

# Help finding childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

## What information is available locally to help find childcare?

You can get information about local childcare for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) through your council's [Local Offer](#).

Every council has to have a Local Offer providing information on childcare, as well as other services, for children with SEND.

The council should also have a [Family Information Service](#) to help you find childcare and a [SEND Information, Advice and Support Service](#) that provides independent advice if you experience problems accessing services. The Local Offer should include information about these services.

## What is the Local Offer?

Every council has to provide quality information in one place about local education, health and social care services and childcare for children and young people with SEND. This is their 'Local Offer'.

The Local Offer should be more than a directory of services. It should explain what support your family is entitled to and how you can find the service you need.

Councils should work with children, young people and their parents to design and improve the Local Offer.

## What information about childcare should the Local Offer include?

On the other side of this leaflet, you can find a good practice checklist, created by the Family and Childcare Trust, that councils can use to make sure they are providing parents with the information they need.

The SEND Code of Practice, published by the Department for Education, sets out what information and guidance councils must include in the Local Offer. The Code of Practice can be found at: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

## What to do if you are unhappy with the Local Offer

If you are unhappy with the Local Offer provided by your council, the first thing is to get in touch with the council to suggest how it can be improved. The Local Offer should include contact details so that you can provide feedback. It can be a good idea to work with other parents to raise concerns so that the council knows that several parents have the same problems.

If you are unhappy with how the council responds, you can make a formal complaint. Your council will be able to give you information about how to do this and details will also be on the council's website.

If you still experience difficulties, you can raise your concerns with elected councillors and your local MP. Your council's website will have their contact details.

The Family and Childcare Trust have created a good practice checklist of information to include in the Local Offer.

### Guidance and advice

- ✓ Information about childcare entitlements and support, including:
  - The free entitlement for two, three and four year olds early education and childcare entitlement for two, three and four year olds
  - The Disability Access Fund payment
  - Additional financial support including: the childcare element of tax credits, employer supported childcare vouchers, the tax-free childcare scheme and support for parents in education or training
  
- ✓ Guidance to help parents find a suitable childcare place, including:
  - Signposting to the Family Information Service or the council's childcare brokerage service
  - an explanation of the duty on providers to make reasonable adjustments for children with additional needs
  - advice on finding a suitable childcare place, such as questions to ask a provider
  - a description of extra local support, such as funding for equipment or training, available through the childcare Inclusion Fund and how this support can be accessed
  
- ✓ Information about how to raise concerns and, if appropriate, complain about the quality of care at a childcare provider
  
- ✓ Information about what parents should do if they experience difficulty accessing a free early education and childcare place, including the local authority's complaints procedure

### A childcare directory

- ✓ A directory of early education and childcare providers, easily searchable by:
  - age range
  - type of SEND condition
  - types of childcare provision, including nurseries, childminders, wraparound school childcare and holiday childcare
  
- ✓ Each provider's listing should include the provider's own 'Local Offer', for example with details of the provider's SEND policy, accessibility at the setting and staff training

