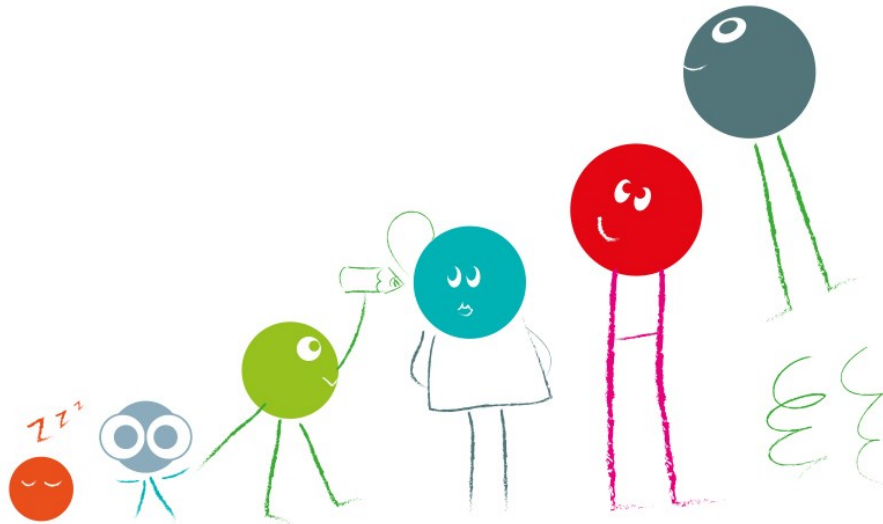




Early Years and Childcare Excellence

# Early Years and Childcare Bulletin

March 2017



**Kent County Council**

**Early Years and Childcare Service**

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

Thank you to those of you who responded to our Early Years and Childcare Provider Satisfaction Survey 2016. We were pleased with the level of response and the nature of the feedback on our services. The survey was conducted online for a period of four weeks and we had 225 responses. Respondents were asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with a series of statements. The outcomes were as follows:

### 1. Vision and Direction of Travel

There is clear vision and direction of travel for Early Years and Childcare provision in Kent over the next two to three years communicated through KCC's Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2016-19.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	76%	81%

### 2. Information and Communication

KCC provides timely, up to date and useful information on Early Years and Childcare issues through a range of media including bulletins, briefing and networking sessions, social media and through the KELSI website.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	93%	92%

### 3. Sufficiency and Sustainability of Places

The Early Years and Childcare Service provides helpful information, support and guidance through your Childcare Sufficiency Officer regarding your provision of early education and childcare places.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	73%	81%

#### 4. Continuous Improvement

Your setting is able to access effective support, training and high quality professional challenge from the Early Years and Childcare Service through centrally funded support, for example the Annual Conversation and support to settings with an Ofsted Inspection outcome below Good or new registrations, to meet the needs of the provision's improvement and development.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	79%	85%

#### 5. Threads of Success

- a) The range of training, services and products available through the Early Years and Childcare Service (Threads of Success) provides flexible effective support that is responsive to your setting's needs.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	58%	80%

- b) The range of training, services and products available through the Early Years and Childcare Service (Threads of Success) provides flexible effective support that is value for money.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	58%	57%

#### 6. Qualifications

Your setting has been able to access helpful advice and guidance to support the professional development of your workforce (either via workforce mailbox, KELSI or bursary applications).

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	81%	71%

#### 7. Vulnerable Children

Your setting is clear about how to access support from the Early Years and Childcare Service to ensure vulnerable children receive appropriate support and this is reflected in your practice.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	91%	97%

#### 8. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Your setting is well prepared to implement the SEND Code of Practice (2015).

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	94%	98%

### 9. Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Teams

The Early Years Local Inclusion Forum Team (EY LIFT) meetings have been effective in providing advice and support for settings' provision for children with SEND.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	86%	91%

### 10. Collaboration

The Local Authority supports Early Years and Childcare providers to work collaboratively in order to drive improvement and narrow achievement gaps.

	2015	2016
Agree or Strongly Agree	84%	83%

Free text boxes were also available. The comments made in these and our responses to them can be found [here](#).

**We will be forward planning based on this survey, reviewing our practices as appropriate and necessary, in order to drive our own continuous improvement.**

## News and Updates

### Early Years Funding Rates

Following on from the communication emailed from Patrick Leeson on 28 February, providers should now have received a letter from KCC Finance confirming their individual hourly rate. Please ensure that you read this carefully and let Management Information or Finance know if you think your rate may be incorrect.

