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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

I hope that as the new term continues to develop that your new cohorts of children and families are settling in and that routines are becoming established. It's always such a busy time of year; enjoyable but often very hectic!

I make no apologies for including our annual safeguarding self-assessment again this week. We are really pleased to have established such a positive relationship with the safeguarding team and this tool is a direct result of our close partnership working. I am sure that you will find it useful in identifying your settings safeguarding priorities.

On a similar note, Early Help in Worcestershire have produced a useful booklet that we have also attached to this week's bulletin.

Finally, I must once again mention our Early Years conference. The number of delegates booking on continues to be pleasing. I know our keynote speakers are once more looking forward to being part of a face-to-face event and we are really pleased to have secured such a line-up of high-quality Early Years experts. Please ensure you book on and join us for what promises to be two inspirational days.

Enjoy your week.

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Annual Safeguarding Self-Assessment for Early Years Settings and Childminders

Over the term we have consulted with the sector and worked with some DSL’s from across the County and have now developed a self-assessment audit tool (Annual Safeguarding Self-Assessment for Early Years Settings and Childminders). Schools for some years have been completing a similar assessment known as the section 175 which legally has to be completed by all schools.

In Early Years the toolkit is **not** mandatory, however WCF believe this will support you in your setting to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding over the past 12 months. The survey will be available yearly and can be completed [online](#) by **31st October 2021**.

The results will be shared with Denise Hannibal, Early Years and Education Safeguarding Lead and will support developing training needs for Worcestershire Early Years DSL’s and all Practitioners, as well as supporting you in your setting to identify any priorities to ensure safeguarding is effective.

Early Help Booklet

Early help means providing advice, help or support where we identify there is a specific need or difficulty within a family. As professionals we work alongside a child, young person and their family / carers to address the challenges they are experiencing, helping them to access the support and make any changes needed. This could be at any point in a child’s life, from birth to 18 years old and on more than one occasion, as we know children and young people are always growing and developing their needs change, as well as the needs of their families and carers. Early help is about supporting children and young people when there is a challenge in their lives or that of their families as soon as possible.

Early help in Worcestershire have produced a useful booklet describing the services and support that may assist you in developing your Early Help offer. (please see attached document)

Healthy Start

Healthy Start is a Government Scheme that provides weekly vouchers to eligible parents and can help parent/carers who are pregnant or have a young child under four. These vouchers can be spent on milk, fruit and vegetables and infant formula milk at local shops and supermarkets, as well as offering coupons for free vitamins too.

Early Years settings should be promoting this scheme to parent/carers in their settings.

For more information about the scheme, visit [Healthy Start website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Qualifying criteria for the Healthy Start programme

Parent/carers will qualify for the Healthy Start scheme if they are at least 10 weeks pregnant or if they have at least one child that's under 4. In addition, they must be receiving any of the following:

- Child Tax Credit (only if the family's annual income is £16,190 or less)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (which includes the child addition)
- Universal Credit (only if the family's take-home pay is £408 or less per month from employment)

Additional criteria for Healthy Start:

- If the parent/carer is under 18 and pregnant, even if they are not claiming any benefits
- If the parent/carer claims income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are over 10 weeks pregnant
- If they or their partner get Working Tax Credit run-on only. (Working Tax Credit run-on is the Working Tax Credit they receive in the 4 weeks immediately after they have stopped working for 16 hours or more per week)

To find out if they earn £408 or less per month from employment whilst claiming Universal Credit, please advise them to look at their 'take-home pay for this period' on their monthly Universal Credit award notice.

Advice on how to apply:

Please see the [How to apply page on the Healthy Start website \(opens in a new window\)](#).

Where can parent/carers get Healthy Start vitamins from?

To find where parent/carers can use their Healthy Start vitamins vouchers choose the relevant district below:

- [Bromsgrove](#)
- [Malvern Hills](#)
- [Redditch](#)
- [Worcester City](#)
- [Wychavon](#)
- [Wyre Forest](#)

Early Years Conference

We are pleased to announce the return of our popular Early Years conference.

Titled “New Beginnings”, it will take place on Friday 15th and Saturday 16th October at Worcester Racecourse. The Early Years team are inviting you to a full day of inspirational and motivational keynotes and workshops exploring the most talked about and current topics in Early Years.

