



Early Years NEWSLETTER

Issue 01
NOV 2021

SPOTLIGHT: Your Winter Wellbeing

Inside

- Funding
- Good practice in settings
- Safeguarding
- SEND
- and more!

A newsletter
for childcare
providers
working with
children aged
0-5 in Reading



www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Hello!

I'm delighted to welcome you to our new termly Brighter Futures for Children newsletter for childcare providers in Reading.

We aim to bring you all the latest news and information, features, resources, top tips and advice in this termly newsletter.

Our first newsletter has a particular focus on the important issue of wellbeing and mental health.

We look at wellbeing resources for early years managers and teams, practical tips and where you can find help and support.

Staying on the subject of health, we also have a worrying feature about the state of children's teeth in England and hear how Sure Start Whitley has tried to make teeth brushing fun.

You'll also find safeguarding information, news of the Early Years Brighter Beginnings Inclusion Award and we celebrate some positive Ofsted inspection outcomes.

There are pages of useful information on funding, SEND news and the November/December schedules for our Reading children's centres.

In fact, I'm confident you'll find lots of interest in this first edition of your newsletter. I hope you enjoy it.

If you have any comments or ideas for future editions, please let me know.

Becky Gibson
Early Years Team Manager

Contents

- 3** BFFC's new website
- 4** Wellbeing and mental health
- 8** Oral health
- 10** Safeguarding & welfare
- 13** SEND
- 17** Celebrations!
- 20** Settings - a focus on practice
- 21** Funding
- 27** Local information

The information in this newsletter has been co-ordinated by Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC). We deliver children's services including children's social care, early help and prevention, education and special educational needs and/or disabilities in Reading. We are wholly owned by, but independent, of Reading Borough Council.

Contact



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@BFFC_Child



Introducing... our new website



Visit us at www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Brighter Futures for Children are proud to introduce a brand new and improved website.

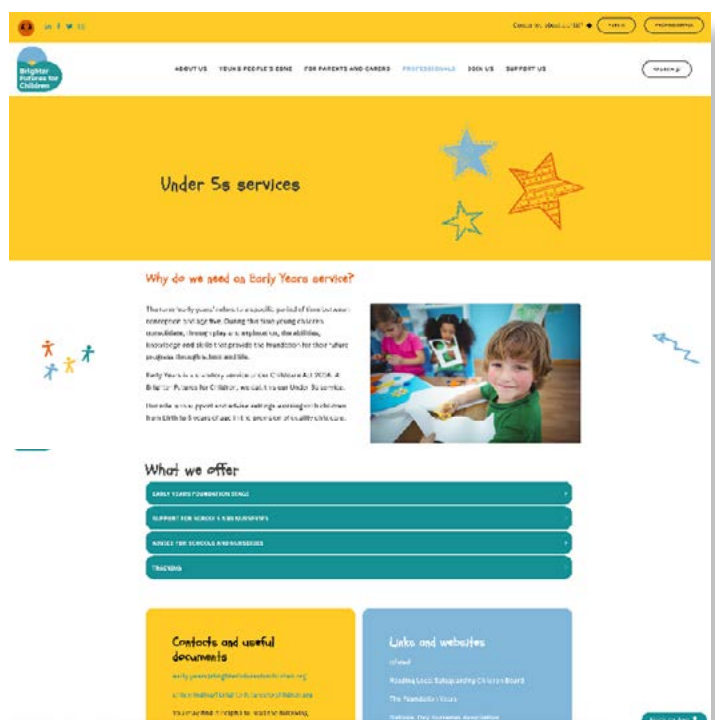
We have a section for early years professionals like you, called the 'Under 5s services'.

On the new website, you'll find information about the early years foundation stage, support and advice for schools and nurseries, plus training opportunities for childcare providers.

We will be sharing useful documents, links and contacts as well as information on becoming a childminder and how to join in with our popular early years inclusion award.

Visit the website: www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/professionals/under-5s-services/

We would welcome feedback from you about the website, please email communications@brighterfuturesforchildren.org



Spotlight on... wellbeing

A Focus on Early Years Staff Wellbeing & Mental Health

Now more than ever there is a greater emphasis on staff wellbeing and mental health in early years settings. The Early Years Inspection Handbook states that leaders have a responsibility to their team to ensure 'high levels of effective engagement' and 'support for well-being issues'.

A key objective for the EYFS reforms was to reduce unnecessary workload for early years practitioners to ensure that they can spend more time with the children. It is widely recognised that leaders should ensure a working environment where staff can flourish, and that support is available for those who need it.



Early Years Staff Wellbeing: A resource for managers and teams

The **Anna Freud Centre**, with local authorities, practitioners and organisations, has produced a staff wellbeing guide for practitioners working in early years settings. The document '[Early Years Staff Wellbeing: A resource for managers and teams](#)' is based on a survey they conducted which represents the views of 1,458 nursery staff working in nurseries and preschool settings across England between January and February 2021.

The resource recognises that mental health should be a key priority and it is important that settings introduce policies and initiatives to enable staff to focus on their own wellbeing while feeling supported both professionally and personally.

The report can be read in full [here](#) with key findings indicating that nursery staff:

- Love their work
- Feel their settings are actively engaging with staff mental health positively
- Note higher stress levels when a wellbeing policy is not in place
- Feel that the pandemic had taken its toll on their mental health
- Report that they felt unwell with work related stress in the past year
- State that the pandemic had impacted their wellbeing and mental health.

Spotlight on... wellbeing



Four key areas

The findings informed four key areas which could make a difference to the wellbeing of early years staff:

1. Supporting each other

It was recognised that staff most value support amongst colleagues, when they check in and show an interest in each other and can be honest and open about sharing difficult workplace experiences.

2. Supportive management

All staff, including managers, have a role to play in promoting peer support. Managers determine the extent to which staff wellbeing is a priority, supported by policies, procedures and resources.

3. The physical environment

Having access to an environment which promotes wellbeing and provides a safe space can help staff to recover from stressful situations. They recognise the importance of openly displayed health and wellbeing information, and the option to join in with fun or social activities.

