

The Role of Educational Psychologists

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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.

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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 Collaborative working with children, young people and parents Joint problem solving Evidence-based practice Early intervention Partnership working with other agencies</p>	<p>Emotional and social well-being Alternatives to reward/sanctions (e.g. through Choice Psychology) Anxiety Attachment Attendance Behaviour management Bullying Cognitive Behavioural Approaches Conflict resolution Empathy</p>	<p>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities C/YP'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>
<p>Organisational Psychology Change management Group/Team development Systematic problem solving approaches Solution Oriented Working Systems analysis and development</p>	<p>Emotional Literacy Friendship skills Loss and bereavement Motivation Parenting support Positive psychology Resilience Response to Critical Incidents Self-esteem/self-image Self-harm</p>	<p>Other Areas of Need ADHD Autistic Spectrum Conditions Dyspraxia Hearing/Visual impairment Physical and Neurological impairment Speech, language and communication</p>
<p>Research and Development Monitoring the impact of national/local initiatives Research design and methodology (from questionnaire design to scientific trials) Statistics and data analysis</p>	<p>Social inclusion Social problem-solving Social skills Suicide Staff well-being Stress management (young people and adults working with them)</p>	<p>Vulnerable groups Children/Young People with mental health needs Excluded pupils Looked After Children Traveller community Refugees Minority ethnic groups</p>
<p>Learning 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>	<p>Support of individuals (young people and adults working with them) 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>	<p>Settings Children's Centres Families/Parents/Carers Integrated Support Service centres Preschools and Nurseries Schools (Primary and Secondary) Schools Causing Concern Special Schools (in and out of county) Specialist or Enhanced Provisions Youth Offending Service</p>