Early Help: A guide for parents and Carers

let's understand the importance of an EHA

What is Early Help?

Every family can go through challenging times at some point. Early help means working with you and your family so that small problems dont become big problems.

Early help is for everybody, for families with children and young people of any age, its your choice whether to have it or not.

How can I get Early Help?

If you feel you and your family might need support to solve some problems, you can ask a professional involved with your family about early help . This might be someone from the inclusion team from your child's school, your GP, your health visitor, nursery practitioner or your housing support worker. If you find this difficult you can always contact your local family center to ask for advice. They will work with you to find someone for you to talk to. If someone is worried that your having some problems, they may ask you if you would like to talk about early help.

Why would I want Early Help?

It could be because you are worried about your child's health, development or behaviour, or how they're doing with school, or perhaps because you are caring for a disabled child.

It could be that you are worried about money or housing and how that is going to affect your family.

Maybe its because your child has been affected by drugs, domestic abuse ,alcohol or crime.

Perhaps your child is a carer for other people, or maybe you have had a bereavement in the family that's made life a real challenge.

Early help can give you the tools to solve any challenges you are experiencing with help from others when needed.

What will happen when I ask for Early help?

- The Professional will talk to you about the problems you're experiencing. They will ask what help and support you think you might need. This is called an Early help assessment (EHA).
- An Early help assessment is nothing to be worried about. Its just a conversation to work out how to help you stop small problems turning into big problems. You can talk about things that are going well and things that you are proud of as well as things that your finding a challenge.
- The Professional will also talk with your child/children in your family to make sure they understand how they are feeling and anything they might want some help with.
- Together you will agree what to write down so there is a record of what you talked about.
- What happens next will be different for every family. You might want to make a plan with the person you spoke with to sort out the problems. You might want to meet with other people who might be able to help. This is called a team around the family meeting (TAF). You may want to get a service (like family support) to give you the help you feel you need

These are just examples. You can say what you think will help you and your family.

Sharing Information

If you decide you'd like to access early help, the person you talked to will ask if they can share details of your conversation. This is to ensure the people who will be supporting you are able to do a good job for you and understand the journey you and your family have been on. You need to be happy with this and give your permission.

There may be times when the person you talked to has to share information without your permission. This includes:

- **If they think a child is at risk of harm**
- **If they think an adult is at risk of harm**
- **If they think the information could help prevent or detect a serious crime.**

Remember, Its your choice to have early help. Early help is here to help you and your family stop small problems turning into big problems - and hopefully into no problems at all.