Early Years, SEND and Childcare Briefing

Date 10 November 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.

Contents

Safeguarding 2
Leadership 3
EYFS and Beyond 4
Specialist Advisory Support 6
Best Start in Life 8
Compliments/celebrations 9

Safeguarding

Information Sharing Duty
A new Information Sharing Duty came into force on 30 September 2026: DfE Information Sharing Duty

The duty strengthens expectations around sharing relevant information where it may help another organisation to safeguard a child or promote their welfare. This includes sharing information to support prevention and early help, enabling concerns to be identified and addressed before they escalate. Providers should ensure they understand their responsibilities and are confident in making lawful, proportionate decisions about information sharing in line with the statutory guidance. This guidance is particularly relevant for Designated Safeguarding Leads and those responsible for safeguarding governance within settings.

Safer Sleep
Supporting babies and young children to sleep safely remains an essential part of providing high-quality care. We would like to remind all practitioners to review their sleeping arrangements and ensure they are fully compliant with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements:

Babies and children must be placed down to sleep safely. For children under 2 years old, the following requirements apply:

- Children must be placed down on their back in their own separate sleep space on a firm flat surface such as a cot, bed or mattress on the floor. Babies aged 12 months and under must only be placed to sleep in a cot.
- Sleep spaces must only contain a firm, flat, waterproof mattress and lightweight bedding which is firmly tucked in around the child below their shoulders to prevent head covering. Alternatively, a well fitted baby sleep bag may be used. Check the manufacturer recommendations before using a baby sleep bag.
  Where blankets are used, the child must be placed feet-to-foot at the bottom of the cot, with blankets tucked in.
- Cots must not contain extra items such as toys, pillows, extra blankets, bumpers, wedges or straps.
- Children should not get too hot or cold. The recommended room temperature for babies is 16 – 20˚C.
- Children's heads must not be covered.
- Babies under six months of age must always have an adult with them in the same room for every sleep. All children must be frequently checked when sleeping.
- Children must always be within sight and hearing of staff when sleeping.

Also read:

- Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework - GOV.UK - details the statutory requirements
- Help for early years providers : Safer sleep - the importance of sleep and travel advice
- Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) – NHS - what it is and prevention.
- The Lullaby Trust - expert sleep information.
- Office for Product Safety and Standards - product advice and information.

The DfE will be launching a new safer sleep module soon – check for updates here: Early years child development training : Home page

Reading Continuum of Help and Support (Threshold) Briefing Sessions
Professionals working with children, young people and families are warmly invited to attend an online session to learn more about Reading's Continuum of Help and Support (Threshold) and local support services.

These sessions will provide an overview of Reading's Threshold Document, how to access and use it, and help professionals understand the range of support available through Family Hubs, the One Reading Partnership Team and Children's Social Care.

Session Dates and Times

- Tuesday 10 November 2026, 10.30-11am
- Tuesday 24 November 2026, 10.30-11am
- Thursday 10 December 2026, 10.30-11am
- Tuesday 15 December 2026, 1-1.30pm
- Tuesday 12 January 2027, 10.30-11am
- Thursday 21 January 2027, 1-1.30pm
- Tuesday 9 February 2027, 10.30-11am
- Thursday 11 March 2027, 1-1.30pm
- Thursday 15 April 2027, 1-1.30pm

All sessions will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams.

To secure your place, please email onereading@reading.gov.uk. Please include your preferred session date when booking.

Leadership

EYFS Profile 2025-26
Early Years Foundation Stage Profile results provide an insight into outcomes for children at the end of Reception and can help inform self-evaluation and planning. The results for

2025-26 have been published by the DfE: EYFS profile results - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK
Additionally, Nesta provides a helpful overview of Good Level of Development results by area: GLD results and target | BSiL Playbook. The data highlights the positive trajectory of GLD outcomes for children in Reading over time and offers an opportunity to explore trends locally and nationally.

Ofsted Explore an Area
Ofsted inspectors will refer to Ofsted: explore an area prior to a planning call and inspection to build an understanding of the local context and inform inspection discussions. Leaders may find it helpful to review the information available for their area and consider how it aligns with their own knowledge, data and improvement priorities.

