

Welcome to the Early Childhood Service Newsletter for the summer term. As we move towards the end of this academic year it is with some relief and hope that things may return to 'normal' very soon. Thank you to those who have sent content for this newsletter, as ever your contributions are greatly appreciated.

MESSAGE FROM SIMONE WHITE:

THE NEW DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES FOR WIRRAL'S CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION



I WAS ASKED if I would like to write a few words to go out with the early year's newsletter; my answer was 'yes please'!

It has been a difficult sixteen months; I am sure it feels longer to many of us since the first lockdown in March 2020. The circumstances we faced were without precedent and it will be many years until we know the full impact of what has happened on our children their

families and our overall way of life.

However, I do know that I am incredibly proud of the way staff and organisations across early years have responded. Despite all the changes on a personal level we have managed to keep children at the very heart of what we do, for which I want to offer my very sincere thanks.

I know we have made many asks of you for updates and data. Which I know may feel like a job on top of the day job. Again, can I thank all of those who have been helping us keep our data up to date and please can I assure you that we are using this in discussions with

the DfE, which we hope will influence their understanding of the sector but also its importance and funding needs.

I look forward to the day when we can once again meet face to face. You never know it may happen this year but if not, we will all continue to work hard together to achieve the best for the children and families of Wirral.

Simone White
Director for Children's Services

Invitation to play Project

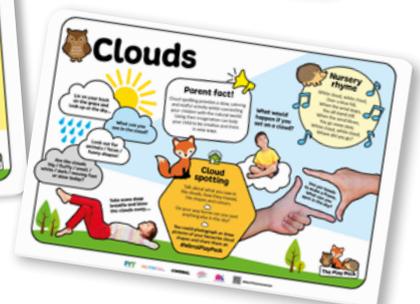
LOOK OUT for our brand new project developed for Wirral in Summer 2021. **Invitation to Play** introduces **The Play Pack**, who are best friends and can be found sharing play ideas and activities in an area near you!

Boards containing play prompts will be placed in popular areas to encourage families to play together, talk together and develop positive family interactions.

Being active is even more important than ever before and we have added lots of play prompts

to get bodies moving and hearts pumping! Each board will have a parent fact explaining why these activities are important and some ideas to take home.

Do have a look for these boards when taking the children for walks out in the community!
#Wirralplaypack



Wirral Libraries: Wild World Heroes Summer Reading Challenge

THE WILD WORLD HEROES SUMMER READING CHALLENGE is coming to a library near you this summer!

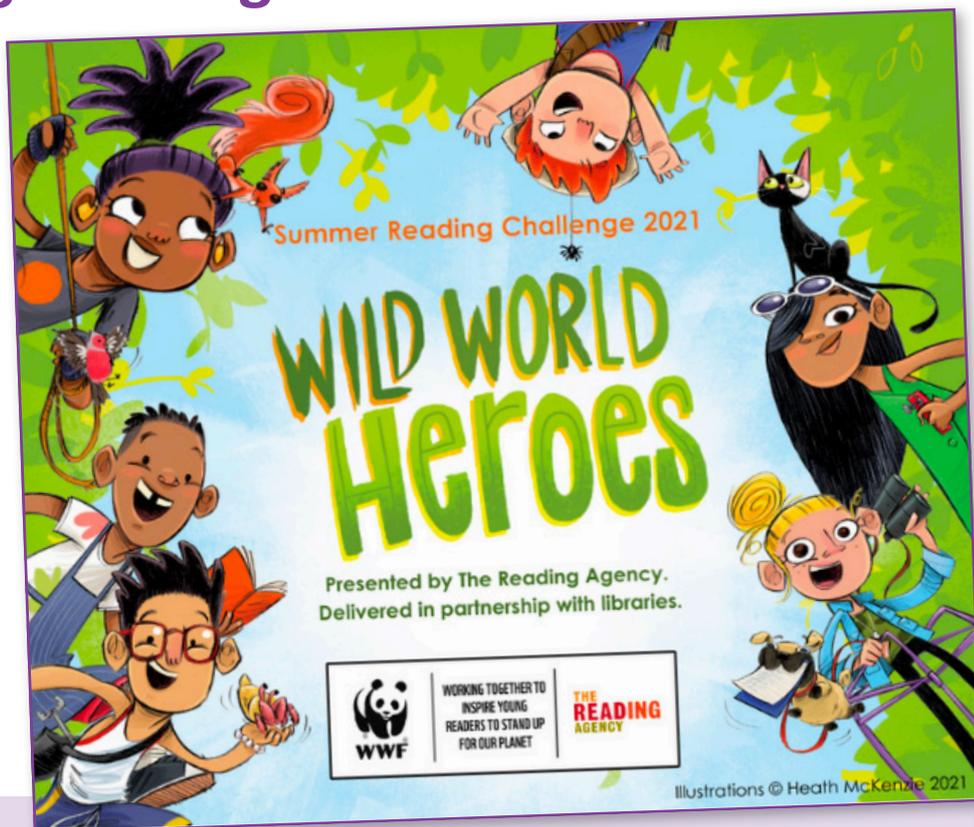
Wirral Libraries have teamed up with the Reading Agency, and the World Wildlife Fund for a very special nature-themed challenge that will inspire you to stand up for the planet!

