

## Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing 28 November

Dear Provider,

This briefing is packed full of [safeguarding updates](#), free training offers, a link to [The SEND Local Offer winter newsletter](#) and information under the new [Best Start in Life section](#).

### Safeguarding

#### Safeguarding: Bitesize Training

Please find attached a calendar of bite-sized training sessions as part of the Berkshire White Ribbon Campaign. These sessions are designed to support professionals working in or across Berkshire. Each session includes a dedicated link for further details and registration. Most sessions will be delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams, with one in-person event scheduled in Wokingham on 26 November. If you have any queries, please contact Sophie Wing-King at [Sophie.wing-king@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:Sophie.wing-king@bracknell-forest.gov.uk).

#### NSPCC Early Years

NSPCC Learning has launched a new online masterclass on the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) safeguarding and welfare requirements. The on-demand training session focuses on: the new safeguarding training requirements; safe recruitment and creating a safer culture; and reducing online risks for children under five. The masterclass has been designed for anyone in England working or volunteering with babies and young children in early years settings.

[Safeguarding in early years settings masterclass](#)

#### Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)

The ICO has added clearer guidance for schools, nurseries, and colleges to go alongside its 10-Step Guide on sharing information to keep children safe. This extra advice includes practical examples to give education settings more confidence when making decisions.

Useful Links:

[ICO education-sector guidance](#)

[Guidance for education sector on data-sharing - overview \(Blake Morgan\)](#)

[ICO "Think. Check. Share." A4 poster \(good for staff rooms\)](#)

### Leadership

#### Wraparound Childcare Providers: Business Planning for Success

We are pleased to announce a new, free training opportunity designed to help your wraparound services achieve long-term **sustainability, quality, and inclusion**. We are partnering with [Families First CIC](#) to offer specialised virtual training: **Business Planning for Success**.

This 2-hour virtual course is designed to support owners, leaders, managers, committee members, and governors with financial responsibility for your provision.

The training guides participants through a 10-step business planning process. It focuses on ensuring that quality and inclusion remain central to your model while providing practical financial guidance. Specifically, the course content will:

- Challenge a "funding-led" approach, encouraging you to find funding that fits your operational aims.
- Explore potential income streams to boost financial viability.
- Support your compliance with equality duties.
- Share real-world examples from successful providers across the country.

To gain the full benefit of this training, providers are required to attend two sessions: one Introductory Session (Session 1 OR 2) AND the Reflective Session (Session 3).

Session Type	Date & Time	Content	Action Required	Booking Link
<b>Introductory Session 1</b>	Wednesday 21 January 9.30-11.30am	<b>Core Business Planning:</b> Identical content to Session 2, covering the 10-step planning process.	<b>Attend EITHER Session 1 OR Session 2 (Not both)</b>	<a href="#">Book Here</a>
<b>Introductory Session 2</b>	Tuesday 24 February 9.30-11.30am	<b>Core Business Planning:</b> Identical content to Session 1, covering the 10-step planning process.	<b>Attend EITHER Session 1 OR Session 2 (Not both)</b>	<a href="#">Book Here</a>
<b>Reflective Session 3</b>	Wednesday 6 May 9.30-11.30am	<b>Implementation &amp; Outcomes:</b> A reflective discussion for attendees of Session 1 or 2 to discuss changes made and positive outcomes to date.	<b>Attendance is REQUIRED</b> if you attended an Introductory Session.	<a href="#">Book Here</a>

You can view all available dates and secure your place by registering with the Families First learning management system.

**Click here to register:** [Registration for Business Support Sessions](#)

We strongly encourage your leadership and management teams to take advantage of this fantastic, free resource to strengthen the future of your wraparound provision.

### **EHCNA Requests**

Please note that all EHCNAs, documents and queries related to EHCNAs need to come to the EHCAssessments email address [ehcassessments@reading.gov.uk](mailto:ehcassessments@reading.gov.uk).

## EYFS and Beyond

### Winter Book Bingo at Reading Libraries 1 December to 31 January

Following on from the success of this summer's Reading loves reading campaign which saw nearly 2,400 people take part, Reading Libraries are launching Winter Book Bingo. It will run Monday 1 December to Saturday 31 January and is open to children, teens, and adults. There will be 2 prize draws – under 13s and teens/adults - to win a £20 book voucher. To enter, people will need to either complete a line (read 3 books) or if they want a harder challenge, complete the card (read 9 books) over at least 3 visits to the library.

People will be able to pick up Book Bingo cards from their local library from Monday 1 December.

### Early Years & Childcare Surveys – Participation Required

As part of our annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, we are collecting the views of providers, parents and carers regarding early years and childcare provision in Reading.

We are currently running 3 surveys to better understand parental use of early years and childcare provision and provider supply of out of school childcare for primary aged children. (*Early years provider views were collected June 2025*)

The surveys will close **9am on Monday 8 December**.

- **Reading Wraparound Childcare Provider Survey - Autumn 2025**  
We are seeking feedback from Schools and Wraparound providers to understand your offer and gather the most up-to-date information.
- **Reading Wraparound Childcare Parental Survey - Autumn 2025**  
Participants will have the opportunity to enter a prize draw to win a £20 High Street voucher.
- **Reading Early Years Parental Survey**  
As part of our annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment we would like to collect the views of parents regarding childcare provision in Reading.

### Thames Valley & South Central Stronger Practice hubs

Have you signed up to the [Hub](#) yet? Check out their exciting new Winter Term programme attached.

### Little Foundations Project – Exploring high quality pedagogy with the under 2's

Thank you to the providers who will be joining the EY & CC team, along with the [Thames Valley and South Central Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs \(TVEYSPH\)](#) to begin a collaborative project to reflect on high quality pedagogy with the under 2's. In addition to supporting the project, the TVEYSPH have facilitated a new [Baby Room Network Meeting](#) available free of charge to all providers led by Mona Sakr.

