



Special Educational Needs & Disabilities Policy

How we welcome, identify, include and champion every child
Play Days Nursery Limited | Play Days Academy Limited
Form Reference: PD-SEND-MAY26 | EYFS 2026 | SEND Code of Practice 0–25 (2015)



Every child should be given the best chance to succeed in life.

Department for Education, April 2014

Play Days welcomes every child into our community. Our practice places the child at the centre of everything we do, and we believe — deeply, not as a slogan — that children with special educational needs and disabilities thrive in early years settings that see them first as **children**: curious, capable, full of potential, and entitled to the same warm, joyful start as every other child.

We view behaviour as an outward sign or indicator of another need that a young child may not yet be able to verbalise or understand. Early identification, early intervention, and high aspirations together unlock outcomes that come too late if we wait.

Imelda Rylatt, Company Director & SENDCO — Play Days Nursery & Academy

1. Our Aims and Objectives

Play Days is committed to the inclusion, enablement and flourishing of every child with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). We have full regard to the SEND Code of Practice 0–25 (2015), the Children and Families Act 2014, the Equality Act 2010, and the EYFS Statutory Framework 2026.

Aims

- Provide the highest quality early years' service so that every child fulfils their potential.
- Combine high aspirations with high-quality early years practice, focused on early identification and early intervention to improve long-term outcomes.
- Ensure that knowledgeable Key People, SENDCOs and managers form strong relationships with children and their families, so judgements are made by those who know the child best.
- Put the thoughts, feelings and wishes of children and their families at the forefront of every decision.
- Build strong multi-disciplinary partnerships across Education, Health, Social Care and Safeguarding so that every child has equal opportunity to engage in the EYFS curriculum.
- Operate within the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and the local authority Core Offer (Leicester City and Leicestershire).

Objectives

- Provide a broad, balanced, statutory EYFS curriculum accessible to the individual needs of every child.
- Identify and assess needs early, and provide appropriate, evidence-based support through high-quality targeted teaching, applied consistently across the setting.
- Build cultures, policies and practices into our planning that include all children — not by treating all children the same, but by responding to learners in ways that take account of their varied life experiences and needs.
- Engender a sense of community and belonging, and to offer new opportunities to children who may have experienced previous difficulties.
- Maintain a setting-wide commitment to inclusion: equal opportunities for all children, whatever their age, gender, ethnicity, special educational needs, impairment, attainment and background.

2. Persons with Responsibility

Nursery SENDCO	Imelda Rylatt, Lynn Shellard & Lana Shellard (Special Educational Needs & Disability Coordinators).
Academy SENDCO	Imelda Rylatt and Anna Lewis.
Nursery Early Language Lead Practitioners (Elklan / ELLP)	Imelda Rylatt (0–5), Lynn Shellard (0–5), Lana Shellard (0–3).
Academy Early Language Lead Practitioner (ELLO)	Imelda Rylatt., Anna Herbert
Leicester City Area SENDCO	Allocated by the Early Years Support Team. We work closely with our named Area SENDCO and refer through the team office on 0116 454 4750.
Leicestershire County Area SENDCO	Our Early Years Improvement Advisor doubles as our Area SENDCO. The Family Information Service signposts on 0116 305 6545; the Early Years SEND Inclusion Team is contacted via the Professional Services Portal.

3. What is a Special Educational Need?

A child has special educational needs if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child has a learning difficulty if they continue to make inadequate progress, despite high-quality teaching targeted at the areas of learning and development that they find most challenging.

The four broad areas of need identified in the SEND Code of Practice are:

Communication and interaction	Children with speech, language and communication difficulties which make it harder for them to make sense of language or to communicate effectively and appropriately with others — including children on the autism spectrum.
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Cognition and learning	Children who learn at a slower pace than others their age, who have difficulty understanding parts of the curriculum, who struggle with organisation or memory skills, or who have a specific difficulty affecting one particular area of learning.
Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)	Children who experience difficulty in managing their relationships with other people, who are withdrawn, or who behave in ways that may hinder their own or other children's learning, or impact on health and wellbeing.
Sensory and/or physical needs	Children with visual or hearing impairments, or a physical need that requires additional ongoing support and equipment. Some children have needs spanning more than one of these areas.

