

Working with the Educational Psychologist

How can you get help?

Parents who have concerns about their child's learning should, in the first instance, discuss these with their child's school.

Educational psychologists (EPs) are involved with children in two main ways – through their school/educational provision or through a statutory assessment.

School/settings – Schools can purchase time from the service and use this time to focus on needs in the school.

Statutory Assessment - The Educational Psychology Team is responsible for providing psychological advice of special education needs for the statutory assessments of Education, Health and Care Plans and can contribute towards prioritised annual reviews of individual progress. Information about statutory assessment is detailed on the Local offer.

Occasionally, it may be helpful to contact the Educational Psychology Team directly to decide on the most appropriate course of action. Your school will be able to tell you the name of the Educational Psychologist linked to your child's school

What sort of work does an Educational Psychologist do?

The Educational Psychology Team provides a variety of services within a consultation framework. This enables them to look together at learning conditions, and helps identify teaching strategies and interventions, monitor progress and evaluate outcomes. Educational Psychologists may work directly with children or be involved in discussions about individual children without necessarily meeting them (this will always be with parental agreement). The aim is to provide advice to those people who have day to day responsibility for meeting the child's educational needs because it is these adults who are in the best position to help.

Each school has its own 'link' Educational Psychologist. The school will seek your consent for the Educational Psychologist to become involved before they begin any direct work with your child. This will usually begin with a joint discussion with you, the Educational Psychologist and members of school staff to clarify concerns and begin to think about ways to help.

What happens if the Educational Psychologist does see my child?

This depends very much on what is causing concern and what sort of information is already available.

Schools always ask parents and carers whether they consent to EP involvement before any work takes place. Before EP involvement is agreed we ask for information to gain a clear indication of needs identified and the support the child has received so far, parents add to this form and sign it.

EP time purchased by the school is carefully prioritised by the school. The school SENCO in liaison with key professionals (for example EP, class teachers of individual children,) make a decision on how their setting will use the EP time they have purchased. This decision takes into consideration the complexity of the need, the current support in place and the desired outcomes of EP involvement.

The Educational Psychologist may decide to do some of the following:

- observe your child in familiar situations:
- work or play with your child, using a range of tasks and materials
- the psychologist may also try out methods of teaching your child certain skills
- find out, wherever possible, your child's views about his or her educational progress and any things that are causing concern
- use a range of tests - these can help to get an objective picture of some of your child's skills, and allow comparison with others of the same age

You will be told when this is going to happen. You will be offered the opportunity to meet the psychologist to discuss your child.

When an Educational Psychologist does assess your child, he or she is trying to identify the sorts of targets and approaches that will be helpful - the aim is to get a clearer picture of how to help your child make progress in school.

When EP support has been negotiated and agreed (with parental consent), direct work will begin within four weeks. If the school ask for a report of the work any agreed a record will be sent to the key adults within four weeks of the EP finishing their work in the school/setting.

What happens next?

This depends on the specific plan of action agreed with teachers and yourselves after the Educational Psychologist's involvement with your child. Responsibility for daily help and support for your child remains within the school.

If written reports have been agreed with the school summaries of involvement (reports, letters or notes) would be sent to parents, teachers and other professionals. Written records about children and young people should be fair and accurate. Confidential information is only passed on to people who need to know.

Educational Psychologists are always keen to seek your views and therefore they may ask you to think about ways in which the service you received from the Educational Psychology Team was helpful and any suggestions for improvements.