

Early Years Team

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Early Years Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you to everyone who has joined one of the Early Years Update Meetings this week, as ever it's a pleasure to see so many people engage with us. As promised, the slides are available to download within the Worcestershire News and Reminders section. The dates for the Summer Term Update Meetings are already confirmed and available to book via CPD.

A reminder that the termly SENCo Cluster Meetings and the Early Years DSL Forums are taking place in early March. Whilst places are not limited, you do need to book a space to ensure you receive the meeting link. Please see the Training section for further details.

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

Summer Term 2025

The Summer Term, from a funding perspective, starts on Tuesday 1st April. Children who are eligible for funding in the Summer Term, can access funding from **1st April**, as part of the Summer Term Funding Claim. Children must have turned the appropriate age for funding by Monday 31st March:

Children who turn 9 months, two years or three years between:	Funding can commence from:
1 st April and 31 st August	Autumn Funding Term – 1 st September
1 st September and 31 st December	Spring Funding Term – 1 st January
1 st January and 31 st March	Summer Funding Term – 1 st April

In addition to confirming the date of birth, please note that Eligibility Codes:

1. Must be applied for by Monday 31st March.
2. Must have a start date of Monday 31st March or before.
3. Must have an end date of Tuesday 1st April or later.

Any codes that are applied for between 1st April and Easter will not be valid during the Summer Term and will need to be renewed before the Autumn Term.

For term-time only settings, this means that children are eligible to access funding before the Easter break, as part of the Summer Term funding claim. If you choose not to offer places to new children until after Easter, your Summer Term claim for these children must have the number of weeks amended to reflect the reduced access. When submitting your Summer Term Estimate Claim, we would recommend using the attached Estimate Funding Calculator to ensure your Estimate claim is accurate and reflects the appropriate number of weeks for each child.

The Online Provider Portal will open on Monday 3rd March for Summer Term Estimate Claims.

If you are unsure about any of the above information, please do not hesitate to contact one of the team to discuss.

Spring Term Update Meetings

As promised, the slides from each of the Early Years Update Meetings are available to download:

- [Out of School providers](#)
- [Group settings](#)
- [Childminders](#)

Linking to the section on Sustainability, the following websites were recommended by attendees at the Update Meetings:

- [UK Climate Change • Let's Go Zero](#)
- [Midlands Net Zero Hub](#)
- [Apply for the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme \(HNES\) - GOV.UK](#)
- [The Stobart Sustainability Fund | Stobart](#)
- [Apply for funding | Energy Redress scheme](#)

Early Years Network for ECTs

Vicky Dunn, the new Learning and Teacher Adviser for Early Years would like to set up an Early Years Network for ECTs in Nursery and Reception. Later in the year, there may be an opportunity to include ECTs in year 1, to support with moderation and transition.

The aim of the network is to provide opportunities for Early Years ECTs to:

- Meet other Early Years ECTs in Worcestershire
- Share good practice
- Moderate outcomes
- Discuss successes and challenges
- Identify areas for further development or training
- Discuss transition both into and out of EYFS

Depending on interest, the EY ECT network would meet half termly. A meeting place will be decided, based on the location of attendees.

If you have an ECT in Nursery/pre-school, Reception or Year 1 who would be interested in being part of this network, please email Sarah Read on sread2@worcestershire.gov.uk.

If you have any questions, please email Vicky Dunn via vdunn@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Reminder: Integrated 2 Year Check

The 2-year check should be completed by the Health Visitor (HV) or Community Nursery Nurse before 30 months. If child has not received their check, either ask parent to chase or Early Year's Setting (EYS) to contact HV team through the Children's Secure Portal (CSP).

Step 1: Early Years setting completes the progress check

Step 2: If you have no concerns: Early Years settings share the outcome of the check with parents.

