Dear Early Years and Childcare Providers

Please see below this week’s Government updates for you and your staff. There have been no updates for families this week. Please also see below a message from the Department for Education on Contact Tracing and information from Kent County Council/The Education People regarding the need to close settings or limit the number of children in settings.

**Updates for the Sector**

[Pay Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme grants back](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pay-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme-grants-back?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=b84d4cce-8ef3-4bc9-83db-b800c4f8b74d&utm_content=daily) 11 Oct 2021

Change made: ‘Offset an amount you’ve overclaimed’ section added.

[Managing coronavirus (COVID-19) in education and childcare settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_source=323e61c0-676e-4dd3-93c2-00b1fa277f03&utm_content=daily) 13 October 2021

Change made: Updated the advice on those previously identified as clinically vulnerable people, shielding and regular testing, and clarified guidance on contacting the NHS Test and Trace self-isolation hub.

**Department for Education (DfE) Updates to Contact Tracing Guidance**

In response to recent queries, the DfE has updated the contact tracing ‘frequently asked questions’ which can be found on the early years document sharing platform [here](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1y_yFE-GfzGcgeEmVy-JaoOaGUM1NrWxG/view). Updates have been made to several areas including advice on contacting the NHS Self Isolation Hub and where a child cannot attend their setting because they are reliant on a self-isolating adult for transport.

**COVID-19 - Setting Closures and Limiting Numbers of Children in Settings**

We are receiving reports from some settings that they are having to close or limit numbers of children in their care due to the number of staff in the setting with COVID-19.

As a matter of course, early years settings should be following the current guidance as detailed below both to deal with the situation on a day-to-day basis and to make contingency plans for local outbreaks.

[Actions for Early Years and Childcare Providers During the Covid-19 Pandemic](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/actions-for-early-years-and-childcare-providers-during-the-covid-19-pandemic)

[Managing Coronavirus in Education and Childcare Settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings)

[Contingency Framework Education and Childcare Settings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-restrictions-in-education-and-childcare-settings)

Whilst recognising the shortage of qualified staff in the county, we know you will continue to do all that you can to stay open or provide care for as many children as possible. If you find yourselves in a position of having to limit the number of children in your settings, could we draw your attention to the Contingency Framework document which states “In all circumstances, priority should continue to be given to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers to attend to their normal timetables”.

Can we also take this opportunity to remind you to contact your Childcare Sufficiency Officer or adviser if you have to completely or partially close.

Some of you may have questions about Early Education and Childcare funding when your setting is affected. We would advise that Kent County Council and The Education People are liaising over this issue and we will bring you further information as soon as we are able.

As always, we thank you for all that you continue to do during these difficult times.