



BEDFORD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Early Help Services for Families

A Guide for Parents and Carers



“Right support *Right action* Right time”



## What is Early Help?

Early help means providing support as soon as possible to help families cope with difficulties and working together with other services to prevent bigger problems emerging.

Support can come from a range of services and organisations, for parents, children and young people of any age.

Our aim is to provide the right action at the right time with the right support.

## Why would I want Early Help?

There can be many reasons why people ask for early help. You might have some concerns about your child's health, development, behaviour or education: we can also help if you care for a child with a disability. You may be worried about your finances or housing and need some advice about who to talk to. Maybe your family has been affected by domestic abuse, drugs and alcohol, or crime.

If you are finding that family life is becoming a challenge we are here to help.

## What sort of services can I get help from?

Here are a few examples of services that can help, depending on your needs.

We will talk to you about support that you may already be getting from the ones listed below:

### Education and Early Years

- Schools, nurseries, children's centres, access to 2 year old funding
- Inclusion support
- 16+ Education support

### Family and Young People

- Domestic abuse support for adults and young people
- Parenting support
- Family information service

### Well-Being and Welfare

- Mental health /emotional well-being support, housing/ benefits advice

### Health

- Health visitors, midwifery, school nurse, drop in clinics, GP's

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## Where / how can I get Early Help?

Early Help can be accessed, in many ways. Through schools, GP's, health visitors, children's centres, pre-schools / nurseries, colleges, other voluntary agencies. You can also get in touch with us directly using the early help contact details on this leaflet.

## Can I say no to an Early Help Assessment?

Yes you can. The early help assessment is a voluntary process, and can only happen with your agreement. If you decide not to work with us we may ask to stay in contact with you in case your circumstances change.

## What will happen if I ask for Early Help?

You will be asked for more information about the difficulties that you are having. This will also include sharing what is going well for you and how we can build on that. An early help assessment (EHA) may be used to get a clearer picture of what is happening now and look at how we can move forward with agreed actions. This might include any other services that can help you to plan the future that you would like to work towards.



## Confidentiality / Information Sharing

Only professionals who need to know about you and your family will receive information about you.

However there may be times where we need to share information with a service because:

- An adult is at risk of harm
- A child is at risk of harm
- A crime could be prevented or detected



## Frequently Asked Questions

*Does it mean Social Services will get involved?*

No. Early help is a not part of social care, but if we have concerns about you or your child being at risk of harm, we will need to talk to you about sharing this information.

*What is a Team Around Family (TAF)?*

This is a meeting that you will be invited to, to discuss what support is available, and agree a plan of who will do what and when. This meeting could include health visitors, school family workers, and any other relevant service.

*What if I start the assessment and change my mind?*

The assessment is completely voluntary, and is there to help you. If you change your mind then we will close it.

*Will this affect my benefits?*

No. This does not have anything to do with you receiving benefits.

## Contact Us

To speak to someone about Early Help call:

 **0800 023 20 57**

Or email us on:  **earlyhelp@bedford.gov.uk**

Further information can also be found on the website:  **<https://earlyhelp.bedford.gov.uk>**