

School Readiness newsletter

August 2020

Welcome to the first School Readiness newsletter. If you have resources and information you would like me to share in this newsletter please email SchoolReadiness@Oxfordshire.gov.uk

Oxfordshire School Readiness Strategy 2020

Oxfordshire's goal has been for all services working with young children and their families to play an important role in supporting school readiness.

The school readiness strategy reflects key principles that school readiness is achieved through families, ready communities, ready services and ready children. Through the School Readiness consultation 4 main priorities have been identified as being key for children to be ready for school and lifelong learning.

- Strong Home Learning Experience to support children's learning and development
- Early Engagement
- High Quality Provision
- Information-sharing and high-quality transitions through life

http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/starting-school/Oxfordshire_school_readiness_strategy.pdf

The next steps are to find out how colleagues in Oxfordshire meet the 4 priorities identified in the strategy. From reviewing this information, we will identify the gaps and meet the identified needs in Oxfordshire.

For further information please contact SchoolReadiness@Oxfordshire.gov.uk



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

- [The Look, Say, Sing, Play campaign](#) The campaign asks parents of children under two years old to look at what their baby is focusing on and how they react, say what they are doing and copy the sounds their baby makes, sing along to their favourite tune or play simple games and see what their baby enjoys.
Resources - <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/news/2019/february/look-say-sing-play-launches>
Videos - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwFnbKzC1Y&feature=youtu.be>
- School Readiness webpages for parents - <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/education-and-learning/get-children-ready-school> This includes well-being packs from Health visitors and COVID-19 support.
- For Happy Healthy Early Years - Support from trusted NHS professionals <https://healthforunder5s.co.uk/>
- Simple, fun activities for kids, from newborn to five <https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>
- Tiny happy people <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people>
- Talk to your baby www.talktoyourbaby.org
- What to expect when? www.foundationyears.org.uk/what-to-expect-when
- Building a happy baby - a guide for parents www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly

What 50 things can children do before they are ready for school?

<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/working-early-years/50things.pdf>

This booklet includes 10 top tips for children from children and 10 top tips for parents from parents.

Education Endowment Foundation

NEW: Supporting reading at home - we have made some of our resources available in Polish, Punjabi, Urdu, Bengali, and Lithuanian.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/support-resources-to-share-with-parents/>

Improving the Home Learning Environment guide by the Department of Education and National Literacy Trust

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/756020/Improving_the_home_learning_environment.pdf

Coronavirus (COVID-19): keeping children safe online - Advice and guidance to help parents and carers to keep children safe online during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-keeping-children-safe-online?utm_source=b7f7afa2-831f-4e7f-ab12-e1b27917d611&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

Get children writing competition

On International Literacy Day (Tuesday 8th September), we'll be launching our My Twist on a Tale writing competition for it's second year!

This free competition now open to 4-19-year olds across the UK, will encourage young people to let their imagination run wild as they write a story based on our new theme for 2020, Everyday Heroes.

Parents can register to get all the details sent to you in the coming weeks!

https://www.pearson.com/uk/educators/schools/subject-area/literacy-and-english/EngagingReadersandInspiringWriters/my-twist-on-a-tale-competition.html?utm_source=eye&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=%20GBPREN0620TWIST

Early Engagement

[Improving social and emotional learning in early years and primary schools](#) - Jean Gross discusses Improving social and emotional learning in primary schools with Julian Grenier from the East London Research School

[Guidance /Teaching about mental wellbeing](#)

Practical materials for primary and secondary schools to use to train staff about teaching mental wellbeing.

[Guidance/Pastoral care in the curriculum](#)

How schools can provide additional emotional and pastoral support for pupils when they return to school following the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Healthwatch Oxfordshire website have quite a collection of useful translated materials under their information and advice tab <https://www.covid19parenting.com/>

How 'Being With' babies and their emotional experience helps them develop a secure sense of self

OXPIP's very first online lecture with Joanna Tucker on Friday 25th September. For more information and to book, please visit the [website](#)

SEND newsletter

<https://us1.campaign-archive.com/?u=feb3ea90bfa82dcb90c21a3e7&id=398d24f92c>

High quality provision

Bite size CPD for Early Years Providers

A range of short CPD opportunities <https://www.oxfordshireearlyyears.co.uk/a-range-of-short-cpd-opportunities.html>

Early Years Toolkit – Useful resources to help develop your early years setting.
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/early-years-toolkit>

A range of training courses that are pertinent to school readiness can be found at <https://oxfordshirecpdonline.com/cpd/default.asp>

Get back on track to reopening and test your knowledge on SEND in early years with our online quiz.

