



**Early Years Team**

Email: [eycc@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eycc@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

Tel: 01905 844048

Our Ref: EYB203

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## Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

It's been lovely to see so many faces at the recent Early Years Update Meetings. Following the final session next week, we'll make sure the slides are included in the next Early Years Bulletin for reference. The dates for the Spring Term meetings have now been agreed so look out for them on CPD in the coming few weeks. Please email the Team if there are any specific areas you would like to be covered via [EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk).

This edition of the Bulletin contains a key announcement regarding **Operation Encompass for Early Years**, along with information about the start of the **Childminder Mentor Programme** which follows on from the [Early Years Experts and Mentors Programme](#) that started earlier this term.

Best regards,

The Early Years Team

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## Early Years Bulletin: Worcestershire Reminders and Updates

### Early Help in Worcestershire

To support easy access to information about Early Help in Worcestershire, there are now QR codes available for both families, via the Worcestershire Virtual Family Hub and for professionals, via the Early Help guidance for professionals' page:

#### Worcestershire Virtual Family Hub



#### Early Help Guidance for Professionals



### 30 Hour Childcare Codes

Families intending to access 30 Hours Childcare for their 3 or 4-year-old child in January must have Code with a Start Date of 31<sup>st</sup> December, or earlier.

For existing 3 & 4 year old children, please ensure that you've checked the start and end dates on the [Provider Portal](#) to confirm their Code will still be valid on 1<sup>st</sup> January. For children due to start accessing funding in January, please use the Eligibility Checker (on the [Provider Portal](#)) to ensure the start date is no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December and the end date is no earlier than 1<sup>st</sup> January.

**Families applying for 30 Hours Childcare after 31<sup>st</sup> December will not be entitled to the additional 15 hours until April 2023.**

### Two Year Old Funding Invites

We are currently contacting families with two-year-old children who are likely to be eligible for Two Year Old Funding. Initial contact will be via email or text message, with a follow-up postcard for families who do not apply. If you have any families who you think may be eligible for Two-Year-Old Funding, please encourage them to apply using the [online application](#).

### Nursery Education Funding Claims

The [Provider Portal](#) is now open for both your Autumn Term Adjustment Claims and your Spring Term Estimate Claims. The deadline for both claims is **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December**.

## Early Years Bulletin: DfE Updates:

### Childminder Mentor Programme

In October 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) announced the [Early Years Education Recovery Programme](#) to help address the impact of the pandemic. This includes the early years COVID-19 recovery experts and mentors' programme.

The DfE early years COVID-19 recovery experts and mentors programme currently supports private, voluntary or independent (PVI) nursery settings, maintained nursery schools and school-based nurseries.

**The DfE have now expanded this offer of support to childminders.**

Going live from April 2023, the [Childminder Mentor Programme](#) will offer bespoke support by trained early years professionals in the role of area leads and mentors, to childminders across the country. If you are interested in becoming either an area lead or a mentor, applications are now open; an Expression of Interest must be submitted by 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

### Stronger Practice Hubs

The first 13 (of 18) [Stronger Practice hubs](#) have now been appointed by the DfE. The Stronger Practice Hubs have been developed to support other nurseries and childminders in their area to adopt evidence-based practice improvements through:

- Establishing local networks of early years educators to share knowledge and effective practice.
- Proactively sharing information and advice on evidence-based approaches.
- Acting as a point of contact for bespoke advice, and signposting to other funded support.
- Working with the Education Endowment Foundation to select evidence-based programmes to fund and make available to nurseries and childminders.

More information about stronger practice hubs is available on the [National Children's Bureau's](#) website.

## Early Years SENCO Training

There has been a high level of interest in the DfE's [early years SENCO training offer](#). With 5000 places available between October 2022 and August 2024, over 3,500 eligible applications have already been received. To manage the high level of demand:

- Training places are being offered to applicants in order of date received and each applicant is being given an indication of when they can expect to commence the training.
- A waiting list will come into effect once the 5,000 places have been filled, again operated in order of date received.
- Where an applicant withdraws, applicants will move up the queue.
- Pre-training activities will be offered, aimed at preparing applicants for the training and supporting them in their SENCO role pending training. Activities will include provision of the course induction book and pre-reading, regular newsletter and programme updates and cases studies from SENCOS.
- [Best Practice Network](#), the DfE's delivery partner, are expanding the number of places to be made available in early cohorts so that more applicants can take the training sooner.

## Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding Update

### Early Years Operation Encompass

**The 'What is Operation Encompass for Early Years' sessions, due to be held on 29<sup>th</sup> November and 1<sup>st</sup> December have been cancelled.**

Thank you to everyone who had signed up to attend; the response was incredibly positive and means we can be really excited about the project going forward. The Education and Early Years Safeguarding Team want to ensure that all providers offering Nursery Education Funding (NEF) have access to the resources needed to successfully launch Operation Encompass for Early Years, without placing additional pressure on your free time. The decision has therefore been made to cancel the evening briefings and instead provide all of the information you need by email.

