

School Readiness newsletter

June 2021 - Issue 11



This month we have a focus on 'Play', thank you to colleagues who have sent in valuable resources to share.

Don't forget to email SchoolReadiness@Oxfordshire.gov.uk by the 27th of the month with your news.

All things PLAY!

Oxfordshire Play Association

All Party Parliamentary Group on a Fit and Healthy Childhood sees play as central to a child's learning and healthy development and research has shown that integrating time for play into the school day is essential to develop creativity, promote emotional intelligence and improve academic achievement. Play as part of a whole child strategy should be a key priority for policy-makers at all levels.'

Have you seen the OPA Play & Activity Days 2021, if not have a look [here](#)

New campaign calls for a 'summer of play' - Playful Planet

An ad hoc coalition of children's advocates, led by Save the Children, Play England, Playing Out and Professor Helen Dodd, is today calling on the country to get behind a campaign to give children a great 'Summer of Play' as they emerge from the coronavirus restrictions. More information can be found [here](#)

Join the Alliance's National Week of Play: 21-27 June 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a hugely detrimental impact on children's access to play. As parents we know that play is fundamental to a child's learning and development. Play is how children make sense of the world and it is even more important now as it is the first step in giving them back a sense of control after a confusing time in their lives.

From 21 June the Early Years Alliance (which runs Family Corner) is launching a National Week of Play to encourage and inspire to discover and explore new play ideas to do at home. Top tips will be shared, blogs and videos. To register your interest click [here](#)

Hidden benefits of loose parts

Loose parts play isn't just a gateway to creativity. From early maths and literacy skills to communication skills, open-ended play fantastic for child development. To find out more click [here](#)

Sutton Trust survey by the Sutton Trust

Parents of 2-4 year old children completed a [survey](#) which found that many parents felt that not being able to play with peers had adversely affected their child in terms of physical development and language, but mainly in terms of social and emotional development.

The trust calls on the Government to increase funding in the Early Years sector. As for school age children, some schools are cutting playtimes in their eagerness to compensate for 'lost learning', according to a [TES blog](#), and this ignores the capacity of play to enhance all outcomes that educators aim to deliver. Underlining the benefits of play, a campaign calling for a "[Summer of Play](#)" for children was launched in mid-May.

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

Update from Oxfordshire Library Service

Oxfordshire Libraries is preparing to launch The Reading Agency's annual Summer Reading Challenge: Wild World Heroes (SRC) to start from **July 10 – Sept 11** for 4-11-year olds and the mini-challenge for pre-schoolers. Please keep an eye out for communications as they come out.

In addition, The Reading Agency has announced today a move to support a [Summer of Reading](#) of which the SRC is a part. This is a collaborative move with 20 significant organisations committing to promoting reading for children and families over the summer. We will all be working together to provide a range of resources and activities (online) to entice children and families to keep reading all summer long and set up ongoing good reading habits.

Please do signpost this initiative through your relevant social media channels and colleagues. The library service website will have a prominent feature box for the SRC and this initiative soon.

Four recommendations on working with parents to support their child's learning

This EEF guidance report reviews the best available research to offer schools and teachers four recommendations to support parental engagement in children's learning. Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's learning, and levels of parental engagement are consistently associated with better academic outcomes. You can read the report [here](#) and find a poster summary of recommendations [here](#)

Free online learning for all the family - Join the Early Years Alliance courses for parents of 0-5s.

Please take a look at our various free online sessions and courses throughout June and July. We hope they will help you learn more about your child's development and inspire you to interact and learn from each other in different ways.

We have three options on offer:

- **'Let's learn together@home'** is a six-week programme for the 0-2-year olds - one Zoom session per week for six weeks.
- **'Parent Connect'** are one-off online events providing wellbeing and other advice. They support children's return to, or introduction to, early education.
- **'Let's get ready for school'** is a three-week virtual Zoom programme for children due to start school in September 2021. Each session will last 30 minutes and there will be one session per week.