Our Wild World Heroes live in Wilderville, a pretty cool place, but there are lots of things that the Wild World Heroes can do to make their town even better for the people and animals that live there.

The challenge runs from Saturday 10th July to Saturday 4th September and is aimed at children aged 4-11. There is also a mini-challenge for pre-school children.

The Summer Reading Challenge is open to all children and is free of charge.

To find out which libraries are open in your area, and for up to date opening times visit wirral.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives



Team updates

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION CHILDCARE GRANT- EARLY YEARS BUSINESS TEAM

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority recently released access to a new grant for childcare providers who have encountered a significant impact on their business due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We can reveal that 176 awards were granted to Wirral providers totalling £379,500! These awards consisted of payments to 99 childminders, 55 day nurseries/pre-schools and 22 Out of School Clubs. Congratulations to all those who were successful in the award of this grant.

BIG THANK YOU

To all those early years & childcare providers and schools for submitting registers to enable the Local Authority (LA) to submit data to the Department for Education (DfE). The now fortnightly submission has seen an increase to over 50%. We appreciate that everyone is so busy however, we would really like to increase submission to 70%, to give both the LA and DfE a true picture of how many children are accessing the amazing play opportunities across our early years provision.

CONFERENCE

Wirral's Early Years Conference will be virtual workshops over the week commencing 18th October. Tickets are selling fast with great speakers such as Julien Grenier, Jan Dubeil, Honor Coombs and many more, so don't miss out book today at wirralquality.co.uk

READY FOR SCHOOL

A ready for school working group has been set up with representatives from Schools, early years providers, Speech and Language, Libraries, 0-19 service, voluntary sector.

The group are reviewing process and practice around school readiness. The group recently surveyed parents and received over 500 responses, parents stated their biggest concern being their children making friends, and requested additional advice and support to prepare both themselves and their children for school.

The group are currently looking at ways to support parents and children through this transition as well as schools and providers to make the transition as smooth as possible. More information will be shared soon.



TRAINING PLATFORM – QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND TRAINING TEAM

We are very proud to announce that the Wirral Early Years Training platform is now live. This platform will act as a single point of access for all Wirral early year's providers- to keep up to date with the latest information both local and national, download templates, access resources, use our interactive training calendar to see what's on, book and access training opportunities and e-learning all at the click of a button!

To have full access to the platform follow: wirralquality.co.uk - then click on the 'My account tab' to register an account- a confirmation email will then be sent to your account and you are then good to go!!

Early Years SEND Team

Penny Bishop – Early Years SEND manger

PORTAGE SUPPORT for teaching parents how to break down tasks into small achievable steps has continued this term with some home visiting starting up again in line with COVID restrictions.

