

# I think my child has Autism...

## Does my child need a diagnosis in order to receive support in school?

Voyage schools support 'needs, not diagnosis', which means that regardless of diagnosis, needs are supported in the most appropriate way

## Does my child need a diagnosis?

GPs don't ordinarily do referrals to a Community Paediatrician anymore. Schools are asked to do this, where appropriate. Voyage academies have put together this pathway to support parents with the autism diagnosis referral process.

## What do schools do?

Voyage academies support the needs presented by our children. We follow the 'Graduated Approach', which means that we assess children, plan how to support them, carry out that targeted support and then review. This cycle may repeat many times and then could lead to seeking advice or referring to outside agencies, in addition to the core training that all Voyage academies receive.



## Other key information:

A diagnosis is a medical condition that stays with a child for life.

A diagnosis does not mean your child will get a 1:1

A diagnosis does not mean your child will have an EHCP

A diagnosis does not necessarily mean your child will be on the SEN register.

Parents can access the support on the pathway without a referral to Community Paediatrics

If your child is 5 or under, speak to your health visitor and see how they can help

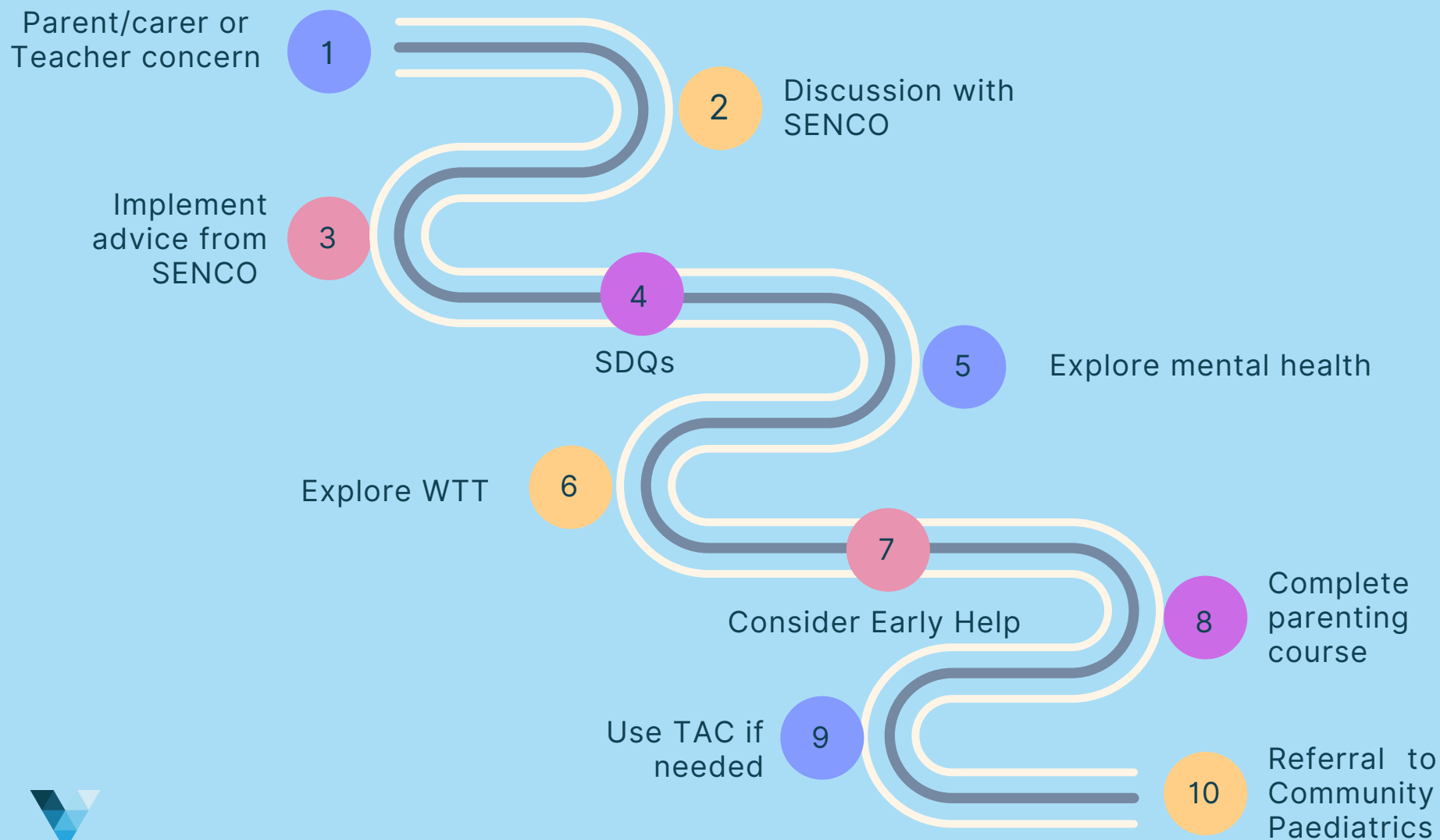
**Before a referral can be completed, you should follow the steps below to gather evidence that different strategies have been tried and tested.**

**Referrals will not be accepted by Community Paediatrics unless strategies have been tried over time.**

**Please also note that steps may not be completed in this exact order, e.g. Early Help may be suggested at any point during the process.**



# Pathway of Support for Social Communication differences



- 1 Speak to the teacher and discuss your concerns. They can discuss with you what works at school and offer suggestions of things that might help at home.
- 2 Once you have tried the suggestions from the class teacher and there are no changes after at least 6 weeks, arrange to see the SENCO. They may be able to signpost you to other things that may help. Remember things need to be consistent and tried over time. It can take 2+ months of work for behaviour changes to become embedded. It is vital that you stick to it, even when it is tricky and your child is pushing back.
- 3 The school SENCO may give you a 'Strengths and Difficulties' Questionnaires to identify further possible needs.
- 4 The school SENCO may suggest exploring the Mental Health pathway, to support needs within this area. This may be parental support or sessions for your child.
- 5 The school SENCO may suggest exploring support offered by The Working Together Team, to support needs within this area. This is in addition to the training that school staff access.
- 6 School may suggest an Early Help Assessment, which focuses on ensuring support is explored for other areas of a child's life, e.g. environmental factors such as housing, well-being, relationships or financial difficulties, as well as behaviour support.
- 7 Following an Early Help Assessment, a referral for an Early Help Worker may be completed, or a referral to a parenting course may be offered. Further meetings may be offered as part of the TAC (Team Around the Child) process, to continue this support for a period of time.
- 8 Once the above steps are complete, the school SENCO may then suggest a referral to Community Paediatrics for further support.



**Further information can be found here:**

**LPCF (Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum)** – offering free, ongoing signposting, information, and peer support for families. <https://www.lincspcf.org.uk/>

**The Local Offer** – a central point of information for services and support available across Lincolnshire for children and young people with SEND. <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/send-local-offer>

**Liase** – for specialist information, advice, and support around SEND Law and processes. <https://www.liaselincolnshire.org.uk/>

**Virtual Autism Hub** - NHS service for non-clinical autism enquiries. <https://www.lpft.nhs.uk/virtual-autism-hub>

