



Parent Partnership Service

Special Education Needs and Statements

What are special educational needs?

April 2005

What are special educational needs?

A child has special educational needs (SEN) if he or she has greater difficulty in learning than most other children of about the same age.

A child with SEN is provided with education by the Local Education Authority (LEA). The setting in which a child receives education depends on their individual level of need. The majority of children with SEN receive education in mainstream schools, only a very few attend special schools.

How can I find out if my child has special educational needs?

All children are special, all children have needs and many children experience a difficulty with their learning or the way they behave at some time during their school life. Some learning difficulties are obvious from an

early age and parents may be aware of these difficulties almost as soon as their child is born. In other cases the difficulties may not be noticed until the child is at school.

You may be the first to notice your child has difficulties but there are others who can help depending on the age of your child.

- If your child is pre-school. Your first point of contact should be your health visitor, doctor or playgroup worker. They may give advice to enable you to support and help your child or refer you to a specialist for an assessment.
- If your child is at school. Your child's teachers will consult you if they have concerns about his or her progress. If you notice any difficulties with your child's learning you should ask your child's teacher about them first. Schools are able to support and help children who have special educational needs by providing, for example, help from an additional teacher/adult and/or adapting the curriculum so as to be more accessible for the child.

This booklet has been prepared by the Parent Partnership Service to provide guidance to parents/carers on problems which might arise with their child. This leaflet is particularly useful as it identifies other services and support and details national helplines

The Dorset Parent Partnership Service also provides information and support for:

- parents and carers who have children with special educational needs
- parents and carers who are concerned that their child may have special educational needs but as yet these are not recognised.
- helps gain access to a range of support services and expert advice
- provides access to an impartial mediation service
- provides support to help write reports or letters and in discussing a child's needs at meetings
- advice and support if a child with special educational needs is excluded from school.

The service:

- gives independent information and support
- helps parents and carers make informed choices about their child's education
- encourages closer working relationships between the parents/carers, the child's school, the Local Education Authority and other agencies
- supports schools in continuing to develop good working practices with parents

I am concerned my child may have a speech and language difficulty.

Talking is a very complicated process which most children manage without problems. Other children may meet some difficulties along the way.

If your child is under five, common signs of a child having difficulty are:

- slow to start using words
- has difficulty in understanding what you say
- speech is not as clear as you would expect for his/her age
- stammering
- slow putting words together.

By the time your child starts school, he/she should be able to:

- speak clearly enough to be understood by strangers
- understand instructions given directly to him/her and instructions given to the whole class
- ask questions and reply to them
- talk about things in the past, present and future and understand the difference
- talk about his/her feelings (eg happy, upset, frightened)
- be able to ask for help and explain

If you are concerned, you should speak to either the pre-school/school or someone from the health service, (see page 1). For further information about speech impairment contact:

**Speech and Language
Therapists (SALTS)
The Children's Centre
Damers Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 2LB**

Tel: 01305 251150 (West)

**Speech and Language
Therapist (SALTS)
11 Shelley Road
Bournemouth
Dorset BH1 4JQ**

Tel: 01202 443035 (East)

**National AFASIC
2nd Floor, 50-52 Great Sutton
Street, London EC1V ODJ**

**www.afasic.org.uk
Tel: 020 7251 283
Fax: 020 7251 283
Helpline: 0845 3555577
(local call rate)
Helpline open 11am to 2 pm
Monday to Friday**

I am concerned my child may have a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia)

Dyslexia literally means a difficulty with words. Dyslexia is an unexpected difficulty in one or more of these areas: reading, writing, spelling, number work. Dyslexia is often referred to as a specific learning difficulty to show that it is not an all-round learning problem and helps to describe what the specific difficulties are.

Common signs:

- reverse the order of letters, numbers and words
- has long-term difficulty remembering sequences, for example the alphabet, days of the week and months of the year
- has problems with time, both in telling the time and knowing which part of the day it is

- finds it difficult to concentrate, remember messages and to follow instructions
- has trouble putting names to things or people
- is late in learning to read and spell.

Remember – all children have to learn to do these things. If your child experiences one or two of these difficulties it does not mean your child is dyslexic.

