



Hampshire
County Council

Virtual School

PEP toolkit

**Personal education plan needs analysis tool and toolkit of support strategies
and interventions: identification of care-experienced children's and young
people's needs with supportive strategies and interventions within educational
settings**

Hampshire Virtual School

Children's Services Department

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Contents

Introduction	4
Personal education plan toolkit needs analysis tool.....	6

Introduction

Attachment begins in pregnancy and develops throughout infancy and toddlerhood. It is the bond that grows between a parent and their child through affectionate feelings, thoughts and actions. Touch, eye contact, smells, smiles, parental control and, most of all, joy and attunement play major roles in this process. A positive attachment triggers a heart and mind development in the child that lays the foundation for future relationships; a safe and sensitive first experience of a close relationship equips the child to form healthy relationships with self and others in the future (Cocking & Georgiades, 2003). The first three years of a child's life are particularly important in determining how they form relationships with others in the future.

For a baby, human contact and interaction are part of survival, and it will engage other humans to get its needs met by any means necessary (Cocking and Georgiades, 2003). If a baby's basic needs are not met by its carers in a consistent, caring way, its expectations and ways of engaging with the world become distorted. One of the child's biggest fears is no human contact at all. Therefore, it is better to have cries met with anger and irritation than to be ignored. If this is a persistent pattern in the child's early life, they begin to lose the ability to tell the difference between positive and negative attention or to value one over the other. Their aim is to avoid being forgotten and neglected (Cocking & Georgiades, 2003). Children and young people with these difficulties may act out these feelings of rejection with teachers at school as these are the child's attachment figures at school. In fact, the more maternal the teacher (male or female), the more likely they are to experience this type of behaviour from the pupil with attachment difficulties.

Some children with disrupted patterns of attachment have had early histories that have left them feeling completely out of control of their destiny. They have been moved between their birth parents, relatives, foster carers or childcare institutions a number of times. Even when this decision has been made, the children may remain in foster care for some time before suitable adoptive parents are found. Even though social workers work hard to prepare children for moves, the impact on the child goes beyond an intellectual understanding of why, where and whom. Many children recount their life stories with little prompting. What is often missing from these stories is the sensory, emotional and psychological experience of this history, the impact of which cannot be underestimated. It is not, therefore, surprising that once such a child is old enough, they begin to find ways of taking control of their environment and relationships. They aim to escape the feelings of helplessness and chaos in their lives (Cocking & Georgiades, 2003).

In school, difficulties stemming from this early disruptive history may manifest in one or more areas, including relationships with teachers and peers, problems with school work and more general emotional and behavioural difficulties. In order to best meet the needs of looked-after children in school, the personal education plan (PEP) must be thorough and comprehensive, clearly identifying the specific needs and outlining appropriate related interventions. The following needs analysis tool and associated toolkit of suggested support strategies and interventions is designed as a way of helping school staff achieve this aim. However, it is important to mention that not all looked-after children experience the difficulties identified in this document. Some are happy, well-adjusted children and young people, which must be considered when using the needs identification toolkit. Focusing on the pupil's strengths and resiliency is also paramount¹.

¹ This introduction has been reproduced from Cocking and Georgiades' 'Working with Adopted and Fostered Children in Education' (PAC 2003), with their kind permission.

Personal education plan toolkit needs analysis tool

Use this tool to support the summary of needs that are causing a barrier to learning.

Information from the care plan and health plan should be used when identifying needs.

Consider the following questions in relation to the behaviours, actions, cognitions, skills, and emotions the pupil demonstrates.

Note: the following are to be used just as a guide. The following areas of need are not necessarily fixed, and they may change depending on factors such as mood, the nature and quality of the relationship the child/young person is in and whether the child/young person is in a situation they find particularly challenging or anxiety provoking. When considering these questions, it may also be useful to contemplate situations where these behaviours do not occur, as these can be equally powerful when designing support and intervention.

	Adult Relationships Does the child/young person:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
AR1	Deny the need for support from the adult?					
AR2	Appear sensitive to the proximity of the adults (either wanting them close by or watching them from a distance)?					
AR3	Always need consistency from the adults (change in adults is very unsettling)?					

