

School Readiness newsletter December 2020 - Issue 5

School Readiness consultation part 2

The Oxfordshire school Readiness strategy was published in June 2020. Due to COVID-19 the 2nd part of the strategy was put on hold, however during December and January we want to hear what you are doing to meet the 4 main priorities that were identified as being key for children to be ready for school and lifelong learning.

From reviewing the information, you give us, we will identify the gaps and form the membership of the School Readiness and Lifelong Learning partnership group 2021.

We believe children have the potential to become school ready when families and communities, Early Years practitioners and schools work together to support the development of children's confidence, resilience and curiosity.

Please click [here](#) to be part of this consultation.



If you have resources and information you would like me to share in this newsletter, please email SchoolReadiness@Oxfordshire.gov.uk by the 27th of every month.

Wishing you very best wishes for the festive period, I look forward to hearing all of your news in 2021.

Strong Home Learning Experience to support children's learning and development

Every year the Book Trust provides 3.9 million children with £20m worth of books to reach families. [Listen](#) to Diana Gerald from the Book Trust and start your journey to becoming a fully-fledged bookworm.

Oxfordshire Libraries is here to help children stay safe, calm, connected and hopeful during the COVID-19 crisis.

Using the [resources](#) of the Reading Agency and their own collections they have compiled a list of books to help children understand how to protect themselves and others, and to cope with their own worries and fears. The list is available on the attached document and online [here](#)

Twelve easy Autumn activities for pre-schoolers

With many restrictions still in place because of the coronavirus pandemic, thinking of things to do with little children can be an exhausting prospect.

Children still need to spend time outdoors and move about even in the colder months but thankfully [Autumn offers a rich bounty of inspiration for exploring and imaginations.](#)

Would you know how to spot a dangerous toy online?

More parents shopping online plus increasing numbers of dangerous toys for sale via online marketplaces mean a heightened risk of children suffering serious harm.

Dangers include:

- Magnets so strong they can burn through a child's gut if swallowed
- Long cords that can strangle a child
- Small parts that can choke or suffocate a child
- Easy access to button batteries that can get stuck in a child's food pipe, causing internal bleeding and even death.

But there are ways to spot and avoid dangerous toys when shopping online.

[Here](#) is simple, practical advice that you can read, copy and share at the push of a button, during a call, or over your social channels.

How can we improve the Home Learning Environment?

[Improving the Home Learning Environment](#) guide by the Department of Education and National Literacy Trust

Early Identification

Reporting a confirmed case of Covid-19 in your setting or school (for providers)

You must contact your Local Authority if you have a COVID-19 case within your school or setting. To do this you must email educationcovid19@oxfordshire.gov.uk You can find the reporting template in the downloads sections on this [page](#)

Early intervention services can change a child's developmental path and improve outcomes for children, families, and communities. Families benefit from **early intervention** by being able to better meet their children's needs from an **early** age and throughout their lives. Please ensure you report concerns to our Early Help services as soon as possible to support Oxfordshire families. For further information click [here](#)

Oxfordshire Health visitors

Please refer parents to the health visitors resources, they have a Facebook page, where they have regularly updated health promotion advice and a useful video about minor illness, is [here](#)
Their webpage, has an abundance of useful information and links is [here](#)

It is a **Public Health England priority** to ensure that every child has the best start in life: being ready to learn at age two and ready for school at age five.

Health for under 5's

<https://healthforunder5s.co.uk/>

Home Start has useful information to support families during the Pandemic. Top tips to help and support parents. To find out more click [here](#)

High quality provision

Early years eNewsletter

The newsletter is essential reading for anyone working with young children, including childminders, staff in day nurseries, pre-schools, and schools.

To sign up to receive the latest information for early years childcare providers click [here](#)

COVID-19 resources hub

Foundation Years have launched a new hub to support all early years providers during the COVID-19 outbreak. It includes the latest policy updates, Government

The importance of outdoors play and learning

Cath Prisk and Rob Ferguson discuss the importance of kids getting outdoors, and how communities/local groups, to family and friends, schools, and organizations can help to [support](#).

