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Module Code: LCHS4001

Module: Academic and Employability skills

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Submitted on:

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1: Written Report

1.1 Introduction

This report looks at the role of a children's support worker for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). This role is selected to explain the vital support provided to children with special educational needs in care and education settings. The role is highly important as it helps children access learning, build independence and engage with activities alongside their peers (Lester et al, 2024). This report will describe the duties and background of the role, outline its significance within health and social care, and evaluate the key skills required to carry out the work effectively.

1.2 Description of, and background to, children's support worker for SEND in healthcare

A children's support worker for SEND works across schools, early years settings and care services. In this role, the worker helps children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities take part in daily life. Core duties include helping children and young people access learning activities, support personal care and routines, follow individual support plans, encourage social skills, and work alongside teachers, health professionals and families (McDonald & Lester 2022).

The most important duty is to provide consistent, person – centred help that meets each child's unique needs, ensuring they have the same opportunities as other children to learn, grow and feel included. Key skills needed include clear and patient communication, the ability to adapt approaches to different needs, good observation skills and the ability to work well as part of a team (Department for Education, 2025). This role is vital within health and social because it removes barriers to participation, supports children's emotional and social wellbeing, and helps improve long – term life outcomes for those with additional needs.

1.3 Evaluation of the skills needed for children's support worker for SEND in healthcare

Three of the most important skills for this role are clear and patient communication, the ability to adapt practice to individual needs, and strong observation skills. These are selected because they form the foundation of safe, effective support for children

with SEND who may struggle to express their needs or respond to standard approaches. As outlined in the official NHS Careers and the National Careers Services (2024), these skills are central to working well with children who have additional needs.

Effective communication is essential as many children with SEND have difficulty understanding spoken instructions or sharing how they feel. Using simple language, visual timetables, gestures or alternative communication methods like Makaton (The Makaton charity, 2023) to help build trust, ensure children understand what is happening, and helps them feel heard. This skill also supports clear, consistent information sharing with families, teachers, and health professionals, so all teams work towards the same goal (Department for Education, 2025). For example, using visual cards to explain a change in routine can prevent distress and help a child feel secure.

Adapting practice is essential because every child's needs, strengths, and preferences are unique. What works well for one child may cause anxiety or confusion for another. Adjusting activities, breaking tasks into smaller steps, or changing how support is delivered helps ensure children can take part and achieve success, rather than being expected to fit into fixed routines (Department for Education, 2025). For instance, allowing extra time for tasks supports children who process information more slowly.

Observation skills allow staff to notice small changes in behaviour, mood, or ability that may signal discomfort, unmet needs, or progress. This helps identify issues early, prevent difficulties from worsening, and ensures support plans are updated appropriately. Observation also provides evidence to share with other professionals to guide further help (National Careers Service, 2026).

These skills improve practice across all care and education roles: they reduce misunderstandings, build positive relationships and make support more effective. If these skills are missing, children may become distressed, their needs may go unrecognised or support may not match what they require. This can lead to poor wellbeing, limited participation, and slower progress.

1.4 Strategies to improve the skills for support worker for SEND

Three effective strategies to develop the core skills needed for this role are specialist training and learning, working alongside experienced practitioners, and regular reflection and feedback. These strategies are chosen because they help build strong, practical skills for working with send children (NHS Careers, 2026; Department for Education, 2025).

Specialist training teaches things like different types of SEND, communication methods including Makaton, also how to write and use individual care plans. This gives workers new ideas on ways to help children. For example, a course on autism explains why some children will get upset by changes, and how visual timetables will help them feel safe. (National Careers Services, 2026). Training also makes sure work follows rules and best practice.

Working with experienced colleagues means watching and learning from people who already do the job well. This helps workers see how to handle real-life situations. For example, shadowing an experienced worker shows how to change tasks for different needs, and lets new workers practice skills with help (Department for Education, 2025). This is a very effective way to learn, as it uses real examples from daily work.

Reflection and Feedback means talking to a supervisor about what went well and what could be better. This helps workers to learn from their own experience. For example, thinking about how a child reacted to a new way of working helps adjust support to suit them better (Bond et al., 2024). This helps improve skills over time and keeps work focused on what each child needs by adapting practice.

1.4 Conclusion

This report has explained the role of a children's support worker for SEND, why this work is so important, the skills needed, and how to develop these skills. The role helps children with additional needs take part in learning, make friends, and grow in confidence. Good communication, adapting support to individual needs, and careful observation are the most important skills. These can be improved through training, learning from other experienced colleagues, and using regular feedback. Overall, this work is vital to ensure children with SEND have equal opportunities and fulfilling lives as other children.

1.5 Reference List

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