

# Why are early help and early intervention important?

**Providing timely support is vital. Identifying and addressing a child or family's needs early on can increase protective factors that positively influence a child's wellbeing and decrease risk factors that may be impacting a child's life negatively.**

Early help' is care provided at any stage of a child or young person's life that aims to prevent escalating need or risk and improve children and young people's outcomes. Essentially, it's about getting in early to provide support before a problem emerges or escalates.

Early help and early intervention services can be provided at any stage in a child or young person's life, from the early years right through to adolescence. Services can be delivered to parents, children, or whole families.

## **What is the difference between 'early help' and 'early intervention'?**

One of the key areas of confusion is around what, if anything, differentiates the term 'early help' from 'early intervention'.

'Early help' often covers universal support, such as health visiting or open access youth services.

'Early intervention' is generally used to mean additional, targeted support that occurs around a specific issue deemed a concern, but which is not at a high enough threshold or level for a child protection.

An effective preventative response requires a focus on the importance of communities where universal help is accessible to all and where families can work in partnership with professionals. This can help families feel able to engage with services to access the support they need, when they need it.

## **Key pointers to remember**

'Early help' and 'early intervention' are forms of support aimed at improving outcomes for children or preventing escalating need or risk. Because of this they are also sometimes referred to as prevention or preventative services.

Universal help that is accessible to all, and where families can work in partnership with professionals, can prevent issues from appearing in the first place and help families feel able to engage with services.

**Providing the best start in life.**

