



Early Years NEWSLETTER

Issue 02
MARCH 2022

SPOTLIGHT: Recruitment & Retention

Inside

- Funding
- Good practice in settings
- Training
- 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 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.

Our Spring newsletter has a particular focus on the important issue of recruitment and retention. We ask that all providers take just five minutes to complete the local survey to help us understand more about what's happening in Reading.

You can find out more about the three lesser known senses and also read about Aimee's intensive interaction experience and how you too can access this training.

There are pages of useful information which cover funding, libraries, children's centres, partnership outreach work and SEND news.

Again, it is great to showcase the brilliant work of local early years providers who are celebrating Ofsted success, training achievements, long service awards and so much more.

I hope you enjoy it!

Becky Gibson
Early Years Team Manager

Contents

- 3 Recruitment & retention**
- 6 Physical development**
- 8 SEND**
- 11 Training**
- 17 Celebrations!**
- 21 Settings - a focus on practice**
- 22 Funding**
- 25 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.

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Spotlight on... recruitment & retention

Local early years providers have highlighted that recruitment and retention is a growing worry for them, which reflects the findings of a national report [Breaking Point](#) published in December 2021. We have started exploring the reasons for this with setting leaders during network and support visits, with two recurring themes:

- a decline in candidates interested in a career in childcare at both apprentice and qualified level with fewer applications for positions.
- practitioners leaving the sector due to low rates of pay in comparison to other less skilled roles which entail less responsibility and offer more flexibility.

We know that early years can be a rewarding sector to work in, with no two days the same and where high-quality care and teaching will have the greatest impact. With you, we would like to raise the profile of early years careers in Reading and promote them as an exciting, rewarding and ambitious choice.

Survey

We are asking all providers to complete [a recruitment and retention survey](#) by **31 March 2022**. The survey, along with ongoing networks and visits, will help us to understand the situation in Reading, your worries and where you have experienced success, and plan a local response. If you are interested in being more involved with local recruitment in early years, please email early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Top tips

Reading providers and committee members share their top tips for both recruiting and retaining practitioners:

Recruitment	Retention
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Focus your advert on what is unique about your setting2. Explain your commitment to continued professional development3. Advertise conditions and rewards i.e. flexible working, increasing holiday entitlement4. Share apprentice adverts with local secondary schools to reach final year students5. Share level 3 adverts with local training providers to reach practitioners approaching qualification.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide a comprehensive induction period with a robust introduction to the role2. Ensure a supportive probationary period with regular opportunities for discussion3. Place continued professional development of all practitioners as a high priority4. Provide regular supervision and appraisal opportunities5. Demonstrate clear career progression.

Spotlight on... recruitment & retention

A Culture of Wellbeing

CACHE Alumni has released a [wellbeing video](#) which focuses on how a culture of well-being can be created in settings. This includes tips, ideas and reflection points with consideration of the physical environment.



Career progression

The DfE has released a variety of useful resources which focus on a career in early education and childcare, highlighting the offer of progression and a variety of career paths as experience and confidence grows. [Pathway into early education](#) includes details of career opportunities and qualifications for those new to the workforce and others considering study at degree level.

The [early years career progressions map](#) is a tool that can help current practitioners in your setting to plan their careers and [for those interested in a career](#) in the sector to understand the range of existing jobs and opportunities on offer. The map will be shared with careers advisors and Department for Work and Pensions work coaches to raise the profile of early years, and will feature on our BFfC website.

Career toolkit

[The NCFE](#) has a core purpose to promote and advance learning and the DfE signposts to their [childcare and education career toolkit](#) which includes information for both students and qualified practitioners embarking on their next stage of education. The toolkit has been created to raise career aspirations and to 'champion the next generation of childcare and education workers.'



The NCFE has also developed [an essential guide for practitioners](#) with hints and tips on maximising development opportunities with limited resources. Highlighting that with so many progression and CPD opportunities available, an early years career can be exciting and long term.

Spotlight on... recruitment & retention

MITEY

MITEY: Men in the early years

MITEY is run by [the Fatherhood Institute](#) and is a national network and campaign which works to bring more men into the early years education workforce, and support them once they are part of it. MITEY has developed a [comprehensive guide](#) which calls on early years employers to take active measures to recruit men into the workforce.

Early Years Business Support Package

If you would like to receive personalised advice on recruitment, retention and a wide range of business matters, please email early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org. You will be offered support from qualified business advisors working within the skills and behaviours underpinned by the Institute of Consulting code of professional conduct and practice. Both advisors have completed a level 5 qualification to demonstrate that they are qualified and competent, have specialised knowledge and know how to apply it when providing business advice:

- Confidentially guaranteed
- Analysis and understanding of business strategies
- Marketing - unique selling points
- Advice on managing change and risk
- All discussions directed by you

Suitability of early years qualifications

If, when recruiting, you are unsure that qualifications meet the early years criteria, please refer to the following guidance published by DfE in February 2022:

- [Early years qualifications that do not meet the criteria - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Early years qualifications achieved in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [Early years qualifications achieved outside England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Early Years Apprentice Award

We would like to shine a light on apprentices in our summer newsletter and invite you to nominate your 'Early Years Apprentice of the Year'. Include details of why you feel their good practice is commendable and a photograph with their permission. The entries will be shared with a local panel and the winner will be announced in the newsletter with a £25 Amazon voucher awarded.

Email your nomination by 2 May to: early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org



Sensory processing: a focus on senses

Were you aware that we have more than five senses? There are in fact eight senses working together to help your brain take in information from the environment around you, and from our bodies to integrate all this information for us to then take actions throughout the day, which is called our sensory integration system:

- 1) Touch
- 2) Taste
- 3) Smell
- 4) Sight
- 5) Hearing
- 6) Proprioception
- 7) Vestibular
- 8) Interoception

We all have different levels within our sensory integration system, and for many people this can be more severe and affect our day to day ability to manage with the world around us.

Let's explore a bit...

Touch/tactile

Our skin receptors help us to process information such as when things are hot or cold to touch, and to explore different textures. I am sure there will be some textures that you find difficult to touch and others that you find quite therapeutic. Our touch sense also helps us detect pressure and pain, helping us to understand what is dangerous and safe to explore. Someone who struggles with their tactile system may find a light touch feels heavy and dangerous to them when there is no danger. This can make them become anxious and they may pull away when touched lightly.