Step 3: If you have concerns such as:

- Poor attendance
- Poor Diet
- Development
- Behaviour
- Poor Oral Hygiene
- Concerns about Home Environment

Early Years settings share the outcome of the check and their concerns with parents. **If the parents' consent**, you should refer to the Health Visiting team as appropriate: Send a copy of the child's completed progress review via the CSP to the relevant District (2yo integrated checks – relevant district).

Please note: if you have identified speech and language issues, please refer to Speech and Language Therapy services in liaison with parent/carers. There is no requirement to flag these children to the health visitor as you have already made the referral.

Please note: if health services are already involved with the child and are supporting with their development (i.e., known to paediatrician / child development centre / physio etc) you are not required to send information to the health visitor. Please only send information to the health visitor on children whose needs are newly identified for requiring health interventions.

Step 4: NHS Admin to inform named Health Visitor.

Step 5: Named Health Visitor to add information to the clinical note and liaise with Early Years Setting if necessary.

Further information about the Integrated 2 Year Check, along with the All About Me @ 2 leaflet, can be found on the Early Years website: [Integrated 2 Year Check | Worcestershire County Council](#).

Heart of Worcestershire College – Early Years Conference

The Heart of Worcestershire College are offering a free conference for Early Years practitioners. The keynote speakers are Ben Kingston-Hughes, award winning training and author, and Michelle Malomo from the University of Worcester. Taking place on Thursday March 6th, 12 – 4:30pm in Worcester, attendance can be booked for free. For further information and to book a place, please visit: [Early Years Conference Tickets, Thu, Mar 6, 2025 at 12:00 PM | Eventbrite](#)

Wychavon Social Mobility Grant

Wychavon District Council have set aside £30,000 for a new Social Mobility Grant scheme to provide support and improve outcomes for eligible children and/or their families. Schools and voluntary organisations are invited to apply for small grants to help close the gap between the most disadvantaged children and young people and their peers.

Individual grant awards will normally be between £250 and £1500. Grants can be for small capital projects or revenue schemes and must be made via an online application (see below). Applicants will be expected to demonstrate the impact of the grant award as part of this process.

Successful applicants must ensure that, whilst the grant money is targeted primarily at eligible children, their projects do not stigmatise or isolate individuals or groups of children or young people.

For more information including how to apply, visit: [Social Mobility - Wychavon District Council](#)

Deadline for applications is 15th March 2025.

Please note – a brief outcome report covering the programme would be required at the end.

Recruitment Reminder

Please don't forget that we can include any staff vacancies you are currently advertising via the WCF Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Can you please ensure the information is written in a way that is suitable for social media – we can't use PDF attachments of job descriptions, or long lists of information. Please email ChSComms@worcestershire.gov.uk with the following information if you wish to make use of this service:

Information required (with example):

- **Job title:** *Level 3 Early Years Practitioner*
- **Location:** *Example Nursery, Worcester*
- **Hours:** *Full time between 7am – 6pm, Monday to Friday*
- **Brief description of role:** *Example Nursery is looking to recruit a hardworking and enthusiastic Early Years Practitioner to join their team in Worcester. Duties will include providing safe, high quality education and care to children aged 0-4 years including being a Key Person for a group of children to support and monitor their emotional, physical and developmental needs. You will have a strong understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and be nurturing, dependable and thrive in a team environment. A full and relevant Level 3 qualification or higher is required. Recent experience in an Early Years setting would be desirable but not essential.*
- **Link to your setting for more information and/or details of how to apply:** *Find out more and apply via our website [LINK], or email xxxxxx@examplenursery.com*
- **Closing date:** *Applications close 20th February at midday*

Early Years Bulletin: National News and Reminders

Ofsted Inspection Consultation

Following feedback from the Big Listen, Ofsted are now consulting on the way it inspects education settings, including Early Years providers and schools. The consultation includes the way in which Ofsted reports on completed inspections, as well as the way in which the inspection itself is carried out.

