

Early Years and Childcare Team News

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Richmond upon Thames
Children and Young People's Trust

Dear colleagues

As ever, we continue to provide high quality standards of education, care and family support against a backdrop of continuous change.

Whilst we accept that review and evaluation is an important part of progress, it seems that the array is quite daunting – cuts to budgets, EYFS review, schools funding review, Code of Practice review – the list goes on. Sarah Teather's statements about top-up fees are disappointing and impossible to completely comply with in this borough. I hope that more consultation will allow us to prove that children are not at a disadvantage because the high cost of quality care provided in this borough reflects the area we live in.

Early identification and intervention is a key focus in children's services; there are no local plans to close any children's centres. Family support services continue to develop. Windham/Croft is currently on target to open in October, with a further, much needed centre, in the Hampton North area early in 2012.

All centres provide a wide range of universal and targeted family support particularly for families under strain. Home-Start and Relate provide tailored support to families in times of stress, with a new service, DOVE, commissioned to support very young children caught up in domestic violence. Programmes of services in our centres can be found online at www.richmond.gov.uk/childrens_centres

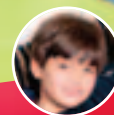
It is especially pleasing that when the Norman Jackson centre in Hampton was inspected by Ofsted in April, it gained a high level good outcome. The report particularly mentions the responsiveness of the service to the needs of the community.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the children in the borough and your unflinching drive to provide enjoyable early learning opportunities.

Sue Ritson
Head of Early Years and Childcare

Contents

- Page 2** Two-year-old free childcare offer
- Page 4** Why join the childminding network?
- Page 5** Every child a talker (ECAT) in the childminding setting
- Page 7** SEN and disability update
- Page 8** Default Retirement Age (DRA)
- Page 9** Local children's centre receives high accolade
- Page 10** Contact Information



• 0-20 years • 0-20 years • 0-20 years •

Two-year-old free childcare offer

The 2-year-old free childcare offer has been a great opportunity to support 2-year-olds and their families across Richmond Borough. It has enabled the development of positive relationships with agencies and professionals both in and outside the borough, allowing us to deliver high quality support. It has also given us the chance to learn new skills and ways to engage parents and support them in all areas of their lives.

A specific focus on engaging parents in their child's learning and being positive role models was achieved through PEEP sessions. Everyone involved learned a great deal. We would like to thank you all for your hard work, patience and dedication to this pilot.

As the '2-year old' pilot drew to an end, families that had received funding, as well as nurseries and childminders that had been part of the pilot, were asked to feedback about their experiences. Those that provided feedback, were entered into a prize draw, and Maggie Fox, a network childminder from East Sheen won 'Community Play Things' vouchers. Ten parents and carers also won some other vouchers. Congratulations to them, and a huge thank you to all those who returned their feedback cards!

The feedback itself has been extremely valuable. It has been wonderful to see the views of those offering and receiving the funding, and how much the hard work of everyone involved has contributed to the support of so many families in the borough.

Among the feedback, parents and carers commented...

'Interacting with other kids has been very helpful to her speech and confidence.'

'The funding has been excellent. I would have been lost without it. My son is now prepared for school and has become sociable and made friends. Thank you, we have loved it.'

'I think it was brilliant! My daughter has enjoyed it immensely and has come on in leaps and bounds. It helped me as well. I have really valued this service for me and my daughter. I hope other people will have this opportunity.'

'It has made a really big difference to the whole family. My daughter is very happy and has learnt a lot, including how to speak English. She can't wait to go. She was very shy, but is much happier and more confident. I am much better and less exhausted and have some time for myself. The future for my daughter looks much brighter. This is a fantastic programme.'

'It really has saved me, and Clare has been so helpful and has referred me to Home-Start which has been a great help.'

'My son, in this last year, has grown and matured into a wonderful young person. He has bonded with and made many friends, and is learning more each day. He wouldn't want to miss a day as he loves it!'

'Having the 2-year-old funding has helped me immensely. As a single parent, both my children have benefitted from it. I would like to offer my sincere thanks for the support I have received over the last 18 months and I wish Clare Inman all the best for the future.'

