

School Readiness newsletter

February 2021 - Issue 7



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.

Next month – Celebrating success stories during lockdown.

If you have any good news and stories you would like me to share please email SchoolReadiness@Oxfordshire.gov.uk by the 27th of the month.

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

Actively involving parents

Do you have strategies and approaches that encourage parents to read and talk with their children at home or to participate in activities in the early years setting; programmes that focus directly on parents themselves, for example, providing training in parenting skills or adult numeracy and literacy support; and more intensive programmes for disadvantaged families or families in crisis. Find more information in engaging parents [here](#)

Family workshops - Contact

Contact run free family workshops for families with children with additional needs. They are currently running [workshops](#) on various dates in February and March

Healthy habits for the year ahead

Against a backdrop of rising childhood obesity rates – heightened by the impact of several lockdowns, which have seen children eating more unhealthy snacks and sugary drinks – the Infant & Toddler Forum has put together a list of six top tips to help families easily establish some healthy habits for 2021.

[Read more](#)

BBC Bitesize collates content for 0-5s

There has been much publicity about BBC Bitesize programming for primary school children during lockdown - but the Beeb has also pulled together a list of suitable programmes and games for the 0-5s as well.

[See the list](#)

Support your little one's learning

If you've got a child at home at the moment, we've got lots of videos to help parents help their pre-schoolers with their learning at home.

Made by our childhood experts, we've got videos on a range of topics including how to encourage speech and language, making the most of screen time, supporting physical development and even a family meditation session.

[Browse the videos](#)

How dangerous can batteries be?

CAPT have developed new resources to share with parents, explaining the risks and sharing top tips to keep children safe.

Alongside a new leaflet and social media assets, there are free photos, videos, illustrations and educational materials from CAPT, helping you share the safety messages with families. Share this link to the [button battery hub](#) and the [new resources](#).

Five ways to manage your wellbeing as a parent during lockdown

The BBC have shared some top tips for parents on their Bitesize webpage. Helping parents with emotions and encouraging calmness as we continue through the pandemic. Read more [here](#)

Early Engagement

Help from support services

You can find services to help children and young people 0-25 with their learning, health and social care needs [here](#)

National Strategy for disabled people – survey

The government has launched a public [survey](#) as part of developing a National Strategy for Disabled People. The Disability Unit in the Cabinet Office is working with government colleagues, disabled people, disabled people's organisations, charities and businesses to develop the strategy, to be published in Spring 2021.

Youth Mental Health Ambassador

The Prime Minister has announced the appointment of Dr Alex George as Youth Mental Health Ambassador to advise government and raise the profile of mental health education and wellbeing in schools.

Read the press release: [Prime Minister appoints Dr. Alex George as Youth Mental Health Ambassador](#)

Supporting family engagement and early intervention in the early years (0-5) during the COVID-19 outbreak – Did you manage to see the webinar?

You can download the presentations from this webinar [here](#)

High quality provision

Elizabeth Jarman- online training and webinars

If you attended the School Readiness conference in 2019 you would have heard Elizabeth Jarman talking about communication friendly spaces for Early Years. Elizabeth now has some online evening Seminar delivered via Zoom which will offer a visual refresher on some of the key points to consider when reviewing your space inside and out. Elizabeth will deliver the sessions live and there will be some time for questions at the end of her input. This means that numbers are limited to just **10 places** at the cost £15. To find out more have a look [here](#)

How can we support social and emotional learning during partial school closures?

Jean Gross, co-author of our Improving Social and Emotional Learning in Primary Schools guidance report, offers some practical and evidence-based suggestions for building children's social and emotional learning into schools' everyday practices, even while schools remain closed to many pupils. Read more [here](#)

Every child a mover

Jan White's book on the importance of physical development is about to go into its third re-print due to popular demand. This book is more important than ever as we try to address the impact of the pandemic and the lockdowns on children's physical development.

This book sets out the scientific evidence on physical development in an easy to read way that will inform your understanding of practice. It also provides detailed practical suggestions of activities to undertake with children from birth to age 5. It will give readers:

- a deeper understanding of the role of movement and physicality in children's lives, wellbeing, health, development and learning
- a strong commitment to increasing movement and physicality in all aspects of care/education and in their home lives
- understanding of critical movement experiences; how to support them through provision and practice; adult role and strategies for providing engagement and support
- understanding of how to implement national curricula in this area

For further information and to book your copy click [here](#)

Childcare bubbles: what are the rules?

Even though we are in a third national lockdown, childcare settings and childminders are still open. Informal, unpaid childcare by relatives or friends is still allowed as well. So, if you feel comfortable doing so, you can arrange for family or friends to help out. But how do childcare bubbles work exactly?

