



Top Ten Tips for parents and carers on accessing specialist education and support

- 1 Do your homework about services available through the Local Offer. Check out what's available through Ofsted reports, press coverage and what other parents say. Start at the Local Offer but remember, it may not be complete. (Lincolnshire's Local Offer is available through their website at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk)
- 2 Use the Careers service.
- 3 Contact your local Parent Carer Forum. They will have lots of experience, information and advice they can give you and they are involved in the development of each Local Offer.
- 4 Consider what age break is best for your child to move from one education provider to another – e.g. would it be better for them at 16 or 19?
- 5 Every Further Education college, including specialist colleges, are on a level playing field with regard to funding, so you have a choice.
- 6 Contact education providers. Visit them and ask to speak to a parent of a former pupil/ student. Most education providers are qualified in giving information, advice and guidance so this is another source of support.
- 7 Understand your rights. There are sources of information and support about your rights and responsibilities under the Children and Families Act 2014, which include the right to express your preference and the right to appeal local authority decisions should you feel this is necessary. IPSEA is a source of independent specialist advice: www.ipsea.org.uk
- 8 Attend information events as they become available and ask questions.
- 9 Don't be isolated – speak to other parents.
- 10 Don't settle for second best.