



PARENT CARER GUIDE – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

SEN SUPPORT

Sept 2019

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NOTE: In this Guide: -

“Child” is used to mean child (0-16) and young person (16-25)

“Setting” is used to mean nursery, school, or college

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What Do I Do If My Child is Struggling at Nursery/School/College?

1. Talk to your child's class teacher, head of year, tutor – the person who has most contact with your child every day AND is responsible for your child's progress.

Ask them how they're viewing your child.
How is he/she progressing compared to other similar – aged children?

Parent-to-parent advice

Although your child sees their LSA (Learning Support Assistant) / TA (Teaching Assistant) every day, remember it is their teacher/tutor/head of year who is responsible for planning to meet their needs

2. See if the staff have concerns too.
Perhaps your child's difficulties are things that all children may experience some time.

If not persist by asking for information on all types of progress – academic, social and developmental.

Examples of your concerns

Does your child play alongside other children, rather than with them?

Does your child seem to have great difficulty completing their homework and can't tell you what the lesson was about - resulting in lots of detentions?

Has your child become really anxious about going to their nursery/school/college?

3. If your child has a serious health and/or care issue, find out how the setting is coping?

Does the setting have an individual Health Care Plan for the child?

Top Tip

If a Health professional is already working with your child (health visitor, GP, paediatrician, physio, etc.), you may raise your initial concerns with them. Ask them to copy in the SEN Co-ordinator (SENCO) at your child's setting with any letters/advice.

4. How is the setting sharing important information about your child amongst other staff – within the setting, and with other agencies?

Top Tip

Ask for copies of the records the setting is making about your child's progress, and the actions they are taking. You should be told and asked for your permission if they are referring to other agencies.

5. During any discussion, keep a record of agreed actions. Then, next time you meet, you can ask to see progress against these actions.

Top Tip

What are they going to do?
Who will do it?
When will it be done by?
When will you meet again to review progress?

6. The setting has to report to you on your child's progress at least once a year in a written report, as well as at parents' evening(s).

7. You may find the setting can address any needs using a wide range of usual interventions available to any child as a matter of course, and by using internal resources. These interventions will be covered by the standard budget the setting has per pupil per year.

Top Tip

All settings in Bradford should be practising **Quality First Teaching**, which includes differentiation of tasks for pupils to meet their individual needs.

8. The setting should be able to tell you all the things they are doing to help your child, and if these are making a difference.

Top Tip

Ask the staff to share these ideas with you, so you can try them at home.

Parent-to-parent advice

Be persistent!

If your gut feeling is that something is wrong, don't be put off by the "Everything's fine!" response given by many settings.

Talk to other parents of children at the same setting to see if any others are having similar problems.

Take your concerns higher in the setting (e.g. the Nursery Manager, Head, Inclusion Manager)

Contact Bradford SENDIASS (SEND Information Advice & Support Service).

www.barnardos.org.uk/bradford-sendiass/information-advice-and-support.htm

9. If these interventions don't enable your child to make progress, your child may have **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** - see next page.

What are “Special Educational Needs”?

1. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can affect a child’s ability to learn.

They can affect their:

- behaviour or ability to socialise, e.g. they struggle to make and keep friends
- academic progress, e.g. reading, writing, and maths
- ability to understand things and follow instructions
- concentration levels and ability to remember things
- physical ability to join in all the activities with the other children
- ability to cope with a busy education environment.

The law says:

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her.

The SEND Code of Practice says:

A child must have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age, or has a disability which prevents use of what is normally available in mainstream settings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

2. Some difficulties may NOT be SEN

Your child may be responding in usual ways to difficult life events, for example: -

- They may display changes in behaviour due to bullying, bereavement, etc.
- They may be recovering from an operation or illness and need additional support for a time.
- Their first language is not English and they are struggling to learn and make friends
- They are acting as a carer for an adult or a sibling and may not be making consistent progress
- They may, for various reasons, show disruptive behaviour only with certain teachers or in certain lessons.

