

Who provides extra support for children's learning?

This factsheet explains:

- the roles and responsibilities of the people who provide support to children and young people
- particular responsibilities regarding co-ordinated support plans and leaving school.

Children and young people who need extra support at school, and their families, often have to deal with a lot of people during their pre-school and school years. These people can have a number of roles and responsibilities. Their job titles can also vary among different local authority areas.

Named person

You should have one person who acts as a single point of contact to discuss any concerns you have about your child. This person is sometimes called a “named person”. The named person can help your child get the support they need, and give you advice and information. Depending on a child's age, the named person will be a health visitor, the head teacher or another senior teacher.

Children under three

Identifying needs

Parents and medical staff such as **midwives, health visitors, GPs and community paediatricians** will probably be the first people to notice that your child may need support.

Assessments

Normally, health, social work and education professionals should be in close contact with each other, so the local authority may already know about your child's needs. Working with you, a **pre-school community assessment team** made up of **professionals from health, education, social work and voluntary agencies** will consider what assessments your child needs. If several assessments are needed, a **lead professional** should ensure that information about your child is not duplicated and that you and your child are not put under stress. If a lead professional has been appointed, you should be able to contact them throughout the assessment process. After assessment, your child will have a plan of action to prepare them for pre-school, which should also say how you can be involved. For more information, see **Enquire factsheet: Assessment**.

Providing support to children with a disability

As long as you give consent, your local authority must provide additional support to your child if they have been identified as having additional support needs arising from a disability under equality law.

Pre-school home visiting teachers may visit your child at home to support their development. Some children may be given a place at a local pre-school centre.

If you have any concerns

If your child is not disabled but you think they may need extra support to help them learn, you should speak to your GP or health visitor first. You can also talk to the **education officer** responsible for additional support for learning at your local authority. The education authority may provide additional support, but it does not have to.

Children over 3 – pre-school and school

Identifying needs

Once your child starts at pre-school or school, more people will start to look out for any additional support needs they may have. Any person working with your child may identify difficulties they are having with their learning.

If your child is having difficulties, you may notice changes in their behaviour and development or you may notice some specific issues for them.

Medical practitioners may also notice things that could affect your child's ability to benefit fully from school education, such as identifying a possible long-term illness or a delay in their development.

Early-years staff, class or subject teachers, learning assistants or support workers may notice your child is having some difficulties with school work or their behaviour with others.

Social workers involved with your child may be aware of a situation outside school that could affect their ability to cope with school, such as a change in family circumstances or a bereavement.

Assessment

The local authority is responsible for making arrangements to find out about the needs of children and young people in their area. It must publish information about these arrangements. You can contact the **education officer** who is responsible for additional support for learning in your local authority to find out more about these arrangements.

If two or more agencies are involved, then a **lead professional** should ensure that information about your child is not duplicated and that you and your child are not put under stress. You should be able to contact the lead professional throughout the assessment process. Contact the local authority if you do not have contact details for this person.

You may think your child should be assessed to find out whether they have additional support needs or need a co-ordinated support plan (CSP). If so, you should ask the school or the **education officer** responsible for additional support for learning about this or write to the local authority to request an assessment. Your child may also have the right to request an assessment of their needs. For more information, see **Enquire factsheet: Children's rights to education and additional support in school**.

Some of the following people may be involved in assessing your child's needs:

Class or subject teachers assess all pupils' schoolwork and social development daily.

You the parents will also monitor your child's progress. You should be asked for your views, and asked to give professionals information about your child's behaviour and development.

Learning support staff may look at your child's school work if they think your child may need additional support. They may observe them in class or speak to them to find out how they feel they are getting on in school. They may also carry out specific assessments.

Educational psychologists may assess your child's support needs in various ways. They may carry out specific assessments, consider information provided by you or school staff, or observe or talk to your child in school or at home.

Health professionals may be involved, for example:

- **Doctors or nurses** may investigate any medical conditions your child may have
- **Occupational therapists** might assess what kind of support your child may need to join in fully at school
- **Physiotherapists** may consider any physical support your child needs
- **Speech and language therapists** may assess any communication difficulties your child may be having.

For more information, see **Enquire factsheet: Assessment**.

Providing extra support to children without a co-ordinated support plan (CSP)

Several people may be involved in meeting the needs of these pupils:

Early-years staff, class and subject teachers will play a large part. They may need to adapt classroom and homework activities and materials to suit the child's learning needs. They must listen to the views of the child and their parents. They will talk to children about their personal learning plans and work with other professionals to update any other plans, such as individualised educational programmes (IEPs). For more information, see **Enquire factsheet: Planning children and young people's learning**.

Learning assistants/additional support needs assistants help the teacher in the classroom, including with record-keeping, group work and one-to-one support.

Parents will be able to support their children by keeping in touch with their teachers and helping them complete homework. Local authorities and people who work for them must seek and take account of parents' views.

Other pupils may also be able to provide support to children and young people who need it. This could happen informally, but schools can also set up **peer support** arrangements, such as buddying, reading together and 'circle time'.

