

WELLBEING FACTSHEETS: 03

What has **wellbeing** got to do with a family with SEND needs?



Wellbeing is about promoting a better way of life and equality for citizens. In its simplest definition wellbeing is Being Well. When the basic human requirements are met people are free to have optimistic aspirations, which help them attain a satisfying quality of life and happiness. Ultimately, wellbeing comes from our inner sense of peace and life satisfaction.

Mike Kelly,
Chief executive, Institute of Wellbeing



At the Institute of Wellbeing, it is our mission to support people to develop their wellbeing so that they are able to maximise their own sense of inner peace and joy and function effectively. We work with practitioners to give young people aged 0-19 the early help with a focus on family wellbeing, and in particular on providing families with the life skills to achieve positive emotional and mental wellbeing and resilience.

The importance of supporting wellbeing

Supporting wellbeing is about ensuring people have the resilience to deal with life's challenges, by building on the strengths that each person has and working to counter their vulnerabilities. Wellbeing is affected by internal attitudes and by external factors such as health, income, personal freedom, family and friends.

A wellbeing approach helps people to create a better life for themselves. It also promotes community connectedness which can help disadvantaged



Wellbeing and early intervention

Improving the wellbeing of families, and children in particular, is a critical part of achieving early intervention outcomes. The emerging evidence is unequivocal: investing in wellbeing to improve life outcomes works – there are clear links between levels of wellbeing, inequality and social mobility. Early intervention directly increases the wellbeing of families and their communities and that increase in wellbeing can have a positive effect on a range of other indicators, from children's educational progress to their parents' ability to get into work.

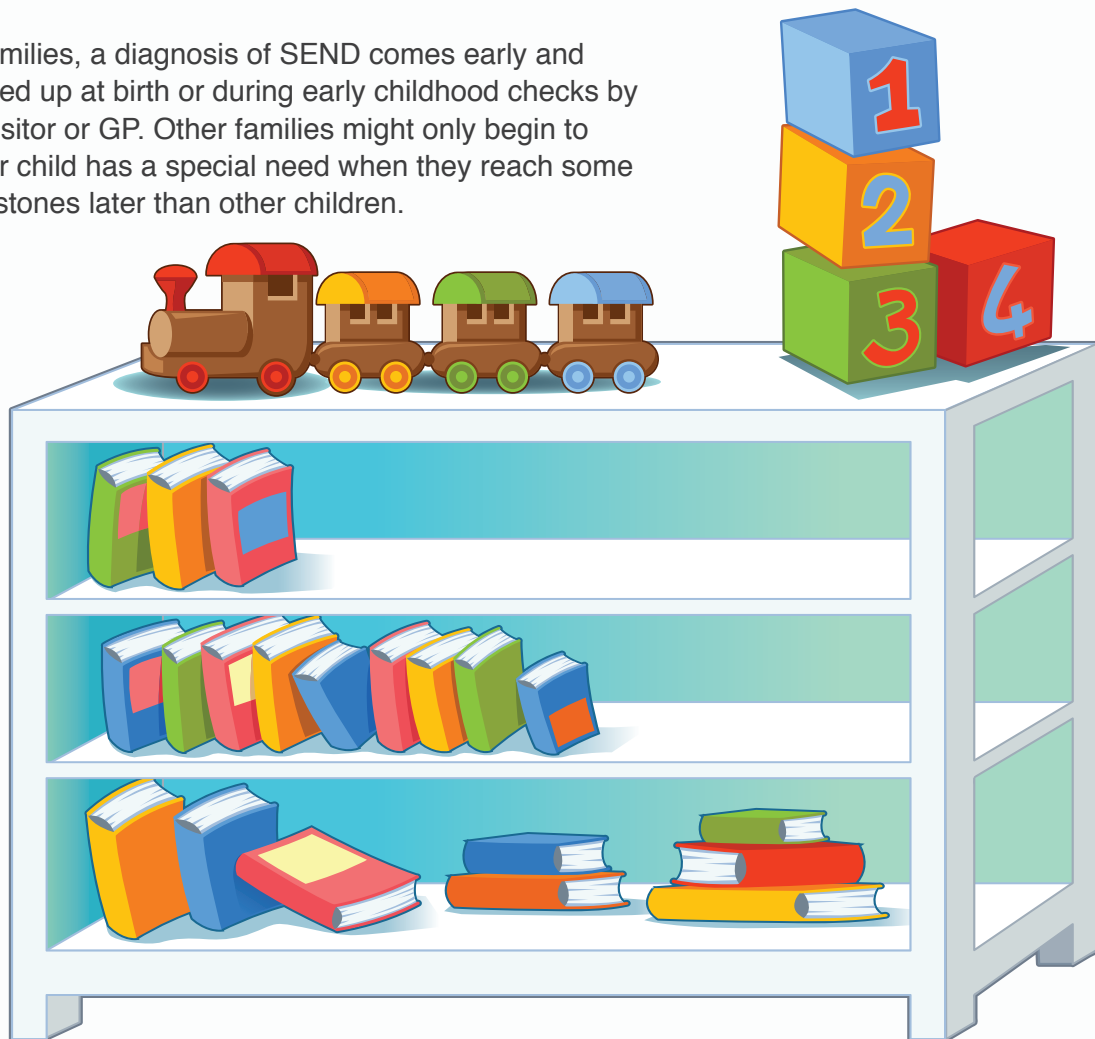
Early years educators can play an important role: by providing high-quality education to children and by supporting parents to nurture and play with their children, actions which can help to mitigate the effects of poverty, low achievement and low-skilled parenting.



