

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing

30 April 2026

Dear Provider,

Welcome to the Early Years, SEND and Childcare briefing delivered to you on a fortnightly basis. This briefing contains updates and information on [Ofsted serious childcare incident reporting](#), [Early Years pupil premium](#), [New Starting School Home Learning Education Programme](#), [Best Start in Life](#) and [Compliments and Celebrations](#).

Safeguarding

Further advice on safer sleep from the Department for Education

This [guidance](#), created in collaboration with the Lullaby Trust, provides advice to help early years providers create and maintain safer sleep environments for babies and young children in their care.

It includes information on:

- Providing an appropriate sleep space for babies and children
- Safe use of cots, mattresses, bedding and sleep bags
- Supervising children while they are sleeping
- What to do when babies and children fall asleep whilst travelling, managing their temperature, positioning and use of comforters.

The Department for Education has also published answers to [frequently asked questions](#) to help early years providers prepare for planned updates on safer sleep to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, expected to come into effect from September 2026.

Safeguarding guidance for out of school providers

The Department for Education has published [guidance](#) for providers of after-school clubs, community activities and tuition. It has been produced to help out-of-school settings operate safely and protect children.

Ofsted serious childcare incident reporting – updated guidance

[Report a serious childcare incident - GOV.UK](#)

Updated to clarify that Ofsted expect significant events to be reported as soon as possible but always within 14 days.

Child Sexual Abuse

BWSCP have recently completed a thorough review and update of the Child Sexual Abuse webpage. The page provides clear information on what child sexual abuse is, key signs to look out for, and the guidance and support available for professionals. You can view the updated webpage here: [Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership - Child Sexual Abuse](#).

BWSCP

Please find attached the Pan Berkshire Online Child Protection Procedures Updates Newsletter that details all the recent changes that have been made.

Safety product recall update

[asbestos - Product Safety Alerts, Reports and Recalls - GOV.UK](#)

Nationally available safeguarding training

Attached is a flyer for a programme of training developed by the Children's Society to support the understanding of county lines.

Also attached is a leaflet offering a Safeguarding Professional Level 3 programme, funded through the Growth and Skills Levy.

BFfC training and network offer

- **Universal Safeguarding Children - Free**
14 May 2026, 6.30-9.30pm, Civic Offices
[Email](#) or log on the [SLA](#) to book your place

Leadership

Government consultation on updating the School Food Standards

The government's initiative to consult on the elimination of high-sugar foods in schools aims to reduce students' access to and consumption of unhealthy products. By updating school food standards to align with current health guidelines, this effort is part of a broader strategy to promote healthier eating habits and foster a healthier school environment. If you're interested in participating, the government consultation is currently open for your input.

[Government scraps high-sugar food from school menus - GOV.UK](#)

[School Food Standards: updating the legislative framework - GOV.UK](#)

[Written statements - Written questions, answers and statements - UK Parliament](#)

Early Years Pupil Premium

Have you downloaded your FREE [Early Years Pupil Premium](#) guide from the EEF(Education Endowment Foundation) yet? This guide includes suggestions for developing an EYPP strategy, as well as a 4-step planning tool, and a practice review. This [link](#) provides additional EYPP case studies including insights into practice from the EEF team of early years experts. Please request a [General Advisory Slot](#) with the EY advisory team if you would like support with developing your EYPP strategy in between your Partnership visits.

Supervision resource

Professional conversations can be a helpful tool for reflecting on existing practice and identifying priorities together. The EEF have developed [The Professional Development Conversation Cycle](#) aimed at supporting you to facilitate professional discussions and to monitor impact of CPD and coaching/mentoring in your setting. This is a template which can be downloaded and used during your supervision sessions. If you would like support in using this tool or to develop effective supervision practice with impact between your Partnership visits, please request a [General Advisory Slot](#) with the EY & Childcare advisory team.

EYFS and Beyond

Schools White Paper and SEND reforms consultation on-line discussion

Please share the attached flyer with your SEND families.

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS)

Please share the following links from the RBFRS with your families:

Safe and Well visits: [Book a Safe and Well Visit | Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service](#)

Work with young people who have a fear of fire: [FireSafe | Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service](#)

Education drop-in sessions for young people or families can also be hosted free of charge and will be delivered by prevention teams. Please contact Ed Jennings, Safety Education Coordinator, 07570948614, Jenningse@rbfrs.co.uk.

New Starting School Home Learning Education Programme

Our new Home Learning Education Programme is now live! If you have any families who you feel would benefit from enhanced home visits to support their child's development before starting school in September 2026 or 2027 please (with parents permission) complete the online professional referral form found on our transitions hub: [Under 5s transition to nursery or school - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

Please note there was an error in previous flyers. The correct email address is starting.school@reading.gov.uk (full stop in between starting and school). If you require a new printed copy of this flyer please let us know and we can coordinate this.

