Early Years Team
Email: eycc@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk
Tel: 01905 844048

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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

It was fantastic to see so many providers at the recent Early Years Update Meetings. A copy of the slides from both the Group Settings and the Childminder sessions are available to download from Google Drive. The Summer Term Update Meetings will be taking place 22nd to 24th May and are available to book via WCF:CPD now. If there is a specific agenda item you would like to be included, or if you would like to share an element of good practice or learning from your setting, please let the team know.

Alternatively, if you'd like to share an article in a future Early Years Bulletin, we'll be happy to include any aspects of good practice that you feel would benefit other settings.

The Early Years DSL Forums are coming up in March, details on how to book can be found below in the Training section of the bulletin. Items on the agenda include Operation Encompass one year on and the new Neglect Pathway and Toolkit.

If you need any advice or support, please email the team on EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk or submit a request via our online form.

Best regards,

The Early Years Team

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Early Years Bulletin: Worcestershire News and Reminders

Nursery Education Funding

Spring Term Funding

The Spring Term Actual payment is due the week commencing Monday 11th March and will include EYPP, Deprivation and Inclusion Supplements.

The Provider Portal is now open for any Spring Term Adjustment claims. Adjustment claims that are submitted by Friday 1st March will be included on the Actual Payment. Claims made between 2nd March and 15th March will be paid during the week commencing Monday 25th March.

Please remember that Adjustment Claims should be for children accessing funding for the first time this term, or children already accessing funding and changing their hours/supplements. Funding is only transferrable mid-term by exception, following a successful appeal. If a parent/carer is looking to transfer funding, please signpost them to their local Family Hub for support.

Summer Term Eligibility Codes

For children to access funding via the Working Families criteria, including the new cohort of two-year-olds along with 3&4 year-olds, you must have received a valid Eligibility Code with a start date on or before 31st March and an end date on or after 1st April. If families do not have a valid Eligibility Code before 1st April, they will be unable to access the 15 funded hours for Working Families until September.

Spring Term Sufficiency Information

We have received a completed Spring Term Sufficiency Table from almost half of all funded providers. If you have not yet completed the Sufficiency Table, we request that you do this as a priority. To be able to effectively plan for the rollout of the Early Years Expansion and to be able to provide information about the sufficiency of provision within your area, it is vital that we have accurate information.

- Log onto the Provider Portal
- Click on Sufficiency (instead of Funding)
- Select the appropriate Year (2023/24) and Term (Spring)
- Click Edit to fill in the table
- Click Save once you have entered all of the information (the number of places you offer and the number of spaces/vacancies you have available)

If you do not have a table to complete, please email NEF@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Childminder Virtual Drop-In Session

We've received a number of emails and telephone queries from childminders regarding their NEF offer and how they can make it work. We have therefore arranged a virtual drop-in session for **Thursday 29th February at 6pm** where we will be available to answer any questions and provide support around the new funding offer. To receive the Teams link for the session, please book via CPD using Course Code: **10469**

Worcestershire Provider Agreement 2023/24 – Addendum

You will shortly receive an Addendum to the Worcestershire Provider Agreement 2023/24, outlining the key changes to the Statutory Guidance. Please ensure that you read the email and complete any actions required.

Childcare Choices Communication Toolkit

Childcare Choices have refreshed their Communication Toolkit in line with the new Early Years Entitlements. They have a range of resources, including posters, leaflets and social media assets, all of which are free to use.

Business Support Survey

How up to date is your business plan? Do you know what your breakeven point is? How confident are you about the viability of your setting?

We would appreciate you taking the time to complete this short survey to identify any support requirements you might have, as well as to establish how business confident the Worcestershire early years and childcare sector is.

The survey will only take a few minutes to complete and may enable us to develop some business focussed support for Worcestershire settings: https://forms.office.com/e/dEjpT4pzzD. **Please submit your response by Friday 8th March.**

Wraparound Programme

The DfE have now published the wraparound childcare guidance; Wraparound Childcare: guidance for schools and trusts in England. The guidance outlines the expectations on schools, as well as the important role that PVI settings will play in meeting the Governments' ambition of accessible, affordable, sustainable and high-quality wraparound provision for all families who need it by September 2026.

