



**Early Years Team**

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## Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

The Spring Term seems to have flown and we're rapidly approaching the start of Summer, which brings new challenges with the start of the Early Years entitlements expansion in April and a focus on the Wraparound Programme to increase access to childcare for working parents.

We'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that we always welcome articles from you; if you have anything specific you want to share, please email a copy to the Early Years inbox.

If you are getting a break during the Easter holidays, please enjoy it. If you're open and/or working, we continue to be available via the details below.

If you need any advice or support, please email the team on [EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) or submit a request via our [website](#).

Best regards,

The Early Years Team

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## Early Years Bulletin: Worcestershire News and Reminders

### Nursery Education Funding

#### Summer Term Eligibility Codes

As you are aware, there must be a valid Eligibility Code in place on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 for a child to be able to access their 15 hour Working Family entitlement. The only way to confirm that a Code will be valid is to use the Eligibility Checker on the [Online Provider Portal](#).

We have been made aware of a number of newly issued Eligibility Codes, for both two-year-olds and 3&4 year-olds, with March end dates; **these Codes will therefore not be valid for the Summer Term** unless they are refreshed.

We urge you to check every Eligibility Code as soon as possible and inform families where there are problems, to enable any issues to be resolved before the 31<sup>st</sup> March; **47% of Codes** for two year olds eligible for funded provision from 1<sup>st</sup> April have **not** been checked.

#### Summer Term Funding Claims Support

Are you new to offering funded provision or has it been a while since you last used the [Online Provider Portal](#)?

If you would like support to submit your Summer Term Actual Claim, we are running drop-in sessions at County Hall where we will be happy to help you submit your funding claim and answer any questions you may have about the process.

- Friday 12<sup>th</sup> April 12:30pm – 4pm
- Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> April 08:30am – 1pm

You will need to arrive with sufficient information to be able to submit your funding claim; child and family details as per the Parent Declaration Form, details of attendance patterns and your Provider Portal log-in details.

#### Summer Term Actual Claims

Just a reminder that the Online Provider Portal opens on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April until Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April for your Summer Term Actual Claim for eligible 2, 3 and 4 year-old children.

As mentioned above, please ensure that you have valid Eligibility Codes with a Start Date on or before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and an End Date on or after 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 for all 2, 3 and 4 year-old children accessing funding under the Working Families criteria. You will not be able to claim funding for a child if their Eligibility Code is not valid.

**Reminder:** The maximum funding claim for a two-year-old is 15 hours per week; this is the same whether the child is accessing Two Year Old Funding (for families in receipt of additional Government Support) or the new Working Family criteria.

## Worcestershire Early Years Community Hub

Come and join our growing network of early years leaders, childminders, and practitioners at our next Early Years Community Hub meeting, taking place on **Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June 6:30 -8:30pm** at the University of Worcester, St Johns Campus.

This is a fantastic opportunity for settings to come to together, share good practice, learn from each other, and talk about the issues that matter to you.

Our agenda for the evening will include:-

- Positive behaviour in early years, with a focus on **emotional coaching** and its benefits to children and their behaviour- **a discussion lead by colleagues at Little Hands Daycare.**
- A brief introduction to the Education Endowment Foundation (EFF) Early Years Toolkit and how this could be used within early years settings to improve practice.
- Plus, lots of opportunity for you to chat with other settings over a nice cup of tea, in a relaxed and welcoming environment!

If you would like to attend the meeting, please email Sharon Jones via the early years email address [eycc@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:eycc@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) , include name of attendees and setting.

Booking is essential for this event due to venue capacity and refreshments.

We look forward to seeing you there!

## University of Worcester - Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS)

Starting in September 2025, the University of Worcester will offer Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) leading to Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS). This course will equip individuals to teach children from birth to five years old, becoming a vital part of their early years setting. By obtaining EYTS, individuals will be able to support increased ratios of 1:13 for children aged three and over, enhancing early years provision and practice.

Recruiting from Autumn 2024, we are offering two graduate routes to EYTS, both fully funded by the DfE. The **Graduate Employment-Based Route (for those employed in an early years settings)**, a one-year part-time program, includes coverage of trainee fees and provides a £7,000 incentive for the employing setting. The **Graduate Entry Route**, a one-year full-time program where trainee fees are fully covered, accompanied by a bursary of up to £5,000 for the trainee.

