

# Excel

*Newsletter for childcare,  
early years, children's centres  
and playwork practitioners*

November 2011



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# General News

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## Welcome

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**Anne Cheveralls,**  
Head of Early Engagement  
& Development.

Dear Providers,  
I would just like to draw  
your attention to the budget

option proposals that will impact on services to early years and childcare. The closing date for public consultation is 21 November 2011, so please take the opportunity to have input to this important process. I enclose a further explanation and detail in the letter and attached survey sent with this newsletter for you to complete if you wish.

### **Consultation on Proposed Changes to Early Years in Bedford Borough Modernisation Programme 2012**

Following approval by Executive in September 2011, the Children's Services, Schools and Families Directorate has published its policy proposals as part of the Council's Modernisation programme. These policy proposals are important if the Council is to find £36m of savings over the next four years; and they are now subject to public consultation until 5pm on 21 November 2011. Responses will then be considered by the Council's Executive on 7 December.

As part of the published policy proposals, Children's Services, Schools and Families Directorate included proposals for a whole service restructure, indicating that there are proposed reductions to services across the whole Directorate and that these would be subject to consultation. This proposal mentioned that the detail of further reductions in addition to those originally specified in the report would "emerge" and we are now providing further details for the whole service restructure. These proposals specifically include the proposed changes to the Early Engagement & Development Services.

Bedford Borough Council currently spends £4 million per year on the provision of Early Years services for families including the 11,682 under fives within Bedford Borough. This includes the funding for the provision of 15 hours per week of free childcare and early years education; and the funding for 10 free hours per week of childcare and early years provision for 2 year olds in areas of highest need; which will continue as per the council's statutory duties.

### **In addition, the current services provided by Early Engagement & Development include:**

- Staff recruitment, retention and vacancy bulletin;
- Staff qualifications and training;
- Every Child a Talker (ECaT ) sustainability;
- Family Information Service, information, brokering and outreach services for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-19 years, including the Family Services Directory and the Children with Disabilities Register;
- Children's Centre services – contract compliance, performance management and Quality Assurance, delivery of a wide range of services through a network of 15 Children's Centres on 16 sites to under 5's and their families;
- Marketing support & advice;
- Sustainability funding and support to childcare providers to ensure that there are enough childcare places to meet the needs of families across Bedford Borough;
- Childminder start-up funding and support, to ensure flexibility of the childcare provision for families across the Borough;
- Childcare new places funding and support;
- Inspection / registration support and advice;
- Funding workshops;
- Roles and responsibilities of committees;
- Inclusion funding and support;
- Early Years Foundation Stage support and moderation;
- Play principles;
- Childcare sufficiency assessment;
- Quality improvement.

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**The current budget policy proposals for Early Engagement & Development are to find savings of approximately £1.1million over the 3 years from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015. Specifically, these proposals are to:**

- Review the staffing structure for Early Engagement & Development, which does include the removal of the Head of Service post and functions combined with other areas.
- Promote the holiday play schemes in a combined summer booklet with sports and leisure activities.
- Deliver the contract for support and training to Childminders in Bedford Borough differently and for less money.
- Implement a full cost recovery model for training to the early year's workforce, thereby saving £400,000 over the 3 years.
- Implement a phased reduction in the Early Years Sustainability grant given to the private, voluntary and independent sector, and family support services, by £285,000 over the three years
- Reduce management and administration costs of Children's Centres by 20% and thereby achieving a saving of £364,000

As an identified stakeholder to the current Early Engagement & Development service, it is important that you understand the proposals as they currently stand and that this is an open, genuine consultation were you can have your say. In order to ensure we capture the response, thoughts and comments on these proposals, please fill in the questionnaire sent with this newsletter and return it to the freepost address below.