Sharon Jones, Early Years Improvement Adviser, will be providing advice regarding the Wraparound Programme. If you have any questions or want to discuss your plans for wraparound, please email sjones20@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk.

Healthier Eating Habits and Choices in Nurseries, Schools and Colleges

What we eat and drink are fundamental to our health and development. Public Health colleagues, as part of the wider mission to improve health for children and young people, are welcoming your input around healthier food choices/habits.

What are your concerns? Lunch box contents? Energy drink consumption? Lack of breakfast? Family diets/food affordability? Cooking skills? Something else?

Please let us know by completing this short survey to feedback your concerns and the support that would be most appropriate/useful for your setting: https://forms.office.com/e/w5ciyrLuE8

The survey should take no more than 3 minutes to complete.

Recruitment Reminder

Please don't forget that we can include any staff vacancies you are currently advertising via the WCF Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Please email comms@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk with the following information if you wish to make use of this service:

- Job title
- Location
- Hours
- Brief description of role
- Link to your setting for more information and/or details of how to apply
- Closing date

Early Years Bulletin: National News and Reminders

Level 6 Qualifications

After receiving a number of queries from settings, we wanted to clarify on what counts as a full and relevant qualification to enable an individual to work within level 6 staff: child ratios in early years settings in England.

The DfE policy is that only those with Qualified Teacher Status, Early Years Teacher Status and Early Years Professional Status can operate in Level 6 staff: child ratio as set out in the EYFS and in paragraph 1.13 of the Qualification Requirements and Standards document.

The policy on Level 6 qualifications (e.g. bachelor's degrees) which unlock the Level 3 staff: child ratios is set out in paragraph 1.15 of the Qualifications Requirements and Standards document, which states that "For level 6 qualifications started on or after 1 September 2014 to be full and relevant, therefore allowing holders to be included in the staff: child ratios at level 3, they must:

- be fully consistent with the QAA subject benchmark statement for Early Childhood Studies;
- include an element of assessed practice in an early years setting.

Due to the variety of qualifications offered, the DfE does not currently list all individual degrees and honours degrees on the Early Years Qualifications List (EYQL). Qualifications which meet the above-mentioned two requirements are considered full and relevant for working within the staff: child ratios at Level 3.

The Department recently consulted on providing clarity on the qualifications needed to operate in Level 6 staff: child ratios. The majority of respondents were in favour of this change, however the department is taking some time to consider the routes available to gain early years teacher status and how these requirements can be communicated more clearly to the sector.

Further information

If you would like to check whether a specific qualification is full and relevant for working within an early years setting in England, please contact UK ECCTIS, who from September 2022, carry out on behalf of the Department for Education all assessments of domestic and overseas early years qualifications. ECCTIS will assess whether a qualification is full and relevant to count towards the staff: child ratios in England. ECCTIS' contact information is found here: Early Years Services (ecctis.com).

Do Something Big

The DfE have launched their Early Years Recruitment Campaign, Do Something Big. The campaign website has information to help people take steps to start their own early years and childcare career, with job application advice, information on training and qualifications and real life stories of those already in early years and childcare.

Don't forget to list any staff vacancies you have on Find a Job; please download the DWP Find a Job Instructions (Google Drive) if you are adding a job for the first time.

Ofsted Inspection Handbook Updates

The Early years inspection handbook has recently been updated (January 19, 2024) to reflect the findings of a coroner's report on the tragic suicide of headteacher Ruth Perry which concluded that an Ofsted inspection "likely contributed" to her death in January 2023.

As a result of this the inspection handbook has been updated to clarify certain elements of inspection but more importantly to address how inspectors will support leaders at what can be a very stressful time. In addition the Ofsted code of conduct has been updated, firstly to clarify their commitment to act with professionalism, courtesy, empathy and respect and secondly to add in new expectations around how inspectors must account for the well-being of leaders.

