

# Early Years and Childcare Team News

Edition 14 • December 2010



Richmond upon Thames  
Children and Young People's Trust

## Dear colleagues

Hello again to everyone. I hope you are enjoying the autumn term and looking forward to the festive season.

You must be aware of the continuous news on how Council services will be reduced and possibly wonder how you and your business might be affected. Certainly through contact with the Family's Information Service, changes to parent's preferences for childcare are emerging, some deciding to stay home, and some cutting down on childcare needed.

As a Council service, Early Years must look at value for money and see where change can happen for good. Services in children's centres will be maintained yet more focused on the most vulnerable groups; support for children with additional needs will continue in its present form; advice and guidance from the Early Years consultants will be there and business sustainability continues to be a priority.

It's impossible to predict what further changes will need to be made from the government's spending review in late October, but for the moment we will continue to work alongside you to deliver excellent services to the children in the borough.

Many thanks for your continued support.

**Sue Ritson**

*Head of Early Years and Childcare*



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# Improving Quality for Children (IQC)

It is now a year since we began working with settings on the IQC and we thought it would be helpful to let you have an update and to answer some frequently asked questions.

## Why did the Early Years and Childcare Team develop these materials?

Providers had fed back to us that they found the previous visit reports unclear and too lengthy. We needed a system that would enable us to work with settings on agreed actions that were directly linked to creating and maintaining the highest quality early years provision. We wanted to be able to tailor support to those who need it most and to inform Workforce Development of your training needs.

The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' Education, Children's and Cultural Services has an 'outstanding' Ofsted classification. This classification is in part due to the quality of early years (EY) provision and our childcare services. The Early Years service is committed to raising this standard so that all our provision can offer outstanding services to the children and families in the borough.

## How were the materials developed?

The materials were created by the Early Years & Childcare Service using the Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme (DCSF 2008) and using Ofsted's self-evaluation materials.

## How is the red, amber, green (RAG) rating used?

We share this system with you and other team members who may be able to support you, for example, with business support. The outcomes and planned support is set up in a transparent way; all local authority teams are required to do this.

## Why do we have to do this additional paperwork?

It is a robust system. The IQC toolkit has been designed to give the setting staff, management and the Early Years and Childcare service a clear picture of where strengths lie and where support is needed most. The materials were designed to support the completion of the SEF and enable settings to create a workable development plan. We envisage that the highest quality settings, where this standard has been maintained, will be able to use the materials to review their practice, procedures and paperwork; probably every two to three years.

## My setting is judged as 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, how will this help me?

There have been lots of changes in the early year's field and to the inspection framework. Our highest quality settings have said that the system has been very valuable in ensuring that they are up-to-date with current policies, procedures and recommended practice. Although the majority of our early years providers are judged as good or outstanding (childminders 87%, settings 86%), we need to provide a clear level of support to the satisfactory and inadequate providers in the local authority (childminders 13%, settings 14%).

## What have been the major findings from the settings so far?

Providers have reported that they really value the opportunity to update their policies and procedures and to revisit their duties with regard to the welfare requirements (section 3 in IQC document). As so much of the work we do with children and families relates to this section, we are asking settings in the final phase to approach this section first. We are now only moving on to the other sections once this is done.

The process has supported several settings who were due for an Ofsted inspection. Inspectors have asked some of our providers for evidence of how they are working with the local authority to improve quality and support and have been impressed with the commitment of settings to improve.

