

Firm Foundations



Sure Start News from Medway Council

Issue 8 January 2008

Serving You

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Foreword

Welcome to the first edition of Firm Foundations for 2008.

The coming year will see another series of big steps forward in the world of early childhood services.

From April the implementation of key parts of the Childcare Act 2006 will place new responsibilities on the local authority to secure sufficient childcare for all families, to provide comprehensive information and guidance, and to specifically address early years services for those children and families who are currently often excluded from accessing provision.



Mark Holmes—early years strategy manager

In September the formal introduction of the Early Years Foundation Stage will be a landmark change to the way we organise care and learning for our youngest children – a genuine continuum from birth through the early years of life.

The further investment in Early Years Foundation Stage settings, and Sure Start Children's Centres, is aimed at genuinely enhancing the life chances of children at the time when such support makes the biggest difference.

Key to this are the adults who work with children. Whatever your professional background or current job-role, the work you do is absolutely vital. Every child really does matter.

2008 will be a busy year - when was it ever not? – and I wish you every success in rising to the new challenges.

Mark Holmes
Strategic manager – early years services

Children's Information Service

Medway Children's Information Service is an award winning free service that aims to support parents and carers by providing childcare information and impartial advice on childcare related issues.

Services provided by Medway Children's Information Service include:

- Up to date information on both registered and unregistered local childcare including day nurseries, childminders, out of school clubs, holiday playschemes, parent and toddler groups and other leisure activities available locally
- Help and advice on the different forms of childcare and nursery education
- Information on available help with childcare costs
- Up to date list of local job vacancies in childcare
- Information on childcare careers, qualifications required and training opportunities



Contact CIS by phone: 01634 335566 **email:** childcareinfo@medway.gov.uk

local website: www.medway.gov.uk/childcare **national website:** www.childcarelink.gov.uk/medway

Office opening hours Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5.30pm **Friday:** 8.30am to 5.00pm

Error in Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance (EYFS)

The EYFS (statutory framework booklet page 26) states that prescribed medicines should be kept in a locked, non-portable container.

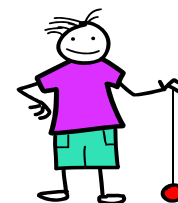
This is incorrect. Medicines which may be needed quickly in an emergency **should not** be locked away.

Further information will be posted on: www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/EYFS/



The DCFS will be issuing clarification of the EYFS in spring 2008, including rectifying the errors highlighted on the errata slip.

Two Medway after-school clubs receive Quality in Play



Sam's Place in Chatham and **Fun Explorers** in Strood are the first two after school clubs in Medway to achieve Accreditation for excellent playwork practice from London Play and now hold Quality in Play status.

Both Sam's Place and Fun Explorers dedication to providing local children with quality play experiences, allowing the children to explore and challenge their own boundaries have always been forefront in the clubs ethos.

Medway's Playwork Advisory team have supported Sam's Place and Fun Explorers through the QIP process and have established a strong professional relationship with the staff.

Staff at Sam's Place and Fun Explorers have successfully undergone NVQ Playwork training at level 2 and 3 and attend many professional development training courses delivered by the Playwork team at Medway.

Quality in Play meets government requirements for quality assurance schemes and builds on the National Standards for Out-of-school Daycare. It incorporates key play concepts from research literature as the bedrock for the quality standards.

Quality in Play is for play and childcare providers catering for school age children based in adventure playgrounds, after school clubs, holiday playschemes, extended schools or children's centres.

Accreditation can be achieved at level 1, 2, or 3 and continues for 2 years at which point you can apply for re-accreditation.

If you are interested in taking part or would like further information about the Quality in Play accreditation scheme 2008 contact Katy Fridd / Sue Howrihane on 01634 338530

Diane Tippett & 10yr old Arry Levy from Sam's Place, Chatham



Arrangements for Criminal Bureau Checks (CRB)

Changes to the law from 3rd October 2005 mean that Ofsted no longer has to carry out checks on all those who work in registered day care settings to decide whether or not they are suitable to look after or be in regular contact with children.

