

# Welcome to this Whole School SEND webinar!

The session will begin shortly.

- Feel free to introduce yourself in the 'Chat'
- Put any questions for our speakers in the 'Q&A'
- Slides and a recording will be available tomorrow
- Attendees are automatically muted and have their cameras off
- Please be respectful towards speakers and other attendees
- Message one of the team if you are having any technical issues

Please complete our opening poll while you wait for the session to begin.

# Working with Parents, Carers and Families

Erica Wolstenholme, WSS National Coordinator

Tania Tirraoro, Special Needs Jungle

18<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Funded by



Department  
for Education



**nasen**  
Helping Everyone Achieve

# Whole School SEND Contract Aims

Equip the school workforce to prioritise and understand their responsibilities in relation to SEND and to share and embed good practice at individual and setting-level within their CPD and school improvement plans, particularly in relation to SEN Support, early intervention and effective preparation for adulthood

Equip schools to meet their training needs in relation to SEND to improve provision through the delivery of targeted training packages within specific Local Authorities

Build capability within the school workforce to ensure all professionals can contribute to excellent SEND provision at every point in their career by providing clear CPD pathways to support their development, including in relation to specialist provision



## Breaking News: nasen announces new CEO

Annamarie  
Hassell – CEO  
NASEN

Director of Practice and Programmes at the National Children's Bureau.

100 Conversations: Gathered evidence on the hopes and concerns of parents and lays down a range of challenges to civil society in terms of what support should look like for families.

# Alex Grady

## Head of Whole School SEND

- *An essential principle of our work is that it is co-produced – we know that one of the missed opportunities of the SEND reforms has been person-centred working becoming embedded across the system, as was the intention of the Children and Families Act. We want every school leader and every teacher to ask for, listen to and act upon the views and wishes of the people at the centre of the SEND system – children, young people and their families!*
- *(Special Needs Jungle 2021)*



# Whole School SEND Values



# Whole School SEND Values

Inclusion – Diversity - Strength-based approach  
– Collaboration - Integrity

## **Collaboration:**

*We believe that human connections and relationships are important. We aim to support local networks of education professionals to drive sustainable improvement to SEND provision. Our Regional SEND Leaders are working with existing local networks and influencers to create opportunities to reflect honestly on SEND provision. We create opportunities to share knowledge, ideas and experiences. We believe that we achieve more when we work together, and that collaboration is essential to deliver effective bespoke support to every child.*

