

A parent's guide to:
Providing information to the
Local Authority when making a
parental request for an
Education Health and Care Needs
assessment (EHCNa)

Advice on providing the necessary information to the
Local Authority at different stages during the EHCNa process



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Funded by Oxfordshire County Council

Making a parental request for an Education Health and Care Needs assessment

If you are concerned that your child is not making progress despite the level of support they currently get at school or in their educational setting, you have the right to ask the local authority to carry out an assessment of their needs. They will consider whether your child has or may have a level of needs that requires their provision to be via an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Remember you are not asking for an EHCP, what you are asking for is an assessment of their needs (EHCNa)

The law says you have the right to request this EHCNa so that the Local Authority (LA) can determine whether your child's needs are such that they require support which is above that readily available for all children. This may mean that an EHCP will be required to secure the necessary provision. In other words, the assessment should provide a clear picture of your child's strengths, the things they find difficult, areas for development and the support they will need to help them make progress. The LA will then decide whether or not that support needs to be via an EHCP.

Stage 1 Send a letter with supporting evidence* if possible

You do not have to send in any additional information to the LA at this stage; you can simply send a letter, like the one on the template here.

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-programme/useful-information/template-letters>

Look for the one entitled Request for EHC needs assessment

The LA has 6 weeks from the date they receive your request to decide whether to carry out an assessment or not. They will need to gather information in order to make this decision.

The LA will acknowledge receipt of your request and ask you to send in your views and any further information you have to support your request.

There is nothing to stop you sending in additional information with your request so if you have any evidence you feel would support your request, i.e. the level of support they already have, any reports from school, professionals, such as therapists or psychologists, please attach copies with your request. You may have letters about exclusions or Team around the Family (TAF) minutes, these too might be helpful to include.

You can give your views and information in person rather than written if that is easier for you.

(You could ask the SEN Officer for your child's school to meet with you and they could write down your views on the computer and print them off and you can then sign them to show they are accurate.)

Remember that an EHC Needs assessment will not always lead to an EHC plan. The information gathered during an EHC Needs assessment may indicate ways in which the school, college or other provider can meet the child or young person's needs without an EHC plan.

Stage 2 *Supporting evidence to send with your request

Oxfordshire County Council's information on requesting an EHCNa asks you to complete a form called '*All about me*'. This is optional but may be helpful in providing evidence to support your request.

It's very easy when faced with a blank form to feel overwhelmed or unsure on what to write. Here are some suggestions about how to approach completing the '*All about me*'.

Why it's important

It may help you to fill in the paperwork if you understand why it is important.

You are the expert when it comes to your child, and you as their parent are certainly best placed to say what is important to them, what helps them learn and what they hope for their future.

The **'All about me'** is an opportunity for you and your child or young person to give the people who will be making the decision about whether your child needs an EHC needs assessment, a clear picture of your child, their strengths, the things they find difficult, any areas for development, the support they need and what you and they hope for their futures.

The SEND Code of Practice outlines how schools, the local authority and others should carry out the SEND processes. It makes it very clear that the assessment and planning process should focus on the child or young person as an individual. It says that the process should:

- enable children and young people and their parents to express their views, wishes and feelings
- enable children and young people and their parents to be part of the decision-making process
- be easy for children, young people and their parents or carers to understand, and use clear ordinary language and images rather than professional jargon
- highlight the child or young person's strengths and capabilities
- enable the child or young person, and those that know them best to say what they have done, what they are interested in and what outcomes they are seeking in the future
- tailor support to the needs of the individual
- organise assessments to minimise demands on families
- bring together relevant professionals to discuss and agree together the overall approach, and
- deliver an outcomes-focused and co-ordinated plan for the child or young person and their parents

Obviously much depends on your child's age and their particular needs as to how clear they are about what they want their future to look like. Even young children have opinions and we need to build on their likes and dislikes from the start so that when they are older they can express their views as clearly as possible. Young people with significant needs can also communicate their views and we must encourage them to do so.

The **'All about me'** can later become Part A of an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and provides an important basis for the outcomes that you and professionals will identify and specify within your child's EHCP.

