



## Becta's ICT Advice services for teachers

Becta's ICT Advice service is an integrated provision of support and advice to schools. It offers timely, free and impartial advice on the implementation of ICT through a range of different services.

To keep up to date with Becta's ICT Advice service, register for the ICT Alert, a monthly email newsletter [[www.ictadvice.org.uk/newsletters](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/newsletters)].

### The ICT Advice website [[www.ictadvice.org.uk](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk)]

The ICT Advice website is the 'core' of Becta's advice and support to schools. It is the place to access online content and services and to find out more about the events and opportunities offered by Becta's ICT Advice service for schools.

Aimed at classroom teachers, subject co-ordinators, ICT co-ordinators and special needs co-ordinators, the website is where you will be able to access all of the advice and support relevant to your professional needs.

The ICT Advice service consists of the following key features:

**Direct access to national experts through the 'Ask an Expert' service**  
[[www.ictadvice.org.uk/experts](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/experts)]

The Ask an Expert service offers support and advice to enable practitioners to make appropriate decisions about ICT-related issues or problems. You are able to pose questions directly to national experts through the ICT Advice site. Each month the site hosts two topical themes which focus on curriculum and pedagogy. The themes are advertised in advance through the site and our newsletters.

**Developing ICT skills and confidence through the 'New2Computers' service**  
[[www.ictadvice.org.uk/new2computers](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/new2computers)]

New2Computers is for those teachers who are just starting out with computers. The service offers direct online advice from friendly mentors via tutorials, a chat room and an email forum. If you are totally new2computers, you can join the 'newts' area, which offers sample missions to support the development of ICT skills.

**Sharing good practice in the use of ICT in your subject through a programme of face-to-face national conferences**

[[www.ictadvice.org.uk/ictadviceevents](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/ictadviceevents)]

Events at venues all over the country will be happening over the next year to support the use of ICT in subject teaching. Becta's ICT Advice services will be offering advice and support events, with additional subject specialisms being provided by the relevant subject associations.

**Supporting continuing professional development in the use and implementation of ICT through online events and insets**

[[www.ictadvice.org.uk/ictadviceevents](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/ictadviceevents)]

The online events and insets provide lesson resources, ideas and advice. Users are able to log on in advance, view and try out materials, and then ask for support from the content authors at a pre-arranged time.

**Keeping up to date with the latest news and sharing good practice through online and offline newsletters** [[www.ictadvice.org.uk/newsletters](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/newsletters)]

Find out the latest ideas and learn more about integrating ICT into your subject through our online and offline, termly and monthly newsletters.

**Exchange information and talk to other practitioners through online discussion forums**  
[[www.ictadvice.org.uk/talk](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/talk)]

The 'Talk' area of the ICT Advice website is where you will find a wide range of discussion forums on different aspects of ICT. By joining a forum, you can exchange views, ask questions, provide answers and just generally share classroom experiences with other teachers.

**Supporting the use of ICT in schools through offline publications**  
[[www.ictadvice.org.uk/orders](http://www.ictadvice.org.uk/orders)]

In addition to providing online advice, a range of print publications is available free of charge. You can order any of our publications, leaflets and CD-ROMs from the above web address.

### About Becta

Becta is the Government's lead agency for ICT in education. It supports the UK Government, national organisations, schools and colleges in the use and development of ICT in education to raise standards, widen access, improve skills and encourage effective management.

While every care has been taken in the compilation of this information to ensure that it is accurate at the time of publication, Becta cannot be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of any error or inaccuracy within these pages. Although all references to external sources (including any websites linked to the Becta website) are checked both at the time of compilation and on a regular basis, Becta does not accept any responsibility for, or otherwise endorse, any information contained in these pages, including any sources cited.



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# support assistants and ict





## How to support children using ICT

Support assistants frequently work with individual pupils or groups of pupils. The children in a group may have similar abilities – they may have special educational needs (SEN) or be gifted and talented children – or have mixed abilities. The use of support assistants allows the class teacher to concentrate on the remainder of the class and to provide targeted support where it is most effective. When the focus of the activity is ICT-based, the role of the support assistant can be more complex because some pupils need help with the technology as well as with the subject they are studying.

### Support for the technology

Pupils should be taught the skills and techniques needed to develop their ICT capability. It is essential that a support assistant is familiar with the resources being used and can explain how to do things, and why. It is worth a support assistant spending time working through activities that pupils will be asked to do to identify where difficulties might arise.

Some pupils need more support than others, and it may be necessary to develop a range of different activities to help them to learn. Activities with a very specific focus allow pupils to work on one technique at a time and, as their repertoire increases, techniques can be combined. For example, when pupils are learning how to highlight text and change its size, font style, colour or layout, they will probably find it easiest to practise one technique at a time. As they become more confident, they can create a poster.