[‘Improving the way Ofsted inspects education: consultation document’](#) outlines the consultation intentions; responses can be made until Monday 28th April. To respond to the consultation and to access all of the supporting information, please visit: [Improving the way Ofsted inspects education - GOV.UK](#).

Experience-based route for Early Years Staff

The DfE have published the guidance on how early years providers can implement the experience-based route for staff who do not hold full and relevant qualifications.

Please note, the experience-based route is not yet law; it is expected to come into force on 3rd March 2025. The guidance outlines the recommended approach for early years providers who are interested in carrying out the experience-based route for staff within their setting.

[Experience-based route for early years staff - GOV.UK](#)

National Literacy Trust – Supporting Reading in the Early Years

Why early experience of books and stories is important

Early experiences of reading will have significant influence on children’s views and feelings about reading as they get older. It is crucial for children to develop a love of early reading to enable them to learn the necessary skills to become successful readers themselves.

[National Literacy Trust research](#) has shown that reading for pleasure can help children access wider benefits for learning and wellbeing as they grow. The foundations for children enjoying reading and actively choosing to read are established from their earliest experiences.

Early Years Reading Guidance

This Supporting reading in the early years resource:

- Outlines the skills in communication and language comprehension children need to develop
- Explores the experiences that will help them to prepare for reading
- Includes guidance on planning for high-quality reading opportunities and tips for putting them into practice.

[Supporting reading in the early years: practitioner guidance | National Literacy Trust](#)

School Readiness Survey

For the past five years, [Kindred²](#) has surveyed thousands of teachers and parents to source robust evidence of the proportion of children that are considered 'school ready', comparing this to perceptions of parents.

The 2024 report has now been published, analysing views from the September 2024 Reception intake. To access the report or to see the key findings, please visit: [School Readiness Survey | Kindred²](#).

Early Years Bulletin: Out of School Provision

Free Playwork Training (Learn Through Play (10GLH))

This 5 week course is based on the 8 principles of playwork, and would benefit current childcare staff in schools, private, voluntary and independent settings working with children within Early Years through to Key Stage 2. During this course you will have the opportunity to:

- Explore what is unique about playwork.
- Understand how to facilitate positive development through play.
- Ensure that high quality play opportunities are given to children.
- Establish the professional and ethical frameworks for playwork including risk assessments and safeguarding.
- Understand how to adapt play to ensure inclusivity.
- Become an advocate for children's self-directed play.

This course is free to attend.

The Learn Through Play course is comprised of weekly 2 hour sessions online via Microsoft Teams. We currently have places available on either:

- Course 1 - Wednesday 5th March – Wednesday 2nd April 1-3pm
- Course 2 - Wednesday 5th March – Wednesday 2nd April 7-9pm

If you are interested in attending one of these courses or would like some further information, please contact the Learning Services Team directly by Friday 7th February via email to: adultlearning@worcestershire.gov.uk with:

- Your full name
- Your education, private, voluntary or independent setting
- Your contact phone number
- The course you wish to book on

Playwork Conference

Join us for the Playwork Conference: The Power of Play!

We aim to show you why play is the perfect ingredient and a recipe for success in out of school and holiday club provision.

Play is crucial for developing children's communication and language skills, as well as supporting their learning and wellbeing. We plan to bring you a day to remember, with inspiring speakers and interactive workshops all themed around the Power of Play! We want to put play back on the agenda and shout about its importance for children and young people. We want to support our out of school providers to create high quality out of school provision where the playing child/young person is at the centre of practice.

We are working on an excellent line up of speakers and workshop leads so keep your eyes peeled for more information soon.

This conference is aimed at leaders, practitioners and Childminders who work with school age children in out of school or holiday provision (maximum of 2 members of staff per provision) and is FREE to attend.

To book a place: [The Power of Play!](#)

Early Years Bulletin: Early Help

Solihull Approach

We're pleased to share the below update from the Solihull Approach NHS team behind [inourplace](#).