### Early Years Census and Provider Survey

The deadline for the Early Years Census and Provider Survey was Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 – thank you to all those who completed it on time.

You may recall that Management Information requested all settings to collect new data items on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE) for the January 2017 Early Years Census. The DfE requested this to keep in line with the School Census but later decided that there was no need to extend the collection of data on nationality or country of birth to the Early Years Census. We are very grateful for all those settings that did collect and record the ethnicity, country of birth, nationality and language in their Spring 2017 Headcount and will continue to collect this.

### Childcare Choices - New Website on Government Childcare Offers

[Childcare Choices](#) sets out all current and upcoming Government childcare offers and support available to parents, including the Tax-Free Childcare scheme and 30 Hours of Free Childcare, the 15 hours of Free Childcare, Tax Credits, Universal Credit and Childcare Vouchers. Included on the website is a Childcare Calculator for parents to compare all offers and support available to them and check what works best for their family.

Parents will be able to use Childcare Choices to register for alerts for the Tax-Free Childcare scheme, which the DfE and Treasury have now confirmed will start from 28 April for parents of the youngest children. They can also sign up for information about the 30 Hours of Free Childcare for three and four year olds, coming in from September.

## **Free for Two (FF2)**

At the end of the autumn term 2016, the take-up of FF2 places was 74%, the highest rate achieved in Kent so far, which is very good. This equates to 4302 children out of 5814 potentially eligible children identified by the DWP and an increase of 4.41% when compared to the end of the autumn term 2015.

The FF2 Parental Declaration, New Starter Claim, Continuing Claim and Adjustment Claim forms have been amended to reflect the directive from the DfE that Early Years providers should collect details of children's ethnicity. Only the options shown on the list that was provided by the FF2 team should be used. This may not be the same as on your registration forms. A great number of forms are being received stating ethnicity as 'White British' which is not a valid option. Please bear in mind that ethnicity is not the same as nationality or country of birth. Ethnicity refers to racial heritage and may be based on many things, including, for example, skin colour, culture, ancestry or family history. Parents may, however, refuse to give this information.

If you become aware that a child on the FF2 scheme has been adopted from care, please advise the FF2 Team as soon as possible in order to protect the confidentiality of the child and provide new details including name of the child, and name and address of the adoptive parent. All claims for payment should then be submitted in the child's adoptive name.

As always, the FF2 Team is available to help with any FF2 issues and can be contacted at [eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk](mailto:eyfreefor2@kent.gov.uk)

## **DBS Checks for Committee Trustees**

Some providers have highlighted recently that when applying for a DBS check for new committee trustees, they are being charged £52.10.

It would appear that there is confusion in the overarching description of the two types of application category, described by Capita as 'Role Guidance' and 'Volunteer Guidance'. A Committee Trustee is listed under the 'Role Guidance' and the word 'volunteer' in the other grouping seems to be slightly misleading.

Please ensure that when applying for a DBS for a committee trustee the application is included under 'Role Guidance' which will ensure that their DBS application will not then incur a £44 fee.

A typical volunteer application applying online and checking their ID via a responsible person will be charged £8.10 (£6.80 + £1.30).

Further information is available [here](#).

## **Business Update – Employers Reclaiming Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)**

Please note for businesses managing payroll manually HMRC no longer allows you to reclaim SSP. For details regarding payments should you be insolvent please go to web [link](#).

Employees who are sick at the time an employer becomes insolvent can still be paid by HMRC. Employers should signpost employees to contact the Statutory Payment Disputes Team on 03000 560 630.

## **Is Your Setting Ready for Ofsted?**

Being prepared for Ofsted is not about someone coming to the setting to undertake a 'mock' inspection. Being prepared is being confident in your leadership and management processes and systems, having confident and informed staff that know their key children and who ensure they are providing inclusive, high quality and challenging learning experiences for all children.

Providers need to know that their provision is in the best position it can be and need to be confident that they are ready for Ofsted when they get that call. To find out more about our half day course 'Are You Ready for Your Inspection', please visit page 12 of this Bulletin.

## **Early Years and Childcare Service Centrally Funded Support: The Annual Conversation**

All children in Kent are entitled to good quality Early Years education and our aim is to work with and alongside providers to ensure all children have access to high quality provision.

