

Hampshire Educational Psychology Service

A guide for parents and carers



Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)



Hampshire
County Council



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Who are educational psychologists?

Psychology helps us understand how people learn, develop, feel and get along together. Qualifying as an educational psychologist is a lengthy process. All educational psychologists have a first degree in psychology and a postgraduate degree in educational psychology, which specialises in the application of psychology to children, their learning and education. We all have significant experience of working with children and young people – most of us as teachers. From the summer of 2009, educational psychologists must be registered with and regulated by the Health Professions Council. There is more information about educational psychologists and the other kinds of psychologists on the British Psychological Society website: www.bps.org.uk

What do educational psychologists do?


Educational psychologists are employed in Hampshire to help the County Council meet the priorities of Hampshire's Children and Young People's Plan. We use psychology to improve outcomes for children from birth to 19 years within the whole community. This includes children in pre-schools and schools. Most children's centres and every school has a named, link educational psychologist. There is one educational psychologist for every 9000 children aged 0-16 years.

We:

- provide advice and training to staff in schools and children's centres
- carry out targeted work with individual children and young people, for example, children with limited academic progress that might be leading to low motivation and attendance, and children with special needs
- work with acute needs, for example, loss and bereavement. We also work with complex and highly specialised needs, for example, children with profound and multiple learning difficulties
- have a key role to play in the statutory assessment of special needs. We provide the County Council with psychological advice about a child's needs.

What if you have concerns about your child's progress?

As a first step you should talk to your child's teacher or key worker or another member of staff. Through the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, staff are required to work with you to understand and meet your child's special educational needs. You all might find it helpful to make a plan about how to meet your child's needs. If necessary, you and a member of staff might also consider making use of one of the bookable consultation sessions that our Service makes available in your area. The local office has information about these sessions – see page 7 for contact details.



If there are concerns about your child's progress in school or pre-school what might happen?

The direct involvement of the educational psychologist isn't always necessary.

Staff in pre-schools and schools will ask for advice from their link educational psychologist. You will always be told about any discussions between staff and the educational psychologist.

If there isn't going to be direct involvement, what will the educational psychologist do?

You will already have been involved in discussion with staff about your child. We will ask about what has already been done to meet your child's needs. We will ask about background information that you have agreed to share. We usually find it helpful to meet with you and relevant staff to plan the best way to help your child make progress. We will listen to staff concerns about your child.

We will discuss ways of helping your child learn and develop, set goals for learning or behaviour, and talk about ways in which you and staff can work closely together. This will be recorded as a shared action plan with a date set for review. Sometimes all of this might lead to an Inclusion Partnership Agreement (a written agreement between you, the school and any other relevant support services or agencies which sets out what all of them will do to support your child).

If someone suggests that you and your child see an educational psychologist, what is likely to happen?


First of all, you need to give your permission for our direct involvement. Depending on what concerns are being raised and the age of your child there are a number of things we might do. These include:

- talking with you about your child
- talking with key adults who support your child
- observing your child and looking at the work they are doing
- talking with your child on his or her own or in a group. We may ask about feelings, family, friendships, school work, out of school activities, etc.
- using a range of approaches to assess your child's general abilities, progress, thinking skills, feelings and motivation.

Sometimes it is helpful for you to join us when we work with a child but sometimes this can be off-putting for a child. We would expect to talk with you about what will be best. Generally, if a child attends a school, we work with him or her at school. If your child is of pre-school age, we may work with him or her in the pre-school group or at home.

If you have agreed that an educational psychologist sees your child, what do you tell them?

It is helpful to talk to your child about the visit, to prepare him/or her in advance. We have a number of booklets to help you with this. Copies are available by phoning your local office (see page 7) and can be accessed from the website: www3.hants.gov.uk/educational-psychology



What can you do if you are concerned about your child starting school?

Ideally, you will already have discussed your concerns with your health visitor, doctor or member of staff in your child's pre-school or someone else who might be working with you and your child. With your permission, they may contact us to ask for advice on giving your child a good start in school, or you can contact us directly.

Can you contact the Service directly?

You can contact us directly. We will discuss your concerns and agree a way forward. Sometimes we will suggest things that you might do or suggest someone else to contact. Sometimes, with your permission, we will discuss your concerns with those that know and work with your child.

We don't operate a referral system with strict criteria so do not have a waiting list. We do have priority areas of work and there are priority groups of children with whom we work, for example, children in care and those that have experienced bereavement. As we have limited resources and time, we rely on a responsible negotiation about the nature of any work we are being asked to consider and, if we agree to become involved what timescales are reasonable.

And finally...

We regularly ask parents and carers about the service we have provided and we welcome your comments. We like to hear if you are pleased with what we have done. If you are dissatisfied, please talk with the psychologist involved as soon as possible. Many difficulties can be sorted out on the spot. If this is not possible, then you may wish to speak to the educational psychologist's manager or you can use the Children's Services Complaints Procedure, accessible at: www3.hants.gov.uk/cs-complaints

Contact details for your local Educational Psychology Service

Area office

Winchester Local Office

Monarch Way

Winchester

SO22 5PW

Tel: 01962 876239

Havant Local Office

River Way

Havant

PO9 2EL

Tel: 02392 441496

Fleet Local Office

Birch House

Barley Way

Fleet GU51 2YB

Tel: 01252 814727



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