'The service provided has been of a high standard. The quality was excellent and it's truly helped me a lot through a difficult situation. I feel safe leaving my child as I know he is being looked after with care. My son has really developed. He learns new things and comes home sharing his experience.'

'The funding was very helpful; as parents of triplets it was a real lifeline. It made a real difference.'

'The 2-year-old funding provided a brilliant start for my son. Before he was very clingy and unconfident as he used to be with me all the time. It gave him confidence and social exposure. I could clearly see the difference in him. I would say a big thank you to the members of the Early Years Team and Clare for the support and assistance.'

'The funding has been wonderful for me and my son. It has given him the chance to attend nursery and learn as he is a bright boy. This has encouraged his skills and has got him out of the house where he was getting restless. Now he loves going to school. This free time has also given me the start to become self-employed allowing me to support my family to a better future. Clare Inman has been supporting us throughout. Thank you.'

'My daughter has loved going to nursery. It has really helped her to make new friends as well as bringing out her creative side. I have no space on my fridge with all the drawings and paintings she has so proudly bought home! I think going to nursery at this age has helped her to realise that she can go and play without mummy being there, but that mummy is always going to come back! I have time to myself while she is away and it has made our house much calmer. Her behaviour has improved.'

Two-year-old free childcare offer

continued

Childminders and nurseries said...

'The 2-year-old free childcare offer provides professional support for children and their families. It creates opportunities to work together with the family support worker, health visitor, nursery, carers and the family to identify the child's needs, as well as support the family to satisfy those. This has enabled major improvements in children's development from a learning point of view, and from a social and emotional point of view.'

'We think this offer is a fantastic idea as it gives disadvantaged children and families help and support. In our eyes, all children deserve the chance to experience a variety of activities and develop their knowledge.'

'It has been rewarding to be part of the 2-year-old free childcare. The children are flourishing and it feels great to be able to make a difference in a child's life.'

'I really enjoyed providing a 2-year-old funded place. The challenges it provided were very rewarding, particularly as the child I cared for appeared to progress well and clearly enjoyed coming to me. Clare was very helpful, approachable and professional. A bespoke contract between the childminder, local authority and parents would be useful.'

'The 2-year-old pilot scheme has been a great success for both children and their families. The children have been able to access provision, whilst parents have been able to make new friendships and use the Ham Children's Centre. Families have used many of the groups and courses on offer. The funding means we can provide the best staffing too.'

'The offer has had a really positive effect on the child and the parent. The initial introduction worked well, with Clare Inman making initial introductions and supporting the parent and childminder. It would have been good to provide more hours free as the child often needed longer to settle and be more comfortable in the setting. The whole experience for me has been very positive. I have enjoyed working with the child who has made progress in speech and social skills. The parent has also spoken of the benefit to her.'

'It has been lovely seeing the children on the pilot scheme do so well over the last year. It couldn't have happened if it wasn't for you.'

'During my time with one child in this scheme, I found Clare Inman helpful and supportive. I was happy for a child to use my free childcare place. It was very rewarding, adding to my job satisfaction. I love my job and if I am able to help others then that's amazing. It's a great scheme for parents and children.'

'The scheme was a great opportunity for us to introduce some children and families to our setting that we otherwise would not have the opportunity to include. It bought economic diversity. It encouraged the team to think about different issues parents face. They had to support them to feel welcome by making an extra effort to reach out to them and build relationships that were difficult to find ways to establish. And to think about ways to include them in additional activities without making them feel excluded through cost.'



Continued from page 2

It encouraged practitioners to assess the children's development thoroughly as age was not a factor in finding the starting point to help them grow. They could make exceptions to time-keeping rules and 'the way we have always done it'. By being open and flexible they could make the bigger family picture work and ensure families could access our provision.

But, the best part of the pilot was watching children move through the stages of growing in confidence, move from being scared and not wanting to come, to accepting being there but not fully engaging, to being fully engaged and developing children. They are all really special to us now because of the hard road we have been on with them.

Why join the childminding network?

Why not? You'd be mad not to. I joined it very soon after registering back in 2005 and have never looked back. Six years on, I have two outstanding Ofsted inspections under my belt, a hotline for support and advice whenever I need it, and inspiration when I'm feeling a little lost from working on my own.