In addition, the University is providing further incentive by offering 60 Masters' level credits at no additional cost, enriching the EYTS qualification and providing opportunities for further study and diverse career prospects.

For further information please contact: Lorna Williams [lorna.williams@worc.ac.uk](mailto:lorna.williams@worc.ac.uk) (EYITT Course Leader)

## Bereavement Support

Do you provide childcare for families who have experienced a recent bereavement? Perhaps your setting has experienced loss within your own provision? Do you know who to signpost parents / carers to? Do you know what to say to the children within your setting?

Many of us have sadly experienced a bereavement at one time or another. We wanted to ensure you had links to support services which you can signpost your families to and seek advice out for yourselves.

**The following links will offer some guidance around this topic:**

Winston's Wish is a national charity which offers advice, guidance and support following a bereavement. Their Freephone National Helpline is free to call on 08088 020 021 and their expert team provide bereavement support for parents, carers and professionals who are looking for childhood bereavement advice and support. Their [website](#) offers a range of support including information on suffering bereavements and age-appropriate reading lists to help support siblings or young children.

Anna Freud has developed a range of resources to support children and family's mental health, including specific guidance focused on how Early Years settings can support a child in their care who is experiencing loss: [Supporting young children and families through bereavement](#).

We also have a range of bereavement services available within Worcestershire:

**Redditch and Bromsgrove:** [Bereavement Service | Primrose Hospice | Family Support](#)

**Wyre Forest:** [KEMP Hospice: The Wyre Forest Hospice](#)

**South Worcestershire:** [Bereavement support - St Richard's Hospice \(strichards.org.uk\)](#)

In addition, South Worcester have a bereavement service which is an extension of St Richards hospice, but provide countywide support: [Help for Children, Young People and Families](#)

If you are supporting children in your setting who are experiencing emotional difficulties following a bereavement, please do not hesitate to contact the Inclusion team to discuss additional funding to contribute towards staffing on: 01905 843099 or visit our [website](#) for funding information.

## 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](mailto: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

### Childminder Recruitment and Retention Consultation

The Department for Education are consulting on new proposals and gathering evidence to improve the recruitment and retention of childminders and to support the role of childminder agencies in the sector.

The [consultation](#) seeks your views on three proposals which aim to address issues that childminders have raised:

- Simplifying the registration process for new childminders by allowing a wider range of regulated healthcare professionals within a GP surgery to complete new childminder health declarations.
- Ensuring local authorities pay entitlements funding monthly where this is the provider's preference.
- Offering flexibilities to childminder agencies to enable them to thrive and grow.

The consultation also seeks to gather evidence on a range of other issues that impact childminder recruitment and retention such as property barriers, and support for childminders to remain in the profession.

The consultation is open to all early years' providers, closing on Friday 10th May.

[Have your say on childminder recruitment and retention consultation.](#)

### Level 3 SENCo Training – Childminders

Childminders can now join the EY SENCO programme without requiring a Level 3 qualification. This means even more childminders in England can become EY SENCO Certified for free. Applications for a place in the final cohort must be made by Sunday 31st March 2024. Please download the [Early Years SENCO flyer](#) for more details.

### Experts and Mentors and Childminder Mentor Programmes

The Experts and Mentors Programme and the Childminder Mentor Programme are both coming to an end this Summer, with applications for both closing soon. If you are interested in receiving support via one of the programmes, please download the [Experts and Mentors Programme flyer](#) or [Childminder Mentor Programme flyer](#) for more details or visit one of the following websites:

Group based provision: [Early Years Expert and Mentor Programme | Pen Green Children's Centre](#)  
Childminders: [COVID-19 Recovery Childminders | Hemsalls \(coramhemsalls.org.uk\)](#)

## Early Years in Schools

Ofsted have put together a useful video to support early years staff/leaders in schools in preparing for Ofsted. The webinar discusses early years education in schools, focusing on communication and language. It discusses what inspectors look at on inspection, including the use of phonics. It also explores deep dives in the early years and shares insights from research.

