

Help from school with dyslexia - the Graduated Approach

If you feel your child finds it harder to learn than most other children of the same age they may have **special educational needs**. This should be identified by the school, but if it is not you should speak to the school's head teacher, or the class teacher or the school SENCO - this stands for Special Educational Needs Coordinator. Once it has been established that a child has special educational needs (SEN) the school will adopt the **graduated approach**. This is a series of actions that develop step-by-step to reflect that children learn in different ways and may have different needs at different times. You, as the parent, should be consulted at every step. Advice and help for parents is available from the local **Parent Partnership Service**. Irene Holland in North Herts 01992 555847.

School Action

The first step in the graduated approach is **School Action**. This is when the help your child receives comes from within school. It might be in the form of equipment like a computer or a sloping desk-top, or in the form of assistance from an extra adult or a different way of teaching certain things. The actions that are taken to help your child may be recorded in an **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** which will be discussed with you when it is written and when it is reviewed.

School Action Plus

If the child does not make enough progress the next step is **School Action Plus**. This is when the school gets advice from other people outside the school. This could be a specialist teacher or an educational psychologist. In Hertfordshire the school may seek help for pupils with dyslexia from the local **Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Base**.

The Specific Learning Difficulties Bases

The SpLD Bases offer specialist teaching for dyslexic pupils, training for teaching staff and advice on meeting the needs of pupils with dyslexia. All of this can be accessed only **through the school**. There is a list of referral criteria issued by the Bases. This is a list of evidence the school must supply about a pupil in order to be considered for help from the base. The levels quoted in it - 1c, 2a etc - are the levels children are tested against in the SATs. More information on them can be obtained from your school or the Department for Education and Skills.

If insufficient progress is made at School Action Plus the school can ask for either **earmarked pupil funding (EPF)** or a **statutory assessment** of the child from the local education authority (LEA). EPF is money that is allocated to the school for the resources that your child needs in order to be able to learn effectively. The assessment is a detailed investigation that gathers evidence from medical, educational, social care and other staff as appropriate. The results of the assessment will be used by the LEA to decide whether the child needs a **written statement of special educational needs**. A statement describes all the child's special educational needs and the particular help the child should receive.

Further details of the graduated approach can be found in *Special Educational Needs - A Guide for Parents* and *Special Educational Needs - Code of Practice*. Both are available from the Department for Education and Skills publications centre on 0845 602 2260 and are free.



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