

Early Childhood Service

Newsletter

Early Childhood Quality Improvement and Business Support Team

Welcome to the Early Childhood Service Newsletter for the Summer Term – We hope that you all have remained safe and well during these past few months.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

During the COVID-19 lock down, the Local Authority's Early Years team acknowledges that Wirral's early years and childcare providers had to very quickly make challenging decisions in the response to Government recognising you to be part of the keyworker workforce and an essential service, to enable other keyworkers to play their part in crucial and ongoing services.

In addition to keeping open critical childcare for keyworkers, calling upon you to engage those children within the vulnerable category to continue attending.

In those initial days/weeks and then months around a third of Wirral's providers remained open and those that didn't we know found closing and not supporting children and families to be very difficult.

Great efforts were made to continue providing services across Wirral for children and families, for which we thank you. The journey hasn't been easy or without it's



bumps in the road, it has brought about a lot of varied pressures, anxieties and emotions and I don't doubt by now a very tired workforce. I would like to add that from feedback I understand it has also brought about more joined up working and better collaborations from setting to setting and with the Local Authority, which can only be good for Wirral's children and families as we move forward.

For those that will be taking some time out over summer I wish you well. For those still offering services, I hope you keep safe and for those not as yet re-opened I wish you good luck.

The only way forwards is - onwards and upwards! Best wishes,

Carol Fenlon
Head of Service, Early Childhood Services

Early Childhood Service Virtual Conference

SAVE THE DATE!

Keep the 2nd October 2020 free, we are to hold our first Virtual conference. The theme this year is My Child Can... attend an emotionally healthy setting, exploring creative opportunities to ensure wellbeing for all.

All this for the very affordable price of £20.00.

Speakers will be facilitating hour long live workshops, these also include a Q+A session. Facilitators include:



Kate Moxley
Creating a culture of workplace wellbeing for staff.



Simon Ward
Impact of covid in early years.



Dr Claire Warden (Mindstretchers)
How to use the outdoor environment to support children's emotional well being.



Kim Potts (Funky Feet)
Using music and movement to support children's physical and emotional development.



Clear Sky
Supporting practitioners in developing children's attachment, resilience and self-regulation.

Local Offer Update

Sally Tittle

SEND Participation & Engagement Lead



Well it's been a strange and not so wonderful time for us all since the last edition of the Newsletter. Hope you and your families are all safe and well.

It's fair to say some good has come out of this pandemic because here at the Local Offer we have been kept very busy supporting our SEND families, schools and nurseries. Engagement via the website and social media is up by 30%. It's at times like this that we all realise the importance of pulling together and pooling our resources to be in the best place possible to support the children and young people in our care. We've loved working more closely with our colleagues in Health and the many fantastic voluntary organisations here in Wirral. Soon after lockdown, we added a COVID 19 support section to the Local Offer website: <https://localofferwirral.org/category/covid-19-support>.

We found that we were getting sent lots of fantastic resources and wanted to make sure everyone got to benefit from them. We also wanted to keep Parent/Carers informed of the adjustments having to be made to the range of SEND services and so we published regular editions of a SEND Snapshot (Newsletter) with contributions from many

different services and organisations. These can be found in the COVID 19 support section and a summer edition will be added for reference early into the school summer holidays. We are continuing to add information as and when it becomes available. We have information to help with children going back into school and for those starting school. The Early Years section has some great new content and well worth a look. How are you finding the refreshed Early Years section on the website? Maybe take a look and let us know what you think? We listen and we learn and welcome all your feedback at <https://localofferwirral.org>

We have also been using social media to keep Parent/Carers informed so if you're interested and not following us already, our twitter account is [@lowirral](https://twitter.com/lowirral) and our Facebook page is [The Local Offer Wirral](https://www.facebook.com/TheLocalOfferWirral).

To further support our SEND families, we now have a dedicated e mail address to enable people to send us their feedback, views, suggestions or to ask for signposting to a service. E-mail us at: localofferwirral@wirral.gov.uk

Enjoy the sunshine when it comes and take good care of yourselves.

