



Education Health and Care Plans – a guide for parents and carers

The importance of Section A

Education, health and care plans (EHCPs) have 12 distinct parts, known as sections A to K (section H is split into H1 and H2), each covering different things. These sections cover important details, such as your child's or young person's special educational needs, the outcomes that are sought and how the setting your child or young person attends will meet those needs and achieve those outcomes.

Possibly the most important part of the whole document is **Section A**, as this is the part of the plan that you and your child or young person complete, and where you get to explain all the things you want to tell everyone involved in your child or young person's education, health and social care. You can set out your child or young person's needs, their strengths and importantly their aspirations and your aspirations for the future. You can include things such as working towards specific employment goals, independent or supported living, desired health outcomes or simply being happy and doing the things your child or young person enjoys in a meaningful way.

If your child is younger those aspirations may be looking towards what you and your child would like for the next stage of their education, be that moving to a different key stage or a different school.

In a good EHCP, the aspirations set out by you and your child or young person in Section A should be the '**golden thread**' that runs through the rest of the document, and everything in the EHCP should be focused on achieving those outcomes and aspirations.

Top tips for writing an effective contribution to Section A

- Detail is key – include as much information as you can about your child or young person, their needs and what strategies help them and work for them
- Talk to other people who know your child or young person – seek the views of partners, relatives, friends and anyone else who knows your child or young person well. Their responses might help you to decide what you want to include
- Where possible, use evidence to help you demonstrate what you mean. You might have reports from different professionals, or written views or statements from others who know your child or young person well. You can include these and ask for them to be attached to the final document in Section K
- Be honest – as a parent it is naturally easier to speak about the successes and strengths of our children, but it's equally important to detail the challenges in Section A too. If all your

child or young person's needs are identified, then the rest of the EHCP can detail plans for how the setting your child or young person attends can meet those needs and hopefully help your child or young person to thrive

- Support your child or young person to contribute to or write their Section A including their aspirations. Some children or young people will be able to complete this with minimal assistance, depending on their age and/or overall level of ability, but you know your child or young person better than anyone else, and so it should be possible for every child or young person to contribute to their part of Section A even if only in a small way
- You can complete your child or young person's part of Section A on their behalf if necessary, writing from their perspective, (for example you could write "I am autistic and have hyper mobile joints and this sometimes makes walking longer distances difficult"). You can declare in the 'how was this information obtained' part that the child or young person's contribution was written fully or partially by you as the parent
- Once completed, give your Section A to someone to read who knows your child or young person well and ask them if they feel it covers everything you need to include before returning it.
- At any EHCP meeting, remind all present that yours and your child or young person's contributions are the 'golden thread' that should run through the document and create a cohesive plan to achieve the outcomes, goals and aspirations that you have identified in Section A

If you require further support with writing Section A, you can contact the Cumbria SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SEND IAS) through their website.

<https://sendiass.cumbria.gov.uk/aboutcumbriasendiass.asp>

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