



Getting ready for school

Useful tips and support

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Home and School Visitor

Where to start???

- Looking for Early Years places or getting ready for School?
- The following is generally applicable to both scenarios:
- Start Early!
- ‘Do your research’
- Create a Shortlist of Early Years Settings/ Schools you are interested in

Create a shortlist of early years settings/ schools

- Useful resources include:
 - Your Local Council website – info on early years options & info on schools and how to apply
 - OFSTED - ‘The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills’
 - Local Offer (your Local Council website)
 - Individual providers’ websites
 - Take recommendations from friends and family
 - Contact SENDIASS (Parent Partnership) who can advise on the whole process (local area focused)
 - FIS - Family Info Services (area specific service) eg – City of York Council (<http://www.york.org.uk/families/FIS/family-information-service.html>)
 - Health Visitor and other professionals supporting your child

Early years choices

- Consider
- SEND awareness by SENCO and staff team?
- Do the staff have knowledge of hemiplegia already?
- Proximity to home – walk, bus, drive, other transport?
- Level access - inside and outside?
- Large space, easy to walk around?
- Good ratio of staff to children?
- Calm and quiet?
- Lively and noisy?
- Do they provide regular progress updates?
- Any emerging additional needs should be identified by staff and discussed with you, and application for additional support made if required
- Any SEND information should be handed over properly at transition stages to avoid break in level of support

Choosing Early Years Places

- Questions you might want to ask (and add your own!):
- What experience do they have of supporting children with additional needs.
- What qualifications and/or training do staff have, and are they relevant to your child?
- Are they open to accepting training on your child's condition if required?
- Are they trained to give medication or use specific equipment?
- Can I look around the building to see the rooms and outside play areas?
- Where will my child rest?
- What kind of food and drink will you give? Can you support my child's dietary needs?
- What will my child be doing throughout day?
- How would they approach your child's hemiplegia with other children/parents?
- Will my child be with a regular group of children? How old are they?
- How will they communicate with you about your child's progress and needs?
- <http://www.yor-ok.org.uk/families/Childcare/choosing-childcare-disabled-children.htm>

Starting School



- Start looking early – approx a year prior to your child starting school
- School starts in England and Wales: the beginning of the term following the child's fifth birthday.
- Parents generally request a primary school place from the September following the child's fourth birthday
- OFSTED (Govt dept –The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills). Inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages')
- Local Council website – information on schools and how to apply
- Ask nursery/pre-school for advice on where to go

Starting school

- **Considerations:**

- Location – can you walk/is there parking? Do you have a blue badge?
- Will siblings go there too? Need to be practical
- Number of steps around the school
- Size
- Inclusive approach/ethos
- Strengths and weaknesses – small school may be good for getting around but not much experience of children with SEN
- Ofsted?
- Speak to the SENCO – what experience do they have? Other children with SEN?
- Word of mouth (friends & family recommendations)
- Is the school over-subscribed? Must have a back up

Starting school

Local Authority Services:

- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS).** Formerly known as Parent Partnership Board
- Provides free information, advice and support to parents, carers, children and young people about Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Disability and related health and social care issues
- Provide support via phone or home visits and can support you in school meetings concerning SEND issues
- **Local Offer** – ‘A Local Offer gives children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities and their families information about what support services the local authority think will be available in their local area. Every local authority is responsible for writing a Local Offer and making sure it is available for everyone to see’
Example: City of York Council Local Offer -
(<http://www.yorok.org.uk/families/Local%20Offer/DfE%20The%20Local%20Offer.pdf>)
- **Specialist Teaching Teams** support disabled children and young people providing specialist assessment, advice to the school team tailored to your child’s additional needs

Starting School.....

