

Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing

Date 5 October 2026

This fortnightly briefing contains important updates, information, resources and opportunities relevant to colleagues working across the early years, SEND and childcare sector.

See previous updates and full training programme on our [EY Childcare & SEND page](#).

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Safeguarding

Prevent

The 'Notice, check, share' guidance was updated in August and is aimed at all professionals working in sectors subject to the Prevent duty, such as health, education, and local authorities: [Notice, check, share \(accessible\) - GOV.UK](#)

Key Prevent statistics:

- 10,293 referrals were made to Prevent which is a record high. (South East noted the highest number of referrals)
- 3496 (34%) referrals were made by education

LADO

The Local Authority Designated Officer role is being carried out currently by the following named safeguarding experts and social work professionals:

Angela Fergus-Greed is currently leading on all new LADO referrals, in her absence only this will be overseen by **Jeremy Curtis, LADO**. Sue Darby, LADO is on leave and away from the office currently.

Please continue to use LADO@reading.gov.uk

Training and Network offer:

Title	Date and Time	Delivery/Venue	Booking details
DASH & MARAC Training – Level 2	7 October 2026 1.30-4.30pm	Civic Centre	Book on via the application form

Leadership

Wraparound and Holiday Club Business Support Training

Reading Borough Council's Wraparound Team has partnered with [Families First CIC](#) to offer a free 2-hour virtual business support session for wraparound and holiday club leaders, managers, committee members, and governors.

The training focuses on sustainability, inclusion, financial planning, workforce development, and meeting the needs of families, including children with SEND. Sessions are delivered live via Zoom and run twice each term (daytime and evening options available).

To register, please use the booking links provided by Families First:

- [Wednesday 21st October | 9.30am-12.30pm](#)
- [Wednesday 21st October | 6.30-9.30pm](#)

Training and network offer:

Title	Date and Time	Delivery/Venue	Booking details
Early Years SENCO coffee morning	7 October 2026 9.30-11.30am	Civic Centre	Book here or email to secure your place
Stronger Practice Hubs Network Meeting	8 October 2026 2-4pm	TBC	Book by emailing: admin@tveysph.org
Early Years Leadership and Governance Network	8 October 2026 5-7pm	Civic Centre	Book here or email to secure your place
Wraparound and Holiday Club Business Support Training	21 October 2026 9.30am-12.30pm or 6.30-9.30pm	Online via Zoom	Book here for: Morning Session or Evening Session

Thames Valley & Solent Stronger Practice Hubs – Professional Development

Starting this autumn term 2026, the Thames Valley and Solent Early Years Stronger Practice Learning Leads are running the following Professional Development Programmes:

- **Early Maths** - more details [here](#)
- **Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)** - more details [here](#)
- **Early Language** - more details [here](#)

The Hubs are recruiting 15 Early Years settings per cohort to take part in these fully funded programmes. Each programme is designed for PVI, childminders and schools with nursery classes who have 2 to 4 year olds attending their setting. The course content is **aimed at Early Years practitioners who are qualified at Level 3 and above**. The programmes were developed by the Department for Education and are completed over one academic term.

Join one of the Welcome Webinars to find out more about these programmes:

Early Maths

- Thursday 8 October, 4-5pm, Online - [Book now](#)
- Wednesday 14 October, 12.30-1.30pm, Online - [Book now](#)

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- Tuesday 6 October, 4.30-5.30pm, Online - [Book now](#)
- Monday 12 October, 1-2pm, Online - [Book now](#)

Early Language

- Tuesday 6 October, Online - [Book now](#)
- Wednesday 7 October, Online - [Book now](#)

Applications close: Thursday 15 October

Ofsted Blog

[Early years inspections: frequently asked questions](#). This blog post has been updated to respond to the following questions:

- What happens when you inspect without notice?
- How will you look at safer sleeping, weaning and eating on inspection?

Also, a helpful guide for parents - [New Ofsted report cards and grades: a guide for parents](#)

EYFS and Beyond

Reminder: WAC Workforce Training & Backfill Fund Now Available

The Wraparound Care (WAC) Workforce Training & Backfill Fund is still available 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.

Develop a climate action plan with free DfE support

The heatwaves of the summer were another reminder of climate change and the DfE are encouraging every nursery in England to have a climate action plan. A holistic plan can help nurseries prepare for extreme weather and reduce costs, while supporting children's wellbeing and the environment.

Free support is available through DfE commissioned programmes – the National Education Nature Park, Sustainability Support for Education, and Climate Ambassadors – all working with Let's Go Zero Climate Action Advisors. Find out more [here](#).

New Request for Needs Assessment form

The Special Educational Needs Team have a new form to request an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Needs Assessment. Please see attached.

There have been some changes to the Annual Review Paperwork. You can find out more [here](#).

National Year of Reading - Autumn term resources from National Literacy Trust

Sign up or download resources for the Autumn term, including an opportunity to register for a forthcoming Early Years Professional Webinar focused on Parent Partnership [Early Years: Opening the door to reading at home | National Literacy Trust](#).

Find out more on the resources available from National Literacy Trust [here](#).