Taste

We use our taste to determine what foods we enjoy or dislike and what is dangerous for us. A person who has difficulties with their taste sense may often present as being a “fussy eater” but often may be struggling with not only the taste but the texture and smell of certain foods.

Smell

Smell is one of our strongest senses that link with our emotions. Different smells can make people feel different emotions and this will vary across everyone. Some people may find certain smells very overwhelming and cause them to feel anxious as it links to emotions they have experienced. This is important to consider when wearing perfume or aftershave as it could be a trigger for some people's emotions.

Sight/Visual System

Not only is this seeing what is around us, it is also being able to process distances, as to what is close or far away and includes our visual motor skills, such as being able to follow moving objects. We interpret the world around us through sight including colours, numbers, shapes and lighting. Some people struggle with their visual system and will have difficulty with organising information visually as they struggle to filter out information that is needed. Some people also may have different tolerance levels with lighting and find some bright lights overwhelming when perhaps you might not.

Hearing

Our hearing allows us to process auditory information around us and we develop our auditory system to differentiate between what is useful information and what we can filter out in the background. The brain aims to make sense of the sounds and to understand the speech. Some people struggle with their auditory system and may find it hard to filter this out, therefore presenting with low attention levels and they may need verbal information to be repeated and broken down into smaller steps.

Spotlight on... physical development

Proprioception

This is your body using its muscles, joints and individual body parts to know where you are in relation to yourself and the environment around you. This is often an unconscious element of your sensory system and comes into play automatically. For example, when you are out food shopping, pushing a trolley, you instinctively know how hard to push it to maintain a good speed. You are able to control stopping and, as the shopping trolley gets heavier, you know you need to push it harder to maintain control and speed. This is your proprioceptive system at play. People with difficulties in their proprioceptive system struggle to relate to their joints/muscles and how we respond to the environment. You may find they seek out jumping or climbing or may push items off the side more frequently than expected. They may close doors harder than required and find self-care elements harder e.g. getting dressed or putting on shoes.

Vestibular

This system involves your inner ear and is all about balance and knowing when you are in space. If I asked you to stand on one foot with your eyes closed, you will feel your vestibular system kicking in to help you stay balanced. We use our other senses to integrate with this system, especially sight, sound and the proprioceptive system. Regular movement is key to developing a strong vestibular system especially swinging or other movements that involve the head changing position. The vestibular system helps us feel secure with gravity, but when someone has an underdeveloped vestibular system, they may not feel safe and secure because the brain is struggling to process the information that gives them that sense of security. This in turn will increase their arousal levels and present with some different behaviours as they try to navigate their own sense of balance and safety.

Interoception

This is one of the newest researched senses. Interoception is all about our basic internal needs e.g. hunger, thirst, tiredness, pain, toileting etc. It is the physiological state of our body that our brain processes. If someone has interoception difficulties, they may not be aware they are hungry or thirsty, or need the toilet.

We all have different sensitivities across the board in all eight senses, and just because you are more or less sensitive to one area does not mean you have sensory processing difficulties. But if a sensory difficulty is adversely affecting someone's day to day life, then we may need to consider what support they need and investigate sensory processing difficulties.

Berkshire Healthcare has provided [a helpful toolkit](#) that shows different behavioural signs and symptoms and how you can help those elements. Sometimes it is as simple as providing a calming den for the child or having a movement break so they can reconnect their body with their brain, and be in a ready state to learn. You know yourself if something is not right with you on a particular day. You may not be able to focus on the task at hand and this is how it can be everyday for people who struggle with sensory processing difficulties.



Intensive Interaction

by Aimee Trimmer, Early Years SEND Advisory Teacher

I have been completing the Intensive Interaction Coordinators course which is focussing in depth on the techniques required for intensive interaction. Intensive interaction is a recommended strategy for children and young people in the early stages of their fundamentals of communication, which includes enjoying being with other people, sharing attention, having fun, using and understanding pre-verbal communication, and using vocalisations.

At first, I thought intensive interaction was mostly mimicking what the children are doing to get into their level of development/ join their world, and while that is a small part of intensive interaction, it is only one of the recommended techniques.

I understand the importance of 'less is more' and letting the child drive the interaction so they feel safe and secure with me. This naturally gives them the confidence to interact with me more and show they are enjoying it. The children I have been practicing with are not expected to do "now this, then this" or use visuals to communicate. I am simply enjoying being with them, tuning into them and showing them I understand, respect and validate their interactions with me, however small those may be.

It has been really challenging to take my early years hat off, where we are often naturally driving learning by extending language, being quite animated and offering different ways of playing with our children. I have had to learn



not to extend learning e.g. usually I would be counting the blocks or naming colours or doing "ready steady go" during my interactions with our children. Instead I have learnt to be patient, recognise the small interactions and enjoy just being with the child, even if it doesn't feel like I am doing anything with them but sitting there, being tuned in and ready for them to drive the interaction.

What I have learnt so far is that intensive interaction does not have to be a structured activity at a certain time (although it can be helpful to plan it like that especially when practicing) but rather a way of interacting with our children who need it in that way. Similar to how we interact with children based on their level of development through play, we can apply intensive interaction techniques during free flow to support that child's development.

We often have recommendations that include Attention Autism and structured Speech & Language Strategies. And there can be a place for all these, but we also must also consider what might be the priority for the child's needs at this time. Intensive interaction is something that we need to focus on first before we can expect our children to engage in learning and focus their attention on our other strategies. I will be running some workshops soon and I look forward to you joining me so we can continue this journey of rolling out intensive interaction techniques within early years.

To find out more about intensive interaction visit: www.intensiveinteraction.org

SALT referrals



If, after ensuring consistent support strategies and with a child's parent/carer you have identified a child who requires a speech and language assessment, a referral can be made to the SALT team. The parent/carer can send an email to cypit.adminreading@berkshire.nhs.uk outlining their reason for referral. It is best if practitioners also complete the following 'Setting Information Form' to represent the setting perspective which parent/carers can include in their email.

To talk to the SALT team about further support that would help you and the staff working in your setting, or if you need to find out information about a specific child who is known to the speech and language therapy service, you can call the Reading team on 0300 365 4000.

Tiny talkers

Tiny Talker sessions are facilitated by our children's centres 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. There are up to six children per session to ensure all children get the most tailored support required, and



therefore get the most benefit from the course. The content of the course includes turn-taking games, focus on match +1 and building vocabulary with lots of positive role modelling from the children's centre staff as well as advice for parents to continue strategies at home. The session is open to all children who may benefit from some speech and communication support.

