

First 5 steps if you think your child has SEN

Step 1 - Book an eye test. This should be anyone's first step if their child is struggling in education. The link between vision and literacy difficulties is well documented and correcting vision can be transformative and sometimes, it's all that's needed - an easy win for some and always good to check.

Step 2 - Keep a log of any concerns or traits you notice at home. This will allow you to build up a full picture and spot patterns to help identify what type of support or intervention your child might need. It's also invaluable evidence if it turns out that your child requires any specialist support later on, including applying for and EHCP*.

Step 3 - Talk to your child's school. Share what concerns you have, what traits you have noticed and whether there is a pattern to these traits. If you go in prepared with a list of what you have already noticed and documented, you'll be on the front foot. It's important to work with the school and see if these patterns are mirrored at school. Children are amazing at 'masking' traits if they want to conform at school which means these traits can be amplified when they get home. Comparing patterns between home and school is so useful in narrowing down what the issue could be.

Step 4 - Talk to your child and protect their self-esteem. If your child feels like they aren't any good at school work, their self-esteem can plummet pretty quickly and this is incredibly painful to watch. Not only that, but if it's not turned around, the difficulties become part of a fixed mindset which just compounds any SEN related difficulties; they give up and the difficulties spiral into a self-fulfilling prophecy where they don't move forward because they have adopted a closed mindset. This doesn't need to be the case. Guiding your child through this process is a topic in itself so do take a look at this link for more: [Support Self Esteem with SEN](#).

Step 5 - Become open minded about what success will look like for your child. My whole philosophy in education is around helping individuals have the confidence to create their own definition of success. Unfortunately, our education system still characterises success in terms of academic outcomes and great results in exams. Don't let the system define you; find what they love to do, what makes them excited and nurture that. This will give them confidence and perspective so that they don't attach their self-worth to educational outcomes as defined by our very narrow and outdated system.

*I try to keep my work free of all the SEN jargon but if you come across a term you are not familiar with, look at my free SEN Jargon Buster here: [SEN Jargon Buster](#)

Good luck,
Charlotte 😊