Alternatively, you can respond online at [www.bedford.gov.uk/budget2012](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/budget2012); however, if you have any specific concerns or queries that might require a further response and dialogue, then these should be directed to me by email to; [anne.cheveralls@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:anne.cheveralls@bedford.gov.uk)

**Anne Cheveralls**

Head of Early Engagement & Development

Please return the survey to **FREEPOST ANG5840, Bedford, MK40 1ZD** or you can fill in an online version of the survey at this web address [www.forms.bedford.gov.uk/earlyyears](http://www.forms.bedford.gov.uk/earlyyears)

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## Outstanding Childminders and Settings

We would like to congratulate the following childminders and settings for receiving an 'outstanding' grading in their recent Ofsted inspection:

- **Claire Boyden, Childminder.**
- **St. Mark's Church Pre – School.**
- **Queens Park Community Nursery.**
- **Dawn Til Dusk Before and After School Club.**
- **Little Pilgrims.**
- **Brickhill Baptist Pre – School.**
- **Queens Park Neighbourhood Centre**

An 'outstanding' grading means that the provision is exceptionally high quality and is a reflection of the hard work that the childminder and settings have put into providing an excellent service for the children in their care.

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## Inspection Outcomes in Bedford Borough

We are very pleased to report that according to figures published by Ofsted in June 2011, 91% of settings and 80% of childminders in Bedford Borough have received a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' grading, compared to an overall national average of 77%. This places Bedford Borough in the top 10% of local authorities. Well done everyone, keep up the good work!



## St Mark's Pre-school visit by Chris Hilliard

St Mark's Pre-school, in Brickhill, were graded as 'outstanding' following their recent Ofsted inspection. In recognition of this, Chris Hilliard, Executive Director for Children's Services, Schools and Families at Bedford Borough Council visited the pre-school to present them with their Ofsted certificate.

Mr Hilliard said: "Congratulations to St Mark's Pre-School for receiving the top award of 'Outstanding' from Ofsted. I was so pleased to see the children really learning through play and enjoying themselves engaging in a wide variety of activities – all within an environment where high standards of behaviour are the norm.

"It was a privilege to visit such a super provision and to be able to recognise the quality of the pre-school which makes such a difference to the community."

## National Playday

National Playday is an annual event when thousands of children around the U.K., together with their families, visit hundreds of community events. As well as a celebration of children's right to play, Playday is a campaign that highlights the importance of play in children's lives.

This year on 3rd August Bedford Borough Playday took place in Bedford Park. Hundreds of families joined in a range of activities around the park, with many taking the opportunity to stay for the whole day and enjoy a picnic.

There was something for everyone. Tony Delahoy showed the children how to make giant bubbles, Bedford Museum exhibited some Victorian toys and the RSPCA brought along some animals including a snake which the children could hold.

The weather was brilliant and one of the most popular attractions was a water slide organised by the play rangers, with lots of children taking the opportunity to get soaked and cool down!

The Children's Centres were well represented, with Goldington &



Putnoe laying on heuristic play, Pine Cones parachute play, Pear Tree messy play and Cauldwell Baby Brasserie and soft play

Children were able to make themselves a hat using their 'forest skills' courtesy of Alison Taylor from the childcare team, The Family Information Service brought along a range of toys and there was also giant painting and activities provided by the Park Rangers.

During Playday, a Play survey was handed out to parents/carers. This asked what they felt were the barriers to their children playing freely in the community, to find out what support parents need with play ideas and advice, and to show the impact play has on a child's development. 63 completed surveys were returned.

Many thanks to everyone who came along to support the day.

### Summary of results

- 70% of respondents attend children centres
- The majority of children played in their home or garden on a daily basis
- 82% of children play in the local park at least once a week
- 88% of respondents agreed that there are enough free play areas in the area
- 67% of respondents do not believe it is safe for children to play outside in there area (predominantly due to age of child, but traffic and personal safety were barriers)
- The majority of respondents believed 10 years of age was the age that children should be allowed to play outside unsupervised
- The majority of families understand the range of benefits play has for children's development

## Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

Under the Childcare Act 2006, Bedford Borough Council has a duty to make sure there is sufficient childcare provision in the Borough to enable parents to work, or undertake education and training leading to work. In support of this duty, we are required to carry out regular assessments looking at childcare supply and demand in the area. This is called a Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA). The assessment helps us to identify if any gaps exist in the childcare market. By working closely with our partners we will be able to plan how to address these gaps.

The Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2011 is now complete. The final version of the report is available to download from the link below. If you have any comments regarding the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment or comments in general regarding childcare in your area then please contact Bedford Borough Family Information Service:

Freephone: **0800 023 2057**

Email: **[fis@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:fis@bedford.gov.uk)**

[http://www.bedford.gov.uk/education\\_and\\_learning/early\\_years\\_and\\_childcare/childcare\\_assessment.aspx](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/early_years_and_childcare/childcare_assessment.aspx)

## Daisy Hill Children's Centre - New Group 'Hour for Me'

Following regular discussions with parents attending Daisy Hill, it has been identified that parents would like to attend a group that specifically gives them the opportunity to meet up and chat over a cuppa and at the same time let their children play.

Following this parental feedback, a new group 'Hour for Me' started in November from Daisy Hill Children's Centre.

The group aims to give parents opportunity to meet for an hour, once a week to chat to other families and staff /invited guests.

Although the group aims to be informal Daisy Hill staff hopes to promote the family support work that can be offered from the children's centre, such as debt advice and housing issues for example.

There group launched on 1st November and families and outside agencies were invited to attend.

## Wilstead Children's Centre brings the farm to Elstow



With kind permission from the curator of Elstow's Moot Hall, Wilstead Children's Centre brought the farm to families in Elstow. Despite the gusty weather, over 100 parents and under 5's came to see the Shetland pony, pigs, sheep, ducks and hens in the grounds of the historic Moot Hall.

The star of the show was definitely the gorgeous Labrador puppy who adored having her ears stroked by the children. "We were delighted to meet so many new families and have the chance to explain what Wilstead Children's Centre can offer families with young children" said Jo Maule the Children's Centre Manager.

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## Goldington Family Centre Receives Vital Funding Boost for Early Education

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Goldington Family Centre has been awarded a grant of £30,000 for its work aimed at helping young children raise their educational achievement.

The Goldington Family Centre provides a range of services and early years learning activities at Goldington and Putnoe Children's Centres and Smarteez Neighbourhood Nursery and Pre-school.

The three year grant will fund the salary for Rebecca Baker, the Key Learning Co-ordinator, who will develop and monitor the new Keys to Learning service for disadvantaged families.

Kate Martinow the Centre Director at Goldington Family Centre, said: "We recognise that parents are their child's first educator and this project supports and enables them

to develop life long family learning. Without the funding from the Lloyds TSB Foundation this innovative pilot project would not be possible."

Jude Stevens is the region's Grant Manager at the Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales, she says: "In this the Foundation's 25th anniversary year, we are very proud to support the Goldington Family Centre, a charity providing support for vulnerable families and delivering great outcomes for them. Seventy percent of the Foundation's funding goes towards core costs like salaries and overheads, if your charity is working to tackle disadvantage and needs funds to cover these sorts of costs please visit our website [www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk](http://www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk) to see if your organisation is eligible for funding."

For more information about the Keys to Learning project, please visit [www.goldingtonandputnoechildrencentre.org.uk](http://www.goldingtonandputnoechildrencentre.org.uk) or call: Rebecca Baker on 01234 340552/341977 or email: [keylearning@btinternet.com](mailto:keylearning@btinternet.com)

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## Queens Park Neighbourhood Centre Take The Train

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On Monday 24 August, Queen's Park Neighbourhood Centre staff accompanied local families on the train from Bedford to Marston Forest Centre. Unlike our Willen Lake trip the previous Thursday, the sun decided to shine on us and we had a great day out.

Families and children enjoyed the train journey, which is really short and easy. They appreciated the views, open spaces and forest walks and got excited about all sorts of new experiences, including seeing rabbit poo for the first time! They enjoyed looking out over Stewartby Lake, rushing down to the water's edge to get even closer. Some families enjoyed some fruit-picking along the way. Everyone wore themselves



out with the walks, views, play parks and all the running around and walking they did.

