

These are our top suggestions to help meetings go well and some ideas for questions you could ask.

Top tips

1. Prepare well – know what the meeting is about, think about what you want to get from it and read any reports or paperwork beforehand.
2. Have a list of questions written down or your DiAS meeting form to hand so you can check it during the meeting.
3. Be on time. It helps to arrive five minutes early so you can sign in and get to the meeting room. If you are going to be late, phone to let them know.
4. Find out how long the meeting will be and allow enough time, so you don't have to cut it short to be somewhere else!
5. Have a pen and note pad so that you can make some notes.
6. Make sure you're comfortable – take a drink and go to the toilet beforehand if it's likely to be a long meeting!
7. Get some support if it will help you feel more comfortable and confident – ask a friend or family member to be with you at the meeting.
8. If you don't understand something or need more information, ask. You have every right to be involved in the decisions made about your child - to do that you need the right information, given in a clear and straightforward way.
9. If you don't understand someone's role at the meeting, ask who they are and how they're involved in supporting your child.
10. Ask about the timescales for when something will happen. For example, is this action going to be carried out next week, next term, or next academic year?

Meetings top tips and questions you could ask

11. Check that someone is taking notes and ask when these will be shared after the meeting
12. Book in the next meeting there and then, when everyone has their diaries in front of them. You can ask for a virtual meeting if it's easier for you or certain professionals to come.
13. Try not to spend too long talking about what has happened in the past. Focus on the issues in the here and now and try and find solutions.
14. Be respectful of other people's point of view. You don't always have to agree but try and be constructive and look for solutions rather than problems.
15. Remember that you're an expert too and as such you have an important role to play – you know more about your child than anyone else!

Questions to ask

This is by no means a full list, but some of these might help you get started.

- Is my child getting support for special educational needs?
- What assessments have been done to find out more about my child's difficulties?
- Does my child get extra help from a teacher or another adult? If so, what kind of help is it and how often?
- Is my child getting help individually or as part of a group?
- Is my child making the kind of progress expected and how is that being measured?
- Have any goals or targets been set, to show whether support is making a difference (outcomes)?
- Has my child been referred for any kind of specialist advice or support, such as educational psychology or speech and language services?

- What can I do at home to support my child?
- What will the next steps be if my child needs more help?
- Where can my child go, and who can they talk to about how they are feeling or when something is happening at school.
- What is the best way for everyone to communicate with each other?

Don't forget, you can always ask the question "What else can you do?" Most parents don't know everything that's on offer, so it's always a good idea to ask.

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