# The 7 Cs of Working With Parents

**SPECIAL  
NEEDS  
JUNGLE**

Tania Tirraoro

Special Needs Jungle Ltd



# What's the situation in SEND?

**2021**

2020

**15.8%**



15.5%

of children in England had SEND

**3.7%**



3.3%

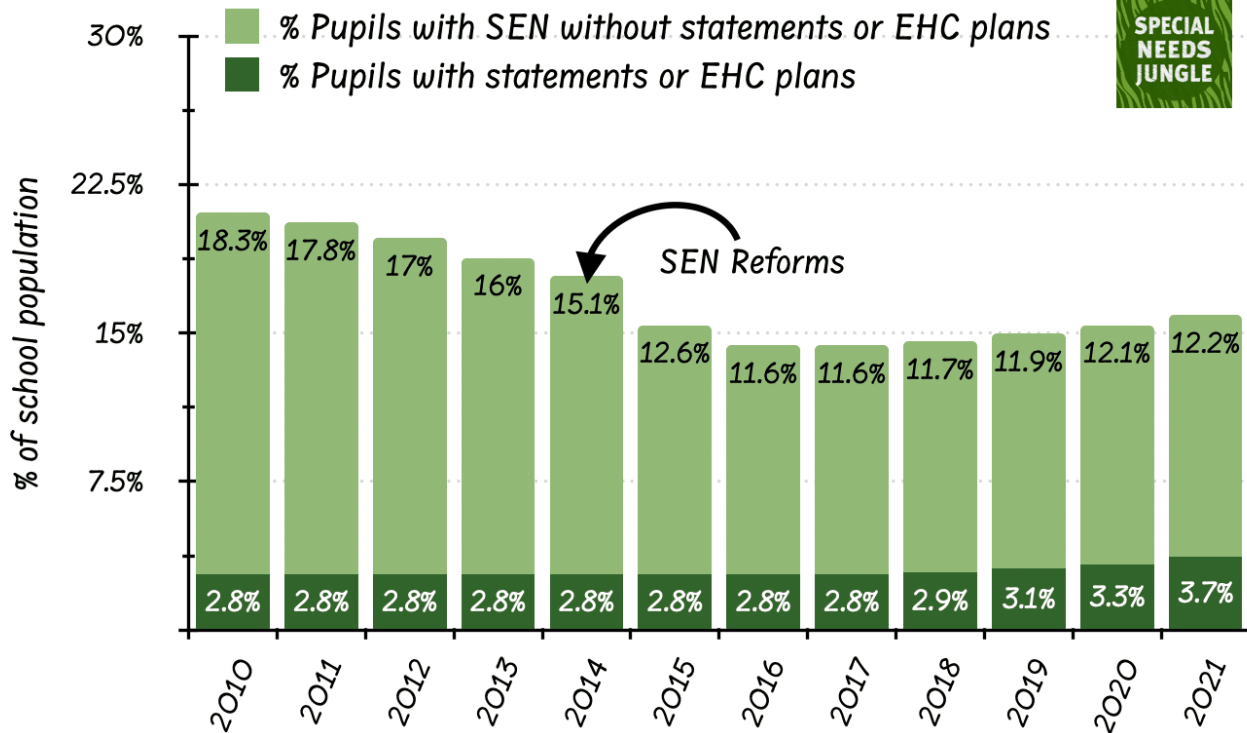
Had an EHCP at the end of Jan '20

**12.2%**



12.1%

Of pupils were on SEN Support

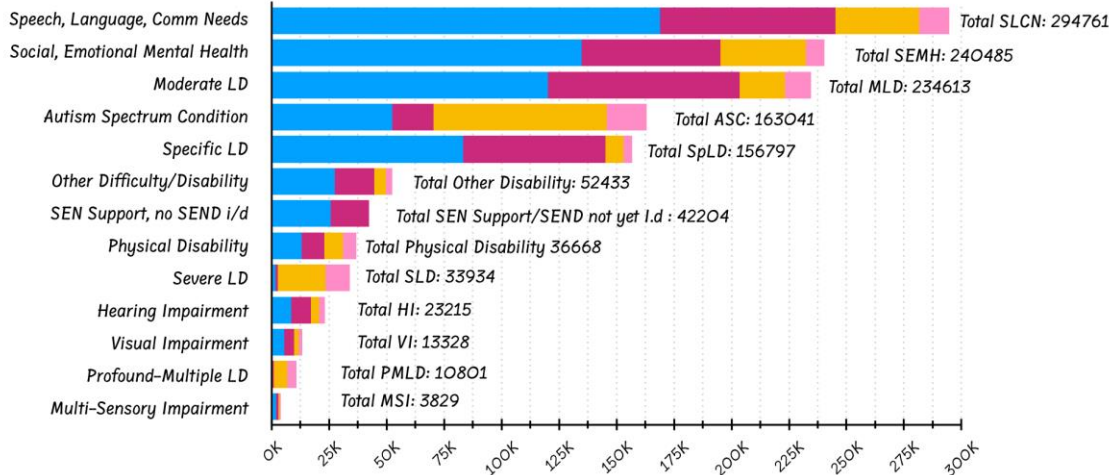


**SPECIAL  
NEEDS  
JUNGLE**

# State-funded primary, secondary and special schools : percentage of pupils with SEND by gender and primary type of need in 2020

