

**Early help**

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| **Background** | The importance of early help in supporting children and their families is outlined in a number of national reviews and policy documents, such as Working Together 2018, in recognition that effective early help for children and families improves their outcomes long-term. KCSIE 2022 states that all staff in schools should know the local early help policy.  Providing early help is more effective in promoting the welfare of children than reacting later. Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child’s life from the foundation years through to the teenage years. Early help can also prevent further problems arising, for example, if it is provided as part of a support plan where a child has returned home to their family from care. |
| **Understanding** |  |

**Understanding** Effective early help relies upon local agencies working together to:

* Identify children and families who would benefit from early help
* Undertake an assessment of the need for early help; and
* Provide targeted early help services to address the assessed needs of a child and their family which focuses on activity to significantly improve the outcomes for the child.
* Local authorities under s10 Children Act 2004 have a responsibility to promote inter-agency cooperation to improve the welfare of children’

# Info

Early Help in Blackpool is our approach to working with children and families with a range, or a combination of, social, health or educational needs as soon as problems arise. Families should be supported to understand their children’s and their own needs or problems and be provided with advice, guidance, support and services to help them before higher levels of support or services are needed.

**It is useful to think of early help as**

***The right help*** By undertaking strong assessments with children and their families and using these to understand their needs and

planning effectively to support them.

***The right time*** Offering help as soon as needs and problems begin and before any higher levels or specialist services are needed or when a

child or family ask for it.

***The right people*** Early help works best when those people who know the family well or speak to the regularly lead on the work but work with a range of people and service to support meeting the needs of children and their families

***The right place*** Working with families in their community or neighbourhood or their home, or where they feel most comfortable.

Early Help can be provided by a single agency (such as a nursery, school or Health Visitor) or by a group of professionals from these agencies working together as a ‘Team around the Family’, with the family at the centre of the planning and decision making.



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| **What to do** | To help us understand how best we should be working with children and families and ensure that the right help is provided, **four levels of need** have been identified.  Early help sits across two of these levels:  **• Level 2 needs - Universal Plus and is described as:**  *‘Some children, young people and families will need support from people who know them well and have established relationships with them to meet some challenges where advice and guidance has not been enough to help the family achieve change or where a child or young person needs additional support to help them to thrive.’*  **• Level 3 needs – Intensive and is described as:**  *‘A small number of children, young people and families will experience significant difficulties and will need coordinated support from experts working with them to find sustainable solutions that reduce the impact of challenge on the wellbeing and development of children and young people’.*  It is everybody’s responsibility to identify and, with parental agreement, assess the needs of children and their families through open and honest conversations with them. Other people who know the family should be included in the assessment and planning process.  One person takes the role of the Lead Professional, and works to ensure that the early help process is undertaken co-ordinating with the other people who work with the family, also known as the ‘Team around the Family (TAF). |

# Questions to Consider

Do I know who can help me in my workplace with early help?

Have I been on [early help training](https://sites.google.com/seaside.blackpool.org.uk/pshe/learning-development-for-practitioners)?

Do I know how to find [local services](https://www.fyidirectory.co.uk/blackpool-local-offer)?

Have I read the [early help strategy](https://www.blackpool.gov.uk/Residents/Health-and-social-care/Children-and-families/Documents/Early-Years-Strategy-Accessible.pdf)?