Training and network offer:

Title	Date and Time	Delivery/Venue	Booking details
Designated Safeguarding Leads & Officer Network	**19 November 2026** 6.30-8.30pm	Civic Centre	Book via email or the SLA
All Room Leaders Network	**3 December 2026** 6.30-8.30pm	Civic Centre	Book via email or the SLA

EYFS and Beyond

Early Years & School-Age Childcare Surveys – Participation Required
As part of our annual Childcare Sufficiency Assessment, we are seeking the views of providers, parents and carers on childcare provision in Reading.

We are currently running four surveys covering early years and school-age childcare. Feedback will help inform future planning and support for children, families and providers across Reading.

The surveys will close at **5pm on Wednesday 2 December 2026**.

1. **Reading Early Years Provider Survey 2026**
   We are seeking feedback from early years providers to help us understand local early years capacity, workforce, sufficiency and future challenges.
   Early Years Provider Survey: Early Years & Childcare Provider Survey 2026

2. **Reading Early Years Parental Survey 2026**
   We would also like to gather the views of parents and carers regarding early years provision in Reading, including childcare use, accessibility, affordability and future requirements.
   Please share the Early Years Parent Survey with families accessing your provision.
   Early Years Parent Survey: [Early Years Childcare - Parent Survey 2026]

3. **Reading School-Age Childcare Provider Survey 2026**
   We are seeking feedback from all organisations providing care, activities and support for school-age children, including wraparound childcare providers, holiday childcare providers, HAF providers, childminders, sports clubs and activity or enrichment providers.
   Provider Survey: [School-Age Childcare Provider Survey 2026]

4. **Reading School-Age Childcare Parental Survey 2026**
   We are keen to hear from parents and carers of school-age children about their experiences of childcare in Reading, wraparound childcare, holiday childcare, affordability, accessibility and future needs.
   Please share the Parent Survey with the families who use your provision.
   Parent Survey: [School-Age Childcare Parental Survey 2026]

Thank you for taking the time to complete and promote these surveys. Your feedback plays a vital role in helping us understand local childcare needs and shape future services and support for children, families and providers across Reading.

Maths Champion Programme
The NDNA's Maths Champions programme is designed to fit around the realities of a busy early years setting. Register your interest and discover how Maths Champions can strengthen your team's confidence while fitting around the day-to-day running of your provision. Find out more and register your interest.

Parents needed for a Children's Gut Health and Behaviour Study at the University of Reading
At the University of Reading, we're looking for parents of 3 to 5.5 year olds to take part in a study exploring the effect of a prebiotic fibre supplement on children's gut bacteria, behaviour and thinking skills.
We are looking for generally healthy children aged 3 to 5.5 years. The study runs over 13 weeks and involves a short online screening questionnaire, two x 1 hour visits to the University (times completely flexible including evenings and weekends), two stool samples collected at home and posted using a prepaid kit, and a daily supplement

flavourless/textureless) mixed into your child's food or drink for 8 weeks. Families receive £150 on completion.
To find out more, please contact Kirsty Holroyd at kirsty.holroyd@pgr.reading.ac.uk.

Reading Borough Council is sharing this information on behalf of the researchers. The council is not a partner in, sponsor of, or responsible for the study. Any questions about the research should be directed to the research team using the contact details provided.

Outdoor Learning Training for School Staff
Gabriels Wellbeing & Education are offering free training to Reading Primary Schools. Click here for further information.

Training and network offer:

Title	Date and Time	Delivery/Venue	Booking details
Berkshire supporting Hearing Impairment Children Berkshire Sensory Consortium	**12 November 2026** 6.30-7.30pm	Teams	Book via email or the SLA
Visual Impairment Awareness Workshop Berkshire Sensory Consortium	**26 November 2026** 6.30-7.30pm	Teams	Book via email
New to the role of SENCO Drop-in	**10 December 2026** 12.30-2.30pm	Civic Centre	Book via email or the SLA