To book, parents can email:

Reading.childrencentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org





EARLY YEARS SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

Dear parent / carer. You can access advice from the early years speech and language therapy service. Please send an email to your local team.

Wokingham - CYPIT.ADMINBRWOK@berkshire.nhs.uk

Reading - CYPIT.ADMINREADING@berkshire.nhs.uk

West Berkshire (Newbury) - CYPIT.ADMINNEWBURY@berkshire.nhs.uk

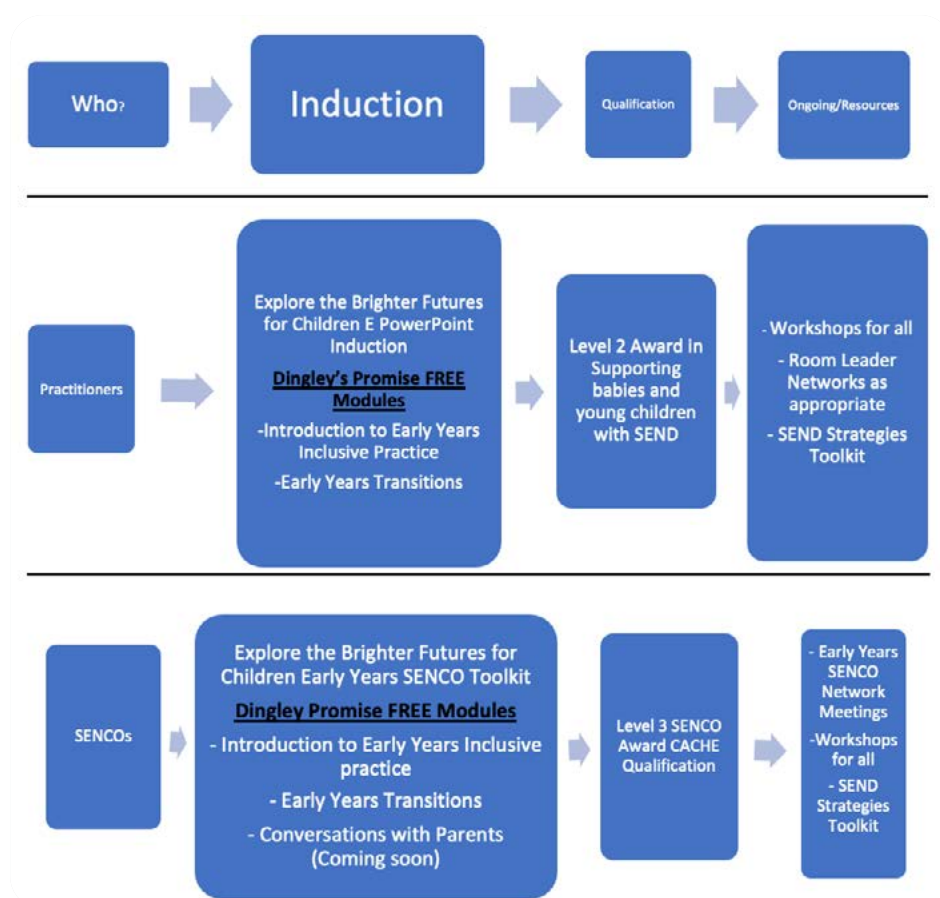
Please include your child's name and date of birth or NHS number, a contact telephone number and information about the day of the week that works best for the team to contact you. If your child's nursery has provided some information below, please attach this to the email. A speech and language therapist will call you as soon as they can.

Child's name: Date of birth / NHS Number: Name of early years setting:	
What are you hoping for from early years speech and language therapy service?	
How is the child's speech, language and communication skills affecting them on a day to day basis?	
What additional support has been put in place?	How has the child responded to this?

PLEASE PROVIDE THE DETAILS OF THE KEY PERSON (AT YOUR SETTING) WHO WE CAN LIAISE WITH:	
Name:	Role:
Telephone number:	Email address:
Best day / times to ring:	

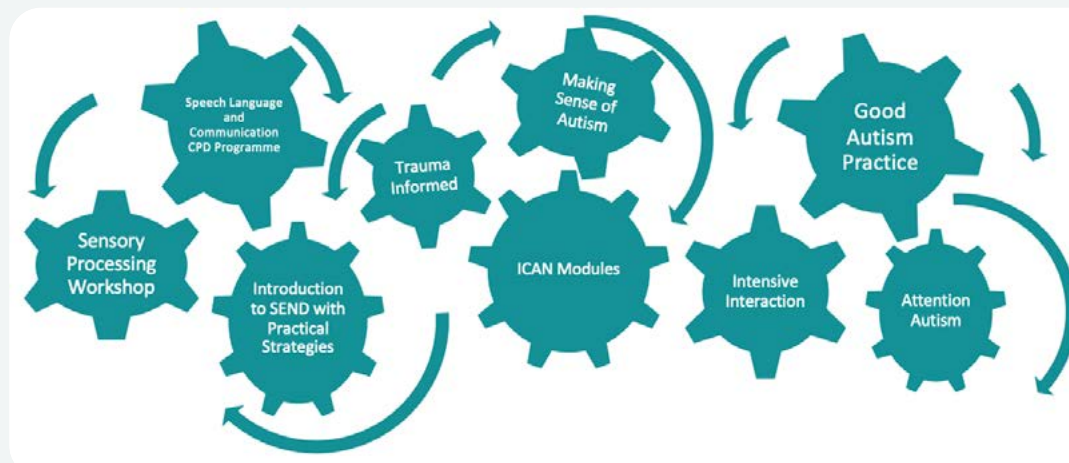
EY SEND

We have many exciting training opportunities coming up, with a focus on SEND and Inclusion. It can get a bit confusing to know what training to do when, so we have provided a suggested pathway to follow for different practitioners.



Workshops available for all practitioners

These can be completed at any time along the SEND CPD pathway. They include a variety of workshops that focus on different SEND needs and strategies that practitioners can bring back to the setting and share their knowledge with your team. You can also request a whole setting bespoke SEND training package where we come and deliver training to everyone in your setting. This allows the team to think about how they can support children in their setting and increase their confidence in SEND strategies.



Whole Setting SEND Training

Whole Setting SEND Training: Early Years Introduction to SEND Practical Strategies Workshop

This workshop explores an Introduction to SEND and the four broad areas of need giving practitioners practical activity ideas to support a variety of learning needs, whilst supporting positive universal provision.