This is part of Queen's Park Neighbourhood Centre's drive over the coming year to encourage healthy and active lifestyles. We want to show families how easy and fun it is to keep themselves and their children active. We also want to help local families learn about

what opportunities and local attractions are out there that are cheap and easy to visit.

### Families said:

"It was a great day out – my son really enjoyed himself."

"It was fun and we all enjoyed ourselves."

"It was great to be outdoors and see all the water."

## Sensory Equipment Library

As part of the DCATCH (Disabled Children's Access to Childcare) project we have been able to purchase some fantastic sensory equipment and have set up a library enabling settings and childminders to borrow any of the equipment, helping to make their provision more inclusive to children that have a disability or additional need.

### The equipment includes:

Bubble Tube, Bubble Dome, Dark Dens, Lightboxes and Translucent Rocks, and Fibre Optic Lights.



An email was sent recently with a copy of the catalogue attached, which outlines the terms and conditions of hire as well as information on the refundable deposit. Please take the opportunity to look at these excellent resources and find out how they could be used in your setting.

For more information please contact Nicholas Ralph on 01234 228418 or email: [nicholas.ralph@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:nicholas.ralph@bedford.gov.uk)

## Important changes to Safeguarding Posters and Booklets

There have been several changes to the contact information on the 'Safeguarding Children' Poster and in the 'Safeguarding is Everybody's Business' Booklet.



The emergency out of hours number (Intake and Assessment) is now 0300 300 8123

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) number is now 01234 276693

The National Childminding Association number is now 01234 269512

Please update your copies as this is something which an Ofsted Inspector may well check.

If you do not have a copy of either publication, please contact the Family Information Service 0800 023 2057 or email [fis@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:fis@bedford.gov.uk)

## Updating your information online

The Family Information Service is introducing a system whereby you will be able to update details of your childcare business or family support service via an online form. This will virtually eliminate the need for us to send out paper update forms, saving on postage and printing.

A secure log in will be issued to all providers and as well as allowing you to update as often as you wish, once verified, the updated information will appear on your profile on the FIS website much more quickly than under the current system.

We will shortly start testing the childminder form and will be contacting a few childminders to ask for their help with the trial. If you would be interested in 'volunteering' for this, please email [fis@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:fis@bedford.gov.uk) or call the helpline 0800 023 2057

# Childminder News

## National Childminding Association Bedford Borough Project

**Contacts: Alison Mooney:**  
01234 269512

**Helen Northrop:** 01234 269512

Both Alison and Helen are Childminding Development and Network Coordinators based at Peter Pan Children's Centre, Edward Road, Bedford MK42 9DR

**Caroline Morris, Childminding Services Coordinator:**  
01908 551620

Caroline manages the Bedford Project and coordinates the Community Childminding Scheme for referred children.

The team aim to visit all childminders and are now using the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) quality improvement programme, in line with other settings. We have received very positive feedback. Here is what one newly registered childminder

has said following a visit from Helen Northrop.

"I found your visit extremely helpful and its reassuring to know I am on the right track, I have taken the time to implement all your suggestions and have started to observe my son and managed to make two observations on the 6 month old child who is starting in September (I had him for a transition morning). Looking to start my SEF this weekend"

We know quality visits improve grades and childminding practice so please do take up the opportunity to meet with your development worker.

### Training

NCMA continue to offer core training for newly registered childminders and for those wishing to refresh. We have updated our LSCB training and this is now known as Safeguarding - Raising Awareness. If it has been three years since you attended CAF and Safeguarding training, please call Alison or Helen to book a place.

All core training is free of charge.

We are now offering Saturday training following many requests from childminders. EYFS Observations and Planning, Safeguarding - Raising Awareness and CAF are available over one full day session. You do not need to attend all the topics, just come along for whichever you need. Places must be booked through Alison or Helen.

### Community Childminding Scheme

The Community Childminding Scheme places children referred from social care with childminders. Placements can be planned or for emergency situations. Daycare, overnight and weekends can be accommodated at short notice. If you would like to find out more about the Scheme, please call Caroline Morris on 01908 551620.

If you are aware of parents seeking specialist childminding for private contracts, Caroline can also help find an appropriate childminder.