If you are concerned about your child speak to his/her class teacher, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or the Head Teacher. The school may undertake some preliminary tests. If they continue to have concerns they may refer your child to Special Educational Needs Specialist Service (SENSS). This service provides specialist assessment, teaching and advice for pupils, from 4 – 19 years with specific learning difficulties and the broader range of SEN.

**For further information about
dyslexia contact:**

**Special Educational Needs
Specialist Service. (SENSS)
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

**Special Educational Needs
Specialist Service. (SENSS)
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

**Dyslexia Institute
Head Office and National
Training & Resource Centre
Park House
Wick Road, Egham
Surrey TW20 OHH**

www.dyslexia-inst.org.uk

Tel: 01784 222300

Fax: 01784 222333

Email: info@dyslexia-inst.org.uk

I am concerned my child may have Dyspraxia

Children with Dyspraxia have difficulty getting their bodies to do what they want them to do, for example:

- handwriting
- fine motor movements, e.g. cutting, threading beads, building bricks and ball skills
- poor use of pencil, pen, scissors and rulers
- using cutlery at mealtimes (mess when eating)
- dressing and undressing
- problems in PE, bumping into things and knocking things over
- organisation and planning
- following instructions
- expressing themselves clearly
- remaining on task and paying attention
- mathematical and literacy skills

Dyspraxia is normally diagnosed by medical professionals. If you are concerned about your child, speak to your child's class teacher and/or your GP. They may refer on to a Paediatrician, Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist. The therapists can provide advice on activities to help your child. For further information contact:

**Children's Therapy
The Children's Centre
Damers Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 2LB**

Tel: 01305 254744 (West)

**Children's Therapy
Poole Hospital NHS Trust
Longfleet Road, Poole
Dorset BH15 2JP**

Tel: 01202 442475 (East)

**The Dyspraxia Foundation
8 West Alley, Hitchen
Hertfordshire SG5 1EG**

www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk
Tel: 01462 454986
Email:
admin@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

I am concerned my child may have a hearing difficulty

There are two types of hearing impairment or deafness:

- conductive deafness – a difficulty caused by problems in the outer or middle ear, which is often temporary
- sensorineural or nerve deafness – a permanent difficulty caused by problems in the inner ear or the central nervous system.

Hearing loss can be mild, moderate, severe, profound affecting one ear or both.

How can I tell if my child has a hearing loss?

If your child has a hearing difficulty he/she may:

If your child is between three and four years of age:

- do strangers find it difficult to understand what your child is saying?
- Is your child unable to carry out two unrelated requests or tasks?

If your child is between four and five years of age, does he or she:

- miss the ends off words, for example saying "do" instead of "dog"?
- often use the wrong letter, for example saying "gog" instead of "dog"?

If your child is at school, his or her teacher may have noticed that your child:

- often asks for questions to be repeated
- watches other children for clues about instructions
- frequently misunderstands what is being asked.

The majority of children with severe or profound hearing loss are normally identified at an early age by health professionals. Other more mild losses can come to light at a later age. If you or your child's teacher have any concerns, speak to your GP. For further information about hearing difficulties, contact:

Hearing & Vision Support Service. (HVSS)
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

Hearing & Vision Support Service. (HVSS)
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

The National Deaf Children's Society
15 Dufferin Street
London EC1 8UR

www.ndcs.org.uk
Tel: 020 7490 8656
Freephone helpline:
0808 800 8880

I am concerned my child may have a difficulty with their sight

If your child has an eyesight problem he/she may:

- be unable to keep his/her eyes straight
- hold things very close to one or both eyes
- look at things in only one direction
- hold his/her head at a strange angle to see
- not know people until they are very close
- seem 'clumsy' and 'awkward'
- have difficulties at school with writing and drawing.