Attention Autism

We have two exciting programmes to support the implementation of Attention Autism.

Practitioners who attend the two-day course will understand the theory and develop their skills in delivering the four-stage programme.

We will also be offering another package that supports all staff in your setting by having an 'Introduction to Attention Workshop' for the whole team to have an understanding of the programme, with two practitioners to attend the course who will consolidate their understanding and enhance their skills in the programme.

The two-day course will be running in the summer term – dates and venues to be confirmed shortly.

- **Practitioner attendance on two-day course:** £90 per candidate
- **Whole team package:** £250 - includes the whole team workshop to introduce Attention Autism to the team and two practitioners attendance on the two-day course.

SEND Training Workshops

NEW: Autism Education Trust Making Sense of Autism Module

South Whitley Community Hub

10 March 2022, 1–3.30pm

£30 per person

This is an introduction to making sense of autism and is aimed at new practitioners to enhance your understanding and awareness of autism and the three areas of difference that affect autistic children.

NEW: Autism Education Trust Good Autism Practice

31 March 2022, 9.30am–2pm

£60 per person

This workshop continues from the Autism Making Sense module and is aimed at practitioners who have a basic understanding of autism and wish to further their practice in knowing how to support children with autism.

Level 2 CACHE Award – Supporting Babies and Young Children with SEND

Virtual workshops run 9am–12.30pm on 9, 16 and 30 March 2022

£150

(Practitioners must have protected time to work on assignments in the afternoon)

This CACHE accredited course developed by Liverpool School Improvement is aimed at Level 2 practitioners who are working with babies and young children with SEND. It offers a balance of theoretical and practical support to enable a practitioner to carry out their role in supporting young children with additional needs. It runs over three sessions, with assignment and study time for each module.

Early Years Training

Since September we have been busy exploring the 'Seven Key Features of Effective Practice' within training and quality workshops. Settings and childminder groups are now able to book a bespoke package which provides the opportunity to explore, reflect and develop your approach to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment with your whole team.

Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment

Group cost of £150

Curriculum

What knowledge do you want your children to learn and develop?

Broadly defined, the term curriculum in the early years is simply everything children do, see, hear or feel in their setting, both planned and unplanned. It considers the range of interests and knowledge a child brings to the setting. If a programme is to be effective in motivating children and in promoting meaningful cross-curricular learning there must be flexibility built in. Children access the curriculum through a well organised and appropriately resourced learning environment

Pedagogy

How will you deliver knowledge effectively, so that children make progress across all areas of learning?

Early years pedagogy can be many things, but it may touch on things like aims for teaching, learning and caring, and your vision will guide the methods by which you deliver the curriculum. These aims and values should be explicit and agreed, known by all staff and shared with parents.

Assessment

How will you find out what children have learned and use it to inform your curriculum and teaching?

Although Gill Jones, Deputy Director for Early Years at Ofsted, has announced a diminished focus on assessment, inspectors will still need to know that children are making progress, that when used, assessment is effective and that staff are taking the children's learning forward. It is essential that any system a setting has for observing and assessing children is quick, easy and effective.

Heathy Lifestyles

£150 whole setting/childminder group

New to the timetable this term and suitable for all levels of practitioner. Join us to explore what the EYFS says about physical development and developing healthy bodies, and reflect on how to implement into your curriculum:

- Oral health
- Healthy eating
- Food safety
- Potty training
- Berkshire West Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Learning Walk Confidence

£50

Invite us to your setting and present and practice your 'learning walk' in preparation for an Ofsted inspection. An early years advisor will provide feedback and highlight strengths and recommendations.

ICAN – Early Talk

£140 whole setting

Suitable for all levels of practitioner who will develop an awareness of children's communication and language development. Practitioners will develop the ability to use a range of strategies that could help children aged 0-3 years to access the areas of learning and development in the EYFS curriculum.

Dingley Training

FREE for all practitioners!

We have been successful in being one of 10 local authorities to have access to an online inclusion programme that is being delivered by Dingley's Promise. This project aims to deliver two modules per term that can be completed at a time that suits practitioners. The first two available from **28 February 2022** are Inclusive Practice and Early Years Transitions.

We are recommending this as part of our CPD programme, especially for new starters as part of your induction process. Enclosed with this newsletter you will find information posters and you can also register your interest here:

[Early Years Inclusion Programme - Dingley's Promise](#)



Trauma Informed



Trauma Informed Level 1- FREE

Describes the baseline knowledge and skills required by everyone in the organisations partnered by the Reading children, young people and family strategic partnership. This level is comprised of two videos (nine and 11 minutes long) and both can be accessed [via the NES.](#)

Trauma Skilled Level 2 - FREE

After completing the Informed Level, the NES Transforming Psychological Trauma Programme is a skilled level interactive e-learning module. The level takes around two hours to complete and practitioners will be required to set up a learning account with Turas. There are three modules, with module one being compulsory and the other levels optional. Create an account here and select "international" from the drop down box. Next, [access the workshop here.](#)

Please email early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org when you have completed this training and you will be invited to a guided discussion.



DINGLEY'S PROMISE COMIC RELIEF EARLY YEARS INCLUSION PROGRAMME

Course 1: Introduction to Early Years Inclusive Practice



Are you concerned about Ofsted?

Would you or your employees like to have more knowledge, confidence and skills in the workplace?

Are you concerned about excluding children when you want to be inclusive to all?

Would you like parents to have even more confidence in your settings ability to enable their child to thrive than they do today?

If you answered yes to one or more of the above, then the Dingley's Promise Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion Programme is for you!



Transforming early education for children with SEND by building inclusion.



DINGLEY'S PROMISE COMIC RELIEF EARLY YEARS INCLUSION PROGRAMME

Course 2: Early Years Transitions



Are you concerned about Ofsted?

Would you or your employees like to have more knowledge, confidence and skills in the workplace?

Are you concerned about excluding children when you want to be inclusive to all?

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Transforming early education for children with SEND by building inclusion.



Celebrations! ★

Ofsted Inspections

Big congratulations to the following settings that have recently been inspected by Ofsted:

The following received a 'Good' grading:

- ★ Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School
- ★ Ashley Johnson
- ★ Emmer Green Kindergarten
- ★ Rajinder Sandhu

And to one of our childminders who has retained her '**Outstanding**' grading following an inspection in January:

- ★ Kate Abbott



Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School

Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School is delighted to receive a 'Good' judgment by Ofsted in all areas including early years provision. The report recognises how the school ensures a sharp focus on communication and language starting with children in the early years. Another highlight is how leaders make decisions that benefit pupils but are mindful of staff well-being too, with one member of staff reporting that the 'headteacher really looks after his staff'.

