

A Parent's Step-by-Step Guide to EOTAS

(Education Other Than At School)

Introduction

For many parents, watching their child struggle in school — or worse, being out of education entirely — is one of the hardest experiences imaginable. Mainstream and even specialist schools don't always work for every child. Some needs are too complex, some situations too traumatic, and some support packages simply unworkable in a school setting.

This is where **EOTAS (Education Other Than At School)** comes in. EOTAS is a legal option where the Local Authority (LA) provides education in a way that doesn't involve a school — usually at home, in the community, or through a tailored package of tutors and therapists.

This guide is written **from a parent's perspective**, with step-by-step advice, real-world strategies, example wording, and resources to help you:

- Understand what EOTAS is (and isn't).
 - Decide if it's right for your child.
 - Navigate the legal and practical process.
 - Find, instruct and direct tutors.
 - Use tools like **Earwig Academic** to track provision.
 - Access support from charities and the LA's Children with Disabilities Team.
 - Protect your child's rights — and your own wellbeing.
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Step 1 — What is EOTAS?

EOTAS stands for *Education Other Than At School*. It is a legal arrangement, under **section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014**, where an LA decides that education in a school is not appropriate for a child, and instead provides an alternative.

Key points:


- **EOTAS is not elective home education (EHE).**
 - With EHE, parents choose to home educate and take full responsibility.
 - With EOTAS, the **LA remains responsible for funding and delivering** the provision.
- **EOTAS must be written into the child's EHCP.**
 - Section F (special educational provision) remains binding.
 - Section I will specify "EOTAS" instead of a school.
- **EOTAS is not a lesser option.**
 - Provision should still be "adequate" and "suitable" to meet the child's needs.

- The law requires the LA to deliver what's in Section F — regardless of setting.
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Step 2 — When should you consider EOTAS?

Parents usually turn to EOTAS when school is no longer viable. Common situations include:

- **Health needs:** Your child is too unwell (physically or mentally) to cope with school routines.
- **Repeated placement breakdowns:** Schools say they cannot meet needs, or your child has been excluded.
- **Severe anxiety or trauma:** Attending school causes distress, shutdowns, or behavioural crises.
- **Specialist provision unavailable:** The nearest suitable school is too far, full, or unable to deliver therapies.

 *Tip: Keep a diary of school refusals, meltdowns, medical absences and failed placements. These records become crucial evidence later.*

Step 3 — How to request EOTAS

Requesting EOTAS can feel daunting, but here's a clear process:

1. **Check your child's EHCP**
 - Read Section F (provision) and Section I (placement).
 - If the specified provision cannot be delivered in a school, you have a strong case.
2. **Gather evidence**
 - Letters from doctors, CAMHS, or therapists explaining why school is not possible.
 - School exclusion records, attendance reports, or evidence of unmet needs.
 - Statements from yourself (and your child, if appropriate).
3. **Write formally to the LA**

Use the phrase:

"It is not possible for [child's name] to be educated in a school setting because..."

Then list your evidence. Request that EOTAS be named in Section I of the EHCP under section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014.


4. **Request an early review or emergency meeting**
 - If your child is out of education, stress the urgency.
 - The LA has a duty to provide education even while decisions are pending.
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Step 4 — Contact the LA's Children with Disabilities (CWD) Team

While you're pushing for EOTAS, also contact your LA's **Children with Disabilities Team**. Parents often don't realise they can ask for this support.

Why contact them?

- They can carry out a **Child in Need assessment** under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- They may provide **respite, transport, therapy, short breaks or personal assistants**.
- They strengthen your case by showing the LA that school is not feasible and extra support is required.


 *Script you can use when calling:*

"Hello, I'm the parent of a disabled child who is currently unable to attend school. I'd like to request a Child in Need assessment from the Children with Disabilities Team, as we are exploring EOTAS and need support at home."

Step 5 — Securing the package

Once the LA agrees to EOTAS, make sure everything is crystal clear in writing. Ask for:

- **Number of hours** of education per week.
- **Subjects and curriculum** to be covered.
- **Named therapies** (SALT, OT, mental health).
- **Exact providers or tutors** to be used.
- **Review arrangements** (termly or annual).

 Don't accept vague promises like "a tutor will be arranged". Insist that provision is written into the EHCP.