Finally, we have asked some of the settings to feedback to us how the process has helped and here are three quotes from those responses:

*"Our initial feelings were negative about completing yet more paperwork, but we have realised that overall it has proved to be beneficial. The IQC has highlighted areas that we need to improve and also given us confidence that we are doing well in other areas."*

*"We felt that at first it was just going to be another form that we had to find extra time to fill in and that after it would not benefit anyone, well we were wrong. The tool has helped us identify gaps in the setting that we had thought we had covered or that we had explained to staff/parents and found we hadn't."*

*"Whilst it is time-consuming, I think that if something is worth doing, and doing well, it is worth the time. The self-assessment (and the improvements we agree to work on) will stand us in good stead for our next Ofsted inspection."*

**Rachel Turner**

EYFS Strategy Manager



# Safer recruitment



Please remember the following procedures when recruiting new staff or volunteers:

- Take up at least two references.
- Conduct a face-to-face interview.
- Expect the new staff member to spend half a day in the setting as part of the interview process (for observation, feedback and views from the staff team and children).
- Go back to earlier employers if the last position was for less than a year.
- Query gaps in employment.
- Ensure that CRB checks are complete before the employee starts.
- Verify qualifications.
- Check right to work in the United Kingdom.
- Obtain health checks.
- Induct the staff member properly (policy and procedures).
- Put a probationary period in place and mentoring (for example one term or six months).
- Carry out regular appraisal and review sessions during this time.
- Keep written records of meetings and appraisals.

For up-to-date and detailed information see 'Recruiting Safely' on the Children's Workforce and Development Council website:

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/resources-and-practice/IG00175/>

# Early Years Consultants

The Early Years consultants in each quindrat are busy working with settings currently taking part in the quality improvement process. If you have not had a call for a while and need support or advice, please call or email our *Office Manager, Melanie Adams*, on **020 8831 6267** [m.adams@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:m.adams@richmond.gov.uk) and your call will be forwarded to the most appropriate person.



## The Equality Act

The Equality Act, which will become law in October 2010, replaces previous legislation (such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 1976), and ensures consistency in what employers must do to make their workplace a fair environment, and to comply with the law.

The Equality Act covers the same groups that were protected by existing equality legislation (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity) but also extends some protections to groups not previously covered. It also strengthens particular aspects of equality law.

The Government Equalities Office has more information on its website, including guidance entitled 'What do I need to know?'

Please click on the following link for further information:

[http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality\\_act\\_2010/equality\\_act\\_2010\\_what\\_do\\_i\\_n.aspx](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010/equality_act_2010_what_do_i_n.aspx)

# Providing support for children with additional needs and disabilities

This article is based on a presentation delivered to the Early Years and Childcare Provider Forum on 23 June 2010. Key information is provided for all settings working to support children with additional needs and disabilities attending settings across the borough on how they, and the Early Years Service, can work in partnership to meet children's needs and the duties placed on settings by the Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

The Early Years and Childcare Service provide support to settings in a variety of ways to ensure that all settings can include children when a family request placement in a setting. Support includes:

- Advice from the settings attached Early Years consultant (EYC) about general SEN, disability issues and disability related issues.
- Specific advice from a lead area SENCo when working with children with more complex needs.
- The provision of a training programme that ensures that all settings have at least one trained SENCo.
- The provision of more specialist training when required to provide skills needed to work with specific children (for example, training in the administration of epilepsy medication).
- Additional funding through the pre-school special needs support group to provide up to 15 hours additional staff support for children. This scheme supported 30 children in 25 settings last year, providing levels of support ranging from two to 15 hours a week.

Settings have, over the years, become more and more confident in meeting the needs of children. To give two examples, it is now very rare for settings to not respond inclusively to a request to include a child. Issues such as continence and allergy management which used to be seen as major barriers to inclusion are now dealt with by most settings routinely. Small group sessions that provide support for children are often provided as an inclusive response to children's needs. This often occurs without staff feeling the need to check with consultants or the area SENCo that this response is needed, or seeking funding for additional staff to run these groups.

Through working with families and medical professionals the service has become aware of some key changes in the numbers of children with additional needs attending nurseries. Not only are there increased numbers of children in the community, but these children's families are seeking to access childcare both earlier, and in some cases for longer periods, than in the past.

We have therefore been seeking to amend the Pre-school Special Needs Support Grant funding so that it remains available to support families of children with the highest level of need.

It is therefore being proposed that the PSSNSG will be replaced with an Additional Needs Grant. This grant will be available to all settings, including childminders and out of school settings, where the setting is able to demonstrate that it has tried to meet a child's needs and feels that additional support from the local authority is needed to help the setting meet its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act.