The Annual Conversation visit is offered to all Kent's group Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) settings. The purpose of this visit is for providers to engage in a shared professional dialogue with an Early Years and Childcare Improvement Adviser, to explore and understand the setting's approach to the monitoring of the quality of provision, the safeguarding and welfare requirements and its place within the self-evaluation and setting improvement planning processes, with the aim of reducing the risk of providers falling below a 'Good' Ofsted judgement.

Currently 97% of Kent's Early Years Settings have a Good or better Ofsted judgement.

Every group PVI setting will be offered the Annual Conversation this year and we strongly encourage managers to take up this offer. It is available at no cost to settings and could help to identify any areas of the provision that could prevent the setting from getting a Good or better judgement.

An Early Years and Childcare Improvement Adviser will contact the setting to arrange this visit.



## **Deferred Entry to School**

Parents have the right to delay their child's start date (known as deferred entry), until later in the school year, but not beyond the beginning of the term after they turn five and not beyond the beginning of the final term of the school year in April.

Children may also start part time later in the school year, but not beyond the beginning of the term after they turn five.

If parents plan to defer their child's start date until later in the school year, they must still apply at the usual time for Primary or Infant school places. They should also speak to the schools they are applying for, to discuss how they would like their child to be admitted.

Parents will need agreement from the admissions authority of the school for any child to start Reception Year in the following September, a full year after they were first entitled to start. This is because a new application for a later admissions round would be needed for their child to be considered for a place to be taught outside of their age group and with a younger group of children. The admissions authority will make its decision taking into account the school admissions code and the advice of the Headteacher.

To request admission to Reception Year outside of the normal age group, parents should contact the Headteacher of each preferred school as early as possible during the application period for that child's date of birth (in line with other children the same age). This will allow the school and admissions authority enough time to make a decision before the closing date.

Parents are not expected to provide evidence to support their request to defer the application, but where provided, it must be specific to the child in question. This might include medical or Educational Psychologist reports. There is no legal requirement for this medical or educational evidence to be secured from an appropriate professional, but failure to provide it may impede a school's ability to agree to defer admission.

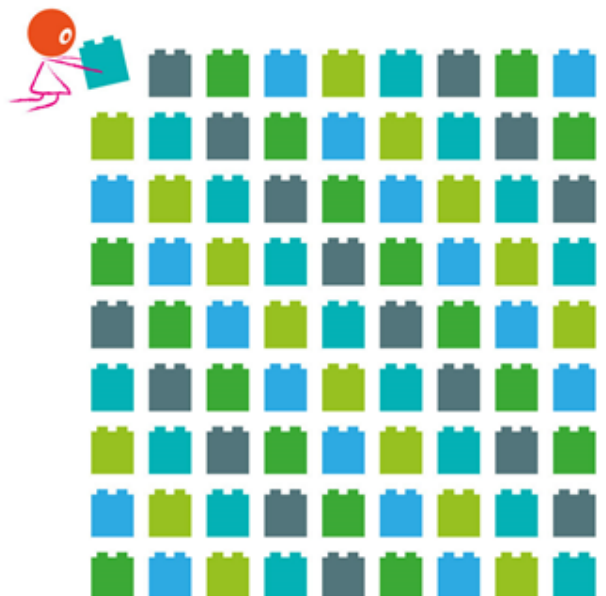
Parents are required to complete an application for the normal point of entry (start date) at the same time, in case their request is declined. This application can be cancelled if the school agrees to accept the request for deferred entry into Reception Year the following year.

Deferred applications must be made by completing the Primary Common Application Form to the local authority, with written confirmation from each named school attached. Deferred applications will be processed in the same way as all applications in the following admissions round, and offers will be made in accordance with each school's over subscription criteria.

If a setting is in receipt of Severe and Complex Accessibility Resource Funding (SCARF) for a child where a parent is hoping for deferred entry and continuation of attendance at the setting, it is not an automatic entitlement that the setting will be granted continuation of the funding. The above processes need to be followed and then consideration will be given to each individual case at the SCARF Complex Case panel.

## Support for Children in Care (CiC)

The Early Years and Childcare Equality and Inclusion Team is pleased to be able to share information about the support you can access for children in care (CiC) in your setting. We have worked with the Virtual School Kent (VSK) to produce this information leaflet. It gives you the names and contact details of VSK staff in your area, and more information about how you can best meet the needs of the child or children. The Equality and Inclusion Team can also provide you with support and advice, details on how to access this are also included in the leaflet, or email [EYInclusion@kent.gov.uk](mailto:EYInclusion@kent.gov.uk) and ask for our request for support form. The leaflet is now available on [KELSI](#)



## Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) News – what is happening nationally?