Step 6 — Finding, instructing and directing tutors

Tutors often form the backbone of EOTAS. Sometimes the LA provides them; sometimes you suggest or source them yourself.

Where to find tutors

- **Through your LA:** Ask for their list of approved agencies.
- **Specialist agencies:** Look for SEND experience.
- **Parent networks:** Other parents are often the best source of recommendations.
- **Registers:** The Tutors' Association or subject networks.

What to look for

- **Current DBS check.**
- **Experience with SEND.**
- **References.**
- **Flexibility and creativity.**

How to instruct tutors

Think of yourself as the **coordinator**, not the teacher.

- Provide **EHCP targets**.
- Share a **child profile** (strengths, triggers, strategies).
- Set **clear expectations** (hours, subjects, reporting).
- Ask for short **lesson notes** each session.

Managing tutors

- Hold **weekly check-ins** (call/email).
- Request **termly reports** against EHCP outcomes.
- Keep a **parent log** of sessions.
- Raise problems with tutor *and* LA quickly.

 *Checklist for first tutor meeting:*

- Go over your child's needs and triggers.
- Share EHCP outcomes.
- Explain your preferred communication style.
- Ask how they adapt lessons for different learning profiles.
- Agree on reporting format (e.g. notes after each session).

Step 7 – Using Earwig Academic to track progress

One of the hardest parts of EOTAS is proving provision is happening and showing progress. That's where **Earwig Academic** comes in.

What it does

- Tutors upload **notes, photos, videos, and assessments** securely.
- Aligns everything with **EHCP outcomes**.
- Creates **clear, professional reports** for reviews.
- Brings all providers into one shared system.

Benefits

- **Accountability:** You can see exactly what's being delivered.
- **Transparency:** No more missing reports or excuses.
- **Consistency:** Everyone works toward the same goals.
- **Reduced admin:** You don't have to collate everything yourself.

 *Tip: Ask your LA to fund your Earwig subscription as part of the EOTAS package. This saves them time too, since it produces review reports at the click of a button.*

Step 8 — Reviews and accountability

EOTAS must be reviewed at least annually (via EHCP review), but you can request earlier reviews if provision isn't working.

How to prepare:

- Collect tutor reports and notes.
- Use Earwig Academic reports.
- Keep your own diary of engagement and wellbeing.
- Note what is working and what isn't.

If the LA is failing to deliver Section F, write formally:

"The LA is in breach of its legal duty to deliver the provision in Section F of [child's name]'s EHCP. Please confirm urgently how you will remedy this."




Step 9 — Looking after yourself

EOTAS can feel isolating. You are suddenly project manager, advocate, and emotional anchor. To avoid burnout:

- Ask the **CWD team** for respite.
 - Connect with **local SEND parent forums**.
 - Join **online support groups** for EOTAS families.
 - Protect your own time: plan breaks, ask for help, and prioritise your health.
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Step 10 — Charities and organisations who can help

You don't have to face this alone. These charities provide advice, advocacy, and emotional support:

- **Contact a Family** — for families with disabled children.
 www.contact.org.uk
- **Parents in Need (PIN)** — advocacy and support for parents navigating SEND disputes.
 www.parentsinneed.org
- **SOS!SEN** — independent SEND legal advice and tribunal support.
 www.sossen.org.uk

Other useful organisations:

- **IPSEA** (Independent Provider of Special Education Advice): www.ipsea.org.uk
- **SENDIASS** (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Services): Find your local service

These groups can help with:

- Writing letters.
- Preparing for reviews and tribunals.
- Understanding the law.
- Emotional and peer support.

Final thoughts

EOTAS can feel like a battle — but it is a legal, valid and often life-saving option for children who cannot thrive in school. As a parent, your role is to coordinate, advocate, and keep evidence strong. With the right tutors, the right support, and the right tools, your child can still receive a meaningful education and make progress outside of school.

Above all, remember: **you are not alone**. Use the Children with Disabilities Team, connect with charities, and lean on the parent community. Every step you take is not just for your child's education, but for their dignity, safety and future.

The EOTAS Parent Toolkit

Education Other Than At School
A practical workbook for families

Section 1 — Understanding EOTAS

Quick definition:

EOTAS = Education Other Than At School.

- LA is still responsible for education.
- Written into EHCP (Sections F & I).
- Not the same as elective home education (EHE).