### Difficult conversations with parents module

A SENCO from a nursery recently complete the “difficult conversations with parents module” from the FREE Dingley Promise Training and wanted to share they found it very useful with some top tips to take away: You can access your account here: [Dingley's Promise: Online learning](#)

Remember this is free until **July 2026** for Reading Early Years Practitioners so not long left for your teams to access these free training resources!

## Mental Health and Wellbeing

### FREE Virtual Reality Trauma-Informed Training

We are delighted to offer a limited, free Virtual Reality (VR) Training session to providers. This two-hour immersive experience uses video and reflection to deepen staff understanding of how adversity and trauma impact a child’s behaviour and ability to engage.

Date	Time
<b>9 December</b>	7-9pm
<b>14 January</b>	7-9pm

#### Please Note:

- **Capacity:** Spaces are extremely limited (6 places per session).
- **Selection:** Places are NOT allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Settings will be selected based on maximising the impact for children in Reading.
- **Deadline:** Register your setting's interest by **28 November 2025**

**How to Register Interest:** Email [earlyyears@reading.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@reading.gov.uk) with your preferred date and the name/contact details of the staff member who would like to attend.

## Specialist Advisory Support

### SEND Advisory Support

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

Please use this [form](#) to request an EY SEND advisory Surgery for support not yet allocated to an Early Years SEND Advisor.

This will be reviewed weekly and allocated to the relevant EY SEND and/or Senior SEND Advisor.



## 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

### SEND Local Offer Winter Newsletter

The SEND Local Offer [Winter Newsletter](#) (Issue 39) is packed with information, for parent carers, young people and professionals support local families. Please share with your teams and parent carers.

### Reading Family Aid Christmas Gift Appeal 6-12 December 2025

Every year, at the beginning of December, RFA run the Annual Toy Project, where they are helped by an army of volunteers, to collect gift donations ready to distribute to identified children. By the end of the week they often have items left over which are suitable for use by nurseries, pre-schools, out of school clubs and reception classes.

- They invite you to drop in to **St Lukes' Hall, Erleigh Road, Reading**
- **Thursday 11 December from 4-6pm OR Friday 12 December from 9-10am** to choose from left over items.

Please let [salliewall@readingfamilyaid.org](mailto:salliewall@readingfamilyaid.org) know which slot you would prefer. Everything is available on a first come first served basis.

### 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.

## Training

### Attention Autism

We had a full course for Attention Autism this year. Thank you to everyone who joined in and participated in all the discussions and activities. We hope you are excited to continue implementing this in your settings with your children with SEND. If you are interested in this course; please do email [earlyyears@reading.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@reading.gov.uk) so that you can be added to our waiting list.



### Level 3 SENCO Training

The next Level 3 SENCO course starts in January and there are a few spaces remaining.

The 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 at the Civic Offices and all 12 sessions and the celebration event held later in the year **must** be attended. For a full list of dates please see the link to our training programme below.

The cost of the training is £600pp 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 [earlyyears@reading.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@reading.gov.uk) by **Friday 12 December**.

### Under 5's and Childcare 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. **Please note that free access to this training will end in July 2026.**

[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.

[NASEN](#) have some free online training that focuses on SEN including “Meeting the needs of every child”

## Best Start in Life

### Data: Understanding the Local Context

Find out more about the context of the local authority and the families living in your area:

- [Ofsted: explore an area](#)
- [The Berkshire Observatory](#)

Collectively the sites include information on population, deprivation, wellbeing, health data and more.

### Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

The Index of Multiple Deprivation, commonly known as the IMD, is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England. The IMD combines information from seven domains to produce an overall relative measure of deprivation:

- Income Deprivation
- Employment Deprivation
- Education, Skills and Training Deprivation
- Health Deprivation and Disability
- Crime
- Barriers to Housing and Services
- Living Environment Deprivation (9.3%)

Overall, Reading is ranked 90th out of 151 local authorities (1 being the most deprived and 151 the least deprived). Find out the measure for your area here [Reading-JSNA-Final.pdf](#) (p.15)

### National rollout of free Breakfast Clubs

DfE have [published further details](#) regarding the national roll out of free breakfast clubs, including:

- school eligibility
- increased mainstream funding rates
- how schools can apply

The government is committed to giving every pupil regardless of their background [the best start in life](#), breaking down barriers to every child [achieving and thriving](#) at school and in later life, by ensuring they are ready to learn, as well as supporting families with cost of living, and tackling poverty.

Improvements in the national roll out phase, including increasing the funding rate for mainstream schools:

- Mainstream schools will, from April, receive £25 per day plus £1 per child per day.
- Special schools will continue to receive £18.95 a day plus £3.23 per pupil per day.

Eligible schools can apply to join the programme in April 2026 via this [expression of interest form](#).

The deadline to apply is **11.59pm on Friday 5 December**.

## Compliments/Celebrations

### Kindness Bell

Our EY SEND advisors observed some lovely practice at Playdays Milestone as a way to encourage kindness & positive behaviour. They have a kindness bell that when children are observed being kind or doing something good; they are allowed to go and ring the bell; everyone then gives that child a round of applause. The children are really enjoying this and it is working to encourage positive behaviours & kindness with their peers!

Well done Playdays!



### 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: [earlyyears@reading.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@reading.gov.uk).

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

Kind regards

**Early Years, Childcare and SEND Team | Directorate of Children's Services**

Reading Borough Council  
Civic Offices  
Bridge Street  
Reading  
RG1 2LU

[earlyyears@reading.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyears@reading.gov.uk)

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

