

## Assessment and statementing

**Remember to keep a file with all the details of your child's medical history, education reports and other important documents. You may need this information at some time and it should be kept in a safe place.**

### Getting extra help

The school can arrange additional support for your child through '[School Action](#)' or '[School Action Plus](#)'. Children who stammer are only likely to need further support than this if there is another more complex need present for which statutory assessment and specialist support is required. For example, a third of children with Down's syndrome are likely to stammer. **The majority of children who stammer are unlikely to go on to be statutorily assessed.**

If you are not happy that your school is meeting your child's [special educational needs](#) first talk to your child's teacher with whom you should have built up a good relationship. If you feel then that more specialist help is needed ask to speak to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) in the school. There can be misunderstandings so it is important you co-operate as much as you can with your child's school and involve the SENCO and even the Headteacher if you consider that would be helpful. After this discussion you may accept that adequate support is in place. However, if you anticipate that further support is likely to be needed then [Get more advice on the options available](#).

If the school wants to ask the local authority to carry out an assessment, they should always talk to you first. You may approach the local authority yourself to request one and should then talk to your child's teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). You may decide that the process would be less demanding for you if you and the staff agreed that the application should be made by the school.

This assessment may conclude that your child needs the extra support that a [statement of special educational needs](#) should give.

### Get more advice on the options available

The [BSA](#) can provide information about stammering and its effects on children and provide you with information and support.

### Parent Partnership

Parent partnership services provide accurate and unbiased information on the options available to you. They may provide you with training to guide you through [special educational needs \(SEN\)](#) procedures and processes or link you to organisations and groups that can help.

You can find your local parent partnership service through your local authority or the National [Parent Partnership Network](#).

### Independent parental supporters

Your local parent partnership service should be able to give you access to an independent parental supporter who can help you through the SEN procedures. **They work under the guidance and supervision of your local parent partnership service and are usually trained volunteers.**

While an independent parental supporter helps you understand what is happening, they will not make decisions about your child. You can also choose any other adult you wish to support you: for example, a friend, a relative or someone from a voluntary organisation. You may request that this person accompanies you to significant meetings.

An independent parental supporter may help you by:

- explaining your rights and responsibilities
- finding further sources of information, support and advice for you
- helping you to understand what is happening during SEN procedures and processes such as School Action , assessment and statementing
- helping you to prepare for and attend visits and meetings
- helping you to make phone calls, fill in forms and write letters and reports
- helping you to express your views and communicate with schools and local authorities
- listening to your worries and concerns
- providing you with ongoing and general support.

## **Other voluntary organisations**

[Advisory Centre for Education \(ACE\)](#) an independent advice centre for parents, offering information about state education in England and Wales for five to 16 year olds. They offer free telephone advice on many subjects like exclusion from school, bullying and special educational needs.

[Independent Panel for Special Education Advice \(IPSEA\)](#) has independent experts who will give you free advice about your child's special educational needs.

## **Advice for parents with disabled children:**

[Contact a Family](#) provides advice, information and support to families with disabled children across the UK.

[Parents for Inclusion](#) works to enable disabled children to learn, make friends and have a voice in ordinary school and throughout life.

## **Statementing**

If your child who stammers was not making progress under the '[School Action](#)' or '[School Action Plus](#)' provision and has other complex needs that require a lot of special extra help, your local authority can carry out a more detailed assessment of your child's needs, based on professional advice.

If the school wants to ask the local authority to carry out an assessment, they should always talk to you first. You may approach the local authority yourself to request one and should then talk to your child's teacher and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) first. You may decide that the process would be less demanding for you if you and the staff agreed that the application should be made by the school.

This assessment may conclude that your child needs the extra support that a [statement of special educational needs](#) should give.

The assessment finds out exactly what your child's needs are, and what special help he needs. It is only necessary if your child's school cannot provide all the help he requires.

## **The assessment process**

Local authorities look at requests and tell you (normally within six weeks) whether they will carry out an assessment. They also explain the assessment process.

The authority also gives you an opportunity to explain in writing to the authority the problems that your child has and why you consider that more support is needed. Take your time in putting this together as it is very important and you will find it helpful to take advice from the organisations in the section [Get more advice](#).

If the assessment goes ahead, the local authority asks people to give their views on your child. They ask for advice from:

- your child's school
- an educational psychologist
- a doctor
- other professionals working with your child, such as a speech and language therapist
- social services (who will only give advice if they know your child)
- anyone else who the local authority thinks it should get advice from to get a clear picture of your child's needs

You can attend any interview, medical or other test during the assessment and be accompanied if you wish by your chosen adult. You know your child best so your views are important. What your child thinks also plays a big part in the assessment and a child of primary school age is very likely to have helpful ideas to contribute.

You are free to suggest any other groups you know whose views may be helpful. The local authority should take them into account as part of the assessment. You may want to think about asking organisations in the section [Get more advice](#).

## **After the assessment**

Once [special educational needs \(SEN\)](#) officers have completed their assessment, they decide whether to write down all the information they have collected in a [statement of special educational needs](#).

This statement describes your child's special educational needs and the special help he should receive.

Your local authority usually tells you if it is going to write a statement within 12 weeks of beginning the assessment.

If the local authority decides not to write a statement, it will explain the reasons, and tell you how it thinks your child's needs should be met in school or in other ways.

### **If the local authority decides not to assess**

If your local authority decides not to assess your child, it must write and tell you and the school its reasons. If you or your child's school still feel that more needs to be done, talk to the school. The local authority could think about other ways of helping your child, including getting in some more outside help.