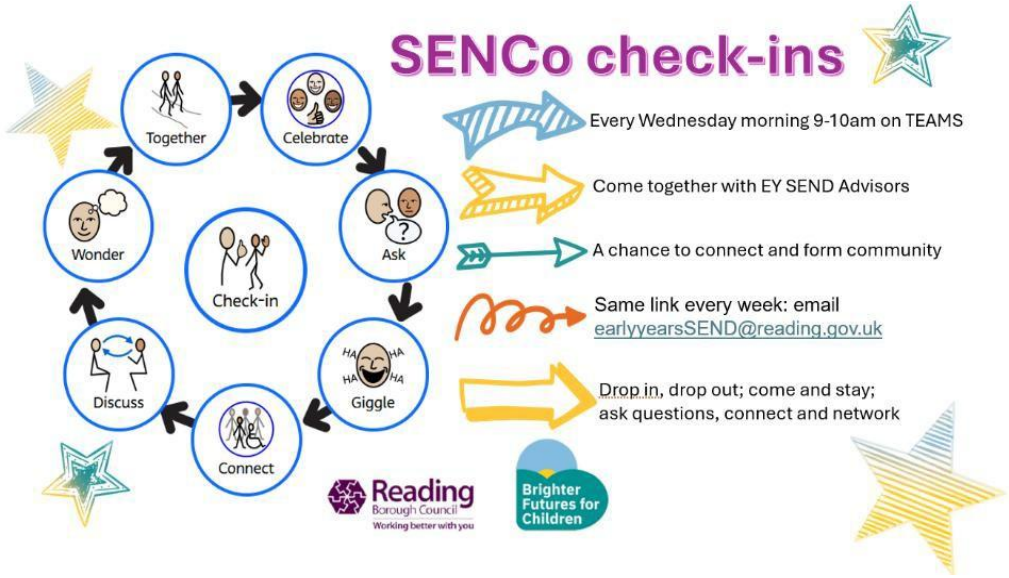
Specialist Advisory Support

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.

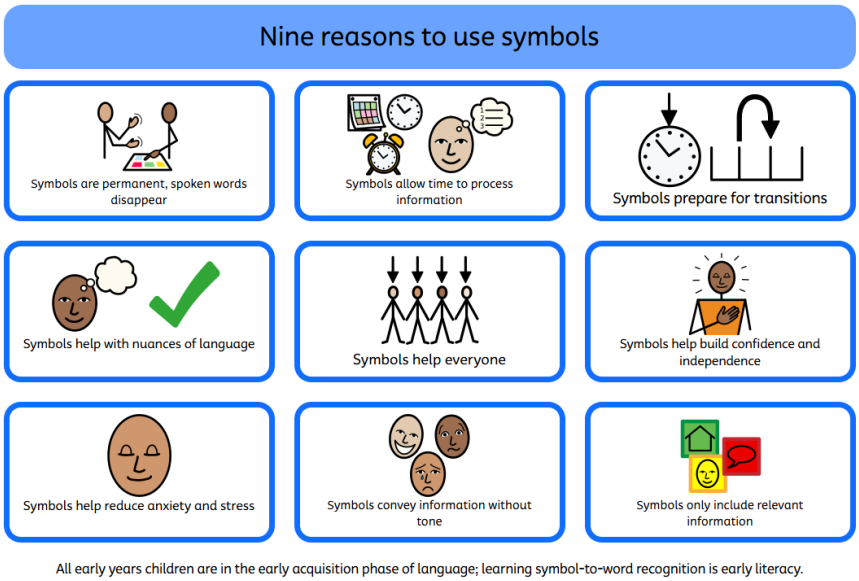


SEND advisory support
A callback service that runs alongside the SEND referral process. Request a call from a SEND advisor.

Speech and language (SALT) surgery
Third Thursday of the month. Book a slot.