Birth to 5 Matters - Nancy Stewart speaks at the Childcare & Education Virtual Summit 2020

Nancy Stewart speaks at the Childcare & Education Virtual Summit held on the 21st November 2020, kindly shared with permission. <https://youtu.be/XIZBOYXRCU>

Chris Whitty: physical activity must play key role in nation's recovery

Exploring why governments should strive for a more preventative and joined up approach to health and outlining how the physical activity sector can partner with other sectors to support the creation of healthier, more resilient communities.

<https://youtu.be/UATh349tS44>

Early Education Spring webinars

Click through from the individual webinar links above for further information and to book a place. Or view our [webinar listing](#) for the full programme, including any additional dates which may be added over the coming weeks.

Littlemagictrain

Have you seen the Christmas session available? To find further information about 'Toy shop at the North Pole' visit <https://www.littlemagictrain.com/product/toy-shop-at-the-north-pole/> or go to www.littlemagictrain.com and type 'Toy shop at the North Pole' in the search tab and pop: **Toy shop at the North Pole'** individual session (introduction guide, session plans, illustrations and music) in your basket go to checkout and use the Discount Coupon **ORD20** it will be **100% free**. The voucher runs out on the 24th December 2020.

Signing training video

Oxfordshire Health have produced a video on signing which you can access [here](#)

SchudioTV provides teachers, school leaders and staff easy, affordable access to a range of high-quality, inspirational online courses.

A holistic approach to curriculum and assessment for SEND learners - Part 1: Introduction. This course focuses on the importance of developing an engaging curriculum that acknowledges a child's starting point through appropriate baseline assessment and supports the identification of what they need to achieve overall.

With changes to the Ofsted Inspection Framework, it's important to address the wider long-term outcomes for pupils with special educational needs. [Enrol for free today](#)

Have you seen the Christmas mouse series by Greg Bottrill?

An exploration of the Message Centre, the 3Ms and story dreaming. In this first episode, we hear about Thimble and she has brought us some gifts in the Magic Mustard Tin...Click [here](#) for more!

ACAS courses

Acas training courses are now being run remotely using Zoom. They have a range of management, employment law and HR training courses available. They can also provide remote training courses for your workplace if you need to train larger groups or teams. You can find more information [here](#)

Information-sharing and high-quality transitions through life

Don't forget about the kindness calendar

2020 has been a difficult year in so many ways. We have suffered with uncertainty, anxiety, isolation and challenges with our financial situation, health or relationships. One thing that can hold us together and help us get through is kindness. Although we can't change our situation, we can choose to respond to others (and ourselves) with kindness. You can find the calendar [here](#)

Charities That Help Children at Christmas Time

Operation Christmas Child - Great things come in small packages and make their way into the hands of children all over the world. In this case, the package is a shoebox. A program run by Christian organization Samaritan's Purse, [Operation Christmas Child](#) that takes a collection of shoeboxes filled with toys, school supplies, hygiene items, apparel, candy, and a personal note. Select a child's age group and fill the box with items consistent for that age group. A small donation is required to cover shipping costs. If you donate online, you will receive a special label for your shoebox so you can track your box's journey to its final destination.

The [Make-A-Wish Foundation](#) helps children throughout the year, but it also partners with companies to raise money specifically during the holiday season. If you drop off a letter to Santa at any Macy's location, the store will donate \$1 per letter to Make-A-Wish. You can also help raise money for Make-A-Wish by browsing the list of [current promotions](#). If you see something that catches your eye, use the link to shop and the partnered company will donate to Make-A-Wish when you make a purchase.

The [Salvation Army](#) also has an Angel Tree program in collaboration with Walmart. The stores have Christmas trees that have tags on them. Each tag has a wishlist of a specific child. Donors pick an angel tag, shop for gifts (not necessarily at Walmart), and drop off the gifts for the Salvation Army to distribute.