4. Outside support

It was found that staff value being given training opportunities and access to peer networks, as well as signposting to local services when extra wellbeing support is needed.

Activities and practical tips

In each key area you will find an excellent range of practical tips and ideas to champion staff wellbeing in your setting along with an activity checklist to help implement permanent changes and monitor progress:

1. [An activity to focus on mental health and wellbeing with ideas to set the tone, structure and ground rules for meetings](#)
2. [A team discussion to reflect on happiness, stress, support, mental health and wellbeing](#)
3. [Consider the support available to staff on a universal, targeted and specialist level in your setting](#)
4. [Reflect on good practice, implementation and priorities with your team](#)
5. [An opportunity to develop or review an existing wellbeing policy](#)

Spotlight on... wellbeing

Early Years in Mind

The **Anna Freud Centre** has introduced an **Early Years in Mind Network** which Dr Camilla Rosan discusses the importance of. If you would like to join the network, [please register here](#).

The network is free for early years staff and practitioners, and offers termly updates on the latest advice, guidance and resources from the Anna Freud Centre in regards to the mental health and wellbeing of infants and their families.

Every Mind Matters

The NHS recognises there are little things which we can all do to take care of our mental health.

They have produced a free, five-step mind quiz which can be accessed using the QR code and focusses on mood, sleep, anxiety, stress and worry. When the quiz is completed this will generate a personalised plan which includes expert advice and practical tips to help look after mental health and wellbeing.



"Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more" – NHS

Mind – for better mental health

Mind is a registered charity in England which has a website dedicated to mental health. They have

produced a booklet and short video which provides tips and ideas to see how relaxation can fit in to everyday life.

[Relaxation tips – booklet](#)

[Relaxation tips – 4-minute video](#)



Spotlight on... wellbeing

Wellbeing apps

There are lots of wellbeing apps available to share with your team which range from recording mood and triggers of stress and anxiety to deep breathing and relaxation techniques:

- ★ **CALM:** App for Mindfulness and Meditation. (Available on iOS, Android & Web)
- ★ **Breathe2Relax:** relaxation app trains you on the “belly breathing” technique that has proven benefits for your overall mental health. (Available on iOS and Android)
- ★ **Stress Check by Azumio:** deep breathing exercise to promote calmness and can bring your heart rate down in five minutes. The app provides instant feedback with breath and pulse monitoring and tracks long-term progress. (Available on Android)
- ★ **SAMAPP:** to help you understand and manage anxiety. (Available on iOS and Android)
- ★ **PACIFICA:** daily tools for stress, anxiety, and depression alongside a supportive community. Based on cognitive behavioural therapy & mindfulness meditation. (Available on iOS, Android & Web)
- ★ **Thrive: Feel Stress Free:** different tips to help you relieve stress/anxiety, including meditation, deep relaxation, self-hypnosis, and more. (Available on iOS and Android)
- ★ **BASE:** designed to help manage stress and anxiety. By learning more about how and why we experience anxiety at different times and in different situations we can be less fearful. (Available on Android)
- ★ **Smiling Mind:** app to help you launch into a regular practice of mindfulness meditations. (Available on iOS and Android)
- ★ **Anxious Minds:** a charity that was set up by sufferers of anxiety and depression, to provide free support to all sufferers of anxiety and depression. (Available on Android)
- ★ **What’s Up? Anxiety App:** uses CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) and ACT (Acceptance Commitment Therapy) methods to help you cope with depression, anxiety, anger, stress and more. (Available on iOS and Android)
- ★ **WellMind:** your free NHS mental health and wellbeing app to help you with stress, anxiety and depression. Includes advice, tips and tools to improve your mental health and boost your wellbeing. (Available on iOS and Android)
- ★ **Reflectly:** A personal journal and diary driven by AI to enable you to deal with negative thoughts, make positivity louder and to teach you about the science of well-being. (Available on iOS and Android).

Spotlight on... oral health

Oral Health and the Early Years Foundation Stage

The government has included oral health in the Safeguarding and Welfare requirements of the EYFS from this September. It states that:

Nearly a quarter of five-year-olds in England have tooth decay, with three or four teeth affected on average. Tooth extraction is one of the most common procedures for children under six in hospital. Extraction is also the most common reason for hospital admission for children aged six to 10. Children from more deprived backgrounds are more likely to have tooth decay.

It also says that:

Children who have toothache, or need treatment, may have pain or infections. This can have a wider effect and lead to problems eating, sleeping, socialising and learning.

The government has produced a document to support you in deciding how you would like to promote oral health within your setting:

[Oral health - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-oral-health-supervised-tooth-brushing-programme-toolkit)

This gives examples of role play, stories, healthy eating to name a few.

Public Health England has devised a toolkit to support 'supervised tooth brushing' if you wish to follow this:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-oral-health-supervised-tooth-brushing-programme-toolkit



Surestart Whitley has shared details about what they are doing to support parents around oral health:

We have put together these packs to support our parents with oral health. I made the leaflet up for all families and they are aware that they can take a pack which contains a toothbrush and toothpaste if they need/want this. Thought it was a good first step in supporting and promoting oral health with our families.

We are promoting the uptake of these by emailing all parents/carers to let them know it is available. Within the email we also informed the parents of the new EYFS focus on oral health and the sort of activities we will be doing within the nursery with the children to promote and prompt discussion about the importance of good oral health etc. We also invited in any parents/carers who were dentists, dental nurses – but have yet to have any volunteers.

We have also been sending them home with any of our children/families that we feel would benefit and/or who may not feel comfortable asking for one.

A few parent comments:

"Thank you Sure Start Whitley for the toothbrush and toothpaste. My son loves brushing his teeth with the special nursery toothbrush and the information is great."

"Thank you for the oral health pack. My child has thoroughly enjoyed brushing her teeth this evening with her new brush. She does not enjoy it and every day is a struggle so I will be trying the ideas you have suggested to help. Thank you again for sparking an interest in teeth brushing for her."

