



Centre for Research in
Education Inclusion
and Diversity



**ESRC Funded Knowledge Exchange Programme
Dispute resolution in additional support needs:
Working together to improve children's and families' experiences**

Think Tank 3

Involving children and young people in ASN decision-making

Venue: Room 1.26 Paterson's Land, Moray House School of Education,
University of Edinburgh

Date: Thursday 26th January 2012, 9.30am – 3.15pm

Local authorities and schools have a duty to ensure that children with additional support needs receive the extra help they need to develop their full educational and social potential. However, disagreements may sometimes arise between parents and the school or local authority in relation to identifying children's needs and the type of additional provision required. The Government is keen to ensure that any issues are speedily resolved, using informal negotiation or mediation rather than court or tribunal wherever possible. However, recent research conducted by the Universities of Edinburgh and Manchester found that many parents of children with additional support needs disagreed with the local authority or school on some aspects of provision and were often dissatisfied with the outcome of informal negotiation at school level. Mediation had not, at the time of the research, been used extensively, partly through lack of awareness. Despite some criticisms, parents are generally positive about the ASN Tribunal and adjudication, partly because these routes are seen to offer clarity and closure in dispute resolution. Children and young people have generally not been involved in ASN decision-making or dispute resolution.

This is the third think tank in a series which has focused on avoiding disputes in additional support needs through better communication and dealing with disputes effectively when they arise. The questions addressed are the following: Why are children so little involved in ASN decision-making and dispute resolution procedures? Are efforts to enhance their involvement tokenistic and what would need to be done to make their involvement meaningful? How can we work effectively with children from different social backgrounds, of different ages and with different types of difficulty?

A final event to launch our parent-friendly publication on avoiding and resolving disputes will take place at the Scottish Parliament on 23rd May 2012 – details to follow.



PROGRAMME

Involving children and young people in ASN decision-making

Chairs: Sandra Mitchell, Resolve, Children in Scotland and Morag Steven, Common Ground Mediation.

9.30 – 10.00	Arrival and coffee
10.00 – 10.05	<i>Introduction</i> Sheila Riddell, Centre for Research in Education, Inclusion and Diversity, University of Edinburgh
10.05 – 10.25	<i>Involving children and young people in decisions in relation to additional support for learning</i> Robin McKendrick, Scottish Government.
10.25 – 10.35	Questions
10.35 – 10.55	<i>The legal rights of children and young people to challenge educational decisions: theory and practice</i> Professor Laura Lundy, Research Forum for the Child, Queens University Belfast
10.55 – 11.05	Questions
11.05 – 11.20	Coffee
11.20 – 11.40	A young person's account of his involvement in decision-making
11.40 – 12.00	<i>Working with children with communication difficulties</i> Liz Herd, Education Support Officer, East Lothian Council
12.00 – 12.30	Questions
12.30 – 13.15	Lunch
13.15 – 13.45	<i>Supporting children to engage with the tribunal</i> Robert Cochrane, Take Note, Barnardo's <i>Involving children in mediation</i> Pauline Linn, ASN and Family Mediator, Resolve Mediation
13.45 – 14.00	Questions
14.00 – 14.45	<i>Discussion of case studies: how can we ensure the non-tokenistic involvement of children and young people in ASN decision-making?</i>
14.45 – 15.00	<i>Next steps: producing a framework guide on avoiding and resolving disputes in ASN</i> Sheila Riddell, Centre for Research in Education, Inclusion and Diversity, University of Edinburgh