The majority of children with severe sight loss are normally identified at an early age. However if you or your child's teacher are concerned, speak to your GP. For further information about sight loss, contact:

Hearing & Vision Support Service. (HVSS)

Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

Hearing & Vision Support Service. (HVSS)

Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

The Royal Institute for the Blind
105 Judd Street
London, WC1 HNE

www.rnib.org.uk

Tel: 020 7388 1266

Fax: 020 7388 2034

Helpline: 0845 766 9999

I am concerned my child may have Attention Deficit Disorder (with or without hyperactivity ADHD and ADD)

Children with ADHD/ADD have real problems controlling their behaviour, in most situations at home or school. They can cause great strain within their families. The condition normally shows itself well before school age.

Children with ADHD:

- show impulsivity which can make them appear deliberately disobedient
- are easily distracted (forget instructions, flit from task to task, have a low boredom threshold, have difficulty starting tasks, often leave work unfinished)
- can be impulsive (fidgety, restless, frequently get up and down, interfere with other

children, act and speak without thinking)

- can be socially clumsy (act silly in a crowd, butt into games, lose friends)
- are sometimes poorly disorganised (have problems structuring school work)
- often have unexplained good and bad days
- sometimes have other learning difficulties (literacy problems, poor written work)

Children with ADD (i.e. without hyperactivity) will have some similar characteristics, but be less impulsive. They will often be lost in thought, and appear unmotivated.

ADD and ADHD are normally diagnosed by medical professionals. If you are concerned about your child, speak to your child's class teacher and/or your GP. They may refer on to a Paediatrician. For further information contact:

**Behaviour Support Service
(BSS)**

Top O' Town House
Bridport Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

**Behaviour Support Service
(BSS)**

Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

County Psychological Service

Top O' Town House
Bridport Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

County Psychological Service

Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

ADHD UK Alliance c.o.

Contact a Family
209-211 City Road
London EC1V 1JN

Tel: 020 7608 8700

Fax: 020 7608 8701

Textphone: 0808 808 3556

Email: info@adhdalliance.org.uk

Freephone helpline:

0808 808 3555

**Hyperactive Children's
Support Group**

71 Whyke Lane, Chichester
PO19 7PD

www.hacsg.org.uk

Tel: 01243 551313

Fax: 01243 552019

Email: contact@hacsg.org.uk

I am concerned my child may have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties

Children with difficult behaviour are not automatically considered as having special educational needs. However if a child's behaviour is related to emotional and social problems and has persisted over a period of time, making it difficult for him/her to form social relationships and concentrate on work, they may be considered as having learning difficulties. For further information contact:

Behaviour Support Service (BSS)

**Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

Behaviour Support Service (BSS)

**Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

County Psychological Service

**Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

County Psychological Service

**Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

Parentline Plus
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Tel: 0808 800 222
Textphone: 0800 783 6783
Email:
contact@parentlineplus.org.uk

I am concerned my child may be Autistic or has Asperger syndrome.

Autism is a lifelong disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. Children with autism have difficulty relating to others in a meaningful way. Their ability to develop friendships is generally limited as is their capacity to understand other people's emotional expression.

A child with autism experiences difficulties in 3 main areas:

- social interaction (difficulty with social relationships, for example appearing aloof and indifferent to other people)
- social communication (difficult with verbal and non-verbal communication, for example not fully understanding the

meaning of common gestures, facial expressions or tone of voice)

- imagination (difficulty in the development of interpersonal play and imagination, for example having a limited range of imaginative activities, possibly copied and pursued rigidly and repetitively).

Children with autism are usually diagnosed by health professionals before they start pre-school. However if you are concerned speak to your GP who may refer you to a Paediatrician.

Asperger syndrome is a form of autism and shares many of the same characteristics. Children with Asperger syndrome usually have fewer problems with language and do not have the accompanying learning disabilities associated with autism. However, although children with Asperger syndrome often try hard to be sociable, many find it hard to understand non-verbal signals,

including facial expressions. As with autism, asperger syndrome is diagnosed by health professionals. If you are concerned, speak to your GP who may refer you to a Paediatrician.

For further information contact:

**County Psychological Service
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

**County Psychological Service
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

**Behaviour Support Service
(BSS)**

**Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

**Behaviour Support Service
(BSS)**

**Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

For further information contact:

**The National Autistic Society
393 City Road
London
EC1V 1NE**

**www.nas.org.uk
Fax: 020 7833 9666
Email: nas@org.uk
Helpline: 0846 070 4004
(10am – 4pm Monday to Friday)**

My child has Down's syndrome?

