

# Preparing for your MaP folder

Welcome to the Child Development Network MaP folder. This handout provides some information about the MaP folder, and asks some initial questions to get you ready to the process.

## **A GUIDE TO THE FUTURE**

The key to the MaP folder is that the documents provided a framework for the future. Most documents written about children who have developmental and behavioural difficulties reflect the past. For example, an assessment report, a school report or a letter from a specialist are all examples of documents that tell you about the past. They usually do not address the important question of what to do or where you are going. The MaP folder has been designed to provide a plan for the future.

## **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS**

The special needs that children have, and the issues that need to be managed often do not distinguish between home and school. If a child has a learning problem, for example, or is particularly fearful and anxious, then these issues need to be managed **at home and at school**. If home and school manage these in different ways, the outcomes for the children are confusing and poor. It is important that home and school work together, communicate regularly and make sure that approaches to a child's special needs are synchronised as much as possible. Our MaP folder has been designed to help you build a partnership between home and school that allows you to understand your child's special needs in the same way, and set common goals that you can work towards together.

## **MANAGING PROGRESS**

Once you have identified who you are working with, and where you're going, the next challenge is how to know whether your journey is on track. The MaP folder can help you manage progress by identifying how you will communicate amongst the team, helping you keep progress notes, and managing important events such as meetings.

## **BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE**

A great deal of knowledge about how to help children with special needs comes from trial and error. A teacher working with your child over the course of the year builds up significant knowledge and experience through their work with that child. What happens the following year with the new teacher? Usually, you have to start all over again. The MaP folder enables you to build up a database of knowledge around what works, and what does not work for each area of your child's special needs. With this information efficiently recorded, it is easy to pass information on to somebody new to your child's care, such as a new teacher.

## **WORKING WITH THE SCHOOL'S PLAN (IEP)**

For some children with special needs, schools prepare in writing an individual education plan (IEP). This is a plan specific to what happens at school. It defines the areas where your child's needs are not adequately met by an unmodified school curriculum. Your MaP folder is not intended as a replacement for the IEP. Instead, the folder helps you define the areas of special need where home and school need to work together.

## **HOW THE MaP FOLDER PROCESS WORKS**

To prepare for your child's MaP folder, please feel in the answers to the questions below. Bring these answers along to your first visit with Wendy Horton. At this first visit, Wendy will discuss how the MaP folder works, show you some examples and let you know what is involved with putting it together.

The full process usually involves two further visits, along with exchange of information by e-mail between visits. Where the issues are a brief, but you would like to get started with a MaP folder, then it is possible to put together a 'MINI-MaP' which may only involve a single further meeting.

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This Document has been written for general information purposes only. It is not intended to be used in individual circumstances without the guidance and assistance of a professional.

**PREPARING FOR YOUR MaP FOLDER**

Think about the areas where your child has special needs that need to be understood and managed at home as well as at school.

What would you see as your **main area of concern**, regarding the difficulties that your child is having, that you would like to work on this year?

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At the end of the year, where would you like to be on this issue (what is your goal)?

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What is the most important issue this year regarding your child's **happiness and well-being**?

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What other issues would you see as very important for this year?

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The key people involved in your child's care this year

Name	Role / position	How well does this person understand your child's <b>difficulties</b> ? Circle which option is best	How well does this person understand the main <b>issues</b> you would like to manage, and the <b>goals</b> you would like to achieve this year?
		Well    OK    Not very well	Well    OK    Not very well
		Well    OK    Not very well	Well    OK    Not very well
		Well    OK    Not very well	Well    OK    Not very well
		Well    OK    Not very well	Well    OK    Not very well
		Well    OK    Not very well	Well    OK    Not very well