

Planning children's and young people's learning

Enquire factsheet 2

This factsheet is an introduction to the ways that schools can plan your child's education and the ways that you and your child can be involved in planning. It has information about personal learning planning (PLP), individualised educational programmes (IEPs) and co-ordinated support plans (CSPs). If your child has another plan, for example a care plan, it explains how this can fit in with these education plans. This factsheet takes into account changes in the law brought by the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (the ASL Act).

What is personal learning planning?

Personal learning planning is an overall term for all the ways that teachers, your child and you can think and talk about what your child is learning, what progress has been made and what can be done next. All schools are expected to have some form of personal learning planning in place – **Assessment and reporting 3-14 Circular 02**.

A key aim of personal learning planning is to actively involve your child in planning their education. Your child should get the chance to discuss their learning regularly with a member of staff and be helped to keep notes of these discussions. The outcomes of discussions should be shared with you and with other adults as appropriate. The school should also give you a written report at an appropriate time or times during the school year, with information from assessments and personal learning planning.

It is up to the school or education authority to design a practical way of recording plans that is not too time-consuming to maintain. "The purpose of record keeping and documentation is to support the process of personal learning planning rather than these being ends in themselves" – **Supporting children's learning: code of practice**.

More information about personal learning planning can be found on the Assessment is for Learning website. In particular, there is information under the goal setting key issue in the research section. www.ltscotland.org.uk/assess

Enquire is the Scottish advice service for additional support for learning. We provide independent and impartial advice to parents and carers, to practitioners in education, social work and health services, and to children and young people themselves.

Factsheets on other topics are available.

Personal learning planning and additional support needs

Your child's additional support needs might be identified through personal learning planning. Personal learning planning might also help to meet your child's additional support needs.

Supporting children's learning: code of practice states that, "All children with additional support needs should be engaged in personal learning planning and for many this process will be sufficient to address their additional support needs."

Schools may also realise through personal learning planning that your child's education requires a more detailed plan, such as an individualised educational programme.

How will the school decide on the plan my child needs?

Most schools use a system called 'staged intervention' where they will try to deal with your child's difficulties as early as they can and with the least possible interruption for your child. This means your child is given the support they require and it is carefully planned.

What is an individualised educational programme (IEP)?

An IEP can be seen as your child's personal pathway through the curriculum. It contains a limited number of specific, short-term targets for your child's education and the methods that will be used to reach the targets. It also contains longer-term targets or aims for your child.

"An individualised educational programme describes in detail the nature of a child's or young person's additional support needs, the ways in which these are to be met, the learning outcomes to be achieved, and specifies what additional support is required" – **Supporting children's learning: code of practice**.

Please note, individual plans may be called different things in different areas, for example additional support plans or individual support plans.

If your child has an IEP, they should still be involved with the work their class is doing, in a way that is appropriate for them.

What is the legal status of an IEP?

There is no legal requirement to prepare IEPs, and they are not legal documents. However, it's good practice for schools to prepare them for certain children with additional support needs.

Who should have an IEP?

If your child's education needs more detailed planning, perhaps because several members of school staff or other professionals support them in school, or they need significant changes to the curriculum, they may benefit from an IEP. Your education authority may have a policy for when IEPs should be used, which you can ask to see. If you feel your child needs an IEP, you can ask the school to consider preparing one.

If you are not sure if your child has an IEP, ask the class teacher or head teacher.

How are IEPs developed?

IEPs should be written in partnership with everyone who is involved in your child's education, including you and your child.

The following elements should be considered when an IEP is developed.

1. Assessment

Your child's IEP should be based on what is known from assessments. It could also involve plans for more assessments if there are still unanswered questions about your child's learning.

2. Long term and short term targets

IEP targets should be "SMART":

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Timed.

IEP targets are the educational priorities for your child, and should be set with the aim of helping your child reach their potential.

3. Context

Your child's IEP should be integrated with plans for the whole class. Your child should be involved in class projects in a way that is appropriate for them.

4. Methods

The school should think of a good range of flexible methods to use with your child and decide who will be involved in delivering your child's IEP.

5. Resources

The school should also think about what equipment and materials they have for working with your child and the class, and whether your child needs any resources designed or modified for them.

6. Organisation

The IEP should help organise and co-ordinate support for your child. It should set out who will be involved with the programme and how. The school should consider how they will share information about the IEP with everyone who works with your child and with you.

