



SEN Teaching Assistant

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# Assignment 1

1. Explain what is meant by the term 'Special Educational Needs'.
2. Discuss the signs which may indicate that a child has SEN.
3. What was the purpose of the National Register?
4. In your opinion, what are the most important skills required to work as an SEN Teaching Assistant?

# Unit 1:

## Special Educational Needs



# What Are Special Educational Needs?

Special educational needs are “special” needs that support gifted educational performances or learning disabilities. Children with special educational needs due to learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or social disabilities may need support in:

- Writing
- Reading
- Comprehension
- Communication
- Routines
- Rules
- Organisation
- Sensory disabilities
- Health issues
- Psychological issues

Gifted and talented special educational needs were supported through organisations such as the National Register for gifted and talented children. According to the National Register, gifted and talented children need to be supported through personal achievements and addressing dual or multiple exceptionalities (DME).

DME children are children that fall into both categories of special educational needs. These children may have a learning or physical disability, but the child may also be talented and gifted in another area of learning. For



example, a child may have a sensory disability like blindness, but the child may have an exceptional level of performance in art or mathematics. It is important not to classify DME children into one special educational need category, declassifying them from the other category. The National Register recommended that DME children were identified through techniques that incorporate focusing on a child's learning outcomes and self-perception, and supporting the child's learning strengths. In addition, the National Register recommended that those involved in special educational needs focus on supporting a child's learning, talent, and strengths, rather than on the child's disability.

The National Register provided additional assistance in achieving this goal by suggesting a few steps which special educational needs providers can take to support a child's learning, talent, and strength, rather than their disability. These suggestions include:

1. Finding ways for the child to use and express their learning strengths and talents which incorporates their learning needs
2. Determining the support which the child needs
3. Determining what kinds of support can be offered for the child, and which types of support promote learning for the child
4. Finding ways for the child to show that they understand material in ways that support their needs
5. Documenting special educational needs actions, successes, and support
6. Finding a way to celebrate the child's achievement

The National Register was abolished in 2010 when the new Government came into power. Although no longer in place however, many schools still adopt many of the principles put in place by the register.

## The SEN Code of Practice 2001

The 2001 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice amends the 1994 code. The amendment occurred after the Department for Education collaborated with schools, SEN Representatives, social services, health services, and others in 2000. The 2001 SEN Code of Practice was fully implemented 1, January 2002. The purpose of the code is to give guidance to representatives, providers, decision makers, and other stakeholders in SEN to ensure that they support SEN, and to provide direction in order to incorporate the new 0-25 system (which combined the pre-16 SEN system and the post-16 LLDD system). The SEN Code of Practice is due for review in September 2014.

According to the Department for Education, the 2001 SEN Code of Practice includes:

- Principles and policies
- Working in partnership with parents
- Pupil participation
- Identification, assessment and provision in early education settings
- Identification, assessment and provision in the primary phase
- Identification, assessment and provision in the secondary sector
- Statutory assessment of special educational needs
- Statements of special education needs
- Annual review
- Working in partnership with other agencies
- The Education (Special Educational Needs) Regulations 2001

- The Education (SEN) (Provision of Information by Local Education Authorities) Regulations 2001
- The Education (SEN) Regulations 1999 (Department for Education, 2012)

# Signs That Indicate a Child May Have SEN

Some signs of SEN may not be as obvious and transparent as the noticeable signs which manifest with physical disabilities. Learning and cognitive disabilities can be slight and hard to identify. This can be especially true during a child's early developmental stages. During this stage, children are known to develop social and learning skills at different paces. SEN leaders suggest that children be referred to a SEN provider (such as the local authority – depending on the individual needs of the child) or supporter if they show more than two of the following signs:

- Avoids reading
- Has problems with writing, composition, or other activities that require basic motor skills
- Has an inability to perform basic movements like walking straight and avoiding obstacles
- An inability to jump
- Despises or fights to avoid school
- Disorganisation
- Always distracted or preoccupied
- Being a distraction in class
- Avoids or refuses homework

- Avoiding or failing at socially interacting with peers
- Overall poor performance in school

It is important to remember however, that although there are certain 'milestones' that children should reach, this will not occur at the same age / stage for every child.

Children may be more apt to present as a child having a SEN if their parent/s was also a child with an SEN. Suspecting a child has SEN indicates an opportunity to determine if a child with SEN has also developed a personal coping mechanism to hide their SEN.

Issues of embarrassment and shame may prevent a child with SEN from reaching out for support or help from their parents, their teachers, or other school representatives and administrators.

SEN children may develop coping mechanisms that include:

- Withdrawal from social or classroom activities that bring them to the attention of others
- Developing behaviour issues that disrupt the class
- Participating in activities or actions that make them appear restless and anxious

# Qualities Needed To Be a SEN Teaching Assistant

SEN Teaching Assistants are a support to the teacher and to the child. While the teacher will maintain control of the classroom and ensure the learning outcome of each child in the class, the Teaching Assistant will help the child overcome any learning barriers. They help the teachers and the child design and implement a personal education strategy and plan, and ensure that the child stays motivated and performs to the best of their abilities.



A SEN Teaching Assistant can be a general term that is used to describe a Learning Support Assistant. There are also circumstances where an SEN Teaching Assistant and a Learning Support Assistant are clearly defined as separate positions with separate functions. When the functions of the Teaching Assistant and the Learning Support Assistant are clearly defined, it is common that the SEN Teaching Assistant is responsible for supporting the teacher, while the Learning Support Assistant is charged with assisting the child.