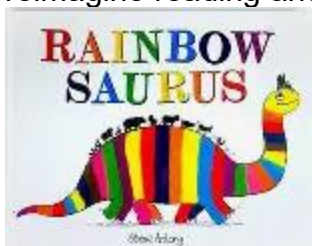
Please see below the allocated Wards that Noelle and Clare are covering and their contact details:

Champion	Wards	Family hub area
Champion A: Clare.Barber@reading.gov.uk 07889176716	<u>West Central Lead; West & North Split</u> Abbey Battle Coley Southcote Kentwood Tilehurst Norcot Emmer Green	<i>Southcote FH (West Central)</i> <i>Ranikhet FH (West Reading)</i>
Champion B: Noelle.Freeman@reading.gov.uk 07542 511955	<u>South Lead; East & North Split</u> Church Whitley Katesgrove	<i>Sun street FH (East)</i>

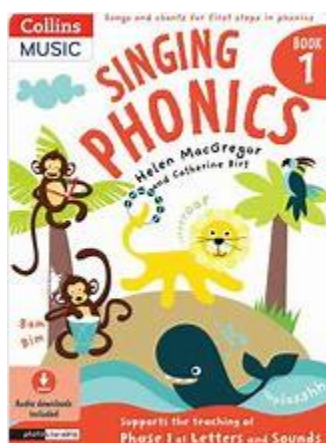
	Redlands Thames Park Caversham Caversham Heights	South Reading FH (South)
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National Year of Reading

The National Literacy Trust have an offer for schools and early years setting for the [National Year of Reading 2026](#) and the [Go All In](#) campaign. Their aim for 2026 is to reimagine reading and (re)engage with reading in all its forms.



Rainbowsaurus by Steve Antony: wonderfully engaging read aloud.



Singing Phonics to help your school leavers develop their foundation skills for learning sounds. Professor Brain is a favourite!

Sign of the month



name

Delivering school-age childcare provision (April 2026)

This non-statutory guidance outlines the vital role that schools and trusts play in supporting parents to access school-age childcare (SAC), contributing to an inclusive, sustainable, and accessible childcare offer for families during both term time and school holidays.

The guidance builds on the successes of several key initiatives, including the National Wraparound Childcare programme, which aims to sustain the childcare places it has created, and the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which has expanded holiday offerings in recent years. Additionally, it addresses the rollout of the National Free Breakfast Clubs (FBCs) programme.

[Delivering school-age childcare provision](#)

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!

Dingley's Promise Sensory Processing Information Session

Dingley's Promise are hosting an information session about Sensory Processing at their centre on 11 May. Any parents with under 5s are welcome to attend, they will just need to complete [this form](#). Please share the link to the form and the attached flyer with your families.

BFfC training and network offer:

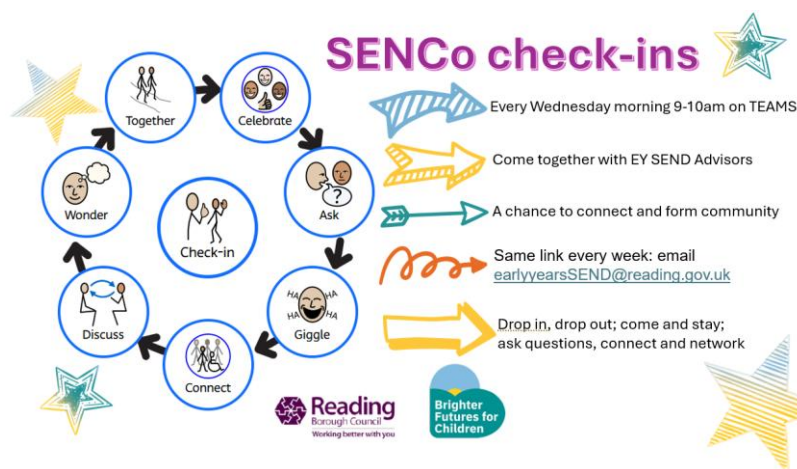
- **Supporting Vulnerable children through school transitions – Dr Jordan Self, Educational Psychologist - Free**
6 May, 9.30am-12pm, Civic Offices
Book by emailing Virtual.school.dl@reading.gov.uk
- **Sensory Processing 1 day course and Hand Massage Workshop - £30pp**
12 May, 9am-3.30pm, Civic Offices
Book via [email](#)
- **Berkshire Sensory Consortium Glue Ear Workshop – Free**
13 May, 6.30-7.30pm, Teams
Book via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)

- **Managing Worries and Anxiety in Early Years Transitions, Kayleigh Henry, Educational Psychologist - Free**
19 May, 1-3pm, Teams
Book via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)

Specialist Advisory Support

The Early Years team offer Specialist Advisory Support

- **Educational Psychology Surgeries**
18 May, 1-3.30pm. [Request a slot](#)
- **Weekly SENCO Check-ins**
Every Wednesday morning, 9-10am. Join using [this link](#).