The code of conduct states if concerns are raised about staff or child welfare as a result of the inspection process this will be looked at by a case-by-case scenario, with the inspector contacting the help desk for advice. They will consider suitable adjustments to enable the leader or staff member to continue. Where appropriate, the inspector will inform the relevant support person about the leader's or staff members well-being.

And finally, where there are minor improvements that can be put right before the end of inspection the inspector may allow this to be accounted for. However they will need to consider whether these failings, taken together, suggest wider weaknesses within the setting. If this is the case, it is likely to still have a negative impact on the leadership and management judgement.

Ofsted Survey

Ofsted are carrying out a research project regarding practice with 0-2 year olds in Early Years settings. The aim of the study is to explore the extent to which and how early years practitioners understand and are applying the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum framework to the education and care of 0-2-year-olds.

The survey is designed for Early Years practitioners, managers and leaders who are currently working with children under two in England. It asks about practitioners/managers/leaders' attitudes/feelings/beliefs/knowledge about working with 0-2-year-olds, and the practices they use with 0-2-year-olds.

The survey takes approximately **10 minutes** to complete. The responses will be used to better understand how Early Years practitioners understand and are applying the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum framework to the education and care of 0-2-year-olds.

This is an anonymous survey: no information collected will enable Ofsted to identify either the practitioner or their early years setting.

If you work with 0-2 year olds, please could you complete the survey before 5pm Friday 1 March.

https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Ofsted_0-2s/

Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding

Early Years Safeguarding Audit

Have you recently completed your Early Years Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit or is it something you are currently working through? When you complete the Safeguarding Audit, we request that a copy of the completed Audit is sent to EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk. This will enable us to provide feedback on your assessment and offer support, where required.

Copies of the Audit template are available via the Early Years website:

Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit

Childminders Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit

Early Years Bulletin: Early Help

What is the Integrated Review at 2?

The Starting Well Partnership Health Visiting Teams work closely with Early Years settings to provide a seamless and comprehensive insight into the child's health and development needs and is carried out by a member of the health visiting team and the child's early years setting (childminder, nursery, preschool or playgroup).

Within Worcestershire, this check is known as: **All about me @ 2!** and usually takes place when the child is between 27 – 30 months old (or around 2.5 yrs old), and a member of the Health Visiting team will provide an overview of the check in the child's Red Book. This overview should then be shared with the child's early years setting by the parent. If any concerns are identified, with parents' permission, the health visiting team will share this information directly with the early years setting.

Early years settings will then also review the child's progress between the age of 2 to 3 years old. This review will include an overview of the progress they are making in the following development areas; Personal, Social and Emotional, Physical and Communication and Language. Once this review has taken place, the early years setting will provide parents with a copy of the report, and this can also be added to the child's Red Book. If the early years setting identifies any concerns, with parental permission, they will share this information with the health visiting team.

The two checks are in place to ensure that all children's developmental needs are reviewed, and that health and early year's professionals are working together to support children's progress if any additional support is required.

Download All about me @ 2! - Integrated Review Information Leaflet for parents (Google Drive)

Free support to help quit family members quit smoking

If any parents/carers/grandparents living with a child under the age of 3 are looking to quit smoking. They can sign up to gain free friendly help and support from the Smoke Free Homes team.

The team will:

- Support families (with young children up to 3 years old) to quit smoking
- Provide 1:1 support by a stop smoking advisor
- Offer free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)

Parents/ carers living in a household with a child/ baby under the age of three can sign up to the service by emailing: whcnhs.smokefreehomes@nhs.net

Download Smoke Free Homes Leaflet (Google Drive)

Solihull Approach - Understanding your child's feelings

It's important for anyone involved in a child's life to understand the importance of relationships and these relationships help to shape s child's emotional health and wellbeing. This short course offers parents, grandparents, carers a reflective space to think about their child's feelings and in turn how these relate to behaviour. Providing practical ideas, skills and techniques to better understand and nurture a child's feelings and behaviour.