7. Evaluation

The IEP should be evaluated to see if it has helped your child to make progress and to get the support they need. The school should think about how they will do this.

In what areas are targets set?

Key areas for targets are:

- communication and language
- numeracy (or, for some pupils, understanding and relating to the environment)
- personal and social development.

However, targets can be set for any aspect of education including behaviour.

How can parents and children be involved in developing an IEP?

You can say what you think are achievable targets and whether the targets are focusing on the areas of greatest need. When the IEP is reviewed, you can say whether you think the targets have been met and, if not, how you think the targets or methods should be changed.

Your child should be involved, in a way that is appropriate for them, in setting and reviewing targets.

How are IEPs recorded?

IEPs are written down and a copy will go in your child's school records. Many local authorities have developed either paper or electronic templates for IEPs.

Delivering the IEP

Everyone involved should have a copy of the IEP.

The IEP should be used by anyone supporting your child to focus their work on your child's educational targets.

You and the school may agree ways of working with your child that you can use at home to help your child reach the targets.

Reviewing the IEP

The IEP should be reviewed regularly – at least each school term. If targets have been met, new ones can be set. If they have not been met, the targets or methods may be reviewed.

What is a co-ordinated support plan?

Your child might need a co-ordinated support plan to organise their support if:

- they have support needs as a result of complex or multiple factors that have a significant adverse effect on their school education
- their needs require significant additional support to be provided by the education authority in the exercise of any of its other functions (such as social work services) as well as in its functions related to education, OR by one or more appropriate agencies (such as health boards, any other local authority, Careers Scotland, colleges of further education and institutes of higher education) as well as by the education authority itself
- their support needs will last more than one year.

Unlike personal learning planning and IEPs, a co-ordinated support plan is a legal document. It aims to ensure that the different professionals involved in providing support work together and that the support is properly co-ordinated. It is an action plan for everyone involved, including you and your child.

You and your child should be involved and consulted at every stage of preparing and reviewing a co-ordinated support plan. For more information, please see the section on co-ordinated support plans in **The parents' guide to additional support for learning** and **Enquire factsheet 15: Co-ordinated support plans**.

If your child has a co-ordinated support plan, the school should still carry out personal learning planning and, if appropriate, open an IEP to deal with detailed short-term targets. The plans should complement each other. For example, information from the co-ordinated support plan should be used to draw up the IEP and progress with the IEP can be used to measure the success of the support outlined in the co-ordinated support plan.

Different local authorities may use different sorts of education plans to meet your child's needs. For more information on local plans you could contact your local authority or look at the information on your local authority's webpages.

How do education plans fit with other plans for my child?

The Scottish Government is working toward having just one plan for each child, which covers their support needs from education, health, social work and any other agencies. This is part of the proposals for the Integrated Assessment Framework (IAF). The IAF would allow professionals to keep and share their records about a child electronically. Work is ongoing to develop this system, but it will still be some time before it is introduced across Scotland.

Until this is in place, children may have more than one plan. Any education plan that your child has should take into account information in other plans. Likewise, other plans should always take into account the aims and goals set out in your child's education plan.

Supporting children's learning: code of practice states that, "Every opportunity should be taken to ensure that there is an integrated action plan for a child or young person where more than one agency or service is involved... Education authorities and other agencies need to have arrangements in place to co-ordinate the planning and review process for children and young people."

For example, if your child has a care plan and an IEP, they can be drawn up and reviewed together, which should help to make both plans as relevant as possible, and cut down the number of times you have to repeat information.

Further useful resources:

The parents' guide to additional support for learning, Enquire (2007)

What's the plan? Your education and support,
An Enquire guide for young people (2005)

Supporting children's learning: code of practice, Scottish Executive (2005),
available at: www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/08/15105817/58187

Assessment and reporting 3-14 Circular no. 02, Scottish Executive (June 2005)

Useful websites:

Enquire: www.enquire.org.uk

Parentzone: www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Assessment is for learning programme: www.ltscotland.org.uk/assess

Inclusive education resources: www.ltscotland.org.uk/inclusionandequality

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 was amended in 2009. The amendments form a new act that was passed in June 2009. The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2009 is expected to come into force in Autumn 2010. All Enquire information will be updated to reflect these changes once the secondary legislation that supports it (the regulations and **Supporting children's learning: code of practice**) has been amended and the act comes into force.

In the meantime, Enquire helpline staff will be happy to discuss any questions you may have about the changes.

For further information contact:

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