

**Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing**  
**26 March 2026**

Dear Provider,

This briefing includes updates on

## **Safeguarding**

### **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**

The Department for Education has published Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 - A guide to multi-agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children.

The 2026 update builds on reforms and wider children's social care changes, with a strong emphasis on early help, family support and multi-agency accountability. It underpins safeguarding as a shared responsibility across all agencies, with clear expectations on how organisations should work together to identify needs earlier with a coordinated support in conjunction with the child's family network. This highlights the family-centred approach, encouraging professionals to work in partnership with parents and wider family members whilst having a clear focus on the child, their safety and lived experience.

[Working together to safeguard children 2026: statutory guidance](#)  
[Summary of changes 2026 - GOV.UK](#)

### **Safe Sleep Online Training**

Multiagency training aimed at any practitioner or volunteers who works with families, including Social Workers or other social care staff, Foster Carers, Early Years, Childminders, Police, Ambulance, Mental Health, Substance Misuse, GPs, and Practice Nurses. Everyone is welcome to attend!

It is an hour's session facilitated on MS Teams and will provide an overview of why Safe Sleep is everyone's business, the evidence, the facts and how to support families, including useful resources.

Available dates:

- Friday 24 April 12:30-1:30
- Thursday 21 May 9:30-10:30
- Wednesday 17 June 1-2pm

Book by emailing: [Frimleyicb.safeguarding@nhs.net](mailto:Frimleyicb.safeguarding@nhs.net)

### **Prevent in Education: Training for Early Years Staff**

This training package has been designed by DfE for staff within the early years to understand their responsibilities and the importance of the Prevent duty.

[Wednesday 29 April, 4-5.15pm](#)  
[Tuesday 16 June, 6-7.15pm](#)

## Leadership

### We are recruiting!

We are looking for an early years professional with extensive experience of supporting children under five and their families, someone who truly understands child development and the power of early intervention. You will bring leadership experience from a high-quality early years setting, a track record of delivering successful support programmes, and the confidence to work collaboratively with a wide range of professionals.

Find out more about the Early Years Advisor role and apply here [Job Search](#)

### National Childminding Week 2026 – Do Something Big case studies

The Do Something Big campaign are looking to put together an article for National Childminding Week in May. The DfE would love to include current childminders in the article so you can share your experiences and inspire others who might be thinking about a career as a childminder.

Once published, the article will be featured across National Careers Service and DfE channels, so it's a great opportunity for childminders to reach a wide audience.

If you are interested in sharing your story, the DfE would love to hear from you. You can express their interest by completing the attached short case study form and returning it to [Luke.PRESCOTT@education.gov.uk](mailto:Luke.PRESCOTT@education.gov.uk).

If you submit a form the full article will be shared with you before it goes live, so you have the opportunity to review it and approve your quotes.

### New: Restrictive interventions, including the use of reasonable force, in schools

This guidance aims to support all school staff working with children, including those involved in school-based wraparound childcare. To effectively implement the guidance within a wraparound setting, it's essential to ensure that all staff are familiar with the key principles and practices of the guidance, and with how the school intends to implement it.

[Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance](#)

### Stronger Protections for Children with Allergies in School settings

This guidance mandates compulsory allergy awareness training that covers recognising symptoms, emergency response protocols, and the use of adrenaline devices, as well as improved incident recording procedures. |

[Stronger protections for children with allergies in school - GOV.UK](#)

[Home | FSA Food Allergy Training](#)

### Scam text messages claiming to be from Ofsted

Ofsted are aware of a rise in scam messages claiming to be from them. For further information please [click here](#).

Commented [GR1]: @Don, Nicola @Allen, Vicki can you include a title and link to the guidance please

Commented [DN2R1]: All done!

## Sustainability Support for Education – Top 10 actions for your climate action plan

Early Years settings are leading in way with climate action! Small actions can create a snowball effect and evidence shows climate action delivers wider benefits too: from financial savings from energy efficiency to improved wellbeing through outdoor learning.

Join the movement and build a meaningful, high impact climate action plan with the help of Sustainability Support for Education - the DfE's sustainability platform. The platform is your one-stop shop for free, expert recommended actions. Every action comes with quality-assured resources, practical guidance and clear next steps to help you move from ideas to impact as quickly as possible.

Make sure you've got these [top 10 actions in your plan](#). Create an account to save these actions to your list to start developing your plan. Keep returning to the site as a tool to develop and implement your climate action journey; it's built to support you at every stage.

## EYFS and Beyond

### Update: School Age Childcare

We are unifying **the oversight of school age childcare** in Reading. This includes **term time wraparound care**, the **national rollout of Free Breakfast Clubs**, and the **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)** programme.

This joined up approach will ensure providers have:

- One consistent point of contact
- Streamlined communication and guidance
- Coordinated planning across term time and holidays
- Closer alignment to support children, families and settings

Our aim is to reduce duplication, strengthen sustainability, and create a seamless childcare system across the whole year.

Please read the letter attached to this email for further details.

### Business Planning for Success – Free Training for Wraparound Providers

Don't miss out on our upcoming **Business Planning for Success** training, designed to help wraparound leaders strengthen sustainability, build financial resilience, and future-proof their provision.

#### Live Online Training

**Tuesday 21 April, 9.30–11.30am**

A follow up reflective session will also take place on **Wednesday 6 May, 9.30–11.30am** for all attendees.