AR4	Show hostility to the adult/teacher if directed?					
AR5	Appear sensitive to tone of voice, body language and perceived warmth of the adult?					
AR6	Require a constant need for adult attention or engage in avoidance of adult relationships, such as ignoring them (or a mixture of both)?					
AR7	Appear overly dependent on adults to support them (engaging constantly in attachment/connection-seeking behaviours)					
AR8	Direct hostility to the adult/teacher when frustrated?					
AR9	Have difficulty showing trust to adults (they may say adults are against them or feel they are being persecuted)?					
AR10	Engage in control/power-seeking behaviours with adults (not engaging in adult-directed tasks, refusal to follow adult requests)?					

AR11	Sometimes seek/respond to affectionate contact and reject it at other times?					
AR12	Engage in regressive behaviours with the adult (such as acting in a baby-like manner or making noises)?					
AR13	Crave affection/approval from adults. However, remain insecure when reassurance is given?					
AR14	Resent the adult giving approval to other pupils and may become jealous?					
AR15	Appear more connected to objects or tablets/computers than to adult relationships? They may retreat into an imaginative and fantasy world rather than connect with adults					
AR16	Engage in fawning behaviours (extreme safety-seeking behaviours around adults, including responding in a way they expect the adult wants them to; people pleasing, pacifying)?					

	Peer Relationships Does the child/young person have difficulties:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
PR1	Maintaining normal physical boundaries with peers (seemingly unaware of their proximity/personal space)?					
PR2	Making appropriate verbal requests to other pupils who may be in their way or their space (they may push past them, or younger children may hit out at a child who is too close to them)?					
PR3	Abiding by the rules of the group (they may try and set new rules and dominate these)?					
PR4	Accommodating other pupils when they play/socialise (not always able to engage in reciprocal play or turn-taking, wanting to dominate/control the social interaction)?					
PR5	Playing/working alongside others without interfering/causing a disturbance (these may be connection-seeking behaviours, such as taking their pencil to get their attention)?					

PR6	Showing genuine interest in other pupils/activities/narratives (this may threaten their self-concept, and they may interrupt and start talking about their own achievements or saying that their accomplishments are better)?					
PR7	May engage in sharing made up narratives with peers (consciously and unconsciously), potentially to try and impress their peers.					
PR8	Showing empathy for others?					
PR9	Making genuine and reciprocal friendships with other children/young people (maybe too self-focused or being hypervigilant to perceived criticism, which interferes with this relationship formation)?					
PR10	Making positive attachments with peers and, for example, may engage in attachment-seeking behaviours with peers? This can result in experiencing feelings of rejection/personalisation/hypervigilance around peers, leading to fight/flight/fawn responses in peer interactions. The latter can include copying others, masking feelings, ignoring their own needs and 'rescuing' behaviours.					

PR11	<p>Playing/interacting with more than one other child/young person and experimenting with the differing roles taken in group games and activities</p>					
PR12	<p>Showing appreciation for the work of others/ becoming jealous if validation is given to the work of others by a trusted adult</p>					
PR13	<p>Being positive to their peers, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the pupil disparaging of others? • Does the pupil remember real/imagined offences? They may hold grudges • Does the pupil bully/intimidate/use force with peers? 					

	<p>Executive Functioning</p> <p>The following has been adapted from 'Attachment, Developmental Trauma and Executive Functioning Difficulties in the School Setting', with kind permission from the Family Futures Consortium</p> <p>Does the child/young person have difficulties with:</p>	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
EF1	<p>Planning/organisation?</p> <p>This is when pupils have difficulties setting goals in their learning, difficulties planning steps needed to reach a goal and work through these steps in a timely manner, difficulties planning their work, difficulties breaking down work into smaller tasks, a tendency to avoid work they think they cannot do; difficulties organising their school bag, resources, desk and locker; a tendency to arrive at a lesson without the required resources.</p>					
EF2	<p>Inhibiting their behaviour?</p> <p>This is the ability to stop one's behaviour at the appropriate time, not acting on one's immediate impulse. These pupils will often shout out in class or appear out of control. They may show particular difficulties in non-structured periods and activities as they need the presence of an external regulator to assist them in managing their impulses.</p>					