### [Ofsted Early Years in Schools July 2023](#)

Other Ofsted videos which can support staff/ leaders in the early years include a 4-part series on the importance of language and communication.

Ofsted part 1: [The importance of communication and language](#)

Ofsted part 2: [A curriculum for communication and language](#)

Ofsted part 3: [Making progress through knowing and remembering more](#)

Ofsted part 4: [How we look at communication and language on inspection in registered Early Years provision](#)

## Ofsted: Early Years

[The Ofsted: Early Years blog](#) has recently published a statement by Sir Martyn Oliver, His Majesty's Chief Inspector for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, entitled "[My priorities for the early years sector](#)". The Blog includes introductions to the Senior Early Years Team and recognises the importance of the early years of a child's life.

## Early Years Bulletin: Out of School Provision

### Information for Families

Are you aware that parents and carers can search for childcare in Worcestershire via our website? Does your setting appear on the search? Is the information displayed up to date and accurate?

If you are Ofsted registered and do not appear on the [childcare search](#) for your local area, you have not provided us with consent to advertise you.

We urge all wraparound and holiday providers to review the information we hold and to provide us with consent to advertise you via the internet; it is particularly important to check the list of schools you pick-up from and drop-off to, as this will enable parents and carers to make informed decisions.

#### To update your details:

- Log onto the [Provider Portal](#)
- Select the appropriate provision type from the drop-down box at the top of the screen (Before School Care and/or After School Care)
- Click on Forms and select Out of School Provision
- Complete the form and submit for each of your out of school provider types

**If you offer Out of School provision** but do not have a record for Before School Care and/or After School Care available on the Provider Portal, please email [EYCSystems@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCSystems@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) with your Provider Name, Ofsted URN and whether you want Before School Care, After School Care or both adding to your record. Once you have received confirmation that this has been done, you will be able to complete the Out of School Provision form with up-to-date details.

**If you no longer offer Out of School provision** but still have the records appearing on your Provider Portal, please email [EYCSystems@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCSystems@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) with your Provider Name and Ofsted URN to request the records are deleted.

**If you do not have access to the Online Provider Portal**, or cannot remember your log-in details, please email [EYCSystems@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCSystems@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) with your provider name and Ofsted URN to request a reminder of your log-in details.

### Play Deprivation

[Play Wales](#) have published a new information sheet about play deprivation and the potential of playwork to overcome the consequences. It is aimed at play providers, play researchers and those with an interest in children's play, health and wellbeing. Within the information sheet is a table developed by Emeritus Professor Fraser Brown that provides a thorough summary of the benefits of play and the dangers of play deprivation.

[Download new play deprivation information sheet](#)



## Ready Steady Worcestershire – Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme

HAF is a Department for Education (DFE) funded programme aimed at enabling children and young people in receipt of benefits-related free school meals (FSM) to attend school holidays activities and experiences during Easter, Summer and Christmas.

In Worcestershire there are over 200 organisations that support the delivery of the programme for families, [Ready Steady Worcestershire](#). Organisations include holiday club providers, workshop providers, community groups, charities and schools. The programme creates free places for eligible children to attend, with a focus on enriching activities with a healthy meal and snacks included.

[Ofsted: Early Years](#) have recently published a blog (19th March 2024) entitled [The Holiday Activities and Food programme- when you need to register with Ofsted](#). This blog sets out Ofsted's expectations of when organisations are required to register with Ofsted. The DFE also set out certain [requirements](#) that organisations are required to meet if they are to receive grant funding.

## Early Years Bulletin: Early Help

### 'If they could tell you...'

Start for Life's 'If they could tell you' campaign is aimed at helping parents understand their baby's needs, enabling them to foster strong relationships. Parents and carers can find resources to support them on the [Start for Life Hub](#).

Launching this week, The Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Education have published a range of free resources related to the 'If they could tell you' campaign, which can be found on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#).

## Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding

### Early Years Operation Encompass

As the Early Years Entitlements expand over the next two terms, more and more early years children will be included within the Early Years Operation Encompass process; it is therefore highly recommended that if you offer Nursery Education Funding, you sign-up to the notification service.