Another benefit is that when a desperate parent asks for a place and you know you are full and have a waiting list, rather than just saying "sorry I'm full", I can put them in touch with Lucy (Chester) who will send out an email advertising that vacancy – a great service to be able to offer a prospective parent.

In January 2009, I had an impending inspection looming and was feeling completely overwhelmed with the paperwork and especially the observation side of it. I called my co-ordinator and she was straight round with the network file full of policies and guidelines that helped me reorganise my own files. She also made sure I was booked on all the relevant courses. She phoned to wish me luck on the day and afterwards to see how it went. What more could I have asked for?

Childminding can be a lonely career choice and there are times when you need inspiration or just someone to discuss ideas with. Again, I cannot rate being part of the network community for that.

My network co-ordinator keeps me up-to-date with regulations and publications. She keeps me motivated and helps me reflect on my business. She offers me guidance and support. I look forward to her visits.

Caroline Wrigglesworth

Network Childminder



Every Child a Talker (ECAT) in the childminding setting

I am sure you have heard of this new project, Every Child a Talker. A National Strategies programme, it is aimed at improving the skills and understanding of early years practitioners so they're better able to support the development of young children's speaking and listening skills. Richmond Borough's Network for Childminders has worked hard to make sure childminders are included.

Helen Swan and Lucy Chester asked a group of us if we wanted to take part in the new training. Nine childminders from the network accepted and I'm writing about my experience in this new exciting project. We started off by interviewing parents. I interviewed a mum of a 2 1/2-year-old daughter. She was keen to be part of the project and we had a chat about her own childhood experiences, how language was used and when they seem to be talking the most in their home. The feedback received after the interview showed me how it made her realise when they always had fun and enjoyable conversations – predominantly at dinner and bath time. She said, "It made me feel good about myself. I gained confidence learning that all those little moments that I had never thought were anything special, were so important for my child's language development".

We also filmed ourselves interacting with the children and did two video clips of about 3-4 minutes each. The first was filmed without thinking of any special techniques, just chatting along with the child, interacting and having fun like we normally do. I watched the video clip with Helen and I personally found it

fascinating to see how much I led the conversation! I found that I asked far too many questions and was by far the dominant speaker. With this new knowledge I filmed us again and was very conscious of listening, observing and waiting before speaking. This time the child was talking much more, coming up with new ideas, such as how to solve the problem, as well as using language and lots of imagination. I was surprised at how effective the training was and how much it applied to myself.

The network also put on three training events

- Adult child interaction
- Communication friendly environments
- Story telling

This training was run by Clare Catt and Vanessa Gordon (early years language consultants) and was a fantastic way for us to get to grips with how to support children in their language skills. I especially enjoyed the story telling and found aspects such as using props, control of your voice, eye contact, getting the children involved and how to spark lots of imagination very helpful. All-in-all, I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of 'Every child a talker' and my children have benefited from having a childminder that is a better listener.

Matilda Johansson

Network Childminder



Every Child a Talker

continued

Phase 1 Every Child a Talker (ECaT) programme (2010-11) has been a great success and was rated outstanding by National Strategies.

At the end of March we held a tea party to celebrate the end of the programme. The early language lead practitioners (ELLPs), from the 20 settings involved in the programme were presented with certificates by the Head of Early Years, Sue Ritson.

We are delighted that the Borough has agreed to fund the programme for another year and a further 20 settings have been invited to participate in the programme from April 2011 to March 2012. We are also extending the programme to reach multi-agency services through the children's centres.

The 20 settings taking part in Phase 2 are:

Aston Pierpoint at Hampton Academy; Greenacres Nursery School; Grena Road Children's Day Nursery; Hampton Hill Nursery School; Jellie Tots Playgroup; Kew College; Kids Unlimited NPL; Kings Road Day Nursery; Nelson Primary School; Scamps; Squirrels; St Edmunds School; St James School; Sunshine/The Ark Nurseries; The Russell School; The Village Nursery; Top of the Class Nursery; Windham Nursery School; Windsor Kindergarten, Twickenham and Working Mums at St Mary's.