These changes are designed to stop the duplication of tasks and to clarify that recruitment and employment decisions about whether or not someone is suitable for a particular job involving children should rest primarily with the employer.

Ofsted is still responsible for assessing whether or not the registered person and day-to-day manager are suitable to be in-charge of a day care setting and for checking that proper recruitment and employment procedures are in place.

What this means simply is that Ofsted will do the CRB checks on the registered person and the day-to-day manager of the provision. Ofsted will decide when the CRB needs to be updated; this is usually three years after the issue date.

The registered person/owner or day-to-day manager of the provision is responsible for completing the CRB checks on all staff working within the provision. For best practice these should be updated every three years.

For more information contact the Children's Information Service on: 01634 335566



Budding Poets at Hempstead Pavilion Playgroup

Young Writers have worked closely with schools for the last 16 years, bringing a passion and enthusiasm for writing into lessons. A new project entitled 'My First Poem' provides pre-schoolers with a fun activity and the opportunity to be involved in a creative writing experience: from writing their first poem to the chance of seeing their work in print. The children at Hempstead Pavilion Play Group entered the competition and everyone was a winner!

The children were asked to suggest creative ideas for their poem and the judges were so impressed that all the poems will be published in a book called 'My First Poem'. Congratulations! Watch out Mike Rosen!



Here are some examples of the children's genius. If you want to read more you are welcome to contact the play group who will be happy to share the children's success.

Getting to know the EYFS

By now every EYFS leader within a school or Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) setting should have attended the EYFS Launch in July 2007 and a briefing session in September 2007, childminders are being supported through the NCMA and should have had the opportunity to access briefings in this way.

From these centralised briefings there is an expectation that leaders will return to their settings and deliver their own briefing session to their team. Copies of the power point form the centralised briefing sessions can be downloaded from

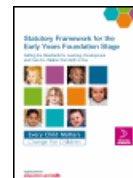
Medway Early Years Service has tried to structure the support for preparing for the implementation of the EYFS from September 2008 in the most helpful and useful way it possibly can. From January 2008 there will be localised training for practitioners with a level 2/working towards level 3 qualifications to support the development of their knowledge, understanding and skills in order that they may be ready for the EYFS. Further details of this can be gained through your Early Years Advisor.

In addition there are many website links available at www.e-learningatlast.org.uk this is an exciting site set up by the Learning and Support Team to help practitioners in their everyday practice. Log on to find out more.

Ten top tips for getting to know the EYFS

1. Be ready to take part in your setting's EYFS briefings – make sure you have your own copy of the EYFS. Available from www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications
2. Look on teachernet for answers to frequently asked questions, available at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/EYFS/clarificationsandfaqs/>
3. Put the poster up in your setting if you have space available. Match photographs of your practice to the commitments to see how the EYFS reflects what you do already.
4. Consider where the EYFS gaps are in your provision – reflect upon how you currently meet the 16 commitments in your setting. What does this reflection tell you about next steps? For the Leadership team? For the practitioner team?
5. As a practitioner think about the professional development training you could access to support the growth of your knowledge, skills and understanding as you prepare for the implementation of the EYFS.
6. Consider as a team how your views on what good practice looks like match the 16 commitments.
7. Choose one commitment a week. Focus on it during your evaluations. Consider how your practice and provision has reflected that commitment; think about what you need to do next to be able to demonstrate it further in your setting's practice.
8. As a team take one card at a time and use the back of it as a point of reflection using the points from effective practice, challenges and dilemmas and reflecting on practice. Consider next steps for your team's practice from the discussions you have.
9. As a team think about how you can share the EYFS with your parents.
10. Make sure your EYFS leader attends the EYFS PVI Leader's Forums/Schools FS

Leaders Briefings to keep up to date with what is going on both locally and nationally.



Private Fostering

Private fostering

Are you looking after someone else's child?

Is your child living with another family?

If the answer is yes you should contact Medway Council on the number below for information, advice and support with your responsibilities as a private foster carer



Are you looking after a child who is not related to you?

Do they live with you?



Is this a full-time arrangement?

Will it last for 28 days or more?



Is your child living with another family?