Settings duties under the DDA are based around two key elements. Settings must not treat a child less favourably for reasons related to a disability and must make reasonable adjustments to enable a child to be included. Details about the act are contained in the booklet available on this website <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/publications/leaflets/757/>

To summarise the key points:

- Settings are regarded as service providers.
- There is a wide definition of children who fall within the act.
- Settings must take steps to avoid treating children in a 'less favourably' way for a reason related to a disability, and must attempt 'reasonable adjustments'.
- One part of the test of what is 'reasonable' can be turnover of the business, but most adjustments are either low or no cost.
- A decision as to what is reasonable is if a parent makes a challenge is potentially decided in a court and can result in the service provider being fined.

When settings apply for the new grant, they will be asked to demonstrate steps that have already been taken to include children through making adjustments in the setting and then indicate additional support that maybe required.

Therefore, please keep records of:

- how funds have been spent that have supported the child you are applying for; and
- what changes have been made to the building and/or the groups practice to include the child.

This should demonstrate support provided before the application is submitted. Applications that cannot demonstrate attempts by the setting to meet the child's needs will in the vast majority of cases be rejected until the setting can demonstrate attempts to meet the child's needs from its own resources.

Scheme papers (including the application form) will be made available on line via the Council website, but if you need to discuss a possible application please speak to the following members of the team **Jonathan Rourke** (PVI settings) **Barbara Morton** (Out of School and Holiday Schemes) **Margaret Monori, Lucy Chester** or **Helen Swan** (Childminders).

# The Peers Early Education Partnership Learning Together programme

The PEEP Learning Together programme uses key research findings to promote the role of a parent or carer and support them to encourage their child's learning. Through a specific learning framework parents or carers are offered practical ways to play and learn with their children and develop self concepts and learning dispositions, oral language, reading, writing and numeracy. PEEP covers nine themes for each age level (0 to 4). Through talk time, stories, songs and rhymes, joint activities and take home packs, PEEP enables parents or carers to gain advice, support and ideas for interacting with their children using everyday opportunities. Parents or carers can also gain confidence and knowledge and meet others with children of a similar age to share ideas and develop their parenting skills.

The PEEP summer taster sessions welcomed 28 families with 44 children over the five weeks at Norman Jackson, North Barnes, Ham and Heathfield. These included:

- Twelve families on the 'Two-Year-Old' free childcare pilot.
- Two grandparents with their grandchildren, childminders – some with children with SEN.
- Children living in foster care as part of their supervision
- A deaf parent with an interpreter which the children found very interesting particularly at story time. We therefore felt we had reached a wide range of families with varying needs.

The sessions were also supported by FIS and children centre outreach workers giving parents or carers further opportunity to seek advice and guidance.



The sessions covered the following topics:

- Helping children to feel good about themselves ending in a joint activity of making play dough.
- Making the most of favourite stories where we used communication friendly spaces (CFS), bags to build dens and cubbies (blankets, baskets, tarpaulin, tents) and then read together in or under these.
- Managing difficult behaviour where we made musical instruments and used them in our song time.
- Making and playing with puppets, discussing imagination and pretend play and making wooden spoon puppets.
- 'Let's count!' Here, our talk time was incorporated into our tea party discussing everyday opportunities for using numbers and talking about size as we counted fruit onto small, big and medium plates for an adult, a child and a teddy.

All sessions included a talk time, songs, rhymes and story time related to that week's topic.

Feedback included:

*'I liked the idea of photocopying pictures of the children's favourite stories and using them to bring stories to life.'*

*'It's helped us get closer together as a family since the recent things we have been through. It was good to be part of a group and interacting with people. Everything I did at PEEP was fun and educating for me and the girls.'*

*'I was not sure of my parenting skills before, but now I have realised that everybody tries to do their best for their child and I found that whatever I have been doing for him is not too bad!'*

*'I have learnt that learning happens without you realising, normal everyday things teach our children so much.'*

The courses were hard work but very successful and we really enjoyed meeting and engaging parents and children in all quadrants (Welcare in September). Watch this space for Baby PEEP!