[inourplace | Solihull Approach – Worcestershire](#) is an online learning area for childhood development, emotional wellbeing and parenting and we have funded free access for local residents (meaning it's totally free for all residents to access and start learning!).

You can also access promotional resources to print or share on social media in this [SharePoint area](#). Some of the resources you can find include:

- Digital postcard designs including information of the Early Years support available
- Poster for early years practitioners
- Social media graphics

Reminder: Early Help Website

The Early Help website provides information and resources for professionals so that they can support families to make positive change: [Early Help guidance for families and professionals | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Alongside the guidance, there are a range of free training courses available, including:

- Domestic Abuse
- Signs of Safety
- Reducing Parental Conflict
- The Energy Crisis

To find out more information about the training available and for booking information, please visit: [Early Help training and events | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding

Early Years Designated Safeguarding Lead Training

Over the past few months, the Training Team have noticed delegates attending session 1 of the Early Years DSL training, and then not session 2 (or vice-versa) which then means the training is not complete.

To those delegates that are pro-active and inform the training team, thank you, this ensures that alternative sessions can be provided with necessary updates undertaken within CPD to ensure the delegate receives the joining instructions to be able to complete the training.

For those delegates who do not make any contact to the training team about missing sessions please be aware that:

- Your setting could incur additional charges as the replacement session has not been organised promptly
- By only attending one of the sessions, 3 hours of the total 6-hour training, you have not completed your full Early Years DSL training
- If the lead practitioner for safeguarding (DSL) does not have a full and relevant DSL qualification you would be in breach of the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS.

The training team ask that if you do miss one of your sessions in relation to the Early Years DSL course, please advise the team as soon as possible. This will ensure alternative sessions and options can be discussed: we have dates arranged from April 2025 to March 2026. The team can be contacted on 01905 844 420 or email workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Domestic Abuse in Worcestershire

Worcestershire has partnered with domestic abuse charity Safe Lives in operationalising a Public Health Approach to improve the response to Domestic Abuse.

Worcestershire County Council are working with [Safe Lives](#), the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good. Safe Lives work with organisations across the UK to transform the response to domestic abuse.

Safe Lives want what you would want for your best friend, they listen to survivors, putting their voices at the heart of their thinking.

They look at the whole picture for every individual in the family, to get them the right help at the right time, so families everywhere can be safe and well. And challenge perpetrators to change, asking ‘why doesn’t he stop?’ rather than ‘why doesn’t she leave?’ This applies whatever the gender of the victim or perpetrator and whatever the nature of their relationship.

Last year alone, they trained more than 11,500 professionals and first responders, reached almost 90,000 adult and 100,000 child survivors through programmes designed and delivered with partners. And in the last six years, more than 5,000 perpetrators have been challenged and supported to change through interventions developed by their flagship [Drive Partnership](#), and the programme continues to expand year on year.

Part of improving how things work means that we need to speak to those who have had these experiences to listen to what they have to say. As part of this, we are now launching our public surveys for victims and survivors and children and young people.

We are asking all agencies to support with sharing the survey as much as possible to enable us to have the best and most meaningful response by **24/02/2025**.

Professional: https://online1.snapsurveys.com/Professionals_Worcestershire

Children and Young People: https://online1.snapsurveys.com/CYP_Worcestershire

Survivor Voices: https://online1.snapsurveys.com/Survivor_Worcestershire

Public: https://online1.snapsurveys.com/Public_Worcestershire

Those that harm: https://online1.snapsurveys.com/ThatHarm_Worcestershire

Early Years Bulletin: In the Setting

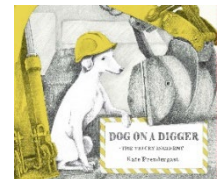
Discovering the value of wordless books

We all recognise the joy and importance of reading and sharing high-quality stories with young children. But have you ever considered the benefits of wordless books?

