

School Readiness newsletter

January 2021 - Issue 6



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.

Ready for School

Children who do not achieve a good level of development by the age of five will often struggle with reading, maths, social and physical skills, leading to long term impacts on their educational attainment and health. School readiness is a measure of how prepared a child is to succeed in school cognitively, socially and emotionally. [PACEY](#) describes this as having strong social skills, the ability to cope emotionally with separation from parents, being relatively independent in their own personal care, to be curious about the world and have a desire to learn. 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.

National Guidance

- [Improving school readiness: initiatives across the South East](#) a Public Health England SE report mapping initiatives to improve children's school readiness
- [Improving the Home Learning Environment](#) guide by the Department of Education and National Literacy Trust
- Explore Public Health England's [data on school readiness](#) in Oxfordshire

Advice and resources

- Oxfordshire School Readiness page for [parents](#) and [providers](#)
- Early Years [Toolkit](#)
- [Health and development](#) two-year-old reviews
- Register your child for school via the '[Apply for a school place](#)' page
- [What to Expect, When?](#) guide to a child's learning and development in the early years foundation stage by the Department of Education, published by Foundation Years
- [Hungry Little Minds](#) is a resource full of ideas and activities for parents of 0-5 year olds to help them learn and discover the world. This will prepare them for starting school.
- [Safeguarding](#) in Oxfordshire

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

Why Movement Matters – Recovering from the Christmas holidays

This year the Christmas holidays would have been very different from other years. Children would not have had the opportunity to visit friends and family over the festive season, some children not having access to outdoors at all. In 2021 it is important to get us all moving again after lots of Christmas treats and being active and moving maintains health and weight, develops muscles and bones, encourages coordination, improves sleep and builds relationships and social skills.

Moving into Lockdown it is even more important to be active and moving will help children's brains and bodies to work together. Here are some top tips for parents:

- **Reduce screen time** and time spent in equipment that restricts a child's movement e.g. highchairs, car seats, pushchairs, etc.
- **Provide time and space** for children to move freely and spontaneously indoors or outdoors. Let children spin, twist and turn freely or freely dance to music, etc.
- **Give children lots of opportunities to play on the floor or be on their tummy.** Let them lie down to play with their toys, e.g. cars, trains, jigsaws, prop themselves to read a book or allow them to roll around freely.
- **Encourage crawling** – even if they can already successfully crawl. Crawling is a great activity for your child and gets the whole body and brain working together. Let children crawl through tunnels, ladders, over cushions, under tables and chairs at home.
- **Create opportunities for children to help push, pull or carry heavy objects** maybe when gardening or by carrying a weighted rucksack while on a walk.
- **Provide opportunities for children to walk, jump and hop** using chalk drawn zig-zag lines/spots/swirly lines/hopscotch court on the pavement or on another hard surface.
- **Create opportunities for children and adults to sing and dance to action songs and finger rhymes** like 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' and '5 little peas in a pea-pod pressed'. It's just as important to get the fingers moving as it is the whole body!
- **Get children's wrists, hands and fingers moving** with activities like playdough, popping bubble wrap, cleaning with sponges and spray bottles.

Sport NZ contains brochures providing a variety of fun activities to get little children moving (<https://sportnz.org.nz/managing-sport/search-for-a-resource/guides/active-movement-activity-guides-for-children-0-5-years->)

National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine contains leaflets on '*Help your baby move and play everyday*' and '*Help your child move and play every day*' (www.ncsem-em.org.uk/resources/age-groups/early-years/)

TOM & JACK - Improving children's well-being together

Tom and Jack have been working with parents and answering questions about home learning, amongst other topics, for further information click [here](#)

The Oxford Hub

Volunteer tutors will work 1:1 with a child for a minimum of one hour per week to a maximum of four hours per week to support them with schoolwork and GCSE or A-Level preparation. Pupils are matched with one tutor per subject to provide tailored support. Referrals can be made from teachers, social workers or foster carers. For further information click [here](#)

Early Engagement

Early Years Mental Health

Welcome to the 'one stop shop' for all things to do with young children's mental well-being. A video introduction with useful links and free resources is [here](#).

Early Support

To find out further information about Early Support, Free Education for 2 year olds and Free education for 3- 4 year olds look [here](#)

Happy New Year from the health visiting service.

With the new lockdown all our health visitors and community staff nurses are staying within the service to continue to support families at this difficult time. A very small number of nursery nurses (7) will be supporting the rehabilitation team for 4 weeks from the week of the 5th January. We are working to ensure a full HCP service delivery for all our families and the enhanced support of our most vulnerable families.

We are increasing the number of visits we do face to face in the home. We use PPE and continue to complete a COVID risk assessment. We will be working hard to ensure our most vulnerable families are seen at home. We have the option of a face to face visit in a clinical setting, if parents do not want to see us in their home. We continue to have the option of virtual contacts for other families.

