

Education

Children with special educational needs have a right to a place in a mainstream school if it is their parents wish and provided it does not compromise the education of other children in the school. All schools are expected to provide for their needs and make reasonable adjustments to ensure their inclusion. Schools can call on the support and advice of a range of professionals and specialists who work in the locality, including Specialist Teaching Service, Educational Psychology Service, lead school and special school outreach and speech & language therapy services. For some children where mainstream schools cannot meet their needs, a special school place may be needed. Some special schools have links with mainstream schools to enable the children to learn and play together.

Pre-School – Getting Help before starting school

Early Years Action

Through Early Years Action, the child gets help that is either extra to and/or different from the help that the pre-school usually gives children.

The pre-school will discuss your child and their needs with you. If they decide that your child may need more support, they will collect all available information about your child. They will then decide what help to give. You should always be consulted and kept fully informed about the help your child is given and of the results of that help.

Your child's help should be written down in a document called an Individual Education Plan (IEP). The IEP should be checked continually. If your child does not make enough progress and the school thinks they need advice from specialists they will move your child to Early Years Action Plus.

Early Years Action Plus

At Early Years Action Plus the school will give your child more or different help than they gave through Early Years Action.

External specialists may assess your child and with your child's teachers should look at different ways of teaching and helping your child. The specialists will advise on a new IEP. Sometimes they will teach or help children personally. These specialists could be educational psychologists, behaviour specialists, speech and language therapists, healthcare professionals etc. The help should usually take place in your child's pre-school.

Portage - www.portage.org.uk

Portage is an educational home visiting service for pre-school babies and children with additional needs. Children and families are visited weekly or fortnightly in their homes and a programme of activities to support their development is devised between the family and the Portage Home Visitor. In addition to home visiting, which is their core work, they offer groups for children and their families.

School Years 5-19

If you have any concerns about your child's education the first thing to do is to talk to your child's class teacher. If you need more information, find out who the school's SENCO is and discuss your worries with them. You may also wish to talk to the head of year, head teacher, governor with responsibility for SEN or the chair of the governing body. The Partnership with Parents Service can support you with information or offer someone to go with you to meetings.

School Action

To start with, the school will probably provide extra help via School Action. This means the school should provide interventions from within its allocated resources that are additional to, or different from, what other children need. The SENCO and class teacher will put together a special plan and targets for your child called an Individual Education Plan (IEP). You should be shown this so you can also help your child. Your child's progress will be reviewed to check targets are being met.

School Action Plus

Where despite sustained intervention at School Action level a child is still failing to make appropriate progress, the school may seek more help from external specialists. Your child will have an IEP with targets and reviews and experts from outside the school will advise or help. This is called School Action Plus.

Statement of SEN (a Statement)

If this further support through Early Years Action Plus or School Action Plus is insufficient, you or your school can ask your local authority to carry out a statutory assessment of your child's Special Educational Needs (SEN). This is the first step towards obtaining a Statement. Your child doesn't have to have received Early Years, School Action or Action Plus before you can make a request. There are special provisions for children under two.

The LA will consider the need for a statutory assessment and if they think it appropriate, they will seek parental, educational, psychological, medical and social services advice. The LA will also seek advice from any professionals identified by you. The LA will send you a comprehensive information pack to help you understand and participate in the process. You will be asked for written permission in advance of any assessments of your child and you have a right to attend all assessments and interviews that form part of the Statutory Assessment Procedure.

The whole process should be completed within 26 weeks, as follows:

- 6 weeks to decide whether or not to make an assessment.
- 10 weeks to make the assessment.
- 2 weeks for drafting and issuing the Proposed Statement.
- 8 weeks for finalising the Statement, giving details of provision including the school your child will go to.

If the LA decides not to make a Statement they must notify parents giving their reasons. You have a right to appeal if you disagree.

What is a statement?

A statement is a document that sets out a child's special educational and other non-educational needs, the provision to meet those needs and their school or type of school. Your local authority has a legal obligation to ensure that the special educational provision set out in Part 3 of the Statement is provided.

The contents of a statement are as follows:

Part 1 – Introduction: child's name, address, date of birth, home language & religion and names and addresses of the child's parents.

Part 2 – Description of the child's SEN.

Part 3 – Details of the special educational provision the local authority considers necessary to meet the child's SEN as set out in Part 2. This is broken down into the following three areas:

- a) the objectives the special educational provision should meet;
- b) the actual special educational provision required;
- c) monitoring arrangements.

Part 4 – Type and/or name of the school where the provision set out in Part 3 is to be made, or the local authority's arrangements for provision to be made other than at school.

Part 5 – Non-educational needs.

Part 6 – Non-educational provision.

Appendices – copies of all the expert reports received as part of the assessment procedure.

Help with statement process

Parent Partnership Services

Every local council has to provide a Parent Partnership Service (PPS) by law. PPS offer information & advice to families of children and young people with additional needs. PPS are at 'arm's length' from the local authority and the advice they offer is confidential and impartial.

The SEN National Advice Service – Launched by Contact a Family
www.cafamily.org.uk/advice-and-support/sen-national-advice-service

IPSEA – www.ipsea.org.uk

Offers free and independent advice to parents

ACE Education - www.ace-ed.org.uk

Offers free and independent advice to parents

Transport

LA's must provide free transport if it is necessary to enable the child to get to the nearest suitable school and it is over a statutory distance between the home address and school. For pupils who live less than the statutory distance, where as a result of their special educational needs or disability (even accompanied by a responsible adult), their welfare or safety, or the

welfare or safety of others, cannot be guaranteed, free transport to school is provided. The LA may provide a free bus pass or a minibus or a taxi. If the parent agrees to take their child to school, the LA may give an allowance towards the cost of fuel.