

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing

18 December 2024

Dear Provider,

This is the last update from the EY, SEND and Childcare team this year. We would like to thank you all for being part of Reading's vibrant early years and childcare community and for working to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and families. We value your support and partnership and look forward to continued collaboration in 2025. Wishing you all peace and joy this Christmas and a happy new year.

Please note that in line with the Council's closure for all non-essential services over the Christmas period, the team is running a limited service. To ensure enquiries are dealt with in a timely manner please use the Early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org email.

Safeguarding concerns should be directed to:

CSPoA - [Report or refer concerns about a child - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

LADO - [Allegations against people in a position of trust - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

Safeguarding

BWSCP Training Survey

Have your say and contribute your thoughts to the local safeguarding CPD offer [here](#). The BWSCP training survey is open until 20 December 2024 and should only take a few minutes to complete.

Also, look out for the annual safeguarding survey in your inbox during the week commencing 6 January.

Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: annual report 2023-24

The report reveals that 485 children were affected by serious child safeguarding incidents between April 2023 and March 2024. It highlights key themes and patterns in practice for national government and local safeguarding partners to improve the protection of vulnerable children.

The following themes emerged:

- Safeguarding children with mental health needs
- Safeguarding pre-school children with parents with mental health needs
- Safeguarding children from risks outside the family home

Read the report [in full online](#).

Child Looked After – Designated Teacher and ePEP Training – EYFS

10 January, 10-11.30am (Teams)

The Virtual School team will provide training for practitioners covering the role of the designated teacher for children looked after, using ePEP, Pupil Premium Plus funding, attendance, raising attainment and aspiration.

Email Matt Bevan (matt.bevan@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) to book.

Designated Safeguarding Lead – Refresher Training

29 January, 9.30am-12.30pm (Civic Offices)

The lead practitioner for safeguarding must attend a child protection training course that enables them to identify, understand and respond appropriately to signs of possible abuse and neglect.

Please email Learning@brighterfuturesforchildren.org to book.

Leadership

Advisory Support

Childminders, daycare, sessional and wraparound and holiday providers are invited to request time with a member of the Early Years and Childcare team for non-urgent advisory support between agreed partnership visits. To request advisory support please complete the [request form](#).

Level 3 SEND Award

January to July 2025

Civic offices

£550pp

This training programme, developed by School Improvement Liverpool, is for Early Years SENCOs, or those due to take over the role, wanting to gain a qualification and recognition for their role. The course is accredited by NCFE CACHE, who are the leading Awarding Organisation for the care sector. Training days comprise of 12 guided learning sessions with time for independent research and assignment writing.

Sustainability – Break even and place planning

28 January, 10.30-11.30am & 29 January 7-8pm (Teams)

Attend one of the short workshops to plan for financial stability in response to the full roll out of expanded early years entitlements in 2025.

EYFS and Beyond

Christmas activities page

Colleagues in the Family Information Service (FIS) have created a [Christmas Activities page](#) on the website, which will be regularly updated with fantastic festive opportunities in Reading over the Christmas period. If you want to be kept informed of new events and activities for you and your family, or families you work with, like the [Reading FIS Facebook page](#).

Maths information from the Early Years Evidence Store - Education Endowment Foundation

The Maths Champions programme builds the knowledge of nursery practitioners to support children's early mathematical development. It is an online, one-year programme delivered to both Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI), maintained and school-based nursery settings.

Find out more [online](#).

Read how children's early understanding of numbers can be supported [on the Education Endowment Foundation website](#).

Reflection tool from Froebel Partnership:

The Froebel Partnership has published [Reflection with Guidance: A Froebelian tool for developing practice and transformation](#), which encourages and enhances reflective dialogue and practice and leads to continuous quality improvement.

Stronger Practice Hub:

Have you [signed up for the newsletter?](#)

There is lots of interesting training on offer on the website:

SEND workshop from National Children's Bureau - Thursday 9 January

Tamsin Grimmer – Poor behaviour or Schematic Play? Tuesday 14 January

Jan Dubiel – Learning Behaviours – Friday 17 January

Dingley's Promise - Early Years and SEND Assessment Guidance Tuesday 21 January

A Holistic Approach to the EYFS

16 January, 6.30-8.30pm & 30 January 2.30-4.30pm (Civic Offices)

The new session, delivered by trainers within the early years team, is designed to help all practitioners working in Early Years to reflect on:

- What underpins the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and why?
- The connection between mind, body & spirit in each child's experience (including using the Characteristics of Effective Learning & the principles of the EYFS)
- Child development within the Prime & Specific areas of learning.