Even outside of the SEN Teaching Assistant and the Learning Support Assistant, a Higher Level Teaching Assistant may be positioned to perform the function of a Teaching Assistant and a Learning Support Assistant, but the Higher Level Teaching Assistant has a layer of qualifications that the Teaching Assistant and the Learning Support Assistant does not have. There are opportunities for Higher Level Teaching Assistants to have responsibilities in the designation of curriculums for children with special educational needs.

Generally, SEN Teaching Assistants:

- Should be a minimum of 18 years of age
- Have good communication skills
- Have the patience and aptitude for dealing with individual learning needs, speeds, and abilities
  
- For classrooms that serve specific SEN children, SEN Teaching Assistants may also require additional skills:
  - Braille for blind children
  - Sign Language for deaf children

Generally Higher Level Teaching Assistants:

- Should be a minimum of 18 years of age
- Having experience and extensive knowledge in a specific subject
- Have experience or rapport in SEN teaching
- May require additional qualifications and course work specific to the role of Higher Level Teaching Assistant

Skills for a SEN Teaching Assistant

# Unit 18:

## The Curriculums



# Early Years Education

Early years education includes children that are between the ages of birth and five years old. These children are normally taught under the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum standards in learning, development, and care. The EYFS focuses on seven stages of development and concentration:

- Communication/Language
- Physical development
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Reading
- Mathematics
- Sociology (understanding the world around them)
- Arts

All schools, care systems, professionals, and educators who work with children within the EYFS target must adhere to the EYFS curriculum. The most updated version of the EYFS was published on 27.03.2012 under a new statute as of 01.09.2012. The updated EYFS addressed:

- Bureaucratic reductions and intervention in professional curriculum developments
- Limiting the required early learning outcomes from 69 to 17
- Redeveloping the policies focussing on developments in communication, physical health, and personal, social and emotional development
- Aligning children's physical health doctor visits with checks on the child's EYFS developments



- Improving the relationship between all concerned individuals, organisations and professionals with the focus on supporting early years education development

In addition to the new EYFS changes already established, EYFS frameworks and requirements are in place to ensure that a secure foundation of learning and development is in position. These foundations would also provide quality and consistency, as well as partnerships with parents and practitioners to provide equal opportunities in education. Specifically the EYFS framework covers learning and development requirements, assessments, and safeguarding and welfare.

### *Learning and Developmental Requirements*

Under the EYFS, children must be prepared and developed in the areas of:

- Communication/language

Children must be given the chance to develop their ability to communicate with others, and use language to promote their self-confidence and communication skills. They should also be exposed to communication in different environments and situations.

- Physical development

Children must be given opportunities for physical activities that develop their co-ordination, movement, and motor skills. They should also understand the importance of exercise to their health.

- Personal, social and emotional development

Children should be taught on the subject of developing healthy relations, and taught to have empathy, patience, and understanding for others.

- Literacy

Children should be able to perform phonics for a foundation of reading and writing. They should be introduced to books and general reading materials.

- Mathematics

Children should have the opportunity to learn and apply concepts of counting, numbers, shapes, spaces, and measurements.

- Understanding the world

Children should be able to understand the world and the community in which they exist. They should be aware of the cultural expectations and the opportunities that are available to them.

- Expressive arts and design

Children should be given the opportunity to express themselves through artistic actions such as art, music, movement, design, and technology.

EYFS also continues to set expectations for effective teaching. Within the statute, effective teachers are those teachers that support learning through exploration, experimentation, consistency, and critical thinking skills. Within the seven developmental frameworks of the EYFS, the statute sets forth in

detail, the requirements that children develop:

- Communication/Language
  - Listen
  - Pay attention
  - Understand
  - Speak
  
- Physical Development
  - Move and handle things
  - Understand the link between exercise and health
  
- Personal, social and emotional development
  - Have self confidence
  - Have self-awareness
  - Know how to handle their feelings and behaviour
  - Know how to handle relationships with other people
  
- Literacy
  - Read
  - Write
  
- Mathematics
  - Recognise numbers
  - Count
  - Understand shapes, space, and measurements

- Understanding the world
  - Understand people
  - Communicate with people
  - Understand the concept of the world
  - Use technology
  
- Art
  - Use artistic materials and venues
  - Use their imagination

The EYFS also requires periods of learning assessments that includes the review of the progress of learning developments at the age of two. At two years old, the child is reviewed by professionals, and those professionals provide parents with written statements regarding the progress of the child. They may also provide recommendations and highlight necessary actions to perform if the child's developments are behind, or if there is need for concern or praise. Another developmental assessment is performed at the end of the child's participation in EYFS. At five years old, the child's complete profile is reviewed to determine the child's next level and educational steps.

Safeguarding and welfare statutes require actions that support the protection of the child. It provides professionals with guidance on signs to pay attention to that may indicate that a child's welfare could be in danger.

These signs include:

- Odd or significant changes in behaviour
- Decrease in health conditions
- Bruising, marks, and signs of trauma that the child is reluctant to talk about
- Comments or statements that the child makes that are odd or disturbing
- Inappropriate or disruptive behaviour

Finally, the EYFS statute goes on to explain qualifications and the qualified individual staff members as well as supervisors. Some of these qualifications include cultural sensitivity, and staff training.