Spotlight on... oral health

Useful oral health resources



Find a dentist - NHS (www.nhs.uk), to find your local dentist



Public Health England: health matters child dental health, guidance to help you prevent tooth decay in children under five, including links to e-learning.



Children's Oral Health: healthcare e-learning, aimed at parents, early years healthcare workers, teachers, nurses, GPs and the public.



Oral Health Foundation: early years foundation stage, how children can keep their mouth healthy and the best way to brush your teeth.



Improving oral health in early years: National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Pathways.



PACEY's **oral health advice: includes factsheet for parents**.



PACEY's **nutrition spotlight, encouraging healthy eating habits**.



Delivering oral health from Public Health England, includes a quick guide to healthy mouths in children.



Change4life children's centre toolkit from Public Health England, for promoting healthy eating and dental health.

Useful oral health videos



How to care for the teeth of children aged 0-3 with Dr Ranj and Supertooth!
- Bing video



Dr Ranj Healthy Teeth Guide Aged 3-6 Spit, don't rinse after brushing (BSPD short video) - Bing video

Safeguarding and welfare

Update from the LADO service

We have previously announced that we were making some changes to the allegations management service involving the designated officer (LADO). Previously there was one LADO, with cover from colleagues on occasions. We have now extended this to a team of three; the team is now complete. The LADO service is now managed by Jeremy Curtis, with Sarah Rae and Sue Darby sharing the LADO role. They will do this in addition to some duties, but there will always be a LADO available each day.

Part of the role is liaising with and supporting the wider children's service sector, including Early Years. We won't be able to get around to all of you, but hope to see many of you at one of your regular meetings. If you wish to invite us to visit we will do our best.



Contact arrangements for the LADO remain the same:

Email: LADO@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Telephone: **0118 937 2684**

Calls and emails will be directed to the duty LADO, however we operate a 'no wrong door' policy and if you phone any of us, we will always try to help. If further work is necessary, we might need to pass it to a colleague.

Designated Safeguarding Lead Training

The New to the Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Refresher courses for the coming year are now available.

To book a place, please email: learning@brighterfuturesforchildren.org with the **name, job title, organisation** and **email address** of the person you would like to attend.

New to the Role of Designated Safeguarding Lead Training

Date	Time	Mode of training
14 January 2022	9.30am-12.30pm	Virtual
24 March 2022	2-5pm	TBC
24 June 2022	9.30am-12.30pm	TBC

Designated Safeguarding Lead Refresher Training

Date	Time	Mode of training
16 February 2022	2-5pm	Virtual
14 July 2022	2-5pm	TBC

Safeguarding and welfare

Early Years Safeguarding Audit

The Early Years safeguarding audit is issued to monitor, review and evaluate safeguarding policies and procedures across Reading settings, to ensure the maximum effectiveness of safeguarding of the children in the borough. This audit must be completed and returned by ALL Ofsted Early Years registered settings including PVI's, maintained nursery schools and childminders, as a mandatory requirement of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership.

A report will be compiled from the replies during the following month, presented to senior officers within the council in January and shared with the early years sector at the providers update in March.

If you require a copy of the audit, please email early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org. The closing date to return your completed audit is Friday 19 November.



**I'm worried
about a child**

**I need some
help being a
parent**

**I'd like to refer
a family for
extra support**

**Brighter
Futures for
Children**

Children's *single point* of access

Our Children's Single Point of Access (CSPoA) makes it easy for the public and professionals to tell us about concerns they have about a child or to ask for extra support for a child, young person or family in Reading.



www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org



0118 937 3641

You can call CSPoA between 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday, or send the referral form on our website at any time.

***For urgent enquiries out of hours please call the
Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 01344 786 543.***

Early Years Brighter Beginnings Inclusion Award

In 2019 we launched a pilot trial of the Early Years Brighter Beginnings Inclusion Award in which nine settings completed Level 1.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID pandemic and a shift in setting priorities we delayed launching this out further. However, with feedback from the pilot settings and adapted content we are now proud to relaunch Level 1 which all settings can apply to participate in. The pilot settings which have already achieved the Level 1 award will now be invited to continue the journey and work towards Level 2 with the support of our Early Years team.

There are three levels to the award, with a charge of £150 applied, which includes the following support package:

Level 1

A consultation with EY team member with initial advice around evidence required to achieve the award, access to the upcoming free training on offer and support to our downloadable induction for the SENCO to deliver this training to staff. Your inclusion lead will also be offered placement on the Autism Education Trust (AET) Making Sense of Autism Module. This will support achieving the award as one of the criteria involves all staff having a basic level of training in SEND.



Level 2

Placement on an evidence-based intervention training module (e.g. Attention Autism/ICAN Early Talk Boost/AET Autism Good Practice or a Bespoke Team Meeting Training) to upskill staff in delivering the interventions if they have already attended training previously, plus the visit to sign off that they have achieved the award. This is to support you in achieving the requirement that the setting must have staff who are actively working with a child with SEND and supporting their development. In order to achieve Level 2 the setting must also have a member of staff working towards an appropriate SEND qualification.

Level 3

Support to network with other settings and share exceptionally good practice. We know you are all working extremely hard to support your children with SEND, and much of the elements of the award you will already have in place. This award will provide you the opportunity to review your SEND practice and identify an action plan to help develop your SEND provision. This award will enable you to receive recognition of all your hard work and celebrate your inclusive setting by proudly displaying the plaque in your setting entrance area.

For more information about this please email:

brighter.beginnings@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

or visit brighterfuturesforchildren.org/professionals/under-5s-services/early-years-inclusion-award

Attention Autism Advanced Practitioners!



Please join in me in congratulating both Samantha and Angela in becoming Advanced Practitioner's in Attention Autism. They have been working tirelessly over the last year, on top of keeping up with our growing caseload, to provide evidence of their improving knowledge and practice. This has included filming themselves completing the programme and critiquing their practice, as well as being critiqued by the infamous Gina Davis. We are very proud of all they have achieved, and this will be extremely valuable in us being able to deliver Attention Autism programmes to you all.

