Help in organising and coordinating oral and written language

- Support to compensate for the impact of a communication difficulty on learning in English as an additional language

- Help in expressing, comprehending and using their own language, where English is not the first language

How speech, language and communication needs are met

If the LEA decides that the child's school in partnership with the LEA or external support services, (such as a Speech and Language Therapist,) can provide some or all of the above support programmes, then the LEA may conclude that intervention should be provided at School Action Plus level. If this action is effective then a statutory assessment will not be necessary. However, if the child does not make acceptable progress through School Action Plus interventions, a statutory assessment should then be considered.

Multi agency teams

Multi-agency working is about different services, agencies and teams of professionals and staff, working together to provide the services that fully meet the needs of children, young people and their parents or carers.

The need for partnership working is particularly important to the speech and language therapy (SLT) services, as they operate between both health and education services. Ultimate responsibility for SLT provision lies with the NHS, whilst responsibility for carrying out, assessments, and maintaining and delivering statements falls to the local authority.

SEN services such as speech and Language Therapist may be provided directly from the Local authorities or the LEA may appoint them from the statutory, private or voluntary sectors, this could include independent and non- maintained special schools. But whichever sector they come from, these services need to be joined up with others so that the child's family have the information and support that they need to help their child.

Speech and language therapy service

When a child or young person is identified as having a SLCN, targeted and specialist services – like those provided by speech and language therapists – need to be ready to intervene quickly and effectively.

The role of the Speech and Language Therapist is to identify children with speech, language and communication needs and then support such children either by providing consultations or by making direct intervention, whichever is most appropriate to the child's needs.

The service forms a partnership with both the educational setting and the child's parents and can work with a child and his/her family/carers either in the home, a clinic or in the educational setting. So that the child's needs can be integrated into their teaching of the curriculum, there should be a formal liaison process that involves teachers, support staff and healthcare professionals.

Supporting children with speech language and communication difficulties

The 2006 ICAN report, *'The Cost to the Nation of Children's Poor Communication',* suggests that in some areas of Britain more than 50% of children who enter school have *'transient language or communication difficulties'*. This particular type of problem can be overcome and will not become permanent if the child receives the right support. But there are a much smaller proportion of children have more severe needs that require ongoing support.

Strategies for supporting children and young people with SLCN

Although each child or young person with SLCN will have specific needs, the following support approaches will enable pupils with communication and interaction difficulties to participate in learning activities and help them develop relationships with others:

- **Alternative and augmentative communication** – Know which form of communication is most appropriate for those children you work with. Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) is the term used to describe extra ways of helping people who find it hard to communicate by speech or writing. AAC helps them to communicate more easily and encompasses many different methods which can be unaided, such as signing, or aided, such as using low tech picture charts or high tech electronic systems. Children who

need to use AAC and those who support them often need the help of a specialist to help them get the best out of the system they are using

- **Environment** - Adapt the room where necessary (e.g. rearranging furniture) and help pupils to use specialised equipment such as audiological and amplification equipment, low-vision devices or speech synthesisers

- **Visual support.** Many children and young people with SCLN learn more effectively through vision than they do through the auditory channel. Making activities concrete and real can enhance understanding and promote confidence. Make the most of this by using:

  - Labels - label equipment and activity areas with pictures, symbols, photographs or written labels

  - Visual timetables – use pictures, symbols or photographs to create a time-line

  - Visual displays of topics or current activities

- **Noise level.** Bear in mind that if the environment is too noisy, it can be difficult for pupils to listen effectively or focus on tasks in hand; this can be a particular issue in open-plan areas

- **Cognitive processing.** It is important to give children sufficient time to process and understand information so that they can formulate their responses

- **Your vocabulary.** Be aware of the language you use when issuing instructions. Keep information clear, chronological and brief. When explaining points check on a regular basis that the child understands

- **Distractions.** Children with SLCN have to concentrate very hard in order to take in information and process it, so minimising of distractions will help them to focus

- **Make routines clear.** Rehearsing routines several times can help children to become more confident in the environment

For younger children play and activities can promote speech, language and communication. Approaches that help younger children to communicate include the following:

- Know which words the teacher wants you to introduce or practice with the children. Talk to them in ways that help them to expand

their vocabulary, and provide opportunities for them to practice the words and develop their understanding of how to use these new words in different situations

- Research has shown that dialogic book reading is a powerful way of using books to support children's language development (Wasik, Bond and Hindman, 2006). Dialogic book reading is when an adult shares a picture book with a child and discusses with the child what is happening in the story, asks questions, provides additional information, and encourages the child to describe scenes and events from the book

- Talking about and giving a running commentary on what a child is doing whilst they are involved in play will help to support the learning of language. As the child receives an ongoing description of the activity, the child will hear the language that is associated with the activity, without being distracted from it by having to answer lots of questions

- Books, stories, rhymes and songs all have an important part to play, not only in developing children's vocabulary, but also in their language comprehension. Supporting books, stories, rhymes and songs with actions or objects, helps to increase a child understanding

- The outdoor environment can also provide opportunities to expand vocabulary. For example new words can be introduced during experiences on climbing equipment, or looking at plants trees, birds and insects

The effects of transitions on children and young people

Children and young people naturally pass through a number of stages as they grow up and develop. Often these stages will present unfamiliar problems that they have to try to cope with, such as moving from primary to secondary school and changing their groups of friends. These changes are commonly referred to as transitions.