Other useful information

Oxfordshire libraries to offer new click and collect service during lockdown

Although Oxfordshire County Council's library service is currently unable to open libraries for browsing, the government has made it clear that libraries may offer a collection service during this period. For further information click [here](#)

The Oxfordshire Early Years Network, please see previous newsletters [here](#) (This network is different to Oxfordshire Early Years County Council networks and training for Early Years and Childcare Providers)

Redundancy

Oxfordshire Mind have put together things to remember if you're made redundant to help you look after your mental health <https://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/coping-with-redundancy-during-the-pandemic/>

Achieve Oxfordshire – see what they are delivering over the next month

- **Festive Cook Along**, Wednesday 16 December, 6.00-7.00pm. Cooking a Winter Warming Salad and a Leftover Turkey Curry. More information and recipes [here](#).
- **The 24 Day Festive Challenge**, various activities to help keep you feeling healthy, more information [here](#).
- **12 Days of Fitmas Challenge**, download the resource [here](#).

To share the above activities across your networks please go to the Achieve Oxfordshire Facebook page [here](#)

Eat Them to Defeat them sign up for February 2021.

- New video about Veg Power [here](#).
- Video about the 2020 schools programme [here](#).
- For signing up contact Stephanie Douglas at hello@vegpower.org.uk

Ofsted announces phased return of early years inspections

Ofsted has announced a phased return to early years inspections next year in light of the ongoing challenges facing the sector as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The full Ofsted announcement is available [here](#). Frequently Asked Questions document compiled by Ofsted is available [here](#).

Government updates

Coronavirus: contingency framework for education and childcare settings

The Department for Education (DfE) has published a contingency framework for local authorities, childcare and education settings in England setting out how restrictions to any childcare or education settings would be implemented as a containment measure for the rare circumstances in which they are required to address transmission within education settings and the community. Any restrictions on education would only be as a last resort and may only be initiated following a ministerial decision. Read the guidance [here](#)

Guidance on protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The updates apply from 2 December and cover: home education; educational visits and trips; providers of music, dance and drama or sports provision; who can attend your out-of-school setting; and social distancing. Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings in England has also been updated. The sections updated cover: children with health concerns; live performances of children's dance, music and drama. A new section on parent and child groups has been added.

[Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

[Guidance for parents and carers of children attending out-of-school settings during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak

What childcare services early years settings, childminders and local authorities need to provide during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. *Change made: Update to 'Side effects of children taking a vaccination or teething'.*

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Information for parents and carers about going back to schools, nurseries and colleges in the autumn term. *Change made: Updated the information on primary assessments and GCSE and A Level exams in summer 2021, Ofsted inspections and exams for selective schools.*

See also on NSPCC Learning

[What you need to know about the Department for Education's new guidance for out-of-school settings \(OOSS\)](#)

[COVID-19: guidance for the safe use of places of worship and special religious services and gatherings during the pandemic](#)

Guidance to provide advice on how places of worship can open, for limited permitted activities, in a manner that is safe and in line with local tier restrictions. *Change made: Added guidance on Celebrating religious festivals during coronavirus (COVID-19).*

[Guidance for full opening: special schools and other specialist settings](#)

What all special schools and other specialist settings will need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from the start of the autumn term to support the return of children and young people with special education needs and disability (SEND). *Change made:*

Updated sections on assessment and accountability, and contingency planning for remote education.

Articles/News/Reports/Research

Why Ages 2-7 Matter So Much for Brain Development

Children's brains develop in spurts called critical periods. The first occurs around age 2, with a second one occurring during adolescence. Read more [here](#)

Winter Mental Health Support Package.

The Government announced the Winter Mental Health Support plan for England. You can read the paper [here](#)

Ten things we learnt about working with parents to support children's learning in the early years This blog by Lindsey Foster and Julian Grenier summarises what we learnt during the [lockdown](#)

Diversity and children and young people's reading in 2020

This report is based on questions from our 2020 Annual Literacy Survey, conducted between January and mid-March 2020 with 58,346 children aged 9 to 18. Read more [here](#)

The return to school for disabled children

The Disabled Children's Partnership has published findings from an online poll of parents and carers of disabled children and young people looking at how the reopening of schools had gone for their children. Responses from 3,400 parents across the UK who completed the poll show that: returning to school has gone well for many disabled children; parents reported delays in assessments for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs); and there were challenges with wider support such as therapies and social care services lost during lockdown not yet being restored. Read the report [here](#)

For up to date information

[COVID-19 Gov guidance](#)

[E-newsletter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[OSCB](#)