



Early Years and Childcare Excellence

# Early Years and Childcare Bulletin

March 2018

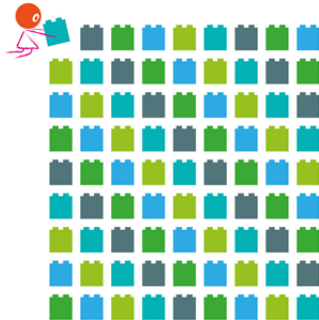


Kent County Council

Early Years and Childcare Service

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## Welcome and Introduction Alex Gamby, Head of Early Years and Childcare

### The Education People

I am pleased to be able to tell you that James Roberts has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer of the Education People, which as you will be aware is Kent County Council's new education services company, which is now due to go live at the beginning of September. James will be joining the Education People in June.

This new timeframe will allow for James, to work with colleagues, schools and settings over the summer term and support a clear transition into the start of the new academic year; and to allow more involvement with schools and settings in product development. James has been a teacher and Headteacher, most recently as the Principal of the Vocational Education Development Centre in Abu Dhabi. He is currently the Director of Standards at Innoventures Education in Dubai, which manages six schools and nurseries with over 7,700 pupils from all around the world, ranging in age from 18 months to 18 years. He has had a number of achievements whilst in this role including raising professional standards and success in expanding the business within a very competitive market place.

James has very good knowledge of current developments and priorities in education in the UK and an impressive grasp of the issues and successes in education in Kent. He combines a passion for education with a good understanding and experience of operating successfully in a commercial environment.

### Support for Childminders

You will be aware also that for many years in Kent, support services for childminders have been commissioned by KCC and externally delivered, most recently by Prospects.

Support for childminders will continue to be delivered by Prospects Services until September when the team will undergo a TUPE transfer into the Education People along with the Early Years and Childcare Service.

## **Emporium Plus – business as usual**

Further to bespoke messages sent recently, following the publication of the County Council's budget proposals for the coming year I can confirm that Emporium Plus will continue to operate and that there are now no proposals to close the service.

Like the rest of the wider Early Years and Childcare Service Emporium Plus will be transferring into The Education People in September.

Integral to this, annual memberships have already been re-opened. If you are a current member or waiting to renew your membership, please continue ordering as usual and/or visit the [website](#) to update your membership.

The team would like to thank you for all your patience and kind comments during this time and we look forward to working with you in 2018.



## **News and Updates**

### **Consultation on the Kent County Council Early Years Payment Process**

On the 26 March the Local Authority launched a short consultation on possible changes to the method and frequency we pay providers from 1 September 2018. This is an important issue where we seek the views of providers. You can access the consultation via the following [link](#).

The consultation closes on 27 April. Please email [eyfinance@kent.gov.uk](mailto:eyfinance@kent.gov.uk) if you have any questions.

### **30 Hours of Free Childcare**

The Early Years and Childcare Service, alongside internal KCC partners, reviewed the use of the word 'free' in its marketing materials in January. Our decision was to not remove the word 'free' from these materials at the current time. The rationale behind our decision is twofold:

- ◇ Firstly, the Department for Education (DfE) has recently announced its intention to issue revised/updated Statutory Guidance in the summer
- ◇ Secondly, you will know that a national evaluation of the 30 Hours Scheme is being undertaken by the Department for Education, of which Kent is a part.

We prefer to wait until the revised Statutory Guidance has been issued and also for the outcome of the evaluation and the lessons learned from it are published to enable us to make a fully informed decision about the need for any changes to our terminology and materials.

It would be our preference that providers use the marketing materials provided by KCC for consistency across the county and so that parents become familiar with the branding used; however, this is ultimately at providers' discretion. Providers could, for example, consider using the 'empty belly' posters in their settings to describe their own 30 Hour offer to parents. However providers decide to make their offer known to parents, they should not be advertising any offer that contravenes the Statutory Guidance for local authorities and/or Kent Provider Agreement.

## Kent Provider Agreement

In late February 2018 the Department for Education revised the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities for Early Education and Childcare. The guidance predominately remained the same, with a few alterations to wording, and the introduction of Universal Credit as a criteria for parents accessing funding for two year olds. You will have already received a communication from the FF2 team, with regard to this. We are expecting another revision to the guidance in July 2018.

The current Kent Provider Agreement will therefore remain in place until 30 September 2018. However, for legal reasons, we have had to re-date the existing Agreement and have added a new Introductory paragraph. In order for providers to continue receiving Free Early Education funding, you are requested to sign and return the new Provider Declaration form, and return it to Management Information by **30 April 2018**. The re-dated Kent Provider Agreement and new Provider Declaration can be found on [KELSI](#).