Support for families during the Covid-19 pandemic

The DfE has produced some information for families containing useful links to activities that may be undertaken by families whilst isolating at home.

This can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/help-children-aged-2-to-4-to-learn-at-home-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Examples of **other organisations** also offering support and activities include:

Wirral children's centres, who have a virtual time table at <http://www.wirral.gov.uk/early-years-and-childcare/childrens-centres>

Hungry Little Minds at <https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk>

Livescience at <https://www.livescience.com/coronavirus-kids-activities.html> and

Harper Collins at <https://www.harpercollinschildrensbooks.co.uk> - these are just a few of the virtual resources available.

Children's Centres

During these difficult times children's centres across Wirral have been working hard to support families virtually.

This may have been through telephone conversations home learning packs or through our *My Child Can...* Facebook page. We have worked together with the support of our partners, and have created an array of virtual support across our My Child Can Facebook page. Families can access videos on a variety of subjects such as cookery, crafts, games, messy play ideas, mental health support, speech and language support, breastfeeding support, basic first aid, SEND support, road safety as well as lots lots more.

We have also introduced weekly live chat sessions where parents have the opportunity to ask a professional questions in a live chat, each week we have a different theme for us to chat about together.

MY CHILD CAN - let's talk



Hannah Keyworth facilitating online activity sessions



Face-to-face support at Brassey Gardens Children's Centre

Brassey Gardens Children's Centre has partially reopened this week to offer face-to-face support to families, on a referral and pre-bookable basis only.

Parents and guardians will be able to speak with a professional to access health advice and referrals to help children with speech and language development.

Find out more about this at: <https://wirralview.com>

For anyone who would like support for their family, please contact your local children's centre: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/cc>

News from Foundation Years Trust

Anne Parker (Local Director)



As we emerge from lockdown and reflect on the past 4 months, it's clear that learning at home and consequently, your relationships with parents, has never been so important. And parents are key to successful transitions.

FYT have worked with over 40 nursery settings across Wirral and the feedback from parents and staff shows our projects greatly expand and enrich parents understanding of how to influence their child's development, and relationships between staff and parents improve too. We have been providing parents and settings with simple, useful messages to prompt parents into doing different things with their child. Now, it's back to your teams to support parents to continue their child's learning at home.



We're here to help you! We can provide training and mentoring to your staff to help them build their confidence in talking to parents daily about promoting learning. We can help you think about



the messages you give, what works, what nudges parents into action. We can help you write and action your parental engagement strategy. And there is a number of projects you can participate in to.

For information, contact Anne Parker at aparker@foundationyearstrust.org.uk

We are a charity and rely on funding, so there may be a small charge to cover our costs, but there is lots of free stuff on our social media. Follow us, and encourage your parents to follow us too:

Instagram: [@foundationyearstrust](https://www.instagram.com/foundationyearstrust)

Facebook: [Foundation Years Trust](https://www.facebook.com/FoundationYearsTrust)

Twitter: [@FoundationTrust](https://twitter.com/FoundationTrust)

Our website: www.foundationyearstrust.org.uk

Early Years SEND team

Penny Bishop
(Early Years SEND manger)

Hi all, what a time we have been through and are still doing. A huge thank you to all the settings and childminders who have stayed in touch with all the children with SEND as they are a vulnerable group. We had a big panic when we thought you were all closing, and we would need to support 250 children/families. We contacted all the families to find out what was happening and whether the children were in or not. We have sent out activities to families following parental requests.

The big issue has been transition to F1 and F2, and I want to thank all those settings that have arranged online meetings with parents. Please invite a SEND Officer and send transition paperwork to EY SEND team, as this links to transition fund.

We are working as usual over the summer. Please email us if you want some advice over the summer. Portage workers are developing printed resources that we will be able to share.

PLEASE can you ensure that you refer children into EY SEND sooner, as we must not let this vulnerable group down.