## Care in a child's own home

The Family Information Service is receiving an increasing number of enquiries from parents looking for care in their home – particularly in the evenings. This is either because they work irregular hours or sometimes because they are studying at college evening classes. It is proving difficult to find suitable care, leaving parents with no choice than to use unregistered babysitters. This means that they are unable to claim help with the cost of childcare

either through the Tax Credits system or from their training provider.

We have noticed that some childminders in the Bedford area have been advertising their services as evening babysitters on childcare websites. If you offer care in a child's own home, then please contact the FIS, as we would be able to note this against your record and pass your details on to parents contacting us. Even if you are only on the voluntary register then parents would be able to claim help with their childcare costs.



Call the helpline 0800 023 2057 or email [fis@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:fis@bedford.gov.uk)

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# Provider News

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## Brickhill Baptist Pre-school – 40th Birthday Celebration

Brickhill Baptist Pre-school hosted a 40th Birthday party at the Baptist Church for current and previous children, families, employees and Borough staff. Activities were available for children, including face painting and a bouncy castle. Teas, coffees and cakes were also provided. The party was also attended by the Deputy Mayor Charles Royden and Richard Fuller MP. There was a display area of photographs of the setting over the years as well as comments from previous children. Brickhill Baptist recently were graded Outstanding by Ofsted in all areas and were praised for “recognising



each child as an individual and having highly effective partnerships with parents, carers and other professionals which ensure that individual children's needs are met and their welfare is always promoted”.

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## Clapham Pre-School has a New Home

Clapham Pre-School opened the doors of its new purpose built facility to the public last month.

The ribbon to the new building was cut by 3 children – a past, present, and future pre-schooler whose names were pulled out of the hat on the day. The Pre-School Manager Kamal then put a drop of oil on the threshold as a traditional Indian custom of welcome to symbolise growth and enrichment.



Chair of the committee Louise Tranquada said “We are thrilled with this wonderful building which has been designed to maximise our children’s opportunities for learning through play.

It has been made possible by support from the Bedford Charity (the Harpur Trust), Bedford Borough Council Early Years Funding and Rural Grant Assistance. The canopy and outdoor play area was funded by the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund, and Bedford Borough Council Ward Members Fund, and we are very grateful to all our funders. There was also some serious fundraising by the staff and committees past and present, raising over £4,000 last year. We are blessed with the support we have received from the local community, making our facility truly a community achievement.”

The Pre-School is now able to welcome 40 children per session from the age of 2 up to school age. With an Early Years Professional leading a team of dedicated staff, and a spacious permanent building designed to be extended as our numbers increase, this really is a dream come true and a wonderful reward for all the hard work put in over the years.

## Inclusion Matters

At the start of another school year, we hope that the term has started well for you and the children and families who access your settings.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and hope to see you at the Inclusion Network Meetings this term details of which are outlined below.

### Inclusion Network Meetings

The next Inclusion Network Meeting will be held on:

**Wednesday 23 November** 7.00 – 8.30

Overdale Tots Pre-School,

High View, Putnoe, Beds, MK41 8EN

Tel 01234 327247

During the meetings, we will update you on current changes within the Local Authority Support Officer teams, progress on the SEN Green Paper and Early Years Foundation Stage consultation, discuss any training needs that you may have and provide general updates on other inclusion matters. As always, there will be opportunities to discuss any issues or concerns that you may have and to network with others attending the meeting.

The meetings are open to Sencos, Equal Opportunities and Looked After Children Co-ordinators. There is no charge to attend the meetings, which offer opportunities to network with colleagues, share practice and ideas and for mutual support, so we hope that you will do your best to attend one of the meetings.

If there are any particular issues that you would like to discuss or share at the meeting, please contact your Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher.

To book a place on one of the sessions, please contact Claire Clements on 01234 276298 or email [claire.clements@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:claire.clements@bedford.gov.uk).

### Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

A revised CAF training programme has begun. The training has been renamed "Supporting Families through Integrated Working" and takes place over a two day period. If you would like to apply for a place on the training, please contact Caron Montague on [caron.montague@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:caron.montague@bedford.gov.uk) or 01234 718393.