After the upheaval of the coronavirus / COVID-19 pandemic, it will help you to monitor your understanding of SEND and highlight where further support may be required.

Do you know:

- If you are required to have a SEND policy?
- What the Local Offer is?
- Which documents you should use to assess whether a young child is developing at expected levels for their age?
- What an EHCP is?

https://www.ndna.org.uk/NDNA/Training/Quizzes/supporting_children_with_send_quiz.aspx?utm_source=informz&utm_medium=sales_email&utm_campaign=28_7_2020

NASEN have developed some really useful resources during lockdown to support teachers, SENCOs, other leaders and Governors. They have collated review materials from across the Whole School SEND Suite into this new COVID-19 SEND Review Guide. They highlight the key areas pertinent to understanding and delivering effective practice for children with SEND as they return to school

https://www.sendgateway.org.uk/whole-school-send/find-wss-resources/?utm_campaign=2701966_CoP%20e-news%20July&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Nasen&dm_i=2F68,1LWUM,8WAVQ4,5GEWJ,1

Anni McTavish on Treasure Baskets and Heuristic Play - In this interview, we first discuss treasure baskets – their benefits, the adult's role and what objects to include. We then go on to discuss toddler's heuristic play and the types of resources that work well for this. Anni also explains how we might share these types of play with parents for use in the home learning environment.

<https://www.earlyyears.tv/episode/anni-mctavish-on-treasure-baskets-and-heuristic-play/>

PACEY Toolkit to support school readiness

<https://www.pacey.org.uk/parents/toolkit/>

The Family interview with Alice Sharp on Future-Proofing the Early Years.

What's playing with mud got to do with becoming a neuroscientist?

<https://family.co/blog/management/alice-sharp-on-future-proofing-the-early-years-the-family-interview/>

Working with children from birth to three - Learn how the earliest relationships with caregivers can promote healthy brain development, how young children build social and emotional skills, and ways you can support language and literacy development starting from birth.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/working-children-0-3>

ROSPA - Keeping Kids Safe

www.rospa.com/Keeping-Kids-Safe

The NSPCC have some great learning resources in the form of podcasts.

Living through a pandemic, what children have told us.

https://audioboom.com/posts/7640202-living-through-a-pandemic-what-children-told-us?utm_campaign=detailpage&utm_content=retweet&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter

Five EEF Guidance Reports.

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Publications/Covid-19_Resources/Resources_for_schools/Linking_learning_-_home_learning_support_from_mainstream_schools.pdf

Are you looking after staff well-being?

We should not underestimate the impact that this time is having on our own mental wellbeing. [Kate Moxley in Early Years Matters](#) reminds us of the ways we can reframe the worry and uncertainty into things we can be sure about.

We need to nurture ourselves to balance our emotional systems **before** we can offer this to the children in our care. If you have ever wondered about the science behind attachment take a look at this video. [The Science of Emotions \(TEDx\) \(17 mins\)](#)

Psychological First Aid course

Developed because of COVID - 19.

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-covid-19>

Information-sharing and high-quality transitions through life

The Early Years Team have done a lot of work to support transitions reflecting on our approach this year and put into place different arrangements for children to support this unique transition. Themes identified are:

- Gathering and sharing of information
- Communication opportunities and relationship building
- Supporting emotional well-being

Good practice examples:

- Postcards written to the children from the setting
- Buddy systems linking new and present parents
- Virtual tours of school classrooms and settings
- Virtual story time sessions with the new keyperson or teacher
- Fun tasks for the Summer
- Visual timetable/photobook of a typical day
- Virtual 'home visits'
- Online meetings with key adults for children that need more support

Keyperson and child relationships will be critical for secure transitions by rebuilding bonds and forming new attachments and time will need to be allocated to capture children's individual experiences/cultural capital. The Early Years Team have shared toolkits and information to support childcare provisions to ensure children's needs and emotional wellbeing are considered.

