



Ian Morris

Early Years and Childcare Strategic Manager

Email: imorris@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Tel: 01905 844721

Our Ref: EYB138

Date: 26th February 2021

Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

It's been a busy week, with the news dominated by the return of children to schools on the 8th March. It's almost easy to forget that the children and staff in the Early Years sector have worked throughout the current lockdown but we must continue to ensure that your incredible work must not be overlooked.

Our bulletin contains the latest information from the DfE; including the news that Early Years providers will soon have access to home testing. Hopefully, this service will soon be extended to childminders.

The Early Years team have been looking ahead to the statutory introduction of the new EYFS in September. Our introductory training begins during the Summer term, please look out for the dates and come along and join us.

Enjoy your weekend, stay safe.

Contents

Covid testing of Early Years staff.....	2
Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment – How to complete an RS36	3
Government Updates.....	3
Out of School and Holiday Club Providers	4
Healthy eating and safe food preparation.....	5
Continued Liaison with Health Visitors	5
Meeting the Needs of Anxious Children in the Early Years	6
Domestic abuse training	6
Sharing the Joy and benefit of being Cochlear Implanted at an Early Age with the Hearing Impairment Service	7
Early Years Weekly Attendance Data.....	7
World Book Day 4 th March 2021.....	8
Testing kits WILL be distributed to PVI nurseries	9
Message from Worcestershire Public Health Team	10

Covid testing of Early Years staff

Early Years staff are encouraged to access LFT test twice a week. Until home testing is operationalised, testing is available for early years staff at a variety of rapid community testing sites and pharmacies across Worcestershire.

You can book your test slot via: https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/info/20870/coronavirus_covid-19_symptoms_and_how_to_get_a_test/2344/coronavirus_covid-19_i_do_not_have_symptoms

Wider symptoms: Please note the EY bulletin issued on 5th February 2021 (No. 135) confirmed the retraction of testing children or staff with wider Covid-19 symptoms in Early Years settings. Please continue to ensure all staff/children who display any of the three main COVID-19 symptoms (new continuous cough, high temperature, loss of taste/smell) do not attend settings and get a PCR test.

However, a number of schools and early years settings have agreed to take part in a small pilot to test wider symptoms to identify if this detects cases earlier and/or reduces transmission. Those settings taking part are aware and this has now commenced.

Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment – How to complete an RS36

Do you have a child who is being put forward for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (in the hope of getting an Education, Health and Care Plan) in readiness for starting in reception September 2021?

If so, you might find this new training written by the Area SENCo team a useful tool as it takes you carefully through the paperwork process, giving practical hints and tips along the way.

It is recommended that you have the required paperwork (specifically the RS36) and all accompanying evidence before you start to view the PSF version of the power point, as it takes you through each section of the RS36 – giving examples of what to include.

The PDF version PowerPoint is available for all early years setting to [view free of charge on our website \(opens in new window\)](#)

Early Years settings who are currently being supported by the Area SENCO's will also be invited to free training events where the Inclusion team will take them through the PowerPoint and provide additional advice and guidance.

Government Updates

[Guidance for parents and carers on safeguarding children in out-of-school settings \(opens in new window\)](#) updated on 17 February 2021 to include that there are now translations for Gujarati and Punjabi available

[PHE launches new Psychological First Aid training \(opens in new window\)](#) From 21 February 2021, people who care for or work with children and young people aged up to 25 who have been affected by COVID-19 (or other emergencies or individual crises) will be able to access a new online Psychological First Aid (PFA) training course). The online course, developed by Public Health England (PHE), offers training on how to provide practical and emotional support to children and young people affected by emergencies or crisis situations. Children and young people can be very resilient, but crises such as COVID-19 can severely impact their mental health. Getting the right support early on can help prevent problems occurring or worsening.

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(opens in new window\)](#) On 22 February updated by withdrawing the 'Education and childcare settings: national lockdown from 5 January 2021' guidance and transferred relevant sections into the updated 'Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' guidance.

[Evidence summary: COVID-19 – children, young people and education settings \(opens in new window\)](#), first published 22 February 2021 a DfE paper summarising evidence in relation to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, particularly around children, young people and education settings.

[Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#), updated the guidance updated on 23 February 2021 to outline who can attend out-of-school settings and what precautions parents who are sending their children to these settings should take from 8 March. Added a new section on face coverings.