Changes to the CAF form are being made and the new form will be available to download from the LSCB website from October. Further details of all the CAF processes including the training dates and CAF form can be found on the LSCB website <http://www.bedfordshirelscb.org.uk>

**Merle Jackson** - Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher (children and families with additional needs)

## Hello! From Your Early Years Education Consultant in the Year of Communication

2011 is the Year of Communication with events and resources detailed on the Hello website. Hopefully all settings will have received information about the planned focus on Year of Communication Events for the autumn term.

If you haven't received your pack of materials about story time and story telling then please contact your Early Years Education Consultant at Bedford Borough School Improvement Team for details.

Story telling weaves its own special magic, different to a read story. We all have stories to tell and share – our own stories and the retelling of stories that we know and love. Anyone can become a teller of stories – it takes a little practice and perhaps a move outside of our comfort zones if we are used to telling from books. It's worth the effort! Let us help you get started, we can come and tell a story in your setting.

See [www.hello.org.uk](http://www.hello.org.uk) or contact your Early Years Education Consultant for more information.. let the story telling begin!

Janet Vakilpour on behalf of EYEC team at Bedford Borough School Improvement Services

Tel: 01234 836173

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## Changes to the Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher Team

Jenny Amos will be leaving her post as Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher for children and families with additional needs at the end of October to join the Sensory Impairment Team as a Teacher for the Visually Impaired.

We are reviewing service delivery and there are consequently changes to the way we work, with new processes being put in place.

To this effect, from Monday October 31st, please telephone Sue Seth, Support Officer for the Early Years Support Team on 01234 290770, if you would like support from a Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher.

We are sure that you would like to join us in thanking Jenny for all the work she has done with settings, schools, children and families during the time that she has undertaken the post, and in wishing her every success in her new post.

Tim Long, Head of Vulnerable Pupils and Principal Educational Psychologist

## New settings delivering ECAT

I'm delighted to say that Brickhill Baptist Pre-School has now become an ECAT setting. Following a bespoke induction to ECAT during the summer ECAT will be rolled out this term.

If you would like to be part of ECAT contact: Sue Saunders 01234 228152 or [sue.saunders@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:sue.saunders@bedford.gov.uk) to arrange a bespoke induction.

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## ECAT News

Our ECAT Network Meeting on 3rd November looked at Widgit Software.

Following the successful launch of the Widgit Software training in July our network meeting was a time for us to "Show and Tell" the many uses of the software.

Widgit Symbols have been designed in collaboration with language and communication experts, and enable individuals of all ages to gain access to written information and communicate more independently. Whether you are an individual or an organisation, Widgit provides software, resources and services to help you make information more accessible using Widgit Symbols.

For information on future ECAT Network Meetings please email:

[sue.saunders@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:sue.saunders@bedford.gov.uk)

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## Network meetings

We have arranged for our termly network meetings to be held on the following dates:

### Early years – Pre-schools and Nurseries

**15th November** 7 - 9pm at Oakley Pre-school and

**22nd November** 7 - 9pm at Stepping Stones Pre- School

We will be talking about marketing / PR and safeguarding- keeping records and informing parents. There will also be a valuable chance to network with colleagues from other settings, and share good practice and ideas.

### Committee network

**6th December** 7.30 - 9 pm Wilstead Pre-School

Roles and responsibilities, both of borough staff and the support that they can give, and an overview of roles on Committees from Chair to volunteer. induction packs – what should they contain?

### Advertising for new staff

A chance to meet committee members from other settings, and share ideas.

As these events are extremely popular the places are restricted to 2 per setting To book contact: Nicholas Ralph 01237228657 or email

[nicholas.ralph@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:nicholas.ralph@bedford.gov.uk)

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## Attachment Conference – date for your diary.

Northamptonshire Childminding Association has organised a conference on Attachment Theory which will be delivered by Sir Richard Bowlby, son of Dr. John Bowlby whose research on attachment and child development left a lasting impression on psychology, education, child care and parenting. We would like to invite childminders and other early years practitioners in Bedford to join us.