All NEF settings will be emailed an Operation Encompass pack by **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December**. The pack will contain information explaining:

- What Operation Encompass is and how Worcestershire Children First support it.
- Why Operation Encompass is vitally important for the children (and staff) in your setting.
- What being signed up to receive notifications means and what you need to do with that information.
- The Online (DSL + DDSL) training and how to access.
- How you sign up to Operation Encompass.
- Where you can access ongoing support, including direct contact details.
- The additional resources available, such as a letter to parents template/posters/ Operation Encompass log form.

We will be holding some virtual 'drop-in' sessions in the new year where you will be able to access support. In the meantime, Nicky Truby is available to answer any questions you may have:

**Email:** [ntruby@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:ntruby@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

**Telephone:** 01905 843314

### Reducing Parental Conflict (Harmony at Home)

Harmony at Home is Worcestershire's approach to the Reducing Parental Conflict (RPC) initiative in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and organisations from our multi-agency Reference group.

Parental conflict, which can range from a lack of warmth and emotional distance, right through to swearing and shouting, is known to be a risk factor for poor child outcomes, particularly when conflict is frequent, intense and poorly resolved. There is growing understanding and awareness of the need to address and reduce parental conflict that sits below a domestic abuse or violence threshold.

Information, advice and support is available on the [Harmony at Home](#) webpages. Free training is also available to book via the [Early Help Guidance for Professionals](#) webpage.

## Early Years Bulletin: Ofsted

### Early Education is vital for children born in lockdown

Ofsted has published the first in a series of reviews on early years education. The review underpins the inspectorate's new strategic focus on early education and giving children 'the best start in life' following the Covid-19 pandemic.

['Best start in life: a research review for early years'](#) stresses the value of play and teaching, and the importance of developing communication skills. What matters most is that practitioners have considered what they want children to know and be able to do, before deciding how best to teach. Making sure children catch up after the pandemic is still a key challenge in the early years, so practitioners need to think carefully about what content to prioritise. However, the report does not prescribe how to teach a high-quality early years' curriculum.

The report found that, high-quality early years curriculum and pedagogy may have the following features:

- The curriculum considers what all children should learn. It prioritises communication and offers plenty of opportunity for disadvantaged children, or those who speak English as an additional language, to learn and practise speaking and listening.
- Practitioners choose what activities and experiences they are going to provide for children after deciding what it is that they want children to learn.
- Adults think carefully about what children already know and can do when deciding what to teach first.
- Children with gaps in their knowledge get the additional teaching they need so that they can access the same curriculum as their peers.
- Practitioners consider children's interests when choosing activities. They also expand children's interests, so they make progress in all areas of learning.
- Children's play is valued and used to teach many aspects of the curriculum. Learning through play is enhanced by skilful adult intervention.
- Practitioners introduce children to new knowledge through explicit teaching and follow this up with practice through play.

## Early Years Bulletin: News from the Inclusion team

Visual Supports are a communication tool that can be used in your settings to support all children, as well as children who struggle with their communication. They can be used in most situations, are adaptable and portable.

Visual supports can help to:

- provide structure and routine
- encourage independence
- build confidence
- improve understanding
- avoid frustration and anxiety
- provide opportunities to interact with others.

They can make communication physical and consistent, rather than fleeting and inconsistent like spoken words can be.

We have a [webinar](#) available as a free resource to share with all staff in your setting, it is 20 minutes long and can be used as part of your staff training programme.

## Early Years Bulletin: Training news

### Early Years Update Meetings

#### **Out of School Providers**

An opportunity to hear the latest Early Years news on policy, Ofsted and best practice within the sector.

Cost: **Free**

Date: **29 November 2022**, 10am to 11.30am, virtual, course code: EY 10274 / 81306

You can book onto an Early Years course via [WCF:CDP](#) using your CPD leader login details. Confirmations will be issued to the delegate email provided at the point of booking, please ensure junk / spam folders are checked. Joining instructions will be included within the body of the confirmation email.

If you have not yet had access to the new booking site organised or resolved, please do not attempt to create an account and contact the training team at [workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) to get this resolved. If you encounter any other issues when booking, please contact the training team for support.



## Energetic antics – a physical development workout

Physical development, that's both gross motor and fine motor skills, contributes to our thinking development – as children move and explore the world, they learn about how different objects work and their own capabilities. Physical development can help with the maintenance of a healthy weight and the development of strong bones, muscles, and heart. Our brains are wired to expect physical development. If it doesn't happen early in life, it is more difficult to establish as we grow older.

