

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing

12 September

Dear Provider,

It's a packed and informative briefing this week with details of [Ofsted changes to education inspection](#), [the Championing SEND programme](#), [Parental hub for Best Start in Life](#) and the [Early Years Autumn term training programmes](#).

Safeguarding

Ofsted toolkit

Guidance for inspectors and providers on inspecting registered early years settings in England under the renewed education inspection framework, available for use from 10 November 2025. There is a strong safeguarding focus running throughout as well as a stand alone met or not met judgement.

[Early years inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information - GOV.UK](#)

Please make yourself familiar with all 3 documents, with myth busting included in the operating guide. There are comments for childminder only inspections – for example, grades will not be limited because childminders work on their own or don't care for children with SEND.

- There is guidance for no children on roll inspection in the operating guide.
- There are links to other documents – for example, the [Ofsted inspector's code of conduct](#).
- Ofsted have yet to inform providers at what grade or combination of grades they will lose their Local Authority funding.
- There is a link to more information about [Childcare Register compliance inspections](#).
- The ['Giving children the best start in life' \(07.25\) publication from DfE](#) confirms that Ofsted will be moving to four yearly early years inspections from April 2025. New registration first inspections will reduce from 30 months to within 12-18 months.

Martyn's law

A factsheet and guidance are attached.

BFFC training and network offer:

- **DASH & MARAC Training – Level 2 (Childminder session)**
15 September, 6-9pm (Teams). Book on by emailing CSP@reading.gov.uk
- **Local Safeguarding Processes for DSL Training – Refresher**
23 September, 1-4pm (Civic Offices). Book via [email](#)
- **Domestic Abuse Awareness Training – Level 1**
25 September, 9.30am-12.30pm (Teams). Book on via the [application form](#)
- **DASH & MARAC Training – Level 2**
24 September, 1.30-4.30pm (Civic Offices). Book on via the [application form](#)

Leadership

Ofsted confirms changes to education inspection and unveils new-look report cards

Ofsted has set out a renewed approach to education inspection which will take effect from 10 November 2025.

Key changes include:

- Nurseries and childminders to be inspected more frequently
- A new inspection report card
- 5-point grading scale
- A wider range of evaluation areas
- New inspection toolkits

- New inspection methodology
- A new online insights platform - 'Ofsted – Explore an Area'
- A new system for monitoring schools where improvement is needed
- Increased resource and training for inspection teams

Press release:

[Ofsted confirms changes to education inspection and unveils new-look report cards - GOV.UK](#)

[New era of accountability to drive up standards for all children - GOV.UK](#)

Inspection toolkits:

[Early years inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information - GOV.UK](#)

[School inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information - GOV.UK](#)

Registering and inspecting school-based early years provision: what the updated guidance means for you

Ofsted: education have published a blog to inform of changes to registration and inspecting school-based provision. Read the [new post](#).

Ofsted – Inspection Framework Webinars

From September 2025, providers can attend live webinars that set out the main changes to education inspections starting in November 2025. The programme of webinars for early years, schools, further education and skills and initial teacher education settings will be recorded and available on Ofsted's [YouTube channel](#). [Book an event](#)

Update to Targeted 2-year-old funding criteria

Following the closure of tax credits on 5 April, the Department for Education (DfE) has removed working and child tax credits from the list of eligibility criteria.

For full details of the eligibility criteria, please visit: [Reading Directory](#)

School-Based Nursery: Phase 2

The DfE has just launched phase two of the School-Based Nursery Expansion Programme. This builds on the foundations of the first phase, with an increased focus on supporting families in disadvantaged areas to access early years provision.

State-funded primary schools and maintained nursery schools can apply for up to £150,000 of capital funding to create or expand on-site nurseries. The application window opens between 22 September and 11 December 2025.

The second phase will support projects ready to offer new places in 2026/27 with schools and local authorities working together to establish supply and demand.

