April 2019 Early Years Bulletin

**Welcome to the April 2019 Bulletin**

I can’t quite believe that I am writing my last Bulletin as the Early Years SEND Lead Teacher. Time has flown and as you know I will be leaving 30th April. Thank you so much for all your good wishes, it has been very much appreciated and I know that I will miss the role. It is hoped that my replacement will be in post by September and thus I am trying to tie up as much as possible before I go to ensure processes e.tc. continue to run smoothly. Please bear in mind that the team will be without a Manager for at least 2 terms, I know they will continue to offer a very high service but with obviously reduced staff. It has been a pleasure to work with you all over the last 18 years and I wish you all the very best as you continue to offer Medway children the best start on their educational journey. Take care Tina Arterton ☺

**Cluster Meetings**

The next round of meetings are to be held in Term 5 where a senior therapist from the Children’s Services will be present to explain the processes for referring a child to them and to answer any questions you may have. We will also be talking about transition to school for those children due to start Year R in September. Your Early Years SEND Practitioner will email to invite you once the venue, date and time has been confirmed.

**Disability Access Funding (DAF)**

Please remember to check with your parents to see if they are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). If they are then on elearningatlast you will find the forms to allow you to claim the DAF - additional funding to support children. Applications now made from April onwards will be paid in the summer. Even if a child is going into school in September if they are eligible for this funding please make sure that you apply. Remember this funding is only for children in Nursery and is ring fenced for Early Years. If you are unsure please speak with your Early Years SEND Practitioner or speak to Tina Arterton EY Lead SEND Teacher.

**Support for Looked After Children**

If you are supporting a Medway Looked After Child then there is a small amount of additional funding that you can claim to support them. I have received information from Sarah Hall Virtual Head to confirm that this would be done through the PEP and that it should be completed by the Social Worker who would then email the information to virtualschool@medway.gov.uk. Once all the paperwork is processed then the funding will be devolved to you. So in the first instance I would speak with the Social Worker supporting the child to ask for support with this.

**Information notifying a change to the EHC process**

As some of you are aware if a child was going through the EHC process then a SAM meeting was held to pull information together and set targets for the draft plan. This is going to be replaced by Co-production meetings and the SEN Team have asked me to share the following information:

**Heading Co-production meetings for draft EHCPs.**

*Dear Colleague*

*The SEN team has introduced co-production meetings with parents and providers at around the 14 weeks stage of the education, health and care assessment.*

*SEN officers will arrange a date meeting with parents when the ehc assessment is agreed.  If the LA decides that a draft EHCP should be issued the meeting will go through the contents of the draft plan with parents, educational providers and professionals who attend the meeting (all who contributed will be invited) to ensure that parents agree with the description of their child’s strengths and needs and to ensure that the provision accurately reflects that recommended by professionals.  Parents can request changes at the meeting if they wish.*

*If the LA decides not to issue an EHCP, the meeting will be used as a “way forward” meeting.*

*SEN officers will let you know in good time the date of the meeting.*

*We understand that some officers have already booked meetings with some providers. Please accept our apologies if this had happened and we had not let you know about the new arrangements beforehand.*

*Kind regards SEN team*

**High Needs Funding Request**

If you are sending in a request for funding there is an example on elearning that was intended to help you. However please do not submit the example, you need to make sure you have written a description and evidenced targets that are relevant and specific to that child. If your application is not complete, eg. Not signed, evidence is missing, then the application will be rejected by SEN and you will need to provide this information before the application is discussed. This will delay the funding for a child as the requests are no longer back dated.

**EHC application reports**

If you are making a request for an application for consideration of an EHC please could you make sure that in the background section you use the prompts to help you but take them out and not just put 1 or 2 word answers next to them! These were intended to be prompts to help you as a guide to information to be included, so some may not be relevant to the children you are making a request for. Also remember do not simply say the child has communication difficulties actually specify what these are. The SEN Panel do not know these children and you need to provide as much information as possible. Also if you know that the Early Years SEND Team have supported the child and some interventions have been implemented such as Little / Big Builders or TAG you have to include these in the background information. If you don’t then the request could be turned down as evidence of interventions tried will not be recorded. If you are ever in any doubt please contact your SEND Practitioner for advice.

**Children’s Services Duty Desk**

Please note that the Children’s Services duty desk is staffed on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning until 12pm.

Their number is 0300 123 5005

**Myself and the rest of the Early Years SEND Team wish you a very Happy Easter**