4. How We Support Children with SEND at Play Days

Targeted provision available within our settings includes:

- Fun Time small-group communication sessions.
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS).
- Structured teaching methods including "First and Next" and "Now / Then" boards.
- Visual timetables and real objects of reference.
- Four qualified Early Language Lead Practitioners (ELKLAN) supporting speech, language and communication needs across the setting.
- Staff trained to support the learning and development of children on the autism spectrum, including reasonable adjustments and one-page profiles.
- Tracking of learning and development for children with SEND using local authority frameworks (Next Steps, Ordinarily Available Provision) alongside our EYFS tracker.

Talk Matters in Leicester accreditation — awarded June 2015. Play Days remains committed to the principles of this communication-rich environment programme.

5. Facilities for Children and Families with SEND

Wheelchair access	Wheelchair access to both settings, all outdoor areas, and all group rooms at the Nursery. Please note the pre-school lounge at the Academy is upstairs.
Accessible toilets	Accessible toilets at both settings.
Changing facilities	Height-adjustable changing table available.
Quiet space	We can arrange a low-stimulus space for children who need a sensory break, in agreement with the family.
Specialist equipment	We will source and accommodate specialist equipment as advised by Health professionals, in advance of a child starting.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

The SENDCO is responsible for:

- Overseeing the day-to-day operation of this policy and the setting's SEND Information Report.
- Co-ordinating provision for children with SEND across the setting.
- Working alongside Key People so that learning for all children is given equal parity.
- Advising on the graduated approach to SEND support — Assess, Plan, Do, Review.
- Liaising with, advising and contributing to the in-service and external training of staff.
- Ensuring records for children with SEND, and those experiencing barriers to learning who may not have SEND, are kept current and secure.
- Working in partnership with parents and carers.
- Acting as a key point of contact for external agencies, Health, Social Care and the local authority.
- Liaising with the SENDCO of a child's next setting or school to ensure a smooth transition.
- Reviewing progress and writing children's support plans in partnership with the SENDCO and parents — "Child Learning Passport" (Leicester City) or "SEND Support Plan" (Leicestershire).
- Ensuring the setting can track and record support plans and decisions for every child with SEND.

The Room Senior and Key Person are responsible for:

- Monitoring children's progress and outcomes — dated, written observations and records are kept.
- Supporting and guiding Level 2 and Level 3 Early Years Educators, regularly informing the SENDCO of progress and any concerns.
- Liaising with parents and carers to discuss progress at every opportunity.
- Establishing individual records for children with SEND and those experiencing barriers to learning.
- Reviewing progress and writing children's support plans in partnership with the SENDCO and parents — "Child Learning Passport" (Leicester City) or "SEND Support Plan" (Leicestershire).
- Sharing information about each child with SEND with the whole staff at termly SEND review meetings.
- Liaising with outside agencies as directed by the SENDCO.
- Seeking support from the Area SENDCO and the relevant local authority Early Years team, who will liaise with the setting and family and provide additional general or targeted support.

7. Admission Arrangements for Children with SEND

Equality Act 2010. It is unlawful to discriminate against disabled children in respect of admissions for a reason related to their disability. Children with special educational needs and disabilities are considered for admission to Play Days on exactly the same basis as children without SEND.

Prior to starting, parents and carers of children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) — or an EHCP pending — are invited to meet with the SENDCO to discuss the provision needed to meet the child's identified needs. We will arrange enhanced settling visits and put any required adjustments in place in advance.

8. Identifying and Assessing SEND

Information about any SEND is gathered by the senior team at the initial meeting with parents when they apply for a place. A home visit is offered for each child by the Key Person prior to starting. Information about the child — including any SEND or medical condition — is discussed in detail.