## GDPR

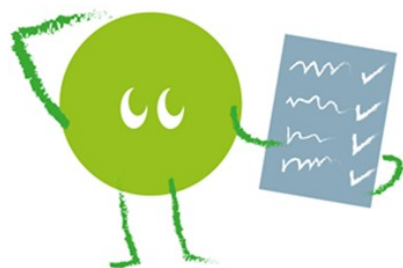
Thank you to those providers who attended one of the recent GDPR workshops. Following this training, some providers have asked for one to one support for their individual setting. Unfortunately we are unable to provide this.

To ensure you are ready for GDPR please read the information and complete a self-audit by following this [link](#). This will help you to identify any areas for review/ and/or updating.

## Committee News

The Charity Commission has this month issued [guidance for charities](#) regarding automatic disqualifications.

From 1 August 2018 changes to the automatic disqualification rules mean that there will be more restrictions on who can run a charity.



For most charities, taking some simple steps to update recruitment and appointment systems is all that will be needed to prepare for the rule changes.

Charities can use this guidance to find out:

- what the current disqualification rules are, and what they mean in practice
- what the changes are
- what steps they should take to prepare for the changes
- about waivers.

This guidance will be updated when the new disqualification rules become law.

The Charity Commission has also produced separate [guidance for individuals](#) about automatic disqualification and how to apply for a waiver.

## Collaboration News

We recently held three meetings in Canterbury, Swale and Thanet with providers who have expressed an interest in joining a new collaboration. The providers who attended agreed to hold their first collaboration meetings to write their terms of reference and agree the way forward. We now have 68% of settings in a collaboration.

We would like to encourage new collaborations to be set up, particularly in Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling. If you would like to find out more about leading a collaboration and would like support to start a new one please email [eycollaborations@kent.gov.uk](mailto:eycollaborations@kent.gov.uk).

See what an existing collaboration leader has to say about the benefits of leading and belonging to a collaboration on [KELSI](#).

## Free Childcare Facebook Posts

Have you visited KCC's Free Childcare Facebook page yet? The page regularly posts about two-year-old, universal and extended funding as well as general posts about childcare costs.

Settings with their own Facebook page or group are encouraged to share posts from this page to help get important messages out to parents.

## Tax-Free Childcare

Tax-Free Childcare is now open to all eligible parents with a child under 12. This means all eligible parents can now get up to £2,000 per child, per year, off their childcare costs, or up to £4,000 for disabled children.

Tax-Free Childcare can provide much needed support for parents, including 30 Hours parents who can use Tax-Free Childcare to fund holiday clubs and other types of childcare. It also means that parents can continue getting support when their child stops being eligible for 30 Hours, helping them manage the cost of ongoing childcare.

Providers should direct parents to [Childcare Choices](#) to find out more.

## Government Campaign against Child Abuse

**Together, we can tackle child abuse** is a Government campaign, led by the Department for Education. It encourages members of the public to help protect children and young people by reporting any concerns of abuse or neglect to their local council and started on Tuesday 20 February.

We all have a role to play in protecting children and young people from child abuse and neglect. But right now, some people do not report their concerns because they're not certain of the signs, don't know where to report, or are worried about being wrong. This means that local councils could be missing out on vital information they need to keep children safe from harm.

This campaign aims to tackle the barriers that stop people reporting, educating people about signs to spot and how to report, so that children and young people at risk get the help they need more quickly.

Working together, in partnership with national and local agencies and charities we hope to establish a new social norm that encourages the public to act on their concerns if they believe a child is at risk.

## Child abuse. If you think it, report it.

To find out how visit [gov.uk/tacklechildabuse](https://gov.uk/tacklechildabuse)

## Egress

Providers will be aware that the Early Years and Childcare Service bulk purchased Egress licences to provide to settings at a reduced price in order that they could send confidential information securely. As take up of these licences has been low, we will not be able to purchase further licences in the new financial year.

### Kent Children and Families Information Service

#### We are here to help

##### Your details, your responsibility

Your details may not be displayed on our website, so you could be missing out on potential business. We recommend that you review your childcare provision details held on a regular basis.

##### Your permission settings

The information you give us will be made available, with your consent, over the telephone, in writing and via the internet. You have the option to restrict the ways in which your information is published. It is important that you complete the permissions form correctly using the following link to [our permissions form](#).

##### Make sure your details are up to date

Are the details of your nursery or preschool up to date?

Do we hold the correct contact details for your service?