A big thank you to Emmer Green Kindergarten & Fledglings Lodge for working with Samantha and Ange to support them in completing this course.

SCD resources

We have some very exciting news which is that we are in the process of developing two new social communication difficulties (SCD) early years resource bases attached to two of our maintained nursery schools (Norcot and Blagdon). More information to come soon!

Here is what Sam had to say about doing the course...

Completing and achieving becoming an Advanced Attention Autism trainer definitely pushed me outside of my comfort zone. It reminded me of the importance of being brave and how modelling bravery can positively influence our children. I found it healthy to be reminded that mistakes are part of daily life and how modelling a positive reaction to a mistake supports the development of our children's ability to be resilient. Even more importantly, it reminded me how to have FUN - how fun is a crucial ingredient in supporting a child to be at a ready to learn state, in order for them to be willing to share attention, which we know is the fundamentals to learning.

I now always ask myself:

- **Am I offering an 'irresistible invitation to learn'?**
- **Is what I am offering 'worth' the child leaving a particular interest/activity to them?**
- **Did we share a positive experience today?**
- **Did we have fun?**
- **Do they want more?**
- **Is this activity visually motivating?**
- **Is this session developmentally appropriate?**
- **Have we left them wanting more?**

I am excited to deliver the Attention Autism programme, and my aim is that trainees leave feeling passionate, excited and most importantly believe in the programme as I do.

We are looking forward to working with you all in the future once we have developed this training programme and agreed dates/venues.

Supporting parents and children with speech, language and communication needs

We know parents are the best teachers for supporting children's development and we need to support them by ensuring they know what information they can access. We can encourage our parents by reminding them that speech, language and communication develops best through play. You will be providing activities to support this in your education setting, but if parents could do one activity for just 15 minutes daily at home this will also have a big impact on their language development.

Many children who are referred for speech and language are often waiting some time before receiving an assessment and will benefit from the continued support in your setting, and support for parents at home.

Did you know about these fantastic websites that you can signpost parents to? They include really supportive videos to help encourage parents to learn more about how they can help their child at home.

hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk

www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people

ican.org.uk/i-cans-talking-point/parents

You can also find plenty of information on the Brighter Futures for Children website:

brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/send/

Tiny Talkers

Tiny Talkers is organised by the children's centres specially to support children with speech, language and communication needs. This is a good option prior to a speech and language referral, when a bit of extra support may be just what is needed.



The sessions are face to face and provide speech and language support to children under five. Tiny Talkers is a term time four-week programme, designed with speech and language therapists, with low numbers of children to ensure the most tailored support is offered, and children get the most benefit.

The content of the course includes turn-taking games, focus on match +1 and building vocabulary, with lots of positive role modelling from children's centre staff, as well as advice for parents to continue strategies at home.

This hugely successful course has been running for four years and is really easy to join. Just make a call or email to Reading Children's Centres (contact details below) from either other professionals or from parents. There is a special invite to a "start reading, keep reading" interactive story telling session once the course is completed.

Currently there is no waiting list and no requirement to be on a speech and language waiting list. The session is open to all children who would benefit from speech and communication support.

Email: reading.childrencentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Tel: **0118 937 5221**

Early Years Conference

Brighter
Futures for
Children

Playful Beginnings



Saturday 12 February 2022



9am to 4.30pm



Holiday Inn, Basingstoke Road, Reading, RG2 0SL

Play is central to the development of children in their early years. This conference is for early years practitioners. Our three leading experts and keynote speakers are Kym Scott, Deb Robinson and Elaine Bennett. You can also choose three of five workshops:

- ★ **Extending children's language, communication and vocabulary through play** *Kym Scott*
- ★ **Understanding trauma responses and the 4 Rs approach to modulation at times of distress - Regulate, Relate, Reason and Reflect** *Deb Robinson*
- ★ **A principled approach to early years maths - let's talk birth to five matters** *Elaine Bennett*
- ★ **Shake, rattle and roll workshop - playful beginnings with music!** *Danielle Ballentine*
- ★ **Grow your own stories - interactive story-telling** *Cassandra Wye*

Reading delegate rate: £70 (early bird offer) | £95

Reading Childminder Partnership Member: £35 (early bird offer) | £70

Reading group booking (five delegates from the same setting): £280

Out of borough: £150



Book now and take advantage of the **early bird offer** available until **31 December 2021!**

To book: go to www.readingeducationsservices.co.uk
or email early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org.

*Please include which three workshops you have chosen,
plus let us know any access requirements and dietary requirements for lunch.*



Celebrations! *

Ofsted Inspection Outcome

Big congratulations to the following settings that received 'Good' in their recent Ofsted Inspections.

- ★ The Lodge at Southcote
- ★ Honey Bee Day Nursery
- ★ Fledglings Lodge
- ★ Sarah Oxley
- ★ Harriet Pyatt

The Lodge at Southcote

The inspector awarded The Lodge with an overall 'good' rating, highlighting that the support for children with special education needs, disabilities (SEND) and for disadvantaged children is a particular strength of the nursery. It was noted that children spend a significant amount of time outdoors and that they show excitement as they explore with their friends, access activities which spark their imagination and follow their own interests. All children were found to be making good progress from their starting points and parents commented that their children loved attending the nursery and were progressing well. It was recognised that staff develop close bonds with children, which helps to support their emotional development and confidence in the setting.

You can read the press release and report here: www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/the-lodge-nursery-rated-good/



Honey Bee Day Nursery

The inspector awarded Honey Bee Day Nursery an overall 'good' rating, recognising that staff value children's uniqueness, in particular other languages spoken at home and encouraging the families to bring in traditional food, clothing and photographs to share. It was noted that children were able to share knowledge about keeping themselves healthy, for example, brushing model teeth, talking about healthy food and linking to what they were eating and drinking. Staff reported they were supported in their work and their wellbeing is considered, with opportunities for regular meetings to support their knowledge and understanding of their roles and responsibilities.