Information from Children's Centres or the Early Years Support Team is passed to us prior to the child starting where possible. If a child is receiving support from an outside agency, we make contact to gain additional information, and we tell the family about any additional support that is available to them.

A SEND file is opened. Professionals may be invited to advise the setting in advance of the child starting — for example, training on a specific need or on the use of specialist equipment such as a feeding tube.

Integrated two-year Education, Health and Care review

Early identification and assessment of children with SEND is pivotal to securing positive future outcomes. Play Days has embedded the principles of the EYFS — unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments, learning and development — into all of our identification and assessment work.

We work with parents to produce a Two-Year Development Check for every child, in preparation for the statutory Integrated Education and Health Review, which we endeavour to attend alongside the Health Visitor (typically held at 2 years 3 months).

9. The Graduated Approach — Assess, Plan, Do, Review

Where child needs SEND support beyond universal provision, we use the four-part graduated approach set out in the SEND Code of Practice. This is a continuous cycle, not a one-off intervention.

ASSESS	PLAN	DO	REVIEW
Clear analysis of the child's needs drawing on the Key Person's observations, the SENDCO's expertise, parent insight, and any specialist advice. We use the views of the child where possible.	Outcomes are agreed with the parent and the support to achieve them is planned. This includes the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place, the expected impact on progress, and a review date.	The Key Person, supported by the SENDCO, implements the plan day-to-day. Provision is consistent, evidence-based and delivered with high expectations.	The effectiveness of the support is reviewed against the agreed outcomes, on or before the agreed date, with the family. The cycle then begins again — refined and revised in light of growing understanding of the child.

Triggers for intervention through the graduated approach:

- A child working at levels significantly below those expected for children of a similar age due to cognition and learning difficulties.
- Persistent social, emotional or mental health difficulties affecting wellbeing.
- Sensory or physical needs where the child continues to make little or no progress.
- Communication or interaction difficulties requiring specific individual interventions in order to access learning.

Triggers for seeking help from outside agencies:

Despite a focused individualised programme and concentrated support, where the child:

- Continues to make little or no progress in one or more areas over a long period (typically one term in Leicester City; 6–12 months in Leicestershire).
- Continues working at a stage substantially below that expected of children of a similar age.
- Has social and emotional health difficulties or wellbeing difficulties that substantially and regularly interfere with the child's learning or that of their peers.
- Has sensory or physical needs requiring additional equipment or regular visits for direct intervention or advice by practitioners from a specialist service.
- Has ongoing communication or interaction difficulties that impede social relationships and cause substantial barriers to learning.

10. Securing Expertise — Working with Outside Agencies

Play Days is committed to effective collaboration between all agencies working with a child. We actively support a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting children's SEND. Specialist support may include:

Speech and Language Therapist	Educational Psychologist	Clinical Psychologist	Occupational Therapist
Physiotherapist	Hearing Impaired Service	Visually Impaired Service	Consultant Paediatrician
Health Visitor	Specialist Nurse / GP	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	Local Authority SEND Inclusion Team

11. Working with Parents and Carers

We recognise the vital role of parents and carers in the identification, assessment and response to their child's needs. We work in true partnership — valuing your views and contributions, and keeping you fully involved in your child's education at every stage.

Before initiating any strategy that is in addition to our universal provision, we consult with you. We also recognise that the views of the child are important and will be sought, in a sensitive, age-appropriate manner, and taken into account.

At termly parents' meetings, the Key Person discusses progress and reviews the support plan with you. We will offer advice on how you can work with your child at home — the effectiveness of any intervention depends on the partnership between us. Where helpful, we will signpost to outside agencies and the Children's Centre Outreach Worker.