Parents/ carers can take this short course to help them to connect with their child and provide the best support to nurture confidence, resilience and empathy, setting them up to thrive, the FREE 'Understanding your child's mental health and wellbeing' course can help.

This short course provides an introduction into understanding their child, their feelings and how to nurture their emotional development. Parents can access this course for FREE by visiting the In Our Place website and using the access code **PARENTSROCK.**

Wyre Forest Swap Shop

Please download the Wyre Forest Swap Shop flyer (Google Drive) for details of their next event on Friday 26th April to support families who are in need of children's clothes, shoes, books, toys and nursery equipment.

If you have a family who need any items, please email liz@homestartwyreforest.org.uk who will be able to help.

Early Years Bulletin: News from the Inclusion Team

Early Years Inclusion Process

The Early Years Inclusion Process and the system to submit Early Years Inclusion Notifications launched on 1st November 2023.

Since then we have received 139 new notifications for children under 5 in Worcestershire.
Out of those 139 children the outcomes so far are:

- 75 children are being supported by the Early Years Inclusion Team (EYIT)
- 20 children are being supported by the Complex Communication Team (CCN)
- 15 children are being supported by an Early Years Language Class (EYLC)
- 29 children continue to have their needs met and are supported by their early years provider. No further action is therefore required from the Early Years Inclusion Process.

We are continually reviewing our processes and welcome feedback from parents and professionals.

If you have received support from WCF Inclusion Support Services since 1 November 2023, we would love to hear from you!

How do I give feedback on the process?

Parents and carers are encouraged to give feedback on the Early Years Inclusion Process via the parent/carer online form.

Providers are encouraged to give feedback on the Early Years Inclusion Process via the provider online form.

Frequently Asked Questions

We have a Frequently asked question document, which we update following any feedback. This can be found on our Early Years Inclusion website

How do I submit a new notification to the Early Years Inclusion Process?

New notifications must be submitted via the Liquidlogic portal. Any notifications submitted by other methods of communication will not be accepted.

Do you have a question?

If you have any questions regarding the Early Years Inclusion Process, please email us at: eynotification@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk. Please email us your name, email address and telephone number along with your query and we will get back to you.

Early Years Inclusion Supplement Funding

Exceptional Funding

We have had an increased number of providers choosing 'Exceptional Funding' when submitting their NEF 'Actuals', who have not applied and / or met criteria for Exceptional Funding. Please be aware that exceptional funding requires an application form and criteria must be met. There are no exceptions and failure to do so will result in no funding being awarded.

Monitoring Inclusion Supplement Funding

The deadline for the Spring Term funding monitoring is **1 - 15 March 2024**.

Providers must please note the following:

- For both GR4 Challenge and Exceptional funding applications, the providers **must return** the **termly** Inclusion Supplement Monitoring form. There is no exception.
- The document is an online forms document only. No other version will be accepted without prior authorisation.
- These forms are only available within a window each academic year.
    - Autumn Term: 1 - 15 November
    - Spring Term: 1 - 15 March
    - Summer Term: 1 - 15 June
- These forms are available on our Early Years Inclusion website Early Years Inclusion website
- The aim of the monitoring process is to monitor the impact of the funding upon the child's progress in the **same term** of which you are completing it.
- **Failure to submit your monitoring form will result in funding being withheld.**

If you have any questions regarding Inclusion Funding, email: eyinclusion@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk and include your name, email address and telephone number for us to answer your queries.

The Early Years Inclusion Funding Supplement deadline for any new children for Summer Term 23/24 applications is 2 March 2024.

All Inclusion Supplement Applications are online and can be found on our Early Years Inclusion website.

This funding is applied for once an academic year for children who receive NEF and once a term for any children who are too young to receive NEF. Payments received begin the term which you have applied for, and will continue for subsequent terms, until the end of that same academic year (unless you are completing the termly application). Payments will be received at the end of each term, in line with your NEF payments for each term, and will be shown on your NEF statements.

Criteria is available in the 'Inclusion Funding Criteria' on our Early Years Inclusion website.

