

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing

22 May 2025

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

New illustrated Working Together to Safeguard Children

An illustrated guide to explain how different people and organisations work together to help, support and protect children and families [Statutory Guidance - Working Together Guidance](#).

EYFS space requirements consultation launch

On 12 May, the government launched a [consultation](#) seeking views on whether to introduce flexibility into the EYFS that will allow free-flow outdoor space to be included in the indoor space requirements, with a possible cap on the number of additional places that can be offered. The government is also seeking feedback on the proposed definition of “free-flow”.

The consultation runs to 11 July and they want to hear from as many people as possible to inform a decision on what to do next. Please complete the online survey and encourage other providers, and parents, to complete the survey too.

Safeguarding and risk management

In early years settings, the general legal requirements, including those concerning health and safety, are supported by more detailed specific legal requirements. Risk management is every staff member's responsibility and involves proactively identifying potential hazards, assessing associated risks and implementing control measures to ensure the safety and well-being of children and staff. This includes regular risk assessments, which are a legal requirement and should be reviewed regularly, especially after changes in the environment or activities.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requires providers to ensure they take all reasonable steps to manage risks. We are approaching the time of year when changes are made, please ensure you have reviewed your risk analysis in particular around food safety (eating and allergens), safer sleeping, care routines, safer recruitment, emergency procedures, child absences and whistleblowing.

To implement an effective risk assessment policy, early years providers should use these best practices: Proactive hazard identification, continuous staff training, engaging children in safety, collaborating with parents and carers and finally monitoring and reviewing - to create a safe environment for all.

Operation encompass

A police-led notification scheme enabling vital and next-day information sharing between police and education settings in cases of domestic abuse involving children. The [Operation Encompass website](#) hosts free training for safeguarding leads, although all staff may find the training helpful.

The website also contains [resources for educational settings](#) including early years specific resources.

Martyn's law

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, also known as Martyn's Law, received Royal Assent on 3 April 2025 and marks a significant step in enhancing public safety. For more information, please refer to the Home Office's [Martyn's Law Factsheet](#) and [Toolkit](#).

NSPCC learning

[Low-level concerns](#) | [NSPCC Learning](#)

BFFC training and network offer:

- **Universal Safeguarding Children**
5 June, 1-4pm (Civic Offices). Book via the [SLA](#) or [email](#)
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead – New to the Role**
10 June, 9.30am-3.30pm (Civic Offices) £33pp
To book a space email learning@brighterfuturesforchildren.org
- **Domestic Abuse Awareness – Level 1**
19 June, 9.30am-12.30pm (Teams)
To book a space complete the RBC booking form www.reading.gov.uk/trainingform

Leadership

Do Something Big campaign – advertising vacancies on Find A Job ahead of summer activity

The next wave of the [Do Something Big campaign](#) will run from 19 May - 14 September 2025, encouraging more people to explore a fulfilling career in early years and childcare. New adverts include 15-second social videos that challenge common barriers to joining the sector, alongside new content specifically designed to encourage more men to consider working in early years roles. The campaign will be across TV, radio, digital, social media, billboards, and the rail network.

The [campaign website](#) also directs thousands of potential applicants to [Find A Job](#) every week and providers can advertise roles on there for free, which will ensure they are seen by a large pool of candidates.

Please see the attached 'DWP Find a Job instructions' to help create an account and post any current or upcoming jobs in their setting.

Providers should use the term 'early years' in the title of the job adverts and select 'Education and childcare jobs' for the job category.

Ofsted – EYPP

Ofsted has published a [new blog](#) following guidance from the [Department for Education](#) and the [Education Endowment Foundation](#) about Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) funding. It explains:

- how Ofsted look at the use of the funding on inspection
- the sort of questions Ofsted might ask
- what you need to know if your setting has no children who receive EYPP

[How we look at the use of Early Years Pupil Premium \(EYPP\) in our inspections of early years settings – Ofsted: early years](#)

Outdoor Play

NDNA's free factsheet on outdoor play looks at supporting physical development through outdoor play, planning outdoor spaces, supporting risks in play and ways that you can expand children's physical activity and time in nature, outside of your own provision when outdoor space is limited.

[Outdoor-Play-England.pdf](#)

Climate Action Plan

The Department for Education expects all education settings to have a climate action plan by 2025. For **free** help to develop and progress your climate action plan, register for interactive workshops

throughout May. They have developed workshops which will guide you to identify key actions, engage colleagues, and access support to integrate sustainability into school life. There are **Early Years specials** - [book here now](#) to secure a place.

DfE Check an early years qualification service – available now!

Early years managers can now use the new [Check an early years qualification](#) digital service to quickly verify whether staff qualifications meet the requirements for staff:child ratios in England. The new service can be accessed at https://check-an-early-years-qualification.service.gov.uk/?utm_source=reading&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=la. This free GOV.UK tool allows managers to check a qualification's approval status by entering key details such as:

- course start date
- level
- awarding organisation

At the end of the process, a clear outcome is provided, which can be printed for your records.