Early Years Foundation Stage Transition Pack See COVID-19 section for new information to help transitions now.

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/transition-pack>

Childrens story book in lots of languages

<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasec-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/my-hero-you>

Children Heard and Seen

Children Heard and Seen helped to develop some useful support [information](#) with the Early Years Team to support young children who have a parent in prison. Children Heard and Seen have recently been involved in two media events which have helped to raise the profile of children with a parent in prison.

- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-oxfordshire-53498170/coronavirus-children-denied-contact-with-parents-in-prison>
- <https://youtu.be/oqB9DxX0ODY>

If you are keeping in touch with families over the summer period, share FAST family activities and offers available during the summer.

- FAST card offers- <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/info/3/leisure-and-culture/107/be-active-more-often/2>
- FAST Activities in parks over summer - <https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/youth-activator-programme>

New Blog: Getting your little ones ready for nursery in September

Due to coronavirus, playgroups and nurseries are shut and those children due to start nursery in a few months will be out of routine and away from friends. It is understandable that many parents are worried about getting their children ready for the September start.

It is important to remember that children learn and progress at different rates so there are no set criteria on what they need to be able to know or do when they first start nursery, but if they have had some experience learning at home it could help to make it a smoother transition. Read Primary School Teacher, Katie Fox's top tips for supporting the transition from home to nursery in the latest https://infantandtoddlerforum.org/blog/getting-your-little-ones-ready-for-nursery-in-september/#utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=May%20email

The webpages for both the Children's Trust Board (CTB) and the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) have been updated

The CYPP page includes the CYPP which has been extended to 2022, the Progress Report for 2019/20, the Recovery Plan for 20/21 and the Be Supported full report and summary.

- <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/social-and-health-care/health-and-wellbeing-board/childrens-trust>
- <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/childrens-services/delivering-services-children/children-young-peoples-plan>
- <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/childrens-social-care/voxybesupported2020fullreport.pdf>
- <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/childrens-social-care/voxybesupported2020summary.pdf>

Government Guidance for stay and play / baby and toddler groups

The Department for Education has confirmed to the [Early Years Alliance](#) that groups such as baby and toddler groups are permitted to operate, depending on the premises they are based in - however, there are limits to the number of attendees that the government advises are able to attend.

For groups using community facilities, the relevant guidance [COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#) Updated 20 July 2020, states that community facilities can open for the provision of services for children and young people but adds that: "People meeting in a club or group context at a community centre should be encouraged to socially distance from anyone they do not live with or who is not in their support bubble. In general, people are being advised to only:

- meet indoors in groups of up to 2 households
- meet outdoors in a group of no more than 2 households (including your support bubble) or in a group of up to 6 people from different households.

The DfE has also stated that while standalone baby and toddler groups (and similar groups) are allowed to reopen, registered early years settings should continue to follow the DfE guidance, which states that "Parents and carers should not be allowed into the setting unless this is essential".

This means that **registered early years providers are currently not permitted** to run stay and play sessions.

Community facilities should therefore not facilitate large gatherings or celebrations.

The Department for Education has confirmed that while children attending registered early years settings are still not expected to socially distance, the requirement for people from different households to socially distance at baby and toddler groups and other similar groups does apply to children as well as adult.

For information about the opening of settings and schools from September - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-coronavirus-covid-19>

Oxford residents urged to follow social distancing to avoid local control measures

Oxford residents are being urged to help stop the spread of coronavirus as the number of cases in the city increases. Over the most recent week up to 24 July, the number of new cases in Oxford has risen approximately threefold to 31. The majority of these new cases has been in East Oxford.

Oxfordshire's Director of Public Health Ansaf Azhar explains: "Local increases are to be expected as we ease out of lockdown, particularly in densely populated urban areas. This is consistent with the picture across other parts of the country, and Oxford is no exception."

