

Requesting an EHC Needs Assessment

A step-by-step guide for parents and carers · UK · Reviewed for the current SEND framework

An Education, Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment is the first step towards an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). You can request one yourself — you do not need the school's permission, and the nursery, school or college usually cannot refuse to pass on your request.

Who can ask

- You, as the child's parent or carer
- A young person aged 16 to 25 in education
- The school, nursery or college (they usually co-operate with a parent request)

Before you write

- Gather evidence: school reports, SEN Support plans, diagnostic or professional letters, behaviour and exclusion records, notes of meetings.
- Write a short history of your child's needs and what support has already been tried.
- Show a pattern: what has been tried, over how long, and why it has not worked.

What your request letter should say

- Your child's name, date of birth and current school year
- A description of their special educational needs (diagnosed or suspected)
- Evidence of the support already in place and its limits
- Why you believe the school cannot meet their needs without a plan
- A clear sentence asking for an EHC needs assessment

Template opening (adapt to your child)

Dear <Your Local Authority>, EHC Team

I am writing to formally request an Education, Health and Care needs assessment for my child, <Full Name>, born <DOB>, currently in <year group> at <School Name>.

My child has <describe needs: e.g. suspected ADHD, speech and language needs, sensory processing differences>. Despite <support tried>, their needs are not being met, and this is now affecting <attendance / learning / behaviour records / emotional wellbeing>.

Please confirm receipt of this request within six weeks and let me know your decision.

Deadlines to know

- The local authority must reply with a decision within six weeks of receiving your request.
- If they refuse, you can ask them to reconsider (mediation) and appeal to the SEND Tribunal — you have two months from the decision letter to appeal.

- Keep copies of everything, and send letters by email so there is a record.

You Are Not Alone offers free advocacy support for Black families. Contact pzadi2012@gmail.com if you would like help preparing your request.