Updated guidance on 24 February: Changed the guidance document 'What parents need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during COVID-19' to an accessible version.

[New education recovery package for children and young people \(opens in new window\)](#), the press release from 24 February 2021 explains a new £700 million plan laid out to help young people in England catch up on lost learning due to the pandemic. The new plan will be focusing on an expansion of one-to-one and small group tutoring programmes, as well as supporting the development of disadvantaged children in early years settings, and summer provision for those pupils who need it the most.

[Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update \(opens in new window\)](#) updated on 24 February 2021 the 'Current activity' section to reflect our plans from 8 March.

Out of School and Holiday Club Providers

Following the Prime Minister's announcement that all schools will re-open on the 8th March, the guidance for Out of School providers has been updated on 23 February.

[Guidance- Protective measures for holiday and after-school clubs, and other out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak \(opens in new window\)](#)

Main changes to this guidance:

- Amended the who can attend your setting section to outline which children and young people can attend these settings and for which purposes after 8 March.
- Added advice for pregnant staff members to the staff and workforce section.
- Updated the face coverings section to advise that children who were aged 11 and above on 31 August 2020 are recommended to wear face coverings when they are being educated or cared for in classrooms or during activities, where social distancing cannot be maintained, and to include further information on exemptions, access and safe wearing of face coverings
- Updated the considering groups sizes section to make clear that:
 - you should only group children from different schools together where it is absolutely necessary
 - each group or bubble should be supervised by at least one staff member
 - where it is not possible to follow school day bubbles, you should ensure any children from the same school are kept together, and/or work with parents and carers to try and keep siblings together
- Added a new section - engage in asymptomatic testing, where available

If you have any questions or require any support in relation to the above guidance, please contact Sharon or Sam from the Early Years and Childcare Team on 01905 844048 or email eycc@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

Healthy eating and safe food preparation

From the [Foundation Years newsletter \(opens in new window\)](#) we wanted to highlight the following.

As those working in the early years sector will be aware, the [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) framework \(opens in new window\)](#) requires providers to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and well - and providers must be confident that those responsible for preparing and handling food in their setting are competent to do so.

This includes preparing food hygienically, providing meals that are healthy, balanced and nutritious, as well as making sure that food is prepared appropriately for babies and children of different ages, for example mashed, pureed or cut into appropriately sized and shaped pieces where it could be a choking hazard. The EYFS learning and development requirements also state that children must be helped to make healthy choices in relation to food.

A number of organisations have produced guidance that supports providers, parents and carers in building a sound knowledge of how to prepare food for children in the early years - and how to make sure that meals provided are healthy and safe. Early years practitioners may find it useful to refer to this guidance when reviewing policies surrounding food and drink in their setting, or when inducting new members of staff to the EYFS requirements.

We have brought this guidance together on the [Foundation Years website \(opens in new window\)](#) and have set out further details on the content to support providers and practitioners in meeting the food and drink requirements set out in the EYFS.

Continued Liaison with Health Visitors

Due to the Covid 19 and the impact it is having on early years setting, the DfE introduced disapplication's on statutory EYFS duties including one for the EYFS 2 year old integrated check; "The progress check at age 2 will not need to be undertaken during any period of intervention related to coronavirus (COVID-19)."

Whilst early years practitioners are not required to undertake the progress check, we urge you to continue to liaise with a child's health visitor (with parents' permission) whenever significant issues or delays in development are identified. This is an important step in ensuring health professionals are involved in the early identification of additional needs and are included in signposting and referrals to appropriate services that can intervene at the earliest opportunity to support the child and family. The Health Visiting service continue to do their 2½ year review – and these are predominantly being done virtually.

A range of promotional materials are also available for inclusion within your parent folders and information boards. During Covid lockdown many parents are reliant on your websites to access information and the range of posters can also be linked or uploaded to your parent section on your settings website. The posters promote the Starting Well Partnership along with the Telephone Advisory Service (TAS) helpline that is available Monday-Friday 9am-3pm on 0300 123 9551.