Parents have been very appreciative to see the Portage Workers face to face – and the Portage team have been happy to get out to homes again. They have been very busy with transition meetings for settings and schools supporting the parents. We have supported the parents with their concerns over their child, COVID, going to a setting or school and we have signposted them to appropriate other people for other concerns.

As families ease themselves out of lockdown and meet up we are already noticing an increased demand on the team and we are working out ways of how to support greater numbers. We have prioritised children going into F2 and F1 in schools this September and organised a limited number of visits over the summer. The Portage workers run Pre-Portage group once a month via an invite in the Children Centres and then the staff there run SEND sensory sessions for the next 3 weeks. Group sizes may be able to increase as restrictions change but there is still an anxiety among parents of children with SEND about COVID, mixing and being safe.

The Early Years SEND Officers support settings, including childminders with 85 – 100 cases per officer. They have supported with planning with setting's SENCOs, answering queries and giving advice, transition meetings, training and observations – some online and now some face to face. The numbers of requests for children with SEND are increasing weekly so we have prioritised children going into F2 and F1 in schools.

Sadly we have been contacted by some schools to ask us why we haven't been involved with certain children – the answer is we didn't know about them. So PLEASE can we ask all settings/childminders to have regard to the Graduated Approach Pathway for Children with SEND and The Early Years SEND Team Referral Pathway which can be found on the Wirral Local Offer - localofferwirral.org/information-for-providers/information-for-providers-useful-documents Please ensure you are following the Code of Practice - being inclusive and supportive.

The SEND Officers are Joanne France – Wallasey; Lizi Williams – Birkenhead; Karen Burke – South Wirral and Sarah Saxton – West Wirral. They will continue to contact the setting SENCOs and have planning meetings to support them. In the meantime, please follow the pathways above and request involvement of your SEND Officer via eysend@wirral.gov.uk using the form on the Local Offer and let them know which children have SEND. Any queries about whether to request involvement for a child please contact your SEND Officer and have a discussion. Please ensure any new SENCOs know about your Early Years SEND Officer and we know about them.

Training has continued online but we are looking forward to seeing people face to face when it is safe to do so. Please contact us via eysend@wirral.gov.uk if there is an area of SEND you would like training on. We should never stop learning and keeping up to date with new ways of supporting children with SEND.

THANK YOU ALL FOR THE WORK AND TIME YOU GIVE TO CHILDREN WITH SEND AND THEIR PARENTS.

Children's Centres

FOR OUR children's centres it is business as usual with groups continuing throughout the summer, including SEND Sensory, Rainbows, Baby Massage, Baby Babble, Baby Yoga and Rhyme Time!

We are looking at how to support children transitioning during the summer and so would welcome referrals if any settings feel that children would benefit from this – this would include communication and language activities and an opportunity for parents to share any concerns, and our school readiness workers will share guidance etc.

Activities will be posted on the 'My Child Can' Facebook page.



Safeguarding

WIRRAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP'S TRAINING

THANKS TO the 'We Can Talk About Domestic Abuse' Project, Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership are now in a position to offer multi-agency training in Domestic Abuse.

A number of dates have been set from July through to December and are now available to book on the WSCP website.

Find out more and book on to the training [here](#). If you haven't attended previous WSCP training, you can find out how to register as a learner [here](#).

The Wirral safeguarding partnership website has lots of information useful in supporting staff to keep children safe on Wirral – these include a series of 7 minute briefings created as a learning aid for use in supervision, team meetings, or just as a reminder of the key issues around a particular theme or current issue. These can be found at [7 Minute Briefings - Wirral Safeguarding Children Partnership](#).





Local Offer Update

EVERYONE, Hope this Newsletter finds you and your little people safe and well.

It's been a roller coaster first half of the year, but hopefully with bit of British summertime sunshine due things are looking up.

Here at the Local Offer, we continue to be kept very busy supporting our SEND families, schools and nurseries. Engagement via the website and social media is steadily increasing month on month, so hello if you've started to follow us recently. Our social media audience is now up by 70% from March 2020.

