

Is the eCAF episode coordinator the same as the lead professional?

A lead professional is not required if only one specialist practitioner is involved with a family. Where there is only one practitioner, the person who starts the eCAF (often a school special needs coordinator or SENCO) will by default be the episode coordinator (ECO).

Where there are two or more practitioners involved in supporting a child, a lead professional is required. A school SENCO is often best placed to take on the role, as s/he has day to day contact with the child, especially if s/he initiated the eCAF.

Other practitioners may also become lead professional, depending in part on the age and predominant needs of the child, and the nature of services involved. The wishes of the family must also be taken in to account as they need to feel comfortable with, and have confidence in, the lead professional.

Remember that as the lead professional you are accountable to your own school or home agency for delivering the lead professional functions. You are not responsible for the actions of other practitioners or services.

Tasks the lead professional may carry out

- Build a trusting relationship with the child and family/other carers
- Be the single point of contact for the family, and help to answer their questions and discuss concerns
- Coordinate the effective delivery of and agreed set of actions which provide a solution-focused package of support and a process by which this will be regularly reviewed and monitored
- Identify where additional services may need to be involved and help to facilitate their involvement
- Be the single point of contact for all practitioners delivering services to the child ie, the Team Around the Child (TAC), including staff in universal health and education services, to ensure that the child continues to access this support
- Continue to support the child or family if more specialist assessments need to be carried out
- Support the child through key transition points but, where necessary, ensure a careful and planned 'handover' takes place if it is more appropriate for someone else to be the lead professional

eCAF and the lead professional

A brief guide for practitioners



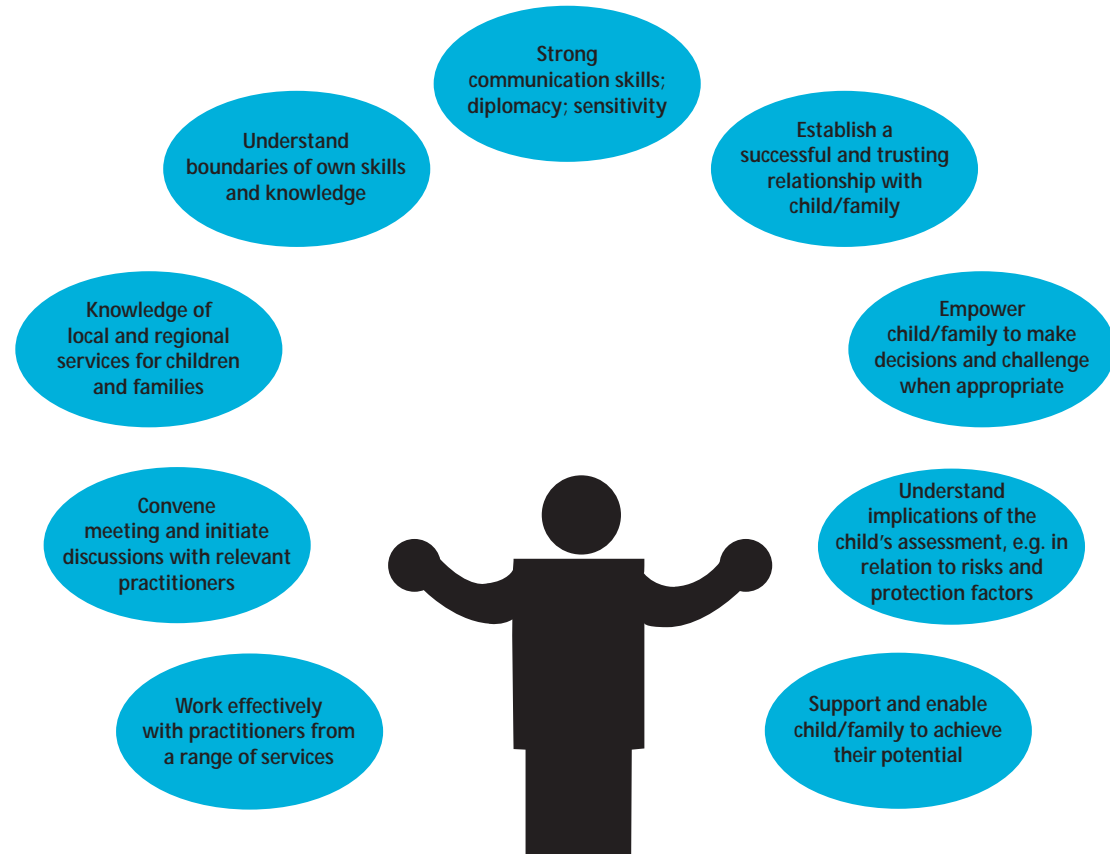
About the lead professional

A lead professional is someone who takes the lead to coordinate provision and be a single point of contact for a child and their family, when a range of services is involved with that child or family and an integrated response is required.

The lead professional is not a job title or a new role, but a set of functions to be carried out as part of the delivery of effective integrated support. These functions are to:

- **Act as a single point of contact** for the child or family, who they can trust and who can engage them in making choices, navigating their way through the system and effecting change
- **Coordinate the delivery of actions agreed by the practitioners involved**, to ensure that children and families receive an effective service which is regularly reviewed. These actions will be based on the outcome of the Common Assessment (CAF) and recorded in an Action Plan
- **Reduce overlap and inconsistency** in the services received
- **Lead the Team Around the Child (TAC)**

Useful skills for carrying out the lead professional functions



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