The conference is in Northampton on February 25th 2012 when Sir Richard will speak to us about his Father's work. Sir Richard is a speaker who motivates all who hear his talk about the importance of babies and young children forming secure attachments. This conference will be of use to all registered childcare professionals and staff who support them. You will be able to book a place for this during November via our website [www.childmindingnorthants.org.uk](http://www.childmindingnorthants.org.uk) We are expecting this conference to fill up quickly and places are limited, so please check our website for booking details.

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# News from the Workforce Development and BTAC Team

## Training Directory 2011-2012

Due to the government's fiscal review and allocation of grants to Local Authorities the budget for workforce development in early years has been severely cut. To this end we have been unable to produce a physical copy of the 2011-12 Training Directory, so a virtual one can now be found on our webpage - [www.bedford.gov.uk/trainingdirectory](http://www.bedford.gov.uk/trainingdirectory).

The variety of courses on offer at the moment is minimal as the Children's Services Senior Leadership Team are still to finalise the budget allocation and what it can be spent on.

We hope to update the website with new courses once this decision has been made.

## BTAC - Can now deliver Apprenticeships

BTAC are now able to offer the Apprenticeship framework for 16-24 year olds for childcare and support staff in schools.

The minimum hours of employment for an apprentice must be at least 30 hours per week

Employment is a fundamental part of an Apprenticeship and in this context is more than just having a contract of employment. An apprentice must be employed in a job role with a productive purpose, which will allow them to have the wider employment experience key to an Apprenticeship.

If you would be interested in this scheme and for more information contact:

Sue Saunders 01234 228152 or email: [sue.saunders@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:sue.saunders@bedford.gov.uk)



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## New Step into Childcare Course for 2012

CACHE Level 1 Step into Childcare – Starts Wednesday 18 January 2012 to Wednesday 28 March 2012 (10 sessions, excluding half term) - 12.30pm - 15.00pm - Queens Park Neighbourhood Centre

A practical, hands on course for people interested in working with children aged 0-5 years, in a pre-school or nursery environment. Ideal for people wishing to take a Level 2 or Level 3 childcare course in the future.

For further information contact Sally Gloyn 01234 228809 or email: [sally.gloyn@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:sally.gloyn@bedford.gov.uk)

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## Do you want a helping hand in your childcare setting or school?

The BTAC Team run Level 1 childcare courses in Bedford each term. Many of our learners are mature students and are eager to progress onto a full Level 2 qualification..

To undertake a Level 2 qualification they are looking for voluntary placements for a minimum of 10 hours per week for up to a year within the early years sector, working with children of 5 years or under.

Our Level 1 students have taken a very practical hands-on course and have a good basic understanding of Safeguarding, the EYFS and how to support children's learning; they would be invaluable extra support for your setting.

Some of our students also have English as a second language and could support you with translation.

If you would be interested in offering a placement for future students or would like more information please contact me 01234-228152 or email: [sue.saunders@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:sue.saunders@bedford.gov.uk)

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## Educational Psychologist and Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher Bookable Drop-ins for Parent/ Carers and Settings

We are considering offering drop-ins sessions for parents/carers and possibly settings in suitable venues such as Children Centres etc. These would operate during the working day and parents/carers or practitioners would be able to book a slot of 30 or 45 minutes to which they could bring a concern to discuss with an Educational Psychologist (EP) and a Foundation Stage Advisory Teacher (FSAT). The time would be used to problem-solve around any issue troubling parents/carers (e.g. concerns about their child's social and play skills, learning, behavioural issues) or for practitioners to problem-solve around individual children or wider setting issues (e.g. how to develop the resilience of traumatised children, how to develop a language-friendly setting). Issues would be discussed in confidence, on the understanding that the EP and FSAT will not have all the answers but that by talking together some ways forward might be found. The parent/carer/practitioner would be encouraged to note down key points from the discussion and any ideas or agreed actions.

If this is something that you feel parents/carers and practitioners would find useful, please contact us to let us have your views on ways to proceed.

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