We are planning on a training programme for autism to start end of Autumn term or the new year.
Thanks again.

Wirral National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) network

Karen Lane (Chair)



From the chair of the NDNA Wirral Network. Purnima Tanku OBE, Chief Executive of the NDNA, has listened to the issues the members have raised throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and brought them to the attention of the government, OFSTED and the DFE. As a sector we will continue to work together to address the issues around sustainability and funding.

During the lockdown nurseries stepped forward, at risk to themselves and their staff, to provide care for children of critical workers and for vulnerable children. We cannot say how crucial this was,

but it must have given those parents reassurance to know that their children were being cared for in a safe and secure environment.

Our staff did not sign up for this, did not expect it, and in many cases were understandably anxious for themselves and their families. Nevertheless, they rose to the challenge, accepted the new risks and necessary new ways of working, and carried on delivering the care as they always have. It is right that when we clapped every Thursday night, we were also applauding them.

We don't know what the situation

holds for us but we do know we haven't finished with this pandemic and that there will be many more challenges. We also know the nursery sector has the skill, attitude and commitment to face them.

Regionally, the NDNA has been striving to give the utmost much-needed support during this time. We believe we have strengthened our working relationship with our Local Authority's Early Years Team to respond to this pandemic and helped to secure the exceptional circumstances grant for nurseries who stayed open. We look forward to building on this in the future.

Positive Experiences



From childminder Margaret Hanson...

I've had doorstep visits from children, lots of photos sent from parents to add in their journals of the children's achievements during lockdown.

We have enjoyed face time and stories. I also sent rainbow themed crafts to the children which they thoroughly enjoyed. We are looking forward to making more memories together in September.

Pitter Patter's Day Nursery

Pitter Patter's Day Nursery celebrated their 19th birthday! The team and children enjoyed party food, games and a big garden social distanced sing-a-long! This is Lisa, the successful owner/manager who has supported hundreds of families in the community and has left a lasting impression on everyone she meets. Here's to another 19 years!

We also had a garden boogie with Maggie Moo and Lindsey from Moo Music as the children were missing out on her fabulous local music sessions a lot of them attend. We sang, danced, jumped, played musical instruments and popped bubbles as they floated across our socially distanced garden groups.



Update on Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership's training and support offer

During the Covid-19 pandemic, all WSCP face-to-face safeguarding training is currently suspended. However, our safeguarding responsibilities remain unchanged. WSCP's website now contains links to a range of virtual training, e-learning support and all of the [7-minute briefings](#) to support you and your team.

The type of virtual sessions you can access include Designated Safeguarding Lead Refresher Session (for existing DSL's - 1.5 hours), Safer Recruitment (2 hours), Managing Allegations (2 hours), plus whole



staff safeguarding, all for only £30.00 per session. The Designated Safeguarding Lead Session training for new DSL's is also available (3 hours for £50.00), as well as a range of free multi-agency training for you to access.

To book your training please visit: <https://www.wirralsafeguarding.co.uk/virtual-training-provision/>

You can also contact [Amanda Waterfall](#) on **07795 617 644** if you wish to discuss your setting specific training needs or support on offer. On site training is set to resume in September.



Wirral Childminding Association (WCMA)

Nikki Griffiths (Chair)

THE WIRRAL CHILDMINDER ASSOCIATION is open to all registered childminders operating in Wirral.

They provide peer support and advice and guidance relating to any aspect of practice. For more information contact Nikki Griffiths (Chair) on 07925 685 360. There is a closed Facebook page called 'Wirral Childminding Association' on Facebook which is used to share information and updates. Only registered childminders can join, to enable a safe place for sharing professional issues. Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/863306037393524>

Nikki worked in partnership with the Local Authority, to organise the delivery of 48 PPE packs to childminders across Wirral.



Useful links

The DfE is constantly updating the guidance for early Years settings – you will find the latest updates at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/early-years-and-childcare-coronavirus-covid-19>