Early Years Bulletin: Training news

Early Years DSL Forums: Autumn, Spring and Summer 2024 Dates

The Early Year's DSL Forums have been developed to support you!

We have developed these meetings over the previous 4 years, providing an opportunity to share good practice and to keep DSL's up to date with national and local statutory requirements.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet other DSL's and Deputy DSL's from across the County.

Audience: Early Years Childminders / Nurseries / Pre-Schools and Out of school Club providers

Cost: Free

Dates:

- 5 March 2024 6.15pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83721
- 15 March 2024 09:30am to 11am, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83722
- 12 June 2024 6.15pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83723
- 13 June 2024 6.15pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83724

To book: via CPD using your setting CPD leader login details and course code 10400.
Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.

Foundation Years Live

Foundation Years are hosting two free, early years practitioner focused events in March. Presentation topics will include Early years Stronger Practice Hubs, SEND in the Early Years and practical approaches to language acquisition.

Cost: Free

Dates and Booking Information:

- Virtual on Teams - Wednesday 6 March 2024, 10:00am to 11:30am - register here
- In person event, live in London – Friday 22 March 2024, 10am to 3:15pm - register here

SENCo forum / clusters

SENCo Forum / Clusters are now county wide to support the sharing of information and are free to attend.

Broad aims:

1. To bring together EYs SENCo's from Worcestershire Early Years Settings to share good practice and discuss common issues in order to continue to improve outcomes for children.
2. To update staff on National and Local Early Years and SEND initiatives to inform further CPD needs.
3. To raise awareness and expectations re Special Needs Education in the Early Years including issues and developments around planning, transition support, assessment and tracking tools, and current developments.
4. To develop a continuing working and supportive partnership between the Early Years SENCo's and Early Years Inclusion personnel.

Cost: Free

Dates:

- 5 March 2024, 4pm to 5.30pm, course code: 10160 / 81546
- 11 June 2024, 4pm to 5.30pm, course code: 10160 / 81547

To book: via CPD using your setting CPD leader login details and course code 10160.
Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.

Training Team reminders

The Training Team wanted to remind settings of the following but also ask that they share this with other staff colleagues.

1: Certificates

Certificates for training are issued directly from CPD and will go to the same email address the confirmation email went to. The email address for CPD is cap-donotreply@worcestershire.gov.uk

2: Training directory

There are a number of training directories that detail the training offered from a variety of teams within WCF, these are updated monthly to reflect changes.

3: Safeguarding training

Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead training, Introduction to the Role of the EY DSL and Safeguarding for Practitioners courses are currently being added into CPD. They will cover April 2024 to March 2025 period, and we are hoping they will be live for booking during February half term week if not before.

4: Booking courses

You can book our course via WCF:CPD using your school / settings CPD leader login details. If you are unsure of who has these login details, please contact the Training Team on 01905 844 420 or email workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk to check.

The CPD user guide is split into sections based upon FAQs and available on our Education Services Training website.

5: Terms & Conditions

Once a booking is made you are then adhering to WCF training's Terms & Conditions as such if you are unsure of what these are then they can be found on our Education Services Training website - select the terms & conditions drop down box.

6: Resources

If your course requires resources to be downloaded and accessible during the training, then to support this approx. 10 days before you will receive a reminder email of your training. Within this email, details of how to access the resources will be provided and this is via a google drive link. Please ensure you liaise with your IT department if necessary to ensure access to the google drive is not blocked.

For courses where resources are issued afterwards, based upon attendance, then these will be either issued via a google drive link, or documents attached to an evaluation email from CPD for your course.

7. Join our Mailing List

To keep up to date with the latest courses and events offered by the Early Years team or wider services within Worcestershire Children First, then why not join our mailing list?

To join use this link https://newzapp.co.uk/clients/forms/wcf/ - enter your details and select your preferred categories. Once you have successfully signed up you will begin to receive marketing emails relevant to your interests on the latest training, conferences, education services and news.

At any point you can update your preferences or unsubscribe.