The Every Child a Talker programme provides a comprehensive training package that supports practitioners in enabling children in their settings to reach their full potential in developing speech, language and communication (SLC) skills. The expected outcomes from this programme are:

- better SLC skills for all pre-school children, especially expressive language and social communication skills;
- increased skills and knowledge for early years practitioners and parents;
- increased self-esteem for children, practitioners and parents;
- earlier identification of children at risk of delay;
- reduced numbers of children entering school with delay;
- increased confidence that settings can manage children with low-level difficulties in a timely fashion and in the child's familiar environment (home or setting);
- better links with services (for example, SALT and Early Years); and
- more appropriate referrals to specialist services.

In addition, through the children's centres, the programme aims to improve multi-agency working across the borough. The expected outcomes from this are:

- Children and their families will receive consistent advice and support from services working together as a united team.
- A children's workforce skilled to effectively promote all children's SLC development and provide effective intervention for children with lower-level needs. This will make sure that the specialist skills of SALT or advisory teachers can be focused on children with the more severe or complex difficulties.
- Duplication of services and conflicting advice will be avoided.

Extending Every Child a Talker across the borough

Talking tips are being sent out to all settings each week by email. Feedback has been very positive. We are aiming to continue the tips through to the end of the year to promote the 'Hello' campaign in the National Year of Communication. These will also be put on the website, so watch out for this in the coming months.

The 20 settings involved in the programme last year are in the process of compiling their case studies, which will show how changes they have made as a result of ECaT are impacting on their practice. We will be sharing these once they are completed.

We would like to thank Aston Pierpoint, Priory Road; Barnes Nature Kindergarten; Building Blocks; Grena Road Children's Day Nursery; Heathfield Nursery and Infant School; Holy Trinity CE Primary School; Ivytree Nursery; Jack and Jill School; Kids Inc Day Nursery; Lowther Primary School; Meadlands Primary School; Parkway Nursery School; St Edmunds Playgroup; St Richard's with St Andrew's; Stanley Infant and Nursery School; Teddington Methodist Preschool; Tic Toc Nursery School; Windsor Kindergarten; Working Mums Daycare and Pre-school Centre and the Childminding Network for all their hard work and ongoing commitment. They have made the programme an outstanding success. We look forward to the next phase of ECaT with excitement, and are confident that many more achievements will be made in supporting and promoting children's speech, language and communication skills across the borough.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact: Vanessa Gordon or Clare Catt on **020 8487 5426** or by email vanessa.gordon@richmond.gov.uk or clare.catt@richmond.gov.uk



SEN and disability update

On 29 March 2011 the Government published the following consultation document 'Support and Aspiration: a new approach to SEN and disability – a consultation'. The document outlines likely changes to SEN and disability practice and is available at www.education.gov.uk/childrenandyoungpeople/sen/a0075339/sengreenpaper

The consultation closed on 30 June 2011 but many of the ideas included in the green paper will require piloting and, in some cases, legislation in parliament before they can be implemented. Therefore, for now, settings should continue to implement the practices set out in the SEN Code of Practice. <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/sen%20code%20of%20practice.pdf>

As it becomes clearer what changes to practice will be made, the Early Years and Childcare Service will keep providers informed through the Daycare Forum, Provider Forum and cluster programmes as appropriate.

Key changes to early years practice indicated in the green paper are:

- A health and development review will be offered to parents of all children aged between 2 and 2 1/2. Settings will be expected to be involved in, and work closely with, health visitors to meet children's needs, particularly following this assessment. (para 1.13 and 1.20)
- Statements will be replaced with education, health and care plans designed to be less bureaucratic and more responsive to needs.
- Timescales for statutory assessments will be reduced (from the current 26 weeks to 20 weeks). Settings will need to be quicker reporting requests.
- Parents will be given more choice regarding use of funding and choice of school or setting.
- There will be a single category of SEN used in settings replacing Early Years Action, Early Years Action Plus and Statutory Assessment.

There is no indication in the green paper that the role of the SENCo will be reduced in early years settings or schools.