But with more events and gatherings set to take place over the coming weeks, such as Eid celebrations and a range of fairs across Oxfordshire, the Director of Public Health is keen to stress the need for everyone to maintain social distancing and stay alert. <https://news.oxfordshire.gov.uk/oxford-residents-urged-to-follow-social-distancing-to-avoid-local-control-measures/>

Articles/News/Research

First 1000 days: the brain's window of opportunity

<https://www.unicef-irc.org/article/958-the-first-1000-days-of-life-the-brains-window-of-opportunity.html>

Review of First 1001 Days launched

Andrea Leadsom MP has announced she is to chair a major new review of early years services on behalf of the Government and will be conducting a review of the first crucial 1001 days.

https://www.andrealeadsom.com/news/150720/1001-critical-days-formally-launched?mc_cid=9ed032ddc4&mc_eid=259507aee7

Lockdown babies: Children born during the coronavirus crisis (Children's Commissioner)

The Children's Commissioner has recently published a report into 'lockdown' babies and paints a 'needy' picture. It reminds me that as we move forward into the next three to five years, as the threat of coronavirus hopefully recedes, that we may need to keep a weather-eye on those toddlers, and especially babies that were born in lockdown.

Read the report here: <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/cco-lockdown-babies.pdf>

The Children's Commissioner for England also calls on Government to make early years central to Covid fightback with a new "Best Beginnings" guarantee. The report, '**Best Beginnings**', is an in-depth examination of early years provision in England. It describes a system that is disjointed and often failing to target those disadvantaged children with development problems who most need early help. <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/best-beginnings-in-the-early-years/>

What does school readiness mean during a pandemic?

If you are an early years practitioner, please reassure parents that the only preparation for school children need is for them to have time to play. And time is what many children now have in abundance!

<https://www.parenta.com/2020/07/01/what-does-school-readiness-mean-during-a-pandemic/>

How Covid-19 is changing the world's children

From their academic success to their social skills and mental health, the pandemic is a crisis for today's children – and the fallout may follow them for the rest of their lives. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200603-how-covid-19-is-changing-the-worlds-children>

Best evidence on impact of school closures on the attainment gap

The EEF's rapid evidence assessment examines the potential impact of school closures on the attainment gap, based on a systematic search of existing literature. Key findings and implications include:

- School closures are likely to reverse progress made to close the gap in the last decade since 2011.
- Supporting effective remote learning will mitigate the extent to which the gap widens.
- Sustained support will be needed to help disadvantaged pupils catch up.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/best-evidence-on-impact-of-school-closures-on-the-attainment-gap/>

Read the Government's response to the Education Committee's report on SEND

The report follows an 18-month inquiry into Government reforms aimed at placing children and young people at the heart of the SEND system. <https://contact.org.uk/news-and-blogs/education-committee-publishes-government-response-to-report/>

Getting the balance right

This report by the Sutton Trust considers recent government policy on early childhood education and care in England https://www.suttontrust.com/our-research/getting-the-balance-right/?mc_cid=9ed032ddc4&mc_eid=259507aee7

Link to National Food Strategy -The First Major Review of the Food System in 75 Years

Please see the link to the National Food Strategy website

<https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/>

Watch the 3 minute video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n2YdpXrdOzQ&feature=youtu.be>

Read part one executive summary and key recommendations

<https://www.nationalfoodstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NFS-Part-One-ES.pdf>

Early Years Alliance

The Alliance has today published a new report examining at the financial impact of coronavirus on the early years sector in England.

The report, entitled The Forgotten Sector

https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/the_forgotten_sector_early_years_alliance_june_2020.pdf

It is based on the responses to recent parent and provider surveys, *The Forgotten Sector* outlines the significant challenges facing many nurseries, pre-schools, childminders and out-of-hours clubs across the country; highlights the gaps in existing government support schemes; and recommends urgent steps that the government must take to ensure that providers are able to stay afloat during this difficult period and beyond.

For up to date information

[COVID-19 Gov guidance](#)

[E-newsletter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[OSCB](#)