

Early Years Support

The Role of the Lead professional in Early Years Support

A lead professional acts as a single point of contact for a child and their family.

A lead professional should be agreed in the next steps discussion or first family meeting.

What is my role as Lead professional?

- ❖ To act as a single point of contact for the child or family
- ❖ Single point of contact for practitioners
- ❖ Working in partnership with other services
- ❖ Enabling and empowering the family in the way that is most effective for them
- ❖ Liaising with the family and other professionals on actions from family meetings
- ❖ Facilitating and coordinating family meetings
- ❖ Providing information and signposting where necessary
- ❖ Advocating on the child and family's behalf where appropriate

Who should the lead professional be?

- ❖ A professional who has and maintains regular contact with the child / family
- ❖ If a child is in pre-school, nursery or school it is likely to be the SENCO/Key person/Teacher/Manager
- ❖ Someone who has a trusting relationship with the child and their family
- ❖ A good communicator
- ❖ Able to listen and show empathy
- ❖ The ability to be solution focused
- ❖ The lead professional does not need any particular qualifications to undertake the role and does not need to be an "expert" in everything
- ❖ The lead professional role can be undertaken jointly with another colleague from your team or another service e.g if a child has complex health needs it maybe that the early years setting SENCO undertakes the role jointly with the community nurse

Changes to a lead professional?

Where there is a change in a lead professional this should be discussed and established with the family prior to any meetings.

Changes occur with the following:

- ❖ Movement through services
- ❖ Transition into school or Early years setting such as childminder, nursery etc
- ❖ Lead professional leaving service
- ❖ Family no longer requiring a service from the lead professional agency e.g children's centre

There should be confirmation of who is to take on or continue with the role of the Lead Professional at each Family Meeting.

What do I need to do if I hand over the role of lead professional?

- ❖ If possible it is useful to have a period of overlap where the new and previous lead professional work together with the family
- ❖ The role of the Lead Professional may be passed on to a member of another service where appropriate e.g. from a Portage worker to the child's key person in

a day nursery or from a SENCO at a pre-school to a reception teacher in a school

- ❖ There is a need to establish formal arrangements for covering the absence of lead professionals both for short and long-term periods of leave

***Please note:** The person who undertakes the request for Early Years Support is identified as the lead professional initially.

Responsibilities of the Lead Professional

It is the Lead Professional's role to:

- ❖ Liaise with the child's parents, and all services involved with the child and family.
- ❖ Arrange Family Meetings, this involves organising a date, time and venue with the family
- ❖ Ensure professionals involved are invited to the meeting and making requests for updates/reports for services who are unable to attend
- ❖ Circulate copies of the completed support plan to professionals involved in supporting the child after each Family Meeting
- ❖ Contact Early Years Support to advise of the next family meeting date, time and venue
- ❖ Advise Early Years Support of changes to the lead professional

It is not the responsibility of the lead professional to:

- ❖ Complete all of the agreed actions
- ❖ Continually chase practitioners to complete their actions

What can Early Years Support offer me?

We provide training, information and support for practitioners which include:

- ❖ Early Years Support and the role of lead professional training
- ❖ Information about, and signposting to, other services and providers
- ❖ Peer support to lead professionals from all agencies working with the family
- ❖ Area SENCO support for Early Years Settings

The Early Years Support team must be informed of any change to the lead professional.

Templates for family meetings and support plans are available via the East Riding local offer pages and the links below:

[Early Years Support \(eastridinglocaloffer.org.uk\)](http://eastridinglocaloffer.org.uk)

[Area SENCO \(eastridinglocaloffer.org.uk\)](http://eastridinglocaloffer.org.uk)

Contact details for the Early Years Support team:

Early Years Support Coordinator	01482 392227
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Area SENCO team	01482 392238