Sally Tittle

FOR THOSE of you unaware of the SEND Local Offer here are three ways you can be signposted to help, resources and a great deal more to support you navigate your way on the start of your SEND journey and beyond.

The Local Offer pulls together information across Health, Education and Social Care to help you access the support you need and to enable you to feedback any gaps in provision.

Website: www.localofferwirral.org

Facebook: [The Local Offer Wirral](https://www.facebook.com/TheLocalOfferWirral)

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

During the pandemic, we wanted to keep Parent/Carers informed of the adjustments having to be made to the range of SEND services and so we have been publishing regular editions of a SEND Snapshot (Newsletter) with contributions from many different services and organisations.

Edition 8 can be accessed by visiting: localofferwirral.org/send-snapshot-edition-8

Wirral are very lucky to have a SEND Youth Engagement Officer. Poppy is twenty one and uses her lived experience to bring about the changes needed and to make sure the voice of the young person is heard.

Poppy assists with the SENCO training programme for Nursery and Childminder staff and we would be happy to chat to Early Years staff if they're looking for guidance/resources to support their families.

Poppy has studied and passed levels 2 and 3 NVQ's in Childcare so would be very comfortable to come into nursery settings. Poppy recently sat on the interview panels for both the Head of SEND (Local Authority) and the Director of Transforming Care (NHS) Board.

How fantastic that SEND young people are being recognised, valued and listened to. If you have any suggestions/comments or would simply like to get in touch please drop Poppy an email to:

localofferwirral@wirral.gov.uk

**Keep safe!
Sally & Poppy**

Wirral National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) network

Catherine Hargreaves (Secretary)



WIRRAL NDNA held a private training session in June, socially distanced of course, for managers looking at staff Wellbeing and Resilience.

We particularly enjoyed learning about Disorientation, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Transactional Analysis and essential Self-Help Techniques for handling stress. This was followed by a light lunch, the morning was funded by the Wirral NDNA budget.

The last 18 months has seen the

NDNA lobby on behalf of the Childcare Sector during the Coronavirus for support. Wirral NDNA held its AGM, virtually this year and Karen Lane and Catherine Hargreaves were re-elected as Chair and Secretary.

We are always looking for new members and invite you to join as a member, for networking and local support. If you would like further information, please email:

wirral@network.ndna.org.uk



The Foundation Years Trust

Anne Parker – Local Director



THE FOUNDATION Years Trust have been working with our partners at The National Literacy Trust to develop a Story Trail for Birkenhead Park.

Families can pick up a book and follow the story of Mia, her little brother Kai, Uncle Josh and Tufty the dog. The story takes them around the park, where they will find out about the trolls, where they live and even what they eat.

The books are free and can be collected at Birkenhead Central Library, Seacombe Children's Centre, Birkenhead

Children's Centre (Brassey Gardens) or the visitor centre at the park.

Check our social media for events over the summer:

📷 Follow us:

@foundationyearstrust

📘 Like us on Facebook:

Foundation Years Trust



Good News & Celebrations

Running for Claire House

AUNTIE EM'S childcare took part in a fundraiser a few weeks ago to raise money for Claire House.

The children raised a massive £1,500 by walking 3k around Birkenhead Park.

Two children ran the whole distance with Emma – she thinks she has some future marathon runners on her books! Parents also supported whilst remaining socially distanced.

All the children got a medal and cake at the finish line, it was such a wonderful event to take part in after such a challenging year.

Emma was very proud of each and everyone of the children and also the amazing parents!



Useful links

- [COVID-19 RESPONSE: SUMMER 2021](#)
- [Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- [National Lockdown: Stay at Home](#)
- [Safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [COVID-19: Guidance for the safe use of multi-purpose community facilities](#)
- [Coronavirus outbreak FAQs: what you can and can't do](#)
- [Ofsted: coronavirus \(COVID-19\) rolling update](#)