EF3	<p>Transitioning and shifting?</p> <p>This is the ability to move from one activity to another and make smooth transitions within any problem-solving activity. Pupils with difficulties in these areas tend to be inflexible in their approach and can find it difficult to switch from one lesson to another, to become disorientated by change, and not be able to move on from a playground dispute. In addition, difficulties in these areas may lead to problems with generalisation. Pupils may have learnt a skill in one context but find it difficult to apply this knowledge in another; a high level of adult bridging will be required to transfer the skill.</p>					
EF4	<p>Initiating?</p> <p>Pupils with difficulties in this area may find it difficult to start a task independently, even for things they enjoy. They may find it difficult to generate ideas and come up with problem-solving strategies.</p>					
EF5	<p>Working memory?</p> <p>The ability to use working memory involves the ability to hold information in one's mind in order to complete a task. Pupils with difficulties in this area tend to forget complex instructions and cannot manage multi-step tasks.</p>					

	Continued from previous page... Does the child/young person have difficulties with:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
EF6	<p>Monitoring (including self-reflection/mentalising)?</p> <p>Pupils who have difficulties with monitoring find it difficult to see their behaviour as others perceive it and find it difficult to understand the effect it can have on others. It also includes being able to monitor one's work and achievement. Pupils who are unable to monitor their work tend to make mistakes and do not have the ability to check over their work. They may not understand why they have a poor mark and may believe they are being treated unfairly. The failure to monitor the effect of one's behaviour on others can also lead to peer problems or problems with adult relationships. They often find it difficult to self-reflect.</p>					
EF7	<p>Impulsivity and attention control. Does the child/young person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appear impulsive? • require immediate gratification? • have difficulty in sustaining attention in tasks? • have difficulties following through on instructions? • fail to finish their work? • avoid/dislike tasks that require sustained mental effort? • tend to be easily distracted? • tend to be forgetful in daily activities? 					

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fidget with hands/squirm in seat? • call out answers to questions before they are completed? • have difficulty waiting for their turn? • have a tendency to interrupt others? 					
EF8	<p>Coping with unstructured time?</p> <p>Without the emotional and physical containment of trusted adults, structured playtimes, breaktimes and lunchtimes the C/YP can become unsettled and dysregulated.</p>					
	<p>Emotional and Behavioural Regulation: does the child/young person:</p>	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
EBR1	Have difficulties calming themselves down after an altercation? The optimal level is approximately one and a half hours					
EBR2	Have uncontrolled/unpredictable emotional outbursts (to release/relieve pent-up anger/aggression/anxiety)?					
EBR3	Have difficulty controlling reactions when they do not get immediate attention (poor frustration tolerance)?					
EBR4	Overreact to affection or attention? (they may become overexcited, loud, boisterous)					

EBR5	<p>sensory regulation difficulties (this is often related to early neglect). Children can be triggered by noise, visual stimuli, textures, sudden movement, smells, seeking proprioceptive input through activities such as fiddling, climbing, rough housing/handsy and vestibular input through movement and fidgeting.</p> <p>This can lead to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attention regulation difficulties (distractible) • difficulties with unstructured time • experiencing overwhelming feelings that do not appear to have triggers. • overreact to unseen triggers (memories, curriculum howlers, reminders, something that looks similar, smell, etc). 					
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	Motivation and Locus of Control Does the child/young person have difficulty:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
MLC1	Recognising when they are underachieving?					
MLC2	Demonstrating a growth mindset? They may have more of a fixed mindset, leading to fear of making mistakes as they do not believe they can make progress					

MLC3	Making efforts to improve?					
MLC4	Working towards tangible rewards?					
MLC5	Responding to positive social reinforcement (a smile/verbal praise)?					
MLC6	Accepting constructive feedback on their learning (this is taken as a personal criticism)?					
MLC7	Maintaining confidence when learning new skills?					
MLC8	Attending school for tests/exams?					
MLC9	Readily answering questions in class?					
MLC10	Relating success in schoolwork to themselves (such as their own efforts/strategies used. This is known as an external locus of control)?					

