



Summary of Revised Model for allocation of Resource hours

Compiled by Dr Dorothy Armstrong MSc PhD
Occupational Therapist www.achieveot.ie

The primary difference between the old model of allocating resource hours and the new model is that resources will now be based on a child's educational profile as opposed to a diagnosis and thus the requirement of a diagnosis has been removed. The support given to pupils is now delivered under a continuum of support which may be delivered in one of three phases:

Level 1

Classroom Support: An intervention process coordinated by the class teacher and carried out within the regular classroom.

Level 2

School Support: In some cases interventions at classroom support level are not enough to fully meet the pupil's special educational needs. School Support may, therefore, be required. The class teacher needs to involve the learning support/resource teachers in the problem-solving process at this point and it involves more systematic gathering of information and the development and monitoring of a School Support Plan or an Individual Pupil Learning Profile (IPLP). Interventions at this stage will be additional to those provided through classroom support and may include what would have been termed as resource hours and/or learning support.

Level 3

School Support Plus is generally characterised by the school requesting the involvement of relevant external services in more detailed assessment and development of intervention programmes. This level of intervention is for children with complex and/or enduring needs and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned interventions at the previous levels.

The allocation of resource hours needs to be understood within this broader model of support and what follows is a summary of this new support structure.

The following process is used at each of the levels to decide which students need support:

- A The Starting Point
- B Information Gathering and Assessment
- C Planning and Intervention
- D Review

Level 1: Classroom Support

A The Starting Point

- A teacher, parent or other professional expresses a concern about a pupil in school. Concerns may relate to learning and /or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties which may affect the pupil's ability to progress at the same rate as their peers.
- These difficulties may also be identified by the class teacher through observation, classroom screening and/or assessment procedures.
- Any indications that a pupil may have additional or special educational needs should be explored and addressed.
- Consideration is then given to the whether the pupil's skills and behaviour fall within the range considered typical for his/her age group and to what extent any gaps in skills and behaviour affect the pupil's learning and socialisation?
- The teacher may decide that some adjustments to teaching style and differentiation within the classroom setting may be sufficient to meet the pupil's needs. Alternately a decision may be made to initiate the Classroom Support process.

B Information Gathering and Assessment

The teacher will need to gather information to make an initial assessment of the pupil's additional or special educational needs including the strengths and particular talents which the pupil may have. Teachers might collect the following types of information during this phase of the classroom support process:

In the classroom -

- Survey of the learning environment
- Samples of work
- Observations of the pupil's learning and behaviour
- Results from screening tests or other test results or profiles

From the pupil -

- Personal experience/perception of any difficulty (in an age appropriate way)
- Views about what currently helps and additional actions/strategies, which they feel may help

From the parents -

- Information on the pupil's health and development
- Factors which may be contributing to any difficulty
- Information on the pupil's learning and behaviour in school and at home
- Any other information they think may help

From other sources -

Information from other schools, preschools and programmes attended

Information available within the school from health or social services

C Planning and Intervention

Following an initial assessment of the pupil's needs, the teacher will meet the pupil's parents. A simple plan will be drawn up which outlines the pupil's additional educational

needs and the actions, including individualised teaching and management approaches, which will be taken to meet the pupil's needs. The plan may also include home based actions to be taken by the pupil's parents to support their child's development. Such meetings with parents may be informal, may be held within already existing structures, such as parent teacher meetings, or may be additional to them.

Actions may include -

- Specific classroom / yard management strategies to be used
- Use of individualised teaching methodologies and/or curriculum delivery
- A focus on the individual needs of the pupil within whole class interventions e.g. Circle Time or small group activities
- The Classroom Support Plan should include a review date. This could be at the end of a school term. For example; the timing of the review should take into account the nature of the proposed interventions, the time needed to implement them and the period after which it might reasonably be expected that a positive change would have occurred.

D Review

A review of Classroom Support actions may involve the class teacher, parents and pupil (in an age appropriate manner) and should focus on:

- The pupil's response to learning/behavioural interventions
- Progress made by the pupil
- The effectiveness of the actions taken

The outcomes of the review process may be:-

- If, the parents and teacher consider that the pupil is making progress towards the targets set, it may be decided to continue with the same plan. A date for a further review should then be agreed to ensure progress is maintained.
- If, however, the parents and teacher consider that the pupil's progress towards the targets set is less than expected, the reasons for this will need to be considered. Revised targets and adjustments to the strategies tried may be agreed and if necessary, a new Classroom Support Plan is drawn up. A date for a further review should then be agreed.
- If progress remains satisfactory after a number of reviews by the teacher and parents, no further Classroom Support Plans may be necessary. Strategies which have been helpful may now be a routine part of the approach used with the child.
- If, after reviews and adjustments to the Classroom Support Plan, it is agreed that the pupil is not making adequate progress, it may be decided that the School Support process is initiated.

