

Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

As we rapidly head towards Spring, we're delighted to share the latest updates and resources from across the Early Years sector.

As promised at the Early Years DSL Forums this week, copies of the slides are available in the Safeguarding section below, along with a link to the survey about children with a social worker.



If you have any good practice you'd like to share, please do send in articles to the Early Years Team for inclusion in future editions of the Early Years Bulletin; there is no word limit or target, no specific format to follow, just an opportunity to share your successes and experiences across Worcestershire.

If you need any advice or support, please email the team on EYCC@worcestershire.gov.uk or submit a request via the website.

Regards,

The Early Years Team

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Early Years Bulletin: Worcestershire News and Reminders

Nursery Education Funding

Reminder: Summer Estimate Claims

The Summer Term Estimate Claims must be submitted by Friday 13th March to guarantee your April Estimate Payment is made as scheduled. If you are unable to submit your claim on time, please contact the Early Years Funding Team urgently to discuss your situation:

EYFunding@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Reminder: Summer Term Funding Rates

The 2026/27 funding rates will apply from 1st April 2026:

Funding Type	Under 2's Rate	Two-Year-Old Rate	3&4-Year-Old Rate
NEF rate	£10.38 per hour	£7.67 per hour	£5.68 per hour
Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)	£1.15 per hour, maximum 15 hours		
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	£975 per year		
Deprivation Band A	£1.50 per hour		
Deprivation Band B	£1.10 per hour		
Deprivation Band C	£0.60 per hour		
Deprivation Band D	£0.20 per hour		
Emerging SEND	£0.50 per hour		
EY SEND Level 1	£4.35 per hour	£2.31 per hour	N/A
EY SEND Level 2	£8.70 per hour	£6.66 per hour	£4.12 per hour
EY SEND Level 3	£9.70 per hour	£7.66 per hour	£5.20 per hour
EY SEND Level 4	£17.40 per hour	£13.32 per hour	£12.90 per hour

Recruitment Reminder

Don't forget, we can include any staff vacancies you are currently advertising on the WCC Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Ensure the information is written in a way that is suitable for social media – we can't use PDF attachments or include long lists of information. If you wish to make use of this service, please email ChSComms@worcestershire.gov.uk with the following information:

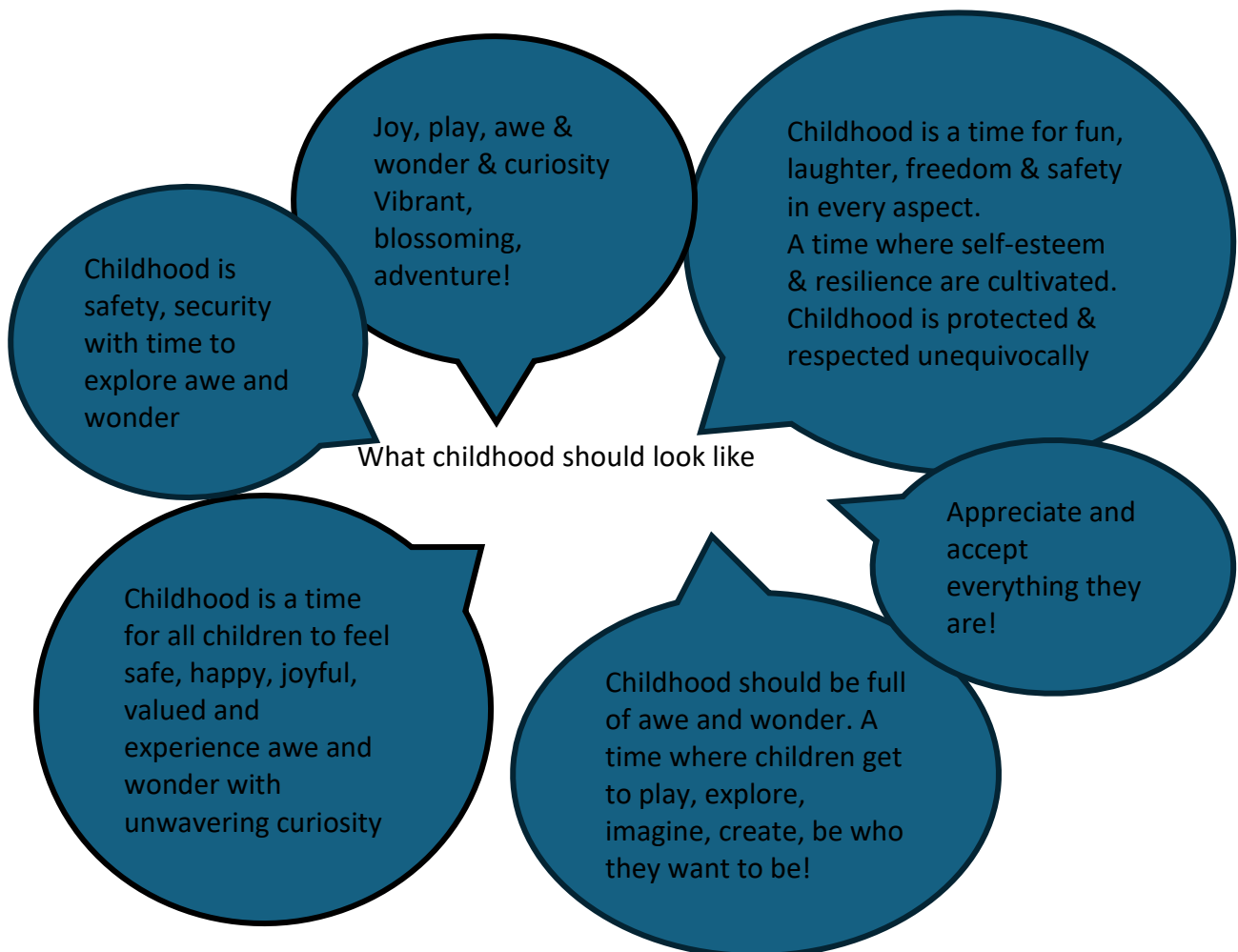
- Job title
- Location
- Hours
- Brief description of role
- Link to your setting for more information and/or details of how to apply
- Closing date

Early Years Community Hub: Reflections

Confident, Capable Children, the importance of supporting children within the Here and Now! was the topic at our Early Years Community Hub (EYCH) meeting on the 26th of February, and what an amazing discussion we had.

We talked about the impact of external pressures and policy and that in early years the focus of childhood can sometimes feel like it's either about "preparing children for their next phase" or "helping parents to be able to access work". These both neglect the importance of valuing childhood as an essential phase itself, which was what we decided was most important to us.

The EYCH felt Childhood should look like:



What would you come up with in your setting?

The next EYCH meeting is on Thursday 11th June, 6:30 – 8:30pm at the University of Worcester and can be booked via [CPD](#) using Course Code 10529.

Early Years Bulletin: National News and Reminders

SEND White Paper: Every Child Achieving and Thriving

The SEND White Paper: Every Child Achieving and Thriving was published towards the end of February, and consultation has now started on the proposals outlined.

- Full White Paper: [Every child achieving and thriving \(HTML version\)](#)
- Proposed SEND Reforms: [SEND reform: putting children and young people first](#)
- Summaries and supporting documents: [Every child achieving and thriving and SEND consultation supporting information](#)
- Consultation: [SEND reform: putting children and young people first - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

The consultation closes on Monday 18th May.

Skills for Life Pilot

[Partnership for Children](#) is inviting early years settings across England to take part in the Early Skills for Life pilot.

Early Skills for Life is a universal personal, social, and emotional development (PSED) programme for 3–4-year-olds, with additional small-group targeted support for children not meeting the expected standard in PSED. The programme aims to improve self-regulation, including emotional and cognitive regulation, through storybooks and play-based activities.

Practitioners receive online training and continuous professional development, including webinars, network meetings, and resources for families. At least two staff from each setting—one project lead and one practitioner—support children to take part in Early Skills for Life activities over a 20-week period.

Cost: Free for all participating settings

Incentives: £100 book token for all settings; £250 for 6 case study settings; £20 prize draw for wider settings; backfill costs covered for practitioners attending training

Take part to help strengthen evidence on what works to support social and emotional learning in early years.