[Read more on setting up a childcare bubble](#)

National Storytelling Week

[National Storytelling Week 2021](#) runs from 30 January to 6 February, providing children with a fantastic opportunity to explore their creativity and try out new vocabulary. In this [early years resource](#) we outline a range of practical ideas that you can adapt to suit your available space and resources. You can also check out our [Young Readers Story Club videos](#) for an immersive storytelling experience.

Information-sharing and high-quality transitions through life

Dear teacher, thank you.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart. I know this isn't easy, but the best things in life rarely are. You are shaping the next generation...see more [here](#)

Safer Internet Day 2021

To mark Safer Internet Day on 9 February, NSPCC Learning has brought together a range of online safety training and resources to help keep children safe online. In addition, the NSPCC Library has compiled a reading list on keeping children and young people safe online.

Access the resources: [Safer Internet Day 2021: online safety resources](#)

View the reading list: [Safer Internet Day 2021](#)

Further information: [Safer Internet Day 2021](#)

Managing safer online communities training

This 3-hour eLearning course developed in collaboration with Childline will give organisations, associations, groups or individuals the information they need to safely set up and manage online communities. It will help with assessing the need and aims of an online community, putting policies and procedures in place and moderating and reporting any concerns.

Take the course: [Online community management training](#)

Promoting wellbeing in schools

Public Health England has published updated guidance for headteachers and college principals in England on the eight principles for promoting emotional health and wellbeing in schools and colleges.

Read the guidance: [Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing](#)

Short Breaks Update for Families with Disabled Children and Young People

For the most recent newsletter click below.



SB Update - Feb 21
Final.pdf

What does the Oxfordshire Family information Service do?

They can give free information, advice and assistance on

- finding and paying for childcare, play and leisure for children, young people and families
- working parents' (maternity and paternity) rights and options
- help for families with disabled children
- family and parenting support

They also support professionals in their work with children, young people and families by providing a centralised information resource to help guide customers to the services and information that they need. Click here for [more](#)

Other support and information

New Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This [document](#) answers the FAQs from the early years sector on the national lockdown. The previous FAQs can be found [here](#). These answers have been checked with the Department for Education (DfE) and cover:

- Safety of settings
- Testing and vaccinations
- Clinically vulnerable children and staff
- Funding and financial support
- Reception-aged children
- + more

COVID-19 information to support families?

Each of the district council provides help for families for self-isolation payments and support.

- South Oxon - <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/coronavirus-community-support/>
- Oxford - <https://www.oxford.gov.uk/selfisolationsupport>
- Cherwell - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/258/coronavirus/736/coronavirus-self-isolation-payments>
- West Oxon - <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/communities-and-leisure/coronavirus-community-support/>
- The Vale of White Horse - [Help for individuals and families - Vale of White Horse District Council \(whitehorsedc.gov.uk\)](#)

Other Oxfordshire support available:

- <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/council/coronavirus-covid-19/covid-19-support-residents/food-support>
- <https://www.oxfordshireallin.org/local-support-groups>

Articles/News/Reports/Research

Working for babies: Lockdown lessons from local systems

A report published by the [First 1001 Days Movement](#) provides insight into the impacts of COVID-19 and the Spring 2020 lockdown on babies in the first 1001 days and their families, and the experiences of systems and services which support them. Read more [here](#)

Understanding the influence of the preschool home learning environment on early mathematics and literacy attainment

[Research](#) from the Liverpool Early Number Skills Project (LENS) at Liverpool John Moores University, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, reports that pre-schoolers who spend more time discussing letters and sounds with their parents are better at reading and mathematics when they start school.

How has pandemic stress affected how we feed our children?

A new study has shown that the COVID pandemic has had an effect on the way parents feed their children. Results demonstrate that parents who reported higher levels of stress, due to the pandemic, were more likely to offer less nutritious food and snacks to manage children's emotions and behaviours. You can read more [here](#)

Oxford Community Action, along with community volunteers, worked collaboratively with Healthwatch Oxfordshire to understand what Oxford's new and emerging communities think about wellbeing. Previous joint work had highlighted that mental health and wellbeing was a concern. They ran three focus groups and designed a questionnaire to reach out to Oxford's new and emerging communities. 152 people responded to the questionnaire, along with many ongoing conversations. Respondents represented the diverse and multi-ethnic communities in Oxford. This report is the result of the work we did and what people told us.

This report shows that there is a huge appetite within the community to learn more about, gain skills and receive support to improve health and wellbeing. However, it also shows that there are significant barriers to getting the support that is needed.

[Oxford's new and emerging communities' views on wellbeing – full report](#)

[Oxford's new and emerging communities' views on wellbeing – summary](#)

Report summary translations

- [Arabic](#)
- [Swahili](#)
- [Somali](#)
- [Tetum](#)

For up to date information

[COVID-19 Gov guidance](#)

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