

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing 6 February 2026

Dear Provider,

This briefing includes information on [The Early Years Qualification check](#), [Fully Funded Early Years Teacher Status](#), [Best Start in Life Parent Hub](#) and [how to nominate a colleague for a Kings honour](#).

Safeguarding

Online Safety

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) has published a new web page on screen time and online harms bringing together key resources to help inform conversations with families and guide practice. The resources include screen guidelines for children under five as well as guidance for parents on online harms.

Visit the page: [Screen time and online harms: resources for members](#)
See also on NSPCC Learning: [Preventing online harm and abuse](#)

Product Recall: Hobbycraft Giant Box of Craft (2601-0364)

[Product Recall: Hobbycraft Giant Box of Craft \(2601-0364\) - GOV.UK](#)

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has issued a Product Recall to warn about a safety risk associated with the Hobbycraft Giant Box of Craft.

The recall relates to vials of coloured sand included in the product, which may be contaminated with asbestos, a banned substance that poses a health risk even at very low levels of exposure. The product does not meet the requirements of the General Product Safety Regulations 2005.

Check an Early Years Qualification

Check if an early years qualification achieved in England is approved as full and relevant by the Department for Education (DfE). Confirm if someone who holds this qualification can count in staff:child ratios at level 2, 3 or 6 in an early years setting in England.

https://check-an-early-years-qualification.service.gov.uk/?utm_source=reading&utm_medium=referral&utm_campaign=la

BfC training and network offer:

- **Universal Safeguarding Children – FREE**
11 February, 9.30am-12.30pm & 6.30-9.30pm, Civic Offices
[Email](#) or register via the [SLA](#) to book
- **DASH & MARAC Training – Level 2 (Childminder session) – FREE**
16 March, 6-9pm, Teams
Email CSP@reading.gov.uk to book
- **Domestic Abuse Awareness Training – Level 1 – FREE**
26 March, 9.30am-12.30pm, Teams

Book on via the [application form](#)

Leadership

Early Years Inspection Focus: Planning Call

The Planning Call is a key conversation between the inspector and the setting that happens after the notification call and before the inspection visit.

The call is used to help the inspector plan the day and understand the setting's context and will usually take around 30 minutes.

Prior to the planning call you should read [Early years inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information document](#) and access data for your [local area](#).

The call will focus on:

1. Introduction to inspection
2. Understanding the setting's context and leaders' priorities for improvement
3. Planning the timetable

Details of what is discussed during the planning call are provided **in full** within the [operating guide for early years inspections](#).

A Word document outlining the data Ofsted will collect during the call is attached.

DfE Request for Feedback

The DfE are conducting research to gather feedback on early years professional's experiences of delivering the following entitlements:

- the working parent (9 month - 4 years)
- universal 15 hours (3 - 4-year-olds)
- the 2-year-old disadvantaged entitlement

Find out more here - [Tell us your experiences of delivering entitlements - Invitation for research](#)

BFfC training and network offer:

- **Holiday and Wraparound Childcare Providers Network – FREE**
9 March, 12.30-2pm or 7-8.30pm, Teams
[Email](#) or register via the [SLA](#) to book
- **All Room Leaders Network – FREE**
10 March, 6.30-8.30pm
[Email](#) or register via the [SLA](#) to book

EYFS and Beyond

Reading SEND IASSS

Please see attached flyer from Reading SEND IASSS who are running training for parent/carers who live in Reading. There are several sessions aimed at parents who have EHCP and those that do not have EHCPs. Please could you share this with your SEND registered parents.

Early Years and Starting School Champions Recruitment

We are recruiting for 2 x Early Years and Starting School Champions to support the delivery of a Home Learning Education Project over the next 3 years which supports the Best Start in Life Strategy. You can find out more about the role on the council jobs website: [Job Search](#)

Early Years Teacher Status: Fully Funded

[Early Years Initial Teacher Training \(EYITT\)](#) – a route to achieving Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) and the Department for Education will pay the training costs.

- If you manage an Early Years setting, you can put yourself or a graduate in your team through EYITT.
- If you are a graduate practitioner, you can gain Early Years Teacher Status while staying in work.
- If you are a registered childminder, you can also apply through a dedicated EYITT route, designed to fit around childminding practice while leading to the same recognised status

Two routes, same outcome

- **Graduate Employment Based route**
For graduates employed in an early years setting or school. Training is completed alongside your role, with supported placements to build experience across age groups and contexts.
- **Childminder route (NEW!)**
For registered childminders. A flexible structure that recognises the realities of childminding while meeting all EYITT training and placement requirements.