Checklist for 'All about me'

We have a suggested checklist which might help. The danger of a checklist is it might not have all the things you would want to say on it, or you might try and fill in things that aren't relevant to your child or young person.

The SEND Code of Practice says that section A should include:

- Details about your child or young person's aspirations and goals for the future, including thinking about the possibility of paid employment, independent living and community participation.
- Details about their play, health, schooling, independence, friendships, aspirations for further education and future plans including employment (where practical).
- A summary of how to communicate with your child or young person and involve them in decision-making.

- Your child or young person's history.
- If written in the first person, the plan should make clear whether it is in their own words or if your views as parents or the views of professionals are being represented.

It is really important that the '**All about me**' focuses on your child and their needs, their feelings, their views and what support they need. It should be 'person centred' so that it helps people have a clear picture of your child in all areas of their life, not just school, but at home and in their leisure activities. If the assessment is agreed and when carried out shows your child does need an EHCP, it will help their EHCP to be person-centred and keep your child at the centre of the process. It should help all those working with your child to understand the purpose of the plan and what it is intended to achieve for your child in terms of their learning, their hopes and their lives in the future.

Getting your child's views

Remember that you know your child best and know the right approach to get them to share their views with you. For some children this might mean having the conversation in the car, you don't need to sit down at the table with pen and paper. An older child might want to make a video or take photos and/or write a 'manual' about the things they are interested in, how they like to be supported and what they want to be able to do. A younger child might choose to draw pictures. Even children who find communicating difficult should be helped to express their views in some way.

Remember it's not just about school; it's about what life is like at home, in their out of school activities, in terms of their independence, their health and what their hopes for the future are.

Questions you could ask (but remember you can include others or leave some out):

What are you good at?

What do your family think you're good at?

Who are the people who are important to you? In your family? At school?

What makes you happy?

What makes you unhappy?

What do you worry about?

What is working well at school/college?

What is not working well at school/college?

What are your favourite hobbies? Why are they important to you?

What do you like doing at weekends?

What does your perfect day look like?

What would you like more help with? at school? at home? when I'm out?

(playing, with friends or at clubs or activities)

What would you tell people who want to help you?

What do you want to do when you grow up?

Remember to make clear which parts are your child's actual words or how they have been supported to express their views.

Include your hopes as their parent for their future

Nearly all parents when asked what they want their child's life to be like as they grow up will say they want them to be as happy, as healthy, as independent and as included in the community and society as they can be. This is your chance to be specific and say what this means to you and what those things look like for your child or young person.

How do I know I have covered everything?

When you read it through, ask yourself whether anyone who doesn't know your child would get a clear understanding of who they are, their strengths, the things they find difficult, areas for development and what they need and would like to support them so its not just their learning but, in their leisure, their independence, their health and their hopes for when they move into adulthood.

NB If your young person is over 16 i.e. they are over 16 and have finished year 11 at school, they become responsible for making the request in their own right if they are capable of doing so. This does not stop you supporting them and many young people prefer to have their parents act on their behalf. You might like to get your young person to sign the request if they are able to.

Who can help?

To double check you have provided the information necessary you could:

- Talk it through with family members.
- Ask the SENCO at their school or setting.
- Ask someone you respect.
- Ring SENDIASS to talk it through and/or ask them to look at your draft.

Stage 3 Once an Education Health and Care needs assessment (EHCna) has been agreed by the LA.

This section is intended to offer suggestions about how to approach compiling the information you will be asked for if the (LA) have agreed to carry out an EHC Needs assessment for your child or young person.

Writing the 'parental advice' for an Education, Health and Care Needs

The SEND Code of Practice says that if the LA has agreed to carry out an EHC Needs assessment, they must seek advice and information from the child's parent or the young person and must take into account his or her views, wishes and feelings. As the assessment has been agreed, you as parents have been asked to provide information that you think is relevant to the assessment. This is called 'parental advice and information' and it is one of the types of 'advice and information' that the LA must obtain as part of the assessment along with advice from school, psychological advice from an educational psychologist, medical advice, usually from the community paediatrician unless your child is already under another specialist, and from social care. Many families will not be known to social care but that does not mean that there may not be support that your child and family could access.

