

## Are Starmer and Reeves now going to make children with ..

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I very strongly support this letter signed by 100 very well-informed people [in the Guardian today](#):

*The legal rights to an education that meets the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (Send) are under threat. Many thousands of children risk being denied vital provision, or losing access to education altogether.*

*As new education reforms loom, every sign from the government suggests the right to an education, health and care plan (EHCP) is to be removed from children attending mainstream schools. Local authorities want EHCPs drastically reduced, or removed altogether, to relieve them of duties they often find costly and troublesome.*

*About 85% of children with Send are educated in mainstream settings. Over 270,000 of these children have EHCPs. These legally enforceable documents detail a child or young person's needs, and the support to enable them to fulfil their individual potential. EHCPs allow children and young people with all kinds of disabilities to receive an education.*

*Without statutory support, underpinned by necessary extra resources for schools, it's extremely unlikely that ministers will achieve their aim of more children with Send thriving, or even surviving, in mainstream education. A reduction or complete snatching-away of EHCPs in mainstream education wouldn't mean their needs magically vanish. It would, instead, increase applications for already overcrowded special schools or mean they would be forced out of school altogether.*

*We believe the public are on our side, and we support the newly launched Save Our Children's Rights (SOCR) campaign led by Special Needs Jungle, IPSEA and others. This campaign is calling for EHCPs to be retained, now and in the future. SOCR's recent [petition](#) reflecting this aim rapidly passed 100,000 signatures, meaning the issue will be considered for a parliamentary debate, and is still growing.*

For more than 40 years, children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities have had a statutory right to an education that meets their needs. Set

alongside catastrophic plans to cut benefits for disabled people, this raises the question of who we are as a country and the kind of society in which we want to live. Whatever the Send system's problems, the answer is not to remove the rights of children and young people. Families cannot afford to lose these precious legal protections.

We know that [Reform and the Tories already deny](#) that there are as many children with autism and ADHD as clearly have these conditions, and that those children need the support that they clearly require, and we know that Labour is indifferent to the needs of those with almost any form of disability, could it be that Labour is now going to make children with special needs pay to balance their books? The possibility is real, and horrendous.

I have already written about education and the economic benefits this morning. It would not just be economic madness to abandon children with Send, because the long-term costs of doing so will be horrendous; it would also represent massively inappropriate neoliberal economic madness. But has that ever stopped Starmer and Reeves?

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Is Rachel Reeves  
going to  
sacrifice  
children with  
special needs to  
her balanced  
budget?

Richard Murphy  
  
Funding the Future

## **Taking further action**

If you want to write a letter to your MP on the issues raised in this blog post, there is a ChatGPT prompt to assist you in doing so, with full instructions, [here](#).