Examples of help available:

If your child’s difficulties are not SEN – don’t worry they should still get health, pastoral and personal care in the setting, and from outside agencies, for example: -

- Bereavement support.
- Medical and social support.
- Classroom support to enable learning, achievement, and social and personal development.
- Pastoral and emotional support to enable inclusion.

3. What might be causing the SEN difficulties

- Are there medical or physical issues?

Perhaps an underlying condition at the root of the problem?

Does your child have very complex difficulties which were identified or diagnosed at birth or soon after?

Parent-to-parent advice

Go and talk to a member of Health staff (such as your health visitor, GP, school nurse). Different Health services have different ways that children can be referred for help, or for an assessment for a health diagnosis (if you wish). Search Bradford NHS www.bradforddistrictscg.nhs.uk/your-health--services/mental-health/children-and-young-people-

Top Tip

Ask the staff working with you (e.g. Consultant, Portage worker, community nurse) if they think an EHC Needs Assessment is required at an early age.

4. Help you can seek during this time

- Are you struggling to cope with the practical aspects of life? (e.g. understanding benefits, applying for Disability Living Allowance or Carer's Allowance, finding grants, dealing with your landlord)

Parent-to-parent advice

Contact an organisation that has parent carer support workers who can help you, e.g. Cerebra, <http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/>

Contact Free Helpline: 0808 808 3555

Citizens Advice Service, <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

- Do your child's struggles at their setting mean they come home and explode with aggression? Is this having such an effect on your family that you feel you need help from local services?

Top Tip

Where you can go for help/support.

<https://localoffer.bradford.gov.uk/service/706-are-you-worried-about-your-child-or-young-person>

- Are you feeling isolated and want to meet with other parents in similar situations, and find mutual support.

Parent-to-parent advice

Find a support group run by other parent carers who have children with similar difficulties.

<https://pfba.org.uk/>

- Do you want to find places to take your child which suit their particular difficulties, and with activities they can do?

Top Tip

Search on Bradford's Local Offer for local information, help and support for children with SEND:

<https://localoffer.bradford.gov.uk/>

5. If the setting determines that your child has Special Educational Needs (SEN), it should offer extra provision different to what all other children get. This is known as **Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support** - see next page.

What is Setting-based SEN Support?

1. Once the setting has told you they are providing SEN Support (something they **must** tell you), they will start an SEN graduated approach based on the **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle.

2. The setting can use internal resources (their own staff and expertise) and external resources to help your child.

These interventions will be covered by the setting's delegated SEN budget (money they already have in their budget to meet the needs of children with SEN – up to an extra £6000 per pupil per year).

The amount of help the external agencies can provide is detailed in their 'Core Offer' to settings, which vary with each profession. Settings and parents can purchase more support if they wish.

Examples of external advice available, which the setting will then implement

Educational Psychologist (EP) School Nurse
Learning Improvement Support Specialist Teaching Services Behaviour Support Service
ASD Outreach Team (if your child is diagnosed)
Health (e.g. speech & language, physio, and occupational therapists)
Primary mental health specialist. Social Care Services

3. The setting should be meeting with you at least 3 times a year to:
 - review progress
 - agree outcomes
 - agree next steps
 - draw up a new plan

Parent-to-parent advice

It is well worth making some notes about what you want to say at the meeting – any concerns you have, what you think is working well and not so well.

Take someone with you to the meeting. This could be a relative, friend or support worker. Another "pair of ears" is always useful and they can remind you about the things you want to say.

4. This information will be recorded in some way. In Dorset, each setting will use their own paper work.
5. You and the setting can agree that there are periods of time when your child should not be at school.

If your child has a part-time timetable agreed with you as part of their **Assess, Plan, Do, Review** cycle – it should be for a short period only and constantly under review.

Top Tip

The setting can NOT ask you to take your child home because they cannot cope with them. This would be an illegal exclusion. Also, they cannot require you to come into school to support your child.

6. The setting will continue assessing your child's needs using a graduated response in order to find what sort of help makes a difference, and to which aspects of their needs.

The setting may find: -

- The support helped, your child has overcome their problem, and they no longer need SEN Support.
- The support is helping and your child will continue to need SEN Support.
- Your child needs more/further support.