To find out more information and to register your interest: [Early Skills for Life - pilot | EEF](#)

National Year of Reading 2026 – Go All In

Have you accessed the Early Years resources designed to support the National Year of Reading?

[Early years settings | National Year of Reading 2026](#)



National Year of
Reading 2026

Ofsted: Early Years Blog

Aiming to make Ofsted information as easy to find as possible, the latest Ofsted: Early Years Blog focuses on 'Early Years resources, information and updates: [Early years resources, information and updates – Ofsted: early years](#).

Other recent articles include:

- [Early years inspections: frequently asked questions](#)
- [What to know before applying to register with Ofsted: choosing names for your childcare setting and legal entity](#)

To subscribe to the Ofsted: Early Years Blog: [Subscribe – Ofsted: early years](#)

Survey: CCTV and Digital Device usage

In December 2025, the Secretary of State for education announced that she would appoint an expert panel to review how CCTV and digital devices are used in early years settings. The panel will provide recommendations to Government regarding whether CCTV should be mandated. It will also inform safeguarding guidance the Department will develop by setting out best practice, technical information and expectations regarding CCTV and digital device usage.

To support the panel, a survey is available for early years practitioners to share their views: [CCTV and digital devices in early years settings](#). Open until Friday 20th March, the results of this survey and the views expressed will be considered by the panel during their review.

Reminder: Childcare Works Hub

The Childcare Works Hub for providers will be closing at the end of March 2026, at the end of their contract to support the Childcare Expansion and Wraparound Programme. The DfE are currently looking at how the resources will be made available to providers and as soon as we're aware, we will share the route with you.

In the meantime, we would urge you to access the Hub and download any resources you may want to utilise, such as resources to support:

- [Inclusive practice](#)
- [Staff recruitment](#)
- [Wraparound](#)

Early Years Bulletin: Out of School

Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork

Do you work with school age children in before, after school or holiday care? Or perhaps, you work with early years children, but would like to learn more about play and the Playwork Principles? Maybe you are in the process of developing wraparound provision and would like a better understanding of how to support children in a play-based setting? If the **answer is yes**, then the **Level 3 Award in Transition to Playwork**, could be the ideal course for you!

This **fully funded Level 3 qualification** is ideal for those already in roles such as playworkers, childminders, teaching assistants, early years practitioners, or other similar positions. It's a great opportunity to progress into playwork settings or embed The Playwork Principles into your current role. You'll develop a deeper understanding of playwork theories and practices – perfect for those with existing experience in childcare looking to expand their skills and career opportunities. There are two pathways available:

- **Non-Accredited pathway:** For staff not qualified to level 3 in Education or Childcare - this route compliments your existing experience. You will gain a CPD certificate, letter of achievement once completed and hold a full portfolio of completed assignments.
- **Accredited Pathway:** For staff already qualified to level 3 in Education or Childcare, and you can gain an accredited Level 3 Transition into Playwork qualification once completed as well as hold a full portfolio of completed assignments to use.

For more information on the eligibility criteria for the course and to express an interest visit [CPD](#) and search Course Code: 10588.

Register for your preferred cohort – delivered virtually via MS Teams

Option 1:

- Monday evenings from 5.30 – 9.30pm
- Starting 13 April and ending 13 July

Option 2:

- Wednesday daytime from 10am to 2pm
- Starting 15 April and ending 15 July

Option 3:

- Monday and Wednesday evening from 7.30pm – 9.30pm
- Starting 13 and 15 April, ending 13 and 15 July

At the point of registration, your details are shared to the Adult Learning team who will undertake the Eligibility checks and workplace assessment, once that's been achieved, they will confirm attendance to the training team to organise confirmation.

Any questions please contact a member of the conference and training team on 01905 844420 or email workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)

The Department for Education funded Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme has been extended for a further three years (2026–2028), continuing to provide vital support to children and young people from low-income families.

This Easter, over 50 holiday club providers across Worcestershire will be offering thousands of FREE holiday activity places for children eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals (FSM).