Wellbeing and children with Special Educational Needs or Disability

More than one in five children in England are identified as having special educational needs¹ or a disability (SEND). This does not mean that the children are unintelligent, but that they have less typical ways of learning, so teachers and schools have to adapt their usual systems in order to accommodate them and to ensure their wellbeing.

For some families, a diagnosis of SEND comes early and may be picked up at birth or during early childhood checks by the health visitor or GP. Other families might only begin to suspect their child has a special need when they reach some of their milestones later than other children.



Either way, realising that, or even just suspecting that, your child might have a special need or needs has a profound impact on families:

It can cause feelings of confusion for parents, siblings, grandparents and other extended family or friends.

Parents can experience feelings of guilt that they might have contributed in some way to their child having a difficulty; grandparents or friends may not understand the extra pressures parents might be under and that can create distances in relationships and add to the pressures on parents.

Often families who have a child with a special educational need or disability need more support than other families.

Having a special need or disability does bring with it special attention and support from the helping professions, such as teachers, social workers and medical staff, and it is important for you and your child's future wellbeing to engage with them and be open to working together with them.

What your child's nursery must do

Since 2014 there has been a new code of practice which specifies that children with special needs must engage in the activities of school alongside children who do not have special needs.²

The code of practice also says that specialists must be involved as need be, such as speech or occupational therapists, Portage workers or special teachers. The new code also puts more focus on parents and children participating in decision-making and their views, wishes and feelings being taken into account.

EHC Plans

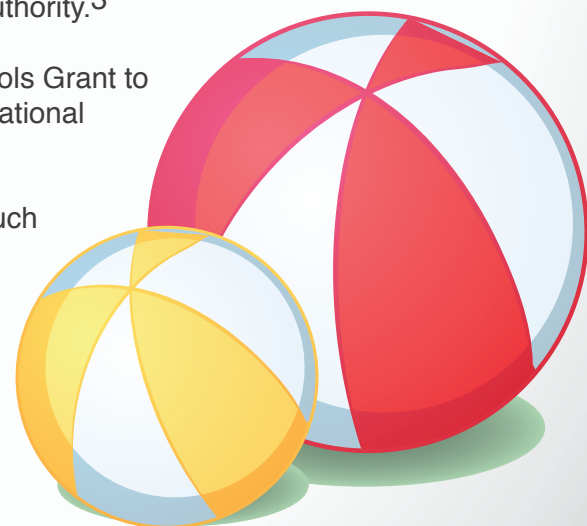
EHC (education, health and care) plans are for children with higher needs and used to be called "statements". EHC plans are drawn up by the local authority but, as parents, you must be asked for your opinion.