Phone: 01634 333333
Email: customer.first@medway.gov.uk

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Free Health Posters

Department for Children, Schools and Families colleagues recently met with the Department of Health to discuss health issues, including infection control and hygiene matters. Every year, children and adults will catch a range of colds and other bugs.

Department of Health have produced some posters on simple measures to take to prevent these from spreading. We wondered if you would like to advertise these posters to practitioners in your newsletters?

There are posters on hand-washing and on 'coughs and sneezes'; these can be obtained free of charge from dh@prolog.uk.com, quoting reference 278819 for the hand-washing poster and 279933 for that on coughs and sneezes.

You can see copies of both posters at:

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/humanflupandemic>



Congratulations!

The Children's Information Service recently offered Medway's childcare providers the chance to win up to £100 of Early Learning Centre Vouchers. All providers who updated and returned the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment form were automatically entered into a prize draw.

The draw has now been completed and the winners are:

1st Prize = £100 of Early Learning Centre Vouchers – Mrs Rosamund Low

2nd Prize = £50 of Early Learning Centre Vouchers – St Michael's Day Nursery

3rd Prize = £25 of Early Learning Centre Vouchers – Creative Days Pre-School



Thank you to all those who returned their forms and well done to the lucky winners!

Celebrating Success

Practitioners from across the Early Years Foundation Stage gathered to celebrate their achievements at Canterbury Christ Church University on Tuesday 20th November. Amongst these practitioners were colleagues who had achieved their Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and colleagues who had successfully completed the Early Years Professional Development Course.

The Early Years Professional Status is supported by a set of national standards set at graduate level (Level 6), which covers work with children from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Those who demonstrate these standards are awarded early years professional status, which is equivalent in level to qualified teacher status (QTS). Currently we have 5 practitioners in Medway who have gained EYPS.

Medway Early Years Service is delighted to be currently supporting approximately 65 practitioners on Foundation Degrees. This has been possible through the Transformation Fund. These practitioners will also have the opportunity to go on and achieve additional credits to gain a full honours degree and EYPS from January 2009.

The Early Years Professional Development Course allows practitioners undertaking Medway Learning and Support Team (MLST) training courses to gain academic credits. Participants attend 4 MLST training days focused on leadership, and 3 taught days by the University. Practitioners focus on the work they are carrying out during the training sessions, and are required to undertake some further work based tasks linked to MLST training in their own setting, reflect upon their own and the setting's practice and undertake to make links between theory and practice. The course is assessed by practitioners completing an Action Plan, writing a reflective commentary on the impact of their course work, handing in notes from the 4 training day courses and analysing one topic in depth.

28 practitioners have undertaken and completed this course. Out of those practitioners 20 have gone on to do or about to do their Foundation Degree. It is not compulsory to follow straight on with the Foundation Degree but many practitioners feel it gives them the confidence boost to take that next professional step.

Practitioners who have completed the course have given very positive feedback – they have reflected upon the new skills and knowledge they have learnt and have shared the following observations:

"I feel that I can achieve things in my setting, I'm much more confident now"

"The course has really helped me to become a better leader, I really listen to my team now and they tell me they feel more part of the setting than ever before – it's been great! Thanks"

"Working with, talking with other leaders has been the best bit for me. To know that there are people out there who have the same difficulties as me is really reassuring, sometimes there still isn't an answer but its always good to talk".

"I wasn't sure about this course when I started but my advisor had said she thought it would be useful. Turns out she was right, I use loads of it everyday and I think I have become a better leader because of it. I am even thinking of doing the foundation degree in the future!"

Further details of this course can be gained through the flyer that came with this edition of the magazine or through your Early Years Advisor.



OFSTED Inspections

Recent OFSTED inspections have highlighted the following:



Fire drills/Emergency procedures

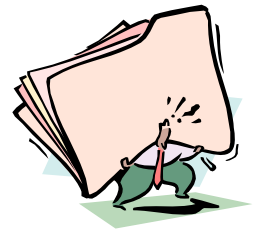


Do you have a policy and are all your staff and children aware of it and your signals, arrangements etc?

HINT: Why not use photographs from your fire drill/emergency practice to make a visual reminder of the procedure for children and families.