Parent to parent advice

It is common for a child with SEND to show different behaviour at the setting than they do at home. Some problems won't be resolved unless everybody looks at the whole child/family.

7. You can ask the setting at any time to see your child's record.

Examples of records to ask for

Attendance record
Provision map
Progress against any assess/plan/do/review outcomes
Records of behaviour points over time
Records of learning points over time
Risk assessments used with your child

8. This support should only come to an end if the setting and you agree that your child has reached all their outcomes, and has become a confident learner.

Parent-to-parent advice

There may come a time when the setting suggests that since your child is making progress, their level of support could be reduced.

Any changes in levels of support should be agreed with you.

9. These interventions might be sufficient to enable your child to make progress.

They might be needed long-term to enable your child to continue making progress.

Parent to parent advice

Even if the setting has been very helpful and put in place a lot of support, it is okay to point out if your child is not making adequate progress.

10. If your child moves setting, SEN Support should still be provided, although it may be in a different format. The new setting might be able to meet your child's needs in a different way/using their resources differently.

Parent-to-parent advice

Meet the SENDCo in the proposed new setting. Discuss your child's needs before they transfer there, and find out how they will meet the needs.

If it feels like the right place for your child, make sure that a proper transition process is put in place between the existing setting and the new one.

Take part in the transition activities with your child.

Expectations of Provision to Ensure Best Outcomes for SEND Children

Element 1: The Universal Offer

Provision for all learners

School level

- **Governors** monitor/publish the SEND offer & Annual Report (impact of SEND provision).
- **Teaching and learning policy reflects equality & accessibility** & is evident in practice
- **Curriculum meets the needs of all learners**
- **Well trained staff** confident meeting needs of vulnerable (links to performance management arrangements)
- **SENCO is qualified with sufficient dedicated time**
- **Good quality teaching** - weak teaching addressed
- **Strategies to improve the outcomes of all current and future pupils – attainment, closing the gap, attendance, behaviour & well being**
- **Inspire parent confidence** & liaise regularly
- **Changes & transitions are planned for**
- **Joined up plans** are in place e.g. PEP, PP, CAF, TAC, medical care plan.
- **Welcoming, safe and empathetic ethos** promotes good behaviour, understanding & acceptance of needs - including peer group.

Class level

- **Know the pupils** – teach every group & continually assess
- **Range of teaching & learning styles - scaffold learning & address misconceptions**
- **Multi-sensory resources** creatively used - all learners/all ages - no stigma attached
- **Confident learners not overly dependent on adults** no 'learned helplessness'

Element 2: The Targeted Offer

Additional educational support provision (notional SEN budget).

- **Additional assessment & analysis** informs choice of intervention
- **All staff have awareness/specialist training in needs of children they work with** - Taught MORE by qualified teacher not less
- **SENCO/key staff have undertaken relevant specialist training and developed provision map** of interventions which are time limited, pre-formulated, carefully matched to learners' needs & require minimal adaptation e.g. appropriate computer software.
- **Support is planned and reviewed by the class/subject teacher in collaboration with parents** and the learner at least three times a year.
- **Additional support and advice may be sought** – *SENS, *PMNS, *HVSS, *BSS, *EP, *Portage, Paediatrician, *CAMHs, etc
- Adapted programmes – curriculum, environment (including specialist equipment), communications/interactions.
- SEN support is recorded on the school's information system.

Element 3: The Specialist or Personalised Offer

Individualised programmes and involvement of services.

- Personalised interventions specific to needs - person centred outcomes.
- Advice/support/interventions from other specialist services (education, social care and health) is sought, implemented, monitored & reviewed.
- Work closely with parents & learner to agree & review aspirations, interventions & progress.
- High Needs funding (element 3), or support from services, may be allocated as part of EHCP request (or without issue of EHCP where there is sufficient endorsement of other professional services)
- Coordinated approach to the needs of the child

* SENS (Special Educational Needs Support Service), PMNS (Physical & Medical Needs Service), HVSS (Hearing & Vision Support Service), BSS (Behaviour Support Service), EP (Educational Psychologist), Portage (Pre-school Support Service), CAMHs (Child & Adolescent Mental Health)