

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing

17 July 2026

Dear Provider,

Welcome to the Early Years, SEND and Childcare briefing delivered to you on a fortnightly basis. This briefing contains information and updates on:

- **Safeguarding:** [Change to Regulated Activity](#)
- **Leadership:** [Stronger Practice Hubs](#)
- **EYFS and Beyond:** [Updated EYFS Framework](#), [Changes to registration requirements](#) and [WAC Workforce Training & Backfill Fund](#)
- **Best Start in Life:** [RCPCH State of Child Health 2026 report](#) and [Free MECC Training Opportunity](#)
- **Local News:** [Summer holiday activities](#)
- **Compliments/celebrations**

Safeguarding

Change to Regulated Activity

Due to the Crime and Policing Act 2026, there is a change to regulated activity which will come into force in September 2026. The change affects settings which rely on volunteers. From 1 September 2026, all volunteers engaging in regulated activity will need an enhanced DBS check with children's barred list information. This also applies to holiday clubs and wraparound care. Providers should read the full guidance here - [Regulated activity: removal of the supervision exemption \(comes into force 1 September 2026\) - GOV.UK](#)

DfE statutory guidance on allergies now live

The DfE statutory guidance about the support that pupils with allergies must receive in schools was published on 6 July. This supports Benedict's Law which becomes mandatory from 1 September. While not currently a statutory requirement for early years settings you may find the [guidance](#) useful.

BFfC training and network offer:

- **Safeguarding Workshop 1: Whistleblowing and professional curiosity.**
Free
29 July 6.30-8pm, Civic Centre
Book via [email](#) or the [SLA](#)

Leadership

Stronger Practice Hubs

It has been announced [18 new Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs](#) will launch across England, helping to strengthen support for even more early years providers. As part of these changes, the Thames Valley and South Central Hub will become the **Thames Valley and Solent Early Years Stronger Practice Hub**. The new region will include Bracknell, Portsmouth, **Reading**, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Southampton, South Buckinghamshire, Slough, West Berkshire and Wokingham. Registered to become a member of the Hub, to access a range of free courses - [Thames Valley Early Years Stronger Practice Hub](#)

DfE Consultation

A [consultation on early years funding](#) has opened, seeking views mainly on reforms to SEND and disadvantage funding (deadline: 14 September).

EYFS and Beyond

Updated EYFS frameworks from 1 September 2026

On 13 July 2026 DfE published updated [EYFS frameworks](#) for childminders and group and school-based providers, which apply from **1 September 2026**. The main changes from that date are outlined below and represent strengthened safeguarding requirements.

Both EYFS frameworks include safeguarding updates which:

- Bring explicit wording on the **safer sleep** requirements into the main body of the EYFS
- Prohibit the provision of registered childcare from any premises where a [banned dog breed](#) is kept or is otherwise present
- Require providers to inform Ofsted of allegations of '**harm**' (instead of 'serious harm') by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises.
- Require enhanced **criminal records checks** for volunteers (including those who are supervised) and prevent new employees from commencing employment before receiving their check.
- Amend the requirements for what providers must tell staff they have to disclose, as part of information that may affect their **suitability to work with children**.
- Have regard to [screen use guidance for early years settings](#) as published on 13 July 2026.
- The group and school-based version also requires providers of childcare on domestic premises to notify Ofsted or their CMA of **changes to persons aged 16 or over living or working at the premises**. This aligns with existing requirements for childminders.

Other minor clarificatory changes have been made to both frameworks. These are mainly to make the existing requirements clearer for providers. Read in full here - [Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK](#)

Changes to Registration Requirements: Banned Dog Breeds

In addition to the changes to the EYFS frameworks outlined above, the department has also updated registration requirements for early years settings as follows:

- Nannies will be prohibited from taking a banned dog breed onto a premises where they are providing childcare and will be required to take reasonable steps to avoid banned dog breeds being present.
- All other voluntarily registered, Early Years and Later Years providers will be prohibited from providing registered childcare from any premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present.

Reception Quality Webinar Series

Free [reception quality webinars](#) are available covering:

- the importance of reception and the data available to support leaders
- strategic leadership of the early years in school
- key messages from Ofsted's research on strong foundations
- embedding a language-rich environment and supporting early writing
- promoting good attendance routines in reception
- the importance of early maths.