Recently two Government research and analysis papers were published on the use of the Early Years Pupil Premium (see links at end of article) and we thought providers would like to see a summary of the findings. The 'EYPP Providers' Survey' involved more than a thousand group and school-based providers and the second smaller-scale paper researched provider 'Experiences of the EYPP' through 30 in-depth interviews. This summary focuses on the results from PVI providers.

### Identification and application:

- it was most common for providers to communicate with all parents rather than targeting children likely to be eligible, although there was a balance to be struck with targeting eligible families.

### Use of funding:

- funding was mostly spent on staff training (e.g. communication and language), targeted support by staff, literacy and numeracy resources, supporting children to play and learn outside, such as a mud kitchen, additional sessions for children and improving home learning opportunities

'We have completely transformed our outdoor area. That was based on recognizing that 60% of our families don't have gardens'. (Voluntary setting, South West)

- spending was targeted on eligible children but all acknowledged the wider legacy this brought to a wider group of children, both now and in the future.

'We want the money to be sustainable; we want it to impact on individual children, but also be sustainable for all.' (Voluntary setting, West Midlands)

### Decision-making and monitoring:

- providers valued the freedom to choose spending strategies
- the most commonly used methods of identifying impact were discussion with staff and parents and observing and tracking the progress of individual children with systems already in use. **Remember that the Kent Progress Tracker has a filter for EYPP which enables you to quickly capture relevant data**
- apart from not having eligible children, the most common reason for not applying was lack of knowledge (one in five). **Please request support from the Equality and Inclusion Team if this is the case for you.**

### Impact of EYPP:

- providers typically perceived EYPP to have a positive impact e.g. by focusing on increasing services and resources provided to eligible children, including those with additional needs, that they would not have normally afforded
- improved awareness and understanding of children's family backgrounds e.g. providers had run courses for parents focusing on skills that would benefit eligible children, including behaviour management, sleep and toilet training
- financial savings where the EYPP was used for training and services when set in the context of public sector cuts.



The research reflected the views seen in our own survey last year with the main barriers being:

- fluctuation and timings of payments which made forward planning difficult
- barriers to parents completing paperwork e.g. literacy, EAL, lack of motivation and stigma
- showing impact where a limited amount of funding was claimed.

‘Even though it’s not a huge amount of money, it still makes a difference.’ (Private setting, West Yorkshire)

‘I think the nursery staff actually feel valued that they’re getting a pot of money that is dedicated to their children...It’s raising the status of nursery education and it’s showing the value I personally place on education.’(Voluntary setting, West Midlands)

Key messages and recommendations included:

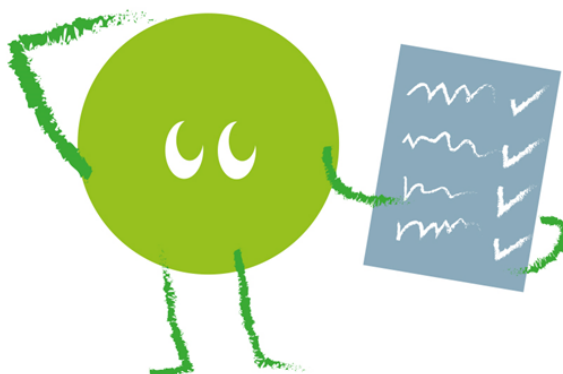
- to standardise eligibility criteria or to make criteria more transparent
- to remove burden from parents to complete application forms
- to provide more guidance on how to spend the money
- to give improved guidance and support to monitor the impact of EYPP with standardised tools, which could show performance across settings.

The research showed that support from local authorities was ‘highly valued’. In Kent, we have seen a significant increase in the uptake of the funding last year, so please keep up the good work and let us know how you are using the funding in your setting and also any further guidance you would like. Settings in collaborations may want to think about pooling EYPP funding for greater effectiveness. Management Information is working hard to improve EYPP processes and the Equality and Inclusion Team has a separate EYPP page on [KELSI](#) for your information. In future bulletins, we hope to bring you some case studies about the impact of EYPP funding locally.