# Childminding Network Quality Assurance scheme

## What is a childminding network?

Childminding Network is a quality assurance scheme for childminders approved by the National Childminding Association (NCMA). Networks are made up of a group of childminders who are supported and monitored by a network co-ordinator.

Before a childminder is accepted onto the network, they must show that they are confident in following the Early Years Foundation Stage. Childminders also need to show that they meet the NCMA 'Children come first' quality standards. These standards cover all aspects of childminding, from keeping children safe, to working in partnership with parents.

## Advantages to parents using network childminders:

- Network childminders are quality assured by completing a thorough initial assessment.
- Network childminders are monitored at least three times a year, including one unannounced visit a year.
- The network co-ordinators can give advice to parents and professionals on childminding issues.
- Parents can receive help to find a suitable childminder who can meet each family needs.
- Network childminders can become accredited enabling them to draw down the funding for parents to access the nursery education places for 3 to 4 year olds and are part of the 2 year old pilot scheme.
- Network childminders meet regularly to share good practice and enhance their service.
- Most network childminders are Level 3 trained and some are completing their degree in early years.
- Network childminders are expected to attend a minimum of 18 hours training per year.
- Network childminders have access to additional toys and equipment through a resources loan scheme.

## Benefits to childminders being on the network:

- They are visited by a network co-ordinator at least three times a year.
- They attend regular training including network specific training.
- They have access to a resources loan scheme.
- They are kept-up-to date with current childminding issues.
- They meet regularly to share good practice.
- They help to fill vacancies.

## Children with special needs

The network co-ordinators are SENCO trained and can offer childminders access to specialised training and support for working with children with additional needs. One of the co-ordinators can liaise with parents to provide advice and help match them with a suitable childminder. We can offer top-up funding for network childminders caring for children with more complex needs.

## Nursery Education Places

As an approved 'Children Come First' Network and a member of the Directory of Providers, network childminders can become accredited, enabling parents to access funded places for 3 to 4 year olds. Accredited childminders go through additional assessment by completing an audit of their setting to provide this service. They need to demonstrate to their network co-ordinator that they meet the extra NCMA 'Children Come First' quality standards for early education.



# Play

Over the past two or three generations, children's access and opportunity for free play has been progressively eroded, due in part to a real or perceived fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and unknown adults. We have been led to believe that there is a need to protect our children more and for longer than at any other time in history. This appears to be backed up by the findings of the Children's Society in their paper 'Public attitudes to safeguarding children' (2010). People were asked to rate the level of risks to children aged 6 – 15 years in certain scenarios.

Apparent lack of supervision came out as high risk, 50% of respondents rated this at nine out of nine on a scale of risk where nine was high, compared with physical punishment which rated as medium risk with only one in seven respondents rating this at nine out of nine. This appears to say that the general public feel it is okay to physically punish your children but don't leave them unsupervised.

Tim Gill (2007) in his book 'No fear: growing up in a risk averse society' argues that childhood is being undermined by risk aversion, and that experiences enjoyed by previous generations are now regarded as troubling or dangerous. Hugh Cunningham (2006) in Tim Gill (2007) notes that:

*"Children in the past been assumed to have capabilities that we now rarely think they have....so fixated are we on giving our children a long and happy childhood that we downplay their abilities and their resilience".*



The theory that children's everyday autonomy has been reduced is evidenced by Gill (2007) in that the number of children aged 7 and 8 years walking to school or going to friends or the shops on their own has shrunk from eight out of ten to one in ten from 1971 to 1990. This was graphically represented in an article in the Daily Mail online (2007) where the childhood habits of one family over four generations were mapped onto the area of Sheffield where they lived. The article was entitled 'How children lost the right to roam in four generations'.