Children with special needs have entitlements

Families whose child has SEN or a disability have greater childcare needs than other families. For instance, there are fewer opportunities for informal childcare exchanges with other parents – including before and after school. It is also harder to find opportunities for your child to participate in activities that benefit his or her social and emotional development.

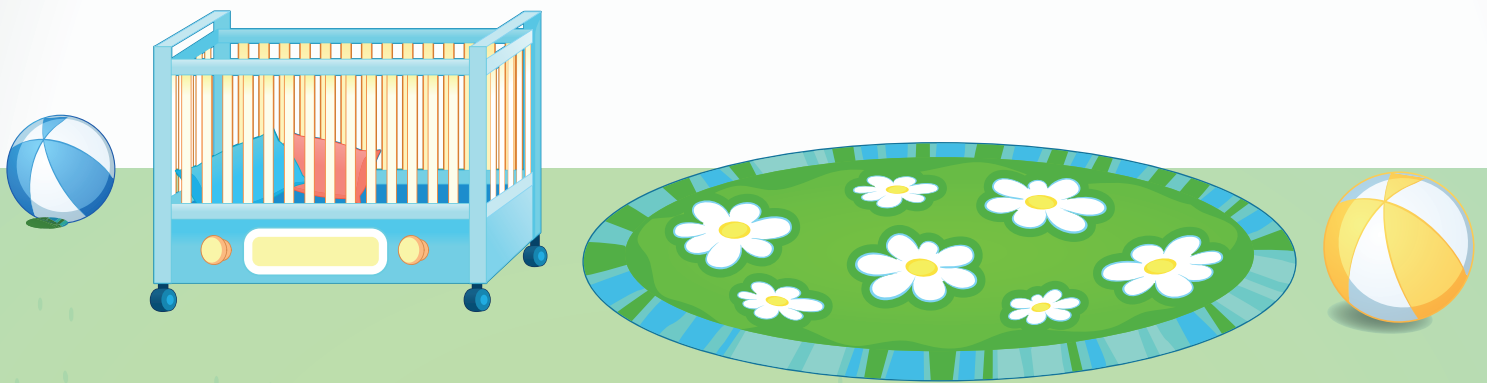
- ✓ Two-year-olds who have an EHC plan or who receive Disability Living Allowance are entitled to early education paid for by the local authority.³
- ✓ Local authorities can also use funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant to pay above the local hourly rate to support a child's special educational needs.⁴
- ✓ The Equality Act 2010 says that children with SEND have as much right to be included as any other child and that to discriminate against, harass or victimise a child with a disability is against the law. This means that reasonable adjustments must be made to enable your child to be included in the early years setting and to promote equality of opportunity.⁵



