

Supporting children with sensory and/or physical needs in the classroom

Children with Sensory and/or physical needs are recognised within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) framework as one of the four areas of need.

This category includes difficulties such as visual impairments, hearing difficulties, or physical health conditions. While the provided sources acknowledge the importance of supporting these children, they offer limited specific examples of how to support them for classroom learning.

However, the sources outline general principles and duties for supporting all children with SEND, which would apply to those with sensory and/or physical needs:

- **Make Reasonable Adjustments and Provide Extra Support:**

Schools have a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to avoid disadvantaging children and young people with disabilities. This includes providing extra support, aids, and services. All staff should proactively identify and anticipate what a child needs to participate and learn.

- **Personalised Plans and Support:**

For children with complex needs, an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) may be required. This plan is drawn up by the local authority and includes personalised adjustments and support clearly identified to help the child learn and achieve effectively. A learning plan, or Individual Education Plan (IEP),

should build skills step-by-step and offer opportunities to practice new skills, receive encouragement, and get feedback.

- **Foster an Inclusive Whole-School Environment:**

Schools should create a whole-school environment that emphasises inclusion and cooperation. This helps children with SEND to feel accepted and to belong.

- **Holistic View of the Child:**

It is important to see children and young people "as a whole" rather than solely focusing on their disability or illness.

- **Implement Person-Centred Approaches:**

Good practice includes implementing person-centred approaches, such as Person Centred Active Support and Positive Behaviour Support, which can indicate a service is effectively supporting individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism. While these are mentioned in the context of learning disabilities and/or autism, the principle of person-centred support is broadly applicable to all SEND categories.

- **Staff Responsibility and Training:**

All staff share responsibility for ensuring children and young people are not disadvantaged in their learning, with class teachers being central to communication, ongoing review, and adjustments, supported by the SENCO. Staff need to be supported in their initial training and throughout their career in identifying and addressing the underlying needs of SEND.