

Education for children with special needs

www.devon.gov.uk/cwan

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All parents want their children to receive a good education and fulfil their potential but every child develops and learns at a different rate. Here are some tips to help you get the best support for your child.

If you have concerns

- If you are concerned that your child is not making good progress, raise your concerns with your child's class teacher as early as possible.
- You can also ask to meet the school's **Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO)** to discuss your child's strengths and difficulties and plan future support.
- Contact the **Devon Parent Partnership Service (DPPS)** which provides confidential, independent, impartial support and information to parents who have children with additional educational needs. The DPPS can listen to your concerns, improve communication links between you and the school, help you to prepare for meetings, support you at meetings, help you to understand documents and reports, support you to write letters and complete forms and direct you to other relevant services.

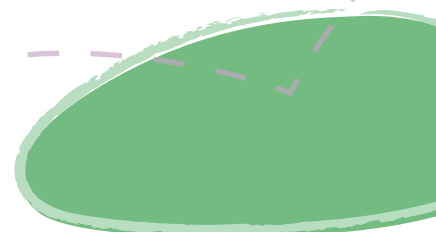
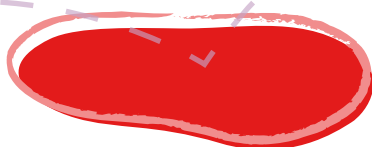
Preparing for meetings

- Check when and where the meeting is and if there are any parking or access issues.
- Ask why the meeting is being called, request an agenda in advance and check that someone will be taking notes at the meeting.

- Find out who else will be attending the meeting and what roles they have.
- Ask the DPPS for support in preparing for the meeting.
- Consider asking someone from DPPS or a friend to accompany you if you need support. Let the host of the meeting know your supporter's name.
- Read any reports that have been written about your child and highlight areas of concern or confusion that you may wish to discuss.
- Prepare a list of questions that you want to ask at the meeting – you can send these to the meeting host in advance if you think it will be helpful.

At the meeting

- Introduce yourself and ensure you know who everyone else is.
- Make sure someone is taking notes or take notes yourself.
- Refer to the agenda and your list of questions and cross each point off as it is discussed.
- Feel free to ask questions and say if you do not understand something or if you want something repeated.
- Don't feel pressured into agreeing to things if you are unsure about them, but don't become aggressive or confrontational.



Factsheet 10

- Be realistic about what can be achieved, think about your priorities and try to provide some solutions yourself.
- Check all your questions and concerns have been addressed.
- At the end of the meeting confirm your understanding of what has been said and ask the host to summarise the action points that have been agreed.
- Ask when you will receive the written notes from the meeting and set a date for the next meeting if necessary.

After the meeting

- Make sure you receive the meeting notes or minutes.
- Write to the host if you disagree with any points in the minutes.
- If minutes are not sent, write a letter to the host with your own notes from the meeting.
- Keep an eye on deadlines to make sure you and others complete the action points.

Writing letters

- Include all your child's details such as name, date of birth and school.
- Quote any references you may have been given and address the letter to a named person where possible.
- Keep a copy of each letter and the date you sent it.
- If you are unsure who to write to at CSET, address the letter to: Director of Children and Young People's Services, County Hall, Exeter EX2 4QD.

Useful resources

- SEN Code of Practice (ref DfES 0581 2001)
- SEN Toolkit (ref DfES 0558 2001)
- SEN – A guide for parents and carers (ref DCSF-00639-2008BKT-EN)

You can get these resources from the Department for Education (DfE) Publications by visiting **www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications** or phoning **0845 60 222 60**.

Devon Parent Partnership Service (DPPS) 01392 383080

parentpartnershipservice-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

www.parentpartnershipdevon.org.uk

There are four parent partnership officers and a team of volunteer independent parental supporters in Devon to support you with issues around your child's education.

DISCplus local information co-ordinators

The co-ordinators are there to help you get information on services and support available in your area.

Phone the main office on **0845 155 1013** and ask to speak to your local co-ordinator or email **discplus@devon.gov.uk**