Your local authority should tell you about local arrangements for sorting out any disagreement informally. You also have a right to appeal to the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal](#), an independent organisation.

## **Statements - setting out your child's needs**

Once your local authority has carried out an assessment, they can decide to record the information they have in a statement of special educational needs (usually just called a 'statement'). This statement describes your child's SEN and the special help they should receive. The local authority usually makes a statement if they decide that this help cannot be provided from within your child's school.

Your local authority should normally write and tell you whether they are going to write a statement within 12 weeks of beginning the assessment.

### **Statements - what they contain**

A statement of SEN is set out in six parts

1. part one gives general information about your child
2. part two gives the description of your child's needs following the assessment
3. part three describes all the special help to be given for your child's needs
4. part four gives the type and name of the school your child should go to
5. part five describes any non-educational needs your child has
6. part six describes how your child will get help to meet any non-educational needs

You are sent a draft statement before your local authority writes a final statement. It will be complete except for part four, which describes the type and name of school or education provided out of school. Part four will be left blank so that you can say what educational provision you want for your child.

## Choosing a school

You have time to review the draft statement and have the right to disagree with its contents. You have 15 days to comment and to say which state school, or non-maintained special school or independent school, you want your child to go to.

You can also ask for a meeting with the local authority and you have another 15 days to ask for more meetings after that. Within 15 days of your last meeting, you can send in any more comments. If you would like more time to comment, you should talk to the 'Named Officer' at your local authority. This is the officer at the local authority who you will have been told is dealing with your child's case.

The local authority must make the final statement within eight weeks of the draft statement. It will send you a copy with part four filled in with the name of a school. The statement starts as soon as the local authority completes it.

## If you disagree with the statement

If you disagree with the statement, first speak to your Named Officer. You might also find it helpful to contact your local [parent partnership service](#), who can provide neutral advice and support.

You also have a right to appeal against parts two, three and four to the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal \(SENDIST\)](#) an independent body that hears appeals against decisions made by local authorities on SEN assessments and statements. Also the local authority will tell you about the local arrangements.

You have this right to appeal to the SENDIST even if you are trying to sort out disagreements informally with the local authority.

You have a vital role in supporting your child's education. Your views should be taken into account and the wishes of your child listened to. There are also a number of groups and organisations who can provide you with advice about special educational needs (SEN). See in the section [Get more advice](#).

## Annual review and meeting

Once your child is statemented then your local authority must review your child's statement at least once a year, checking your child's progress and making sure that the statement continues to meet his needs.

Your child's school will invite you to a review meeting and ask you to send in your views on your child's progress over the past year.

The review meeting looks at written reports and at your child's statement, and will see if it needs changing in any way. You are also asked for your views on your child's progress.

You can take a friend or an independent adult for example from the [parent partnership](#), and if appropriate your child should be able to attend at least part of the meeting.

After the meeting, the school sends you a copy of its report. The Headteacher sends a report to the local authority recommending any agreed changes to the statement. This must be within 10 working days of the annual review meeting or by the end of term, whichever is sooner.

The local authority may then decide to make changes to your child's statement.

### **The BSA has been told about these problems occurring when a statemented child has severe learning difficulties and also stammers**

Some parents have reported that when their child with learning difficulties has been statemented the provision of speech and language therapy has been inconsistent or not available to their child even though it is mentioned on the statement. Occasionally parents have said that while therapy is being delivered for their child's communication needs the stammer is not being addressed. Children with Down's syndrome in particular are likely to stammer more than is the case with other children and parents have expressed concern to the BSA that therapy for the stammering is not being provided, even though the parent feels that the child's stammer is a barrier to learning.

### **Speech and language therapy for stammering for children with a statement**

This is a complex area and therapy is often not available because the therapist makes a decision that to offer further therapy for the stammer, when the child is coping with other complex language difficulties, would add to the stress on the child and be unhelpful. Sometimes parents have said that they feel that their child could cope with therapy for the stammer and that the therapist will not offer it. It is important to talk with your child's therapist if you feel like this so that you do understand the reasons for her decision.

However, the BSA does have a concern that most speech and language therapists do not have the opportunity to develop skills in providing therapy for children who stammer and have severe learning difficulties. There is a training issue that the BSA is endeavouring to explore.

### **What can a parent do in these circumstances?**

You should initially talk with the therapist who has been involved with your child to understand the reasons for any decision that you disagree with and, if you cannot reach agreement, you could suggest to the therapist that you both meet with a more senior therapist to discover what common ground there might be. If you cannot make any progress through that route then you do have the right to go back to the local authority and refer to the section in the statement mentioning therapy provision and request again that it be offered. At this point if you cannot reach agreement you will need further advice. See the section [Get more advice](#) as you may choose to pursue the issue by contacting the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal \(SENDIST\)](#), an independent body that hears appeals against decisions made by local authorities on SEN assessments and statements.

### **Summary**

**Remember to keep a file with all the details of your child's medical history, education reports and other important documents. You may need this information at some time and it should be kept in a safe place.**

### **Assessment and statementing**

The school can arrange additional support for your child through '[School Action](#)' or '[School Action Plus](#)'. Children who stammer are only likely to need further support than this if there is another more complex need present for which statutory assessment and specialist support is required. For example, a third of

children with Down's syndrome are likely to stammer.

**The majority of children who stammer are unlikely to go on to be statutorily assessed.**

If your child who stammers was not making progress under the 'School Action' or 'School Action Plus' support and has other complex needs that require a lot of special extra help, your local authority can carry out a more detailed assessment of your child's needs, based on professional advice. This assessment may conclude that your child needs the extra support that a statement of special educational needs should give.

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