Parent Note:

Write here what you currently understand about EOTAS, and what you still need clarified:

Section 2 — Is EOTAS right for your child?

Checklist of signs to consider EOTAS:

- Child is unable to attend school due to illness or anxiety.
- School placements keep breaking down.
- EHCP provision cannot be delivered in a school.
- Child experiences trauma/distress from attending school.
- Specialist provision is unavailable or unsuitable.

Parent Note:

Tick which apply to your situation. Add specific examples/dates:

Section 3 – Requesting EOTAS

Action Plan:

1. Check EHCP — focus on Sections F & I.
2. Gather evidence (medical letters, attendance, exclusions, diary).
3. Write formally to LA.
4. Request early review or emergency meeting.

Template Letter to LA

Dear [Case Officer's Name],

I am writing regarding my child, [child's name], who has an EHCP. It is not possible for [child's name] to be educated in a school setting because [insert reasons].

I request that the LA names "Education Other Than At School" in Section I of [child's name]'s EHCP, under section 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014.

Please confirm the next steps and provide details of interim education provision.

Yours sincerely,
[Your name]

Parent Note:

Draft your own version of the letter here:

Section 4 – Contacting the Children with Disabilities Team

What to ask for:

- Child in Need assessment (s.17 Children Act 1989).
- Practical support at home (respite, transport, PA hours).
- Evidence to back up EOTAS request.

Phone Script:

"Hello, I'm the parent of a disabled child who cannot currently attend school. I'd like to request a Child in Need assessment from the Children with Disabilities Team. We are exploring EOTAS and need support at home."

Parent Note:

Write the date you called, who you spoke to, and what they promised:

Section 5 – Securing the EOTAS package

What to pin down in writing:

- Number of hours of education per week.
- Subjects to be covered.
- Named tutors/agencies.
- Therapies included.
- Review timetable.

Parent Note:

Use this box to keep track of what the LA has agreed (or not yet agreed):

Section 6 – Finding, Instructing and Directing Tutors

Tutor Checklist:

- DBS check.
- SEND experience.
- References checked.
- Flexible/adaptable.
- Agreed reporting method.

First Meeting Questions:

- How do you adapt for children with [diagnosis/need]?
- Can you share examples of previous SEND teaching?
- How will you report progress to me and the LA?

Template Note for Tutors:

My child's EHCP specifies the following outcomes: [insert].
Please ensure lesson planning links directly to these outcomes. After each session, please provide a short note covering:

- What was taught
- How my child engaged
- Next steps

Parent Note:

Keep a log of tutors contacted, responses, and fit:

Section 7 — Using Earwig Academic

Benefits for parents:

- All evidence in one place.
- Transparent record of sessions.
- Easy reports for EHCP reviews.
- Accountability for tutors and LA.

Action Plan:

- Ask LA to fund Earwig licence in package.
- Ensure all tutors upload session notes.
- Use parent login to monitor progress.

Parent Note:

Write here how you'd like tutors to use Earwig (eg. photos, short notes, videos):

Section 8 — Reviews & Accountability

Before an EHCP Review:

- Gather tutor reports.
- Print/download Earwig data.
- Prepare your own notes on progress.
- Write down concerns and desired changes.

Template Letter if Provision Fails:

Dear [Case Officer's Name],

I note that [child's name] is not currently receiving the provision specified in Section F of their EHCP. The LA is therefore in breach of its statutory duty. Please confirm urgently how this will be remedied.

Yours sincerely,
[Your name]

Section 9 – Looking After Yourself

Checklist:

- Ask for respite (via CWD team).
- Connect with parent forums.
- Join online EOTAS/SEND groups.
- Ringfence personal downtime.

Parent Note:

Write 3 things you can do this week just for your own wellbeing:

1.

2.

3.

Section 10 – Charities and Organisations

Where to get help:

- **Contact a Family:** www.contact.org.uk
- **Parents in Need (PIN):** www.parentsinneed.org
- **SOS!SEN:** www.sossen.org.uk
- **IPSEA:** www.ipsea.org.uk
- **SENDIASS:** Find local service

Parent Note:

Write down the charities you've contacted and the advice given:

Final Section — Your Action Plan

This month I will:

1.

2.

3.

By the next EHCP Review I want to see:
