Where does early support take place?

Early support usually takes place at early support centres. These are specialised facilities or practices equipped with skilled staff and rooms containing suitable materials, such as toys, books or medical aids.

Help and counselling can also be provided as mobile early support in the family home. Sometimes early support is also provided at the child’s day nursery or as part of their day care (for example in the childminder’s home).

Regardless of where it is provided, it is essential that, as parents, you are always involved in the support.

How can my child access early support?

Applying for early support services is uncomplicated. LWL staff are happy to advise and help you with this. You can also obtain information at any early support centre.

Three steps to obtaining early support:
- A visit to a doctor is required in order to apply for early support. The paediatrician will provide an initial diagnosis for interdisciplinary support or issue a medical certificate for therapeutic support.
- A standardised diagnostic test can then be carried out on the child (e.g. at the early support centre) in order to identify what specific help should be provided for your child.
- You can then submit an application for early support. We will carry out a needs assessment together with you. If the requirements are met and early support is found to be a suitable course of action for your child, you will be given confirmation.

Who can I contact?

LWL provides funding to support children who are affected by or at risk of developing a disability to enable them to grow in the best way possible.

We can advise you on early support free of charge and in confidence. Please feel free to call us. If necessary, on-site appointments can also be arranged.

We can advise you on early support services and explain how to apply for them. Also we will help you fill out your application if needed.

We are happy to provide information on other service providers, support options and counselling services in your area.

Early support for your child
Information for parents on early support from birth until the start of school in Westfalen-Lippe

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Photos from stock.adobe.com: Racle Fotodesign, Dan Race, Sergey Novikov
Early support is aimed at families whose children need help with their development for a wide variety of reasons.

Early support can be necessary, for instance, if a child
• has a congenital disability,
• was born prematurely or with complications
• fails to display age-appropriate linguistic or physical development,
• has difficulties in group-settings or playing with children of the same age,
• displays learning or cognitive difficulties,
• has a low attention span and concentration levels.

Therapeutic support
There are various ways to support children therapeutically. The choice is always made with a view to the individual needs of the child and their family. The starting point for any kind of support is playing. The child is helped to learn more easily, cope with their emotions, speak more, enjoy physical movement, deal with group situations and become more self-confident.

Psychomotor development
This is all about movement, because physical and psychological development are inextricably linked. By means of focused play and movement therapy sessions, the child is encouraged to engage with a variety of materials, themselves and other children. This helps the child with their personal, physical and social development. In addition to early support facilities, there are other organisations that specialise in these types of approaches.

Therapeutic programmes as part of interdisciplinary early support

Physiotherapy
The child learns to improve and become more secure in their physical mobility.

Occupational therapy (capacity to act in everyday life)
Occupational therapy helps children who do not get enough exercise, who have difficulties with their perception, sense of balance or concentration.

Speech therapy
This helps children to practise and expand their linguistic skills. Speech therapy helps when a child cannot easily pronounce words or individual sounds, form sentences or speak fluently.