For our developmental reviews at 1 & 2 years we are aiming for at least one of these reviews, to be face to face, preferably in the home.

All our team weekday duty lines and our locality appointment only clinics continue. We are also commencing a revised virtual early days group in each locality. Our "Knowing Me, Knowing You" groups for those with low mood and/or anxiety continue and we are aiming to increase the number of these groups to support parental wellbeing.

Please continue to signpost parents with concerns about their child's health or development to us and support them in contacting us. All settings continue to have a HV team link, usually the team nursery nurse. The child vaccination programme (including flu) continues and we are encouraging parents to attend all vaccinations appointments.

As always, our countywide contact details (and lots of useful information for parents) can be found on OxonFIS or here [Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust Oxfordshire Health visitors contact | Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust](#)

Winter Grant Scheme - Early Years

The funding is to give children and families extra support this winter to provide food for children who need it over the holidays. New winter package to provide further support for children and families. Parents of children in receipt of the EYPP or 2YO funding are entitled to £15 per child per week of school holiday periods until and including the Easter holidays 2021 in order to purchase food.

For further information click [here](#).

High quality provision

Lockdown Learning: How BBC Bitesize can help you learn on TV and online in 2021

As a third national lockdown is under way, the BBC is bringing hundreds of educational resources together to help with home schooling.

Whether on TV, online or on social media, we have lots of brilliant content to help you learn at home. For further information click [here](#)

An Introduction to Making Sense of Behaviour - Online via Zoom

This training is designed for anyone who works with children and young people to provide an introduction on ways to make sense of their often-confusing behaviour. The aim of this two-hour session is to understand and think about what children and young people's behaviour might be communicating. For further information click [here](#)

Mental Health Aware online course available for Oxfordshire 2021. See the booking links below:

- Friday 22nd January: <https://mhfaengland.org/course-booking-form/?id=710dce45-4d40-eb11-a813-000d3ad7ae82#>
- Wednesday 3rd February: <https://mhfaengland.org/course-booking-form/?id=1d34dd5f-4d40-eb11-a813-000d3ad7ae82#>
- Friday 5th February: <https://mhfaengland.org/course-booking-form/?id=331bce78-4d40-eb11-a813-000d3ad7ae82#>

Sensory Play

Sensory play is all about exploring and it doesn't have to be messy, see some ideas [here](#)

Digging and planting

Take time to focus on digging, finding, planting and caring for a garden. Why not make [a mini garden](#)

What a listening walk?

Talk about what you hear when out for a walk or in the garden.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/listen-with-me-18-24/z4d27nb>

Remember physical activity can be carried out both indoors and outdoors. Young children and their families can go outside to exercise as long as it is in line with the most recent government guidelines on exercise:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do/coronavirus-outbreak-faqs-what-you-can-and-cant-do>

COVID-19 resources hub

The Foundation Years [COVID-19 resources hub](#) has been updated to include the latest information and guidance, in addition to hosting a variety of resources to support early years settings during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Talk to your baby 2021: Join the conversation, wherever you are (29 March 2021).

The only annual conference with a specific focus on early language, it will explore how we can cultivate environments that better support young children's wellbeing through language development, while also examining the role of the cross-sector engagement in enhancing the lives of young families who are most in need of support. The cost is £50, for further information click [here](#)

Information-sharing and high-quality transitions through life

A New Year ... A chance to reflect upon unconscious bias

Tamsin Grimmer has written a brilliant article in Parenta, reflecting about unconscious bias and how this has a significant impact on people's lives and our work with children without us really knowing, which can lead to prejudice. To read more click [here](#)

Short breaks newsletter

To read the January edition click [here](#)

Mencap and Special Olympics GB Virtual Challenge Week, in partnership with Westfield Health.

The Challenge Week will take place between 25th and 29th January, and feature skills challenges participants can do at home, with whatever objects they have in the house. The challenges will vary from day to day but contain the following themes: Movement, Throwing, Hitting and Kicking.

This is a team competition – and we would love your organisation, team, or group to take part. Register [here](#) and you will then be sent a simple entry form, where you can enter your team and all the participants representing that team.

Participants will do all the challenges individually and can take part from the comfort of their own home, and, at the end of the week, the highest placed teams will win some sporty prizes for their group – this could be equipment, specialist coaching or other prizes! Every individual who is registered will receive a certificate and some goodies, so please make sure they are signed up using the spreadsheet!

The closing date for entries is Monday 18th January, so reserve your team's place now to compete in this new, fun, and exciting event!

Updates from National Children's Bureau Foundation Years

Are you signed up to get updates? They provide up to date information about Early Years topics and have some useful information about COVID-19 too. See their FAQs [here](#) To get their updates sign up [here](#)

COVID-19 -Oxfordshire

You can find confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in Oxfordshire [here](#).