SEND - Special Educational Needs and Disability

- The title under which the school provides the additional/ adapted support your child needs to access the curriculum without being disadvantaged because of their special needs
- The provision of a school's SEND support is often enough to cater for a child with hemiplegia and may be monitored with an IEP (Individual Education Plan) or similar Plan
- Review meetings between the parents, school staff and other relevant professionals involved in the child's care will be necessary to monitor your child's progress
- **BUT** it isn't **ALWAYS** enough support!
- If you are concerned that your child is not getting adequate/enough support and needs significantly more 1-1 input, you can apply for an **EHCP**

Starting School.....

Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCP)

- Formerly known as ‘Statements’ of Special Educational Needs
- Legal document of specific additional support schools must provide
- Can take up to 26 weeks so plan ahead
- This involves a formal process of application to the LEA
- Includes assessments/ statements from several professionals
- You can ask the SENCO to apply for an EHCP or you can apply yourself directly to the LEA
- www.ipsea.org.uk – Independent Parental Special Education Advice - **free legally based advice**

Why is an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) necessary for some children?

- One HemiHelp parent opted for an EHCP for her son because:
 - Change was difficult
 - Separation anxiety
 - Difficulties socialising – some autistic traits
 - Would not engage in work without 1:1 support
 - Poor concentration
 - Language delayed and would not always ask for what he wanted
 - Needed regular physiotherapy/occupational therapy during the day
- Started the application process 1 year before he started school

How one HemiHelp parent chose a school:



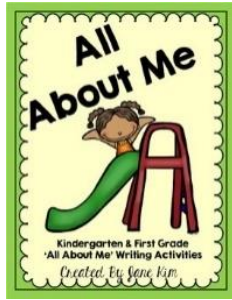
- I looked around three different schools which were close to home and with a good OFSTED report - 1 year before
- I chose the one that was very small (only 20 children intake) friendly, nurturing ethos, very few steps, no football in the playground
- Subtle signs from schools at open days
- Practical – we could walk there
- Had another child there with cerebral palsy

Her son's Transition to school



- First choice of school
- Teacher and two teaching assistants came to visit him the term before starting
- Visited the school, walked around it, walked to the school during the summer holiday
- Photos of key staff before the summer holidays
- Social story/books about your first day at school
- Occupational Therapist did an assessment and school put up a grab bar next to steps and checked toilet appropriate

Starting School Hints & Tips



- When meeting with school staff BE CLEAR about your child and your concerns about their needs

- Use the 'My Hemicheck' online tool (<http://myhemicheck.hemihelp.org.uk/>)
- My HemiCheck is a free online tool, in Q&A form. Based on your answers, it provides a simple printable report about your child and how hemiplegia affects them

OR

Make a 'Things about me' information sheet (or a 'Passport') with your child including things such as:

- What are your child's main additional needs?
- Any other medical problems (e.g. epilepsy)
- What makes your child happy and confident?
- What does your child struggle with/get anxious about?
- Will your child need physio/ stretching sessions during the school day?
- Does your child get very tired or need regular breaks from prolonged sitting to avoid stiffness and discomfort?
- What professionals are involved in your child's life?

Starting School..... Hints & Tips



- Use velcro on clothing with fiddly buttons – saves time and effort when your child is changing for PE
- Use velcro fastening shoes (or help your child practise with laces at home)
- Teach your child to tie shoe laces (one handed if necessary) as early as possible ready for that shoe change task in school!
- Suggest to teachers to use Dycem mat to anchor the paper
- Remind the teachers that your child may need to be encouraged to use both sides consistently
- Ask for your child to sit in class with affected side free from obstruction

Starting School..... Hints & Tips



Hints and Tips

- Tell the teachers about some of the sports your child prefers so that these can be included in the general PE lesson
- Many of your child's physiotherapy exercises can be incorporated into the main PE lesson so your child doesn't feel 'different'
- Consider packed lunches if your child struggles to carry hot plates – you can prepare the packed lunch so your child doesn't have any tricky packets or pots to open
- Encourage friendships early on – In the early days, the social aspects of your child's school life are as important as the health and educational aspects – friendships help disabled children to feel included, just like every other child needs to feel