Down's syndrome is a form of learning disability and children with the syndrome often have similar physical characteristics. Down's syndrome is a medical condition and is usually detected soon after birth.

For further information contact:

**County Psychological Service
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

**County Psychological Service
Cedar House, 1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

The Down's Syndrome Association
Langdon Down Centre
2a Langdon Park
Teddington TW11 9PS

www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

Tel: 0845 230 0372

Fax: 0824 230 0373

Email:

info@downs-syndrome.org.uk

Useful contact numbers:

Education services:

Parent Partnership Service etc
County Hall, Colliton Park
Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

Tel: 01202 577453 (East Dorset)

Tel: 01300 341978 (North Dorset)

Tel: 01305 250766

(West/South Dorset)

Behaviour Support Service
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

Behaviour Support Service
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

County Psychological Service
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

County Psychological Service
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

Hearing and Vision Support
Services. (HVSS)
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

**Hearing and Vision Support
Services. (HVSS)
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

**Education Social Work and
Attendance Service
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

**Education Social Work and
Attendance Service
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

**Children Out of School Service
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224422 (West)

**Children Out of School Service
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB**

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

**Special Educational Needs
Specialist Services. (SENSS)
Top O' Town House
Bridport Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1XT**

Tel: 01305 224907 (West)

Special Educational Needs
Specialist Services. (SENSS)
Cedar House
1 Cedar Office Park
Cobham Road
Wimborne BH21 7SB

Tel: 01202 870130 (East)

Special Educational Needs Team
County Hall, Colliton Park
Dorchester, Dorset DT1 1XJ

Tel: 01305 224888

Health Services:

Speech and Language
Therapists (SALTS)
The Children's Centre
Damers Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 2LB

Tel: 01305 251150 (West)

Speech and Language
Therapist (SALTS)
11 Shelley Road, Bournemouth
Dorset BH1 4JQ

Tel: 01202 443035 (East)

Children's Therapy
The Children's Centre
Damers Road, Dorchester
Dorset DT1 2LB

Tel: 01305 254744 (West)

Children's Therapy
Poole Hospital NHS Trust
Longfleet Road
Poole, Dorset BH15 2JP

Tel: 01202 442475 (East)

Social Care & Health:

Dorchester Local Office
Acland Road
Dorchester
Dorset DT1 1SH

Tel: 01305 251414

Bridport Local Office
The Grove, Rax Lane
Bridport, Dorset DT6 3JL

Tel: 01308 422234

Sherborne Local Office
The Shielings
The Avenue
Sherborne
Dorset DT9 3AJ

Tel: 01935 814104

North Dorset Local Office
Bath Road
Struminster Newton
DT10 1DR

Tel: 01258 472652 (North Dorset)

Weymouth & Portland Office
Jubilee Close
Jubilee Retail Park
Weymouth, Dorset DT4 7BG

Tel: 01305 760139

Purbeck Local Office
19 Bonnets Lane
Wareham BH20 4HB

Tel: 01929 553456

Ferndown Local Office
Victoria Road
Penny's Walk
Ferndown BH22 9JY

Tel: 01202 877445

Christchurch Local Office
32 Jumpers Road
Christchurch BH23 2JT

Tel: 01202 474106

If your domestic difficulties impact negatively on your child, contact your local Social Care & Health local office who may be able to offer support.

National contact numbers:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)
1c, Aberdeen Studios
22 Highbury Grove
London N5 2DQ

Tel: 0808 800 5793

Dorset LEA is able to provide this booklet in Braille, Audiotape or alternative formats or languages on request. Please contact the Parent Partnership Officer if you require an alternative format or language.

For further information please contact:

PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE

Anne Barker 01300 341978
North Dorset a.m.barker@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Dorothy Brunton 01305 813822
Dorchester area d.brunton@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Jane Schmidt 01202 577453
East Dorset j.e.schmidt@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Julie Daulby 01305 250766
South and West Dorset j.daulby@dorsetcc.gov.uk

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