### **Links to documents**

[SEED—Experiences of the Early Years Pupil Premium](#)

[Early Years Pupil Premium Providers Survey](#)



## **Kent Children and Families Information Service can help providers**

### **Do you offer any of the following?**

Before and/or after school care  
Holiday club  
Breakfast club

Are you advertising these services with the Kent Children and Families Information Service, allowing parents to find your after school care facility? Are the details of your nursery or preschool up to date?

The information is made available via our telephone number 03000 412323 which is available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and through our [website](#)

If you are not sure please contact the Kent CFIS on 03000 412323 or email us at [kentcfis@kent.gov.uk](mailto:kentcfis@kent.gov.uk)

If you are holding a special event we can advertise this on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/kcccfis](http://www.facebook.com/kcccfis)

We support all childcare providers no matter what the enquiry and are happy to offer advice, information and assistance whenever needed.

Please remember if you are looking for information about headcount week, estimates, PVI calendar or EYPP this information and more can be found on the [KELSI](#) website. If you have a query around claiming for your two year old children please contact the FF2 team [EYFreefor2@kent.gov.uk](mailto:EYFreefor2@kent.gov.uk). If your query is around claiming for three and four year old children please contact [eyfe@kent.gov.uk](mailto:eyfe@kent.gov.uk).

## **Training and Services from Threads of Success**

### **The Power of Play**

**“Inform me, support me and inspire me”**

### **Supporting Children’s Health, Fitness and Wellbeing**

**Kent County Council’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Out of School Childcare Conference**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 9.30am to 4.30pm**

**Oakwood House, Maidstone**

High quality playwork provision supports children’s play and development and helps to raise their aspirations, making a valuable contribution to children’s health, fitness and well-being. This year Kent County Council’s Out of School Conference is strongly focussed on the high profile national agenda, supporting children’s health and wellbeing. Out of School settings provide a wide range of play opportunities which can build on children’s interests and support this important aspect of children’s lives. The conference will provide opportunities and ideas to enable delegates to enhance and thread this focus into Out of School settings. Delegates will also explore how a range of strategies can be introduced and look at how to remove barriers.

Inspirational key note speakers and a variety of hands-on interactive workshops will offer practical ideas for owners, managers and playworkers to develop their practice and support this important national agenda. Our keynote speakers are:

- Chris Cook – Olympic Swimmer who has represented Great Britain on over 30 occasions and is a well-known motivational speaker
- Ben Kingston-Hughes – Playwork Consultant and Manager for Inspired Children who is passionate about the power of play and its positive impact on children’s health and wellbeing.

This conference is open to practitioners working within standalone Out of School Childcare settings, Early Years’ settings and Childminders offering wraparound care and school based Out of School childcare. Practitioners will be able to attend a maximum of two workshops on the day and can choose from:

- Inspire to Engage with Chris Cook
- Superhero Spectacular with Ben Kingston-Hughes
- Boisterous Play with Ben Kingston-Hughes
- A space to be me
- Music Matters!
- Communicate, Include, Engage.



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

To book your place visit <http://cpdonline.kentcpdonline.org.uk> [EYC 17/105](#)

## E-Learning

The Early Years and Childcare Service is developing some ‘Threads of Success’ e-learning packages to complement and enhance the already successfully suite of face to face training already available. Having identified that some packages could be more accessible to a wider audience through an e-learning platform, the following titles are currently under development: **Introduction to the EYFS (for practitioners), Introduction to the EYFS (for the registered person) and An Introduction to Playwork and Evaluation Impact of Staff CPD.** We will keep you updated as to how providers can access and purchase the training once they go live.

## Threads of Success Recruitment Hub

This new website is currently being built and will include valuable information and links for both employers and those currently working within the Early Years sector or looking to change or further their career. The site will include a prominent job vacancy section which will, for the foreseeable future, be centrally funded.

Thank you to those practitioners who contributed their views and ideas via Early Years and Childcare Briefing and Networking Sessions. This will help us ensure the Hub is focused on what the sector has identified as important to them when recruiting and developing their workforce. We will ensure you are kept up to date with developments and further information will be shared once the site goes live.

## The Strategic Improvement Visit

These visits are tailored to offer a range of strategies to support your continuous improvement. It is suitable for both Early Years and Out of School Providers. A range of options are available that include: action planning, monitoring systems, policies and procedures, safeguarding and welfare requirements, Ofsted grade descriptors, workforce development and a range of audits. The Strategic Improvement Visit is an ideal follow-on from your Annual Conversation and can build on the priorities identified to support you to secure a Good or better Ofsted judgement.