There is also an interactive [COVID-19 Dashboard](#) where you can view data by district as well as at a county level.

To check data at postcode level, go to the [GOV.UK interactive map](#). Public Health continue to monitor data at postcode level and will alert schools at a very local level if they are concerned about the increase in cases in terms of outbreaks in the area.

Other support and information

Leaflets pointing to the food services map

These are now available with specific information on advice service providers per District. There are three versions, a pdf and front-and-back image files you can use to print; and a 2-in-1 version to use online, e.g. on social media. Please download the version relevant to your District [here](#)

If you have any updates to the services listed on the leaflet in future, please get in touch.

Food Insecurity Toolkit

A simple guide for frontline staff and volunteers to: explain some of the reasons behind food insecurity; provide tips and ideas on how to open difficult conversations on food insecurity; signpost to key organisations.

Download [here](#)

If you know of anyone that might need a bit of extra practical help, remember you can refer them to [Oxford Together](#).

Government updates

Latest DfE information can be found [here](#)

A [new national lockdown](#) has been announced in England from Wednesday 6 January. Under this, the guidance confirms that "**All early years providers (including registered childminders but not including reception years in primary schools) can remain open during this period of national lockdown.**" This means that maintained nursery schools, nursery classes (unless impacted by the wider closure of their school), early years provision on school sites, private, voluntary and independent providers, childminders and childcare on domestic premises can remain open. Childcare bubbles can continue to operate and nannies can also continue to work.

National lockdown: Stay at Home guidance can be found [here](#).

[COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)

This information is for those managing multi-use community facilities. It signposts to relevant guidance on a range of different activities that can take place in these spaces.

COVID-19 - Government Funding Support for Businesses

The gov.uk online checker is a useful tool for providers to find out what Government financial support providers could benefit from. It is quick and simple and provides all the latest [information](#)

[Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

What all schools will need to do during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak from the start of the autumn term.

[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: Updated the guidance for pregnant employees.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) contingency framework for education and childcare settings](#)

How settings can prepare for restrictions to help contain community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). Change made: Updated list of areas which this guidance applies to.

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges](#)

Information for parents and carers about going back to schools, nurseries and colleges in January 2021. Change made: Updated to reflect announcements about the phased return of secondary schools and colleges and the use of the contingency framework in some primary schools

[Critical workers and vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings](#)

List of critical workers (key workers) and vulnerable children and young people who can access full-time education provision in the case of future restrictions on education during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Change made: Updated with information about the return to school and college in January and added those whose work is critical to EU Transition to the list of critical workers.

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

Guidance for parents and carers of children attending community activities, holiday or after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings.

Change made: Updated to reflect changes to the contingency framework and the January 2021 return to school guidance.

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

Protective measures for providers of community activities, holiday or after-school clubs, tuition and other out-of-school settings offering provision to children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Change made: Updated to reflect changes to the contingency framework and the January 2021 return to school guidance.

[If you need to self-isolate or cannot attend work due to coronavirus](#)

Page summary: Guidance for employers and workers on work absences due to 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.

Change made: Added 'Mass asymptomatic testing in specialist settings'.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): grassroots sports guidance for safe provision including team sport, contact combat sport and organised sport events](#)

This guidance sets out information on grassroots sport and physical activity during COVID restrictions including the team sport framework, contact combat sport framework, and advice on organised sport participation events

[COVID-19: guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable](#) Information for shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable from COVID-19.

Articles/News/Reports/Research

Oxfordshire Youth Report 2020

This impact report is an account of the work Oxfordshire Youth have been doing in 2019/20. To read the report click [here](#)

[How are the lives of families with young children changing?](#)

A new evidence review published by the Nuffield Foundation reveals the extent of changes to family life in the UK over the last 20 years and highlights how these changes are experienced unequally across the population.

To protect our wellbeing this winter we must explore the roots and fruits of our own resilience. Peter Lefort explains how in [this blog](#)

[State of Health Visiting in England: Are babies and their families being adequately supported in England in 2020 to get the best start in life?](#) was published on 21 December

Poverty In The Pandemic: An Update On The Impact Of Coronavirus On Low-Income Families And Children - Child Poverty Action Group

This [report](#) provides an update on how families with children are managing financially, based on an additional 393 online survey responses received in the period since the last report was published, up to the end of November 2020

COVID-19 series: briefing on early years, November 2020

Evidence from research interviews with 739 early years providers between 5 October and 11 December. Main findings: Children who have returned to early years settings

are making progress and starting to settle back into familiar routines. However, fewer children than expected are taking up early year's places following the first national lockdown. Read more [here](#)

For up to date information

[COVID-19 Gov guidance](#)

[E-newsletter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[OSCB](#)