MLC11	Enjoying classroom responsibilities?					
MLC12	Enjoying the process of learning (just focused on getting it finished as quickly as possible, and dislike self-checking)?					
MLC13	Enjoying the times when they are given a choice in what they learn?					
MLC14	Believing they can succeed (negative belief in their learning)?					
MLC15	Persevering with challenging tasks (they may give up easily)?					

	Self-Concept Does the child/young person:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
SC1	Explode into temper/rage/violence when thwarted/frustrated/criticised?					

SC2	React hyper-sensitively to the criticism of others, including learning feedback, often resulting in task avoidance?					
SC3	Spoil or show negativity to the achievements of others (this can be very threatening to their sense of self)?					
SC4	React defensively when there is a perceived threat, whether in the form of learning tasks, social interactions or unfamiliar environments?					
SC5	Sometimes imagine others are against them/may be prone to personalisation?					
SC6	Have difficulties taking responsibility for their own actions/blame others/make excuses/deny (this behaviour is often related to deep-rooted unconscious shame regarding their worth)?					

SC7	Appear self-denigrating/self-demeaning? Do they have difficulty accepting compliments?					
SC8	Appear listless/lacking in motivation/works only with direct adult support?					
SC9	Find it difficult to accept when disapproval is shown or when attention is withdrawn?					
SC10	Find it difficult to accept imperfection in their work (they may rip it up or become very upset by minor mistakes)?					
SC11	Have difficulty telling people what they are good at?					
SC12	Have a negative body image?					
SC13	Display a high level of anxiety in the classroom (maybe demonstrated by controlling power seeking behaviour)?					

SC14	Have difficulties accepting not knowing things and asking for help from others (this can trigger toxic shame and feelings of unworthiness)?					
SC15	Often only complete their work to elicit adult approval/people pleasing (this is linked to fawning and flocking behaviours by relying on others to help them. these are safety-seeking behaviours)?					

	Language Development For their age, does the child/young person have difficulties in their first language with:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
LD1	Phonic attack skills (not age-appropriate)?					
LD2	Receptive language?					
LD3	Reading comprehension?					
LD4	Expressive language?					

LD5	Knowing their letter sounds?					
LD5	Expressive grammar skills?					
LD6	Narrative organisation skills?					
LD7	Expressing age-appropriate vocabulary?					
LD8	Using language flexibly?					
LD9	Use of homonyms/synonyms ?					
LD10	Understanding maths concepts (however, their calculation ability may be age-appropriate)?					
LD11	Understanding abstract concepts in language (use of figurative speech or inferring meaning in conversations)?					
LD12	Intelligibility of speech sounds?					

LD13	Retelling stories using appropriate vocabulary, expressive language, speech sounds and grammatical structure?					
LD14	Appearing to misunderstand or 'get the wrong end of the stick'? This often amuses peers, and sometimes may appear deliberate when it is not. However, this can unwittingly become a negative reinforcer due to the attention they receive.					
LD15	Shouting out answers that appear random and unrelated to the topic being discussed?					
LD16	Engagement in tangential speech or tangentiality is a communication disorder in which the speaker's train of thought wanders and shows a lack of focus, never returning to the initial topic of the conversation.					
LD17	Age-appropriate thinking and problem-solving skills, such as visual and spatial					

	tasks and practical skills that do not involve language?					
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Reflect on the responses to the questions and look at where the frequency of ticks occurs for each section. Correspond with the colour-coded table on the next page to help you identify the underlying needs of the looked-after child. You can then refer to the relevant links on Moodle to gain further insight and knowledge about these needs and decide on possible suitable interventions.

Identified need of the C/YP	<p>Refer to the Virtual School Moodle</p> <p>https://virtualschool.hants.gov.uk/course/view.php?id=192</p>
Adult Relationships	
Peer Relationships	
Executive Functioning	
Self-Regulation	
Motivation and Locus of Control	
Sense of Self	
Language Development	