It can also help with the development of personal and social skills such as self-confidence, interaction, taking turns, getting along with others and so on. It must be a good thing then You will get a **shed load of fun physical development ideas** that can be shared with your children when you join in with this session. Don't forget that music plays a part in physical development as well - dancing to music helps children build motor skills while allowing them to practice self-expression, so you may well find yourself singing, doing action songs, and playing instruments too. Be prepared to build up lots of exciting ideas to help your children have fun and reach their full potential in life through regular physical development.

Audience: suitable for anyone working with children aged 3 to 5 years including PVI early years settings

Cost: £40 + VAT

Date: 29 November 2022, 1pm to 4pm, Worcester, course code: 10199 / 81164

Book your place via [WCF:CPD](#) using your School CPD leader login details. If you encounter any issues when booking, please contact the Training Team for support via email at: [workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk).

## Early Years Webinars

The Early Years Team have started to develop a range of webinars, designed specifically to be used in team meetings. To find out what is available, please visit [CPD](#) and search for 'webinar'.

## Healthy Start Webinar

Please see the attached a [poster](#) regarding a Healthy Start Webinar, taking place on **11th January 2023**. The webinar is open to anyone working with families that may benefit from accessing Healthy Start vouchers, who would like to find out more. The session will give an overview of Healthy Start and how we can support those most in need to access free vitamins and healthy food.

## How to use stories to help children learn by doing

Children's ability to learn increases exponentially when they are **physically active**. And we, as Early Years practitioners have the most amazing resource available to us for creating active learning experiences that work: **STORY BOOKS**.

The free Active Storytelling training from Animateys and WCC gives your team simple yet concrete techniques for turning any story book into an active adventure where children experience new words and concepts through movement, physicalisation, vocalisation and games.

Rather than simply reading a book to the children, these techniques encourage practitioners to take sections of the story and set them up as a physical game. For example, rather than just reading about an enchanted forest - you'll get the children up on their feet and lead them around the forest, ducking under branches, stepping over logs and listening out for distant sounds.

Rather than just reading about a funny monster character, you'll get the children up on their feet exploring how the monster moves and how she talks. You'll encourage the children to practice language to support the movement, for example **"I'm a terrifying creature!"** ... or **"Lumber! Lumber! Lumber!"** as you all lumber around the room!

Have you considered adding in simple props to your storytelling? For example, is the story set under water? Why not pause the story and explore the movement of water in streams, rivers and the sea using scarves. You could sing a song to the tune of the wheels on the bus:

*"The water in the stream goes ripple, ripple, ripple.  
Ripple, ripple, ripple. Ripple, ripple, Ripple.  
The water in the stream goes ripple, ripple, ripple.  
All day long..."*

*The water in the river goes rush, rush, WHOOSH!  
Rush, rush, WHOOSH! etc..."*

*The waves in the sea go UP and DOWN etc..."*

There is always so much more that can be done with a simple story. And getting the children active - and physicalising and vocalising parts of the story - is not only fun it helps them take on new vocabulary and concepts so much more effectively.

These activities to link to the EYFS can be downloaded from [Google Drive](#).

This **FREE** training course is best run as a group during a team meeting. A team leader is required to access the course in advance and print off a few bits and pieces. The team leader will be required to facilitate the training on the day; however the content and structure is all led by the onscreen presenters. It's very interactive and a lot of fun!

For those without a screen at work - or individual practitioners - we have a version that can be watched at home.

There are three versions (all via interactive video):

- [Group workshop](#) for schools/settings with a screen (Team leader facilitation is required)
- Individual [home access](#) for teams who don't have a screen (to follow up where possible with a team meeting to share ideas)
- [Individual access](#) for childminders, foster carers etc.

Please see the [attached flyer](#) for information about how to access this training. Any issues with accessing the material or any questions, please email Helen on [hello@animateys.com](mailto:hello@animateys.com).

## University of Worcester - new short courses

The [University of Worcester](#) is offering a range of credit bearing short courses for those who work or want to work with children and young people aged 0-25 in education and related services. The courses are designed for people who want to learn new skills and knowledge for their job, or who are considering a new career or career change. They are also perfect for anyone who wants to try out higher education without committing to a full degree. They have been designed in partnership with a range of employer partners including Worcestershire Children First.

The short courses have been developed as part of the [Higher Education Short Course Trial](#) and the government's pilot of the [Lifelong Learning Entitlement](#). This means that participants will be eligible for a tuition fee loan for a short course if they live in England, even if they have had student loans for university courses in the past.

If you are interested in doing a short course and want to find out more you can register for one of our Virtual Short Course Information Events on [Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 6.00pm](#).

Here are some short course [FAQs](#) and you can check out the full range of short courses running on their website: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/courses/education-short-courses>