More information is available on the [Starting Well Partnership website \(opens in new window\)](#)

Meeting the Needs of Anxious Children in the Early Years

Due to interest in the Anxiety training available to those working in Schools Worcestershire Children First's Educational Psychology team have organised a specific training course regarding anxiety specifically for the PVI early years sector. The session is 75 minutes, will be delivered virtually via MS Teams and is free to attend due to Worcestershire Children First securing an NHS funding grant.

Overview: Considering the function and experience of anxiety for children and how settings can identify and support at risk children, including those whose anxiety is impacting upon their attendance. This includes supporting children to communicate how they feel as well as working with parents/carers to promote attendance and reduce distress.

Date / time: 18 March 2021, 6.30pm to 7.45pm

Please ensure places are booked directly via [CPD \(opens in new window\)](#), using your setting's specific login details. Confirmations will include the joining instructions as an attachment.

Domestic abuse training

Due to the popularity of the domestic abuse training offered to schools, we've organised two bespoke early years sessions. They are suitable for PVI – childminders, nurseries / pre-schools and out of school clubs. For school ran nurseries please access this via the Safeguarding SLA. The three-hour virtual session delivered by Martin Lakeman will look at:

- Increase awareness of the insidious nature of domestic abuse and the invisibility of coercion and control.
- Highlight the prevalence and statistics of domestic abuse
- Increase confidence to be professionally curious and to ask about domestic abuse in a way that makes it easier and safer for people to disclose.
- Increase understanding of victims' responses to domestic abuse including why they may stay in an abusive relationship
- Explore the links between pregnancy and domestic abuse and the impacts on children both pre-birth and at various stages of development
- Consider the professional responsibility for positively impacting the resilience of children
- Explore the additional impacts on people from marginalised groups including adults with support and care needs, older people and LGBT and minority communities
- Increase knowledge of how to refer to relevant services when appropriate, including referral to local and national specialist services for victims and perpetrators.

Cost: £24 + VAT (£28.80 inc VAT)

22 March 2021, 6.30pm to 9.30pm, course code: EY/20/267

Please book via [CPD \(opens in new window\)](#) using your CPD Leader login details and at the point of confirmation you will receive the joining instructions and the power control wheel to use during the training.

Sharing the Joy and benefit of being Cochlear Implanted at an Early Age with the Hearing Impairment Service

This is a case study of two young deaf young children (who will be referred to as Child A and Child B) and how their journey as profoundly deaf siblings has progressed so far.

Both siblings received regular visits from a Teacher of the Deaf to support the family with audiological equipment, promoting interaction, communication and language development using both speech and British Sign Language. Family support included tracking development, introducing them to other families with deaf young children through the Early Years Group, delivering training to Nursery staff and providing radio hearing aids to support access to speech at home and in the nursery setting.

Child A (now 3 years 5 months old) was referred to the HI Service at five weeks of age with a profound, bilateral sensori neural (permanent) hearing loss. Having gained little benefit from hearing aids Child A received bilateral Cochlear Implants through the Midland's Hearing Implant Programme at eleven months old. The huge benefits of being implanted at this early age mean that Child A has now been able to listen to speech and sounds in the environment with cochlear implants for 2 years and 6 months. During this time with ongoing family support child A has made exceptional progress with spoken language – language that is now age appropriate and in line with hearing peers, what a tremendous achievement this is.

Child B (now 1 year 9 months old) was diagnosed at birth and referred to the HI Service also with a profound, bilateral sensori neural (permanent) hearing loss. Child B was implanted at the earlier age of eight months old and the benefits of receiving implants three months earlier than Child B's sibling have been remarkable. Child B's progress exceeds all expectations of a cochlear implant user after 13 months of listening to speech and sounds in the environment. The language development of Child B is also in line with hearing peers and followed a normal pattern of language development.

Here are a few words from the parent of Child A and B:

'The opportunity to receive cochlear implants at a young age means both our deaf daughters are now thriving in the hearing world. At just one year from implantation Child B is already able to say approximately 50 words, of which the clarity of them can be understood by her older deaf sibling. Hearing our young deaf daughters having a conversation with each other is truly unbelievable! I'm hearing but I have cochlear implants to thank for my favourite sound; their voices.'

Early Years Weekly Attendance Data

Thank you for your ongoing data returns.

[The form for the week commencing Monday 22nd February is now live \(opens in new window\)](#)

Please be aware that you need to use the new link every week – you will **not be able to access the Form** via last week's link. The form should be submitted by **9am on Tuesday 2nd March**. Please note that schools with nursery provision should also be submitting a return, for the nursery children only.

