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East Sussex
County Council



Early Support is a national programme which was developed by the DCSF 5 years ago in conjunction with the Department of Health, the voluntary sector and families.

Early Support aims to achieve better co-ordinated, family-focused services for young disabled children and their families.

Early Support Key Workers work in partnership with families to provide support and information, and to co-ordinate multi agency meetings. The meetings enable everyone involved to be clear about the support plan for the child and their family.

Early Support provides resources such as Family Files, Developmental Journals and Information for Parents booklets.

From late 2004, East Sussex trialled Early Support as a government Pathfinder, working with children age 0 – 3.

The service was embedded into East Sussex County Council's Children's Services in 2006 and the age was extended to 5.

Development was, and continues to be strongly influenced by parents' views and senior management sign up.

Our criteria is that children must be resident in East Sussex and aged between 0-5 years. They must have a significant disability or life limiting/threatening condition and receive services from more than two specialist professionals or agencies. Our referral form is available from the team or on the ESCC website.

We offer a training programme which is developed based on what families or practitioners tell us would be useful to them. We use the skills of local practitioners where possible so that delivery is free, but their expertise are widely shared. Families and practitioners from a range of agencies are invited to attend free of charge.

Early Support courses eg

Developmental Journals
Working in Partnership

Locally responsive courses eg:

Dental
Social stories
Rhythmix
Sleep
Life limiting conditions

Parents' feedback

'At the beginning of my child's life when he was diagnosed it was very effective as it helped me co-ordinate all the people who were involved in his life. As he has progressed and less people are involved we don't need the service any more.'

'Knowing that support is there, I can pick up the phone and the key worker will offer help and support as required. On home visits, our key worker has been a great listener and offered constructive advice and a great source of local links.'

'Fantastic support and excellent with help towards information and making life that bit easier.'