

What is a SENCo



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A SENCo is a 'special educational needs coordinator' - often called a 'SENCo' for short. They are qualified teachers who have the job of ensuring that children who have extra needs get the help and support they need in school. SENCos will have completed an additional qualification as a SENCo. This gives them the knowledge they need to do their job. However, special needs and disabilities is a huge area and they can't, and shouldn't be expected to, know everything. Their role is to know when to seek specialist advice and when to refer children to more specialist services, including those outside of education. They are teaching and learning experts who have the skills to work with other teachers to focus on how to support a child's development. They are not experts on the law but they will know the basics around a child's entitlement to education and what should be provided where children have Education Health and Care Plans.

SENCo roles vary from school to school. Many will also have a teaching responsibility and may have a full-time class to teach, as well as being the SENCo. Others may also be part of the senior leadership team and have other responsibilities in school. For many, the role is in addition to other work they do in school. Some will be part of a team of staff supporting children with special educational needs and others will have to do the role on their own. SENCos will often help to keep the records about a child's additional needs and may also be the person who fills in the forms to ask others to help. If your child has an Education Health and Care Plan they will be the person who makes sure the Plan is in place and working. They will also ensure that reviews are carried out.

How can they help?

We usually suggest that if you are worried you start by talking to the class teacher but they may also involve the SENCo if they think the extra knowledge is helpful. The SENCo may be able to provide the teacher and family with extra advice and suggest things that might help to support your child. They will have access to some tests that they may use to help understand your child's needs better and use these to suggest things that would help your child. They may suggest that they ask others to help. They may be the person who fills in the forms to ask for this help. They will usually be someone you speak to often if your child needs a lot of help or if your child has an Education Health and Care Plan. But it is still the class teacher who takes the lead on your child's learning and well-being day -to-day.

How do I find out who my SENCo is?

Your class teacher can introduce you to the SENCo and you will find who it is on the school's website.