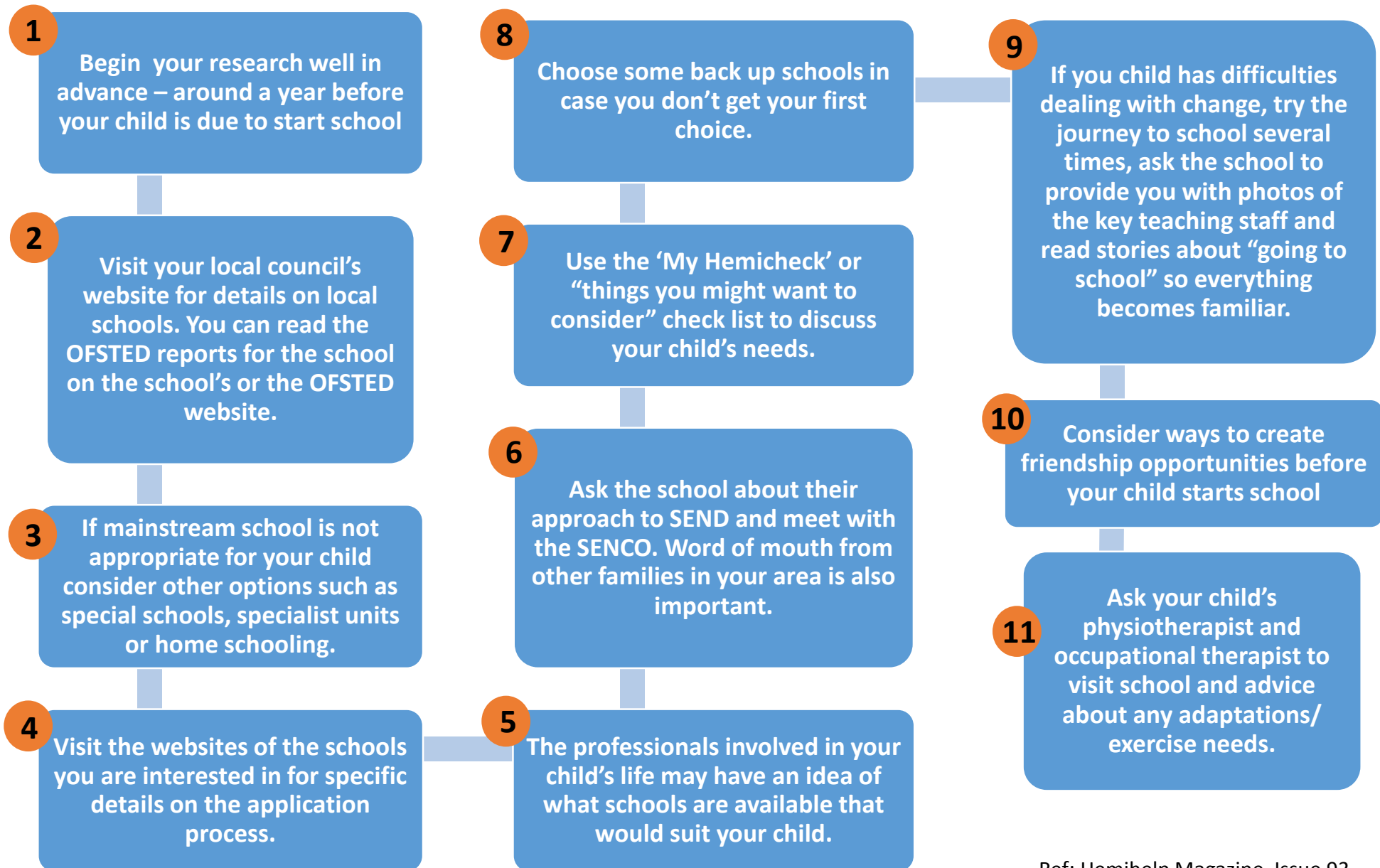
***I am THE EXPERT on
my child and their
needs!***

Remind yourself:

- Stick to your guns, you know your child best but don't run yourself into the ground
- Do not assume that services are joined up or good at communicating with one another
- Request a key worker to help you organise and liaise between appointments
- Argue your case dispassionately as much as you can, but acknowledge you are human
- Read SEN code of practice/Local Offer to be aware of expectations of schools
- Ask professionals to clarify their role and their remit in supporting you (i.e. Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Health Visitor, SALT, etc)
- Find your child's strengths
- Get some respite

***I am NOT a Super Hero –
We all need help and
support!***

'Finding a primary school' map.



