

## **Early Years Level 3 Special Educational Needs Coordinator Specification – Notes for Awarding Organisations**

### **Background**

The [Early Years Workforce Strategy](#) published in March 2017, included a commitment to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), by developing a SEND qualification for early years practitioners.

The Department for Education (DfE) has been working with organisations that specialise in SEND to create a specification for a level 3 early years Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) qualification. The group have also created a level 3 Early Years SENCO job description to give guidance for practitioners and providers about the role. The job description will inform individuals of the breadth and depth of the role and also highlight specialist SEND knowledge and skills required.

Additionally, a level 2 SEND qualification specification has been created using the criteria being developed for new level 2 Early Years Assistant (EYA) qualifications (which awarding organisations (AOs) will develop for delivery from September 2019).

There is no mandatory requirement for the level 2 or level 3 SENCO qualification.

### **Who is the L3 EY SENCO qualification for?**

The level 3 EY SENCO qualification will not be a requirement for practitioners but it is intended to support staff in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector who want to specialise in working with children with SEND and undertake the level 3 EY SENCO role.

Practitioners taking this qualification will be working in the PVI sector. SENCOs in maintained schools are required to have qualified teacher status (QTS) and to gain the [Master's-level National Award for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator](#) within 3 years of taking up the post.

### **AOs supporting information**

The SEND experts involved in the development of these specifications have agreed to AOs consulting them for advice and guidance when developing the EY Level 3 SENCO qualification. If you would like their contact details please email [Diane Rainbow](#).

When developing the EY Level 3 SENCO qualification, AOs should also have regard to the SEND code of practice. This is statutory guidance for organisations who work with and support children and young people who have SEND.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Supporting Documents

- Level 3 EY SENCO qualification specification
- Level 3 EY SENCO job description