Our exciting line-up of keynote speakers include the internationally renowned John Siraj Blatchford and Lynnette Brock from SchemaPlay, the former story-telling laureate Katrice Horsley, and acclaimed independent consultants Neil Farmer and Sonia Mainstone-Cotton.

“Neil Farmer was particularly inspiring, he got key messages across in a way that challenged without alienating and really championed the child's perspective. Loved both his keynote and workshop. A great day with loads of new ideas.”

“We feel we have gained different ideas about how to capture the children's interests and schemes and follow the way they learn to extend their learning from John and Lynette”

“There are few people on earth who give you such a boost of energy as Katrice...She transfers her knowledge of storytelling in a way that is indescribably inspiring - once you have experienced her performances, they are impossible to forget! With a big heart and an enviable presence, she turns her lectures and workshops into something completely magical. I recommend Katrice with all my heart because she is personal and always delivers beyond expectations.”

“Absolutely fantastic course, excellent tutor Sonia.”

“I would highly recommend Sonia's course to anyone and everyone.”

Booking is now live via [CPD online](#) and be advised that places are limited.

The codes are:

- Friday 15th October -CON/21/433
- Saturday 16th October-CON/21/434

Autism and Anxiety Online Training

Autism West Midlands are offering two FREE on-line training workshops for parents/ carers of autistic children aged up to 18 waiting to be assessed for autism. (Please see attached leaflet)

Progress check at age two – EYFS 2021

When a child is aged between two and three, practitioners must review their progress, and provide parents and/or carers with a short written summary of their child's development in the prime areas.

This progress check must identify the child's strengths, and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected. If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development involving parents and/or carers and other professionals (for example, the provider's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) or health professionals) as appropriate.

Beyond the prime areas, it is for practitioners to decide what the written summary should include, reflecting the development level and needs of the individual child. The summary must highlight: areas in which a child is progressing well; areas in which some additional support might be needed; and focus particularly on any areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay (which may indicate a special educational need or disability). It must describe the activities and strategies the provider intends to adopt to address any issues or expected that the progress check would usually be undertaken by the setting where the child has spent most time. Practitioners must discuss with parents and/or carers how the summary of development can be used to support learning at home.

Practitioners should encourage parents and/or carers to share information from the progress check with other relevant professionals, including their health visitor and the staff of any new provision the child may transfer to. Practitioners must agree with parents and/or carers when will be the most useful point to provide a summary. Where possible, the progress check and the Healthy Child Programme health and development review at age two (when health visitors gather information on a child's health and development) should inform each other and support integrated working. This will allow health and education professionals to identify strengths as well as any developmental delay and any particular support from which they think the child/family might benefit. Providers must have the consent of parents and/or carers to share information directly with other relevant professionals.

The Worcestershire Early Years team have been working alongside Health Visitors and some Worcestershire Providers to develop a more integrated approach to sharing information from the check. All Early Years providers can now use the portal for sharing information where concerns for 2 year olds and their development have been raised. Below are the links to the process, which is currently in the pilot stage, but would welcome all providers to follow this process if referrals are needed.

[Integrated 2 Year Check - Worcestershire Children First Education Services](#)

“HANDI” Paediatric First Aid App

NHS Worcestershire have produced the “HANDI” Paediatric” app to get up to date advice about common childhood illnesses and how to treat them. (Please see the attached leaflet).

Resource for Aiding Interaction and Developing Shared Attention

The Inclusion Team has produced an information leaflet listing a selection of resources, toys and ideas that may be useful to support children with interaction, shared attention, turn taking and early communication.

The resources should be utilised by parent/carers and practitioners for developing shared attention with an adult in the first instance. When children are confident in this skill, adults should then introduce another child to the activities to develop interactions and shared attention with the child's friendship and peer group.

The resources are particularly useful for children with complex communication needs and/or autism.

Please email the Inclusion Team on eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk to request the 'Aiding Interaction and Developing Shared Attention' information leaflet or call the Inclusion Helpline on 01905 843099.

Inclusion Courses – Buy one get one half price

A special offer is available for early years inclusion courses. Quote the following code on CPD online to get 50% off the second course you book onto:

Code: SENCOAutumn

For a full list of inclusion courses available please visit the WCF Early Years Training webpage and book on via [CPD online](#).

Best regards,



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