Remember – you are the person who knows most about your child.

We have included some suggested areas for you to cover. Clearly some areas are more relevant than others, depending on the age of your child and the nature of his/her needs. You do not have to write anything if you choose not to do so but as you are the person who knows most about your child, the insights you have into their strengths, things they find difficult, any areas for development and what could be done to support them are very important. This parental advice should be included as an appendix in your child's EHC plan if the LA decide they need one.

Checklist for parental advice and information appendix:

The Early Years

When did you first feel that things were not right?

Did you receive any help or advice at this time?

What is your child like now?

For each section, it is important to include the help that you already give your child to get them to do the things listed below. Families sometimes adapt to their child's needs without realising it

General health

For example: eating, sleeping – do they often miss school due to coughs and colds? Do they take regular medicine? Do they need a special diet?

Physical skills – *depending on their age*

For example: walking, running, climbing, riding a bike, football or other games, drawing pictures, writing, doing jigsaws; using construction kits, household gadgets, tools, sewing.

Self help – *depending on their age*

For example: going to the toilet unaided, dressing themselves, washing/combing hair/cleaning teeth? Do they get themselves organised for school? Can they cope with day-to-day routines? Their general independence? Do they get out and about?

Communication – *depending on their age*

For example: pointing, copying sounds, using words/phrases? Joining in or starting conversations (with children, adults, familiar/unfamiliar people)? Can they describe events accurately? Take or bring messages? What is the first language spoken at home?

Playing and learning at home.

Favourite toys and things to do? Concentrating for any length of time? Sharing stories? Sharing with others? Reading for pleasure? Do they have hobbies or interests?

Make sure you include the support they need to help them do these things?

Activities outside the home

For example: belonging to clubs, sporting activities, happy to go alone?

What support do they need to help them do these things?

Behaviour at home – tell us about any concerns you may have

Relationships

How does your child generally get on with you, his/her brothers or sisters?

Other adults (friends and relations)?

What do you need to do to help them with this?

School

What are your main concerns about school? E.g. relationships with other children and teachers; progress with reading, writing, number, other subjects and activities at school.

Does he/she enjoy school?

What support helps already or what could be done differently to help them?

Other information?

Is there any other information you would like to give, such as: reports from other people, information about the family or any events that may have affected your child?

How do you feel that your child's needs affect your family as a whole?

If you have enclosed copies of reports from other professionals supporting your child, make sure you include a list of them.

If there is anyone involved with your child that you would like the LA to contact as part of this process, please give the details of their name, job role and their contact details.

Please remember that what you write on your 'advice' will be copied to any person or any agency who has been asked to contribute to the assessment so that they will be aware of your views.

Your general views and aspirations for your child's future

What do you think your child's special educational needs are?

How do you think these can best be provided for?

How do you think your child's progress compares with others of the same age?

What is your child good at or what does he/she enjoy doing?

What does he/she worry about? Is he/she aware of difficulties?

What are your worries/concerns?

Most importantly, are there things that you think could be done to support them more effectively?

An EHC Needs assessment will not always lead to an EHC plan. The information gathered during an EHC Needs assessment may indicate ways in which the school, college or other provider can meet the child or young person's needs without an EHC plan.

Sendiass Oxfordshire can offer:

- A telephone helpline: **01865 810516**.
- Information, advice and support on matters to do with a young person's SEND.
- Help with communication between you, the school and the Local Authority.
- Trained volunteer Independent Parental Supporters and Independent Supporters.
- Advice about preventing and resolving disagreements.
- Training events for parents and groups, see SENDIASS website.
- An informal Drop In SEN Advice session, 'Talking Points', see website for dates.

**Contact us on: 01865 810516 or
text 07786 524294
sendiass@oxfordshire.gov.uk
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sendiass**

Confidentiality Code:

Everything you tell us will be treated in strict confidence. We will not disclose our records to, or discuss the case with, a third party outside SENDIASS Oxfordshire without your consent, except if we suspect a child is at risk.