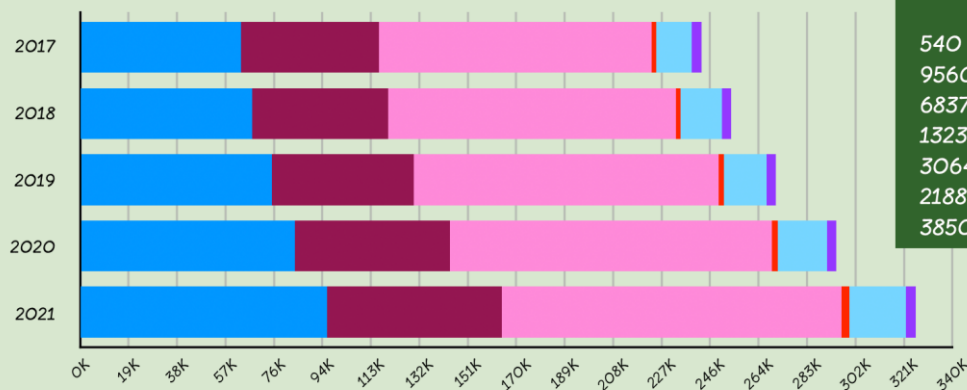
SPECIAL NEEDS JUNGLE

Boys on SEN support Girls on SEN Support Boys with EHCPs Girls with EHCPs



## What's the situation in SEND?

## Where are children & young people with EHCPs?



2021  
Figures

540 State Nursery  
95601 State Primary  
68370 State Secondary  
132306 Maintained Special  
3064 PRU  
21887 Independent  
3850 NMSS

SPECIAL NEEDS JUNGLE

# What's working with parents all about?

It's called Co-PRODUCTION

It's NOT:

- ❖ Consultation (seeking the parental opinion – which can then be ignored)



It's NOT:

- ❖ Participation (taking part in the debate or a Q and A)

It IS:

- ❖ Co-production is when all team members work together on an EQUAL basis and agree outcomes

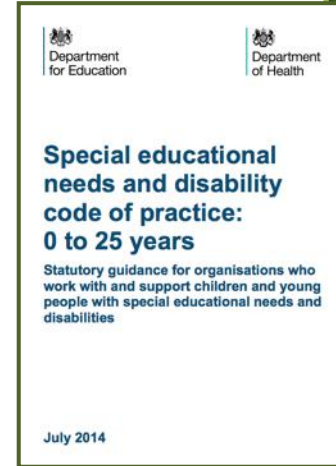
# Co-Production in the CoP

“Parents’ views are important during the process of carrying out an EHC needs assessment and drawing up or reviewing an EHC plan in relation to a child.

“Local authorities, early years providers and schools should enable parents to share their knowledge about their child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon. At times, parents, teachers and others may have differing expectations of how a child’s needs are best met.

**“Sometimes these discussions can be challenging but it is in the child’s best interests for a positive dialogue between parents, teachers and others to be maintained, to work through points of difference and establish what action is to be taken.”**

Code of Practice



# How can you work better with parents?

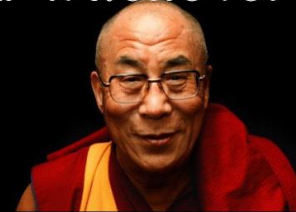
- ❖ Understand that the system is now “Person-Centred” NOT service-centred.
- ❖ Think about how you come across to parents when meeting or talking to them – body language, voice tone & expression are as important as words.
- ❖ Remember, you are the authority figure/ team leader – parents look to you for answers. (If you don't have them, admit it and offer to work together to find out – this is co-production too!)
- ❖ Stress that you, TA & the parent are a TEAM around their child and there are no 'sides'– everyone is part of Team Child.
- ❖ Use apps such as Class Dojo or WhatsApp to communicate with parents – since the pandemic, this should be well-embedded!
- ❖ Smile when you see them – it always counts!



# How you can help the process

- ❖ Work cooperatively, with kindness, understanding and with consideration for the families' challenges.
- ❖ Keep good notes and reminders of your last actions
- ❖ Proactively keep in touch – let parents know when things are going well as well as when there are problems.
- ❖ Develop a list of resources from your and other parents' experience of local resources and support of use.
- ❖ Tell them about Special Needs Jungle 😊
- ❖ Remember the 7 Cs....

**Be kind whenever possible**



**It is always possible.**



▶ See the difficulties they experience through their eyes, not the eyes of a budget, someone else's (paid for) convenience or one's own personal judgements.

## Compassion

1

▶ Information must be easily available to those it's intended for and be unambiguous.

▶ When we're busy, it's easy to forget how our contact will be received...How would you feel if this was said/sent to you?