World Book Day 4th March 2021

World Book Day is about changing children's lives through a love of books and shared reading, it's also about bringing books to the children who need them the most.

Did you know? Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success, more than family circumstances, parents' educational backgrounds or income. – Organisation for Economic Co-Operation & Development.

Through sharing stories and making stories fun we are developing a culture of reading for pleasure, which will encourage the next generation of readers. Just 10 minutes 'daily shared reading benefits every child's future. This is how early years providers are making a difference and can support parents to make a difference in their child's life.

There are some great activities going on to celebrate World Book Day, check out the website below for more information and to download the [World Book Day Nursery and Pre School Pack 2021](#) ([opens in new window](#))

The Early Years Team, love children's stories and here are a few of our favourites, do you have any favourites?

Sam Barrett- Monkey Puzzle by Julia Donaldson "It was the first book I purchased for my eldest Son as a baby, it was also his favourite"

Sharon Jones - We're Going on a Bear Hunt by Michael Rosen " This book never failed to delight and engage children whenever I read it whether this was an intimate story for one, a group chant or to my own child it brings such joy!

Ian Morris - "Alfie" series of books by Shirley Hughes. I think it's wonderful how she bases her stories around real-life experiences that children (and adults) can relate to. Her illustrations are so rich and detailed and evoke a real sense of warmth in the relationships and situations that they convey. My personal favourite from the series would be "Alfie Gets in First."

Gill Deakin- Don't forget the bacon! by Pat Hutchins "It has been my favourite book since I trained as a teacher. It is a great play on words and rhyme as the little boy tries to remember the shopping list his mum has given him. The pictures are fabulous, so much to talk about and explore, you always find something different in the picture each time you see it. And of course – he forgets the bacon at the end of his adventure"

Testing kits WILL be distributed to PVI nurseries

From the [NDNA website \(opens in new window\)](#) we wanted to highlight the following article

Following weeks of campaigning and lobbying, the DfE has finally agreed to distribute home testing kits to all early years providers including PVI nurseries from 22 March.

For weeks the Government guidance suggested that PVI nursery staff would have to go to local testing centres – often during working hours and using public transport – to get tested twice weekly. As well as potentially being a challenging journey, nurseries would have to find cover for their staff if centres were unable to offer out of hours appointments.

NDNA has lobbied successfully that PVI nurseries – which deliver the most significant proportion of childcare places – must be treated in the same way as nurseries in schools and maintained nursery schools, both of which have been sent the home testing kits for their staff.

From 22 March, nurseries will start receiving their at-home kits.

Purnima Tanuku OBE, Chief Executive of NDNA said: “There are two crucial pillars to keeping staff and children as safe as possible in early years settings, mass rapid testing and vaccination of critical workers. The announcement that all staff in PVI nurseries and pre-school settings will have the same access to testing as schools is fantastic news for the sector.

“We have worked hard alongside our members to ensure the practical and logistical challenges are overcome. We hope that soon childminders will also be able to access the testing kits. Early years staff have been desperately waiting for this support since the scheme for schools was announced in December.

“We hope that the roll-out of this plan can happen as soon as possible so early years workers can test at home before setting off to work, limiting the spread of the virus. The next stage has to be the question of vaccination for staff because that is how we can ensure they are as safe as possible and minimise the disruption of care and education for our youngest children.”

NDNA will continue to campaign for early years staff to be prioritised for vaccinations in order to make nurseries as safe as possible for their children and staff.

From the 22nd February 2021 [press release by DfE from Gavin Williamson \(opens new window\)](#) “All staff at private, voluntary and independent nurseries will have access to tests to use twice weekly at home, building on the testing already available to maintained nursery schools and school-based nurseries. Childminders can continue to access community testing, and the Department continues to work with colleagues across government to review the testing approach available for childminders.”

Message from Worcestershire Public Health Team

A letter from Public Health has been attached for providers to share with their families, this is to confirm the retraction of testing for children with wider COVID-19 symptoms. The retraction was in the [EY bulletin dated 5th February 2021 \(no135\) \(opens in new window\)](#).

Best regards,



Ian Morris
Early Years and Childcare Strategy Manager