Are you providing before and after school care that CFIS are not aware of?

Register to use our online service where you are able to update your details at a time that is convenient to you.

The information can be found on our [website](#) or by calling us Monday to Friday between 9am-5pm.

If you need to contact us about any of the above please email [kentcfis@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentcfis@kent.gov.uk) or call us at 03000 41 23 23.

## Case Study: Effective Practice

### Wiggles Playgroup Swale

Wiggles Playgroup opened for children in September 2015. It is located in one of the 10% most deprived Lower Super Output Areas in Kent on the Isle of Sheppey. The Director has a passion for supporting vulnerable families in the area and wants to make a difference to their lives. The playgroup is open 9am to 3pm term time only.

The Early Years and Childcare Service supported the setting ahead of its first inspection. It was recommended that the setting join the local collaboration for support and training which the Director fully embraced. This helped her share good practice as well as accessing training. In the first instance support was based around leadership and management structures and monitoring. Recommendations were made that the Manager and Director attend leadership and management training to support ongoing improvements, which they both did and which they say has helped them further develop and support their team. The setting also accessed a number of Threads of Success training courses.



The Director felt that a Strategic Improvement Visit 'Preparing for Ofsted' had the biggest impact on their development and growth. An ITERs audit was also completed to review resources and support for younger children. As a result of this a member of staff was named as the lead for two year olds. The outcome of this appointment meant that every morning the needs of the younger children were taken into account when providing activities and resources, as well as their emotional needs resulting in an increase in younger children's progress and well-being.

By using the Ofsted grade descriptors it was clear that the setting was moving towards Outstanding The collaboration of which Wiggles is a member purchased Coaching and Mentoring training for its management teams, to further strengthen their supervisions. This allowed Wiggles to foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement to support the improvement of outcomes for children.

To further support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) the SEND Coordinator became supernumerary and sharply focused on supporting staff with children's targets and next steps including incorporating the efficient use of the spend of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). She worked regularly with the Early Years and Childcare Service to build support for the high number of children with SEND and those who needed extra support within the setting. Due to the excellent progress they became involved in the Education for Sustainable Development project.

Constant reflection and self-evaluation saw challenging activities being introduced. The floor space was reviewed and the kitchen area extended to allow children to eat in a quiet environment thus preparing them for school with life skills such as using knives and washing up. Daily science experiments were introduced to challenge children's thinking as well as constantly reviewing and introducing real resources in all areas such as the home corner. As a result of their work and constantly challenging themselves the setting received an Outstanding judgement at their first inspection on 5 December 2017. The summary of key findings:

- Leaders and staff efficiently work in partnership with other professionals. They support children's individual needs and abilities superbly well, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This helps to provide an excellent, consistent approach
- The manager monitors her staff exceptionally well. For example, she provides them with highly focused and robust supervision, support and training to develop their knowledge and skills even further
- Staff provide outstanding opportunities to involve parents in their children's learning. For example, they have stay-and-play sessions, focussed meetings and in-depth daily discussions. This helps parents extremely well to continue their children's learning at home
- Children make consistently high rates of progress in relation to their starting points and are prepared exceptionally well for their next stage in learning
- Staff are highly effective in helping children learn about each other's backgrounds and diversity. For instance, they provide an excellent range of activities and resources that specifically reflect the children's backgrounds and languages spoken at home. This helps children highly respect and value each other's differences.

The Director demonstrated a clear vision and strong commitment to driving improvement forward. She continues to maintain her high quality and uses the Threads of Success training and support to constantly reflect and continually improve.



## Training, Services and Products from Threads of Success

### Kent County Council's 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Out of School Childcare Conference The Power of Play Saturday 12 May 2018, 9.30am to 4.30pm Oakwood House, Maidstone

Join other professionals interested in play, playwork and good quality out of school provision. Be inspired by our range of workshops and enjoy the opportunity to listen to our guest speaker, Ali Wood. Ali has been a training consultant for 25 years in play and playwork, chair and co-manager of Meriden Adventure Playground Association, co-author of books on playwork practice, director of a play resource company and a tutor for an online playworker development course.

Delegates can choose three of the following workshops to attend:

- **Going further with reflective practice**
- **Gender and Play**
- **Clay Funky Faces**
- **Inspiring the power to play**
- **It's not rocket science or is it!?**
- **Understanding and supporting children's behaviour**

Delegates will also have an opportunity to visit a range of market stalls offering advice, support and information.

