

Can parents attend the forums?

The forum's role is to monitor that the right support is in place for your child. The ongoing support that your child needs will be through the team working with your child and family, such as the nursery staff or Speech and language Therapist. The EYF monitors that this support is meeting your needs. We discuss many children at each forum so it is not possible to have parents at the meetings. However your views about what you feel should happen is important and you should be sharing this with the team working with you and the forum.

Questions and Concerns

If you have any concerns or queries about the forum, or specific concerns about your child, please discuss them with any of the professionals who work with your child.

If you have any further concerns after this, please refer concerns to:

Miss Emma Dodd, Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist
The Kingston Centre
Fairway
Stafford
ST16 3TW

Tel: 01785 356863

Email: emma.dodd@staffordshire.gov.uk

We look forward to working successfully with you and will do our best to support you and your child.

EARLY YEARS FORUM



Information for Parents/Carers

Background

Some children need extra help before they start school. Parents and health professionals such as health visitors and doctors are usually the first to notice if a child may need extra help.

Staffordshire County Council Education Service has set up Early Years Forums in each district to help identify these children, recommend the appropriate support available and monitor progress, in partnership with parents/carers and other agencies.

What is the Early Years Forum?

The Early Years Forum is a monthly multi-agency meeting that monitors that the right services are involved to support your child. The people at the meeting represent the services that may help your child, including EHC Assessment and Planning Service, Specialist Health Visitors, Early Years Area SENCOs, Community Paediatricians, Educational Psychologists, Local Support Team members, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists, Child Development Social Workers and Specialist Teachers.

The people at the meeting may not personally know your child, but will have reports and information from colleagues who do. They will make suggestions to ensure that each child has the best possible start to learning. They will maintain confidentiality and keep in contact with you.



Why are children referred to the Forum?

Children will be referred to the forum when:

- ◆ Their progress is causing concern in one or more areas of development
- ◆ They may need extra help or assessment before starting school.

How is your child referred?

Usually your child's doctor will talk to you about the referral and answer any questions you may have. They will gather more information from other professionals working with your child (for example therapists, nursery staff,

Child Development Centre, social workers or others) and send all this information to the Early Years Forum.

Alternatively, if your child is already attending an Early Years setting, such as a playgroup or nursery, the staff there may ask your permission to refer your child, by talking to a member of one of the services represented at the Forum.

What do parents/carers need to do?

- ◆ Agree that their child can be referred to the forum
- ◆ Agree that information about their child can be shared by all the people at the meeting and stored on a secure database

Parents/carers can give their views by completing a form which will be sent to you, or talking to any of the people who work with their child. If you would like help with this contact the Parent Partnership Service on 01785 356921 and they will assist you. Your views are very important.

What happens next?

The information on your child will be discussed at the next available Early Years Forum meeting (usually within one month). They will consider your child's needs and the help currently provided, based on your opinions and the opinions of the staff working with him/her.

The forum may decide that your child's needs are currently being met, or that another service may be able to offer help. In some cases the forum may decide that it needs more information before it can make any suggestions, in which case your child will be discussed at the next forum. The forum will identify a parental contact. This person will usually be someone already known to you who will contact you as soon as possible (usually within one week) to discuss the suggestions made. They will explain what is being suggested, and put the recommendations into place if you are happy.

When your child is reviewed

Once your child has been discussed at the forum meeting, their progress will be reviewed regularly, usually within 6 months. You will be asked for your views before each review. Your Parental Contact will keep you informed of the suggestions made at each Early Years Forum.