- **Develop comprehension skills:** Without text, children rely on the details in the illustrations to help them understand the story. This can enhance their ability to infer meaning and predict what they think might happen.
- **Increase confidence and independence:** Children can "read" wordless books on their own, boosting their confidence and fostering a love for reading
- **Enhance verbal skills and discussion:** Discussing the story based on pictures encourages children to articulate their thoughts and engage in storytelling
- **Support Vocabulary Acquisition:** When sharing a wordless book with an adult, the adult can introduce ambitious language and new concepts. Children are then able to describe the images and re-tell the story using this new vocabulary.
- **Encourage Visual Literacy:** Children learn to interpret visual information, which is a crucial skill in our image-rich world
- **Promote Creativity and Imagination:** Without words, children can create their own narratives, fostering creativity

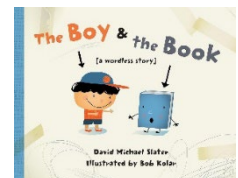
Here are five wordless books which might appeal to the children in your setting or class.

Dog on a Digger by Kate Prendergast: A heartwarming story about the bond between a dog and his owner, conveyed through beautiful pencil drawings



Window by Jeannie Baker: A mother and baby watch the changing view from their window as the baby grows up

The Boy & the Book by David Michael Slater: In this wordless story, a library book tries desperately to evade the destructive clutches of a little boy. What drives the Boy, however, is enthusiasm and love—not malice—and the Book eventually responds in kind, accepting his rough but worthy fate.



Professional Crocodile by Giovanna Zoboli and Mariachara Di Giorgio: A delightful story exploring what a crocodile does for a living.

Wave by Suzy Lee: This beautiful wordless book tells the story of a little girl's day at the beach.



Early Years Bulletin: Inclusion

Early Years Inclusion Surgery Slots with the Area SENCO team

A reminder that we hold regular Inclusion Surgery Slots with the Area SENCO team. Booking is essential as places are limited, you can book on using the following link: [EY's Inclusion Surgery](#).

These are dedicated surgeries for Early Years SENCO's/providers giving the opportunity for a 20-30 minute meeting via telephone call. Currently these are held early or late afternoon. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss more complex inclusion issues with an Area SENCo.

Childminders EY Inclusion surgery:

We are aware that the timing of our general inclusion surgeries may be difficult for childminders as many of you work alone and the timings fall within your working hours. We have added an evening slot only for childminders, operating 6pm – 7:30pm. Please use the link above to book a slot for all surgeries. The Area SENCo will call you at the time you have booked.

- Tuesday 25th February
- Wednesday 9th April

There will be a further SENCo surgery available in June with the same times, date to be confirmed. When confirmed, the date will be on the booking form. If there is a need/demand for the surgery we will continue these into the next year.

To book your place click on the link and add your name and contact number on the Google booking form: [EY's Inclusion Surgery](#)

For your information, please see contact details for Area SENCO's and the area's they cover.

- Sharon Andrews: Bromsgrove
01905 843881
Sandrews@worcestershire.gov.uk
- Caroline Britton: Wyre Forest
01905 846942
CBritton2@worcestershire.gov.uk
- Amy Rowley: Worcester City & Malvern
01905 643962
ARowley@worcestershire.gov.uk
- Annette Murray: Wychavon (inc. Droitwich) & Redditch
01905 643643
Amurray@worcestershire.gov.uk

SENCo Cluster Meetings

This is where you will hear about important updates and there is a CPD slot.

Our next meeting is on Tuesday 4th March 4-5:30pm. We have a number of guest speakers including representatives from the Physical Development Outreach team and Dingley's Promise who are offering an enhanced provision in the south of the county. We're always looking for practitioners to share best practice with us too, if you have anything you would like to share, please contact your Area SENCo and we will book you a slot! We already have at least two practitioners ready to share their good practice with you. If you have any thoughts or ideas on topics you would like to be covered in the SEND cluster meetings, please email your Area SENCo and we will do our best to include them.