Level 2: School Support

A The Starting Point

During the review of a pupil's Classroom Support Plan the decision may be made by the class teacher, principal and parents to initiate the School Support process. This decision is

taken when interventions which are additional to, or different from, those provided within a Classroom Support Plan, are considered necessary to enable the pupil to learn more effectively. Other support staff within the school will be involved in this decision as necessary.

B Information Gathering and Assessment

Further information gathering now occurs using the following sources: It will be important

From the school -

- Information gathered from the classroom teacher including the Classroom Support Checklist, Plans and Reviews.
- Results from screening tests or other test results.

From individual assessments carried out by learning support / resource and class teachers -

- Results of standardised attainments tests/diagnostic assessments/criterion referenced assessments
- Observation of learning style
- Observation of pupil's behaviour in the classroom and in informal settings such as the school yard
-

From the parents -

- Current information on the pupil's health and development, including any medical assessments
- Information on and perceptions of the pupil's learning and behaviour in school and at home
- Factors which may be contributing to any difficulty and/or lack of adequate progress
- Views on additional measures that they consider may help

From the pupil -

- Personal perception of any difficulty (in an age appropriate way)
- Views about what currently helps
- Additional actions which they the pupil feels may help

From other sources -

- With parental consent, information and advice from other agencies such as Health and Social services, Voluntary agencies, Education Welfare Board, etc.
- Response to programmes attended outside school e.g. homework clubs, youth club

C Planning and Intervention

Following information gathering and assessment, the teacher, will meet the pupil's parents and a School Support Plan will be drawn up which will set out the nature of the pupil's learning difficulties, define specific teaching, learning and behavioural targets and set a timescale for review. The plan should for the most part be implemented within the normal

classroom setting and complimented by focused school based intervention programmes. Home based actions may also be included.

The School Support Plan could include

- A description of the pupil's learning/social, emotional and behavioural strengths and difficulties
- Targets to be achieved within a given time frame
- Actions to support the pupil in achieving those targets: (within class and within school)
- Specific individual programmes
- Group and paired work (including e.g. paired reading, buddy systems, mentoring programme)
- Materials / equipment needed
- Staff involved in implementing each aspect of the plan
- Additional provision and frequency of this support
- Any modifications to work schedules/timetable
- Parental involvement and support at home, agreed with the parents
- Medical, speech and language therapy etc
- Monitoring arrangements
- Review date

Essentially the 'School Support' level involves all the components from the Classroom Support Level plus additional support and / or focussed teaching time. (e.g. from the learning support / resource teacher)

Depending on the nature of the needs and on the school context, the additional teaching might be within a small group or individual or a combination of both either in class or on a withdrawal basis.

The School Support process is co-ordinated by the class or learning support / resource teacher and recorded using the School Support Plan.

D Review

The co-ordinating teacher will arrange a review meeting, between the teacher/s and parents. The review process should focus on:

- The progress the pupil has made towards the targets set out in the School Support Plan as well as general progress made
- The extent to which the pupil's needs are being met by the plan
- The effectiveness of the strategies set out in the School Support Plan
- The parent's views on progress made at home in supporting the pupil in the ways agreed in the School Support Plan
- The pupil's view on progress made and on the interventions agreed in the plan
- Additional information or advice arising from observation of the pupil's response to the teaching and management strategies, which may inform future planning.
- Agreed next steps

The outcomes of the review process may be

The pupil continues to have a school support plan

- If the pupil's progress is considered to be satisfactory, additional targets and a review date may be agreed.
- If, however, the pupil's progress towards the targets set is less than expected, the reasons for this will need to be considered.
- Revised targets and adjustments to the strategies tried may be agreed and a new School Support Plan is drawn up. A date for further review should then be agreed.
- If progress remains satisfactory after review, it may be decided to continue with the plan in order to maintain the progress made, with an agreed date for review of the need for continuation.

Intervention for the pupil reverts to the classroom with a classroom support plan -

- If progress remains satisfactory, it may be decided after one or a number of reviews that the pupil no longer needs a School Support Plan and a Classroom Support plan may be agreed.

The school support plus process is initiated -

- If a review of a School Support Plan indicates that the pupil's difficulties continue to create a significant barrier to their learning

Level 3: School Support Plus

The School Support Plus process will generally involve external professionals and support services in a more detailed problem solving process to help the pupil. School support plus applies to those pupils whose needs are enduring and/or severe and complex and whose progress is considered inadequate despite carefully planned and reviewed interventions detailed in Classroom Support and/ or School Support plans.

A The Starting Point

The progress made in the previous levels of support is analysed together with any information from other reports and professional services involved. Agreement is sought from all concerned about pursuing this level of support.

B Information Gathering and Assessment

One teacher will usually take on a co-ordinating role for planning at the School Support Plus level of support. The co-ordinating teacher may be the learning support / resource teacher, or the pupil's class teacher. The co-ordinating teacher will support the class teacher and any other supporting teachers in gathering further information to inform the assessment process which may involve, as appropriate, external professionals.

