



Getting Help For Your Child.

You will need to talk to your child's school about providing suitable help and support. If the school has a good understanding of dyslexia and adequate funding, it may not be necessary to go through all the stages below. In other cases, you may need to take a more active approach to get the help you need. You should always discuss with the school what you intend to do - because in the end it is the school which will have to implement any action plan.

1. Speak to the class teacher (Primary) or Head of Year (Secondary).

Tell them about your concerns and why you think your child might be dyslexic. They may be able to identify support that your child needs and find ways of providing it.

2. Contact your local Dyslexia Association.

Our helpline telephone number is 0121 643 3737. We can provide you with information about support that is available in the local area. You can also contact us by clicking on www.da-bham.org.

3. Make an appointment with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (the SENCO) at your child's school.

After a meeting with the class teacher or head of year, if you still have concerns, you should make an appointment to see the school Special Educational Needs Coordinator. The SEN Code of Practice (2002) requires schools to provide appropriate support so that all children have the opportunity to benefit from an inclusive education. In line with the Code of Practice, the SENCO should create an Individual Education Plan, setting out the steps which the school will take to provide appropriate support for your child's needs.

It is advisable to read the **SEN Guide for Parents and Carers** before your meeting with the SENCO. This booklet sets out the main points of the Code of Practice, explains procedures and tells parents their rights. It is a very helpful guide to understanding what your child is entitled to and what should happen when you talk to the school.

(For availability, see Information Sheet SEN Code of Practice.)

4. Individual Education Plan.

Once the school has established an Individual Education Plan, you should expect to have regular meetings with the school (perhaps once a term) to monitor progress. If all goes well, your child should now receive appropriate help and support.

If, however, the Individual Education Plan is not working or, for some reason, is not properly implemented, it may be necessary to get a full assessment by an educational psychologist, or a suitably qualified teacher.

5. Getting an assessment by an educational psychologist.

You could request that an educational psychologist at the Local Education Authority (LEA) does a formal assessment. If the school is unwilling to refer your child, you can apply for this yourself direct or get help from the Parent Partnership Officer at the LEA.

The LEA service is often over-stretched and there may be a long waiting list. So, if you can afford it, you could consider having a private assessment done either by a suitably qualified teacher or a Chartered Educational Psychologist specialising in Specific Learning Difficulties. This would cost about £350 and give you a full written report with recommendations for educational support.

For information on where to go for independent assessments, please refer to your Local Dyslexia Association or a supporting corporate member assessment centre. Alternatively, search for a psychologist on the British Psychological Society's website at <http://www.bps.org.uk/findpsychologist/psychoindex.cfm>.

6. Discuss the assessment report with the school.

Once you have an assessment, meet with the SENCO and discuss the findings of the report. The report should form the basis for an action plan to help your child.

If you obtain an independent assessment, however, the school may not automatically accept the findings. In this case, you should contact the Chief Education Officer for your LEA and ask him or her to ensure that the school implements an action plan.

If you continue to have difficulty getting the school to provide adequate support, you may need to enlist the help of the school governor in charge of Special Needs. With a diagnosed disability, your child could be entitled to support under the Disability Discrimination Act at school.