Ashley Johnson – Childminder

Ashley had an Ofsted inspection in October, where it was highlighted that Ashley places a strong focus on communication and language development and provides children with many opportunities to listen to stories and sing nursery rhymes. The inspector also mentioned that Ashley has good partnerships with parents and regularly shares information about their child's ongoing development to ensure consistency in their child's learning. Ashley is also very well organised and has a positive attitude towards her continued professional development.

'The whole experience was very positive and a learning experience too. Jayne and Debbie gave great advice and attending training really helped. A special mention to my fellow childminders too who gave great support and practical advice which helped me have a great Ofsted inspection.'



Celebrations!

Emmer Green Kindergarten

"As a new nursery we had our first Ofsted inspection following registration which was very positive. The inspector focused mainly on our under 3s rooms, looking at how our curriculum was implemented and targeted to individual children's learning and development needs; how children were cared for alongside the environments provided and was keen to explore how the three prime areas were promoted, in particular communication and language and physical development as these were the two areas we identified in an audit where COVID had had the greatest impact on children in our setting."

"The inspector was keen to hear how COVID had impacted our setting and how we had overcome the challenges during this period."

The inspector was very understanding of how COVID had impacted us operationally."

"The learning walk was a great opportunity to share our setting with the inspector and she was very keen to ask questions about practice and why we do things the way we do them."

"The inspector was keen to explore the menus and healthy lifestyle choices we promote and related this to oral health in terms of diet."

"One area the inspector focused her time was reading through staff supervisions and focusing on training staff have received in relation to these supervisions."

"Overall this was a very positive inspection with a very positive outcome with good feedback from staff on how the inspection was conducted." Rebecca Hartley, Manager

Rajinder Sandhu - Childminder

Rajinder had an Ofsted inspection in November and received a 'Good' rating. The inspector highlighted that Rajinder provides a welcoming environment for the children, supporting them to feel safe and emotionally secure. It was recognised that Rajinder has a clear focus on what she wants children to learn next and that she promotes young children's communication and language skills from an early age. The inspector also noted that Rajinder encourages children to give things a go, after observing that children were learning to keep themselves safe when managing risks. It was also recognised how Rajinder uses observation and assessment to support children's learning and is committed to her own professional development.

Kate Abbott - Childminder

"I was inspected at the end of January. It was a very positive experience. The inspector was kind and encouraging. She was a happy presence in the setting and put us all at ease."

"Unlike previous inspections which have involved lots of paperwork, she focused fully on observing the children and my interactions. She asked me questions about their experiences and development and asked how I organise my setting for each of them as individuals."

"The inspector asked about training I have enjoyed and how I had applied it to my practice and safeguarding questions."

"I was concerned that I wouldn't be able to demonstrate everything that we do, however she was keen to listen and asked me to show her anything that I felt was important. She happily read parent feedback."

"The children were happy and enthusiastic, showing her what they were doing and resources that they loved. We all had a wonderful morning."



Celebrations!

Achievements

Qualifications

Norcot Nursery School

Mrs Zoe Neale, Early Years Practitioner, has achieved a level 3 qualification, with distinction.

The Lodge Nurseries

Layla Littlewood has achieved a Level 5 Operations/Departmental Manager Qualification, with distinction.

Long Service

Kellie Fairchild

Kellie Fairchild from Welly Boot Lodge Childminding has reached another birthday and is celebrating her first full year of childminding and 18 years of working within childcare and education.

"I am so very proud of all that has been achieved during such challenging times and I am very grateful for the full and consistent support that the team at Reading Early Years' service have offered both myself and staff."

"The past year of childminding has been extremely rewarding and I am totally overwhelmed by the strong relationships myself and my assistants have made with our families."

"The work that goes into childminding by all Reading child minders is astonishing and I think more praise is needed for the work that childminders do. Well done to all. I am very proud to be amongst all that work under Reading local authority."



Norcot Nursery School

Lyn Dunk received a long service award in September 2021 after an impressive 20 years of dedication.

Emmer Green Pre-School

Wendy Robins will be celebrating a phenomenal 30 years' service this April.

Sure Start Whitley Day Nursery

Jo Dixon has just celebrated 20 years' service at the nursery. The team have congratulated and thanked her for her continuous dedication to supporting the children and families over the years.





Celebrations!

Government's Household Support Fund - food vouchers to eligible early years children

Since Easter of 2021, the Early Years team has coordinated the issuing of food vouchers to eligible early years children for holiday periods.



The vouchers were initially offered to the families of eligible two-year-old children and a recent extension to include EYPP and other vulnerable children was introduced last term.

Since the start of the scheme, a staggering £90,895 has been allocated between Reading families to contribute towards the cost of food and groceries for their eligible early years children.

The families really appreciated the financial support, and you can see on this page just a few of the comments we received.

There is no guarantee the Government's Household Support Fund will continue, but with the help of the Family Information Service and our Early Years Providers, we have been able to offer food vouchers to families who need them within a short period of time.

“Thank you so much for such a wonderful consideration I am really grateful”

“Yes please to the food vouchers and very much needed, so this email has very much made my day. Thank you so much for everything you do to help out us single mums, it's really appreciated.”

“Thanks a lot for this email. Is very helpful for me these times, as I'm actually struggling financially a lot.”

Sure Start Whitley Day Nursery

All three nursery rooms have enjoyed putting their creativity to the test in our recent 'Wicks tray of the week' competition. The staff in the room enjoyed the friendly competition over the last few months, with a room winning the best tray each week. The children had access to many fantastic trays which created an irresistible invitation to play and learn, and sparked curiosity, awe and wonder for them all! A few of our favourites were:

- Daffodils: Great British Bake Off tray
- Bluebells: 'The Big Top' circus tray
- Sunflowers: The Gruffalo tray

Lots of our Wicks tray photos are displayed in the nursery lobby area (see photo) and the parents/carers really enjoy seeing these.



Stepping Stones

Stepping Stones Preschool has teamed up with Neil Humphries from The Big Match to purchase a defibrillator for the setting and local community.

