



Together
for Change



Using the ILP parent carer views template

Guidance for schools for using with parent carers



Introduction

The following guidance has been developed to assist schools in using the ILP/ISP (Individual Learning Plan/Individual Support Plan) template for parent carers, developed in co-production with the West Sussex Parent Carer Forum (WSPCF) as part of the Autism in Schools Project.

The template has been developed to help schools work co-productively with parent carers to gather their views and feedback regarding their child. The template is intended to support both families and schools to work together to create a holistic understanding of a child or young person. The template includes a section on 'Hopes and Dreams' so families can share their hopes for their child and any hopes and dreams their child might have expressed.

Background to the template development

Schools using the template through the Autism in Schools Project recognise that true co-production does not begin with suggested targets being sent home for parent carers to consider. These schools also acknowledged that it is often as important to develop targets to promote wellbeing, as it is to develop academic targets. Parent carers know their child best and so are best placed to identify areas of strengths and needs for their child's wellbeing.

In addition, the development of the template recognises that parent carers may have hopes and dreams for their child outside of school, which could contribute to their overall wellbeing and in turn have a positive impact on their readiness and ability to engage at school.

The WSPCF and the West Sussex project team worked with a series of parent carer focus groups and took feedback from schools using the template. This feedback was acted upon and resulted in the templates you now have to use with your parent carers. The practice of using this ILP/ISP template approach is now embedded in many schools across West Sussex. (See the quotes at the end of this document on the value of this resource developed with parent carers for parent carers).

Why the template is important

To ensure true co-production parent carers should be included from the very beginning of the process, in recognition of the fact that they have the best knowledge of their child's holistic strengths and needs.

It is also a helpful support for parents to understand what information is being requested and can be used to structure face-to-face meetings as well as ask for written contributions.

When to send the template and how to use it

The template is intended to be sent before any targets are identified. The information shared can then be used to draft targets, which ideally, should be written with parent carers (and the child or young person where possible). It can also be used as part of the ongoing review process to assess the impact of the support the child/young person has received.

Alternatively, you can use the questions/prompts from the template to structure meetings with parent carers to write targets together.



Some schools have uploaded the format to their website, so that it is always available for parent carers to access when needed.

Communicating the purpose of the template

We know that some parent carers may not have had positive experiences with education settings and as a result may feel anxious when communicating with school. Sharing the ILP/ISP template offers schools a good opportunity to develop positive collaborative relationships. Ensuring that they understand the purpose of the template and the value that your school places on their input, can support that positive start.

To help you explain the template to your parent carers, the WSPCF has developed guidance for parent carers, that you will have received with this document.

What our schools and parent carers tell us about using the ILP template

"The ILP template has given us the basis for true collaboration between home and school when both implementing and reviewing provision for our learners. It also allows us to capture pupil voice and involve the children in their own provision, which goes to the heart of our inclusive ethos in school."

Parents are very positive about the opportunities they get throughout the year to be involved in their child's provision. The children have a better awareness of what they need and how to advocate for themselves - which is our main goal for them when they leave us and move on to secondary school. From a SENCO perspective it is also invaluable when writing EHCNA applications as it very clearly tracks the APDR process."

Kathryn Cheesmur, Inclusion Manager/Assistant Headteacher, Northlands Wood Primary Academy

"I like the surveys the school sends out beforehand too, because they give me the chance to ask my questions and lead the discussion in the meeting rather than just being talked at."

Anonymous parent.

Sharing the impact of using the template - "Higher number of parents participating in sharing their views to write the ILPs. Targets are not a surprise to parents because there has been previous communication. A much more collaborative and purposeful approach to planning for the individual child. It makes the planning for the individual even more bespoke...parents have fed back that they like having a platform to share their views and to be included in all decisions about their child"

Katy McCartney, Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion, Three Bridges Primary School

"It allows key information to be gathered in advance, giving staff time to reflect and plan appropriate provision, while also ensuring that all voices are heard, including those of parents and the child. By capturing insights from home as well as school, it supports a more holistic understanding of the child's needs. The form also makes it easier to recognise and celebrate achievements, not just identify challenges. In addition, it helps to shape more effective, clear and SMART targets, leading to more focused support. Importantly, it enables any historic concerns or ongoing issues to be explored and investigated fully before the meeting, meaning they can be addressed separately. This allows the meeting itself to remain proactive, forward-looking and positive, rather than dwelling on past difficulties."

Overall, this approach helps staff, parents and children feel fully involved, valued and prepared for the meeting"

Vicky Davies, SENCO, Halsford Park Primary Academy