Comic Relief Dingley's Promise Inclusion Training

A series of [training courses](#) is available free of charge for Reading practitioners. The practical elements provide information and strategies to support those working with children with a range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to work more inclusively.

Each practitioner can create their own training portal to access the different modules and work on them at a pace to suit.

- Introduction to Early Years Inclusive Practice
- Early Years SEND Transitions Training Course
- Having Difficult Conversations with parents
- Behaviours that challenge
- The Voice of the Child

Christmas resource pack

Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership has a [brilliant resource pack](#) for parents, featuring ideas for an autism friendly Christmas and activities for mental health and wellbeing.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Hub of Hope

The holidays can be a time for rest and celebration, but we know they can also be stressful. We all have days when we feel sad, anxious or low, but if how you are feeling is having an impact on your day-to-day life, help is available. The [Hub of Hope](#) is the UK's leading mental health support database. It is provided by national mental health charity, Chasing the Stigma, and brings local,

national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support and services together in one place for the first time.

A toolkit for EY educators

The [Championing Well-Being toolkit](#) for early years educators has tools and tips on how we can look to protect our wellbeing using boundaries, self-care, considering our compassion resilience amongst other tools.

Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency

Spring Term 2025 Funding Information

Please ensure that you check funding codes are valid before offering any child a funded place.

Working entitlements

Parents need to apply to HMRC for a code, for either of the entitlements listed below, by **31 December 2024** if they wish to claim the 15 hours of funding for the spring term.

We will not be able to use discretion to extend this deadline.

- 9month-old plus – Working Parent Entitlement (WPE)
- Two-year-old – Working Parent Entitlement (WPE)
- 30 Hours Extended Entitlement

Parents are expected to reconfirm their eligibility with HMRC every three months. If parents do not reconfirm their eligibility, then the funding will cease when the child reaches the end date of their grace period.

WPE and 30 hours Extended Entitlement codes can be checked on the Provider Portal using the existing Eligibility Checker.

More information on eligibility codes can be found [on the gov.uk website](#).

Two Year Olds – Targeted Funding

To confirm eligibility, parents are expected to apply via Brighter Futures for Children's online [citizen portal](#).

Please ask the parents of any targeted 2-year-old children to show you their confirmation email from us containing their eligibility code (it will be a 6-digit combination of letters or numbers).

Brighter Futures for Children will only issue codes to children who are eligible.

If the child in your care has been issued with a targeted 2-year-old code from another local authority, please send us their details so that we can validate it for you.

Please note that targeted 2-year-old codes do not have 'start or end' dates, nor do they require reconfirmation.

ROUND 2 - Early Years (30 hour) Expansion Capital Funding

Any private, voluntary and independent providers delivering funded early years places, including maintained nursery schools, that would like to expand their 30-hour childcare offer are asked to complete a formal funding application **by 6pm, Friday 31 January 2025**.

Any Maintained Nursery Classes that are interested in expanding their nursery are directed to apply to the [school-based nurseries capital grant available to schools](#) **by midday, on 19 December 2024**.

If you have any questions, please contact Lorna McGifford (lorna.mcgifford@brighterfuturesforchildren.org) or book a 15-minute Q&A slot with Lorna using the following links:

[10 January 2025](#)

[14 January 2025](#)

BfC Wraparound Expansion Childcare Funding Applications

Round 2 applications to expand or create wraparound provision for primary aged children will close at **5pm on Friday 10 January 2025**. Please contact the Wraparound Team to discuss any intention to expand wraparound childcare for primary aged children in Reading:

wraparound.childcare@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Specialist Advisory Support

- [SALT Surgery](#): 19 December & 16 January, 1-3pm
- [SEND Contact Days](#): First four Tuesdays of the month

Compliments/Celebrations

Your contributions

Is there something you are particularly proud of that has been achieved by staff or the children in your setting? Do you have a team member that is celebrating long service or achieved a new qualification that deserves a shout out? Please share these with us so that we can share your news with the sector!! Email: early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org.