- Details of the grant process are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2025-to-2026>
- Case studies - [School-Based Nurseries](#)

Free Webinar: Flexible working in early years settings

A free DfE funded webinar is taking place on 8 October at 10am which aims to explore staff retention in early years education. Find out more and sign up here - [Home | Flexible working in Multi-Academy Trusts and schools](#)

Health Visiting & School Nursing Recommissioning Survey

Please see below a survey asking all stakeholders to complete regarding their current experiences of the health visiting services and school nursing services. They are in the process of recommissioning this service and require feedback on current services to inform planning.

Please complete by 21 September 2025 - [Health Visiting and School Nursing Stakeholder Survey 2025](#)

Monthly Multi Agency Early Years SEND Professional Panel

A new process has been created to support under fives with SEND. This will be a monthly multi agency panel of early years professionals from education and health to discuss individual children's cases ensuring that appropriate services/provision is in place.

It is also a process whereby professionals can notify the Local Authority of a child who is likely to need a high level of SEND provision in school and/or is a risk of missing education in school. The panel will provide oversight to early years professionals on next steps including whether to proceed with an Education Health Care Needs Assessment request with the current evidence available as to support a more streamlined process into school and inform SEND teams of the child's needs.

Please see attached the referral form to be used into the panel; it is a summary form, and then professionals can upload existing information/reports you have available:

Reasons why you may refer:

- You are unsure on what support the child/family may need and would like advice/guidance
- You are notifying the LA that the child is likely to need specialist provision/high level of support at school

Dates:

- The panel will meet monthly on the third Tuesday of each month
- Submission deadline dates for paperwork are the second Tuesday of each month

Early Years SEND Transformation Webinars – Additional Dates Added

We are running webinars to update you all on changes in relation to Early Years SEND. This includes changes to specialist placement processes; a new monthly Multi Agency Professionals Panel that you can refer in to and expansion of the EY SEND team. Please book onto an upcoming webinar to find out more:

15 September, 3.30-4.30pm

25 September, 11.30am-12.15pm

To book a place on any of the webinars please complete the [request form](#)

Wraparound & Holiday Childcare Network Meeting

We invite all primary schools, wraparound and holiday providers to join us for our next upcoming Wraparound Childcare Network meeting for Reading Borough. This event is an excellent opportunity to connect with fellow childcare providers, share best practices, and discuss the latest developments in the sector.

Agenda

- **Safeguarding – Changes to Legislation**
- **Wraparound Funding Updates & Progress**
- **Aimee Trimmer BfFC Early Years SEND Manager – BfFC SEND Support for Wraparound provisions**
- *Comfort Break*
- **Food and Nutrition**
- **Going Green**

- **Future CPD & Training**
- Question and Answers

BFFC training and network offer:

- **Early Years SEND Transformation Webinar**
15 September, 3.30-4.30pm
25 September, 11.30am-12.15pm (Teams). Book on via the [request form](#)
- **Wraparound & Holiday Childcare Network Meeting**
Thursday 25 September 2025, 12.30-2.00pm or 7-8.30pm (Teams)
12.30-2pm (Teams) [Book Here - Afternoon Meeting](#)
7-8.30pm (Teams) [Book Here - Evening Meeting](#)
Please book by 20 September. To attend one of the meetings, you may need to create an account at <https://readingeducationservices.co.uk/>

EYFS and Beyond

Prime Minister's letter to parents

To mark this week's childcare expansion milestone, Prime Minister Keir Starmer has written to parents reaffirming his Plan for Change promise to give children the best possible start with 75% of five-year-olds reaching a good level of development by 2028. We would be grateful for your support in helping this letter reach as many parents as possible by sharing it through your channels. You can [read the Prime Minister's letter to parents](#) on the DfE's Education Hub.