- Spring Term: Tuesday 4th March 4-5:30pm (Course code 10160)
- Summer Term: Tuesday 10th June 6-7:30pm (Course code 10160)

If you are not able to attend the meetings, they are recorded and can be found on our Early Years Inclusion website, A-Z of resources under C for cluster or on our YouTube channel, please see the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/@worcschildrensservices>.

Inclusion Funding

For any queries regarding Graduated Response/SEND funding please email or call the Early Years Inclusion Team via eyinclusion@worcestershire.gov.uk and **01905 843099**.

Dates for your diary:

Deadline for Application Forms to reach the Early Years Inclusion Team:

Summer Term 2025 13th March 2025
Summer Term 2025 24th April 2025

Deadline for Monitoring Forms to reach the Early Years Inclusion Team:

Spring Term 2025 Between the 1st – 15th February 2025
Summer Term 2024 Between the 1st – 15th June 2025

Remember GR1-4 is claimed via the Provider Portal when you claim your NEF actuals. You can find more information on the link below:

[The Graduated Response levels and funding rates | Worcestershire County Council](#)

GR4+ challenge and exceptional funding has a separate claim form, please see link below:

[Funding application process | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Funding criteria can be found here:

[Funding criteria, deadline dates and monitoring forms | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Early Years Inclusion Training

Our training offer is currently still FREE. All training is delivered virtually. See the training section below for our Spring and Summer offer.

We also have many webcasts that are freely available. They can be found on the following links:

[Early Years Inclusion Process | Worcestershire County Council](#)
[Worcestershire County Council Children's Services - YouTube](#)

WAVES Support Group

Please see the following flyers for [WAVES Bromsgrove](#) and [WAVES Worcester](#), a support group for children with vision impairment, dual or complex sensory loss. The group is run by Specialist Teachers and practitioners from the Sensory Impairment Team.

Early Years Bulletin: Training

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

Early Years DSL Forums: Spring 2025

An opportunity to share good practice and to keep DSL's up to date with national and local statutory requirements.

Audience: Early years settings including childminders, nurseries, pre-schools and out of school providers.

- 11 March 2025, 6:15pm to 7.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10400
- 14 March 2025, 9:30am to 10:45pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10400

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.

Early Years Update Meetings: Summer 2025

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

Childminders (the childminder sessions also include the SENCo Cluster meeting)

- 11 June 2025, 7pm to 8.30pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10273

Out of School Providers (Save the date – will shortly be available on CPD)

- 10 June 2025, 7pm to 8:30pm, virtual delivery

Group Settings (All group-based provision including school nurseries)

- 12 June 2025, 6.30pm to 8pm, virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272
- 13 June 2025, 10am to 11.30am virtual delivery, course code: EY 10272

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.

Communication Champion Training

Delivered by Worcestershire NHS Speech and Language Therapy Team, this training aims to help you understand the difficulties children in your setting may present with, and practical strategies and activities that can be delivered in your setting to support them.

Please download the [Champion Training flyer](#) for further information.

Audience: All early years' settings

Date: 6 March 2025, 4pm – 5pm, virtual delivery

Cost: Free

To book: Email WHCNHS.SLTBromsgrove@nhs.net to register.

Early Years Inclusion Training

The Early Years Inclusion Team are offering all of their training during 2024/25 for free. The following courses are all available to book:

- Annual Reviews of EHCP's – course code 10496
- Autism in the Early Years – course code 10003
- Individual Provision Maps (IPMs) and Smart Outcomes – course code 10494
- SENCo Forum/clusters – course code 10160
- SEND in the Early Years – course code 10493
- Training for New SENCo's – course code 10160
- Transition in the Early Years – course code 10168
- Webcast: How to write an Individual Support Plan – course code 10084
- What is the SCERTS approach for EYFS – course code 10385

Further details of each course can be found in the [Early Years training directory](#) or alternatively via [CPD – Courses Search](#) using the course code.

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.