

The National Council for Special Education

Working to deliver a better special education service

This is one in a series of leaflets designed to give basic information on the role and operations of the National Council for Special Education in delivering a better special education service to students, parents, schools, the health sector and organisations **representing persons** with disabilities.

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ORGANISER

Q. What is a Special Educational Needs Organiser?

- A. Special Educational Needs Organisers (SENOs) are appointed by the National Council for Special Education to provide a direct service to the parents of children with special educational needs and to schools within geographical areas. This involves identifying the needs of children and deciding on the level of resources schools require to provide them with an appropriate education service.

The SENO, on behalf of the Council, provides a service to parents and children through the co-ordination of the delivery of services between the health sector and schools. This facilitates the inclusion of the child in the school system. Most importantly they keep parents informed of what decisions are being made on their child's behalf.

Q. Who are the SENOs?

- A. All SENOs are selected on the basis of knowledge and experience of providing services to children with disabilities. Their backgrounds include teaching, nursing, psychology and management both in Ireland and abroad. Special Educational Needs Organisers, or SENOs, operate within a network, sharing their experiences and expertise in dealing with the unique needs of each child.

Q. What can a SENO do for me as a parent?

- A. Your local SENO can:
- discuss any problems or anxieties that you may have about your child's education
 - help you source and co-ordinate services provided by schools and the health sector
 - ensure that you are included in the decision-making process that affects your child
 - ascertain quickly the resources available to your child and inform your local school on these
 - explain to you exactly how the school will meet the needs of your child
 - keep you informed of all the decisions made about your child and the reasoning behind them

Q. Does the SENO provide psychological reports?

A. The SENO does not provide psychological reports. The SENO will assist in arranging for assessments where difficulties are encountered.

Q. How does a SENO make decisions on levels of resources?

A. The SENO's decision will be made after considering the needs of the child, the particular requirements of the school in relation to human and physical resources, taking into account the policy of the Department of Education & Science in relation to resourcing.

Where new information, becomes available subsequent to this decision (e.g. a new professional report), it should be forwarded to the SENO for consideration.

There will be an opportunity to review any decisions in the light of any additional information that might become available.

Q. Does the SENO work for children with special educational needs in the pre-school stage?

A. At present, the principal responsibility for meeting the needs of your child in the pre-school stage lies with the Health Service Executive. The SENO will, however, address any concerns that you have about present or future educational needs of your child.

Q. Where can I obtain further information?

A. The list of the contact numbers for SENOs is available on our website at www.ncse.ie

Alternatively, you can contact your local school or the school in which you intend enrolling your child, to get the contact details of your local SENO.

The Council Headquarters address is: The National Council for Special Education, Mill Street, Trim, Co Meath. Telephone Number: 046 948 6400, Fax Number: 046 948 6404

A further leaflet on the role of the National Council for Special Education is also available and may be obtained from your local SENO on request.