

The Role of Educational Psychologists

The Role of the Educational Psychologist (EP)

Educational Psychologists (EPs) provide independent professional advice to families and schools. An EP applies psychology (the study of thinking, learning, emotions and behaviour) to support the learning, development and wellbeing of children and young people up to 25 years old.

EPs work at different systemic levels e.g. whole county, community, whole school, class, group, family, individual child/young person. They work to support the development of all children and young people, including those who have special educational needs and disabilities. They also support school improvement.

The 5 key aspects of EP work are:

- consultation (using specific psychological frameworks and approaches)
- assessment
- intervention
- training
- research

Background and training

It takes a minimum of 8 years to train and become an Educational Psychologist (EP). All EPs have:

- BSc/BA/MSc in Psychology
- A minimum of 2 years teaching experience (Primary/Secondary/both, following a Postgraduate Certificate in Education) or other relevant experience
- MSc and/or Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology
- Practitioner Psychologist status and registration with the Health and Care Professions Council

Ways of working

The Educational Psychologist:

- Asks particular types of questions, uses validated interventions and tools, considers interacting factors, considers interacting systems, attempts to reconcile people's differing perspectives, unpicks the human factors which can hasten or hinder the process of desired change.
- Works to uncover psychological variables in problem situations, and encourages the consideration of alternative explanations for problems.
- Uses systematic and logical analysis of problem situations without their real-life complexity being over-simplified.
- Using information from the research and theoretical database in psychology to recommend evidence-based strategies for change.
- Has specific knowledge and skills in research design, is competent in statistical analysis and is trained to take a constructively critical stance to research findings.
- Has specific knowledge of areas of psychology that can open people's minds as to what they can do, rather than just offering complex explanations for why they cannot do it. Examples could include the areas of: Empowerment and self-management, Resilience, Positive Psychology (the scientific study of psychological well-being), Solution-Focused Thinking.

Described in: Cameron, R. J. (2006). Educational Psychology: The distinctive contribution. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 22 (4), 289-304.

Essex Educational Psychology Service

Improving lives: using psychology to create positive change

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Below is an outline of some of the areas of work in which EPs have specialist psychological training, skills and experience (the list is not intended to be exhaustive). Where other professionals appear to work in similar fields, the skills of the psychologist will be different and complementary.

<p>Some key underlying principles of EP work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using psychology to facilitate positive change Person-centred, collaborative working with CYP and parents Evidence-based practice Solution Oriented Joint problem solving Early intervention Partnership working with other agencies 	<p>Emotional and social well-being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alternatives to reward/sanctions (e.g. through Choice Psychology) Anxiety Attachment Attendance Behaviour management Bullying Cognitive Behavioural Approaches Conflict resolution Developmental trauma Empathy Emotional Literacy and wellbeing Friendship skills Loss and bereavement Motivation Parenting support Positive psychology Resilience Response to Critical Incidents Self-esteem/self-image Self-harm Sexualised behaviour Social problem-solving Social skills and social inclusion Suicide Staff well-being Stress management (young people and adults working with them) 	<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CYP's participation in support plans SEND assessment and identification SEND effective provision at pre-school, primary and secondary SEND legislation SENCO/Staff support The national SEND Code of Practice requirements
<p>Organisational Psychology</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change management Group/Team development Organisational development/School Improvement Systematic problem solving approaches Solution Oriented Working Systems analysis and development 		<p>Other Areas of Need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADHD Autism Spectrum Dyspraxia Hearing/Visual impairment Physical and Neurological impairment Speech, language and communication
<p>Research and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the impact of national/local initiatives Research design and methodology (from questionnaire design to scientific trials) Statistics and data analysis 		<p>Vulnerable groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CYP with mental health needs Children in Care/Previously Looked After Excluded pupils Minority ethnic groups Refugees Traveller community
<p>Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development/School improvement Differentiation Effective teaching and learning English as an Additional Language Independent thinking Literacy Memory Metacognition Numeracy and maths Pupil Participation in learning Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Standardised and Dynamic Assessment methods 	<p>Support of individuals (young people and adults working with them)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical/professional Supervision of psychologists and other professionals Coaching Cognitive Behavioural Approaches Counselling skills Personal Construct Psychology Problem solving approaches Solution Focussed Therapy Solution Oriented Working 	<p>Settings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Centres Families/Parents/Carers Preschools and Nurseries Schools (Primary and Secondary) Schools Causing Concern Special Schools (in and out of county) Specialist or Enhanced Provisions Youth Offending Service