Title	Date and Time	Delivery/Venue	Booking details
Berkshire Supporting Visual Impairment Children (Berkshire Sensory Consortium)	8 October 2026 6.30-7.30pm	Teams	Book here or email to secure your place
Early Years SEND Inclusive Practice	13 October 2026 9am-3.30pm	Civic Centre	Book here or email to secure your place

Specialist Advisory Support

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

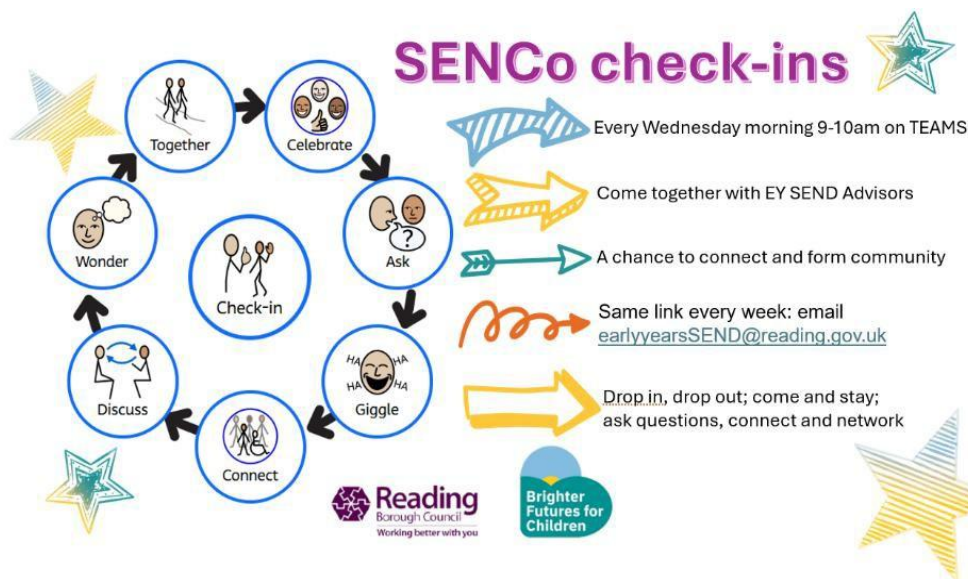
Whether you provide **Early Years, Wraparound Childcare, or Holiday Childcare**, you can now **self-refer** to our service for a range of support options. This includes targeted advisory support for leadership, high-quality provision, safe practice and SEND, as well as business advice, bespoke or whole-setting training, and project participation. Fill out the form [here](#).

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](#).

Best Start in Life

Best Start in Life – Journey to Reception

Additional advisory support is available for children due to start Reception in Sept 2027. Our EY & Starting School Champions are available to support families in the home with helping their child prepare for school, and EY advisors are available to work with practitioners in the setting, to support the whole cohort to thrive as they prepare for transition.

Follow this link to the [Transition Hub](#), email starting.school@reading.gov.uk for more information, or use the self-referral forms below:

[Professional referral for Home Learning Education programme](#)

[Parent/carers request for Early Years and Starting School support service](#)

[Request Project Participation = Journey to Reception](#)

Togetherness - a new programme for practitioners working with children and families

Wokingham, West Berkshire and Reading Councils have introduced Togetherness across Berkshire West through a jointly funded three-year multi-user licence.

This provides free, unlimited access to a wide range of online resources for families, alongside free CPD-accredited training for practitioners, and could be of particular interest to staff members who work with families and children.

What is Togetherness?

Togetherness (formerly the Solihull Approach) is an evidence-based programme that promotes emotional wellbeing, child development and positive family relationships. Used nationally and internationally since 1996, it demonstrates strong outcomes for both families and professionals. Courses are developed by clinical psychologists, health specialists, and parents, and are designed to be accessible, reflective and practical.

Benefits for practitioners (free CPD)

The professional licence provides practitioners across Berkshire West with free, unlimited access to specialist Togetherness training modules. These support trauma-informed, attachment-aware and neurodevelopment-aware practice, with CPD certificates and ongoing learning resources included.

Benefits for families

Families will have free access to more than 15 online pathways covering:

- Baby bonding and antenatal/postnatal support
- Understanding your child / young person
- Support for additional needs
- Teen brain development and feelings
- Parental wellbeing and relationships

Information is available in multiple languages, including voiceovers and built-in evaluation, and is associated with improvements in:

- Parent–child relationships
- Children’s prosocial behaviour
- Parental confidence
- Reductions in stress, anxiety and behavioural difficulties

Further information can be found on the [Togetherness website](#)

- (PCGT) Access Code: BWFAMILIES
- (PRF) Access Code: BWFAMILIES_PRF

Best Start in Life Reading Family Hubs

Reading 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](#).

Compliments/celebrations

Congratulations to the team at Dickory Docks Day Nursery who have recently been highlighted by senior members of the Children's Services team for their **flexibility** and **swift action** in preparing to settle a child into the Nursery. **Flexibility, responsiveness**, and a **warm welcome** for the child and family were used to describe the experience, and the impact of the child accessing high-quality Early Years provision was acknowledged. Well done to all of the team at Dickory Docks!

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.