

## Kent's Local Offer for children with SEND

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 below:  
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/education-and-children/special-educational-needs>

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

## Information for Families & Health Professionals



- ◆ Kent Portage Service
- ◆ Children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) starting at a Pre-school setting
- ◆ Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Team (EYs LIFT) meetings
- ◆ Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding and the role of the SENIF Practitioner
- ◆ Specialist Nursery Interventions
- ◆ NHS Children's Therapies
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The Children's therapies and care coordination team provide a community-based service to children who need specialist help in a range of areas.

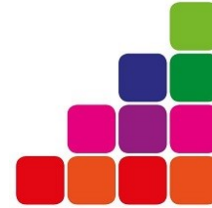
The team consists of physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and specialist nurse advisors, key workers and assistants. The aim is to support children in developing their skills to their full potential so they can participate in everyday activities, and this is in partnership 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 a number of levels in supporting children.

For further information please see the service website;  
<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/childrens-therapies-2/>

All Early Years Settings have a link Health Visitor who can be contacted, with parents permission, to visit the nursery if required to do so.



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 a few children to access Specialist Interventions from Special Schools. 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 Nursery Intervention leaflet available from Portage, in settings, specialist nurseries and from Early Years Specialist Teachers.



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 a small steps 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.  
<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/special-educational-needs/kent-portage>



## Children starting a Pre-school setting

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.

<https://local.kent.gov.uk/kb5/kent/directory/service.page?id=ehkENLK95w4&localofferchannel=2>

## Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Team (LIFT)

EY LIFT meetings take place every term and operate as a forum for 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 years 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 Fund (SENIF)

The SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) is a statutory requirement made available by KCC to enable 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 offer to settings with SENIF Practitioner interventions & centrally funded training opportunities available to complement it.

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) meetings as to further support that could be offered as part of the SENIF package. 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.

## Role of the SENIF Practitioner in a setting

The SENIF Practitioner supports settings and parents to implement 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 Parent / Carer Guide to SENIF which is available from all pre-school settings.*