

# KEY PEOPLE WORKING WITH YOUR CHILD WITH- IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

**Teaching Assistant or Learning Support Assistant :** Teaching Assistants (TAs) are employed to provide extra support to children who require this intervention in order to access education and make better progress in their learning.

Most of the time, children who receive individual support from a teaching assistant have An Educational Health and Care (EHC) plan which specifies the number of hours of support they should receive each week. Schools will employ “floating” teaching assistants who provide extra help where needed throughout the school. The experience and qualifications of teaching assistants varies widely; some will have experience and knowledge of special educational needs, others will not.

It is important to remember that even if your child has a teaching assistant who provides them with individual support, it is ultimately the class teacher and the SENCO who are responsible for planning and differentiating school and home work for your child. It is essential for your child’s school to provide time for your child’s teaching assistant to meet with the class teacher in order to plan and review learning activities and strategies for your child.

**Class Teacher:** Your child’s class teacher should be your first port of call with any concerns about your child’s learning, progress or behaviour. Class teachers are usually very busy but can usually make time to meet with parents before or after school.

**SENCO :** Every school will have a Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) who is responsible for overseeing special educational provision in accordance with the school’s SEN Policy.

The SENCO liaises with teachers about pupil support and teaching strategies. They are responsible for management of SEN teaching assistants. They also liaise with external services including educational psychologists, health and social services. They are responsible for maintaining records of pupils with special educational needs.

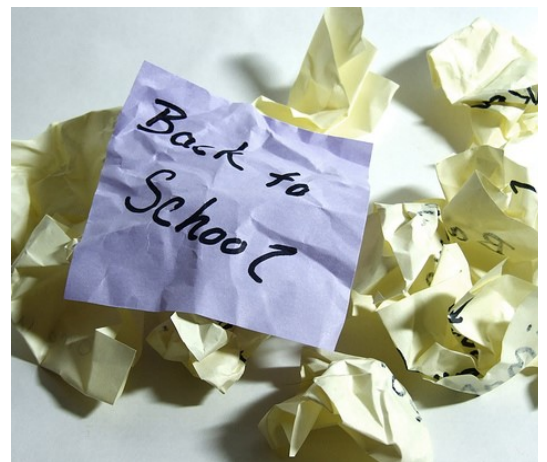
In many schools, the SENCO spends much of their time working either individually or in small groups with children who have special needs. He or she will also meet with parents of children with SEN to discuss progress.

**Physiotherapist :** Physiotherapists work with children with physical problems; they will mainly be involved in cases where children have difficulties with movement and/or have specific conditions affecting gross motor skills such as cerebral palsy.

**Occupational Therapist :** Occupational Therapists work with children who have difficulties with everyday activities including writing, using scissors, toileting, washing, etc. Their work with children can help improve coordination, motor planning, and sensory integration issues. They can recommend sensory activities that can help to calm some children who experience sensory integration problems for example a brushing programme or some time spent wearing a weighted blanket or vest.

**Educational Psychologist :** Every school will have an educational psychologist who visits them regularly, but not necessarily frequently. The Ed Psych will usually make observations of pupils who the school have concerns about. They will then make recommendations to the school about strategies they should use to support the pupil to address the difficulties the pupil is experiencing. Educational psychologists are usually happy to meet with parents to discuss their pupil observations and recommendations.

If you are considering requesting statutory assessment you should ask the school if your child has been seen recently by the educational psychologist. If not, you can ask the school if the Educational Psychologist can observe your child the next time they visit. If your child does get a statutory assessment, an educational psychologist will be asked to observe your child and speak with you about your child. They will compile a report based on this which will contribute to the statutory assessment.



**Speech and Language Therapist :** A speech and language therapist will work with children on a variety of aspects of communication including speaking, listening, non-verbal communication, and social skills. Speech and language therapists can also work with children who have difficulties chewing and swallowing.

