



# Worried about your child?

*Information for parents*



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## **Worried about your child in school?**

### **You are not alone.**

Around 20% of pupils in school have difficulties, which require additional help. Difficulties may be associated with unmet learning needs. Difficulties may be associated with unmet learning needs **and** resultant emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Difficulties may be primarily social, and/or behavioural but they may have a resultant impact on learning.

If you are a parent with a child, experiencing difficulties at school, you will need to ask four important questions.

1. What is my child's primary, or root, problem?
2. Does my child have secondary problems which have developed because the root problem has not been addressed?
3. What kind of help does my child need?
4. Who can offer this help?

An Educational Psychologist can help you answer these questions.



The first two questions can be answered through **Consultation** and **Assessment**. Through consultation, clarity can be gained; appropriate questioning serves to accurately identify the root problem. Assessment looks at the problem in more detail and provides information about the extent and nature of the problem.

The second two questions can be answered through **Intervention**. Intervention may be therapeutic and offered by an Educational Psychologist and may aim to help the child develop more helpful and accurate perceptions. Intervention may be in the form of an individual teaching programme devised by an Educational Psychologist, in order to address learning needs. Equally, intervention may be systemic; in other words, changes to the child's situation, be it in the classroom, the playground, at home or elsewhere, may be advised. Difficulties arise within a context, and it is sometimes important to seek to change the context rather than the child. A number of people within the problem context, may therefore need to be of help.

Early intervention and assessment by an Educational Psychologist is important in order to ensure speedy and effective intervention. The more entrenched a problem becomes, the harder it is to eradicate, for a child can come to believe he or she **is** the problem. For example, a child with a longstanding reading problem may come to view him or herself only in terms of the reading difficulty. Low self-esteem, can impact on all aspects of development and the consequences can be long-term and damaging.