

Concerned about your child?

These people may be able to help



Speech

Feeding

Coordination

Teeth

Toilet training

Learning

Behaviour

Sleep



Feeding and eating

Does your child have difficulty swallowing, eating, drinking or are they reluctant to eat?



Your **health visitor** can give advice on feeding, including breast feeding, bottle feeding and weaning onto solid food. We can send you a parent guide on this topic.

A doctor or **health visitor** might refer you to:

- a **speech and language therapist** who can provide help if there are physical problems with swallowing
- a **dietician** who can provide advice on food, diet and nutrition
- a **clinical psychologist** who can offer support and advice on how to encourage your child to eat.

If your child is under five, a doctor or **health visitor** might suggest:

- a **pre-school home visiting service** which helps children with early communication and pre-school learning skills
- a **nursery or play school/group** that has people trained to help your child develop social skills.

Toilet training or incontinence

Is your child slow in developing control of their bladder or bowel?

Your **health visitor** can give advice on toilet training and we can send you a parent guide on this topic. They might refer you to:

- a **continence advisor** to give you advice and practical help if your child is incontinent
- a **paediatrician** to check for medical reasons why your child might be finding this difficult
- a **clinical psychologist** to give advice on how to encourage your child to use the toilet.

If your child requires nappies over the age of three the NHS can sometimes help by providing nappies and incontinence equipment. Your **health visitor** or **GP** can tell you more about this service.



Behaviour

Does your child's behaviour seriously impact on family life and his or her ability to learn?

Challenging behaviour can be the result of certain medical conditions. Difficult behaviour can sometimes be resolved using simple strategies. Parents should not feel embarrassed asking for help.

A doctor, **health visitor** or your child's school might refer you to:

- **specialist parent classes** to help you find strategies to manage your child's behaviour, run for parents who have disabled children
- an **educational psychologist** or **clinical psychologist** for help with managing the problem
- a **paediatrician** or **psychiatrist** for assessment and advice on how best to manage your child's behaviour.



Difficulties learning or poor attention skills

Does your child have problems remembering information, learning early education skills, or responding to requests?

A doctor or **health visitor** might refer you to:

- a **nursery** or **play school/group** for children under five that has people trained to help your child learn new skills
- a **pre-school home visiting service** to help your child with early communication and learning skills, long before they start school
- a **Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)**, a teacher responsible for coordinating any extra support a child needs in England and Wales. In Scotland the home visiting teacher, the child's class teacher or another member of school staff takes on this role
- an **educational psychologist** might observe your child and advise on which teaching or behaviour programmes will be of most benefit.



Teeth

Does your child have difficulty cleaning their teeth or find visiting the dentist difficult?

A doctor or **health visitor** or local dentist might suggest you take your child to see:

- a **community dentist** who has been trained to work with children and has special equipment for working with children with disabilities.



Sleeping at night

Does your child take a long time going to sleep or wake up frequently during the night?

A child that does not sleep creates exhausted parents yet solutions can sometimes be found:

- a **health visitor** can suggest strategies to promote a good sleep pattern and we can send you a parent guide on this topic
- your doctor might refer you to a **paediatrician** or **psychiatrist** who can assess your child's needs and suggest various treatments or behaviour plans to help your child's sleep.



Movement and coordination

Does your child have difficulty sitting up, walking, handling objects, or using certain parts of their body compared with other children of their age?

A doctor or **health visitor** might refer you to:

- a **physiotherapist** who can advise you and help with exercises to improve your child's mobility and coordination
- an **occupational therapist** to assess your child's coordination and mobility, provide advice and recommend aids/equipment to help with everyday activities.



As your child grows or their condition changes they might need further help.

Do not hesitate to go back and ask for further help.

Description of specialist terms

Audiologist

Carries out hearing tests and can help a child obtain hearing aids if they need them.

Clinical psychologist

Can offer advice on eating, toileting and behavioural difficulties. Parents may also find it helpful to talk to them about how their child's difficulties affect the whole family.

Community dentist

Can provide advice on diet and planning for healthy teeth as well as dental services to children who find mainstream dental services difficult.

Dietician

Can advise on food, diet and nutrition if a child is reluctant to eat, needs to be on a special diet or has difficulties chewing and/or swallowing.

Educational psychologist

Can assess a child's development and provide support and advice on learning and behaviour to the child's parents and teachers.

Your family doctor (GP)

Will be the first person to ask for medical help and advice. They can ask for your child to be seen by another specialist.

Health visitor

A nurse who has had extra training to work with families in the community. They can give practical advice on day to day matters such as feeding, sleep, teething, development and behaviour. Some health visitors have specialist roles such as working with children with disabilities.

A nursery or play school/group

Provides opportunities for pre-school children, usually aged 3-5 to take part in educational and fun activities. Some places have staff specifically trained to work with children with additional needs to stimulate and help their development.

Occupational therapist

Pays particular attention to hand-eye coordination, perception and manipulative skills. They can advise and provide suitable aids to help with everyday activities such as feeding, dressing, toileting, bathing and play in younger children and writing skills in older children.

Paediatrician

A doctor who specialises in looking after babies, children and young people. A paediatrician can coordinate and liaise with other agencies involved in the management, care and education of the child and family.

Specialist parent classes

Sometimes run locally to help parents who have disabled children find strategies to manage their child's behaviour.

Physiotherapist

Helps in the management and development of movement skills. There are a number of ways in which children can be helped. These may include exercises to strengthen weak muscles and games to improve coordination and motor skills.

A pre-school home visiting service

Is sometimes available for children with delayed development. In England this is called Portage. A teacher or Portage home visitor works alongside parents in the home offering practical help and ideas to help with the development of play, communication, relationships and learning for young children.

Psychiatrist

A doctor who specialises in problems that affect the ways a person thinks, feels or behaves. A child and adolescent psychiatrist specialises in working with children and young people. The psychiatrist might want to meet the whole family before deciding what help is appropriate. They can prescribe medication and might suggest a child be seen by a clinical psychologist.

Social worker

Supports children and families by advising them on practical and financial issues, telling them about local services and sometimes helping to arrange the support they need.

Special educational needs coordinator (SENCO)

Responsible for coordinating support for children with special educational needs in England and Wales. This can begin at an early age well before the child starts school and continues while they attend school. In Scotland the preschool home visiting teacher takes on this role before they start school. Once they attend school either the child's class teacher or a member of the Additional Support Learning staff is responsible.

Speech and language therapist

Helps children learn to communicate, either through speech or other methods. They can also help if there are problems with eating, drinking and swallowing.

Early years centres

Sometimes called children's centres or family centres, give advice and support on education, health and childcare to children under five and their families.

Get in contact with us

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 020 7608 8700

 info@contact.org.uk


 www.contact.org.uk


 www.facebook.com/contactafamily

 www.twitter.com/contactafamily

 www.youtube.com/contact

Free helpline for parents and families:

 **0808 808 3555** (Mon–Fri, 9.30am–5pm)

 helpline@contact.org.uk (Access to over 200 languages)



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