

## Preparing for a meeting about your child's special educational needs

Meetings go better when you are prepared - if parties feel comfortable and can think/put forward their points clearly, misunderstandings can be avoided and meetings are more effective.

### Check the basics

When and where is the meeting being held? Who else has been invited and why? Is there anyone else you want to include? **Be on time! You will feel calmer.**

### Gather the paperwork together

This will give you an opportunity to familiarise yourself with the information beforehand e.g. what are your child's targets. Do you have copies of everything you need? If not, you can ask for copies of SEN Support plans, EHC plans, reports from other services about your child and the school's SEN policy. You can also ask to look through your child's school record and get a copy of this too, although you may have to pay the photocopying costs to the school.

### Think about the purpose of the meeting

Did you ask for the meeting - if so what do you want to get out of the meeting?  
Did someone else arrange the meeting - what is the agenda of the meeting?  
Are you looking for information or particular action?

### Make a list of questions to ask and points/concerns you wish to discuss

You may want to put these in a letter beforehand and share with the relevant person. Take a copy of your questions/points and refer to it- you can use the template on p3 to document these. Your questions/points may refer to your child's progress, behaviour at school/at home, relationships with peers or how your child feels about school for example.

You may find it useful to ask questions such as:

- Is my child receiving SEN support?
- Can I see my child's individual support plan?
- What assessments have the school done to find out about my child's difficulties? What have the assessments identified my child's difficulties to be?
- Does my child get extra help from a teacher or another adult? What do they help him/her with?
- Is the help given in a group or individually? Is it every day? How long is that for?
- How do you measure my child's progress? Is he/she making the progress you would expect?
- What can I do at home to help my child and support school?

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- What will the next steps be if my child needs more help?
  - Will the school refer my child to specialist services - for example, educational psychology?
  - Will the school request an **EHC needs assessment**, or will they support me to make a parental request?

### Check how you are feeling about this meeting

Are you anxious, upset or angry? If so, why? What can you do make sure this doesn't get in the way of sharing your points and creating a plan moving forward. Be ready to ask for a break or a glass of water if you need time to compose yourself.

### Ask a family member/friend to go with you

It can really help to have someone to give you moral support, prompt you if you forget to mention something and make a note of any agreed actions/outcomes.

### In the meeting:

- If you don't know everyone, ask them to do introductions.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions. Sometimes professionals slip into jargon or assume you have knowledge about particular processes or types of support. Keep asking until whatever is unclear has been explained in a way that makes sense.
- Summarise your understanding of what has been shared/agreed to make sure you've understood correctly and check that everyone else has understood your views (to avoid any misunderstandings).
- Ask what happens next e.g. what interventions or support have been agreed? What should happen next? Who has promised to do what? When will this be reviewed?
- Before the end of the meeting check everything has been covered on your list, if not, say so - "I did note down some things I wanted to ask and there is one thing we haven't talked about yet ..."

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Date:

People at the meeting:

Things you want to talk about:-  
(Fill this in before the meeting)

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What has been agreed: - (make a note of who is going to do each point)

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(Check each point with everyone before you leave the meeting)

The next meeting date is:-