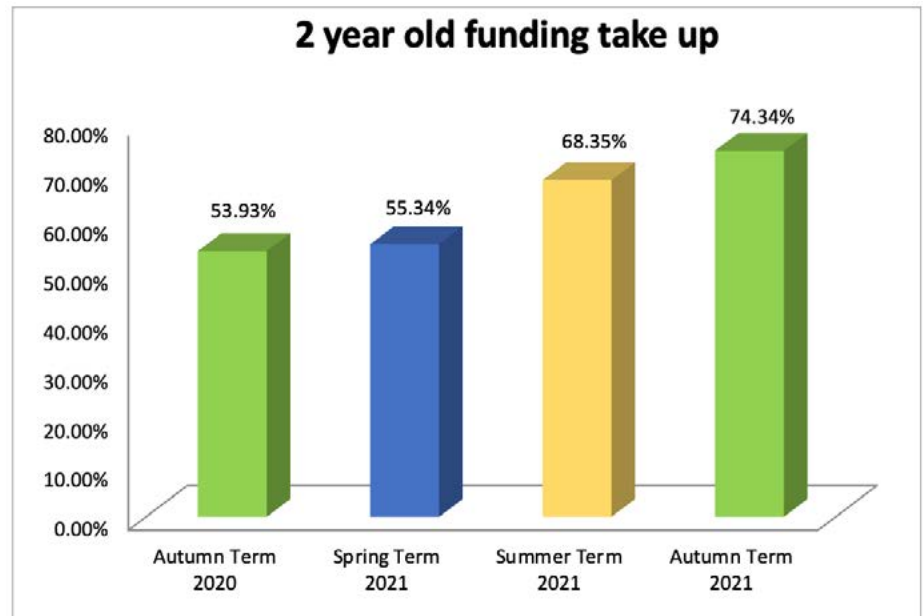
Pictured are the management team Claire and Toni alongside two of the preschool's superstars Tyrae and Freddie.



Two-year-old Education & Childcare Funding

Our two-year-old funding take-up has increased over the last year, and while this is good news because families are aware of the funding available, it is also a reminder that the last couple years will have seen many family's circumstances change due to COVID-19.

Therefore, it is really important that we all play our part to increase awareness and encourage families to check eligibility.



When should families start applying for two-year-old funding?

Child turns two between	When can they get two-year-old funding from	When can they apply from
1 September to 31 December	Term starting on or after 1 January	2nd week in October
1 January to 31 March	Term starting on or after 1 April	2nd week in January
1 April to 31 August	Term starting on or after 1 September	2nd week in June

Please visit the dedicated two-year-old funding page for more information on the offer, where you will also find the translated copies of our two-year-old funding leaflet which are available in the 10 most spoken languages in Reading - www.readingfis.org/childcare



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 April!

For children already accessing 30 hours funding at your setting

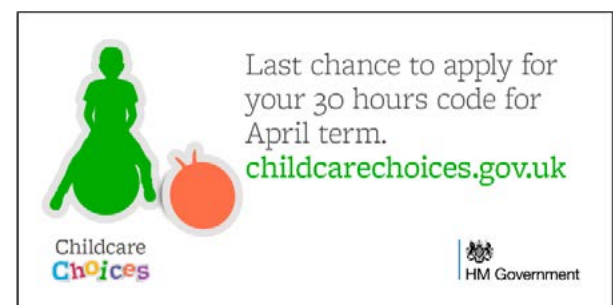
Please ensure parents have checked their details are up to date and have reconfirmed their 30-hour code by visiting:

www.gov.uk/childcareaccount

For new children starting from April

Please encourage families to apply for their 30 hours code by 31 March at:

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk



When should families start applying for 30 hours?

Child turns three between	When they can get 30 hours from	When can they apply from
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

Help parents with childcare costs, increase revenue into early years and childcare settings, and open up new opportunities.

Hempsall's will deliver a FREE Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) webinar for all types of childcare and out of school providers.

15 March 2022 - 1.30–3pm

[Book your place here](#)

16 March 2022 - 6.30–8pm

[Book your place here](#)

This 90-minute ZOOM webinar will be useful for all types of approved or registered providers in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales who offer paid-for childcare and activities for families. If you provide childcare services for children aged 0-11 years (up to 17 years if disabled), you are invited to attend.

The webinar is designed to raise awareness of TFC and increase understanding of it. They will be providing a useful overview of TFC for providers of how it could better benefit children and families. Ideas and tools that can motivate parents to sign up and use TFC to pay for childcare, out of school and holiday activities will also be shared. Helping families and children and the provider in turn.



Agenda

- Welcome and introduction
- Aim and purpose
- What is TFC?
- TFC: the story so far, evaluation and learning
- TFC – how it fits with sustainability and recovery planning
- Re-imagining TFC - The opportunities for families and providers
- Motivating behaviours – helping others to take actions
- Useful tools and information
- Summary points and evaluation.

Local Information

COVID Recovery Project

Research provides evidence that COVID-19 lockdowns have negatively impacted the development and learning of 0-2s. Brighter Futures for Children has secured funding to make a difference to the lives of children born during the COVID-19 lockdowns. The COVID Recovery Project will be led by a co-ordinator, Belinda South, and she will be supported by an outreach worker, data co-ordinator and four family group workers. The team will be responsible for delivering a graduated offer of support to parents and providing babies with age-appropriate learning opportunities they would normally have experienced in readiness for starting school. Sessions will be delivered to families from a range of venues across Reading including children's centres. The data co-ordinator will identify families who are eligible for support and, using an approved assessment tool, we will understand children's levels of attainment and adopt support and signposting as appropriate.

The team will work in partnership with a variety of partners including health visiting, speech and language teams,

children's centres, early years settings, SEND organisations and other community organisations to effectively identify, reach, overcome barriers and provide appropriate targeted support to families. One of the targets will be to ensure all children supported are accessing appropriate early years places, including two-year-old funded spaces. Two services will also be commissioned to support the aims of the project. One service will deliver a range of support to children and families to ensure they have not been impacted physically by the pandemic. This will include physical activity sessions, healthy eating information and signposting to support as appropriate. Another service will focus support on families whose children are currently awaiting a paediatrician assessment. They will provide support and guidance to access SEN services and appropriate activities while they are waiting.

If you would like any further information on the project, please contact the co-ordinator: belinda.south@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Sunnyside at Sun Street

Reading's children's centres are very excited to announce they will soon be able to open the doors for nursery provision within the Sun Street Children Centre:

"Sunnyside at Sun Street is a newly established small setting within the East Cluster's Children Centre, welcoming children who are eligible for two-year funding. We aim to provide a positive learning environment which can stimulate education and offer children the best start in life.