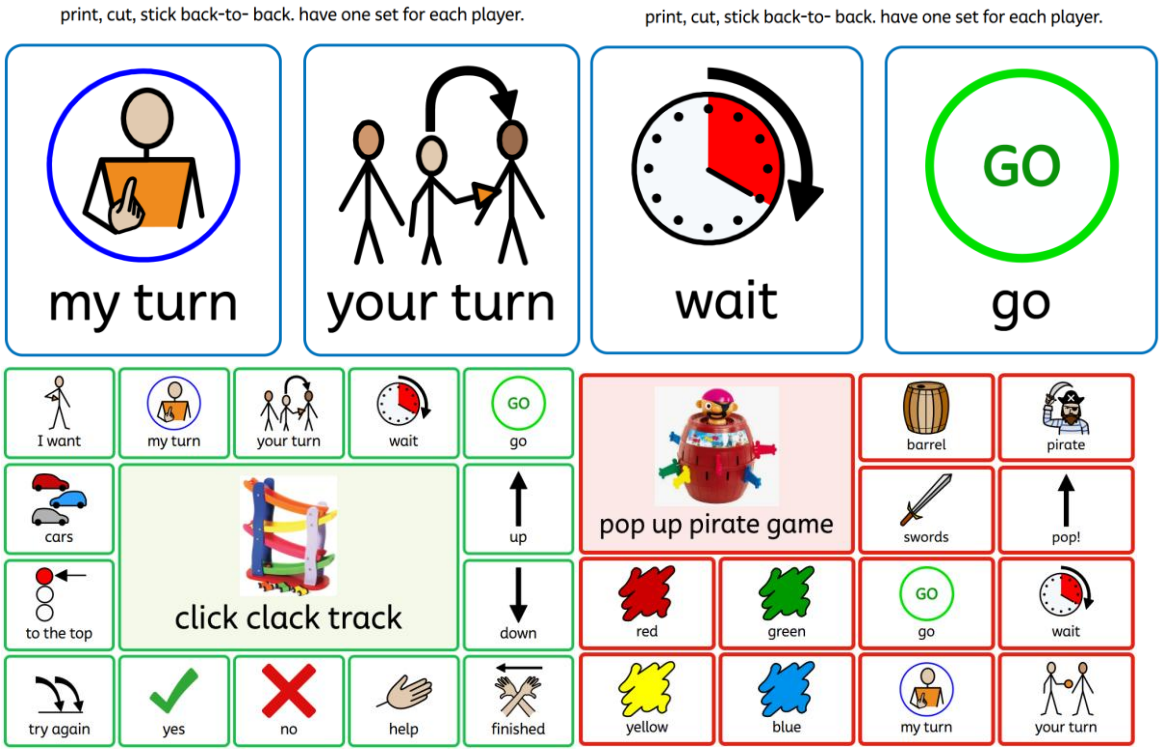
Support for children and families
If you are working with a child or family who may benefit from extra support with development before starting school, with permission you can refer them to the Home Learning Education Programme. Fill out a form to link with an EYFS & starting school champion here.

Symbols and Visual ideas for Inclusive Practice



All early years children are in the early acquisition phase of language; learning symbol-to-word recognition is early literacy.

When playing games that involve taking turns and waiting, a symbol can help with understanding. If you don't have Widget, please email joanna.binks@reading.gov.uk for a copy of these.



Best Start in Life

CBeebies Parenting
CBeebies has launched a brand-new YouTube channel which includes the documentary series 'Parenting Unscripted', with content also available on BBC iPlayer. The series features five well-known parents – Radio 1 DJ Charlie Hedges, Traitors star Leanne Quigley, rapper Krept, Made In Chelsea star Ollie Locke and Strictly' s Dani Dyer – sharing their experiences of parenthood and the challenges and emotions they have faced. The series also has an accompanying Parenting Download podcast offering expert advice. Take a look and share with families.

Journey to Reception Family Outreach
Is your child starting school in September 2027? Early Years and Starting School Stay and Play sessions will be running every Wednesday until Wednesday 18 November 1-2pm at Southcote Family Hub.

Best Start in Life Family Hub Drop-ins - Early Years Funding and Starting School
The Early Years and Childcare team hold drop-in sessions twice a month in all hubs where families can check their eligibility for funded childcare or meet with a Starting School Champion to discuss a child's development or any queries relating to starting school. Please direct families to the drop-ins if you feel they would benefit from the support.

Best Start in Life Hub	
East and North Reading	1st & 3rd Thursday of the month 9.30-11.30am
Ranikhet	2nd & 4th Monday of the month 9.30-11.30am
South Reading	1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month 9.30-11.30am
Southcote	2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month 1-3pm

