



Frequently Asked Questions

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- **What is the *Start-up Professional Support programme* and whom is it for?**

Our Start-up Professional Support programme is a bespoke, whole team programme for all people involved in the establishment and running of a school, education centre, institution or project in its early stages. It provides training, guidance and consultancy to help practitioners construct a stable and sustainable educational community which prioritises childrens' needs.

We would advise that an initial team, budget, vision for the establishment and business plan are important things to have in place before joining this programme. Any point between this stage and the first two years after launching, would be classed as an early stage and would be a good time to get in touch with us. The actual content and timeframes, though, will be tailored to the needs of each initiative.

- **What is the *Ongoing Professional Development programme* and whom is it for?**

Our Ongoing Professional Development programme is a bespoke, whole team programme for a school, education centre, institution or project that has been running for over two years. It provides training, guidance and consultancy to staff members and focuses on strengthening their confidence and efficiency in *educating the whole child*.

More specifically, our main aim is to help the members of the establishment or project further develop their tools and "know-how" to:

- best promote children's rights, freedom, equality, free play, individuality, well-being, self-direction, democracy and healthy relationships within their educational environment;
- and confidently and independently reflect upon, evaluate and appropriately adjust their methods, practices, policies and structures.

- **Why is the "*Core Concepts and Common Misconceptions*" document important?**

The "Core Concepts and Common Misconceptions" document will give you an idea of certain points of view adopted in our two bespoke professional development programmes, that we believe you should

consider prior to enrolling. That is because, it is important for you to know our angles and what to expect from our programmes and for us to feel confident that you resonate with our core values and ideas. That being said, please rest assured that **we do not expect all environments to implement these ideas to the same extent, in the same way or in the way Summerhill does.** A.S.Neill, by valuing individuality and the broad spectrum of education said that *“it is important that you don’t try starting a Summerhill School but instead focus on starting your own school”*.

Furthermore, the “Core Concepts and Common Misconceptions” document does not cover the full range of topics included in our professional development programmes. To get a more detailed idea of the areas we can assist you with, please refer to our *“List of topics”* document. You can select the topics that are of interest to you and leave us specific comments on any of them. If you feel you need support in an area that is not listed in this document or if you would like to clarify something from the “List of topics” document or the “Core Concepts and Common Misconceptions” please do let us know.

Lastly, if you find yourself disagreeing with one or more points of view presented in the “Core Concepts and Common Misconceptions” document but you feel that you would still benefit from working with us on other areas, it is possible that our *educational consultancy service* might be best suited to your needs. In this case, we would recommend you to get in touch with us to discuss this further.

- **What is the *Educational Consultancy Service* and whom is it for?**

Our Educational Consultancy Service is for individuals, teams or establishments needing support with a specific area or areas of their practice. This service is also bespoke and can be implemented in different ways depending on the needs of each individual or group, such as short series of discussions, workshops or CPD courses.

It can also be used as a pre-startup support programme for those looking to start a school, education centre, institution or project but have not yet developed their vision, secured initial finance, created a business plan or put together a team that is working towards it.

- **What is the difference between the *Educational Consultancy Service* and the other two bespoke whole-team programmes?**

Both our *Start-up Professional Support* programme and the *Ongoing Professional Development* programme extend beyond educational consultancy on a specific area, by looking at each unique environment as a whole. As a guide for our work in these programmes, we have developed some *“practice-based indicators”* which focus on *educating the whole child* and *facilitating a happy and fulfilled childhood*. These indicators along with the vision and needs of each establishment will be used to develop the short and long-term outcomes of the programme and subsequently, its content, forms of work and timeframes. Furthermore, in both of these programmes we will be working closely together to achieve the goals of each establishment and therefore, in comparison to the educational consultancy service, they:

- cover a broader range of topics;
- allow us to respond to unpredicted needs and issues as they arise;
- monitor and support the overall development of each educational environment.

- **What are the professional development courses for practitioners?**

A range of professional development courses for practitioners in different educational settings (including state schools, democratic schools, other progressive schools, home-schooling, un-schooling, world-schooling) as well as social workers, psychologists, education mental health practitioners etc. These courses aim to support individuals' practice and will be offered periodically on a variety of topics. There will be options for both online and physical courses and depending on their length and content, they will offer the equivalent CLPL/CPD units.