Guidance - [Reception improvement offer - GOV.UK](#)

WAC Workforce Training & Backfill Fund Now Available

Reading Borough Council is pleased to launch the **Wraparound Care (WAC) Workforce Training & Backfill Fund** to support WAC providers in strengthening inclusive practice across their provision.

The fund has been developed to release staff to undertake training and aims to support workforce development, SEND awareness, and inclusive practice across wraparound childcare settings.

Funding is available to all primary school-aged wraparound providers to support:

- Staff backfill costs associated with completing online inclusion training.
- Inclusive resources to enhance provision.
- A new WAC Level 1 Inclusion Award programme (launching later this year).

If you deliver wraparound childcare and would like to learn more about the fund or request an application form, please contact:

 wraparoundchildcare@reading.gov.uk

Funding is limited and will be allocated subject to eligibility criteria and available budget. We encourage providers to get in touch to find out more.

Birth to Three Research Insight Cards

The Froebel Trust has a track record of supporting research about babies and very young children. The Birth to Three Research Insights provide accessible summaries of key findings from the research and practice development projects.

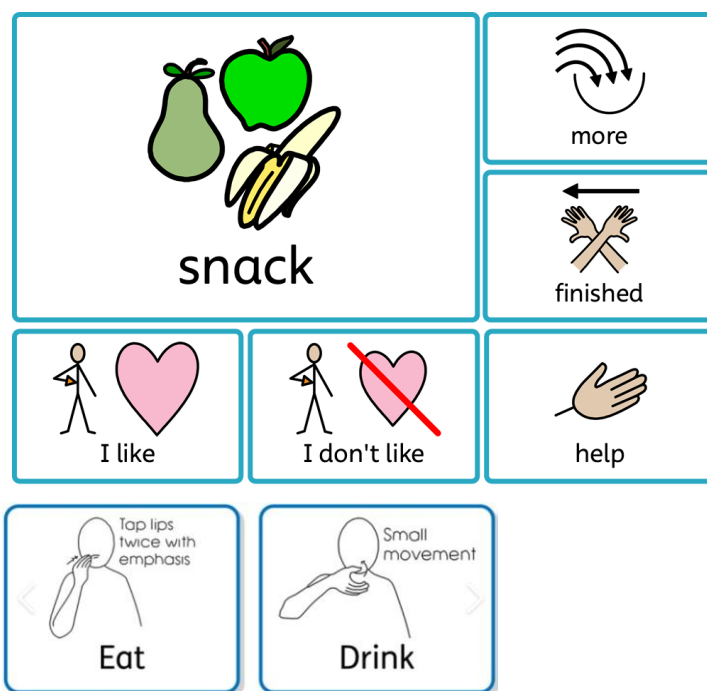
Find here [Froebel Trust | Research Insights](#)

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.

Signs and Symbols of the Month

Using the Makaton signs alongside speech, gestures and symbols promotes communication on every level for every child (not just SEND). Part of your language rich interactions and communication environment.



BFfC training and network offer:

- **Early Years and SEND Inclusive Practice Bitesize Sessions (Childminders only) – Signing in the Early Years. Free**
21 July, 6.30-8pm. Civic Centre
- **Little Foundations Induction & Supervision development (for those that have taken part in the project). Free**
29 July, 2-4pm, Civic Centre
Book on via [email](#)

Specialist Advisory Support

Self-Refer to the Early Years, SEND and Childcare Service

You can now **self-refer** to our service for a range of options to meet your needs, including targeted advisory support for leadership, high-quality provision, safe practice and SEND, as well as business advice, bespoke or whole-setting training and project participation.