## Communication

2

▶ Remember: A parent isn't asking for a favour, they are asking for what their child needs to meet their aspirations and ambitions – they want the same things for their child as every other parents does – even you.

## Care

3

▶ Ask parents to help you communicate with them better - ask what works for them, don't guess. This is co-production

▶ Get to know your parents. Maybe create private aide memoires sheets for each family for when one calls

## Creativity

4

▶ Remember: Parents are not the enemy (Remembering you're all on the side of the child can take the ego out of the equation)

▶ They DO expect you to understand that the law trumps LA policies. Every time.

## Culture Change

5

▶ Commit to remembering the importance of the child or young person, and their parents, in participating as much as possible in decisions, and providing them with the information and support necessary to enable them do this.

## Commitment

6

▶ SEND CoP: "...parents know their children best. It is important all professionals listen & understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to & address concerns raised by children themselves."

## Control

7

7Cs of  
Working with  
Parents

## Scenario 1: Josh

Mrs Miller is very anxious about her child, Josh, who, she says, is acting up at home and having after-school meltdowns.

However, at school, you don't see anything that the parent is saying. Josh is quiet and compliant.

You have tried to reassure her that you don't see an issue, but the parent will not accept it and wants an educational psychologist to assess her son.

❖ What would you advise the class teacher to do?



## Josh: TOP TIPS!

- ❖ Children with SEND often bottle up their anxieties and emotions at school and let them out at home where they feel safe.
- ❖ Ask the parents to keep a diary of their child's mood at home and then think about their day at school to see how it correlates to where the stress points could be.
- ❖ Sit down with the child and ask them what's bothering them.
- ❖ The SEND CoP says: In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves. 6.20 [SEP]

## Scenario 2: MDT Meeting

You are in a multi-disciplinary team meeting for an EHCP. Present are: the parent, the child, aged 10, (for half of the meeting), SENCo/teacher (you), an LA case officer, and, luckily, an SLT.

- ❖ How would you introduce the child's parent?
- ❖ Why would it not be appropriate to introduce the parent as 'mum' or 'dad'?
- ❖ How do you run the meeting so that the parent feels their input is valued and included?

# MDT Top Tips

- ❖ Give the parent the opportunity to introduce themselves and ASK how they would like to be subsequently addressed.
- ❖ If the parent says to use their first name, ask them to also use your first name so there is a level playing field. Familiarity can help foster teamwork.
- ❖ Never refer to a parent as 'Mum' or 'Dad' (though Billy's mum, Sandra is ok)
- ❖ The SEND CoP says: LAs/Schools should enable parents to share their knowledge about their child and give them confidence that their views and contributions are valued and will be acted upon. At times, parents, teachers and others may have differing expectations of how a child's needs are best met. Sometimes these discussions can be challenging but it is in the child's best interests for a positive dialogue between parents, teachers and others to be maintained, to work through points of difference

## Scenario 3: Jack

Jack is seven and is having difficulties with his reading.

His mum, a lone parent, is not often able to come to parents' evenings and while you have already put in some relevant support, you would like help from home to reinforce his learning.

You have sent letters home and left a phone message about this, but had no response. Jack walks to school with his older brother. He says his mum doesn't have time to read to him as she works two jobs. His Dad is not around right now.

❖ How would you help his mum to engage?

## Jack: Top Tips

- ❖ When parents are under pressure through financial, family or work difficulties they can be suffering extreme stress. Keep trying to make contact or ask reception staff to help. Ask the child and older sibling to pass on a message with a phone number or email address.
- ❖ Perhaps offer to meet in a neutral location if they can't come to school and don't want a home visit.
- ❖ Avoid sending a long letter with lots of text.
- ❖ When you meet, tell the parent the good things first and explain difficulties without acronyms
- ❖ Give the parents resources they can follow up - web links, local support.
- ❖ Consider that the parent may also have an LD and think of inclusive ways to communicate
- ❖ Explain the importance of working together and ask how best you can keep in contact - often SMS or WhatsApp can be very useful

## Scenario 4

You are putting a child on SEN Support to help address their learning difficulties.

The SEND Code of Practice says the parents should be part of the team.

❖ How do you make this happen?