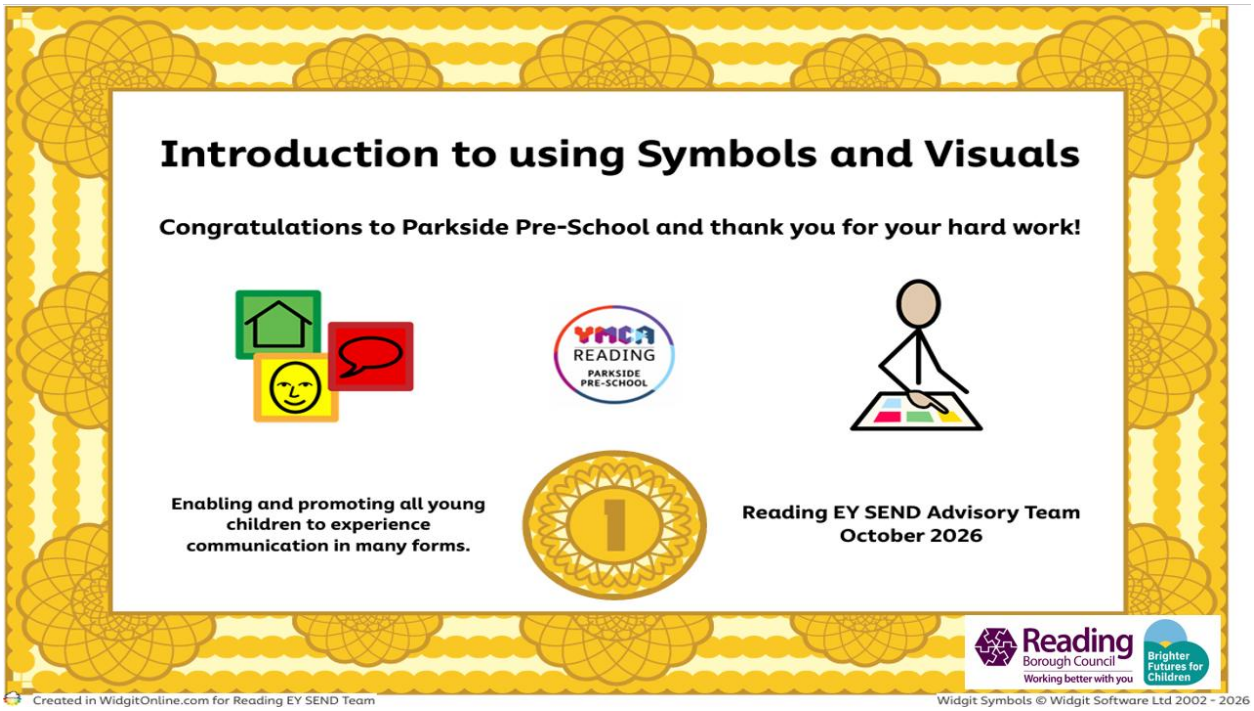
Best Start in Life Reading Family Hubs
Reading Family Hubs provide a wide range of services by connecting families with their community and local support networks. You can view the full timetable of Hub activities here.

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.

Did you know that our local recycling centre is part of a Book Reuse Scheme, you are able to request and collect a box of books free of charge for use at your setting. Further information can be found at re3 re3read.

Compliments/celebrations

Parkside Pre-school
Well done to Parkside Pre-school for completing the Introduction to using Symbols and Visuals training with the Early Years team!



Banana Moon

Well done to Banana Moon for achieving their Level One Inclusion Award!
The team has worked diligently and were able to demonstrate a solid foundation of inclusive practice. The advisors loved hearing you talk enthusiastically about your reflections and what that means for the children and families you care for.
An inspiration for sure!

Level 3 SENCO Qualification

Megan Scrooby from Fennies completed the Level 3 SENCO Course this year and has shared the following poem that she wrote:

🌈 My SENCO Journey 🌈
I started my course, not knowing what was ahead,
With lots of new knowledge filling my head.
A new SENCO role, exciting and bright,
Learning new things and getting it right!

I gained my qualification, step by step,
Building my confidence with every rep.
I met new people and made connections too,
Sharing ideas and learning something new.

I grew my knowledge and shared it each day,
Helping my team find new things to try and say.

I learnt new strategies, skills and care,
To make sure every child gets support that's fair.

I learnt who to contact and where to turn,
And that there's always more to learn.
Building partnerships became part of my way,
Working with families and professionals each day.

I put my action plans into practice with pride,
Keeping inclusion and every child at my side.
I've grown more confident in all that I do,
And discovered just how much I can achieve too.

My journey has taught me, helped me to grow,
And given me knowledge I'm proud to show.
I'm ready to keep learning, supporting and sharing,
With passion for SEN and a heart for caring. 💞🌟

From nervous and new, to confident and strong,
I've found my SENCO journey; it's where I belong! 🌈

Thank you so much for absolutely everything!

The next course will start in January 2027. If you have a member of staff that is interested in gaining the qualification, please complete the expression of interest form by **Wednesday 25 November**.

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.