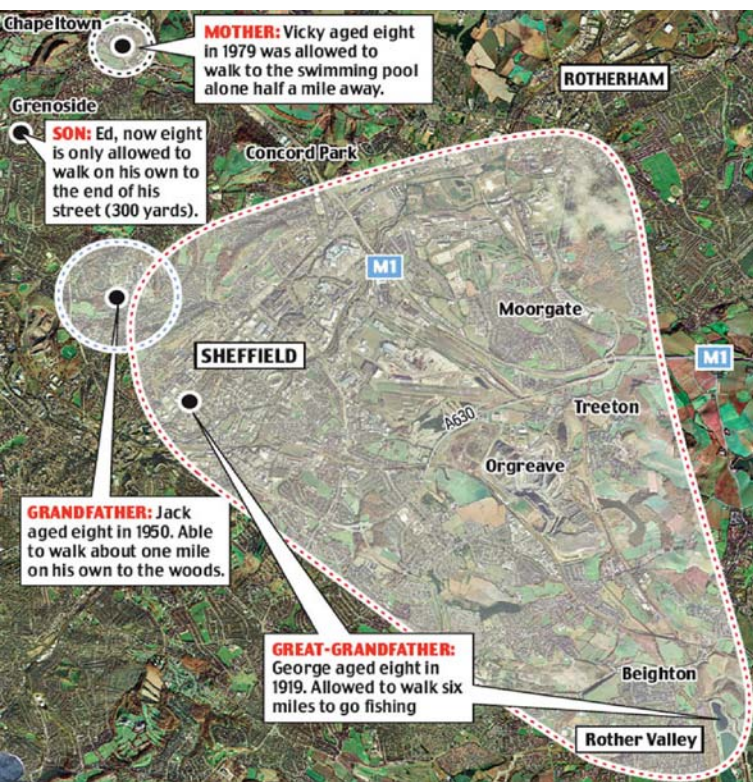
As a result, children do not have the same opportunities to develop the skills needed to live full and independent lives.

In February 2007, UNICEF published 'An overview of child well-being in rich countries'. This presented statistics that appeared to show that Britain is the worst place for children to live in the developed world. Our children are unhappier, have poorer relationships with their friends and family, are unhealthier and are more prone to risky behaviour than in other countries (UNICEF 2007).

It is a huge leap to attribute the latter entirely to the former, however it is safe to presume that reduction in play opportunities do have a significant impact in children's lives and their experiences.

The national Play Day awareness campaign has been set up to highlight some of the issues for young children growing up today. The event held each year, celebrates and promotes children's right to play. This year's theme was 'Our place' highlighting the fact that children will always find a place where they feel comfortable and can make their own in which to play.

It may seem strange to some that we have an event to promote children's play, but as more and more of our children's time is taken up with organised adult-led activities, their time to play is being eroded, and it is important for children's emotional, and physical health to maintain a balance in providing opportunities for both free play and organised activities or sport.



'Children get just one hour of play a day' – 15 June 2010

Figures released today by the British Toy and Hobby Association (BTHA) and Play England show that parents feel their children are not having enough play time, with the average child playing for just over one hour (70 minutes) each day. Parents would like to see this time double.

We held our main event at York House Gardens on 4 August. Children and their parents or carers came and turned their imaginations loose on the scrap cardboard, bamboo canes, sheets, tarpaulins and various other bits and pieces provided. They constructed dens, made tents, created hidey holes and rain shelters in the sunken garden. Despite the weather everyone enjoyed themselves and lots of the adults said that they were going home to collect cardboard boxes so they could continue the fun and games at home (in the dry).

The feedback we have received indicates that the play did not end at the event but has continued, with parents reporting that their children have extended the den-making and play with 'loose parts' for several weeks after the day.

This is the power of play to engage and engross children's imagination, concentration, creativity and problem-solving abilities with almost no interference from adults imposing their own agendas on to children's play.