For further information about course details click [here](#)

Books to read at home - recommendations from parents

Board books

- [Itsy Bitsy Spider](#) by Rosemary Wells
- [The Tiny Seed](#) by Eric Carle
- [Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type](#) by Doreen Cronin
- [Whistle for Willie](#) by Ezra Jack Keats
- [The Paper Bag Princess](#) by Robert Munsch

Picture books

- [The Adventures of Beekle: The Unimaginary Friend](#) by Dan Santat
- [The Curious Garden](#) by Peter Brown
- [Visitor for Bear](#) by Bonny Becker
- [Rosie Revere, Engineer](#) by Andrea Beaty
- [A Perfectly Messed-Up Story](#) by Patrick McDonnell

Activities to try at home

Norfolk's Early Childhood and Family Service have a [YouTube Channel](#) with lots of videos all about child development and activities that parents can try at home, including speech and language support.

Parents play an important role in supporting children to gain the skills they need to cross the road safely or cycle in traffic.

It's good to start teaching children from an early age, long before they can recite the Green Cross Code, judge the speed of traffic or walk to school by themselves.

But it can be hard for parents to know what their growing child understands about road dangers. And often parents lack the confidence to know how best to teach their child how to stay safe.

That's why we have produced a range of free resources as part of Child Safety Week, available now from the [road safety hub](#).

Please share the [road safety advice and resources](#) with the families you work with. With your help, children can walk and cycle more often and in greater safety.

Early Identification

HMCI commentary: putting children and young people with SEND at the heart of our recovery plans – GOV.UK

Amanda Spielman discusses the current challenges in the SEND system and the part Ofsted can play in driving improvements. Read more [here](#)

Locality Community Support Service (LCSS)

Please note that the OSCB webpages have been updated. Please ensure your staff know about these pages and ensure new starters visit these to read about what Early Help is and how LCSS can support practitioners with Early Help, offering advice and support when there are emerging concerns for children.

[Early Help and the Locality Community Support Service \(LCSS\) - Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board \(oscb.org.uk\)](#)

LCSS have attended recent EYs managers meetings and spoken about the importance of Early Help and identifying need early. Data is showing that over the past 3 months Early Help Assessments from the pre-school settings have increased from 0 to 13! We have also noticed more calls being received from the Early Years sector which is great news. There is strong evidence that helping families early and providing support at the right time at the right place can reduce the likelihood of problems escalating and improve long term outcomes for children, young people and their families so do keep in contact and call for support if you need to complete an EHA and don't feel confident in how to broach this with families.

Reminder that the **Early help Networks** can be accessed by the Early Years Sector and information on these can be found [here](#)

Breastfeeding Celebration Week 21st - 27th June 2021

This year Breastfeeding Celebration Week will run from the 21st - 27th June. The theme is how partners and the wider family unit can support breastfeeding initiation and duration. A key focus will be how to get the whole family involved and bond with baby.

You will be able to support and get involved in the campaign by using the social media toolkit that we will provide later this week and will be on the [Campaign Resource Centre](#).

There are also a range of downloadable and orderable resources to support breastfeeding mothers that you can access now, including [leaflets](#), [wallet cards](#), and [A3](#) and [A4](#) posters

Community Dental Services update

CDS answered common questions about children's diet and their Oral Health. They also discussed how to prepare a healthy, tooth friendly lunch box. To see their video, click [here](#)

CDS are part of the brighter futures in Banbury partnership, we aim to deliver the key oral health messages through a fun and informative [video](#)

Brush DJ -

When all our teeth are present, toothbrushing should take two minutes. Two minutes is a much longer than you think! The @BrushDJapp is a fun way to ensure you are brushing long enough to reach all areas of all teeth! #ohimprovement #ohimpoxfordshire #BrushDJ Click [here](#) for more information

High quality provision

Implementing the EYFS reforms for September 2021

The Department for Education have now published the [new Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#) to be used from 1 September 2021.

To prepare for implementing the changes a [new comprehensive government resource](#) has been produced that provides information about each area of learning in the EYFS and gives ideas for activities, alongside guidance to help to improve your practice and other useful resources.

A summary of additional amendments to the Safeguarding & Welfare Requirements and why they have been made can be found [here](#).

