

Parent Advocacy Guide

Advocating for your child's educational needs can feel challenging, but being informed and prepared can make a significant difference. This guide provides essential steps, strategies, and resources to help parents effectively advocate for their children within the education system.

1. Preparing for School Meetings

- Understand your child's needs and rights under the SEND Code of Practice.
- Gather relevant documents (EHCP, school reports, medical assessments, previous correspondence).
- Write a list of key points and concerns to discuss in the meeting.
- Bring a notebook to take notes on what is agreed upon.

2. Key Questions to Ask in Meetings

- How is my child's progress being monitored?
- What interventions and support are in place, and how often are they reviewed?
- Can I see evidence of the additional support being provided?
- How does the school ensure my child's needs are met daily?

3. Handling Disagreements with Schools

- Stay calm, professional, and assertive in discussions.
- Refer to the EHCP and legal obligations schools must follow.
- Request written explanations for any denied requests.
- If issues persist, escalate to the local authority, mediation, or SEND Tribunal.

4. Understanding Your Rights

- The Equality Act 2010 protects children with SEND from discrimination.
- Schools must make reasonable adjustments to support children with additional needs.
- Parents have the right to request an EHCP Needs Assessment.
- Schools must provide specific, detailed, and quantified provisions under Section F of the EHCP.

5. Effective Communication Strategies

- Use clear, concise, and factual language when communicating with professionals.
- Keep records of all emails, meeting notes, and documents.
- Follow up verbal discussions with a written summary.
- Build positive relationships with SENCOs, teachers, and other professionals.

6. Useful Templates

- Sample email for requesting an EHCP Needs Assessment.
- Sample script for addressing concerns in meetings.
- Template letter for escalating a complaint.