To book your place click on the following link: [EYC 18/118](#)

## Unlocking Outstanding Potential

*'Children make consistently high rates of progress in relation to their starting points and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education' Ofsted (2015)*

Are you looking for inspiration to strive for outstanding practice and feel receptive to new challenges? Threads of Success can help you. We have a new initiative 'Unlocking Outstanding Potential' which is an innovative and interactive Leadership programme with a variety of strategies and opportunities to help you strive for outstanding practice and performance.

### Pathway to Excellence

#### Unlocking Outstanding Potential

This is an exciting interactive whole day workshop, facilitated by Early Years Advisers and will build on your existing knowledge, nurture your growth and development to foster a culture of outstanding practice. The learning outcomes for the programme:

- Enhance knowledge and understanding of the requirements of being outstanding
- Develop a clear ethos and vision for your own setting to move to outstanding
- Understand how to ensure staff disposition and attitude promote exceptional outcomes for every child.



Following the successful pilot leaders commented:

*'The tool kit is very useful, with different sections and steps to help you plan ahead, getting the whole team involved. After our last inspection in July the team and myself have been demotivated, but the day after the course I came back to work motivated and ready to lead the team with a vision for success.'* **Lorraine Barker, Briary Preschool**

*'I will revisit my setting's development plan, share this with everyone, staff and committee members and engage each individual in accordance to their skills and passions. We may not reach the Outstanding grade the next time around but I feel more confident we are on our way towards the right direction'* **Debora Bell, Children's Workshop**

Full details for Unlocking Outstanding Potential—Pathway to Excellence are available on CPD Online:

<a href="#">EYC 18/141</a>	Bridgewood Manor Hotel Chatham	25 April 2018
<a href="#">EYC 18/142</a>	Holiday Inn Central Ashford	Saturday 9 June 2018
<a href="#">EYC 18/143</a>	Marriott Tudor Park Hotel Maidstone	28 June 2018
<a href="#">EYC 18/144</a>	Bridgewood Manor Hotel Chatham	29 June 2018

Have you had a recent Ofsted report that recommends that you improve how you meet the needs of the diverse range of families and cultures?

We offer a range of courses and in-house support to help you consider how to improve your practice.

There are currently spaces on:

English as an Additional Language in the Early Years <a href="#">EYC18/014</a> Tuesday 12 June at Oakwood House 9.30-3.30
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Develop your knowledge and understanding about how children learn English as an Additional Language, gain skills to provide effective strategies to support this, explore what an effective and inclusive environment looks like to inspire and support them to reach their potential.

Equality and Diversity in the Early Years <a href="#">EYC18/013</a> Tuesday 22 May at The Village Hotel, Maidstone 9.30-12.30
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The training will cover equalities legislation, self-reflection, everyday equality practice issues and how to respond to prejudice and discriminatory behaviours. The course will also explore practical activities to ensure that all children and families feel respected and valued.

## **Do you need to strengthen your recruitment procedures to ensure you are attracting, appointing and retaining a strong committed workforce?**

Threads of Success has developed its packages to support effective recruitment and retention procedures. We offer a comprehensive suite of strategic improvement visits that can support you in looking at your recruitment procedures through all stages, from identifying vacancies to induction of new staff members. Our experienced team can work with you to reflect and refine your procedures and processes.

Are you a new setting looking at recruiting staff for the first time? Our Strategic Improvement Visits can support you in looking at effective procedures to ensure your new workforce is strong from the start.

From our experience, settings who have a low turnover of staff and effective retention procedures that support continuing professional development of the workforce are likely to be more sustainable and have high quality practice embedded across the team. We are committed to supporting the Early Years and Childcare workforce in developing its skills and knowledge. A staff team is your biggest resource and has the most impact on quality. The outcomes for all children is justification enough to continually strengthen your workforce development opportunities and recruitment procedures.

Visit our website for more information about our specialist [Workforce Strategic Improvement Visit](#) or call **03000 422376** to discuss your specific requirements.

Please remember that you can advertise your job vacancies through the Threads of Success [Recruitment Hub](#). Currently this service is centrally funded for Kent PVI settings.

Since this site launched in 2017, we have had in excess of 100 jobs advertised and this is continuing to increase.

## **The Great Outdoors**

["Three-quarters of UK children spend less time outside than prison inmates"](#)

(The Guardian March 2016)

A startling statistic indeed but something we in Early Years are able to influence.

We acknowledge the importance of getting outside on a daily basis; so important is this that it's a statutory requirement in the EYFS. But are we all fully aware of the benefits to our own, and the children's learning and development and does our outdoor environment and the experiences we offer provide the quality our children deserve?

