

Putting together an Early Help plan – a practitioner's guide

Brief overview

Always remember you are writing the plan for and with the family – Everyone needs to understand what is being asked of them.

An Early Help Plan template can be found on page 32 of the [Effective Support for Children & Families in Essex Guidance](#)

Be Inclusive

- Write from individual family members perspective using specific names where appropriate i.e. John needs, John would benefit from ____ This ensures focus remains on what the benefits of the work are for the family
- Co-produce the plan with families gaining their ideas and agreement. There is no point putting something on a plan which families are unlikely to achieve or are unwilling to do
- Include parents and children's contribution to the plan even where their concerns are not the same as the practitioner concerns. It is important that the family see us listening and hearing
- Do not use professional language / jargon. Speak / Write in plain language so everyone understands what is being said and asked for i.e. avoid making statements such as, John needs his basic care needs met. This does not clearly say what we are worried about. Be clear, e.g. 'John needs to have a bath each day so that he is clean and does not smell bad'
- Avoid the use of acronyms e.g. Health Visitor (HV)

Top Tips

- Avoid having more than 8 actions, remember that families are already struggling and focus on the priorities where there are multiple needs
- You do not need to add an action that addresses a need already being met
- Where the plan includes activity such as a practitioner carrying out home visits, be clear about the focus of the home visits & what they will actually be doing there
- Name the person that should be undertaking the action and whether they should be communicating the outcome of their task to anyone for e.g. (name) Health Visitor to contact the (name) SENCO and update following each weekly visit

Avoid Plan Drift

- Where an action relates to a referral being made include when it should be chased up and what should happen if it is not accepted. This prevents arrival at the next review to find out issues that could have been counteracted are now causing delays
- Use clear timescales, don't be general by saying '2 weeks' time' or 'on-going', use a specific date