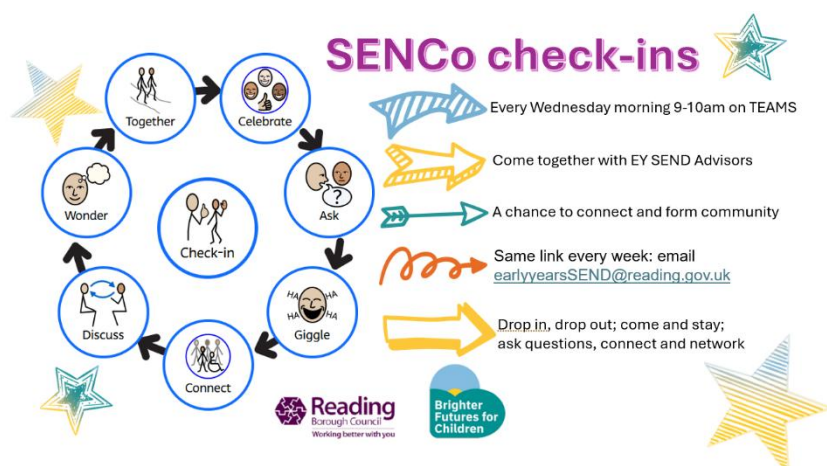
Fill out the form here - [Early Years & Childcare Support – Self Referral Form](#)

EY SEND Child Referrals

We have made changes to how EY SEND referrals are processed, and individual children will be discussed at a triage meeting. Please ensure you send referrals to EarlyyearsSEND@reading.gov.uk and they will be reviewed by the Senior Early Years SEND Advisors and allocated to a member of the team or added to the waiting list.

Weekly SENCO Check-in

Every Wednesday morning, 9-10am. Join using [this link](#).



SEND Advisory Support

A callback service that runs alongside the SEND referral process. [Request a call](#) from a SEND advisor.

Speech and Language (SALT) Surgery

Third Thursday of the month. [Book a slot](#)

Support for Children and Families

If you are working with a child or family who may benefit from extra support with development before starting school, with permission you can refer them to the Home Learning Education Programme.

Fill out a form to link with an EYFS & Starting School Champion here - [Home Learning Education - Referral](#).

Best Start in Life

RCPCH State of Child Health 2026 report

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health's flagship report, updated in July 2026, analyses children's health across the four UK nations against 12 key indicators including infant mortality, mental health, immunisations and obesity. Nearly a decade on from the first report, outcomes have worsened or stagnated in many areas, with the impact felt most sharply in deprived communities and among ethnic minority groups. The report points to three drivers: gaps in child health data, widening health inequalities, and underinvestment in the child health workforce.

Find the report here - [RCPCH report](#)

Morrisons Café

Morrisons and Kellogg's have announced the return of their school holiday 'Breakfast Clubs', offering free meals to families across the UK to help ease the financial pressure over the summer holidays.

Families visiting their local Morrisons Café throughout the summer holidays can enjoy a free 'Kellogg's Breakfast', which includes a bowl of cereal and a portion of fruit. The best part, it's not just for children, adults get to eat completely free too.

The summer holiday offer will be available from 29 June to 6 September across all Morrisons Cafes nationwide. [Free Breakfasts Feed Families | Kellogg's](#)

Free MECC Training Opportunity - Children and Young People's Vaccination

The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) is offering MECC (Making Every Contact Count) for Children and Young People's Vaccinations training as part of a limited pilot programme. The training aims to build participants confidence and skills to have evidence-based conversations about childhood vaccinations, address common misconceptions, and support informed decision-making.

The training is suitable for professionals working across schools, early years settings, children's social care, libraries, community organisations, health visiting, and other services that engage with children and families.

The training is **FREE**. If you are interested, you can register using the link below: [Application Form - MECC for Children and Young People's Vaccination Survey](#)

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](#).

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](#)

Local News

Summer holiday activities in Reading

The [summer holiday activities page](#) on the Family Information Service (FIS) website is now live. The page will be updated regularly until the end of August. The page includes [general holiday activities](#) and school holiday [childcare information](#). Please like the FIS [Facebook](#) page to be kept informed of new events, activities and more.

The summer SEND Local Offer summer newsletter 2026 (Issue 41) is now available on the SEND Local Offer, packed with latest news, blogs, short breaks, events and workshops, information for 16+ and much more.