Please remember it is a condition of the Nursery Education Grant that every setting in the borough has a SENCo or staff member who has attended the three day training programme. The next programme takes place on 4, 11 and 18 November and places can be booked through the workforce development team website www.richmond.gov.uk/continuing_professional_development/special_educational_needs_training

Please contact Jonathan Rourke (Advisor for Children with Complex Needs – **020 8831 6357**, j.rourke@richmond.gov.uk) with any questions regarding the green paper, training programme or children with the most complex needs. To discuss any issues regarding SEN and disability practice contact your attached early years consultant, who can offer general advice with regard to SEN practice.



Default Retirement Age (DRA)

The default retirement age (DRA) will be scrapped on 1 October 2011

After 1 October, employers will be unable to automatically retire employees because they reach a particular age. After this date, to retire employees, the action will have to be objectively justified and employers will need clear evidence to defend it if challenged.

Because six month's notice has to be given to retire an employee, employers, in practice, will no longer be able to compulsorily retire employees using the default retirement age from 6 April.

Employers who fail to embrace this new legislation may face claims of unfair dismissal and discrimination.

ACAS has some handy FAQs, further guidance and an advisory leaflet on their website

www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3203



Local children's centre receives high accolade

Vulnerable parents in Hampton say their children's centre has helped to turn their lives around in a recent Government inspection.

Government watchdog Ofsted paid a visit to the Norman Jackson Children's Centre in Hampton Hill earlier this year and rated its provision 'good' overall.

The centre has been open since January 2010 and provides a varied programme of support and activities for families with children under 5, especially those from the most vulnerable backgrounds and situations. The centre works to give children the best start in life and improve outcomes for all families.

Inspectors particularly praised the good levels of advice and support available. For example, the wide range of courses to help parents develop their parenting and life skills such as ICT and safety in the home. In addition, they praised the outreach work based at the centre, which is helping to bring adults and families together. This was considered as essential by many parents who took part in the inspection. One commented, "I don't know what I would have done without the centre."

CLr Christine Percival, Richmond Council Cabinet Member for Education, Youth and Children's Services, said, "This is an excellent report. All our children's centres in the borough aim to bring a range of services together on one site, offering a variety of health, early years, education and family support activities.

"However, we will not rest on our laurels. Ofsted did note a number of areas for improvement. These include more work on fully reflecting the local community's cultural diversity. We will be working hard over the next few months to ensure that we address this issue and I am sure that when the inspectors next visit, they will see great improvement.

"The inspectors particularly praised the staff at the centre, finding them welcoming and friendly, dedicated to providing support to a wide range of users. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them and thank them for their hard work."

The Norman Jackson Children's Centre is open Monday to Thursday from 9.00am to 5.00pm and on Friday from 9.00 am to 4.45pm. For more information about the centre, call **020 8979 0858** or email: normanjacksoncc@richmond.gov.uk

For more media information, please contact **Elinor Ridgeway** on **020 8487 5159**.



Contact information

Early Years And Childcare Team phone list

Head of Early Years and Childcare	020 8891 7554
Family Information Service	020 8831 6298
Office Manager	020 8831 6267
Finance Assistant	020 8831 6188
Finance and Administration Assistant	0208 831 6398
Business Support Manager	020 8831 6268
Childminding Network Co-ordinator	07985 156 502
EYC/Daycare & Childminder Provider Support Officer 'work from home' only mobile	020 8831 6229 07903 349 722
Childminding Network Co-ordinator	07957 996 095
Qualifications Centre Co-ordinator Mobile	020 8831 6152 07908 462297
Administrative Assistant	020 8487 5282
EYC/Lead Area SENCo	020 8831 6357

Early Years Consultant	020 8831 6162
Early Years Consultant	020 8831 6171
Early Years Consultant	020 8831 6306
Out of School Provider Support Officer	020 8891 7512
Foundation Stage Strategy Manager	020 8831 6261
Outreach Worker for 2 year olds	020 8831 6171

Contacts

Stay and Play Plus	Richmond Childminding Group	020 8891 6090 020 8892 8725
CPD Lead Early Years and Family Support Service	Claire Grayson	020 8831 6152
Quindrat cluster groups	Rachel Turner	020 8831 6261
Continuing Professional Development	Workplace Development Team	020 8487 5345
Childminding network	Helen Swan Lucy Chester	07957 996 095 07985 156 502