- **SEND Advisory Support**
Call back service. [Request a call](#) from a SEND advisor
- **Speech and Language (SALT) Surgery**
Third Thursday of the month. [Book a slot](#)
- **Early Years and Childcare Advisory Support**
[Book dedicated time](#) with a member of the team.

For full details of the support offered by the team please refer to [our training programme](#).

Best Start in Life

Starting Reception

Starting school is an exciting milestone. To help make the transition into Reception as smooth and positive as possible please can you share the following resources from Starting Reception with parents and carers:

- [Starting Reception website](#)
- [Starting Reception Guide \(Downloadable PDF\)](#)

Starting Reception is a free, practical online resource designed to support parents and carers in preparing their child for school. It offers simple activities, helpful advice and clear guidance on the key skills and routines that help children feel confident and ready for their first day. Starting Reception have also provided guides for Potty Training and Children's Toothbrushing. Children being able to use the toilet independently and having healthy routines such as brushing their teeth is an important part of getting ready for starting school.

- [Potty Training Guide website](#)
- [Potty Training Guide \(Downloadable PDF\)](#)
- [Children's Toothbrushing Guide website](#)
- [Children's Toothbrushing Guide \(Downloadable PDF\)](#)

Best Start in Life - Preparing for School Launch

As part of the Government's Early Years strategy, the Best Start in Life campaign brings together trusted advice and support to help families recognise how everyday moments support children's development and build the skills they need for starting school.

A new preparing for school webpage and song is now available:

[Preparing for school - Best Start in Life](#)

[Steps For School Song | @Best Start in Life + @MC Grammar](#)

Please share the video and webpage across your channels to help reach more families.

Early Years SEND reform parent engagement events

On Monday 23 February, the Department for Education published its schools white paper [Every Child Achieving and Thriving](#), which sets out plans to reform special educational needs and disability (SEND) support across early years, schools and colleges. Alongside this, a national consultation, [Putting Children and Young People First](#), is open until 18 May 2026.

The Department for Education is working with early years SEND specialists Dingley's Promise to **host a series of face-to-face engagement events for parents of children with SEND under 8 years of age**, between 24 April and 14 May. These sessions will explore the key proposals in the whitepaper, break

down the consultation questions, and provide families with the opportunity to share their experiences and have their voices heard.

We would really appreciate your support in sharing these events with families, colleagues, and local contacts who may benefit, particularly those working with or supporting children with SEND in the early years.

8 May 2026 Reading. Register here [Registration - Contact Details](#)

Best Start in Life Reading Family Hubs

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](#)

Training

The Early Years, childcare and SEND summer term training programmes are now available on our website.

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

Childminders are now able to sign up to the SLA by following [this link](#).

Compliments/Celebrations

Congratulations to Funtastics Wraparound and Holiday Club

Congratulations on reaching an incredible milestone - your 10-year anniversary! This decade of dedication and commitment to providing a safe and fun environment for children is truly commendable. Your hard work and passion have positively impacted countless families. Let's celebrate your achievements and the joyful memories you've created over the years. Here's to many more successful years ahead!

Feedback from the EY online SENCO Coffee morning drop-in

'Thank you for hosting such a welcoming and supportive session. I really appreciated the opportunity to connect with others, share experiences, and hear such thoughtful insights. The discussion felt positive, collaborative, and genuinely helpful, and I came away with some useful ideas and reassurance. It's always encouraging to be part of a space where everyone feels comfortable contributing and supporting one another' - Deepali and Wendy, Orchard Day Nursery.

Details of the next session and the link to join can be found in the Specialist Advisory Session above.

Rainbow Day Nursery Hallway

Deputy Lucy shared 'after a lovely visit to Kennet Day Nursery we took inspiration from their welcoming nursery entrance and created our own sensory hallway for the children to regulate their feelings.

We added action stickers, sequin wall panels, and books about our feelings.

We also took inspiration from the Portage workshop and adapted our monthly planning and added 'Our tree of curriculum' to the hallway to show the different areas of development we would like the children to achieve in each of our rooms at Rainbow'.



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