This co-ordinating teacher will work closely with the pupil's teachers and parents in considering:

- Information previously gathered and reviews of Classroom and School Support Plans
- Pupil's response to earlier interventions

- Information regarding involvement of outside agencies
- Areas where more detailed school based assessment may be needed
- The involvement of external professionals

Following the gathering of information, the co-ordinating teacher may, with parental consent, request the involvement of appropriate external professionals (e.g. Visiting Teachers, Educational Psychologists, Clinical Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Occupational Therapists, or Speech and Language Therapists).

C Planning and Intervention

An Individual Education Plan is drawn up based on the information gathered.

The individual education plan should describe:

- The nature and degree of the pupil's abilities, skills and talents
- The nature and degree of the pupil's special educational needs and how those needs affect his/her educational development
- The present level of educational performance of the pupil
- The special educational needs of the pupil
- Strategies for supporting the pupil's progress and inclusion in the classroom setting (classroom support)
- Individual and/or small group/special class interventions/programmes
- Specific methodologies/programmes to be implemented
- Specific equipment/materials and/or IT supports if required to support learning and access to the curriculum
- Support required from a Special Needs Assistant (SNA) if appropriate
- The goals which the pupil is to achieve over a period not exceeding 12 months e.g.: the pupil's priority learning needs; Long and short term targets to be achieved; Monitoring and review arrangements to be put in place.

Professionals external to school may be involved in working with the pupil directly or they may act in an advisory capacity supporting the class teacher and learning support / resource teacher in implementing the plan. The pupil's parents and in an age-appropriate manner, the pupil, should be involved in the development, implementation and review of the Individual Education Plan.

D Review

The School Support Plus co-ordinating teacher should organise the review process. Parents should be invited to contribute to this review. Outside professionals and the area SENO should be involved as appropriate or necessary.

The review process should focus on -

- Progress towards targets made by the pupil
- Any new information and/or assessment results
- The effectiveness of the strategies/methodologies used
- The effectiveness of the materials/equipment provided
- The effectiveness of the supports (individual, group, class) provided

The outcomes of the review process may be:

The pupil continues to need intervention at school support plus level -

- If the pupil's progress has been satisfactory, an updated IEP may be drawn up. If the IEP is considered to need adjustment, a new, or adapted, plan should be drawn up.
- If the pupil's progress remains satisfactory following review all concerned may decide to increase gradually the periods between reviews.

The pupil no longer requires intervention at school support plus level -

- If the pupil's progress continues to be satisfactory all concerned may decide that the pupil no longer needs the intensive level of support being provided and would be able to cope with the greater part of classroom tasks with some additional support. In this case it may be decided that the pupil's needs may be met by having a School Support Plan in place.

What resources have been allocated to school in order to carry out this model?

There is a new system of providing Special Education Teaching hours for the special educational support teaching needs of each school. This system is based on that school's 'educational profile'. It has been guaranteed that schools will not receive a lower allocation of special education teaching resources under the new model than was provided under the old system for the 2016/17 school year.

The allocations which are being made for the 2017/18 school year will remain in place for a minimum of two years, following which, revised profiled allocations will be due to be made to schools from September 2019. This also means that no allocation for pupils made under the old system will be removed from schools as long as that pupil remains in the school. It is expected that the number of leavers in each school, who had previously been in receipt of learning support or resource teaching support, will be broadly balanced by any new entrants that have enrolled over the same period – but what if they don't?

In the future how will the allocation of teaching resources for special needs be allocated in the following ways:

- **Baseline component based on enrolment** - to support inclusion, prevention of learning difficulties and early intervention –20% of available resources
- **Complex Special Educational Needs** –50% of available resources. This refers to children who access health supports through the HSE network Disability Teams, or who are on that waiting list for access.

- Percentage of students performing below a certain threshold on **standardised tests** 22% of available resources
- The schools' **social context** which includes educational disadvantage and issues relating to gender -4% of available resources

It is however unclear what the total of teaching resources to be shared out according to this model will be in the future.

How does this impact students with DCD/Dyspraxia?

- These students no longer qualify for automatic provision of resources.
- The problems experienced by these students may not be as visible as they might be for other students
- Schools have the same special education teaching hours for the next two years so if a lot of students with needs enrol in a school, that school may not be able to provide for those needs
- We're unclear about the allowances of special education teaching hours will be to schools after the two year period.

It's very important to support our children and to support their schools by keeping informed and lobbying for their needs. We will need to be very vigilant over the next few years. We have been lobbying for funding for an additional employee in Dyspraxia Ireland and now more than ever we need your support in securing this funding – there's much work to be done!!

Dr Dorothy Armstrong MSc PhD

Occupational Therapist www.achieveot.ie

Board Member of Dyspraxia Ireland www.dyspraxia.ie