How can HemiHelp help?

- Home and School visitor
- Helpline
- Facebook page
- Primary School Pack
- 'My Hemicheck' online tool
- Schools Training PowerPoint
- Information sheets
- Regional groups



Helpful Resources

- Family Information Services – city/ area specific providing a free, impartial information for families (eg <http://fis.wandsworth.gov.uk/kb5/wandsworth/fsd/home.page> for Wandsworth or <https://www.families.scot/> for Scotland)
- My Hemicheck online tool – produces a printable individual report about your child/ specific needs (<http://myhemicheck.hemihelp.org.uk/>)
- CEREBRA- Charity for children with all ‘brain conditions’ (<http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/>) – including:
 - Info on ECHP(<http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/guides-for-parents/education-health-and-care-ehc-plans-education-in-england-a-guide-for-parents/>)
 - Tool kit for process of appealing if unhappy with statutory services - ‘Problem-solving Toolkit for Families’ (<http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/practical-help/problem-solving-toolkit-for-families/>)

Helpful Resources

- **Contact a Family** – ‘support families of disabled children across the UK, whatever their condition or disability’ (<https://www.cafamily.org.uk/>)
- **OFSTED** – Ofsted is ‘The Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. We inspect and regulate services that care for children and young people, and services providing education and skills for learners of all ages’ (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>)
- **Council for Disabled Children** - ‘The umbrella body for the disabled children's sector bringing together professionals, practitioners and policy-makers’ (<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/>)
- **IPSEA** (Independent Parental Special Education Advice) – Information service, Advice Line and Tribunal Line (<https://www.ipsea.org.uk/>)

Helpful Resources

- **Scotland: For children with ‘additional support needs’ (equivalent of SEND)**
 - Scottish Government - info on ‘Additional Support for Learning’ (ASL) (<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/welfare/ASL>)
 - Enquire – ‘Scottish advice service for additional support for learning’ (<http://enquire.org.uk/>)
 - Enable Scotland – ‘Charity providing support and advice for people with learning difficulties’ (http://www.enable.org.uk/Pages/Enable_Home.aspx)
 - Scottish Child Law Centre – ‘Free legal advice for and about children & young people’ (<http://www.sclc.org.uk/>)
 - HemiChat – ‘Raising hemiplegia awareness, uniting and supporting families whilst raising hemiplegia awareness’ (<http://www.hemichat.org/>)

HemiHelp

If you need any more help or advice please contact:

HemiHelp
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amanda@hemihelp.org.uk

www.hemihelp.org.uk

Glossary of terms

- Dycem – non-slip, sticky mat to hold paper etc in place
- IEP – Individual Education Plan. Termly review of child’s progress. May be called an Individual Target Plan
- Inset day – training day for staff when school is closed
- LEA - Local Education Association
- MLD (Moderate Learning Difficulty) defined by a IQ assessment
- OFSTED - Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. Inspect schools
- PTA – Parent Teacher Association
- P levels – Performance levels are used to assess the progress of children aged 5-14 who have special educational needs (SEN) and whose abilities do not yet reach Level 1 of the National Curriculum
- Reception (year child turns 5), year 1 (year child turns 6) etc.
- Statement of Special Educational Needs – now replaced by Education, Health and Care Plans
- SENCO – special educational needs coordinator
- TA – teaching assistant. LSA – Learning Support Assistant
- ASL – Additional Support for Learning (Scotland ref)