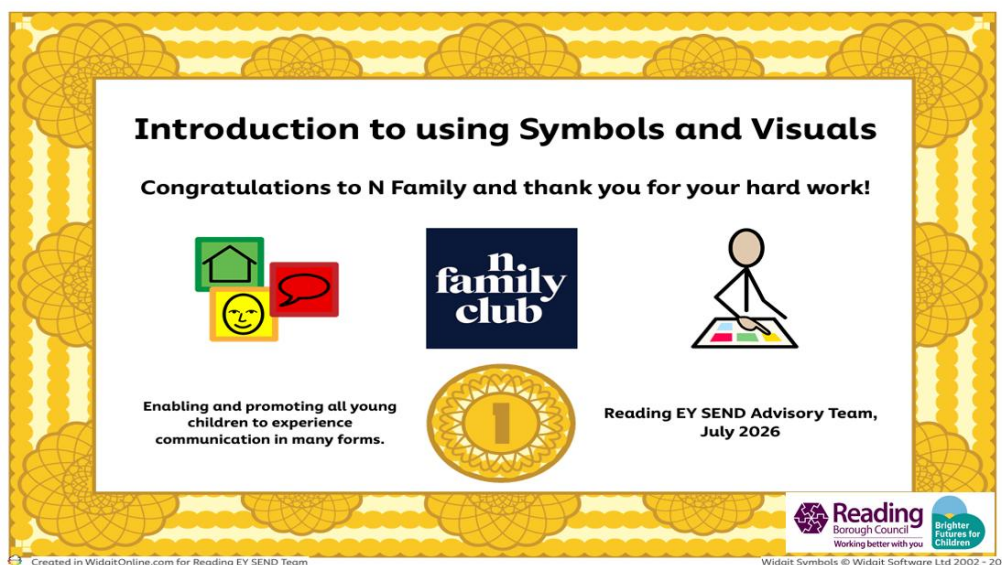
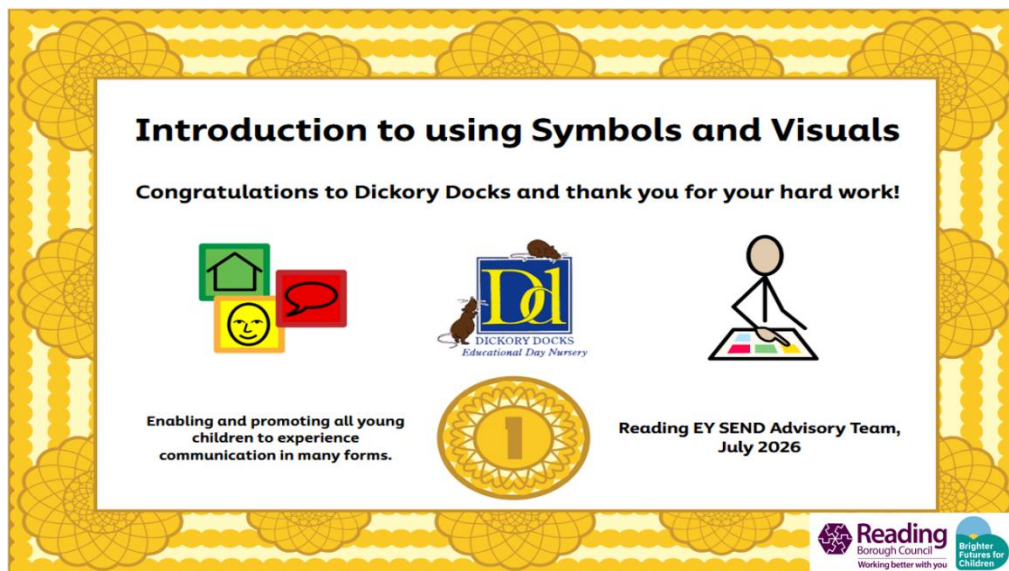
Find out more here [Reading Directory | SEND Local Offer Newsletter Summer 2026 - Issue 41.](#)

Compliments/Celebrations

Huge congratulations to **The Grange Pre-school** who have achieved Level 1 Inclusion Award.

The setting works tirelessly to ensure they meet children's individual differences and support appropriate pathways to further help the family. Relationships with children and their parent/carers are a real strength and form the basis for quality inclusion. This is an outstanding achievement, well done to the whole team!

Well done to **Dickory Docks Day Nursery** and **N Family Club Reading** on completing the Introduction to using Symbols and Visuals training!



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 send these to 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

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