

# Mediated Learning Support Approach (MeLSA) in Enfield

**An evidence-informed approach to supporting the learning needs of pupils:  
Training and support for teachers, support staff and other Educational Professionals**



# Introduction

The mediated learning support approach (MeLSA) is an exciting developing initiative, originating from Bristol Educational Psychology Service. It builds the capacity of schools to support all learning, by providing training and implementation support in the psychology of learning. MeLSA particularly focuses on the power of mediation, a type of support which helps learners to become independent thinkers.

All children and young people in schools are learners, and all adults in schools support learning, every day. MeLSA provides vital evidence-informed frameworks and skills for SENCOs, teachers and support staff to think, talk about and grow learning. MeLSA's focus on developing independent learning skills aligns well with the Preparing for Adulthood agenda, and the MeLSA knowledge and skills can be applied in whole classrooms, in small groups, and in individual learning interventions. The MeLSA training is relevant across the range of ages and stages, and for all types of educational settings.

Developed in parallel to our successful ELSA offer, MeLSA is a six day training course with ongoing support provided via group supervision and borough-wide network meetings.

Enfield EPS is excited to be joining the growing UK-wide initiative to roll out this approach, supporting all learners to reach their potential. We would love to welcome you on our first pioneering cohort, beginning in January 2024.

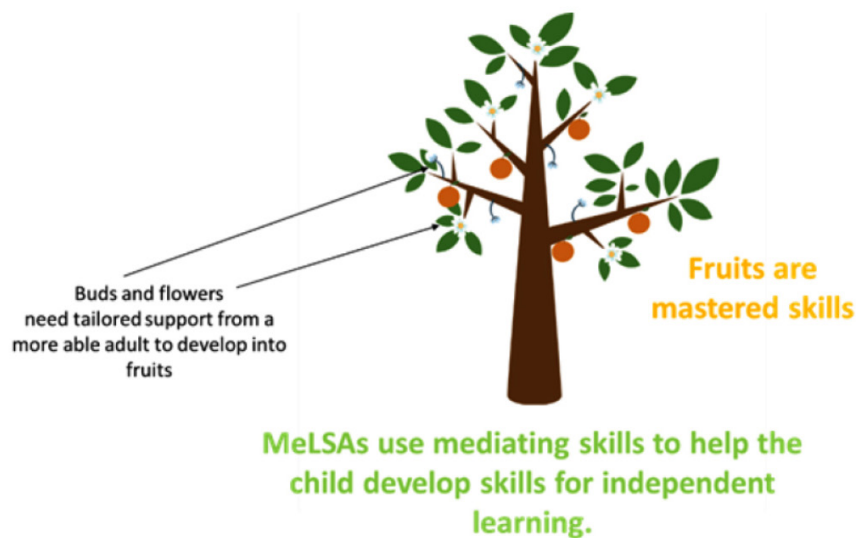


## What is mediation, and why does it matter?

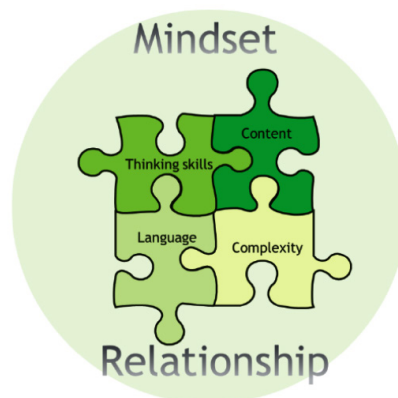
Mediation is structured support that develops learners' independent thinking. There are four parts to mediating:

- Skill practice and skill acquisition (considering and teaching the specific skills needed for the task)
- Adjusting the content of the task
- Adjusting the complexity of the task
- Adjusting the language of the task

In MeLSA, we learn about learning. We think about learning using the metaphor of a tree. We explore what learning is, and what influences our ability to learn. We focus not only on the end skill or knowledge (the 'fruits' of learning) but also on children's emerging skills (the buds and flowers); being able to investigate these emerging skills enables an adult to mediate their growth, taking children into their zone of next learning, or zone of proximal development. This is the MeLSA tree of learning:



MeLSA also keeps in mind the importance both of the learner's mindset, and of the mediating adult's relationship with the child.



MeLSA participants will develop their skills in mediating, learning to consider the three Ws of mediation:



*Rachael Green (2000)*

From their MeLSA training, participants will be more knowledgeable, skilled and confident in how to:

- Solve problems with the learner, not for the learner
- Help the learner to make connections with previous and future learning
- Explore ideas with the learner, rather than just produce the right answer
- Model tasks and ways of thinking
- Break tasks down into component parts
- Give feedback related to the process of learning
- Make links beyond the immediate context

*Based on Kathy Greenberg: 10 reasons why mediation is more than good teaching, Cognet handbook.*

MeLSA draws on an extensive psychological base, set out in this open access academic journal:

Stanley-Duke et al. (2022). *The Psychological Foundations of The Mediating Learning Support Assistant (MeLSA) Training Programme*. *Educational Psychology Research & Practice*, 8(1).

<https://doi.org/10.15123/ucl.8v1v7>

## What is the MeLSA offer, and who is it for?

MeLSA is a six day training course, covering:

- Mediating
- Growth mindset
- Thinking about thinking
- Memory and recall
- Psychology of learning maths
- Psychology of learning to read and write
- Reviewing learning
- Implementing MeLSA in your setting

After completing the training course, we strongly encourage participants to join our annual membership offer. The ongoing small group supervision and borough-wide network meetings support participants to put their learning into practice in school.

