The Child Inclusion: Research into Curriculum, Learning and Education (CIRCLE) Collaboration© is a research team who work in partnership with teachers, therapists, parents and children to develop evidence based interventions and assessments to support inclusion and participation of children with additional support needs in school. Key partners include Edinburgh Council, Queen Margaret University and NHS Lothian. The CIRCLE Collaboration© has completed research, consultancy and training in Edinburgh and across Scotland. CIRCLE has also developed a Post Graduate Certificate (PGCE) in Collaborative Working for Education and Therapy. The PGCE has been designed to enhance the support offered to pupils with additional support needs and it aimed at teachers and Allied Health Professionals. Following recent revalidation this also now includes a distance learning option.

CIRCLE Collaboration© materials

A range of CIRCLE Collaboration© materials have been produced. Materials represent key outcomes of our programme of research. The target audience of the materials varies; some have been designed for teachers, others for therapists, and others are aimed at both groups when working collaboratively. There follows an overview of all the CIRCLE Collaboration© materials.
This resource, aimed primarily at teachers and school staff, aims to bring together and share good practice, focusing on approaches to improve the engagement and achievement of primary school pupils who have additional support needs. Based on the reflections and ideas of education staff it provides practical strategies to support the underlying skills (e.g. attention and concentration, organisation and planning skills etc.) that pupils require to enable them to participate in school. This new edition builds on the experience and best practice highlighted in the previous resource and introduces the CIRCLE Framework as a way of organising and supporting input using a staged system of support, beginning with setting up an inclusive classroom. Checklists and planning tools are included to support discussion, and can be used to document strategies used and record professional learning. The new edition also includes the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS) and the CIRCLE Participation Scale (CPS) developed with practitioners to support the measurement of progress. Overall, the resource aims to empower education staff to support pupils with additional support needs, to promote inclusive practice and to encourage effective collaboration between school staff, parents/carers, partner services and other agencies.

This resource is aimed primarily at teachers and other staff working in Secondary Schools. Based on the reflections and ideas of experienced secondary education staff it provides practical supports and strategies to support the participation of pupils with additional support needs in Secondary School. Similar to the Primary School Resource, this resource follows a staged system of support, with an initial focus on the inclusive classroom, using the CIRCLE Framework to structure input. It begins from the stand point that teachers are experts in teaching and that what is required to support inclusion is a framework that allows this expertise to be applied in the most effective way using a set of general principles. The CIRCLE Framework provides this, supporting the development of underlying skills (e.g. attention and concentration, organisation and planning, motor skills etc.). Checklists and planning tools are available to support discussions, and can be used to document strategies used and as a record of professional learning. It also includes the CIRCLE Inclusive Classroom Scale (CICS) and the CIRCLE Participation Scale (CPS) to support the measurement of progress in these areas. Overall this resource aims to empower subject teachers and other education staff by providing a quick, accessible reference point with practical solutions to address learners’ needs, and a common language and framework to support discussions, which will help support pupils in an effective learner-centred way.
Up, Up and Away! Building Foundations to Literacy in the Early Years: Practitioners and Carer’s Ideas in Practice - Identifying Need & Planning to Meet the Need

These resources are primarily for early year’s practitioners and foster and day carers. They aim to support pre-school children who may be at risk for poor achievement in language, literacy and learning; in the early years setting, at school and later in life. There are two resources Identifying Need and Planning to Meet the Need, were produced following a comprehensive literature review and local consultation with practitioners. They are designed to complement staff and carers’ own knowledge, skills and experience.

The resources provide a shared language across professions to consider which factors in the child’s environment, routines, motivation and skills support or challenge their learning. They provide information on literacy at each stage, strategies for future relationships and those to build vocabulary as key foundations to literacy. They also include developmental milestones and warning signs of the need for partner service involvement and strategies to engage parents as partners. The wide range of practical strategies and tools provided can be used in the early year’s setting or to support parents at home.

Overall, the resources aim to empower staff and carers in the early years to take a preventative approach and address literacy risk factors from birth.
Therapy Manual: Occupational Therapy

Therapy Manual: Physiotherapy

Therapy Manual: Speech and Language Therapy

The Therapy Manuals describe in detail the key techniques which therapists use during intervention and explain, with practical examples, what the therapist does to help the pupil to develop or learn from these techniques. The theoretical background literature underpinning each technique is also included. The Manuals are designed to be used principally by therapists themselves, especially newer therapists and those working with students or mentoring colleagues.

Included in the appendices at the end of the Therapy Manuals are Intervention Descriptions and the Collaborative Communication Chart.

The Intervention Descriptions take the techniques (as described in the Therapy Manuals), and illustrate how these can be applied in different areas of therapy. They are designed to be used by therapists and school staff working together collaboratively to meet the needs of pupils. They provide not only examples of how therapeutic techniques are used to support pupils, but also practical ideas of how these techniques and ideas can be generalised within the school setting.

The Collaborative Communication Chart is designed to be used alongside the Intervention Descriptions during discussions/meetings with school staff. It consists of a framework that supports therapists and school staff to discuss the provision and delivery of therapy interventions. The framework helps promote consistent communication and joint problem solving, supporting collaborative working to meet the needs of pupils.
Systematic Review: OT and SLT Intervention

Systematic Review: OT and SLT Assessment

The systematic reviews aimed to map the existing scientific literature underpinning practice in OT and SLT for children within the primary school age range (i.e. 41/2 – 11 years). The intervention review focused on the nature, frequency, intensity and efficacy of OT and SLT assessment tools. In both reviews, detailed information is presented about individual studies, and for ease of interpretation, the evidence is reported in terms of four colour coded levels.

Best Evidence Synthesis: Intervention (Occupational Therapy)

Best Evidence Synthesis: Assessment (Occupational Therapy)

Best Evidence Synthesis: Intervention (Speech and Language Therapy)

Best Evidence Synthesis: Assessment (Speech and Language Therapy)

Each Best Evidence Synthesis contains an executive summary of the related Systematic Review. This makes them more accessible and easier to read; designed for busy therapists, they give an overview of the research and evidence base which supports therapy assessment and intervention. The colour coded rating system of evidence (see above) is kept in this summary.

For more information about the CIRCLE Collaboration© contact the CIRCLE team, Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, on dmaciver@qmu.ac.uk