

Getting Extra Help at School

This factsheet aims to give a basic overview of what extra help is available in school and how to ask for it and should be used as a guide only. Special Educational Needs is a complex area and phone numbers of organisations that offer specialist help and advice are given at the end of this factsheet.

If your child is finding school work difficult or is slow at making progress, the school may give your child extra help through using different methods of teaching. This is called differentiation. If your child is still not making good progress, the school may consider giving the child Special Educational Needs (SEN) help. You must be told if your child gets SEN help.

Children with SEN can be given help through School Action or School Action Plus; children receiving help through School Action Plus receive more help. If the child still makes little progress the school may consider requesting a Statement of Special Educational Needs for the child.

I think my child needs extra help, what can I do?

You can write a letter to the school, stating the difficulties you feel your child has and asking to meet with the teacher and / or SENCO (special educational needs coordinator).

You can ask that your child attend the meeting.

What happens at the meeting?

Take a copy of your letter with you to ensure all your questions / points are answered.

If you do not understand anything – ask! You may be able to take someone with you to the meeting. After the meeting send a copy of your notes to the school to ensure everyone is clear about what was said and agreed.

What can I do if I am unhappy with the meeting?

If you are not happy, you could ask for a meeting with a senior member of staff, or contact one of the specialist advice organisations listed at the end of this factsheet.

The school agrees that my child is having difficulty, what happens next?

The school could suggest one of the following :-

Differentiation

This is where the child may be taught in a different way, or in a different group or has different work set.

School Action / School Action Plus

The SENCO will work with the Childs teachers and any other professionals involved (if the parents agree) to decide what help to give the child.

Your child will have an IEP (individual education plan) drawn up; this contains targets the school would like to see your child meet and details of how your child will be helped.

At School Action, professionals may be used. At School Action Plus professionals such as Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist will be used.

Statutory Assessment

If your child's difficulties are severe, it may be decided to request a Statutory Assessment. Remember, ask for everything to be put in writing and keep notes of meetings. It is also useful to keep a diary about your child.

What sort of help could my child get?

Your child may get taught in a different way, use different books. They may get help from a classroom assistant or go out for extra lessons.

What is in an IEP?

The IEP should have 3 or 4 short-term targets for your child to meet. It should contain details of what help will be put in place and how the school will decide if the help has worked. It should state when the IEP should be reviewed. IEP's should be reviewed at least every 6 months.

Reviewing the IEP

The review will look at what progress has been made, and listen to the views of the parents and child. The review will set new targets for the child and record progress.

Moving from differentiation to School Action / School Action Plus

If a child is making good progress over a period of time, it may be decided that they need less help than before. Similarly, if progress is not being made, the amount of help may be increased.

What do I do if I feel my child needs more help?

This may be noted at the IEP review, or you could write to the school asking for a meeting to discuss your concerns.

The school is giving less help now to my child

This may be because your child has made good progress and no longer needs the same amount of help. If you feel your child still needs the extra help, write to the school and ask for a written explanation.

I am not happy with the way the school are helping my child

If you are unhappy with the way the school are helping your child or you feel that your child is not getting the help he or she needs, contact one of the specialist advice organisations listed at the end of this factsheet. Differentiation, School Action and School Action Plus are covered through guidance in the SEN Code of Practice, rather than law and this can make it difficult for parents.

Advisory Centre of Education

(ACE)
Unit 1c Aberdeen Studios
2 Highbury Grove
London N5 2DQ
Advice Line: 0800 800 5793
(Monday to Friday 2pm-5pm)

Centre for the studies on Inclusive Education

Room 2S 203
S Block
Frenchay Campus
Coldharbour Lane
Bristol BS16 1QE
Tel: 0117 344 4007

Children's Legal Centre

University of Essex
Wivehoe Park
Colchester
Essex CO4 3SQ
Advice Line: 01206 873 820
Exclusion Line: 020 7704 9822

Children's Rights Alliance for England

319 City Road
London EC1V 1LI
Tel: 0207 278 8222

Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)

SEN Advice Services
7 Downey Close
London NW5 2VP
Tel: 0207 424 1612/1613/1614
(9am-5pm Monday to Friday)
Telephone advice, will take on cases if caller is a Camden resident otherwise will refer to local support.

Islington Education Legal Advice

Tel: 0207 697 1489
(Monday and Tuesday 10am-12 noon)
For people who live work or study in Islington

Independent Panel of Special

Educational advisors (IPSEA)
6 Carlow Mews
Woodbridge
Suffolk IP12 1DH
Help line: 0808 018 4016
Or: 01394 382 814
Tribunal Appeal Advice Line: 0208 682 0042

National Association Of Special Educational Needs (NASEN)

NASEN House
4-5 Amber Business Village
Amber Close
Amington
Tamworth
Staffordshire B77 4RP
Tel: 01827 311 500

National Autistic Society

393 City Road
London EC1V 1NG
Education Advice Line:
0800 358 8667
Tribunal Support Scheme:
0800 358 8668

Network 81

1-7 Woodfield Terrace
Stanstead
Essex CM24 8AJ
Help line: 0870 770 3306
(10am-2pm Monday-Friday)

Parents for Inclusion

Unit 2
70 South Lambeth Road
London SW8 1RL
Advice Line: 0207 582 5008 (10 am-
2pm and 1pm-3pm Tuesday-Thursday)

Rathbone CI

Head Office:
4th Floor Churchgate House
56 Oxford Street
Manchester M1 6EU
Advice Line: 0800 917 6790
(10am-4pm Monday to Friday)

Contact DFES on: 0845 602 2260 for a copy of the SEN code of Practice.

All LEA'S have a Parent Partnership who can give advice and support.