If you have not yet signed up for Early Years Operation Encompass, please contact Gem Grady-Rainsford via [ggrady@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:ggrady@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk) and request a 'Welcome Pack'. If you would like to have a conversation about the purpose and benefits of Early Years Operation Encompass, please contact the Early Years Team via [EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:EYCC@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk).

### Family Front Door Multi-Agency Audits

Every month, a selection of Family Front Door (FFD) referrals that did not meet threshold are audited by experienced safeguarding practitioners to:

- Better understand the reasons for referrals being made to the FFD by education settings (including Early Years) in cases where threshold for Level 4 social care intervention is not met.
- Further identify learning and training needs around the application of [Levels of Need](#) for education settings.
- Use the evidence gathered to discuss learning directly with those specific education settings repeatedly making referrals where the threshold for Level 4 social care intervention is not met.
- To further understand how referrals are dealt with at the FFD to improve the process and relationship with education settings.
- Through the above, to reduce the number of referrals made by education settings with a Level 1 or Level 2 outcome, ensuring that families are receiving appropriate support without delay and that resources at the FFD can be targeted effectively.

#### Key Learning for Education/Early Years Settings:

- The use of school led Early Help Assessments would have been appropriate for several of the audited cases but are not being consistently used or considered. This would ensure that children and families are supported at a level appropriate to their identified needs.
- In some of the cases audited there was very limited information available on the education setting's website for families to access. It is not clear the type and nature of the support that can be provided via the setting.
- Encourage use of [Harmony at Home](#) resources and planning tools ([Harmony at Home Tool](#)) to support parents where you are concerned issues of conflict may be impacting upon the children.

- In some referrals considered it was not clear whether consent had been granted to make a referral from parents/carers. Consent should be routinely requested by early years settings before a referral is made to Children's Services.
- In some referrals the child's voice was not apparent, the referrals should contain information about how the child feels and what is the considered impact on the child.
- The quality of referral lacked detailed information and context making it difficult to determine the level of need/threshold. Information can be added that is not relevant to the risk of harm to the child and in one audit the information was contradictory.
- In referrals where a child's behaviour was identified as an issue, it was not clear what support was being carried out by the education setting, if any.
- There were two referrals that were private law matters and parents could have been advised appropriately at an earlier stage by professionals, prior to the referral to Children's Services.
- In some referrals it was apparent that the referrer was not familiar with the Levels of Need guidance as there was no identified role for social care, yet they were submitted as a Level 4 referral.

## The Survivor Pathway

A new website to help anyone find out more about sexual violence support services in Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin has been launched, [The Survivor Pathway](#).

Providing a safe online space for survivors of all ages, supporters, and professionals, 'The Survivor Pathway' has a comprehensive list of services in West Mercia and information on how to easily access them.

Funded by the NHS and delivered by Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion, as part of his Safer West Mercia Plan commitment to put victims and survivors first, the platform also includes helpful information on sexual health, child sexual exploitation, reporting to the police and going to court.

## Early Years Bulletin: News from the Inclusion Team

### Early Years Inclusion Notification

#### **My child is in the summer term of their preschool year. Do I need to complete an Early Years Inclusion Notification?**

The early years Inclusion process has many functions. Some of which are to facilitate statutory duties. If a child is in their preschool year, and has complex needs, then we request that a notification is made.

Where notifications are submitted **after 30th April** in the child's preschool year, the Early Years Inclusion Process is unable to offer an outcome for child specific work from the Inclusion Support Services. Instead, an outcome of 'No further Action' may be issued.

In those circumstances, the Early Years Inclusion Area SENCo team will continue to offer advice and guidance to support all early year's providers.

The new Early Years Inclusion Process has been designed to support the enhanced transition process in several ways:

- Supporting early identification of needs so that targeted provision can be put in place and closely monitored and reviewed over time.
- Additional support from Inclusion Support Services to provide specialist support through the graduated response. If these professionals are involved at point of transition, they will be involved in the transition process.
- Ensuring that children who require an EHC needs assessment have this requested prior to transition.
- From Summer Term 2024 RETA funding is no longer available to settings however, for significant children an individual extended transition may be required. This will need to be initiated by the provider SENCo with the receiving school SENCo as soon as school placement has been confirmed.