The HAF programme supports children to:

- Access enriching experiences
- Stay safe and connected
- Be more physically active
- Enjoy healthy meals
- Remain engaged during school holidays

Please share this information with your FSM-eligible families:

- Children aged 5-16 who are eligible for benefits-related Free School Meals can book up to **4 FREE holiday club sessions** over the Easter holidays.
- Bookings open Wednesday 4th March 2026 at 12 noon.
- There is no need to pre-register before bookings go live.
- Families can browse activities as they are added and book directly via the link below.

[Browse and book sessions for Easter 2026](#)

For more information about HAF, please visit: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/HAF>

Reminder: Wraparound Funding

If you would like to expand your wraparound provision or open wraparound care in an area where there isn't any, there is funding to support your costs. Provision needs to be open at least 8am – 5:30pm to qualify, for a minimum of 3 days per week, with the intention of increasing to 10 hours per day, 5 days per week, as demand grows. The funding enables you to expand or create provision without financial risk.

If you have already received funding but have now filled your spaces or have demand for longer hours, you are able to apply again.

To apply for funding: <https://forms.office.com/e/6BmKiNF4BW>

To request support or further information, please email Sharon Jones or Nicky Burford via wraparound@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding

Early Years DSL Network Meeting

Thank you to everyone who joined us at the Early Years DSL Forums this week, a copy of the presentations are available to download:

- [Rachel Egan: The Power of Professional Difference](#)
- [Steven Judd: Children with a Social Worker](#)

Following on from this, Steven Judd Education Lead for Children with a Social Worker is seeking views from the sector for children in education who have a social worker.

This can be accessed from the link below or via the QR code on the downloadable slides.

[Children with a Social Worker \(CWSW\): overview form – Fill in form](#)

7 Minutes of Safeguarding: Operation Encompass in the Early Years

A new '7 Minutes of Safeguarding' webcast has been published, with the focus on Operation Encompass in the Early Years: [7 Minutes of Safeguarding - Operation Encompass in the early years.](#)

The webcast is ideal for those interested in signing up to Operation Encompass, or for those already signed up to share information with your team about the way Operation Encompass works in the Early Years.

'Com' Networks

Community 'Com' Networks are online groups involved in child sexual abuse, cybercrime and offline violence. The majority of those involved as both victims and perpetrators are predominantly children under the age of 18.

For further information, please see: [Com Networks - An Alert for Local Safeguarding Children Partnerships V1.0.pdf](#)

Early Years Bulletin: Support for Families

Brief Intervention 1:1 Support for Parents & Carers Pre-birth to 5 years

Family Hubs offer short-term, one-to-one support to enable parents and carers to feel more confident and supported during their child's early years.

[Download a copy of the flyer to share with your families](#)

Healthy Family Fun Day

Taking place on Friday 27th March at Wallace House Community Centre, Evesham, the Healthy Family Fun Day is a fun opportunity for families to access advice from the Family Hub team.

[A copy of the flyer can be downloaded to share with your families](#)



Family Hub Programme of Events

Parents and carers can access a range of services from their local Family Hub, including things such as Wellbeing Walks, Healthy You Healthy Baby sessions and Becoming 3 interactive play sessions.

Families can book via: [Book workshops, groups and courses run by family hubs | Worcestershire County Council](#)

The Children's Toothbrushing Guide

Developed in collaboration with the Early Years sector, the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry and the Oral Health Foundation, the newly launched [Children's Toothbrushing Guide](#) supports healthy routines from the earliest years and provides consistent, evidence-informed messaging for families.

Early Years Bulletin: Inclusion

Early Years Inclusion Funding Changes

Thank you to those who attended the first conversation with us regarding the changes to the funding criteria. If you would like to contribute to the conversation regarding process, or have ideas about how we can support you with this transition, please complete the form below to enable you to attend one of two dates: 18th March 7pm-8.30 or 20th March 2pm-3.30pm

[Early Years Inclusion Funding Conversation Part 2 – Fill in form](#)

SENDIASS Free Transitions Training for parent carers

[The SEND Information, Advice and Support Service \(SENDIASS\)](#) have developed a new Transitions Workshop. The FREE two-part Workshop - **Supporting your child to cope with change (Transitions)** - is aimed at parents and carers of children and young people that have or may have SEND who will be starting school within the next few years.

