

Curriculum for Excellence factfile

Supporting learners



Who is entitled to support?

All children and young people from birth-25 are entitled to support with their education, wherever they learn and there's a new Code of Practice that gives parents the right to ask for help.

What does 'supporting learners' mean?

Every child and young person is entitled to support in two ways. Firstly, there is the ongoing, day to day help of teachers, lecturers and staff. This should be inclusive and supportive as a matter of course. Secondly, there is additional support, available to all and tailored to each individual's needs.

Why would someone need help?

Some children need support throughout their education – for example with challenging behaviour, learning difficulties – like dyslexia or autism – or physical disabilities like deafness or blindness. Others may need support at a specific time or for a short period.

When might a young person need extra help?

Any change might need help: absence due to illness, a death in the family, divorce, moving home, the move from primary to secondary. In secondary, learners might need help with course and career choices. Young people who have left school or home may need help due to the challenge of living independently for the first time. Young adult learners may be parents themselves. Anyone at any stage could struggle with their mental or emotional wellbeing. Families moving to Scotland may need help with English as a second language.

How would anyone know if help was needed?

Some needs are obvious. Others less so. And some emerge over time. Teachers are trained to spot issues. Parents might pick up on difficulties in the course of reading together or helping with homework. Children and young people might sense themselves that things aren't right. The key is to ask for help. School or college can organise an assessment and identify help. Curriculum for Excellence offers regular reports on performance and achievement at key milestones so that learners and parents can see how they are doing. These reports should help flag up any issues.

When's a good time to raise a concern?

As soon as you think there's an issue. No one should suffer in silence or let a problem fester. Children and young people have regular opportunities to review how they are doing with teachers. Parents and learners are invited to discuss progress and future learning plans at Parents Nights and at meetings with staff. Don't wait till Parents Night though – speak to the school at any time.

Who can give the support a young person needs?

Teachers and staff will help. There is also a 'key adult' in the school who has the overall picture of how a young person is progressing with learning and personal development. This may be the class teacher in nursery or primary. In secondary it may be the form tutor, support for learning teacher or guidance teacher. Other professionals may help – for example health and social work services, speech therapists, behavioural support workers and others are partners with schools. School will help make the connections and get the help needed.

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Bringing life to learning and learning to life

October 2010

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What if someone struggles to keep up with lessons?

Curriculum for Excellence offers flexibility for young people to learn in a way that works for them at a pace that offers stretch and challenge but doesn't overwhelm them or put them off learning. Anyone who's finding it hard can ask the class or subject teacher for help – either during the lesson or at the end of the class. Guidance teachers, form tutors – in fact any member of staff – can also help. Or tell a parent or trusted adult and they can take it up with school. It's quite common and nothing to worry about. School will help pinpoint what the problem is and look for ways of helping.

I'm worried my child's learning is slow and their behaviour is getting worse at home

Just ask the school for help. It can be embarrassing for children if they are struggling and don't know why. That might account for 'playing up' to cover it. Dyslexia, for example, often means an intelligent person has poor short term memory, processes words slowly and doesn't process sound well. This can mean they struggle with reading, organisation, planning, remembering things. However, they may have great long term memory. They might find note-taking difficult but be a whizz on a keyboard. They may work slowly but surely. If they are assessed and know what the issue is, parents and school can help them do things differently; play to their strengths. It's important to celebrate the positive rather than focus on the negative to boost confidence. Teachers are trained to look out for their pupils' health and wellbeing and promote positive behaviours so your child will be on their radar and they will alert you to any issues. Parents and school should work together to support children and young people.

We're moving house. Is there help for children starting a new school halfway through term?

Yes. Schools have flexibility in what they teach but they work to national guidance called Experiences and Outcomes, so the new school will get information from the old school about where the child is at and pick up from there. Parents and school can keep in touch to make sure things go smoothly.

My daughter has good support in primary but is worried about going to the big school next year

Speak to your daughter's school. They can put plans in place with the secondary school to help her with the move there. This could include visiting the school and doing some of her learning there before she moves to help her feel more familiar. She may also have an opportunity to meet the key adults, for example her form tutor. It'll help her settle in.



Curriculum for Excellence in action

Watch films and hear teachers and young people talk about their experience of Curriculum for Excellence. There's a set of factfiles too on the background and benefits, qualifications and assessment, the secondary experience, parents' role and health and wellbeing.
www.scotland.gov.uk/cfeinaction

My child struggles with reading and I can't help

Literacy and numeracy is a key part of Curriculum for Excellence and every teacher is responsible for these key skills. If your child is struggling, teachers will spot this and help. The Big Plus offers adults help with reading, writing and numbers across Scotland.

My teenage boy isn't doing well at school and might do better in college. Is that possible?

School-college partnerships are common with various models like pupils attending part- or full-time, colleges delivering courses in schools or through online learning. Ask school what's possible.

This year's S1s will be first to take new qualifications in 2013-14. What help is there?

They will be learning the new curriculum from now until then and there's plenty time to prepare. Teachers will pick up any learning issues as they would normally and any help will be organised to support their learning as they go.

Useful links and information

www.youngscot.org (learners)
www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk (parents/carers)
www.infoscotland.com/justask (additional support)
www.enquire.org.uk (support for learning for parents)
National Parent Forum Scotland
www.parentforumsotland.org
www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/people/young-people/childrenservices/girfec (support for children)
www.thebigplus.com (adult literacy and numeracy)
www.sqa.org.uk (information on qualifications)
www.hmie.gov.uk (standards, inspections)
www.engageforeducation.org (share ideas and questions about education issues)

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