### Inclusion Surgeries with the Area SENCos

The Area SENCo Team will be offering surgery support sessions every half term. These are dedicated afternoon surgeries for Early Years SENCOs, giving the opportunity for a 30-minute meeting (currently delivered via the telephone).

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss more complex Inclusion issues with an Area SENCo.

#### **Dates:**

- 15/05/24 13:30-14:00 14:15-14:45 15:00-15:30
- 26/06/24 13:30-14:00 14:15-14:45 15:00-15:30

Booking is essential as places are limited. To book your place you will need to add your name and number onto this [booking document \(Google Docs\)](#).

## Early Years Inclusion Process Evaluation

We are seeking feedback from providers on the Early Years Inclusion Process. This is anonymous, and the questionnaire can be accessed by the following link: [Provider Questionnaire](#)

## Kidderminster Early Years Language Class

Kidderminster Early Years Language Class at St Mary's CE Primary School are offering free monthly Stay and Play sessions, as well as open afternoons for Early Years practitioners and SENCo's. Please download the following flyers for more information:

[Kidderminster Early Years Language Class Flyer](#)  
[Kidderminster Free Stay & Play flyer](#)

## Early Years Bulletin: Training news

### Early Years DSL Forum

We are pleased to confirm that LADO will be presenting at the June Early Years DSL forums, however due to their availability it has meant that we have had to re-arrange one of the evening forums.

**The 13 June DSL Forum has moved to 14 June and has a new time 9.30am to 10.45am.**

Everyone booked on the 13 June (original date) has been made aware of the date / time change via CPD and has been offered the option to transfer to 12 June if this is preferable. Alongside this if anyone is booked to attend the evening session on 12 June and would prefer to attend a daytime Early Years DSL Forum then please advise the training team and they can arrange transfers.

**Cost:** Free

**Dates:**

- 12 June 2024 6.15pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83723
- 14 June 2024 9.30am to 10.45am, virtual delivery, course code: EY10400 / 83724 **(Change of date/time to previously advertised)**

If you wish to transfer from one date to another please contact the training team by calling 01905 844 420 or emailing [workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:workforcesupport@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk).

**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.*

## NEF Expansion – What do we know so far?

Specifically for providers offering Nursery Education Funding (NEF) in Worcestershire, this is an update session to highlight any changes for September, including the 2024/25 Worcestershire Provider Agreement and the expanded Early years entitlements from September 2024.

Suitable for all early years' settings and childminders who offer NEF.

**Cost:** Free

**Dates:**

- 20 June 2024, 6:30pm – 8pm, virtual delivery, course code EY 10407 / 84512
- 21 June 2024, 10am – 11:30am, virtual delivery, course code EY 10407 / 84513

**To book:** via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code 10407.

*Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.*

## Early Years Update Meetings

An opportunity to head the latest Early Years news on policy, Ofsted and best practice within the sector. The Spring Term agenda includes a session on Supporting Behaviour.

**The childminder sessions also include the SENCo Cluster meeting.**

**Cost:** Free

**Dates:**

**Childminders**

- 22 May 2024, 7pm – 8:30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10273 / 84071

**Group Settings**

- 23 May 2024, 6:30pm – 8pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272 / 84074
- 24 May 2024, 10am – 11:30am, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272 / 84075

**To book:** via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and the course code 10272.

*Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.*

## 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

**Date:** 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.

## Ofsted Best Start in Life Curriculum Roadshow

Ofsted is running a Best Start in Life curriculum roadshow for Early Years Ofsted registered settings. The half-day event will offer the opportunity to learn more about their Best Start in Life research reviews, what an effective curriculum for communication and language, PSED and physical development looks like in the early years, and how the prime areas are looked at during inspection.

**Cost:** Free

**Date:** 15 April 2024, 1:30pm – 4:30pm

**Venue:** Manor Farm Conference Suit, Walsall

**To book:** [Ofsted Best Start in Life Curriculum Roadshow - Walsall - PM Tickets, Mon 15 Apr 2024 at 13:30 | Eventbrite](#)