By supporting Early Years provisions to offer an enabling environment with knowledgeable and passionate practitioners, we can enhance an understanding of the benefits of going outside and instil a love and passion for the outdoors from an early age that will continue through childhood and into adulthood. In addition, this will also support and strengthen parents' knowledge and understanding of the great outdoors,

In a [survey](#) carried out jointly by Learning Through Landscapes and the Early Childhood Forum respondents identified the importance for staff training and the need to redesign their outdoor space as the top two recommendations.

The survey also recommended their findings be shared with Ofsted to 'encourage inspectors to consistently ask about and assess teaching and learning outdoors...' In an analysis of Kent Early Years reports from December 2017 inspections, 79% made specific reference to outdoor learning in the main body of the report.

Threads of Success has a comprehensive range of training and support that will strengthen your outdoor provision:

- [Strategic Improvement visit](#) with a focus on:
  - ◊ Planning the outdoor environment
  - ◊ Auditing the outdoor environment
  - ◊ Forest school

Training:

- Creating an effective outdoor learning environment for:
  - ◊ [Early Years](#)
  - ◊ [Out of school](#)
  - ◊ [Two year olds](#)
- [Mud, mud glorious mud](#)
- [Den building](#)
- [Introduction to Early Years Forest school](#)



## Emporium Plus

Is your outdoor space looking a bit tired and weather beaten? Give it a boost with some of our fabulous outdoor resources!



**Outlast Blocks**  
(weather proof )



**Luna Activity System**  
(our most popular resource)

If you are running a holiday play scheme this year, please make sure your out of school membership is up to date to cover this period.

Please note: we are now able offer the Direct Debit facility to all member types. A typical full day care setting would pay only £10 per month to have access to the service and would receive a 10% discount if they are in a collaboration. Please contact us directly for more information on 03000 422 355.

Visit us at [www.emporiumplus.co.uk](http://www.emporiumplus.co.uk)

## Briefing and Networking Sessions

Our regular Briefing and Networking Sessions provide a good opportunity to keep your setting and staff up to date and to network with colleagues from other settings.

We run sessions for Early Years and Childcare settings and schools and also specifically for settings providing Out of School care including schools.

Why not book a place on the next round and benefit from the opportunity to network and hear important updates?

<a href="#">18/040</a>	13 June 2018	Salomons, Tunbridge Wells
<a href="#">18/041</a>	14 June 2018	Swanley Banqueting, Clock Tower Pavilion
<a href="#">18/042</a>	19 June 2018	Holiday Inn Sittingbourne, The Coniston
<a href="#">18/056</a>	20 June 2018	Three Hills Sports Park, Folkestone

## Contact Us

<b>Threads of Success</b>	<a href="http://www.ThreadsofSuccess.co.uk">www.ThreadsofSuccess.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:ThreadsofSuccess@kent.gov.uk">ThreadsofSuccess@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Threads of Success Recruitment Hub</b>	<a href="https://www.threadsofsuccessrecruitment.com/home">https://www.threadsofsuccessrecruitment.com/home</a>
<b>Sufficiency and Sustainability</b>	<a href="mailto:Sufficiencyandsustainability@kent.gov.uk">Sufficiencyandsustainability@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Free for 2 (FF2) Team</b>	<a href="mailto:Eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk">Eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>30 Hours of Free Childcare</b>	<a href="mailto:30HoursFreeChildcare@kent.gov.uk">30HoursFreeChildcare@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Improvement and Standards</b>	<a href="mailto:EYImprovementServices@kent.gov.uk">EYImprovementServices@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Equality and Inclusion</b>	<a href="mailto:EYInclusion@kent.gov.uk">EYInclusion@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Collaborations</b>	<a href="mailto:EYCollaborations@kent.gov.uk">EYCollaborations@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Emporium Plus</b>	<a href="mailto:Emporiumplus@kent.gov.uk">Emporiumplus@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Workforce Development</b>	<a href="mailto:Earlyyearsworkforce.ask@kent.gov.uk">Earlyyearsworkforce.ask@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Kent Children and Families Information Service</b>	<a href="mailto:Kentcfis@kent.gov.uk">Kentcfis@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>Management Information</b>	<a href="mailto:eyfe@kent.gov.uk">eyfe@kent.gov.uk</a>
<b>KELSI</b>	<a href="http://www.kelsi.org.uk">http://www.kelsi.org.uk</a>
<b>Schools e-bulletin</b>	<a href="http://www.kelsi.org.uk/working_in_education/news.aspx">http://www.kelsi.org.uk/working_in_education/news.aspx</a>

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