Celebrations!

Fledglings Day Nursery

The inspector awarded Fledglings Day Nursery an overall 'good' rating and highlighted how well the curriculum is designed to be ambitious for the children, with effective assessment and focus on children's next steps. It was recognised that promoting language development was a key focus for the nursery and that staff support children's communication and language development particularly well with vocabulary enhancing activities. Also, staff are encouraged to develop professionally, and leaders make good use of annual appraisals to monitor staff's ongoing suitability and performance.

We are delighted that Louise, the Manager of Fledglings, would like to share her experience of the inspection process with you:

"Having recently been inspected under the new framework we wanted to share with you our experience and highlight some of the key areas the inspector focused on which may be of help to settings who are due to be inspected."

Sarah Oxley (childminder)

The inspector awarded Sarah with an overall 'good' rating with both behaviour and attitudes, and personal development aspects rated as 'outstanding'. Sarah is highly committed to her own professional development, seeking out training and information to improve her curriculum and teaching. The inspector drew attention to Sarah's broad knowledge of SEND and her understanding of the importance of early intervention being the key to closing gaps in children's learning and development. Working with parents was another strength including the ways in which Sarah keeps in touch with families and how she shared resources over the COVID-19 lockdowns. The inspector highlighted Sarah as being a positive role model and having high expectations for children's behaviour.

This was our first inspection since we opened in 2019. There was a really strong emphasis on the 3 i's (intent, implementation, impact) with the inspector questioning staff individually on their intent for activities. The inspector was vigorous with her questions on safeguarding with all staff and in the leadership and management meeting.

We had planned our learning walk as we knew this was a new element of the inspection process but due to the small size of the setting this took place as more of a reflective conversation. In hindsight, we wish we had been more assertive to insist the learning walk had taken place because we feel some of the key areas we wanted to share about what we do at Fledglings were missed in the discussion. Next time we would push for it to have happened how we had planned.

Finally, the inspector tracked a variety of children, including SEN. Staff confidence was really important as she questioned them on their intent for interventions and carried out observations too."

Harriet Pyatt (childminder)

The inspector awarded Harriet a 'good' grading overall for her first Ofsted visit. Particular strengths included the flexibility of settling-in sessions which enable children and families to be confident when starting. The inspector pointed out how Harriet and her assistant make the children feel secure, in a homely and safe environment. They treat children with courtesy and respect, asking them for permission before helping with personal tasks. The inspector highlighted the ambitious curriculum which has a strong focus on PSED. Also mentioned was the way Harriet supports children's communication and language development, giving opportunities for children to hear and repeat new vocabulary during activities and building on their learning by recalling past events.



Celebrations!

Level 3 SENCo Award

The Early Years Team works with Reading's providers to support local families and improve children's lives. Ultimately, it is high quality provision that makes the difference. Alongside improving the quality of the provision, supporting the early years workforce is one of our key priority areas. Training and networks will help all levels of practitioner improve their skills and, in turn, improve outcomes for children.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, School Improvement Liverpool trained Deborah Wood as a trainer for the CACHE level 3 SENCo Award. The background to the award was constructed in collaboration with educators, training organisations, SEN professionals, current PVI SENCos and managers from the non-maintained sector, to guarantee that it was relevant and meaningful. The purpose of the programme has been to ensure that SENCo's:

- felt capable and confident to effectively support the children and families they worked with
- understood that the quality of provision a child with SEND experiences has major implications for that child and their family
- were aware that the role of the SENCo is a complex one.

With an overarching aim to ensure that all those successfully completing the programme were competent, committed, capable and confident in their role.

Over the months September 2020 to March 2021, 24 candidates attended this 12 week course which was delivered via TEAMS. The coursework was submitted electronically and assessed and verified by an external company. All 24 candidates achieved the award and are now level 3 qualified SENCos.

Level 3 SEND Award Congratulations!

To the 24 candidates who completed the Level 3 SENCo course:
Khadijah Khan, Hollie Lumber, Kelly Goswell, Racheal Snelling, Claire Bambrick, Clarissa Sims, Lisa McCoy, Sameea Basharat, Samantha Norris, Carly Knight, Affat Bi, Chloe Mills, Crystal Ballingall, Yvonne Werner, Hazel Lambert, Chloe Brown, Georgia Foster, Nicola Gearing, Jacky White, Suraksha Sawant, Lyndsey Tyler, Samantha Smith, Angela Smith and Rebecca Gibson.



Julia Molyneux 20 years of dedication!



The wonderful Julia Molyneux has completed 20 years' service with The Grange Pre-school. Her current staff presented her with flowers and gifts at an organised evening out and thanked her for her continued dedication to the community and families of Southcote.

Hemdean House

We are delighted that Forest School Leader at Hemdean House School, Mrs Illingworth has shared details of their Forest School experience with us:

Hemdean House School in Caversham has over 160 years of history and is now carving a legacy for the future. Sustainability projects are a key focus for everyone at this time and at Hemdean House School they have established a Forest School where the children are engaged with ensuring the sustainability of the grounds and woodlands at school and in the wider community.

The Forest School lessons are popular with the children who investigate and problem solve to understand the impact of their behaviour on the environment, whether in school or outside in the fields, woods or garden. The children have planted saplings, taking advantage of the Woodland Trust tree packs, planting dog rose, hawthorn, hazel, crab apple and dogwood to support regrowth, avoid erosion and sustain natural habitats in the woods. They ring fenced this freshly planted area by weaving a willow fence and scattered wild flower seed and bluebell bulbs as part of their long-term regeneration plan.

The children, along with our groundsman, had previously created a pond in the forest, which had been allowed to fill with rainwater and naturally populate with frogs and newts. The children were concerned when the pond dried up but took the opportunity to clear it of fallen leaves and debris. With the winter rain, it refilled with clear water and the children were pleased and amazed when this spring it was once more full of frogspawn without human



intervention. We recognise that the impact of our Forest School and sustainability learning has extended beyond the school gates. Knowledge and projects were a welcome relief for many of our children during lockdown, supporting their mental wellbeing and ability to cope with a difficult situation. Many of the children continued with their Forest School initiatives at home and enthusiastically shared videos and pictures of their projects, growing a variety of vegetables and flowers as well as caring for wildlife.