12. Supporting Transitions

Joining Play Days	Parents of children with SEND are invited to meet with the SENDCO with their child before starting. Transition arrangements are agreed, including structured transition visits up to a term in advance. Outside agencies are contacted for additional information where helpful.
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After settling	Following the child's settling period, the Key Person arranges a meeting with the parent to review the child's learning and progress.
Between rooms	Internal transitions are planned with the SENDCO and family, with shared visits, familiar objects of reference, and a written handover between Key People.
To primary school or another setting	All children are invited to visit their new setting with their parents in advance. Where needed, further visits are arranged. We prepare a photograph book showing aspects of life in the new setting to help the child.
Documentation transferred	All documentation — individual support plans, Child Learning Passport, SEND Support Plan, EHCP, agency reports — is forwarded to the new setting with a written progress report and (for school transitions) a Transition Report shared with the receiving SENDCO and class teacher. A copy goes to the parent.
SENDCO involvement	Our SENDCO contacts the new class teacher to discuss and forward-plan appropriate support, holds a meeting with parents and new setting staff, and invites the new class teacher to visit the child at Play Days before transition.

13. Requesting an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment

Where the support provided through the graduated approach has not enabled a child to make sufficient progress, we may — in partnership with the family — request an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment from the local authority. The following are considered before requesting an assessment:

- The child has made little or no progress in specific areas over a long period.
- The child continues working at a stage substantially below age-related expectation.
- There is recorded evidence of the child's identified needs, including from Key Person observations, the SENDCO, and our chronology and support plan records.
- Individual strategies have been in place for a reasonable period of time and reviewed through the Assess-Plan-Do-Review cycle.
- Outside advice has been sought in relation to the child's communication and interaction; cognition and learning; sensory or physical needs; and / or social and emotional wellbeing.
- The views of parents have been taken into consideration throughout the process and parents agree the request.

EHC Needs Assessment requests are submitted through the relevant local authority — Leicester City or Leicestershire — see Section 14 for current contact details.

14. Local Authority Support — Leicester City and Leicestershire

Play Days draws on the SEND Local Offer of both authorities. The information below was current at the time of policy review (May 2026); we update it at each annual review.

Leicester City Council — Early Years Support Team

Early Years Support Team	Provides inclusive support to children aged 0–5 with SEND and their families. Four area teams, mostly located in local Children's Centres. Telephone: 0116 454 4750.
Leicester City SEND Local Offer	families.leicester.gov.uk/send-local-offer — the hub for SEND information for Leicester families. Email: localoffer@leicester.gov.uk
Pindar Nursery	Specialist nursery for children with complex SEND aged 2–5, housed at the Early Years Support Centre. Referral via the SEND Services online referral form.
Early Help — “Use One Number”	Single front door for early help, early help assessments, and referrals to Children's Social Care. Telephone: 0116 454 1004.
Training for our staff	Leicester City Early Years Support Team delivers a programme of SEND training accessible to Play Days staff, including the Level 3 SENCO Award, autism awareness, Play Interaction, and emotional wellbeing courses. Booked via the SEND Leicester courses portal.
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	One-off payment per year for any FEEE child in receipt of Disability Living Allowance. Currently £938 per year, paid directly to the provider.

Leicestershire County Council — Early Years SEND Inclusion Team

Early Years SEND Inclusion Team	Supports children with low, emerging, developing and high needs across the county, both at home and within early years provisions.
Family Information Service	Telephone: 0116 305 6545. Signposts families to the Local Offer and to early years SEND services.
SENA Team	Statutory Special Educational Needs Assessment team. Telephone: 0116 305 6600.
Leicestershire SEND Local Offer	leicestershire.gov.uk/local-offer — the public-facing Local Offer for Leicestershire families. Email: leicestershirelocaloffer@leics.gov.uk
Professional Services Portal	resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/early-years — the practitioner-facing hub. Contains the Early Years SEND Inclusion section, the Ordinarily Available Provision guidance, and the SEND Graduated Approach booklet.
Early Years Panel	Children needing further support are referred to the Early Years Panel via the online referral form on the Professional Services Portal. The Panel decides on Inclusion Funding using the Early Years Inclusion Funding Matrix.
Area SENDCO	Our Early Years Improvement Advisor is also our allocated Area SENDCO and makes contact across the year for children with low and emerging needs.

