



# How can an Educational Psychologist help my child?

*Information for parents  
about Educational Psychologists*



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## What is an Educational Psychologist?

Educational Psychology emerged as a profession following the 1944 Education Act, which acknowledged for the first time in Britain, that all children were “educable.” Educational Psychology is a growing profession because of the increasing recognition that Psychologists can have a major role to play in the social, emotional and academic education of children and young people.

An Educational Psychologist holds an honours degree in Psychology, is additionally, a qualified teacher with a minimum of two years teaching experience, and holds a postgraduate qualification, usually a Masters degree, in Educational Psychology. A minimum of seven years training is required in order to become fully qualified and chartered status can be applied for after five years of practice.

Educational Psychologists have expertise in “normal” child development and deviations from the norm together with expertise in cognitive, linguistic, sensory, physical, social and emotional development. They understand how schools work and how children and young people learn. Educational Psychologists also understand those factors that facilitate development and learning and understand how to achieve change in complex social settings. A sound theoretical knowledge of Psychology and its application in an educational context underpins all such work.



## **The Special Educational Needs (S.E.N.) Code of Practice**

The SEN Code of Practice may be fully or partly followed by independent schools. The SEN Code of Practice describes the graduated approach that schools should follow in order to meet the individual needs of their pupils. The graduated approach recognises that pupils learn in different ways and that pupils can have a range of Special Educational Needs. Once a pupil is identified as having needs over and above those normally provided for within a mainstream school setting, increasingly step by step specialist expertise can be brought into school to help with the difficulties the pupil may have.

### **School Action**

School Action refers to the arrangements made by school, to help a pupil who is experiencing difficulties. A wide range of arrangements are possible and might include a different approach within a small group, use of specialist equipment or additional help from an adult already working in school.

A pupil who is registered at School Action must have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). An IEP describes the help the pupil is to receive and must include details of the special help being given, the frequency with which this help will be given, who will provide the help, what targets the pupil is working towards and how and when the pupils' progress will be reviewed.

### **School Action Plus**

School Action Plus refers to the arrangements made by school in the event of a pupil failing to make sufficient progress at "School Action". School may feel the need to request help from an outside agency; for example, a Speech and Language Therapist or an Educational Psychologist.

A pupil who is registered at School Action Plus will be assessed by an outside agency. Assessment by an Educational Psychologist is likely to include observation, discussion and individual work and will result in a series of recommendations to all those involved with the pupil, and where appropriate, with the pupil him or herself. Recommendations will generally be included in the pupil's IEP and arrangements made for a review of progress towards targets.



## **What kind of work does an Educational Psychologist do?**

An Educational Psychologist can offer work at an individual, group or whole school level. Examples of the range of work covered are described below.

Advice to teachers and/or parents on how to address a wide range of emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties.

Individual or family work using Solution Focused Therapy, Cognitive Therapy and Personal Construct Psychology approaches.

Collaborative Conflict Resolution work aimed at alleviating difficulties arising from challenging behaviours and breakdowns in communication.

Advice to teachers regarding appropriate teaching methods and resources, intervention programmes, target setting, monitoring and evaluation arrangements, review and where necessary, referral to other agencies.

Advice to individuals about study skills, planning, organisation, exam preparation and time management.

Therapeutic approaches to emotional difficulties triggered by trauma, bullying, bereavement, separation/divorce, friendlessness, anxiety, low self esteem.

General or Specific Learning difficulties. A specific learning difficulty with Literacy is generally referred to as Dyslexia, with Numeracy as Dyscalcula and with Coordination and Motor Organisation as Dyspraxia.

Collaborative work with teachers on specific whole school policies such as "Anti Bullying", "Special Educational Needs", "Identification and Assessment" and so on.

Group work with children and young people in areas such as Friendship Skills, Peer Mediation, Buddy Systems, Social and Communication Skills, Bereavement and Loss, Depression, Anxiety, Anger and Self Esteem.



## **What is a private assessment by an Educational Psychologist likely to involve and what information will be obtained?**

Each assessment is different because the unfolding strengths and weaknesses of the pupil serve to determine where the emphasis of investigation should be made.

As a guide however, the following areas would generally be covered.

- 1 An exploration of concerns, of parent(s), teacher(s) and pupil.
- 2 A view of the pupil's perceptions of the "presenting problem", of school and of learning.
- 3 Detailed information about a pupil's cognitive strengths and weaknesses following a full "Psychometric" or "Ability" assessment.
- 4 Information regarding the pupils approach to problem solving, his or her attitude to learning, learning potential and self esteem.
- 5 Information regarding levels of attainment in Literacy and Numeracy and comparisons of attained levels with expected levels, calculated on the basis of the pupil's age and ability.
6. Diagnostic testing where appropriate in order to further examine any identified weaknesses.
7. Conclusions and Diagnosis.
8. Recommendations to all those concerned, including the pupil. If appropriate, recommendations will include where and how to seek appropriate additional help for the pupil.