

Guidelines for writing Parental Advice for Statutory Assessment of Special Educational Needs

Be Truthful - honesty will serve your child best.

Be Realistic - daily physiotherapy, music therapy etc. from a qualified therapist would not be considered an efficient use of resources, except in very exceptional circumstances

Be Positive - Tell the good things. Let the receiving school hear about the delights of your child, as well as his / her difficulties.

EARLY YEARS:

- What do you remember about your child's early years that might help?
- What was your child like as a young baby?
- Were you happy about his / her progress with walking and talking etc. at the time?
- When did you first feel things might not be right?
- What happened then?
- What advice or help did you receive and from whom?

WHAT IS YOUR CHILD LIKE NOW?

- General Health - eating & sleeping habits; general fitness, absences from school, minor ailments - coughs and colds.
- Has s/he had any serious illnesses / accidents - periods in hospital? Does s/he have any medicines or special diets?
- How alert is s/he generally? Does s/he tire easily?
- Older children: any signs of drug-use, smoking, drinking, glue-sniffing etc.
- What physical skills does s/he have, and what does s/he find difficult? Walking, running, climbing, riding a bike, football or other games, drawing pictures, writing, doing jigsaws, using construction kits, household gadgets, tools, sewing, computer etc.
- Self-help skills - how independent is your child? Washing, dressing, coping with day-to-day routine. Older children: budgeting pocket money, general independence - getting out and about, road safety. Is s/he aware of danger?
- Communication / use of language. What is your child's level of speech? Can s/he explain, describe events / people, convey information (e.g. messages to and from school), join in conversation, use the telephone etc? If you have a home language other than English, can s/he do the above in this language?

HOW DOES YOUR CHILD SPEND HIS OR HER SPARE TIME?

- At home: what does s/he like to do? Watch TV, play games, read for pleasure and to gain information. What is his / her concentration like? Does s/he like to play alone, or with other children? Is s/he always seeking adult attention? Does s/he have any hobbies?
- Activities outside - Does s/he belong to any clubs or take part in any sporting activities?
Does s/he go to any music, dancing, drama or other classes?

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS?

- How does s/he get on with parents, brothers and sisters; with friends; with other adults (friends and relations); at home generally; outside generally; is s/he wary of strangers or trusting?
- Is s/he a loner?

BEHAVIOUR:

- What is your child's behaviour like at home? Does s/he co-operate, share, and listen to / carry out requests? Does s/he help in the house, offer help? Does s/he fit in with family routine and 'rules'? Does s/he have good and bad moods? Sulks? Temper tantrums? If yes, how bad are they? Is s/he affectionate?
- What is your child's behaviour like at school - relationships with other children and teachers? What are his/her favourite subjects? What, if any, are your concerns?

CHILD'S VIEWS:

- Does your child understand that s/he has any difficulties? What are his / her own views about these difficulties?

EDUCATION:

- Does your child enjoy school? What does s/he find easy or difficult?
- How has the school helped / not helped with your child?
- What sort of educational help do you feel your child should receive?

OTHER:

- Is there any other information you would like to give e.g. about your family circumstances or major events that might have affected your child?
- Are there any other reports about your child that you would like to be considered?

When you receive your child's proposed statement:

- Take a pencil and read the document right through. Mark anything you want to query
- Misspellings and incorrect dates - don't panic! These can easily be corrected

Get a general idea of:

- How your child is described - do you recognise him / her?
- How your child's needs have been set out as **objectives**
- How the provision to meet these needs has been written

Parents are not always totally happy with what is written, but talking to your assessment officer can usually iron out small problems.

If the proposed statement does not meet with your expectations at all:

- Tell your assessment officer
- Were your expectations right or realistic?
- Do you have different expectations of the amount and type of the provision that would be 'adequate' to meet your child's needs?

REMEMBER...

A statement is not a perfect prescription for a child, but it is a useful tool to obtain up-to-date information upon which to build a successful education. If the statement is accurate and well written, the receiving school will get the best possible information to set up an Individual Education Plan for your child, and your child's progress can be checked at Annual Review against the targets set out in the statement.