As the school now works towards a Green Flag Award, the children can be sure they are creating a well-cared for sustainable landscape for many years to come and sharing their enthusiasm with the community and family alike.

Reading Parent Champions!



Parent Champions: Fathima (left) and Hannah (right) with Stella (central) from Sun Street Children's Centre.

What are Parent Champions?

Parent Champions are parents who give up two to three hours a week to speak to parents in Reading about the two-year-old entitlement and childcare opportunities.

Who can be a Parent Champion?

Any parent that has a few hours a week to volunteer, enjoys talking to other parents and sharing their experiences of local services.

What are the benefits of becoming a Parent Champion?

Parent Champions receive training in several areas and develop transferable skills for future employment, while giving back to the community.

The future of Reading Parent Champions

Parent Champions have begun their outreach work in BFfC's children's centres, raising awareness of the two-year-old entitlement and local services. As services gradually return, Parent Champions will increase their outreach across Reading's community, to empower parents to make informed choices for themselves and their children.

How can I get involved?

If you are a childcare provider or deliver Early Years services and would like a Parent Champion to come and speak to parents, or know of a parent who would benefit from the scheme, please get in touch.

Contact Sara Saudella at sara.saudella@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Learn more about Parent Champions: www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/under-5/

Two-year-old Education & Childcare Funding

As of September 2021, we are no longer sending postcards to families informing them they are eligible to a two-year-old funded place, as families must now confirm their eligibility via the Portal.

Applications should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. An application can be made directly by a parent or can be completed by a provider on behalf of a family as an 'assisted application'.

- If a family believes they meet the 'Economic' criteria as they are in receipt of certain benefits, then an Economic Application must be completed in the first instance.
- If a family believes they meet any of the 'Non-economic' criteria, the family will need to apply under this route via the Portal and attach evidence to demonstrate they meet the criteria.
- If a family received an ineligible result after applying via the 'Economic' route, the family can apply via the 'Non-economic' route and attach evidence they are meeting the Economic criteria, for example: their most recent Universal Credit statement.



Economic claim

Please apply under the Economic route if you are in receipt of at least one of the following criteria:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credits or Working Tax Credits and have a gross household annual income (before tax) of no more than £16,190
- Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit, and you (and your partner) have a combined income from work of £15,400 or less after tax

[Start economic application](#)

Non-economic claim

Please apply under the Non-Economic route if you meet at least one of the following criteria.

Supporting text and/or documents will need to be provided when applying via this route

- Failed Economic application
- Funding has been approved by another Local Authority
- You have received a 2-year-old funding postcard with a unique reference number on (URN)
- The child has been in Local Authority care for 1 day or more
- The child has left Local Authority care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), a child arrangement order or an adoption order
- The child has a statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- The child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- The child is on the Child Protection register (CP) or is a Child in Need (CiN)
- The child is being supported by the Portage Service
- Receiving support under 'part 4' of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Receiving support under 'part 6' of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Leave to remain with 'no recourse to public funds' on family or private life grounds and your net income is less than £15,400 a year
- The right to live in the UK because you are the main carer of a British citizen (known as a 'Zambrano Carer') and your net income is less than £15,400 a year

[Start non-economic application](#)

For more information about two-year-old funding, visit:

www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/under-5/2-year-olds/

30 Hours Funding

Now is the time to be talking to parents about applying for 30 hours, or reconfirming their 30-hour codes, ready for January.

For children already accessing 30 hours funding at your setting

Please ensure parents have checked their details are up to date and have reconfirmed their 30-hour code by visiting:

www.gov.uk/childcareaccount

For new children starting from January

Please encourage families to apply for their 30 hours code by 30 November at:

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk



Want 30 hours childcare next term?

Apply for your code ahead of Christmas.

childcarechoices.gov.uk



Child turns 3 between	When they can get 30 hours from	Recommended time to apply
1 September to 31 December	Term starting on or after 1 January	15 October to 30 November
1 January to 31 March	Term starting on or after 1 April	15 January to 28 February
1 April to 31 August	Term starting on or after 1 September	15 June to 31 July

For more information about 30-hour funding, visit:

www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/under-5/3-4-year-olds/

Tax-Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is a UK wide offer. Eligible parents with children under 12 can get up to £2,000 per child, per year, towards their childcare costs (or up to £4,000 for disabled children under 17).

Parents entering the scheme open an online childcare account which they use to pay you directly for childcare. Payments work just as they do through an online bank account. Each payment is accompanied by a reference number for each child so you can identify their payments.

You will only be able to receive Tax-Free Childcare payments from your customers if you have signed up to Tax-Free Childcare www.gov.uk/guidance/sign-up-to-tax-free-childcare-if-youre-a-childcare-provider

Over time, Tax-Free Childcare will replace childcare vouchers. By signing up now, you will be ready to accept payments from parents as soon as they ask to pay using Tax-Free Childcare.

Signing up to Tax-Free Childcare does not affect any payments you receive through childcare voucher schemes.



How do I sign up as a provider?

An invitation letter will be sent to you once HMRC receive your details from your regulator. If you've recently registered as a childcare provider, this may take a few weeks.

Your invitation letter will contain your unique user ID to sign up online www.gov.uk/guidance/sign-up-to-tax-free-childcare-if-youre-a-childcare-provider to Tax-Free Childcare and will also tell you what other details you need to sign up.

If you haven't received your invitation letter, contact the childcare service helpline - www.gov.uk/government/organisations/hm-revenue-customs/contact/childcare-service-helpline

Childcare Choices

"Top things providers need to know about Tax-Free Childcare" document can be found [here](#).





Free, impartial information for Reading families with children up to 19-years-old*

(*or 25-years-old with special educational needs and disabilities - SEND)

Early Years Pupil Premium for three & four-year-olds

What is Early Years Pupil Premium?

