

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. Some children need support throughout their education linked to disability or health needs, social or emotional factors. Others may need help at a specific time, for a short period or a number of years. It doesn't mean they lack skills and abilities.

What does 'supporting learners' mean?

Every child and young person is entitled to support in two ways. First, the ongoing, day-to-day help of teachers, lecturers and staff. This should be caring and inclusive as a matter of course. Second, additional support is available to all who need it. This is tailored to individual need to overcome any barriers to learning.

When might a child need additional support?

All sorts of issues at school, in the playground, at college or in workplace learning might prompt the need for help: difficult relationships, bullying, racial discrimination; making difficult course or career choices. Circumstances at home might call for help: illness, bereavement, divorce, moving home, poverty, homelessness, domestic abuse, parental alcohol or drug misuse, going into or leaving care. Young adults living independently for the first time or becoming parents themselves may struggle to juggle demands on their time and energy. Anyone at any stage could need support with their mental or emotional wellbeing. Families moving to Scotland may need help with English as an additional language.

How would anyone know if help was needed?

Some needs are obvious. Others less so. And some emerge over time. Staff should be able to identify learning needs as they assess educational progress. Parents might pick up on difficulties or stresses just by spending time, talking, reading together or helping with homework. Children and young people are likely to know themselves where they are struggling. The key is to ask for help and encourage your child to do the same. Teaching staff can organise an assessment to build on strengths and meet needs. Regular reports on performance and achievement at key milestones give learners and parents progress updates.

When's a good time to raise a concern?

Speak to staff as soon as you think there's an issue. There should be regular opportunities to review how things are going. Parents and learners should be invited to discuss progress with staff and agree future learning plans. If need be, ask for progress updates.

Who can give the support a young person needs?

All teaching staff are responsible for the health and wellbeing of learners. In school, parents can expect help from a 'key adult' who has the overall picture of how their child is progressing and developing. In nursery this may be the nursery nurse/teacher. In primary it will be the class teacher. In secondary, it may be a form tutor, support for learning teacher or guidance/pupil support teacher. Schools can coordinate help from other professionals like health and social work services, speech therapists, behavioural support workers, careers advisers. Employers can offer flexible forms of work experience to meet needs, interests and aspirations.

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What if my child struggles with some classwork?

Curriculum for Excellence offers teachers flexibility to adapt teaching and learning to meet the needs of young people. This should allow children 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 for help – either during the lesson or at the end of the class. Parents can take it up with school if that's easier. The chances are staff will already be aware of issues and be thinking about how to help.

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

What should I do?

Just ask teaching staff 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. An intelligent child might still struggle with reading, organisation, planning or remembering things. The impact of change might have an effect on them. A child who did well at primary might find secondary challenging just because they're not great at handling change. If your child is assessed and you identify 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 have a responsibility to look out for their pupils' health and wellbeing and are trained to promote positive behaviours so your child will be on their radar and they will alert you to any issues. Parents and school will work together to support children and young people. There's a factfile like this all about Health and Wellbeing.

We're moving house and my child is worried about starting school halfway through term.

Talk to the new school to get support. Schools work to national guidance, so the new school will get information from the old school about where the child is at and pick up from there. Keep in touch after the move 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.

My child struggles with reading and I can't help.

Literacy and numeracy are key skills that unlock other learning and there's a new focus on them under Curriculum for Excellence with every teacher having responsibility for developing these skills. If your child is struggling, teachers



Curriculum for Excellence in action

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

should spot this and help; just ask if you're worried. 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 elsewhere. Is that possible?

Talk to the school. They might discover what's wrong and get things back on track. The main thing is to get the right help for him in a setting that meets his needs – in school, college, on a training course, volunteering. There are many options.

Will there be suitable qualifications for all learners?

Yes, there are qualifications at all levels. The number, range and level of qualifications a young person takes should be appropriate and individual to him/her. Activities and awards outside of school can also be recognised in profiles of achievement from the school. Visit www.sqa.org.uk or www.scqf.info to see what's available.

Useful links and information

www.youngscot.org (learners)

www.sccyp.org.uk (young people's rights)

www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone (parents/carers)

www.infoscotland.com/justask (additional support)

www.enquire.org.uk (support for learning for parents)

www.parentforumscotland.org (new parent forum)

www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/people/young-people/childrenservices/girfec (support for children)

www.thebigplus.com (adult literacy and numeracy)

www.sqa.org.uk and www.scqf.org.uk (qualifications)

www.hmie.gov.uk (standards, inspections)

www.engageforeducation.org (raise issues with education ministers)

Curriculum for Excellence is a major change to the education system that aims to raise standards of learning and teaching for all 3-18 year olds, wherever they learn. This factfile answers questions from parents and learners about the changes and how they affect support for learners – an entitlement for all, from birth-25 years. In the factfile we sometimes use the term 'parents' for short – we mean all parents and carers. When we talk about 'learners' we mean all young people in nursery, school, college, community learning and training, special schools, extended support and secure settings. 'Teachers' or 'teaching staff' means all staff, lecturers, nursery nurses, trainers, support workers.