The Early Education & Childcare Coalition

[The Early Education and Childcare Coalition](#), which unites the voices of parents, children, providers, early years professionals and the wider business community in England, is developing a Sector Advisory Panel to provide a space for frontline early years educators to shape their projects and speak directly to those in power. The coalition is looking for pre-school/ nursery staff, early education and childcare assistants, apprentices, childminders or nannies to join the panel. Find out more here [Sector Advisory Panel Application — Early Education and Childcare Coalition](#)

Transition: Home Visits

A number of providers are already offering or considering offering home visits to support effective transition. We are interested to hear from anyone who would like to contribute to a small network group to discuss the benefits/challenges of offering home visits. Please send an email to early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org to express interest.

The Best Start in Life Parental Hub

The childcare choices website has been replaced by 'The Best Start in Life Parental Hub' website. This parental hub supports families to find information about childcare offers, health and early learning all on one site [Homepage | Best Start in Life](#).

Settings that have received childcare, education or health government funding, please use or replace current logo's with the 'Best Start in Life' logo. The best start in life logos can be found here: [Best Start in Life | Campaigns | Campaign Resource Centre](#).

The Best Start in Life website/information will need to replace any reference to the Childcare Choices website. Therefore, please ensure your contracts, fees & funding information, policies, websites, newsletters now refer and direct families to [Homepage | Best Start in Life](#).

NDNA Championing SEND Programme

Championing SEND is a year-long online training programme designed to boost practitioner confidence and skills with regards to supporting children with SEND. There are 9 steps to work through in the first nine months, and then a further three months to explore the free resources section.

The NDNA Championing SEND programme includes:

- The Role of the SENCO – a recorded virtual course for the SEND Lead and SEND deputy to complete
- Online coaching course for the SEND Lead and SEND deputy to complete
- Three online SEND courses created to support staff to develop their practice (up to 25 practitioners can complete each course)
- Staff confidence and learning environment audits and action plans
- Core activities that can be used to support all children attending your setting
- One live webinar as well as access to webinar recordings
- A bank of resources including activity ideas, inspirational images, case studies, factsheets, information about pedagogy and practice, malleable play recipes, links to useful websites and articles... and lots more!

The first step settings need to take is to register their interest using this [Expression of Interest Form](#).

Contact 01484 624136 or championing.send@ndna.org.uk if you have any questions or require further information.

Developing Learning Behaviours in Early Years Education

Thames Valley and South Central Early Years Stronger Practice Hub are delighted to invite early years leaders and professionals to take part in a fully funded 6-month programme between October 2025 and March 2026.

This unique professional development opportunity will be led by Jan Dubiel, a nationally and internationally recognised specialist in early childhood education and noted as of the UK's most influential voices in early childhood education (*TES*, 2018).

Participants will:

- Explore critically identified learning behaviours including executive function, self-regulation, metacognition, emotional literacy and creativity.
- Understand how learning behaviours underpin early literacy, mathematics, and overall school readiness.
- Gain evidence-based insights and practical strategies to identify, assess and nurture these behaviours in EYFS provision.
- Collaborate with other early years leaders to share experiences and practical solutions.
- Leave with tools that transform outcomes for children

Programme Highlights:

- Launch event: 14 October 2025
- Six-month programme including network meetings, evidence-based deep dives, and practical application tasks.
- Fully funded – no cost to your setting.

Find out more here bit.ly/LearningBehaviours

How to Apply:

- 40 setting places available (two practitioners per setting).
- At least one participant must hold Level 3 QTS or equivalent.
- Deadline for Expressions of Interest: 22 September 2025
<https://forms.office.com/e/3VfVv8P07R>

If you require any further information, please contact admin@tveysph.org/manager@tveysph.org or on 07561852052

BFFC training and network offer:

- **A Holistic Approach to the EYFS**
23 September 6.30-9pm (Civic Offices). Book via [email](#) or the [SLA](#).
- **Monthly Group Discussions**
Ofsted Toolkits – 30 September, 12.30-1.30pm (**new time**)
Inclusion – 7 October, 10.30-11.30pm
Supporting children's development through mealtimes – 12 November, 10-11am
Reserve your place by completing the [booking form](#)