The EYPP is an extra grant available to childcare providers for three and four-year-olds claiming the Universal Entitlement. Early Years providers will use EYPP to improve facilities, equipment and learning experiences to support a child's learning and development.

Providers can receive up to an additional £855 annually for any eligible EYPP children. For every early years universal hour claimed by an eligible child, providers will receive 53p for EYPP and 97p for deprivation supplement. These combined supplements total an additional £1.50 per universal hour.

Who is eligible?

Three and four-year-olds in funded early education will be eligible for EYPP funding if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

Their family gets one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of State Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided they're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on, which is paid for four weeks after they stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit

- Universal Credit (provided they have an annual net earned income equivalent to and not exceeding £7,400, assessed on up to three of the parent's most recent Universal Credit assessment periods.)
- They have been in local authority care for one day or more in England or Wales
- They have left care under a special guardianship order, child arrangements order or adoption order

Four-year-olds in primary school reception classes who already receive the school-age pupil premium are not eligible for EYPP funding.

Children will be eligible from the term after their third birthday, in line with the universal entitlement to free early education for three and four-year-olds, which they should be taking up.

Ensure all eligible children are identified

- Talk to parents about the advantages of EYPP and how this can be used to improve the quality of education for their child.
- Encourage parents to complete the parental agreement form in full to enable eligibility checking.
- Children who are receiving EYPP will be identified with a 'P' in the funding column of your headcount return. Make a note where this has not been applied and check if personal details have been completed or updated (with parental permission).
- If a child has previously benefitted from two-year-old funding it is likely they will be eligible for EYPP if their circumstances have not changed. Please check that we hold the correct carers details for these children on the headcount task.

For more information about EYPP, visit:

www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/schools/pupil-premium/

Disability Access Funding for three & four-year-olds

What is the Disability Access Funding (DAF)?

The DAF is a funding payment of £615 per child per year available to early years providers to support three and four-year-old children with disabilities or special educational needs.



Who is eligible?

All three or four-year-olds who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance and are accessing their funding entitlement.

You could receive up to two payments, over two years, for the same child if you claim the DAF payment when the child is three-years-old (first year) and then again when the child is four-years-old (second year).

How to claim?

The early years provider will need to ask the parent/carer to complete the DAF funding form (available from the Early Years team) and return this to the Early Years team inbox along with a copy of the child's Disability Living Allowance award letter – early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

If a child is attending more than one provider, the parent will need to decide which setting will receive the funding - it cannot be split between both settings.

What can the £615 be used for?

The DAF aids access to early years places by, for example, supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their provision; purchasing equipment for the child to help support them access the curriculum and aid their development.

When will the setting get the funding?

Once the DAF form has been received by the Early Years team, the funding claim will be processed, and payment will be included on the next payment run. The Early Years team will send confirmation of the DAF payment to the setting.

What happens if the child changes provider?

The funding is not transferable. If the child moves from one provider to another, the new provider will not be able to make a DAF claim within the same year the original provider was awarded the funding.

If you would like hard copies of posters and/or leaflets on the following entitlements, please contact the Early Years team early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

- two-year-old funding: poster and leaflet available
- three & four-year-old funding: poster and leaflet available
- EYPP: poster available
- DAF: poster available

For more information about Disability Access Funding, visit:

www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/under-5/under-5-with-send/

Local Information

Reading Libraries



Rhymetimes are back at [@ReadingLibraries](#) in Central, Battle and Southcote libraries. We have limited numbers for safety, so please book your place as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

We encourage people to wear face coverings at these events where possible and our staff will wear visors for the duration of the activity. Please observe social distancing and stay home if you are feeling unwell.

You can book for yourself and your child through our website at [Rhymetimes - Reading Borough Council](#)

Central Library sessions are on **Thursdays** at **10.15am** and **11.15am**.

Battle Library sessions are on **Fridays** at **10am** and **11.15am**.

Southcote sessions start on **Thursday 21 October** at **10.30am**.

We will roll out sessions at other branches throughout the autumn. All sessions last 25 minutes.

Reading Children's Centres

Reading's Children's Centres now have a packed schedule of face-to-face activities in all centres across the borough. There are a real range of fun sessions on offer for parents and carers to do with their young child. From baby yoga, to messy play and getting toddlers ready for nursery. Parents can also get support on finding their way back to work too.

Check out the winter timetables on the following pages.

To see all the fantastic, free activities on offer, [visit this webpage](#).

To learn more or to book, email: reading.childrenscentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Let families know about the [Reading Children's Centres Facebook page](#) to keep up-to-date with all the latest news.

East Cluster Timetable
November - December 2021
These activities are all taking place at Sun Street Children's Centre and Caversham Children's Centre. Have a look at what fun activities you can book on to:

South Reading Timetable
November - December 2021
These activities are all taking place at Whitley Children's Centre. Have a look at what fun activities you can book on to:

West Central Timetable
November - December 2021
These activities are all taking place at Southcote Children's Centre and Coker Children's Centre. Have a look at what fun activities you can book on to:

West Cluster Timetable
November - December 2021
Have a look at what fun activities you can book on to:

Useful contacts
Reading Family Information Service (RIS): hfrreading.gov.uk
Community relations: 0118 322 8059
Health visiting team: 0118 931 2111

For all sessions, please book your place.
Call the West Cluster on 0218 937 3221 or email reading.childrenscentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

East Cluster Timetable

November - December 2021

These activities are all taking place at Sun Street Children's Centre and Caversham Children's Centre. Have a look at what fun activities you can book on to:



www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Monday

Sport in Mind Baby Yoga
(Sun Street)
10-11am

Sing and Sign
(Sun Street)
1-2pm

INVITE ONLY
NHS health visiting service
- 9 month reviews and 6-8 week post-natal checks
(Sun Street)

Tuesday

Baby Dimensions
(Caversham CC)
10-11am

Little Green Fingers
(Sun Street Community Garden)
10.30-11.30am

Ready, Steady Nursery
(Sun Street)
1-2.30pm

INVITE ONLY
NHS health visiting service
6-8 week post-natal checks
(Caversham CC)
1-5pm