#### Book your place:

Register via Families First: [Registration for Business Support Sessions](#)  
or through Reading Education Services: [Book Here](#)

We encourage all leaders, managers and coordinators to attend and share with colleagues who may benefit.

### **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme**

Is your Holiday Setting interested in applying to become a provider for the RBC Brighter Futures for Children Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme? The HAF programme offers activities and lunch through our funded providers for children in Reading who are eligible for the pupil premium or free school meals, as well as those identified as vulnerable by the Department for Education (DfE). If your Holiday setting would like to become a HAF provider, please contact Joseph Pegg at [Joseph.Pegg@reading.gov.uk](mailto:Joseph.Pegg@reading.gov.uk).

### **Wraparound & Holiday Activity Learning Workshops**

We are delighted to invite practitioners to a 2-hour in-person training workshop focused on enhancing the delivery of high-quality Wraparound and Holiday Childcare. This outdoor physical workshop is designed to develop practitioners' confidence and skills in delivering both indoor and outdoor group games.

The workshop aims to:

- Develop practical skills
- Build a toolbox of engaging activities
- Improve quality
- Empower
- Network with fellow providers



**Date:** Wednesday 3 June



**Location:** The Ranger Station, Prospect Park, Reading, RG30 2ND



**Time:** 9.30-11.30am

You can [Book Here](#) or [email](#) to book your place!

### **Achieving high-quality provision for babies among childminders in England**

The Baby Room Project are delighted to announce that the Nuffield Foundation has extended their grant to explore what high-quality provision for babies looks and feels like among childminders in England. Read more about the project plans [here](#).

### **Your voice matters: Help Shape the Future of Early Language Support for Children**

Researchers at University College London (UCL) want to hear from childminders. They are inviting you to take part in a survey to understand how childminders support children's early language and communication skills. Your insights will help them learn about:

- How childminders currently support children's language development
- Confidence and knowledge in fostering children's communication skills
- Views on structured language programmes that childminders could deliver

The survey is part of a wider research study, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, aiming to improve understanding and support for childminders and the children they care for. Take part in the survey [here](#)

Learn more about the study: <https://childminder-language-enrichment.org/>  
Every childminder's experience matters. By sharing yours, you'll help improve understanding and support for early language development across the country.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2026**

The DfE have published practical support to help school leaders and early years practitioners understand and carry out the [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) profile assessment](#).

### **BfC Wraparound Inclusion & Backfill Training Bursary– Exciting details coming soon!**

- Backfill Bursaries: Funding available for staff training in Families First SEND qualifications.
- Resource Grants: Available after training to support your inclusion equipment needs.
- Gold Standard: Commit to excellence by adopting the National Inclusion Standard (NIS).

### **BfC training and network offer:**

- **Senco Coffee drop in - Having Difficult Conversations with Parents**  
27 April, 2.30-4.30pm. Civic Offices  
[Email](#) to book your place
- **Introduction to Intensive Interaction Two Part Workshop**  
22 April & 13 May 3.30-5pm. TEAMs  
[Email](#) to book your place

## **Specialist Advisory Support**

### **Early Years and Childcare Advisory Support**

Book dedicated time with a member of our Early Years and Childcare team between your scheduled partnership visits.

This is your opportunity to tap into tailored advisory support designed to help you. Whether you want to strengthen your business planning, boost your leadership confidence, or streamline your day-to-day operations, we're here to help. [Request a slot](#).

### **SALT Surgery**

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

### **SEND Advisory Support**

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.

## **Best Start in Life**

### **Best Start in Life Reading Family Hubs – Now Open!**

Best Start in Life Family Hubs are friendly, welcoming and safe spaces where babies, children, young people and their parents/carers can meet new people, join in activities and access the support they need. The Hubs make it easier for families to find help from a range of local services, supporting those with children aged 0–19, or up to 25 for young people with SEND.

On Thursday 19 March, the Best Start in Life Family Hubs were officially launched, bringing together partner agencies to showcase the fantastic support available to families across Reading.

The Early Years team attended the event, promoting both the Early Years funding offers and the new Starting School – Journey to Reception programme. Families will soon be able to access regular drop-ins for this support in every Family Hub.

Family Hubs provide a wide range of services by connecting families with their community and local support networks. You can view the full timetable of Hub activities here. [Reading Directory | Best Start in Life Reading Family Hubs](#)



### **Best Start in Life Parent Hub**

This online 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](#)

### **Study findings: Home Learning Environment & Screen Time at Age 2**

Findings from the second wave of the Children of the 2020s Study include a research brief summarising key insights into the home learning environment at age 2. The brief explores areas such as screen time, digital media use, and other aspects of early learning, using data gathered through the primary caregiver survey completed when the cohort children were two years old.

[The Children of the 2020s Study](#)

[Research brief](#)

## Local News





### SEND Local Offer Spring Newsletter

The [40th issue of the SEND Local Offer newsletter](#) is out now!. It is a packed edition with lots of information, including blogs, news items, support services, SEND activities and short breaks, update on Best Start in Life Family Hubs and much more.

### Easter Holiday Activities in Reading

Please share the following link for Easter holiday activities in Reading with your families: [Reading Directory | Activities in Reading Easter 2026](#)

## Compliments/Celebrations

 **Huge congratulations to Funtastics** on an incredible decade of success in wraparound and Holiday Childcare!  We're thrilled for you and all the amazing children and adults who have been a part of this journey. Get ready for a fantastic celebration at the end of the month—let the parties begin! Here's to another ten years of joy, growth, and unforgettable memories!  

### 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](#).