

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.



Early support on the internet

You can find out where early support is available in Westphalia-Lippe on the LWL website: www.lwl.org/fruehfoerderung

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.



Contact

Our unit is divided into regional teams. You can find the right people to contact and their details at:

www.lwl.org/fruehfoerderung

Telephone hotline for initial enquiries:
Tel: 0251 591-5020



Plain language

You can find the contents of this brochure written in plain language on the internet.



Early support for your child

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



Early support for your child

Dear parents,

In this flyer, Landesverband Westfalen-Lippe (LWL) would like to inform you about early support services for your child.

LWL is the body responsible for early support in Westfalen-Lippe. It assumes the costs of these services (with the exception of those covered by statutory health insurance) from when a child is born until they start school. We plan all support activities together with you as the child's parents.

We would like for both you and your child to be included fully and independently in community life - regardless of where you live and the type of care your child needs.

If you are considering early support for your child, we would be happy to help you arrange it.

The Staff
of the LWL Unit
for Social Inclusion for Children and Teenagers



What is early support?

Early support is a service offered close to home for children who are **affected** by or at **risk of developing a disability**. It can help children when they are in need of support with their physical, mental and emotional development. Children have a statutory right to early support so that their needs can be met from **when they are born until they start school**.

- Early support is a special set of therapies based on a **holistic approach**. This means that, depending on the child's needs, special therapies are combined with tailored therapeutical methods where required. In this context, the approach to providing support always starts with playing.
- Early support also functions by **focusing on the entire family**. Both the child and their family can learn to cope with the disability in their everyday lives. The child's immediate environment is included in the support provided.
- Therapeutic care helps to counterbalance the child's learning difficulties to ensure they are given the **best possible opportunities for their development and education**.
- The aim of early support is always to enable the child to **live as independently** as possible.

What types of early support are there?

Early support is subdivided into therapeutic and interdisciplinary early support:

- In **therapeutic early support**, both educational and therapeutic methods are used. Autism-specific support is also a form of therapeutic early support.
- **Interdisciplinary early support** consists of a combination of both special education and therapy provided together. This complex service provides support beyond (therapeutic) educational methods via medical and therapeutic services, for example in the areas of language and movement (speech therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy).

When does it make sense to get early support?

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 measures offered

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.