Pupils should be encouraged to look for information presented in a variety of ways from a very early age – for example, icons linking to speech and animations, and links to other pages. This helps them to become more independent.

Similarly, when prompts are displayed on screen, encourage pupils to read them for themselves and then carry out the instructions. Encourage poor readers to identify prompts on the screen (these may be in a different colour) and then attempt to read them, with support if necessary.

When pupils struggle to remember processes, such as how to save a piece of work, it is often because they do not understand the process or they are not really thinking about what they are doing. Create memory aids to help with this. For example, write down and display the prompts and responses for a process. This approach works because pupils have to think about and articulate what they are doing, rather than follow a mechanical process.

Illustrated help sheets should be available to support specific software and/or processes. Display them near the computer, either on the wall or in a file propped up at the side. Many of these can be downloaded from the internet. Alternatively, many publishers produce illustrated guides for office-type software.

### Using access devices

Some pupils with special needs may find it helpful to use a specific access device. This may need to be moved between different locations, such as the ICT suite and the classroom. Find out how to do this to ensure that the pupil does not waste time. If appropriate, colour-code connections and prepare a simple set-up guide so that others can do it if you are away.

Pupils will probably need some support before they can use the device effectively. Spend some time finding out how it works and exploring its potential. Many devices can be configured to meet individual needs, and it is usually through trial and error that the best set-up is found.

### Managing ICT activities

#### Organising and managing groups

It is important that work is planned to ensure that it meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the individual needs of the pupils. When using ICT it is important to consider:

- the target audience – does the activity meet the needs of one pupil or a small group?
- the basis of the group – is it ability, age, gender or friendship?
- individual needs and personalities within the group – will some pupils be too dominant, too intimidated, or frustrated because of lack of challenge?
- the most effective strategies to make groups work well together – will pupils need their roles defining and need timed intervention to ensure that everyone gets a turn, or should they be encouraged to organise themselves?
- how learning objectives will be communicated to pupils
- how learning will be assessed.

#### Making a start

If the software can be configured or differentiated to meet the needs of individual pupils, ensure that you know passwords and any other information necessary to do this. In addition, you may like to think about:

- learning objectives
- support materials
- pupils' ICT skills – can they carry out the activity effectively?
- group size
- time available.



### Working with pupils

Try to avoid telling pupils what to do without referring to what is on the screen or why they should do something. Consider what sorts of questions and intervention approaches will be most effective: for example whether to use closed questions or open questions such as 'How could you ...?'

If a pupil asks how to do something and you do not know, say so, and talk them through your thinking in trying to solve the problem. Make a note of what you did and rehearse it with other pupils, encouraging them to demonstrate the solution. Reinforce the message: 'We thought..., we tried...'

Encourage pupils to try out their own ideas, reinforcing the notion that it is nearly always possible to go back a step when using ICT, and that work can be saved at various stages throughout its development.

Take care not to intervene when pupils are deeply engaged in a task – there is a fine line between intervention and interruption.

When working with pupils, remember that spoken language, body language and eye contact can all help them to feel positive in their work.

### Subject support

It may be possible to arrange for small groups of children to access equipment for short periods every day so that they can practise tables, number bonds, spelling and so on.

Many commercial programs designed to support particular subjects are self-marking and can show pupils their mistakes and how to correct them. This enables pupils to learn at their own pace. Many of these programs are motivational, encouraging children to try again, and showing them clearly when they are correct. This keeps pupils on task, working on an individual target while receiving support from the program and additional guidance through adult intervention.

Software needs to be evaluated carefully to ensure that it meets the needs of the children and that there are clear learning objectives. Learning objectives might include:

- numeracy objectives – tables, number bonds, sorting activities
- literacy objectives – spelling, extended writing, punctuation programs.

Or the software might provide:

- templates for writing
- information retrieval programs.

There are many opportunities to work with children away from the computer while incorporating ICT into the learning objectives. For example:

- using programmable floor robots or toys to develop positional language and problem-solving skills
- using digital cameras to collect material for use in presentations
- using tape recorders to interview visitors about life in the area during the Second World War

- making storyboards to plan a multimedia presentation
- gathering information for questionnaires or databases.

### Investigative work

This might involve a group of pupils carrying out sensing or datalogging, and you will need to know how to set up the equipment and how it works. Teach pupils how to set up equipment, bearing in mind school and/or LEA health and safety guidelines. When using additional resources, a risk assessment will be needed so that you can plan appropriately. This is particularly important if the activity involves trailing wires or working out of school.

In collaborative activities, pupils may need guidance on their roles and responsibilities. This will vary depending on the age of the pupils. Group activities will need to be carefully prepared to ensure that all pupils know what is expected and so that, where necessary, ICT skills can be taught.