

## **Some questions for professionals to consider in relation to families who elect to home-educate - ACE Team guidance.**

The Education Act 1996 gives parents/carers the legal right to home-educate their children. For many families, home-education is a well thought out, properly researched and planned choice at the centre of their lifestyle and beliefs. Their children are thriving and the educational provision being made is of a good standard - imaginative, inspiring and comprehensive. Communication with the local authority is positive and if a return to mainstream schooling is wanted this is usually achieved.

There are, however other families who home-educate in less positive circumstances, sometimes because they are unhappy with a school. Parents may start home-education with little or no idea of what it entails. All professionals working with families are responsible for trying to ensure the best outcome for children and the following suggested questions can help colleagues in their work with families who have expressed an interest in home education.

1. Is family choosing home-education owing to a breakdown with the current educational provision? If so, what has been done to try and solve problems with the latter?
2. Many parents/carers be considering home-education to try and avoid an exclusion from school? Is home-education likely to be in the best interests of the child or do other alternatives need to be explored?
3. Are parents or carers presenting themselves as having the determination, motivation, enthusiasm and capacity to home-educate? Do they have enough resources (financial and emotional) to be able to offer an acceptable home-education package?
4. Are parents or carers aware of what home-education entails in time and money? For example, if they choose it, they will receive **no** financial support from their local authority, and will have to pay for learning materials, outings, equipment, and examinations. Local authority involvement is likely to be minimal and currently entails only very light-touch advice (annually) from an educational perspective.
5. Do professionals have any safeguarding concerns about children and has anyone asked the child whether he or she wants to be home-educated?
6. Do the parents/carers realise the potential limitation of choice of school places available in the future if they want to stop the home-education?

School staff and other professionals should neither actively encourage a family to home educate nor can they stop a parent or carer from choosing home-education.

If the decision to home educate has been made by parent/carer, ACE team, (or SEND if child has an EHCP), needs to be provided with a copy of the formal written notification from parent, in order that the Elective Home Education process can be initiated.

Schools should also complete the mandatory 'Starters & Leavers' return to School Admissions, necessary following any decision to delete a child's name from the school roll.