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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

This week has seen a wintery twist to the weather, and it feels like the countdown towards the Festive season has really begun. For many of you it's an enjoyable time but also one of the busiest times of the year. The latest developments with the pandemic have added further challenges too.

Please try to make sure that over the coming weeks that you make time for yourselves to relax and take stock; try not to become overwhelmed by the stresses that are also associated with the season.

Our bulletin this week offers some opportunities to reflect with links to interesting webinars from the likes of Jude Twani and Pete Moorhouse amongst others as well as the latest Early Years research to immerse yourself in.

Enjoy your week.

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Covid Update

The Prime Minister has announced [new temporary measures](#) following the emergence of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 in the UK.

A summary of what the new measures mean for education settings can be found on the [Education Hub](#) and the [early years guidance](#) has been updated accordingly.

When settings close for Christmas, all staff should test over the holidays in line with national guidance. This means that they should test if they will be in a high-risk situation that day, and before visiting people who are at higher risk of severe illness if they get COVID-19. For settings remaining open over the Christmas period, staff (including students of secondary age and older) should continue to test at home twice per week.

Staff in all early years settings should take one self-test at home either the evening or morning before they return in January. They should then continue to test in line with government guidelines. Settings should check their test kit stock levels and make an order of test kits so that staff are able to test over the holiday period if required, and for the first week of January, using home test kits.

Early years recovery

As set out in this [DfE press notice](#), the government is investing £153 million to build a stronger, more expert workforce in the early years sector. This was previously announced as part of the £1.4 billion commitment made on 2 June 2021.

The £153m package, together with the previously announced Nuffield Early Language Project (£17m), and further investment (£10m) in the second phase of the Professional Development Programme, represents an investment of up to £180m of recovery support for the early years sector. The [DfE factsheet](#) provides the detail how the £153m is being invested.

Sustainability & Climate Change draft strategy for education

On 5 November, Secretary of State Nadhim Zahawi made an [announcement on the draft sustainability and climate change strategy for education and children's services](#).

It highlights plans to embed sustainability across all education sectors, including early years, with suggestions such as climate awards for children and engagement on a virtual National Education Nature Park, helping children gain skills for the 21st century. [Read the draft sustainability strategy in full](#).

A special offer on our Early Years Inclusion courses

The offer is on our range of early years inclusion courses available in the Spring Term, which include:

- Positive Behaviour Management (currently being rescheduled to January 2022)
- Effective Early Identification of SEND
- Introduction to Speech and Language Difficulties
- Effective Individual Provision Map (IPM) Writing - Introduction to Practice
- Training for New SENCO's - Introduction to Practice
- 'How to write a Support Plan' workshop
- Individual Risk Assessments and Health Care Plans for children with SEND within Early Years settings

The buy one get one half price applies for any bookings made from 1 October, on any early years inclusion course so you can have delegates attend two different courses with this 50% offer, and the course must be completed by the end of March 2022.

To take advantage of this offer when booking via [CPD Online](#) using your settings CPD Leader login details, please quote: **SENCOAutumn**. If you do not quote **SENCOAutumn** when booking your second course, the training will be charged at full price.

Also please be aware that the majority of the Early Years Inclusion training, detailed above, will be moving to virtual delivery. Please continue to book places as normal and as / when the course is updated on [CPD Online](#) we will issue revised joining instructions.

Inclusion Funding Overview

Virtual delivery (Microsoft Teams)

Tuesday 14th December 5.30-6.30pm

£12 per place: aimed at SENCO's and setting managers.

Are you new to the SENCo role or wish to refresh your knowledge on how to claim inclusion funding for children with additional needs in your Early Years Provision?

If so, this 1 hour overview course will provide you with clear guidance on the funding that is available to all NEF registered settings, out of school and holiday provisions.

An overview of how to claim inclusion funding for children with additional needs. The one hour workshop will provide insights into:

- The different levels of funding and the expectation of support and interventions at each stage
- Guidance on when and how to claim the funding
- Explain the funding available for each age group
- How to predict the funding you will receive and plan appropriate spend
- Provide guidance on how to record appropriate spend, and record impact of the funding
- Guidance on discussing the funding with parents/carers

Book your place now on [CPD Online](#).

Early Years Attendance Data

As previously communicated, the DfE are continuing to collect Early Years Attendance data during the Autumn Term, to enable them to monitor the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on the early years sector. The DfE are currently discussing whether the collection needs to continue into the Spring Term; we will let you know when a decision has been made.

The information provided across all local authorities is used to inform the Governments Covid-19 recovery planning; it is therefore really important that we enable them to have an accurate picture of the early years sector within Worcestershire by submitting a response from all providers.

The data collection form for the week commencing **Monday 29th November** is now live and can be found here: <https://forms.office.com/r/EckmAW8Q0p>

The form should be completed by **all settings**, including schools, who have Early Years children in attendance. Children accessing Reception provision should not be included.

Please click on the link above, complete the form and submit by **9am on Tuesday 7th December**.

Primary and First School applications for children starting September 2022

Closing Date for Applications 15th January 2022

The importance of making an application on time cannot be stressed enough. This year more than any other, has highlighted to us the huge impact that making a late application can have on the most vulnerable children. A late application can only be considered after all those received on time, this places those children at a disadvantage. In areas where place availability is more limited, some of the most vulnerable families, applying late, cannot be accommodated in their local schools, and in some cases, have not been able to attend the same school as their siblings. You already provide an amazing amount of support to those that are most vulnerable in your communities. It is vital that you continue to support those families in encouraging them to make on time applications for starting school.

We are asking Early Years partners to remind parents about the need to make an application and draw their attention to the closing date, in both conversations and communication messages to parents/carers.

If you have parents/carers that you feel would benefit from some guidance and support with the application process please direct them to the Worcestershire Hub on 01905 822700, the School Admissions Team on 01905 844111 and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) via: <http://www.hwsendiass.co.uk/>.

Research

[The health and wellbeing of children in the early years](#)

This is the first of four reports from the [Children's Alliance](#) which aims to set out a complete programme for Government action to reverse the alarming decline in the health and wellbeing of children and young people. All four reports will be published before 1st March next year.

Thinking about 'truly inclusive' practice

Andrea Katz, clinical director of the Association of Infant Mental Health, discusses the [importance of reflective practice in addressing unconscious bias](#) in early years settings.

Source: Nursery World

Developing self-efficacy in early years

Maureen Hunt looks at the importance of helping young children [develop self-efficacy](#) and how it can support children's PSED, in particular, self-regulation and wellbeing.

Source: Early Years Reviews

Leading and managing an early years setting

Early years leader Adam Marycz reflects on [the leadership role](#) in an early years setting.

Source: Foundation Stage Forum

Mathematical musings

Jude Twani, an Associate Consultant for Early Excellence ponders [ways that you can approach maths](#) in the early years.

Source: Early Excellence

The wonder of woodwork in the early years

Pete Moorhouse [champions the use of woodwork](#) in the early years and provides expert advice on how to get started.

Source: family

EIF report on impacts of COVID-19 on children's physical development in the early years

The Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) has [published a report reviewing existing research on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's physical development in the early years \(age 0–5\)](#). As UK research in this area is relatively scarce, many of the findings are taken from studies in other countries. Overall, the evidence has shown that the physical development of children is likely to have been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

Best regards,



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