# SEN Support TOP TIPS

The SEND Code of Practice says:

- ❖ (6.65) Where a pupil is receiving SEN support, schools should talk to parents regularly to set clear outcomes and review progress towards them, discuss the activities and support that will help achieve them, and identify the responsibilities of the parent, the pupil and the school.
- ❖ (6.66) These discussions can build confidence in the actions being taken by the school, but they can also strengthen the impact of SEN support by increasing parental engagement in the approaches and teaching strategies that are being used. Finally, they can provide essential information on the impact of SEN support outside school and any changes in the pupil's needs.
- ❖ As well as this: Treat the parent as you would another professional. Ask, listen and value their views. Keep them informed of progress and problems. Don't assume parents=problems
- ❖ Ask how they want to be kept up to date, whether phone, email, SMS, WhatsApp or a mixture.

## Scenario 5

A child has a medical condition and spends a lot of time out of school ill at home or in hospital.

❖ How can you best support them and their parent?



# Medical Conditions Top Tips

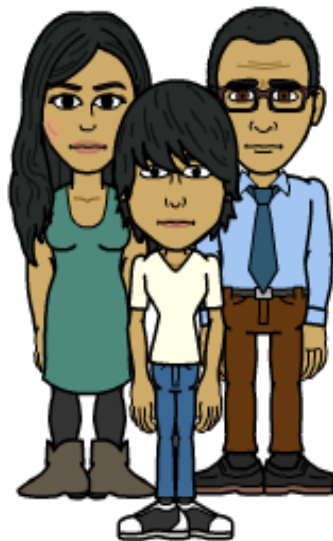
- ❖ There is specific DfE guidance for children with medical conditions and children out of school through illness (this includes school refusal through anxiety).
- ❖ Parents have an important role to play, whether their child is at home or in hospital and should be consulted before teaching begins. Children should also be involved in decisions from the start, as this will encourage their commitment to it.
- ❖ As well as this, keep in touch with the parent and, if the child is able to, think about relevant online resources that fit with your curriculum that you can send.
- ❖ Ensure that all school letters and information about events are still sent home via mail or email so that the child stays up to date
- ❖ Think about you or a familiar TA visiting the child if possible so they still feel part of the school.

# Parents' Advice for Co-Production

“One thing I would love to say to health care professionals and those involved in any SEN(D) child's education is please, please read the background information about a child properly before you write a report.. And check your facts!”

“If I had an audience with these SEN prof. people I would want them to know how desperate we get, how lost we get. We are thrown into a situation we know nothing about. We look to the professionals to help us. We trust them, at our most vulnerable we trust them.

I and others I know have been let down at every turn. The school, the SENCo, CAMHS. I started this SEN journey a very different person that I am now.. All I ever expected was honesty. Something that was a very rare find.”



**[www.specialneedsjungle.com](http://www.specialneedsjungle.com)**

**[team@specialneedsjungle.com](mailto:team@specialneedsjungle.com)**




Preparing for  
Adulthood from the  
Earliest Years Review  
Guide

General | 14 Dec 2020 Free

WSS Review Guide

[View resource](#)



Every Leader is a Leader of SEND  
A collaborative tool to enable all leaders  
to understand and demonstrate  
inclusion in their settings

Demonstrating Inclusion  
Tool

General | 14 Dec 2020 Free

WSS Review Guide

Every Leader is a Leader of SEND

[View resource](#)



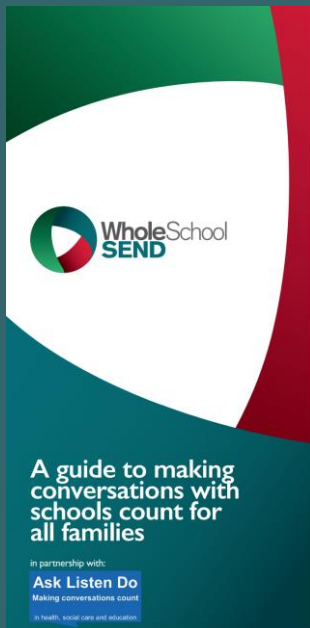
SEND Reflection  
Framework

General | 14 Dec 2020 Free

WSS Review Guide

[View resource](#)

Whole school SEND resources  
[WSS Review Guides | SendGateway](#)



# Ask, Listen, Do: A guide to making conversations count for all families

General | 14 Dec 2020

This leaflet, funded by the Department for Education and developed by families as part of NHS England's Ask Listen Do project, is intended to help build a mutually respectful partnership between families and the school, college or other education settings. On occasion, relationships between families and schools are not as successful as they need to be. By building trust this can change and a new way of working together can be developed.

