

# Support for Pre-school Children in Kent who have Special Educational Needs & Disabilities

“Supporting settings to support children with special educational needs”

## Information for Families & Health Professionals



Supporting Children to  
Play, Learn and Grow... **T**ogether!

## **Kent's Local Offer (SEND Information Hub)**

A local offer gives children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families information about what support services will be available in their area. The name 'local offer' was given by the government.

Every local authority must talk with children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families to find out what sort of support and services they need. There will be many different types of services that children and young people may need, including support services in school and specialist health services. Children, young people and their families may also have ideas about what leisure activities should be available, and what services are needed to help young people move towards independence in adulthood.

A local offer should also include information about what transport services are available for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and if there is any help available to pay for these services.

For further information on [Kent's Local Offer](#) please visit our website.

### **Kent Portage Service**

Portage is an educational service for pre-school children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, offering bespoke packages of intervention to support a child's development through Pre-school Learning Groups and or Home Learning sessions.

Portage supports children's learning and development using the Portage small steps to learning approach.

Portage Practitioners work in partnership with families, recognising that parents are the best people to teach their child. Parental involvement is essential in both the planning and delivery of activities to support the child's learning.

More information about [Portage](#) can be found on Kent's Local Offer.

### **Referrals to Portage**

The Portage referral form is a digital online form and can also be found on the SEND Information Hub Local Offer pages for early years.

[Kent Portage webpage](#)



### **Support for Early Years Settings for children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)**

Parents should contact the Pre-school of their choice several months in advance of when they would like their child to start. This is so that the child's needs can be fully planned for and any changes that may need to be considered to the environment, can be made before the child starts. This will enable the setting to seek advice and support, in advance of the child starting, from the Early Years and Childcare Equality and Inclusion team (who are part of The Education People) and/ or The Specialist Teaching and Learning Service via Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) meetings. All Early Years settings have a duty to meet the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).

The Children and Families Information Service (CFIS), website below, provides further information about the [SEND Local Offer](#) support that is available at each setting.

## **Specialist Teaching and Learning Service (STLS)**

The Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT) meetings are every term. The purpose of these multi-agency meetings are for early years settings to raise concerns or seek advice about meeting the needs of children with SEND. Early Years Specialist Teachers & Specialist Teachers for complex medical needs and physical disabilities, can offer advice and strategies to parents and settings in meeting the needs of their children, once a referral from an early year's setting has been received by the district Specialist Teaching & Learning Service.

For further information about support from Early Years Specialist Teachers please refer to the website of the Special School in your district.



## **Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF) and the role of the SENIF Practitioner**

The SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) is a statutory requirement made available by KCC to enable early years settings, childminders and out of school providers supporting pre-school children with medical and or complex special educational needs to secure better outcomes. The “top up” funding is not designed, in most cases, to provide 1:1 support, as research has shown that this is not the best way to support most children and does not develop children’s independence.

The funding forms part of the local offer to early years settings with SENIF Practitioner interventions & centrally funded training opportunities available to complement it.

The early years setting is responsible for making the application for SENIF and will discuss this with the family before proceeding.

Once an application for SENIF has been agreed (usually after having received Portage interventions or support from an Early Years Specialist Teacher) consideration is given at the termly Multi Agency Planning (MAP) process as to further support that could be offered as part of the SENIF offer. In some circumstances the offer can be made available prior to a child starting at the setting

if the needs of the child are complex.

The SENIF Practitioner supports settings and parents to implement early years Personalised Plans, advice and strategies, provided by Specialist Teachers to enable children to make progress and fully access the Early Years Foundation Stage.

More information can be found in the “The Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund Officer in Kent - information for Settings and childminders” which is available from all pre-school settings and on Kelsi.



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## Specialist Interventions

Children with special educational needs will usually have their needs met by mainstream pre-school settings. However, it is recognised that there may be a need for some children to access Specialist Interventions from the nursery at their district Special School. Referrals for these interventions will be made by Portage or Specialist Teachers following discussion with parents.

The Specialist Intervention will take the form of support and advice over a period of 2 terms (in some circumstances this can be longer) and the offer will be bespoke to the needs of the child.

More information can be found in the Specialist Intervention leaflet available from Portage, in settings, specialist nurseries and from Early Years Specialist Teachers.

## NHS Children's Therapies

The Children's therapies and care coordination team provide a community-based service to children who need specialist help in a range of areas. The team consists of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and specialist nurse advisors, key workers, and assistants. The aim is to support children in developing their skills to their full potential so they can participate in everyday activities in partnership with the child's family and other important people in the child's life, for example school staff, nursery staff.

The children the team work with may have a range of identified needs which can vary in severity and complexity. Some children need a number of professionals to be involved (integrated approach) and this may be co-ordinated by the Care Co-ordination team. Others need support from one professional team only. The team work closely with the child's family as well as in partnership with other agencies including pre-schools, schools, and medical staff. The team can be involved at several levels in supporting children.

For further information please see the service websites below:

**[For West Kent](#)**

**[For East Kent](#)**

For further information, criteria and the referral form please visit;

**[NHS Kent Community Health - The Pod website](#)**



**Kent Community Health**  
NHS Foundation Trust

