



About the Role of an Educational Psychologist

Information for Parents and Carers



educational psychology service



MILTON KEYNES
COUNCIL

What is an Educational Psychologist (EP)?

EPs have training and experience in both teaching and psychology. Their role is to support children, parents/carers, schools and the Local Authority to achieve successful learning outcomes for all. EPs visit schools and many pre-school settings on a regular basis. During these meetings, EPs work with those involved, drawing on their experience to help individual children and to help create positive learning environments.

What does the EP do to help a child?

It is possible for EPs to make a difference for some children through a process of discussion with adults. There is never just one way to respond to a child's difficulty. Conversations with an EP are intended to introduce new ideas for teachers and parents in support of their work with each child. EPs describe the conversation as a *consultation* when they contribute to the educational and caring tasks of teachers and parents/carers.

With parental agreement, the EP may suggest a range of activities that may involve a child more directly. For example, the EP may offer to:

- talk individually with a child
- involve a child in the problem-solving meetings with adults
- observe a child in class or at play
- check a child's current level of attainment in areas like reading, spelling, writing or number work
- use standardised tests to help clarify a child's relative strengths
- teach a child a simple task to help understand their approach to learning
- engage younger children through play in order to explore their thinking and learning

Activities such as these are intended to inform further consultations involving teachers and parents.

Following any involvement concerning a child, the EP will provide a written record for staff and parents/carers, who may share the information when appropriate with their child.

What are typical concerns discussed with an EP?

For all children there may be times when they:

- find it difficult to keep up with classwork
- find classwork too easy
- have a difficulty with reading, writing or understanding
- find it difficult to get on with classmates or adults in school
- feel withdrawn or miserable for no clear reason
- find it hard to get organised
- have difficulty expressing themselves or understanding what others say
- have a medical condition that affects their educational progress

The EP may become involved in situations such as these to help with planning an appropriate response.

How do EPs become involved with school-aged children?

EPs visit schools on a regular basis and their involvement is co-ordinated either by the Headteacher or by the SENCo. EPs welcome hearing from parents/carers, although as a first response they expect them to have discussed any educational concerns with key people in school.

What additional services are provided by an EP?

EPs also offer:

- an out-of-school consultation service for parents/carers, when concerns are at home more than at school. (A leaflet is available from the school and from the EP Service)
- support for staff and students if there should be a crisis or tragedy in the school community
- a monitoring role in relation to all young people who are placed in schools outside of Milton Keynes
- development and training opportunities for parents/carers, teachers and others involved with children and young people

How does an EP contribute to a statutory assessment?

If the LEA's Special Educational Needs Panel decide to formally assess a child's special educational needs, the EP will be asked to submit an advisory report called 'Psychological Advice'. When collecting evidence for this report, the EP will spend time with the child's teacher, as well as with the child. Parents/Carers are welcome to observe individual work with their child. The EP will meet with the child's parents/carers and discuss the information that will be used. At the end of the statutory assessment, parents are sent a copy of the EP's report, along with all of the other reports that have been collected by the LEA.

Our commitment?

EPs are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers, teachers and children, as well as with all of the various colleagues who are involved in the education of a child.

EPs hope that this leaflet will be helpful in clarifying their role for parents/carers. Feedback is welcome.

How to contact us:

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**For general advice on Special Educational Needs you may wish to contact:
The Parent Partnership Service: 01908 254518**