The diverse range of transitions faced by children and young people include:

- Starting or moving school
- Illness that they, their parent's, sibling's or friends experience
- Moving from child health services to adult services
- Changing their group of friends
- Puberty
- Bereavement
- Parents splitting up

Young people and children quite often need help and support from both their peers and the adults around them if they are to successfully make the transition to the next stage in their lives. The type and extent of support that they need will differ depending on the child or young person's age, their ability to cope and other individual circumstances.

How transition can affect development

As children and young people move from one class to the next, one key stage to the next or move from one school to another, it is highly likely that their existing level of learning will decline for a while. Children and young people need time to learn to adjust to a new style of teaching, a different approach, or a new group of children, and as a consequence, their learning may suffer.

It is therefore important for staff to take this into account as they think about how to handle transitions in the school and what can be done to minimise the effects of these changes.

Teachers should share assessment records so that new learning can be based securely on prior knowledge and skills. Also subject coordinators could be involved in making staff aware of the overlap between work at

different stages. This is particularly valuable when children are moving to a new school.

When less common transitions occur such as bereavement or divorce, it is important to understand that the child's school work may also suffer. Parents may not be able to give the kind of support for homework or reading practice as they would like to do. Children's thoughts may be elsewhere. Children's behaviour may also suffer when school may be the only safe place to let emotions out.

At times like these children and young people need to know that life is going on, that there are still normal things around them and that the familiar boundaries are still in place.

Principles for supporting effective transitions

In times of transition children and young people will require those who support them to provide information, emotional support, practical help and resources. Staff can build up and share their skills in supporting children through the transitions that occur as part of normal school life.

The learning support practitioner's role will vary, depending on circumstances, the nature of the transition and the pupil's individual needs. Below are some principles that can help you to support children and young people through different transitions.

- Identify in advance forthcoming transitions. Recognise any key changes, critical moments and transitions that the children you work with might face and ensure that you are aware of any consequences the changes might have on them

- Build open and honest relationships using language appropriate to the development of the child or young person and their family's culture and background

- Make sure that the work you do with children and young people promotes the development of the necessary life skills that will assist them to deal with change

- Identify those pupils who may need particular support through transitions. Make sure you are aware of the support mechanisms and agencies that are available to help the child and his/her family and work in partnership to provide this support, where possible

- Ensure that any decisions about how to support and help children are based on the child's best interests

- Encourage other children to provide support to their friends

- Involve and support parents and carers in transition work so they too can provide understanding and support

- Explain that transitions, apart from causing anxiousness and concern, can also present new, exciting and challenging opportunities

- Stress the importance of asking for help and support when needed

- Recognise any signs of change in attitudes and behaviour. If a child's behaviour does alter, encourage them to acknowledge it and talk about it. Listen to their concerns. Try to discover what issues relating to the transition and change are causing difficulties and what you or the school can do to address the problem

These principles will help you to manage the process of transition in a timely way and help the child or young person reach a positive outcome.

The role of parents and carers at points of transition

It is also vital to recognise the role of parents and their carers in supporting children at points of transition. They may also require information relating to the facts surrounding the transition as well as reassurance, advice and support.

The role of the school in supporting children at points of transition

The school can also play a vital role in preparing children and young people for transitions by:

- Developing curriculum and project work that focuses on transitions and helps children and young people to understand the range of transitions they will experience as they move from childhood to puberty, and from adolescence into adulthood

- Preparing children and young people for moving or leaving school well in advance

- Ensuring that any relevant information transfers ahead of the child or young person, when appropriate

- Making effective links with other practitioners should further support be necessary

- Operating effective cross-agency referral processes

- Making conditions as similar as possible, so that changes occur in a gradual way over a period of time

If a child who has already been identified as having additional needs is transferring from one setting to another, the child and his/her family may already be in contact with a range of support agencies, or have received additional support from practitioners in a previous setting. These practitioners will have a lot of information to share and so it is important that the new school invites them all to share their knowledge of the child, so that the new setting can decide how to meet the child's needs, and how best to support the transition. This discussion should take place well in advance of the transition, so that the new school can make any necessary preparations. For example, practitioners might need to attend training courses to develop skills in certain areas. The SENCO will have overall responsibility for coordinating the transition.

For those young people who have a statement of special educational needs, the annual review in year 9 is particularly important in that it prepares young people for their move to further education and adult life. This review can involve all those people and organisations that will play a major role when they leave school, such as the Connexions Service and could also include the local social services department.

It is likely that the young person and his/her parents will work with a Connexions Personal Adviser to write a personal transition action plan which details their move to adult life. This plan together with the young person's targets and statement will all be discussed at the review meeting. The head teacher is then responsible for implementing the Transition Plan.

End of Section