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Centre for Early Childhood

The Centre for Early Childhood has designed short films to be used by people who work with babies, children and families to support conversations about social and emotional development. Check them out here – [The Centre for Early Childhood Explainer Series - YouTube](#)

Specialist Advisory Support

SEND Advisory Support

[SEND Contact Days](#): First four Tuesdays of the month

Angela Smith and Samantha Smith, our Senior SEND Advisors, will be contacting you to arrange a SEND reflection visit in autumn; and this will be an opportunity to introduce our new SEND advisors and begin handovers where appropriate to the new EY SEND Advisors.

New Early Years SEND team email address

We have a new email address that you can use to contact the EY SEND Team for any general SEND queries that does not require your specific advisor to respond –

EarlyyearsSEND@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

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 activities timetables

[Reading Children's Centres](#) welcome all families and provide a wide range of services to give children the best start in life. The timetables of activities taking place over the summer is now available and can be shared with your families.

Invitation from Playday & Fennies Nurseries – Early Years Coming Together session

Fennies Reading Nursery and **Playday Nursery** have come together to invite you to a special evening of networking, sharing ideas, and discussing the latest updates in the early years sector on **Thursday 25 September 2025, 5.30-7.00pm** Fennies Nursery Reading, Rose Kiln Lane RG2 0HP.

Aimed at nursery managers and deputies, this is a fantastic opportunity to: connect with fellow nursery managers and deputies, share knowledge and explore fresh perspectives Help build a new,

refreshing local managers' network. **Food and refreshments will be provided** — come for the conversation, stay for the community! They would like to do these quarterly, visiting a different setting each time. RSVP to info@playdaycaversham.co.uk by **Friday 19 September** if you'd like to attend.

Training

Under 5's Training Offer Autumn term 2025

The CPD training offer from the Early Years, SEND and Childcare team for the autumn term is now available on our website:

- [Childminders](#)
- [Wraparound Childcare](#)
- [PVI's, Schools and Maintained Nursery Schools](#)

[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.

Wraparound & Holiday Childcare Online Inclusion Training

We are delighted to be working in partnership with [Families First](#) to offer all Reading Wraparound and Holiday Childcare providers access to free online training which supports inclusion. This is an interactive online course that looks at the meaning of inclusion and how it feels to be excluded. The training will unpack some of the legislation, explore a variety of needs, myth busting some common misunderstandings, as well as providing practical ideas and resources for making changes across your whole setting for all children. To access the training, please [click here](#) and see the [flyer attached](#).

Compliments/Celebrations

Do you know someone who deserves an Honour?

As the King's Birthday 2026 honours round approaches, let's raise the profile of the early years and childcare sector and nominate colleagues who have made a difference.

The honours system recognises people who have:

- Made achievements in public life
- Committed themselves to serving and helping Britain
- And more specifically, through their hard work, are helping to raise standards in our sector

There are different levels of award:

- Knight or Dame: For a major contribution at national level which is inspirational and significant, requiring commitment over a long period of time.
- Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE): For having a prominent but lesser role at national level, or a leading role at regional level.
- Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE): For having a major local role in any activity, including people whose work has made them known nationally in their chosen area.

- Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE): For an outstanding achievement or service to the community which has a long-term, significant impact and stands out as an example to others.
- British Empire Medal (BEM): For a 'hands-on' service to the local community. This could be a long-term charitable or voluntary activity, that has made a significant difference.

Please complete the attached form and send to jane.flaherty@education.gov.uk. **The deadline for nominations is Sunday 21 September.**

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. Previous updates can be found on our [website](#).

Kind regards

Early Years Team

Brighter Futures for Children

Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU

Email: early.years@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Web: www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org