MeLSA is very helpful to everyone supporting learning in all types of schools, including:

- SENCOs
- Teachers
- Learning support staff

## Are MeLSAs like ELSAs?

Good question! ELSAs are Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, a specific role which provides interventions for children with SEMH needs. In MeLSA, the 'A' stands for approach, rather than assistant, meaning that you can deploy your MeLSA- trained staff in a flexible way. Participants are supported on the final day of training, and through ongoing supervision, to apply MeLSA skills in a way that is authentic to them and reflective of both the educational setting and learners they work with.

- SENCOs can use this training to develop teaching, upskill support staff, identify pupils' needs, and select, plan and evaluate interventions.
- Teachers can use their MeLSA knowledge and skills to plan and deliver their lessons, and guide their classroom support team.
- Support staff can apply their training in the classroom and when supporting small groups.
- The training is also highly relevant to the planning and delivery of targeted learning interventions, for individuals and groups of children.

Like ELSA, key to the success of MeLSA training is the use of your existing staff:

- Learning occurs within supportive relationships, and the existing relationship with children and parents/carers in the school helps children to feel free to explore and make mistakes as part of their learning.
- The evidence-base tells us that a little-and-often ('frequent, distributed') approach is most effective in developing fluency for children with learning and cognition needs. Developing the expertise of your own staff allows you to deploy their skills in a flexible way, to provide frequent, distributed support for the pupils who need it.
- MeLSA-trained staff will also be modelling different ways of thinking about learning, and modelling effective mediation, meaning that the training indirectly supports the development of other staff in school.

## What are the benefits of having MeLSA trained staff in school?

Feedback from schools' senior leadership teams suggests that staff trained in MeLSA:

- Provide a clear, concise and personalised approach to assessments and interventions related to learning.
- Provide evidence-based and evidence-informed approaches to supporting learning, such as making use of the guidance from the Education Endowment Foundation.
- Start by considering the needs of the learner and then tailor learning interventions accordingly, rather than fitting the learner into a specific intervention.
- Can effectively support the learning needs of specific groups of pupils (e.g. those eligible for Covid Catch-Up or Pupil Premium funding).
- Can use their skills, language and tools to support the practice of colleagues.
- Are provided with a meaningful and valuable framework for their role, that builds their expertise and sense of professional efficacy.



## What does the research say about MeLSA so far?

Research conducted by Bristol Educational Psychology Service has found that MeLSA:

*Provides “a new way of looking at learning” that can “just change your whole method of teaching”.*

*Refreshed what we’re doing (in schools)” and has “reignited my passion” for supporting learning.*

*“Helps to identify those particular (learning) needs that have so far evaded us”.*

*“Makes life easier for (schools) because, rather than constantly calling on an EP to come in and assess, and having this major waiting list,... it’s like, well we want an answer, we want to fix it... and having a MELSA at school is very much like a middleman to start assessments and to try other things that previously, we would have had to wait for an EP to come in and for them to suggest certain things”*

As we launch MeLSA in Enfield, we are planning a comprehensive programme of evaluation which looks at its impact for school staff and pupils.

## Commitment needed from the school

- Identify one or more prospective MeLSAs who are well suited to the role.
- Release MeLSAs for the initial six day training course.
- Designate time for the MeLSA to plan and deliver individual and group interventions, as appropriate.
- Ensure that your MeLSAs can attend half termly group supervision sessions (1.5 hrs, half termly) and network meetings (2.5 hrs, termly) with the Educational Psychology Service.

## The Educational Psychology Service's commitment to you

- We offer six days of high quality training provided by two Educational Psychologists with a particular interest in learning and cognition.
- We provide ongoing half termly group supervision to support MeLSAs to implement their learning in their various roles in school (for which there is an annual membership cost).
- We offer opportunities for professional development including a termly network meeting facilitated by EPs (included in the annual membership cost). For example: in the second year of membership we look at video as a way of developing practice; and in the third year we focus on helping parents to support their children's learning.
- Where you buy EP time from the EPS, your link EP will bring their own knowledge and skills in mediated learning, and dynamic assessment, supporting you to implement mediated learning approaches.





## Cost to schools

### *Initial training course*

The cost of the initial six-day training course is £550 per participant, which includes the printed MeLSA workbooks. There are 25 participants from schools across Enfield in each cohort.

### *Enfield MeLSA Network membership*

On completion of the training, the cost of the annual membership is £450 per year per participant. This includes:

- Half termly group supervision (with a maximum group size of 8), facilitated by an EP and an Assistant EP.
- Termly network meetings, bringing together all MeLSA trained staff for CPD, sharing good practice, and MeLSA updates. Network meetings are facilitated by EPs and Assistant EPs.

We ask schools to commit to one year's annual membership at the point of signing up to the training course, so that each participant receives the training in the spring term and then transitions into three terms of support to embed and develop their practice.

## How do I find out more?

Enfield EPS will begin training our first MeLSA cohort in January 2024. You can sign up for the information sessions, to be held in early November, [here](#).

You can directly express your interest in joining the January 2024 cohort [here](#).

For any other questions, please email [eps@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:eps@enfield.gov.uk)



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