Further to the summer term briefings delivered by the Oxfordshire Early Years Team, the following resources will help you understand the changes:

A [vodcast](#) is aimed at headteachers, senior leadership and governors, and includes presentations and a Q&A from DfE and Ofsted

A further [vodcast](#) is aimed at Private, Voluntary and Independent settings (PVI) and childminders and includes presentations from DfE, Dr Julian Grenier and Ofsted Foundation Years recently hosted events focused on the revised EYFS. The recordings and case studies from the events can be found [here](#)

Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants

This action planning template can help schools structure their thinking around reframing the use of TAs and putting those plans into action. [Making Best Use of Teaching Assistants | Education Endowment Foundation | EEF](#)

The Importance of Storytelling: June O’Sullivan in Conversation with Trisha Lee

Trisha has created a whole arts business around the central tenet of Helicopter Stories which simply put is:

- The child tells a story
- The story is written down
- The story is acted out

Read more [here](#)

Transition toolkit: resources for starting, changing or leaving school or college

Free toolkits for primary, secondary and FE settings, full of practical resources to help pupils and their parents manage changes in their education. For further information click [here](#)

Early Education webinars

For details of our other summer term webinars, including recorded sessions available "on demand" and all sessions on the EYFS reforms and Birth to 5 Matters, see our [webinar listing](#)

Peppa Pig resources and activities

These resources could also be used by parents and carers. Click [here](#) to see

Information sharing and high-quality transitions through life

Oxfordshire museums reopen

Museums across the county are welcoming visitors back. The Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock is open now – the team has been brushing up its exhibits as well as opening up a new exhibition, 'Skeleton Science'. For more information click [here](#)

Active Oxfordshire co-ordinating the Move Together

This is a new county wide pathway into physical activity more information [here](#).

Tuesday 6 July 2021 10:00-11:30am webinar. An opportunity to support those most impacted by the pandemic and transform hundreds of lives through the power of physical activity!

Move Together is funded by the COVID Contain Outbreak Management Fund through the County Council, to help reduce the spread of coronavirus and support

local public health. Many of our communities' physical and / or mental health and wellbeing has been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and they need support now through this recovery period. Book on the webinar [here](#)

Loneliness Awareness Week

Loneliness is something that can affect any one of us at any point in our lives, and it has become something even more of us have had to deal with over the last year. With social distancing restrictions steadily lifting, Loneliness Awareness Week from June 14-18th 2021 continues to be as important as ever. Not just as a reminder that many people will continue to struggle with loneliness and isolation as we emerge from restrictions, but also to reinforce the importance of social connections.

Help us use the week to drive a national conversation and break the stigma, by sharing the assets found in this toolkit along with #LetsTalkLoneliness on your channels. You can also direct towards the [Let's Talk Loneliness website](#) , which shares advice and support routes.

Visit the '[Get involved in Loneliness Awareness Week 2021](#)' web page which details how to get involved further.

OCF's Children and Families Grant

The grant closed on 1st July. The pandemic has affected children and families in three primary ways – mental health, income and education. As we come out of lockdown, many children and families are still afflicted in these areas. OCF would like to fund projects that will help children and families recover from these adverse consequences. To be eligible to apply for funding from Oxfordshire Community

Foundation (OCF), your group must:

- Be a registered charity, constituted group or social enterprise/CIC
- Be based in Oxfordshire and/or have majority of beneficiaries in Oxfordshire
- Have at least three trustees or committee members who are not related to each other
- Have a bank account in its own name with at least two unrelated signatories, open for three months or more
- Be open to people of all religions and political affiliations, and must not proselytise

For further information click [here](#)

The next OCF webinar focuses on the impact of the pandemic on our youngest children.

What do we need to do as a community to support families? Save the date and register now for Wednesday 30 June, 2pm to 3pm.

Much of the media focus of the pandemic has been on schools, but children too young for school are at severe risk of being overlooked. Recent research shows that lockdowns have affected their development. The pandemic has exacerbated the pre-

school disadvantage gap that already existed, and we know this will have an impact on their later educational attainment – but what do we need to do now to get back on track?

This session will look at how the charitable sector and other partnerships are adapting existing services and offering new ones. We are delighted to confirm our speakers for this event are:

- [Dr Nayeli Gonzalez Gomez](#), Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Oxford Brookes University
- [Dr Alexandra Hendry](#), Department of Experimental Psychology, University of Oxford
- Katherine Barber, CEO at [Home-Start Oxford](#) and co-founder of the Oxford Early Years Network
- Laura Barbour, Early Years Lead at the [Sutton Trust](#)

Please find more details and register to join this webinar [here](#). As ever, all are welcome, so please do pass this invitation on.