Suitable for: A parent/carer, Young person

- [Ask, Listen, Do: A guide to making conversations count for all families | SendGateway](#)



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for Education



# Thank you for attending!

- Join our member community:  
<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/register>
- Get in touch: [info@wholeschoolsend.com](mailto:info@wholeschoolsend.com)
- [Sendgateway.org.uk](https://www.sendgateway.org.uk)
- [Nasen.org.uk](https://www.nasen.org.uk)
- [@wholeschoolSEND](https://twitter.com/wholeschoolSEND)
- [@nasen\\_org](https://twitter.com/nasen_org)

# Contact Information

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- Malcolm Reeve, WSS National SEND Leader – [Malcolm@wholeschoolsend.com](mailto:Malcolm@wholeschoolsend.com)
- Erica Wolstenholme, WSS National Coordinator – [ericaw@nasen.org.uk](mailto:ericaw@nasen.org.uk)
- Amanda Wright, WSS National Coordinator – [amandaw@nasen.org.uk](mailto:amandaw@nasen.org.uk)

## **Sign up to receive our monthly e-newsletter!**

Monthly updates on all our events, new resources and other useful information:

<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/user> →  
Communication Preferences

## Additional Links and Useful Info:

- [Alex Grady, Head of WSS, Blog for SNJ](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice \(2015\)](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice Easy-Read Guide for Parents](#)
- [SEND Code of Practice Easy-Read Guide for Children and Young People](#)
- [SNJ 7C's of Working with Parents PDF/Poster](#)
- [DfE Guidance: Supporting children with medical conditions](#)
- [Leaflet for Families: Making Conversations Count](#)



## Additional Links and Useful Info:

- [Recorded webinar: Part 3 of Early Identification and Intervention](#)
- [Recorded webinar: Childhood Trauma – Supporting Healing and Recovery After Lockdown](#)
- [Recorded webinar: Returning to School and Making Use of Trauma-Informed Approaches](#)
- [Leaflet for Families: Understanding SEN Support](#)
- [Leaflet for Families: Returning to School After a Period of Absence](#)
- [Safe Returns Handbook](#)

# Upcoming WSS Events:

- Practical Strategies to Support SLCN
- Developing an Inclusive, Accessible and Ambitious Curriculum
- The Inclusive Classroom – Primary and Secondary
- Getting to Grips with Great SEND Governance
- Leadership of SEND

You can see all upcoming webinars from WSS and find all our free resources on our website: <https://www.sendgateway.org.uk>

# Let us know how this session has informed your practice!

Whole School SEND is always looking to improve our CPD offer by evaluating how attendees have changed their practice or embedded new strategies. We welcome any feedback on the session, either through our **post-events survey** or directly via **email** to [info@wholeschoolsend.com](mailto:info@wholeschoolsend.com).

If you would like to, we are also very happy for attendees to submit copies of any post-event activities so we can see how these have been used in practice

Let us know:

- What worked? What didn't? What were the challenges in putting ideas from this session into practice? What do you need more support with? Do you feel more confident after attending this session?

# Find your region

- The WSS Regions are based on the boundaries used by the Regional Schools Commissioner areas.
- You can find out which region your local authority comes under here:

<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send-regional-send-leads>

# Recordings

- You can find recordings of our past webinars with the accompanying materials on the SEND gateway:

<https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/page/wss-past-events>

- You can also subscribe to our YouTube channel to keep updated:

[www.youtube.com/c/WholeSchoolSEND](http://www.youtube.com/c/WholeSchoolSEND)



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Please get in touch if you are struggling  
to locate any of our resources.

[info@wholeschoolsend.com](mailto:info@wholeschoolsend.com)

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