



Working in partnership with your child's school

Whether it is you that first raises concerns with the school, or the teacher that wants to talk to you about their observations of your child, it is most beneficial to communicate positively with them to get the best outcome.

Sometimes the teacher or SENCO will see things from a different perspective to you, so it is important to share your expert understanding of your child's strengths and difficulties.

Working together with the teaching staff and SENCO will be most effective. They have a lot of children to support, so the more you can do to assist them to help your child the better the outcome will be. Maybe you can offer to make resources or help them by sharing regular updates via the school's communication platform.

Getting started

- Keep a log or diary of your child's progress and record anything they find particularly challenging or that causes them anxiety.
- Think about what you are seeing at home, such as development, behaviours or their ability to carry out tasks.
- If you are offered a meeting at school, make sure you feel fully prepared to get the best out of the limited time you will have.
- Have a look on the school's website and look at their policies to see if this clears anything up, or can give you a starting point with what to do.

Preparation

- Write down all of your questions and everything you want to say. Be clear on what you want to achieve from the meeting. This list will help you to check that all has been covered if the discussion takes a different route.
- Talking about your child can be very emotional, but it is important to stay as calm as you can. Sometimes it helps to take a relative or a friend to the meeting with you to take notes on what was said or agreed. They can also support you if you start to feel emotional or need someone to step in while you gather your thoughts.
- Take a look at the SENDIASS education advice website (found on the next page) to ensure that you understand what types of additional SEN support might be available for your child if required.



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At the meeting

- **Do** ask for any jargon or acronyms to be explained if you do not understand them.
- **Do** ask for a set plan going forward so that you and the school are on the same page.
- **Do not** be afraid to refer to your list you prepared earlier, to make sure you don't forget anything you wanted to say.

After the meeting

- Follow up with an email detailing what was agreed and who is going to do what and by when, so you have very clear goals and strategies to review at a later date.
 - Keep going with your progress log and keep a note of when the agreed actions are implemented, and when strategies are going to be reviewed.
 - If you are introducing similar strategies at home, record any improvements or challenges in your progress diary so you can feed back to the school.
 - If you are unhappy with the communication with the school over your child's additional needs, you can contact an education advice organisation to see if they can advise you on next steps. They are location dependent, as detailed below:
- Essex SENDIASS - <https://www.essexsendiass.co.uk/>
 - Families in Focus Essex - <https://www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk/>
 - PATT (Thurrock SENDIASS) - <https://www.patt.org.uk/>
 - Southend SENDIASS - <https://www.sendiasssouthend.co.uk/>
 - Havering SENDIASS - <https://www.haveringsendiass.co.uk/>



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