



Early Year Team  
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## Early Years

reference. The dates for the Spring Term  
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This edition of the Bulletin contains a key announcement regarding the Operation Encompass for Early Years. The Early Year Team about the start of the

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## Early Years Bulletin DfE Update

### Childminder Mentor Programme

In October 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) announced the [Early Years Education Recovery Programme](#) to help address the impact of the pandemic. This includes the early years COVID-19 recovery experts and mentors' programme.

The DfE early years COVID-19 recovery experts and mentors programme currently supports private, voluntary or independent (PVI) nursery settings, maintained nursery schools and school nurseries.

The DfE have now expanded this offer of support to childminders.

Going live from April 2023, the [Childminder Mentor Programme](#) will offer bespoke support by trained early years professionals in the role of area lead mentors, to childminders across the country. If you are interested in becoming either an area lead or a mentor, applications are now open; an Expression of Interest must be submitted by 16 December 2022.

### Stronger Practice Hubs

The first 13 (of 18) [Stronger Practice Hubs](#) have now been appointed by the DfE. The Stronger Practice Hubs have been developed to support other nurseries and childminders in their area to adopt evidence-based practice improvements through:

- Establishing local networks of early years educators to share knowledge and effective practice.
- Proactively sharing information and advice on evidence-based approaches.
- Acting as a point of contact for bespoke advice, and signposting to other funded support.
- Working with the Education Endowment Foundation to use evidence-based programmes to fund and make available to nurseries and childminders.

More information about stronger practice hubs is available on the [National Children's Bureau's](#) website.

## Early Years SENCO Training

There has been a high level of interest in the DfE's [early years SENCO training](#) with 5,000 places available between October 2022 and August 2024, over 3,500 eligible applications have already been received. To manage the high level of demand:

- Training places are being offered to applicants in order of date received and each applicant is being given an indication of when they can expect to commence the training.
- A waiting list will come into effect once the 5,000 places have been filled, again operated in order of date received.
- Where an applicant withdraws, applicants will move up the queue.
- Pre-training activities will be offered.

## Early Years Bulletin: Safeguarding Update

### Early Years Operation Encompass

The 'What is Operation Encompass for Early Years' sessions, due to be held on 29 November and 1<sup>st</sup> December have been cancelled.

Thank you to everyone who had signed up to attend; the response was incredibly positive and

## Early Years Bulletin Ofsted

### Early Education is vital for children born in lockdown

Ofsted has published the first in a series of reviews on early years education. The review underpins the inspectorate's new strategic focus on early education and giving children 'the best start in life' following the Covid-19 pandemic.

['Best start in life: a research review for early years'](#) stresses the value of play and teaching, and the importance of developing communication skills. What matters most is that practitioners have considered what they want children to know and be able to do, before deciding how best to teach. Making sure children catch up after the pandemic is still a key challenge in the early years, so practitioners need to think carefully about what content to prioritise. However, the report does not prescribe how to teach a high-quality early years curriculum.

The report found that, high-quality early years curriculum and pedagogy may have the following features:

- The curriculum considers what all children should learn. It prioritises communication and offers plenty of opportunity for disadvantaged children, or those who speak English as an additional language, to learn and practise speaking and listening.
- Practitioners choose what activities and experiences they are going to provide for children after deciding what it is that they want children to learn.
- Adults think carefully about what children already know and can do when deciding what to teach first.
- Children with gaps in their knowledge get the additional teaching they need so that they can access the same curriculum as their peers.
- Practitioners consider children's interests when choosing activities. They also expand children's interests so they make progress in all areas of learning.
- Children's play is valued and used to teach many aspects of the curriculum. Learning through play is enhanced by skilful( t)6 u l(l)4.1 hugpela.

## Early Years Bulletin: News from the Inclusion team

Visual Support are a communication tool that can be used in your settings to support all children, as well as children who struggle with their communication. They can be used in most situations.



## Energetic antics a physical development workout