The first session will focus on supporting children to cope with change, and the second session will focus on school readiness.

SENDIASS have teamed up with Worcestershire Family Hubs to deliver this training at community venues across the county.

Upcoming dates:

- **Kidderminster** - Brookside Family Hub, 21st and 28th April 10am-12pm
- **Redditch** - Holly Trees Family Hub, 7th and 14th May 10am-12pm
- **Droitwich** - WANDS Family Hub, 11th and 18th June 10am-12pm

Families can find out more and book their free space here: [SENDIASS training at Worcestershire Family Hubs](#)

Please share this information with your families; [download a poster](#) to display in your setting.

Early Years Bulletin: Training

If you encounter any issues when booking courses via CPD, please contact the Training & Conference Team directly via 01905 844420/844030 or workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Transition in the Early Years

An overview of the issues impacting autistic children as they transition to reception, covering:

- Key issues for transition.
- The importance of transition planning.
- Strategies to support the 5 elements of a good transition plan.
- Resources such as the Transition Plan Template and the EY Transition Pack. Each delegate will develop the confidence to implement a robust transition.

Dates:

- 25 March, 5-6pm, virtual delivery
- 20 May, 4-5pm, virtual delivery
- 7 July, 6-7pm, virtual delivery

CPD Code: 10168

Cost: Free

Book your place via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code. Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.

NHS Healthy Start Webinar for Professionals

An information session to raise awareness of the Healthy Start scheme amongst professionals and how you can support families most in need to sign up and access free food and vitamins.

The webinar will cover:

- What is the Healthy Start scheme and how families can access it
- What are the benefits for families
- How can professionals raise awareness and increase the uptake in Worcestershire

Date: 24 March, 9:30am – 10:30am, virtual delivery

Cost: Free

To book: [NHS Healthy Start Webinar - for professionals working in Worcestershire Tickets, Tuesday, Mar 24 from 9:30 am to 10:30 am GMT | Eventbrite](#)

Play Matters: The 8 Principles of Playwork

During the course delegates will explore what Wraparound Care is, understand the value of play, unpick and dissect the 8 Principles of Playwork and how to implement them into their setting to ensure play matters.

Audience: Specifically for practitioners working with primary school age children in wraparound provision. Open to both schools and settings, including childminders, who offer wrap around provision (before/after school or holiday clubs)

Dates: 22, 29 April and 6, 13, 20 May 2026, 7pm – 9pm, virtual delivery

CPD Code: 10583

Cost: Free - the training is fully funded via the National Wraparound Programme.

Non-attendance charge: When delegates do not attend, do not cancel in line with terms & conditions, and / or do not contact the training team on the day to explain their non-attendance, a charge of £30 + VAT per delegate will be applied.

Book your place via [CPD](#) using your setting CPD leader login details and course code. Confirmations will go to the delegate email provided and include the relevant MS teams joining information.

Working with Fathers

An interactive, evidence-based one-day training course that provides participants with practical knowledge and strategies for working effectively with fathers. The course focuses on supporting fathers to play a positive and meaningful role in their children's development.

- Examine how attachment theory informs our understanding of parent-child relationships.
- Reflect on personal and cultural factors that influence perceptions of men and fathers.
- Understand the importance of considering male carers' roles in children's care, recognising both the strengths they bring and any potential risks.
- Explore the value of working with men in families, including research on fathers' impact on children.
- Review case studies, tools, and best practice to develop an action plan for embedding father-inclusive practice in your service.

Audience: Specifically for practitioners working with primary school age children in wraparound provision. Open to both schools and settings, including childminders, who offer wrap around provision (before/after school or holiday clubs)

Date: 9 May 2026, 9:30am – 3:30pm, Brookside Family Hub, Kidderminster

Cost: Free – a non-attendance charge of £32 will be incurred

To book: [Working with Fathers training - Barnardo's – Fill in form](#)