Wednesday

Together Time and F.A.M.I.L.Y
(Sun Street)
10-11am

Toe-to-Head Baby Massage
(Caversham CC)
1.30-2.30pm

INVITE ONLY
NHS health visiting service
- 9 month reviews
(Caversham CC)
9am-1pm

Thursday

Over 1s Messy Play
(Sun Street)
10-11am

Sport in Mind Dance and Movement
(Christchurch Meadows)
10.30-11.30am

Toe-to-Head Baby Massage
(Sun Street)
1.30-2.30pm

Sport in Mind Baby Yoga
(Museum of English Rural Life) - 1.30-2.30pm

Friday

Bumps and Babes
(Sun Street)
10-11am

Family Employment Advisor
(Sun Street)
10am-12noon

more info overleaf

For all sessions, please book your place.
Call the East Cluster on 0118 937 2551 or email
reading.childcentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Useful contacts

Reading Family Information Service (FIS): fis@reading.gov.uk

Community midwives: 0118 322 8059

Health visiting team: 0118 931 2111

Register with us!



South Reading Timetable

November – December 2021

These activities are all taking place at Whitley Children's Centre. Have a look at what fun activities you can book on to:

Monday

**Rainbows with Reading
Family Church**
(Whitley CC)
10-11.30am

Baby Dimensions
(Whitley CC)
10-11am

Tuesday

Wednesday

Buggy Walks
(Cintra Park)
9.45-11.45am

Messy Play
(Whitley CC)
1-2pm
Under 1s only

Thursday

Ready, Steady Nursery
(Whitley CC)
9.30-11am

Rhyme and Song
(Whitley CC)
1-2pm

Friday

Mini Athletics
(Whitley CC)
1-1.45pm

more info overleaf

For all sessions,
please book your place.

Call the South Cluster on
0118 937 3894 or email

reading.childrencentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Register with us!



Useful contacts

Reading Family Information Service (FIS): fis@reading.gov.uk

Community midwives: 0118 322 8059

Health visiting team: 0118 931 2111



www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Find us at
Reading Children's Centres



West Cluster Timetable

November - December 2021

These activities are all taking place at Ranikhet Children's Centre and Battle Library.
Have a look at what fun activities you can book on to:

Monday

Rhyme and Song
(Battle Library)
10-10.30am

Baby Massage Hold and Reassurance
(Ranikhet CC)
10-11.15am

For babies from 4 weeks old

Tuesday

Messy Play
(Ranikhet CC)
10-11.30am
Bi-weekly from 9 November

Buggy Walk
(Prospect Park)
10-11am
Bi-weekly from 2 November

Baby Dimensions
(Ranikhet CC)
1-2pm

Wednesday

Baby Dimensions
(Battle Library)
10-11am

Tiny Talkers
(Ranikhet CC)
10-11.30am
For 18 months - five years

Toe-to-Head Baby Massage
(Ranikhet CC)
1-2pm
For babies from 8 weeks old, starts 12 December

Thursday

Together Time and F.A.M.I.L.Y
(Ranikhet CC)
10-11am

Bumps and Babes
(Ranikhet CC)
1-2.30pm
Under 1s only

Friday

Didi Dance
(Ranikhet CC)
1.30-2.30pm

INVITE ONLY
NHS health visiting service
- 9 month reviews

more info overleaf

For all sessions,
please book your place.

Call the West Cluster on
0118 937 5221 or email
reading.childrenscentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Register with us!



Useful contacts

Reading Family Information Service (FIS): fis@reading.gov.uk

Community midwives: 0118 322 8059

Health visiting team: 0118 931 2111

West Central Timetable

November – December 2021

These activities are all taking place at Southcote Children's Centre and Coley Children's Centre. Have a look at what fun activities you can book on to:



www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Monday

Urdu Kahani Time
(Coley CC)
10-11.30am

Bumps and Babes
(Coley CC)
1-2.30pm

Tuesday

Together Time
(Coley CC)
10-11.30am

Family Employment Advisor
(Southcote CC)
9-11.30am

We continue to deliver our online sessions to parents interested in attending

Introduction to Family Foods (Weaning), Sleep or Toileting workshops.

Wednesday

Getting to know your bump
(Southcote CC)
10-11am

Sport in Mind Dance and Movement
(Southcote CC)
1-2.30pm
Under 1s only, starting 15 September

Thursday

Baby Dimensions
(Southcote CC)
10-11am

Stay and Play
(Southcote CC)
1-2.30pm
Under 5s only

Friday

Sport in Mind Dance and Movement
(Coley Recreation Ground)
10.30-11.30am
Under 1s only, starting 17 September

Rhyme and Song
(Coley Recreation Ground 10)
10.45-11.15am
All ages

Register with us!



For all sessions, please book your place.

Call the West Central Cluster on 0118 937 2535 or email reading.childrencentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Useful contacts

Reading Family Information Service (FIS): fis@reading.gov.uk

Community midwives: 0118 322 8059

Health visiting team: 0118 931 2111



Find us at
Reading Children's Centres



Launch your career in Childcare and Early Years Education

L1 Award Preparing to Work in Schools

Starting: 2nd June 2021, 14th Sept 2021 and
1st March 2022

L1 Award in Childcare

Starting: 12th May 2021 and 16th June 2021,
16th Sept 2021, 13th Jan 2022 & 27th April 2022

L2 Diploma - Early Years Practitioner

Starting: 14th May 2021, 14th Sept 2021, 21st Jan 2022 and
28th April 2022

L2 Cert - Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools

Starting: 15th Sept 2021

L3 Certificate in Supporting Teaching & Learning in Schools

Starting: 16th Sept 2021

L3 Diploma - Early Years Educator

Starting: 14th May 2021 or on demand, 13th Sept 2021 and
26th January 2022

Fully Funded Places
Available!
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Contact



0118 937 4730



early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org



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