Learning support staff may work closely with teachers in the classroom or provide individual or small-group support to some pupils. **Educational psychologists** may give specialist advice or training to school staff to enable them to provide additional support to some children. Both may be involved in updating learning plans such as IEPs.

Behaviour support staff may be available to help pupils manage their behaviour. They may use various behaviour management techniques that can be adapted for use in class and at home.

Speech and language therapists can advise teachers on how best to meet the needs of children and young people who find it difficult to communicate. They may also work directly with the pupils, providing a course of therapy. This may also be done by a **speech and language therapy assistant**, under the therapist's direction.

Other **allied health professionals** such as **physiotherapists** and **occupational therapists** may get involved in helping a child with physical difficulties.

School doctors and other **health professionals** can help teachers make the changes needed to enable pupils with medical conditions to take part fully in school life.

Specialist teachers may provide support to pupils with specific learning needs, such as those with hearing or visual impairments or whose first language is not English.

Outreach teachers may provide education to children and young people who are not well enough to attend school, or to children of Traveller families.

Counsellors or Play therapists may work with children who may need support because of bad life experiences or mental health difficulties.

Social workers and **voluntary workers** may also be able to tell school staff about pupils' circumstances outside school that may help teachers understand and meet their needs.

Providing extra support to children with a co-ordinated support plan (CSP)

In addition to any of the people mentioned above, a **CSP co-ordinator** will be appointed to be in charge of the CSP and will make sure people carry out the actions set out in the plan. They are also responsible for telling you, your child and everyone involved in providing additional support what is expected of them.

If you have any concerns

You should discuss any concerns you have with the **pre-school** or **class teacher**. If your concerns are not dealt with, you can also speak to the **learning support teacher** or the **head teacher**. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the local authority. Some local authorities have an **education liaison officer** (who may be called a **parent liaison officer**, a **customer liaison officer** or other title depending on the authority). These officers are responsible for dealing with parents' concerns. If there is no such person in the local authority responsible for your child's school, you should speak to the **education officer** responsible for additional support for learning.

Leaving school

Identifying needs

Many of the people involved in providing support for your child at school will also be involved in helping them plan for their future. To help plan for your child leaving school, the local authority must begin to gather information from **all agencies** involved with your child at least 12 months beforehand.

Assessment

If your child needs a high level of support when leaving school, they will be assessed by social work to establish what support they need. Depending on the outcome of the assessment they may be assigned a **key worker**.

The **careers adviser** or **guidance teacher** at school or an **adviser from Skills Development Scotland** will provide careers advice and information on national training programmes.

If a young person is planning to go to further education, the college or university they are going to will be involved with planning to ensure their needs are met while they are a student there.

Providing extra support

Extra support after school will often be identified after the assessment by your child's social worker. Voluntary organisations may also offer additional support, which the social worker should be able to advise on. For example, LEAD Scotland can provide advice or support about learning opportunities after school. See contact details on page 6.

If several agencies are involved, a **lead professional** may also be involved to help co-ordinate the planning. For more information on leaving school, see **Enquire factsheet: Education and additional support after 16**.

If you have any concerns

Young people may be entitled to benefits after leaving school and should contact their local benefits office for advice. As a parent, you may want to ensure you have sufficient support and respite care if your child will be at home more than before. You can get advice and information about this from your local Citizens Advice Bureau or your local Carers' Centre.

Where to get more information

Publications

The parents' guide to additional support for learning, Enquire (2018)

Enquire factsheet: Education and additional support after 16 (2018)

Enquire factsheet: Children's rights to education and additional support in school (2018)

Further information on services provided by Allied Health Professionals can be found at www.gov.scot/publications/2005/09/06111820/18209

Guidance on partnership working between allied health professionals and education is available from www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/05/27095736/0

Supporting children's learning code of practice (third edition) 2017 gives guidance to education authorities on implementing the Additional Support for Learning Act.
www.gov.scot/Publications/2017/12/9598

Organisations

LEAD Scotland
Room B05, Napier Merchiston Campus
14 Colinton Road
EDINBURGH
EH10 45DT

Freephone helpline: 0800 999 2568
Telephone: 0131 228 9441
Email: enquiries@lead.org.uk
www.lead.org.uk

Find your local Citizens Advice Bureau from

Citizens Advice Scotland
www.cas.org.uk/bureaux

Or phone Citizens Advice Direct on 0808 800 9060

ENQUIRE

Helping you understand additional support for learning

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. We provide independent and impartial advice to parents and carers, to practitioners in education, social work and health services, and to children and young people themselves.

www.reach.scot offers advice to young people struggling at school. With practical tips on what can help and young people sharing their views and experiences on all sorts of life issues, Reach offers the 'go-to' source of advice to help pupils make the most out of their education.

This factsheet has been awarded the Clear English Standard.



Contact details

Enquire, Children in Scotland, Level 1, Rosebery House,
9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5EZ

Helpline: **0345 123 2303**
(Access to interpreters through Language Line)

Office: 0131 313 8800

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www.enquire.org.uk

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