

Early Years, SEND and Childcare briefing

5 December 2024

Dear Provider,

Welcome to the Early Years, SEND and Childcare briefing delivered to you on a fortnightly basis, please share with your teams and local networks.

Safeguarding

EYFS changes 2025

If you are starting to prepare for the [changes to EYFS legislation](#) due in September 2025, there is a page on the Foundation Years website that will help.

Information and training to support [understanding and recognition of allergy](#).

Information to support understanding of [food safety](#) can be found here:

Toy safety

There is an interesting article in Nursery World around [buying 'dangerous' toys from low price overseas websites](#). The CAPT has produced a toys fact sheet with advice on which toys are most dangerous for children and how to buy safe toys. Dangerous toys highlighted in the [fact sheet](#) include: Cheap copies of popular toys water beads – dangerous if swallowed. Magnetic toys, baby sleep products, slime - some can contain high doses of harmful chemicals.

Wider considerations

The Department for Education (DfE) has published a [policy statement](#) outlining the Government's commitment to reforming the children's social care system in England.

Training:

- **Online consultation for children previously looked after**
Designated teachers and supporting professionals can book a slot to discuss children previously looked after on **10 December** via Teams.
For more information and to book on please email:
cathy.mccarthy@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Leadership

Level 3 SENCO Training

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 as an early years SENCO. 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 allowed for own research and writing of assignments.

The course takes place over 12 Friday sessions at the Civic Offices and all 12 sessions **must** be attended.

The cost of the training is £550pp and this must be paid before the course starts to secure your place. If you have any questions or would like to discuss alternative payment options to enable staff to attend the training please contact the team.

To book on, please email the team at early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org by **Friday 13 December**.

EYFS and Beyond

Ofsted update

In November 2024, Ofsted completed their annual programme of Best Start in Life Curriculum Roadshows on the prime areas of learning, during which they continued to focus on the importance of communication and language and draw on the second part of their [early years research reports](#). Following on from this, they want to make sure these events are as accessible as possible, especially to childminders. To help with this, they are delivering a live webinar specifically designed for childminders. The [webinar](#) takes place on 16 December from 7-8pm.

You will hear from Ofsted inspectors about:

- the importance of the prime areas of learning
- what a curriculum is for the prime areas
- how we look at the prime areas on inspection
- the top 10 takeaway points from our research

Where you can find out more

You can read Ofsted's completed [Best Start in Life research review](#), and watch back a recorded version of the roadshows from last year, which explores [communication and language](#) on the Ofsted YouTube channel. It has produced some short videos on YouTube in a specific playlist called '[Early years FAQs for providers and practitioners](#)'. It also address some commonly asked questions in the '[Ofsted inspections: what early years providers and practitioners need to know](#)' collection.

Department for Education update

The Department for Education has published the **updated** [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Profile handbook](#) to support teachers and practitioners to complete EYFS Profile assessments in line with statutory requirements.

This update includes a change to allow a child's established or preferred mode of communication (including non-speaking communication, such as signing) to be used for all the early learning goals (ELGs), including the Speaking ELG.

To be judged as expected, children must demonstrate the criteria of the ELG. The mode of communication is the way a child chooses to communicate, not the language a child communicates in. Therefore, when using any mode of communication, the ELGs for the communication and language and literacy areas of learning must still be assessed in relation to the child's competency in English, or competency in British Sign Language.

Embedding musicality in everyday provision

In a publication for the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) Early Years hub, Professor Sara Baker considers how having fun with nursery rhymes can strengthen children's self-regulation [What do nursery songs and self-regulation have in common?.](#)

National Literacy Trust

National Literacy trust recently asked parents & carers of early years children aged from birth to 5, how often they were taking part in key learning activities with their child, including: reading, chatting, playing, singing, painting and drawing, playing outside, engaging in digital learning activities, visiting the library and group activities that support language development.

Findings from the survey in summer 2024 were compared with results from surveys conducted in 2019, 2020 and 2021. Read [here](#) for key findings from the research.

More info about the [Early Words Matter](#) campaign.

New ISP webinar

We have added a PowerPoint presentation to guide practitioners through [writing an individual support plan](#) (ISP) for a child with additional needs. It includes an example plan and guidance on best practice. This can be used for information or as a support tool when writing ISPs.

Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Response

We now have an updated [Ordinarily Available Provision and Graduated Response](#) on the Reading SEND Local Offer website.

Free training from Early Years SEND Partnership

The DfE funded [Meeting the needs of every child](#) online course is FREE to access and will provide Early Years Practitioners with an overview and understanding of inclusive practice for SEND in Early Years settings.

[Introduction to Speech and Language Challenges \(workshop for Parents\)](#)

SEND Local Offer Newsletter – Winter 2024

The winter edition of the [SEND Local Offer newsletter](#) is now available, packed full of information and updates to share with your families and colleagues.

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](#).

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Supporting Early Minds Webinar

The Supporting Early Minds Research Network are hosting a [webinar](#) on Thursday 16 January 2025, 1-2pm, “Getting it right for babies in group-based care. Growing cultures for voice, agency, and early relationships in early childhood environments”.

Dr Caroline Guard will be discussing her work at The University of Roehampton that captured babies’ experiences of group based early childhood settings.

Early Years and Childcare Sufficiency

BfFC 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

Breakfast Clubs Early Adopter Scheme

Schools with primary-school-aged children can apply to become an early adopter of the universal free breakfast clubs scheme. The expression of interest form is now live and will close on the **20 December 2024**. The Department for Education will be introducing free breakfast clubs in up to 750 early adopter schools from April 2025 as part of a test and learn phase in advance of national roll out.

Further information about the early adopters scheme and a link to apply is available at [Breakfast clubs early adopters scheme - GOV.UK](#)

Breakfast Clubs Early Adopter Webinar

The Department for Education is also hosting a webinar on the 5 December offering schools the chance to learn more about the breakfast club programme and the application process. Schools can register to attend the webinar [here](#).

Flexibility of provision

Did you know you can [Register as a childminder without domestic premises](#) - New application guidance for a new category of childcare provider - childminders who provide care solely from somewhere other than a home - as part of a series of changes the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced to give the early years sector more flexibility. Ofsted has begun accepting applications for this new type. It has published a [blog post](#) by Jayne Coward, Deputy Director for Early Years Regulatory Policy and Practice, and a series of [videos](#) explaining the changes and answering some questions that may arise:

- [New changes for childminders and childcare on domestic premises providers](#)
- [What is a childminder without domestic premises?](#)
- [Further flexibility for childminders](#)
- [Working from non-domestic premises – removing the 50% limit](#)
- [Updates for currently registered childcare on domestic premises providers](#)

Various updates have been made to cover the changes introduced by the DfE for specific details of each change, please see the latest update on the site at [Providing childcare - GOV.UK](#).

Training

Specialist Advisory Support

- [SEND Contact Days](#): 10 & 17 December
- [SALT Surgery](#): 19 December, 1-3pm

The Autumn term training programme [can be found online](#).

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

Kind regards

Early Years Team

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