Why use the new service?

Using the new 'Check an early years qualification service':

- saves time during recruitment and HR processes
- supports workforce planning ahead of the September 2025 expansion of funded childcare entitlements
- reduces confusion when checking qualifications

The service is tailored specifically for early years managers. All other user groups (for example practitioners) should continue to use the [Early Years Qualifications List \(EYQL\)](#) to check qualifications, and contact our supplier [Ecctis](#) if they are unable to find the qualification on the EYQL. The Check an early years qualification service is for qualifications achieved in the UK. Holders of non-UK qualifications should continue to contact our supplier [Ecctis](#) for an assessment. If you need help using the service you can [contact DfE](#).

DfE Newsletter

The DfE has a new newsletter for early years providers that will begin in early June. . Subscribers will receive the latest announcements, information and news from the department on how we are reforming early years education and support childcare expansion. You can sign up by visiting the link below and clicking on the "Sign up to receive our provider email updates" tile.

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/provider-guidance-and-resources

BfC training and network offer:

- **Workshops on the Statutory Guidance – Meals and snacks**
3 June, 12.30-1.30pm
11 June, 6.30-7.30pm
- **Workshops on the Statutory Guidance – Other funding sources**
3 June, 6.30-7.30pm
10 June, 2-3pm

To book on to the Workshops please complete the [booking form](#) and share your questions with the team ahead of the session.

- **All Room Leaders Network**
19 June, 6.30-8.30pm (Civic Offices). Book via the [SLA](#) or [email](#)
- **All Childminders Network**
26 June, 6.30-8pm (Hybrid - Civic Offices & Teams). Book via the [SLA](#) or [email](#)

Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers 2025

This major research study is carried out for Department for Education (DfE) by IFF Research and London Economics. The study is crucial to obtaining an accurate picture of the early years sector and has helped to inform key policy decisions since its inception in 1998. This happens annually and results of the survey is published each December. If asked to complete the survey, you might receive a telephone call from IFF research and London Economics, as well as receiving an email with an identity code to keep anonymity. For further information about the survey [Survey of Childcare and Early Years Providers: 2025 - Official statistics announcement - GOV.UK](#)

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Virtual Reality Trauma Awareness

Join Reading Virtual School in the Summer term for an immersive training experience using videos and reflection to understand how adversity and trauma can impact a child's development, presentation and ability to engage in learning. Explore how professional curiosity and building good relationships can support children to heal from trauma and achieve stronger outcomes. For more information and to book a session for your setting please email cathy.mccarthy@brighterfuturesforchildren.org.

EYFS and Beyond

Schools' Early Intervention Funding update

Schools' Early Intervention Funding will not be continuing from March 2025 please note EYIF (Early Years Inclusion Funding) remains available for PVI's and maintained nursery schools. More information about Early Years Inclusion Funding can be found here: [Reading Directory | Early Years Inclusion Funding \(EYIF\)](#).

Free Maths Webinar from Early Education

[The importance of spatial reasoning for early education](#)

In the webinar, you will hear about the [Spatial Reasoning Toolkit](#) which is a FREE resource designed by the [Early Childhood Maths Group](#)

Oral Health

For information on oral health in early years, please see the [Help for early years providers : Oral health](#) page, which contains useful guidance and information to share with families.

BFFC training and network offer:

- **Childminder SchemaPlay Workshop (2 parts)**
5 June & 18 June, 6.30-8.30pm (Civic Offices). £20pp (Free to Childminder Partnership Members) Book via [email](#)
- **Attention Autism – 2 day course**
17 & 18 June, 9.15am-4pm (Civic Offices). £150pp. Book via [email](#)
- **Monthly Group Discussions – Quality Interactions**
17 June, 10-11am (Teams)
To book a space complete the [booking form](#) and share your questions with the team ahead of the session.

Specialist Advisory Support

- [SEND Contact Days](#): First four Tuesdays of the month
- **Early Years and Childcare 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 advisory support between agreed partnership visits.

Local News

[Children's Centres](#)

[Reading Children's Centres](#) welcome all families and provide a wide range of services to give children the best start in life. Please share the link to the website with your families for further information and timetables.

Training

Under 5s Training Offer 2025-2026

The new CPD training offer from the Early Years, SEND and Childcare team for 2025/2026 is now available on our [website](#).

[Dingley's Promise Comic Relief Early Years Inclusion Training](#) is time limited free early years inclusion training that is funded by the Comic Relief Changemakers programme and aims to embed inclusive practice.

[DfE Early Years Child Development Training](#) is free online training that provides an overview of child development and offers practical advice for supporting children in your setting, including reception years.

Stronger Practice Hubs

Have you signed up to the [Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub](#) yet? As a hub member you can receive updates about training opportunities, Networking events and practitioner support.

Compliments/Celebrations

Congratulations to Kennet Day Nursery

Kennet Day Nursery has recently been re-accredited with their Level One Inclusion Award. Congratulations on this achievement which recognises the inclusive practice that is happening in the setting!

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

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