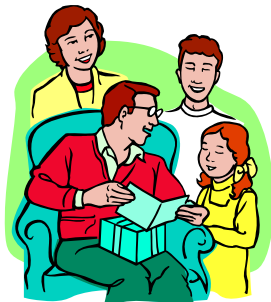
Safeguarding folder

Do you have a safe-guarding collection of policies including; CP, appropriate touch/safe-handling, safe recruitment (CRB's / references), whistle-blowing, lost child/ late collection etc.



HINT: Gather all your policies including CP into one safe-guarding folder.

Opportunities for parents to contribute to planning for children's learning



Do you have evidence of opportunities for parents to contribute to starting points for children's learning and an ongoing dialogue about their children's progress?

HINT: Have you reflected upon your current practice?
Do you engage parents in ongoing discussions?
How do you record this?
Have you thought about trying a 'Learning Story' approach?
(ask your Early Years Adviser for more information)

Daily independent access to drinking water

Do your children have daily independent access to drinking water?

HINT: Mini water cooler and cups



OFSTED contact number for parents



Do you have this clearly displayed?

HINT: It is **08456 404040**

Information Sharing Afternoon



The Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) would like to invite all Committee Members and their Supervisors and all other Member Settings in Medway to come to their Information Sharing Afternoon at

Gillingham Methodist Church,
100 Third Avenue, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2LU
on Wednesday 16th January 2008
12.30pm-3.30pm
Tea and biscuits will be provided

Come along and meet Victoria Bentley, the Senior Pre-school Development Worker and other groups to share any thoughts, ideas or concerns you may have.

A problem shared is a problem halved!

In order to know the number of places please confirm your attendance by
Friday 11th January 2008
by calling County Office on 01622 690636
or email: kentpre-school@btconnect.com

Eat Your Greens...And Reds and Yellows!

Good nutrition for a healthy start in life
Thursday 31st January 2008 – Kings Hill Conference Centre
(University of Greenwich), West Malling, Kent
from 10am-4pm

Issues to be covered, through presentations and workshops, include:

- Supporting diet in pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Healthy Start
- Childhood obesity and family nutrition
- Working through Sure Start Children's Centres
- 5 A DAY
- Play and active lifestyles

Please see enclosed flyer and application form for more information



department for
children, schools and families



Barnardo's Big Toddle

Want to do your bit for charity? And find a reason to get the kids exercising in the fresh air? We've found the solution – The Barnardo's Big Toddle.

This annual half-mile sponsored walk for under 5's saw almost 400,000 toddlers from across the UK register in 2007, raising £1.4 million for Barnardo's work with disadvantaged children and their families.



The Big Toddle can be as easy and as flexible as you like. There are Toddles organised by Barnardo's throughout the UK during the summer months. However, you can Toddle at any time of year and it has become a popular trend for nurseries and pre-schools to host their own events.

Barnardo's Big Toddle Manager Terence Lovell said:

"It is so simple to arrange your own Toddle, nurseries and pre-schools often prefer to host their own. It means they can choose a convenient location for their children, such as a local park, invite families, take a picnic along and make a day of it. Taking part in the Barnardo's Big Toddle is a great way of teaching children about those less fortunate. This year we hope to see more Toddlers than ever joining in, having fun and helping us to raise vital funds for vulnerable children throughout the UK."

Barnardo's encourages nurseries and pre-schools to arrange their own Toddles by offering them the opportunity to keep 25% of funds raised if they so choose, helping them to buy much needed equipment and materials.

Funds raised via the Barnardo's Big Toddle 2008 will be spent across the charity's services working with young children and their families; including projects for children with disabilities, family centres, play schemes and helping to lift children out of unsuitable or temporary accommodation.

For more information on Barnardo's Big Toddle and how to arrange your own event, you can visit the website www.bigtoddle.co.uk or call **0845 270 9900**.

Sing Up

Sing Up, the national singing programme for primary school-aged children, was launched on 21 November and backed by £40 million in government funding. It includes workforce development to build the confidence and expertise of potential singing leaders and a national singing resource, which is available to schools both online and in print.