To arrange a Strategic Improvement Visit please visit our website: [www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk](http://www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk)

## Are You Ready for Your Inspection?

This half day course supports Early Years and Out of School managers to understand the current Ofsted inspection framework. Using the Ofsted documentation it explores the main elements of the inspection process and provides practitioners with the opportunity to reflect on their current practice and provision in preparation for inspection. There are separate courses for Early Years and Out of School providers, available now to book through CPD Online:

- For Early Years - [EYC 17/064](#), Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017 09:30 - 16:30 Battle of Britain Memorial Trust, Capel-le-Ferne
- For Out of School - [EYC 17/065](#), Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017 09:30 - 12:30: Oakwood House Hotel, Maidstone

This course is also available for you to purchase for your setting or collaboration. Please visit our website to book: [www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk](http://www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk)

## Equality and Inclusion

There are a number of upcoming events that will extend your knowledge and understanding of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:

- Early Identification of Children with SEND in Swale, 24<sup>th</sup> April - [EYC 17/056](#)
- An evening with Tracy Harvey of Portage in Thanet, 25<sup>th</sup> April - [EYC 17/031](#)

I Can Talk Boost training both for Practitioners and Key Stage 1 in Tunbridge Wells, 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> May - [EYC 17/099](#) and [SCH 17/673](#)

## Enhancing Family Involvement in Children's Learning (EFICL) Training – Mercure, Great Danes, Maidstone

We are delighted to be able to run a further one day course on EFICL – don't miss out on the opportunity to access a **free copy** of our award-winning EFICL Toolkit which will be provided for each setting attending the course. To book on access [www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk](http://www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk) (Course Code [EYC 17/109](#)).

For further information on any of our featured training or any other training and products please visit: [www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk](http://www.threadsofsuccess.co.uk) or contact the Threads Coordinator at: [threadsofsuccess@kent.gov.uk](mailto:threadsofsuccess@kent.gov.uk) or on 03000 422376.

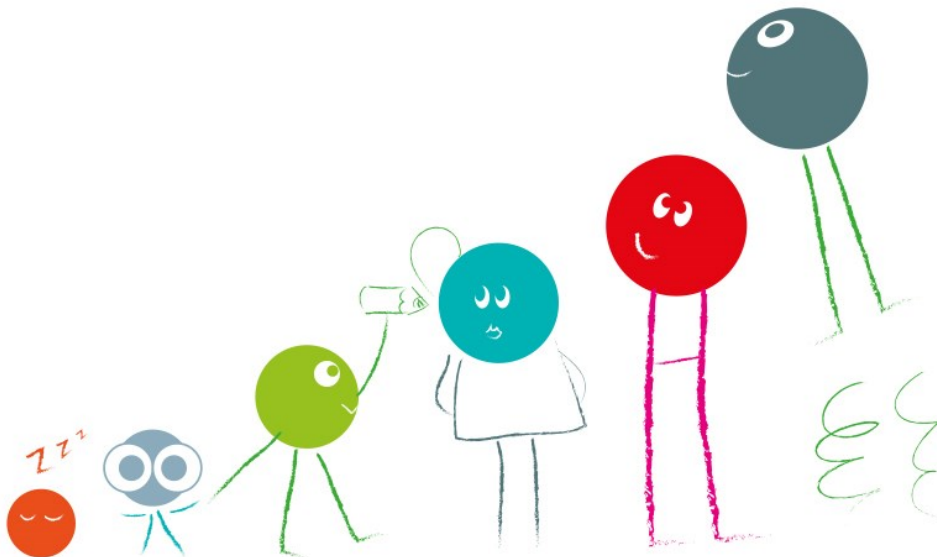
## Briefing and Networking Sessions

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 specifically for Early Years settings and schools and also specifically for settings providing Out of School care including schools.

Delegates attending these sessions have found them valuable, so why not book a place via CPD Online now.

EYC 17/005	06/06/17	Oakwood House	Maidstone
EYC 17/006	08/06/17	Swanley Banqueting	Swanley
EYC 17/007	13/06/17	Whitstable Castle & Gardens	Canterbury
EYC 17/008	15/06/17	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>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>Improvement and Standards</b>	<a href="mailto:EYCImprovementServices@kent.gov.uk">EYCImprovementServices@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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