*"The right to play is a child's first claim on the community. Play is nature's training for life. No community can infringe that right without doing deep and enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens."*

David Lloyd George

#### References

The Children's Society (2010) 'Public Attitudes to safeguarding children' [www.childrenssociety.org.uk/all\\_about](http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/all_about)

Tim Gill (2007) 'No fear: growing up in a risk averse society', Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

UNICEF (2007) 'An overview of child well-being in rich countries': A comprehensive assessment of the lives and well-being of children and adolescents in the economically advanced countries (Florence, the United Nations Children's Fund).

'How children lost the right to roam in four generations' by David Derbyshire, last updated at 01:03 on 15 June 2007.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-462091/How-children-lost-right-roam-generations.html#ixzz0t5JzXPaF>

## SPA Single Point of Access

The local authority is committed to protecting the children and young people who live and/or attend school in Richmond upon Thames, and promoting their wellbeing by providing effective services to all children.

To make sure all children with additional needs are identified early, referred to appropriate services, and monitored through effective information sharing between agencies and professionals, the local authority has established the **Single Point of Access (SPA)**. As the central information hub, the SPA will be the first point of contact for all safeguarding issues into Children's Services. This will create consistency in decision making and thresholds and make sure that there is co-ordination and information sharing between services. Our aim is that families receive an appropriate service as swiftly as possible.



Further information is available on the web page: [http://www.richmond.gov.uk/child\\_protection](http://www.richmond.gov.uk/child_protection)

### Message from Chris Quantrill

As of 24 September I will have moved on to a new position outside of the local authority. Many thanks for all the hard work, help and proactive thinking over the last year or so that has helped the council deliver the extension in a way that we hope has met all of our original goals.

Without exception, every nursery has made me feel very welcome and I will miss visiting you all.

### Congratulations

Congratulations to Heathfield Concorde after school club who received 'outstanding' at the last Ofsted inspection.

### Workforce Development

Early Years training can be accessed using the following link Children's Workforce Development. Queries concerning training should be sent to [workforcedel@richmond.gov.uk](mailto:workforcedel@richmond.gov.uk)

Updated guidance to help reduce the spread of infections in schools and other childcare settings can be found at:

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\\_C/1203496946639](http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1203496946639)

## Richmond Borough's Children's Speech and Language Therapy Telephone Advice Service 020 8973 3512

### We offer

Advice and information on children's communication and language development.

Information on our service and how to access help.

### We want to hear from

Parents and people working with children.

### How to reach us

Register your query on **020 8973 3512** and a speech and language therapist will contact you within a week.

### The Richmond Borough's Children's Speech and Language Therapy Telephone Advice Service offers:

A quick way to access our service for advice and information on anything to do with children's speech, language and communication development.

The opportunity to ask a qualified speech and language therapist questions about your child's talking, understanding, concentration and any other communication issues.

No referral is necessary – just call **020 8973 3512** and leave a message with your contact details. A speech and language therapist will return calls each week so you will hear from us soon after your call. If you already know your local therapist it is preferable to call them directly at your local clinic of health venue.

You may also like to visit [www.talkingpoint.org.uk](http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk) for useful tips, ideas and information for parents and professionals on communication, speech and language development.

## Date for Diary

**9 February  
2011**

4.30pm – 6.30pm

Provider Forum at  
Curriculum and  
Training Centre



# 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
Workforce Development Manager (Early Years & Family Learning)	020 8891 7215
Training Administrator	020 8831 6394
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
Childcare Market Manager	020 8891 7585
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	020 8831 6152 Mob: 07908 462297
Administrative Assistant	020 8487 5282
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
NEF Project Officer	020 8831 6184
Foundation Stage Strategy Manager	020 8831 6261
Outreach Worker for 2 year olds	07904 556399

Contacts		
DHC Stay and Play Plus	Richmond Childminding Group	020 8891 6090 020 8892 8725
Foundation Degree/NVQ Early Years Professional Status	Claire Grayson	020 8831 6152
Quindrat cluster groups	Rachel Turner	020 8831 6184
Professional development workshop	Anita Bhangoo Julia Head	020 8891 7504
Childminding network	Helen Swan Lucy Chester	07957 996 095 07985 156 502