Local offer

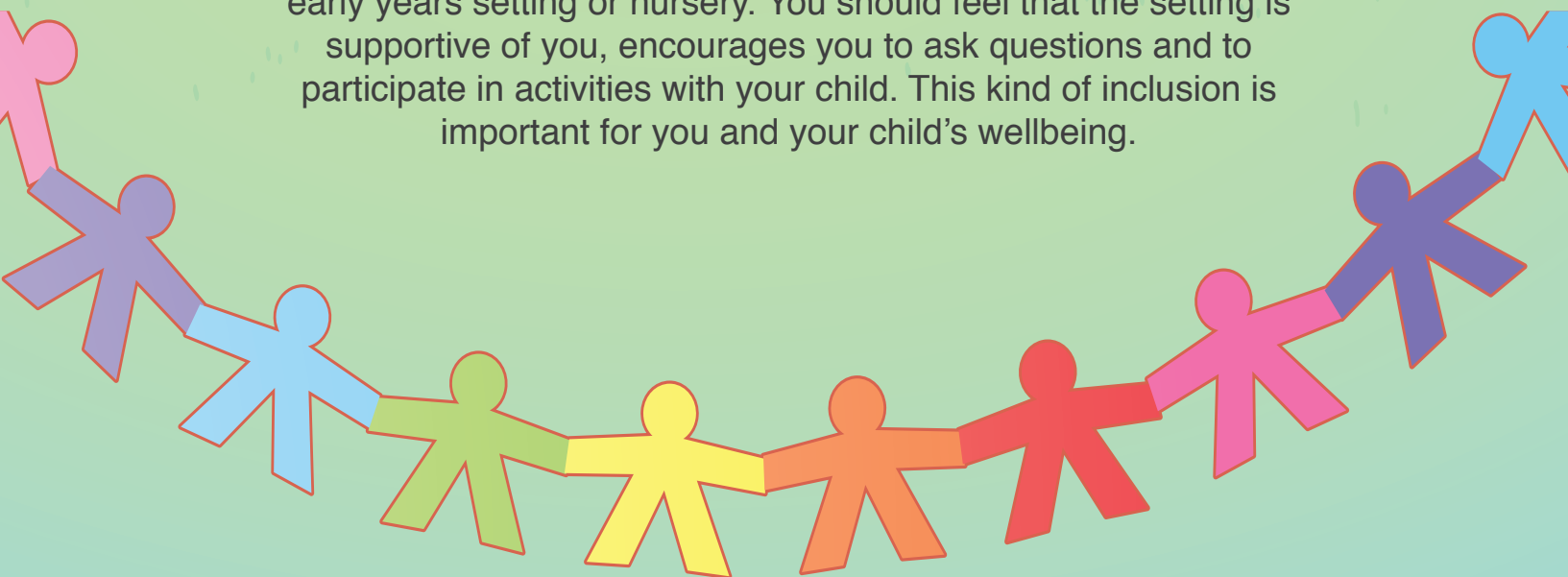
One of the most important changes under the new Code of Practice is that local authorities must now publish a 'local offer'. Their website must outline the education, health and social care services they are providing for children with special educational needs or disabilities, whether or not the child has a formal EHC plan.

- ✓ All health and local authorities have to obey the Code of Practice so as parents you should ask for a copy of the local offer and to give your opinion on whether the right services are being offered. Parents are part of the solution in developing the local offer.
- ✓ Be assertive, if you think your child is not receiving what they should. If you are having difficulty finding a place, contact your local family information service through the Family and Childcare Trust



You should feel welcome at your child's nursery

You and your child should feel welcomed and included in his or her early years setting or nursery. You should feel that the setting is supportive of you, encourages you to ask questions and to participate in activities with your child. This kind of inclusion is important for you and your child's wellbeing.



Where to find more information

There are a number of organisations that can give you more advice and information. Below are just a few and there are more organisations to find out about from your local authority, or your child's nursery might be able to give you.

National Parent Partnership Network, now known as the Information Advice and Support Services Network and is based at the Council for Disabled Children. Will direct parents to their local service:

<http://www.iassnetwork.org.uk>

<http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk>

Parent Partnership Services (PPS) offer advice and support to parents and carers of children with special educational needs. They are statutory services so there has to be one in every local authority. They are free, impartial and confidential services:

<http://www.parentpartnership.org.uk>

Family Information Services:

<http://www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/Pages/Category/nafis>

SEND Gateway:

<http://www.sendgateway.org.uk>

Institute of Wellbeing SEND support training services:

- Life Choices
- Effective Parenting
- Partnerships in Practice



¹ Ofsted, Special Needs and Disability Review

² <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/SEND>

³ <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/free-childcare-and-education-for-2-to-4-year-olds>

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/help-with-childcare-costs/overview>

⁵ Equality Act 2010

FACTS AND FIGURES

10% of all children have a specific learning disability, including dyslexia, dyscalculia (affecting numeracy skills and mathematics)

7% of all children have a speech or language impairment

3% of all children have an intellectual impairment or disability

7% of all children have emotional or behavioural disorders

Overall, more than **20%** of children have a special need or disability of some kind.

There are **1.7 million** school-age children in England identified as having special educational needs.

(Source: Ofsted, Special Educational Needs and Disability Review 2010)



Resources

- Council for Disabled Children
- Family and Childcare Trust
- Family Information Services
- Family Lives—support for families
- Home Start—tailor-made support and friendship for families in their own homes
- National Parent Partnership Network—information, support and advice
- Parent Partnership Services—advice and support to parents and carers of children with special educational needs
- The Communications Trust—to support children in speech, language and communication