The Sing Up website (www.singup.org) provides advice and support on singing, and access to the Song Bank - an ever-growing bank of tracks to use with children. Schools can also register for the free, termly Sing Up Magazine online. The first issue is in great demand and the second issue is in development and will bring you more useful articles and a free CD full of great tracks to help make your school a 'singing school'.



Happy Singing!

Core Competency and Introduction to working with young children courses

The core competency group who completed the six day course this term turned out to be a very creative bunch. As you can see from the photos they produced some really interesting creations and collections using a sock and a bit of imagination.



The training course is suitable for those new to working with young children, those who feel they have not been to any training for a long time and those who are thinking about a career working with young children.



This term the training was held at Bligh Children's Centre in Strood which made it more accessible to the local community. The 16 delegates who attended worked really well as a group and developed their skills and knowledge in areas such as child development, learning styles and observation. One delegate said " I now know I have made the right choice to work with young children." Another practitioner said " I can't wait to try storytelling with the children in my setting."

The next six sessions begin in February 2008 and will be at Blossoms Children Centre, Wayfield Community School in Chatham.



Are you interested in working with young children?

Come and join us on our Introduction to working with young children course. At Blossoms children's centre, Wayfield Community school, on Tuesday 12th February.



For details of both the core competency and introduction to working with young children courses call Jacqui Williams on 01634 338611

Nursery Teachers Network



To be held at Thamesview Infant School, Bloors Lane, Rainham, ME8 6JS

On Thursday 31st January 2008

The meeting will start at 4.30pm and finish approximately 5.45pm. Refreshments from 4.00pm

Put the date in your diary!

Further details of the focus of this meeting will be confirmed at a later date.

Please ring Kim Turner on 01634 338529 or Patsy Chester on 07717531434 to confirm you are able to attend.

Dates for the diary

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>	<u>OTHER</u>
Christmas Card Recycling— If 100 million cards are recycled 24,000 trees will be planted.	2—31 January 2008	www.woodland-trust.org.uk/cards/	Help the children in your care to recycle by taking your cards to any Tesco, WH Smith, M&S or TKMaxx store to help reach the target.
World Religion Day—The aim of world religion day is to understand and emphasize the common denominators underlying all religions.	21 January 2008	www.worldreligionday.org/	Use World Religion Day to promote different cultures and religions in your setting.
Big Schools Garden Watch Children are asked to watch the birds in their school grounds or local park and record the highest number of each species they see at any one time.	21 January— 1 February 2008	www.rspb.org.uk/schoolswatch/index.asp 0870 055 5761	A free resource pack is available for teachers and provides information about the host of curriculum linked activities that can be incorporated into this event.
Food Allergy and Intolerance Week—Allergy affects the lives of thousands of people every year and for some it is a potentially life threatening disease.	21—25 January 2008	www.allergyuk.org/	A campaign to raise awareness about the many people who suffer from food intolerance to ingredients such as wheat, dairy, eggs and gluten.
UNICEF—Day for change 2008—Water and sanitation in The Gambia.	1 February 2008	www.unicef.org.uk/regions/products/?product=57	Day for change gives children the opportunity to wear what they want for the day in return for a small donation to UNICEF.
World Storytelling Day— the theme for 2008 is dream.	20 March 2008	www.literacytrust.org.uk/whatson/annual.html#wsd	As many people as possible tell and listen to stories in as many different languages and at as many places as possible on the same day and night.

Feedback / contact details

This magazine is written for you and we really value your views, we would like you to send us news about your setting or any other information you think may be useful to other providers. Some ideas are:

- Outings with your children (e.g. local visits, trips to the park etc.)
- Events at your setting (e.g. coffee mornings, competitions etc.)
- Any media recommendations (e.g. TV programmes, books etc.)
- Ideas about the kinds of articles you would like to read

Please note if you wish to send in any photos of the children in your setting, you need to ensure permission has been granted by the parents/ carers before the photo is sent to us. Please contact us if you would like us to send you a photograph release form.

As this is your magazine we want **you** to tell **us** what you would like to see, contact us to request information on interesting topics that you feel would benefit your own setting which will in turn benefit others.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Deadline for articles</u>
Spring Issue	Friday 28 March 2008

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