15. Funding to Support Children with SEND

Inclusion Funding (Leicestershire)	Since September 2022, allocated on a banding basis (no longer hours-based). Children are funded for the FEEE hours they attend only. Panel decision forms state the funding period. Providers are expected to reapply, where needed, to support continuation. The Early Years Inclusion Funding Matrix is used to ensure consistency across the county.
SEN Inclusion Funding (Leicester City)	Available through the Leicester City Council Early Years team. Applications are made by the setting with the SENDCO. Where additional staffing or resources are needed to support a child's inclusion, the funding can be put towards that provision.
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	£938 per year, paid to the provider, where a FEEE child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). Helps cover one-off resources, training and adjustments. Leicester City Early Years SEND Entitlement Officer can support families to access DLA so they can in turn access DAF.
EHCP top-up	Children with an EHCP may attract additional banded funding determined by the local authority following Annual Review.

16. Staff Training and Development

Play Days is committed to providing and facilitating attendance at in-service training in the area of SEND. Our SENDCOs attend courses to keep abreast of new initiatives and developments. All staff attend courses that support their continuing understanding of the broad spectrum of need and the strategies that work.

The setting's training needs and individuals' training needs are reviewed when our CPD development plan is devised, and revisited at senior management meetings. Specific SEND training accessed through both local authorities includes:

- Level 3 SENCO Award (Leicester City and Leicestershire delivery routes).
- Autism awareness, the four areas of difference, and the autism progression framework.
- Play Interaction — supporting children with communication and interaction needs.
- Emotional regulation, anxiety and resilience in the early years.
- ELKLAN, Talk Matters in Leicester, and other speech, language and communication programmes.

17. Complaints Concerning SEND Provision

Regular communication between Play Days and home is the foundation of how we identify and resolve concerns about a child's SEND provision. We aim to be responsive to any concerns parents may have, and we treat concerns relating to SEND with extra sensitivity given the personal nature of the issues involved.

Where a concern cannot be resolved informally, parents follow the staged process set out in our Complaints Policy (PD-COMP-MAY26). All formal complaints are recorded on the Complaint Investigation Form (PD-CIF-MAY26). Parents have the right to contact Ofsted at any stage; details are in the Complaints Policy.

Where a SEND concern relates to the local authority's decisions (for example, an EHCP decision), parents may also access:

- SENDIASS Leicestershire (Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service).
- SENDIASS Leicester City.
- First-tier Tribunal (SEND) for appeals against EHCP decisions or refusals.

18. Cross-Referenced Documents and Policies

Tiered Incident Record Ref: PD-IR-MAY26	Low-Level Safeguarding Concern Record Ref: PD-SG-LL-MAY26	Body Map Record Ref: PD-BM-MAY26
Chronology Record Ref: PD-CHR-MAY26	Low-Level Concerns Policy Ref: PD-LLC-MAY26	Complaints Policy Ref: PD-COMP-MAY26
Complaint Investigation Form Ref: PD-CIF-MAY26	Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy Policy	Behaviour Management Policy Policy
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Policy	Confidentiality & Information Sharing Policy	Data Retention Schedule Policy

19. Legislative and Regulatory Framework

SEND Code of Practice 0–25 years (2015)	Children and Families Act 2014	Equality Act 2010
EYFS Statutory Framework 2026	Childcare Act 2006	Children Act 1989 and 2004
SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan (March 2023)	National SEND Standards (2025)	Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Keeping Children Safe in Education (current edition)	LLR Safeguarding Children Partnership procedures

A final word

Every child who walks through our door arrives whole. Our job is not to fix anyone — it is to recognise the child as they are, to remove the barriers between them and the joy of learning, and to walk alongside their family on what is sometimes a hard, sometimes a beautiful, always an important journey. Whatever support a child needs, the principle is the same: high aspirations, early identification, partnership with parents, expertise drawn in early. Thank you for caring this much about it.

