

Asking the Education Authority (EA) for a Statutory Assessment of your child's Special Educational Needs.

Ask for a Statutory Assessment if you believe:

- that your school-age child has a learning difficulty or a disability which is holding them back at school and
- the school is unable to provide the help your child needs, or
- if your child is under school age and you believe that they will need extra help or special provision when they start school.

Should I speak to the school first?

Yes. Speak to your child's Class Teacher or SENCO and the School Principal about your concerns before writing to the EA

What if the school offers to write on your behalf?

The School Principal can write and request a Statutory Assessment (SA) but if you do it yourself you can be sure that the request has been made and you will know exactly when the request was made. This is important as certain deadlines apply. However, if you decide to request the SA yourself and if the Principal is willing, you could ask him/her to write a letter which supports your parental request.

Who should I write to?

Write to the Education Officer (Special Education) at the Education Authority office in whose area you live. Always make your request in writing. **Keep a copy of the letter** and make a **note of when it was sent** and **also make a note of the six-week deadline** for them to reply to you. Your letter should detail your child's difficulties but does not need to contain supporting documentation at this point

When should I send in supporting documents?

When you request a Statutory Assessment from the EA within a short time you should receive a notice from the EA saying that they are **considering** making a statutory assessment. At this point you will have 22 days to send supporting documents and evidence as to why your child needs a statutory assessment.

What can you do if your request is turned down?

If the EA decide not to conduct a statutory assessment, they should inform parents in writing giving reasons for their decision and inform you of your right to appeal to the Special Educational Needs Disability Tribunal (SENDIST)

What criteria is used when considering a request?

The Provisional Criteria the Education Authority uses when considering requests to make a Statutory Assessment states the Education Authority will consider the case for a Statutory Assessment where the balance of the evidence presented to them suggests a child's learning difficulties and/or disabilities:

- a) are significant and/or complex, and
- b) have not been met by relevant and purposeful measures taken by the school and external specialists, and
- c) may require special educational provision which cannot reasonably be provided within the resources normally available to schools in the area.

Sample letter requesting a Statutory Assessment from the EA

The following sample letter can be used as guidance for writing your own letter to your school.
Please insert, delete and adapt where appropriate.

Your address
Date

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: (your child's name and date of birth)

I am writing as a parent of the above-named child to request a statutory assessment of his/her special educational needs under the Education (Northern Ireland) Order 1996.

My child is due to start (Name of school/nursery) in (month) (year)

And/Or

My child has the following learning difficulties: (here give a detailed account of the difficulties that your child may be experiencing e.g. inability to concentrate, behavioural issues, speech or learning difficulties, any diagnoses (e.g. ADHD, Aspergers, Dyspraxia and or medical conditions).

if applicable

His/her school provides him with the following support (detail any help the school is providing at present). This help is not sufficient to meet (child's name) needs.

Or

The school is unable to offer any extra support for (child's name).

I understand that you are required to provide a decision regarding this request within six weeks.

Yours faithfully