Information will soon be available on the Family Information Services website and we will be sure to keep you all updated".

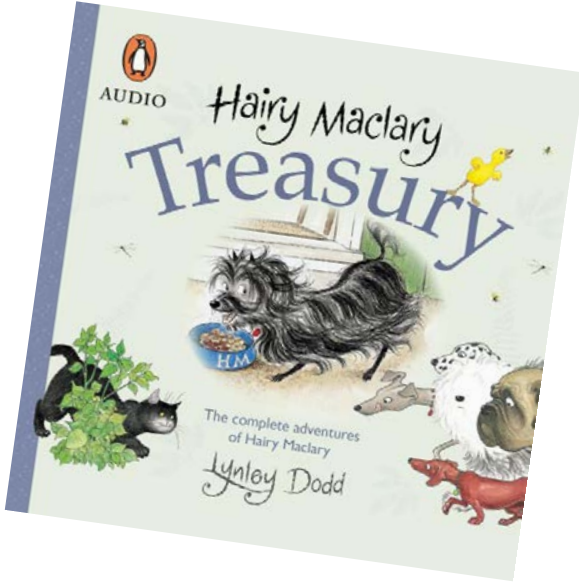


Sunnyside
at Sun Street

Local Information

Reading Libraries

Digital resources for children



This month we've chosen to highlight our digital offering for young children. Did you know that as well as a choice of thousands of adult emagazines on our Libby app we also offer some for young children? These include Little Sparkles, an innovative package of stories, puzzles and activities for three to six-year-olds to enjoy on their own, and Dot magazine, also designed specifically for pre-schoolers. If you are not a library member you can register instantly online at www.reading.gov.uk/leisure/libraries and then download the app to enjoy on your phone, tablet or computer.

And don't forget you can also borrow children's eBooks and eAudio, updated every month with your library card. Choose your child's latest read from our selection of eAudio once you've downloaded the Borrowbox app at www.reading.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/elibrary and listen to great books for children wherever you are on your phone, tablet or computer. If you prefer an eBook then Cloudlibrary has a lot to offer including picture books and beginner readers for the very youngest. Best of all of course, all these resources are FREE!

Reading Children's Centres

We continue to provide quality sessions to support children under five in Reading. All activities are developed by trained professional staff using the early years foundation stage statutory framework.

Below is a little taster of what is available for children and families across the Reading area:

- **Sensory Sensations** – if your child is fidgety and consistently on the move, or if they show signs of stress in a sensory situation, come along to our fun, five-week group. Our aim is to help you and your child understand this behaviour and learn how to reduce triggers and reactions.
- Have no time to attend a children's centre? Why not try one of our **virtual sessions**? Topics include: Coping with Crying, Weaning, Toileting & Sleep. We are always looking for input from you, so please let us know if there is a topic you would like to see on our virtual menu.
- If language is a barrier for you or someone you know, please let them know about our **Urdu Kahani Time** at Southcote Children's Centre on Wednesdays from 1-2pm. Azra delivers fun, friendly activities with songs and stories spoken in Urdu, Hindi, Punjabi and Mirpuri, helping your child learn, play, and develop ready for nursery and school.

ودراں می م رٹن می س ن رڈل چٹ وکھت واس
سے جب 13:00-14:00 ہدب تق واک می ن اہک
، ودراب ورگ می ن اب زودے می ن پ س چل دے رامہ
سے نل وب می بروپ زمی م روا می پ انچن پ، می دنہ
ارزع۔ می می ن اف رط می ک س ون اڈن اچ سے ل او
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مہ ارف س امی م رک سے ن لیت س ودروا می ج می رفت
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دی دم آس وچ س می رمع م امت می ک رمع

East Cluster Timetable

March - April 2022

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
Under 1s only

Rhyme and Song
(Sun Street)
11-11.45am
4 April 2022 only

Sing and Sign
(Sun Street)
1-2pm
Under 15 months only

INVITE ONLY
NHS health visiting service
- nine-month reviews
and 6-8 week post-natal

Tuesday

Tiny Talkers
(Sun Street)
10-11am

Toe to Head Baby Massage
(Sun Street)
10-11am
From six weeks of age

Ready, Steady Nursery
(Sun Street)
1-2pm

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

Register with us!



Wednesday

Together Time & F.A.M.I.L.Y
(Sun Street)
10-11am
For age 1-5 years

Sport in Mind Dance and Movement
(RISC, RG1 4PS)
10.30am-12noon

Bumps and Babes
(Sun Street)
1-2.30pm

Start reading, keep reading
(Sun Street)
1-2.30pm
6 April 2022 only

INVITE ONLY
NHS health visiting service -
nine-month reviews
(Caversham CC)

Thursday

Baby Dimensions
(Caversham)
10-11am

Buggy Walk
(Tutu's Cafe, Palmer Park)
10-11am

Rhyme and Song
(Palmer Park)
10-11am
7 April 2022 only

Toe-to-Head Baby Massage
(Caversham CC)
1.30-2.30pm
Sport in Mind Baby Yoga
(Museum of English Rural Life)
1.30-2.30pm

Friday

Diddi Dance
(Sun Street)
10-10.45am

Family Employment Advisor
(Sun Street)
Contact to arrange
booking, times vary

Useful contacts
Reading Family Information Service
fis@reading.gov.uk
Community midwives
0118 322 8059
Health visiting team
0118 931 2111

more info overleaf

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



Find us at
Reading Children's Centres



South Reading Timetable

28 February - 8 April 2022

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

Tiny Talkers
(Whitley CC)
1-2pm

Tuesday

Baby Dimensions
(Whitley CC)
10-11am

Wednesday

Buggy Walks
(Cintra Park)
9.45-11.45am

Midwife Meet & Greet
(Whitley CC)
9.30-11am, once a month

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

**Toe-to-Head Baby
Massage**
(Whitley CC)
10-11am
Eight weeks old +

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

West Cluster Timetable

March - April 2022



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:

www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Monday

Diddi Dance
(Battle Library)
10-10.30am
For 2-5 year olds
Starts 7 March

Messy Play
(Ranikhet CC)
10-11.30am
For 6-15 months

Tuesday

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

Baby Dimensions
(Ranikhet CC)
1-2pm
Under 1s only

Wednesday

Bumps and Babes
(Battle Library)
10-11.30am
Under 1s only

Story and Craft
(Ranikhet CC)
10-11.30am
For 18 months - five years

Toe-to-Head Baby Massage
(Ranikhet CC)
1-2pm
For babies from eight weeks old

Thursday

Together Time and F.A.M.I.L.Y
(Ranikhet CC)
9.30-11am
For age 1-5 years

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

Friday

INVITE ONLY
NHS health visiting
service - nine-month
reviews

INVITE ONLY
Portage
(Ranikhet CC)
1-2pm

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

March - April 2022

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:

Monday

Sensory Sensations

(Southcote CC)
10-10.45am

Toddler Mighty Movers

(Southcote CC)
11am-12noon

Bumps and Babes

(Coley CC)
1.30-3pm

Start reading, keep reading

(Southcote CC)
1-2.30pm

Tuesday

Together Time

(Coley CC)
10-11.30am

Portage

(Southcote CC)
10-11am

Waiting list, invite only

Family Employment Advisor

(Southcote CC)
9.30-11.30am

Wednesday

Tiny Talkers

(Southcote CC)
10-11.30am

Sport in Mind Toddler

(Southcote CC)
12.30-1.15pm

Sport in Mind Baby

(Southcote CC)
1.30-2.30pm

Urdu Kahani Time

(Southcote CC)
1-2pm

Getting to know your bump

(Southcote CC)
1-2pm

Thursday

Outdoor Adventurers

(St Mary and All Saints)
10-11.30am

Stay and Play

(Southcote CC)
1-2.30pm

Under 5s only

more info overleaf

Friday

Sport in Mind Baby

(Southcote CC)
10-11am

Under 1s only

Virtual Sessions 10-11am

- Coping with Crying
- Toileting
- Sleep

Rhyme and Song

(Southcote CC)
11-11.30am

Baby Dimensions

(Southcote CC)
1-2.15pm

**For all sessions,
please book**

**Call the West Central Cluster
on 0118 937 2535 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

Find us at



Reading Children's Centres

Introducing your partnership outreach worker



**Brighter
Futures for
Children**

Effective relationships lead to successful outcomes for children, young people and families.

As the **One Reading Children & Young People's Partnership**, driven by key leaders from across the voluntary and community sector, health, education, Reading Borough Council, police, business, children's services, schools and colleges, we believe early help is a collaborative approach and response, not a single provision. Our core aims are to improve outcomes for children, young people and families, reduce demand for specialist services and nurture resilient communities.

We think trauma informed, we respond restoratively and therapeutically, with the whole family in mind.

Early Help is the right help at the right time, in the right place. Our role is to assist partner agencies to coordinate early help arrangements to support children and their families.

The purpose of our role is to:

1. Provide practical support, consultation, training and development to professionals from all agencies so families can receive the right support at the right time
2. Promote and support multi-agency team around the family meetings
3. Identify needs as outlined in the Reading Threshold Guidance
4. Provide support to complete an Early Help Assessment

In partnership with the family, we aim to ensure:

- a. Appropriate thresholds are met
- b. There is a lead/key worker recognised by the family and partner agencies.
- c. There is a whole family assessment
- d. The voice and views of the child are actively sought, heard and represented throughout their participation
- e. There is a plan that takes account of all relevant family members which is regularly reviewed.

The lead professional will be able to contact us if they face any barriers that could prevent successful outcomes.

Email us at: OneReading@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

**Your Partnership Outreach
Workers are:**

Rob Bruce
South & East Reading

Geraldine Teer
North & West Reading

**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 (option 1)

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.***

Welcome to New Directions College

Delivering adult & community learning since 1968



New Directions College offers a complete range of formal and informal education programmes that include: **Traineeships, Apprenticeships, Kickstart Work Programmes** and work experience.

We specialise in delivering **GCSEs** and functional skills in **English and Mathematics, English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL)** and essential and advanced **digital skills qualifications**. Furthermore, we offer a breadth of **vocational qualifications** in subjects such as **business management, hospitality, Early Years and childcare**, courses for **teaching assistants** and those who work in the education and training sector.

Our range of **creative arts and crafts courses** are also vibrant and includes **ceramics, art, cartoons and animations, dressmaking, felting and textiles, cookery and languages**.

Ofsted has rated the College Good for the past 6 years (last inspected in June 2019) and we are committed to delivering an outstanding quality of education to our local communities and businesses.

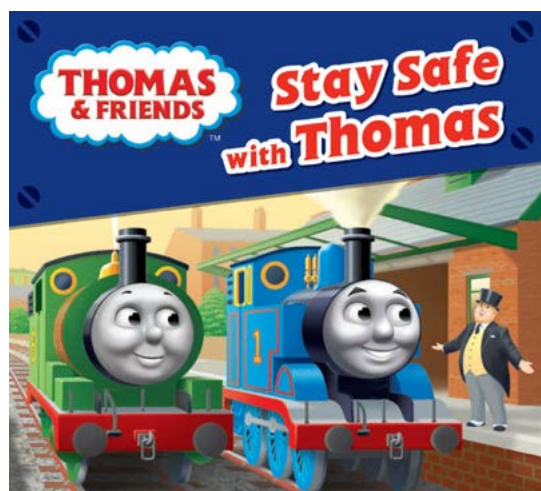
Free workshops about the railways for Early Years

This workshop aims excite children about travelling on the train and will cover some basic safety messages, including the yellow line!

The programme is delivered by the Southeast Communities Rail Partnership and Great Western Railway. These **free** interactive, classroom workshop are for 3 - 5 year olds.



The workshop will include the following activities:



1. **Make a train** - using a pre-cut and folded template children can make and decorate their own train.
2. **Ticket office** - children will be able to use plastic coins to buy a train ticket from the Ticket Office (using old train tickets!).
3. **Railway jobs** - who works on the railways and what do they do?
4. **Train pictures** - colouring train pictures.
5. **Reading activity** - I will read our Thomas the Tank Engine "Stay Safe with Thomas" story. A copy of the book will be given to your group.



Free train ride

After children have taken part in this workshop we can arrange a free return train journey to a local station. The train journey will include an 'I Spy' game.



"Thank you so much for today, the children really enjoyed your visit. We are excited to read the story again." *Nursery Manager, Brighton*

To make a booking please contact:

Maddy Mills (Education Officer)

Southeast Communities Rail Partnership

maddy@southeastcrp.org / 07852 221274

www.southeastcrp.org/education



Contact



0118 937 4730



early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org



@BFfCChild