Berkshire CYPIT Speech and Language online workshops

The link for the online workshops for parents/carers and Early Years practitioners can be found here: [Early language development workshops | Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Dingley's Promise training

An email was sent out to you last week with details of the Dingley's Promise training and we've been made aware that the link has changed. This is the new link: [Training - Dingley's Promise](#)

Climate Ambassadors Programme - Climate Action Workshop for EYFS
[Small Hands, Big Planet: Climate Action Workshop for EYFS Tickets, University of Reading, Reading | TryBooking United Kingdom](#)

Date: Wednesday 25 February 2026 1-4pm

Location: University of Reading, London Road Campus, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 5AQ

BfC training and network offer:

- **Monthly Group Discussions – Can I Play Now? – FREE**
10 February, 2-3pm, Teams
[Email](#) or register via the [SLA](#) to book
- **Monthly Group Discussion – Leuven Scales of wellbeing and involvement - FREE**
11 March, 10-11am, teams
[Email](#) or register via the [SLA](#) to book
- **Portage Workshop - £30pp**
2&3 March 9am-4pm, Civic Offices
Follow up day 14 April 9.30-11am, Teams
Email earlyyears@reading.gov.uk to book

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental Health First Aid England

A dedicated group of Early Years and Childcare professionals came together this week for two days of Mental Health First Aid training led by Kate Moxley. Participants described the course as inspiring, confidence-building, and extremely well delivered, highlighting how it strengthened their skills, clarified their approach, and equipped them with practical tools such as the ALGEE framework. Many shared how the training boosted their confidence to support others and make a positive difference in their settings. This newly trained group will now form a supportive network, working together to share learning, champion wellbeing, and contribute to the ongoing review and development of local practice.

BfC training and network offer:

- **Therapeutic Thinking, Wraparound Providers – FREE - £33pp non-attendance fee applies**
3 March, 9.30-11.30am or 12.30-2.30pm, Teams
[Email](#) or register via the [SLA](#) to book
- **Mental Health First Aid England, Mental Health Aware – (Out of School providers and Childminders) FREE - £150pp non-attendance fee applies**
20 March, 9.30-2.30pm, Civic Offices
[Email](#) to book your place

Specialist Advisory Support

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. These sessions are also available to book for advice on the new invoices/receipts and website FIS changes from January.

SALT Surgery

SALT Surgeries are held on the third Thursday of the month. [Book a slot.](#)

SEND Advisory Support

Please note we will no longer be running the SEND surgery contact days on Tuesdays. Instead, we will be offering a call back service which is flexible throughout the week. Please use [this form](#) to request an EY SEND advisory Surgery slot where a member of the team will contact you to arrange a phone call/TEAMS call.

New! From the 4 March; every Wednesday from 9-10am on TEAMS.

Grab a coffee and join us on TEAMS for any general SEND queries you may have or just for a chat. Remember you are not alone being a SEND or inclusion lead practitioner. You don't have to be a SENCO but if you have any questions or need to chat with the group please come along

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/39854297571177?p=5dbisaebxflcS48ro>

Meeting ID: 398 542 975 711 77

Passcode: wx2xt6s3

Please use the earlyyearsSEND@reading.gov.uk email address for any general queries and a member of the team will get back to you.

If you need to contact your EY SEND advisor or Senior EY SEND Advisor about a specific allocated child or project please contact them on:

- Angela.Smith@reading.gov.uk
- Samantha.Smith@reading.gov.uk
- Suraksha.Sawant@reading.gov.uk
- Joanna.Binks@reading.gov.uk
- Aimee.Trimmer@reading.gov.uk

Local News

Rabbit on the Run

A FREE performance for 3 - 6-year-old children from Reading Rep Theatre in Reading libraries [All libraries - Reading Borough Council](#). See attached flyer for details.

Call to book your tickets -

Thursday 12 February 10:30am, Whitley library

0118 9375115

Thursday 12 February 1:30pm, Caversham Library

0118 9375103

Friday 13 February 10:30am, Central Library
0118 9375950.

Training

Under 5's and Childcare Training Offer Spring term 2026

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

Best Start in Life

Best Start in Life Parent Hub

This resource provides parents and carers with trusted information, practical guidance, and support to help children thrive from pregnancy through the early years. Directing families to this site will ensure they can easily access high-quality advice and local services tailored to their needs [Best Start in Life - Best Start in Life](#)

Children's Centres activity 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 during the spring is now available and can be shared with your families.

Compliments/Celebrations

Visuals at Mary Seacole

We wanted to share some brilliant visuals we have seen on our advisory visits; Mary Seacole Day Care Nursery have been working on their development of visuals and have created this wonderful visual timetable using both visuals and objects of reference to support children in their setting.



Nominate a Colleague for a King's Honour

As the King's Birthday Honours 2027 round approaches, we're encouraging nominations that shine a light on the incredible contributions made by colleagues across the Early Years and Childcare sector. The honours system recognises individuals who have made outstanding achievements, shown exceptional commitment to public service, and helped raise standards in our sector.

Awards range from Knighthoods and CBEs to MBEs and the British Empire Medal, celebrating contributions at national, regional, and local levels. If you know someone whose work has made a real difference - complete the attached nomination form and return it to jane.flaherty@education.gov.uk by **COP Sunday 1 March**. Let's celebrate the people who go above and beyond for children, families, and communities.

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.

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

Kind regards

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

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earlyyears@reading.gov.uk

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

