

Early Help in Hackney

A guide for parents and carers



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We all need a bit of extra support. Early Help means getting that support as soon as you need it, so small problems don't become bigger ones.

What is Early Help?

Early Help isn't a single service – it's a way of bringing people together, like schools, health providers, and community organisations, to make sure families get wrap-around support.

It's for any child, young person or family in Hackney, from pregnancy up to age 19 (or 25 if a child has special educational needs or a disability).

Support is voluntary and based on consent – nothing happens without your agreement.

Why Early Help?

Getting support early can:

- Stop problems from getting worse
- Help children feel happier and do better at school
- Make family life less stressful
- Reduce the need for specialist services later

When might Early Help be needed?

Family life can be challenging for all sorts of reasons.

You might ask for support if:

- A child is struggling at school or not attending
- There are worries about behaviour, friendships, or bullying

- Parents feel stressed or relationships are difficult
- There are concerns about health, money, housing or wellbeing
- A child or parent/carer has additional needs or a disability
- There are concerns about alcohol, drugs, domestic abuse, or mental health.

What support can we offer?

Our support is tailored to your family and may include:

- One-to-one support for family members
- Parenting courses, workshops, and practical advice
- Help with behaviour, routines, or school attendance
- Referrals to specialist services if needed
- Advocacy and signposting to community support

This is called a 'whole family approach' – we keep children's wellbeing at the centre and involve you every step of the way.

How does it work?

Referral

You can ask for Early Help yourself, or a professional who knows your family (such as a teacher, GP, health visitor or Children's Centre worker) can make a referral with your consent.

Once the referral is made, the Early Help Team will contact you to talk about what support might help your family.

Lead Professional

You'll have a main contact person, called a lead professional.

- They will get to know you, listen to your concerns, and coordinate all the support your family needs – so you only have to tell your story once.
- They may visit you at home, your child's school, or early years setting to understand your family's daily life.
- Their role is to support, not judge.

Team Around the Family Meeting (TAF)

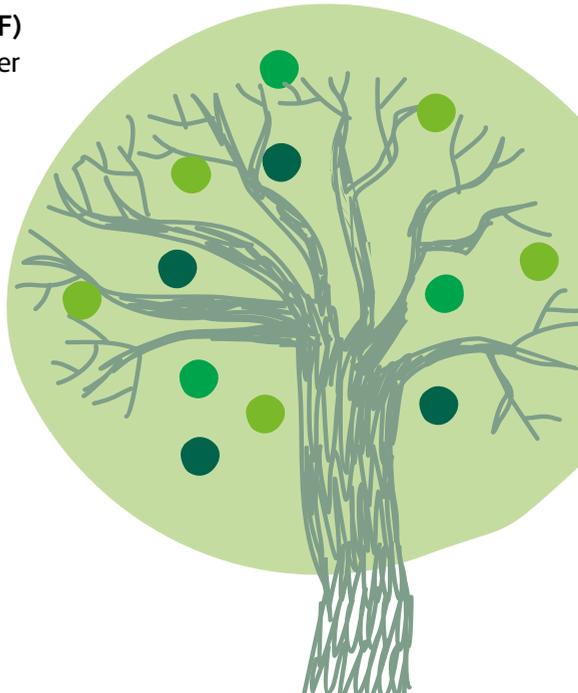
Your lead professional will bring together the people who already support your family, such as:

- Children's Centre or Children & Family Hub Manager
 - Health Visitors, midwives or GPs
 - Family Support Workers
 - Speech & Language Therapists
 - Psychologists
 - Social Workers
 - Youth Workers
 - Community, faith or voluntary sector workers
 - School teachers

- You can also invite other family members or people you trust.
- At the meeting, you'll talk about what's going well and what you'd like to change.
- Together, we'll agree on a simple plan of support, called Family Support Plan. This plan sets out your goals, who is supporting you, and how progress will be checked.

The Plan

- Most plans last a few months, but support can continue longer if needed.
- Plans are reviewed regularly with you to see what's working and what still needs to change.
- Everyone's role is to listen, share ideas, and work with you on a plan that makes sense for your family.



Keeping everyone safe

We value your family's privacy and believe in open communication about how we handle your information. With your permission, the details you share will be securely passed to relevant professionals who can offer support. We won't make any decisions without you.

Our most important job is to ensure everyone is safe. In very rare and specific situations, we may need to share information without your consent. This would only be to:

- Protect a child who is at risk of harm
- Help an adult who is at risk of harm
- Help prevent or solve a serious crime

Our commitment

Our community is made up of people from many different backgrounds, and we are committed to treating every person with fairness and respect.

Our goal is to provide support in a way that is helpful and sensitive to your family's needs.

This means we will:

- Treat you and your family with respect and dignity
- Ensure everyone is treated fairly, regardless of their background
- Work closely with you and listen to your point of view when making decisions

How to get in touch

You can ask for Early Help by:

- Speaking to someone who already knows your family – e.g. your child's teacher, GP, health visitor, midwife, or a Children & Family Hub worker
- Calling the Children and Families Services Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on **020 8356 5500** (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm) and asking for Early Help Support
- Emailing **MASH@hackney.gov.uk**

For urgent concerns outside office hours, call the Emergency Duty Team on **020 8356 2710**.

More information: **hackneylocaloffer.gov.uk**



Accessibility statement

If you require this document in a different format, please email

 **servicearea@hackney.gov.uk**

We will consider your request and get back to you in the next five working days.