Summer Activities for young people aged 8 –17 years old with Asperger’s Syndrome /high functioning autism

In anticipation of lock down restrictions easing... we have planned Summer a bit more like it used to be! Join us for Summer fun and friendships and maybe try.

Please click on the links to download our [Newsletter](#) (a PDF will download) and the [Application Form](#) (a Word document will download)

To book a place and for full details about our activities look in the [Newsletter](#) or contact Activity Coordinator Georgina Palmer on 07947 349655 or georgina@afso.org.uk Closing date for Application Forms is Monday 28th June 2021

Other Activities around Oxfordshire

For other groups run activities during school holidays and term time. For details of what is available across Oxfordshire check out the Oxfordshire County Council *Local Offer* website and *Family Information Directory*. A list of Short Break Providers in Oxfordshire can be found [here](#)

Having a conversation with parents and carers about mental health (Young Minds)

Mental health is a very emotional subject to talk about. This is especially true of conversations between teachers and parents and carers. Sometimes it can be difficult to know how to approach the first conversation. Young Minds has created a guide to help navigate these conversations. The guide can be downloaded [here](#)

The Young Minds Parents Helpline can be contacted on 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday 9.30am – 4pm, free for mobiles and landlines)

Storytelling Evaluation Methodology from the Arts at the Old Fire Station read [here](#), download the guide to using storytelling [here](#) and watch a webinar [here](#).

Oxfordshire Men's Health Partnership first meeting Wednesday 7 July 1.00pm-2.00pm to attend contact menshealth@achieveoxfordshire.org.uk.

COVID-19 updates

- [COVID-19 RESPONSE –SPRING 2021](#)
- [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)
- [Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do](#)
- [Step 3 COVID-19 restrictions posters: 17 May 2021A poster displaying information about COVID-19 restrictions in England from 17 May.](#)
- COVID-19 vaccination: British Sign Language resources [British Sign Language \(BSL\) videos on COVID-19 vaccination.](#)

Articles/News/Reports/Research

Active Reach Storytelling report access [here](#); stories and learning from the first phase.

Obesity - UK Parliament – House of Commons Library

Obesity is a physical condition in which a person is very overweight, with a lot of body fat. Policymakers have faced the difficult challenge of addressing increasing obesity prevalence; a complex issue affected by socioeconomic, cultural and geographical factors. This paper covers the work of the UK Government in preventing and reducing obesity, click [here](#) for more information.

Child food poverty - UK Parliament

Parliament debated the petition “End child food poverty – no child should be going hungry”:

Watch the debate [here](#)

Read the transcript [here](#)

Read the research [here](#)

Lack of playtime with peers has negatively affected young children, parents warn - ITV Online

The majority of parents of pre-school children say not being able to play with their peers during the pandemic has negatively affected their child. More information [here](#)

How extending playtime can help children after lockdown - TES Online

In the 'catch-up' fever, some schools are reducing playtime - but they're denying children a crucial experience. More information [here](#)

Childhood Obesity Related to Poor Cognition in Later Years - Psychology Today

Along with other risk factors, researchers have linked overweight and obesity in early childhood to poorer cognitive performance in midlife. More information [here](#)

Support for children entitled to free school meals - UK Parliament

A Westminster Hall debate on the 'Support for children entitled to free school meals' has been scheduled for Wednesday 26 May 2021 from 2.30pm. The debate has been initiated by Catherine West MP. More information [here](#)

Inquiry: Children and young people's mental health - UK Parliament

The Committee is undertaking an inquiry into Children and Young People's Mental Health. The inquiry will examine the progress that has been made by Government against their own ambitions to improve children and young people's mental health provision. More information [here](#)

What you need to know about the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme - Department for Education

The Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF) has been supporting children and families in the school holidays since 2018 and was significantly expanded in light of the pandemic last year. [Here](#) is everything you need to know about the programme and how it could help you.

For up to date information

[COVID-19 Gov guidance](#)

[E-newsletter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[OSCB](#)