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Childminder Network

Autumn 2025



Agenda



- Updates
- Family Information Service Updates Form
- What's going well - Networking
- Applying for school places and considerations around delaying school start
- Support for childminders
- Attendance
- Identifying vulnerability and planning for improvements– tools available

Updates



- Changing Language – “early education” and “educator”
- New EYFS in place - [EYFS_statutory_framework_for_childminders_.pdf](#)
- New Ofsted Framework from November - [Early years inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information - GOV.UK](#)
- A new Best Start in Life website ([beststartinlife.gov.uk](#) or ‘The Best Start in Life parent hub’) will replace the existing NHS Start for Life and UK Government Childcare Choices websites. Parents will now be able to access that same information and support in one place with content on topics that will take them from pregnancy, through their child's journey to starting school and beyond.
- Save the date – Conference – Saturday 14th March 2026 in Horsham

Sign-up to the virtual DfE Early Years and Childcare Childminder Roadshow



This event for Childminders is the first early years event since the publication of government's Giving Every Child The Best Start In Life strategy and is a great opportunity for you to engage with DfE and be part of shaping government's next steps on its delivery.

- The event will include an overview and update from the Department for Education, and opportunity for you to ask questions, and share experiences and views in virtual breakout sessions.
- Attendees will be invited to choose two sessions from the list below and will be provided the link to these rooms during the event.
- **EY Entitlement & Funding** - The Childcare Entitlements team and the Funding team will be present to hear about your challenges and barriers and opportunities on the working parent entitlements, it is also an opportunity to share your thoughts to the funding team ahead of the funding consultation planned launch in the Spring and how we can design and deliver a simpler system to access early education and childcare.
- **EY Qualifications & Workforce** - A room to discuss issues relating to the recruitment and retention of childminders, as well as qualification requirements. The team will be particularly interested to hear your views on the workforce initiatives announced in the Best Start in Life strategy.
- **EY Quality & SEND** - We are keen for childminders to share their perspectives on the free training and support provided by the department to help deliver quality education and hear your experiences of looking after and supporting children with SEND and developmental differences and delays.
- **School Based Nurseries** - This session will include information about the recently announced phases of the School-Based Nurseries capital grant programme, and the opportunities for childminders to get involved.
- **Best Start Family Services** - This session is an opportunity to hear more about the Best Start Family Service and the role of Childminders in helping to provide support for families. We will be seeking your input to the next phase of developing the strategy published in July.

The event will be held online on Thursday 25th September 18:30-20:00, please use this link to sign up - [Register](#)

- This event and room sessions will not be recorded due to event restrictions.

Review and revitalise your business model!

Funded course to support your childcare business



'Strengthen, Grow and Future-Proof: Building Your Sustainable Childcare Business'



Take a day away from 'business-as-usual' to explore how your business currently works and what could work better.

If you have any questions regarding this training, please email early.years.training@westsussex.gov.uk.

This course has 2 parts, a short online session followed by a full day face to face session.

[Strengthen, Grow and Future-Proof: Building your sustainable childcare business \(North\)](#)

- Part 1 - 17 October 2025 – 9.30am to 10.30am (Online)
- Part 2 - 18 November 2025 – 9.00am to 3.30pm (County Hall North, Horsham)

[Strengthen, Grown and Future-Proof: Building your sustainable childcare business \(South\)](#)

- Part 1 - 17 October 2025 – 9.30am to 10.30am (Online)
- Part 2 - 19 November 2025 – 09.00am to 3.30pm (Field Place, Worthing)

Workforce Support



- We are working on developing access to a range of courses to support new early years educators and those developing in their role. Please watch out for more information in the weekly newsletter that will be coming soon
- You asked, we did, so please use this resource to advertise vacancies free of charge - [Advertise early years and childcare jobs - West Sussex County Council](#)



Sharing: What's going well



Statutory School Age



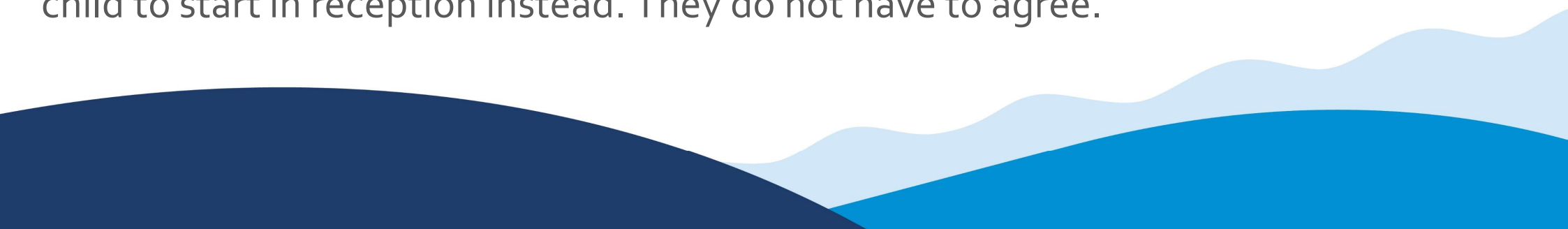
Compulsory school age

Your child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If your child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates then they reach compulsory school age on that date.

For example, if your child reaches compulsory school age on 31 March, they must start full-time education at the beginning of the next term (summer term that year).

If your child starts in the September after they turn 5

Your child will go into [year 1](#). Contact the local council or school if you want your child to start in reception instead. They do not have to agree.



Starting School



- [Summer born children: advice for parents - GOV.UK](#)
- [Admission of children outside their normal year group - West Sussex County Council](#)
- What are the rules around accessing childcare while being home educated?
[Elective home education: guide for parents](#)

Activity/Discussion: What are the benefits and risks of delaying school start – for the child, their family and the EY setting



Activity



	Child	Child's Family	Setting
Risks			
Benefits			

Points to consider and share with parents



Funding for the setting – needs to be agreed before a place is offered – via EYFE and/or SENAT

There may not be a place in the EY setting

Parents need to apply for a place and then apply to defer/delay start

Every time a child changes school, they will need to reapply for admission outside their school age group

EYFE stops in the term after a child turns 5

What is the impact for staff and other children in the setting?

Impact of the child not starting school with their peers

EYFE stops in the term after a child turns 5

School transport may not be funded after the end of Year 10

Supporting Families



What can you do as an EY Educator to support:

- A child to be ready for school?
- A parent to apply for a school place?
- A parent who is anxious about their child starting school?

[Home - Starting Reception](#)

[School Readiness Questionnaire](#)

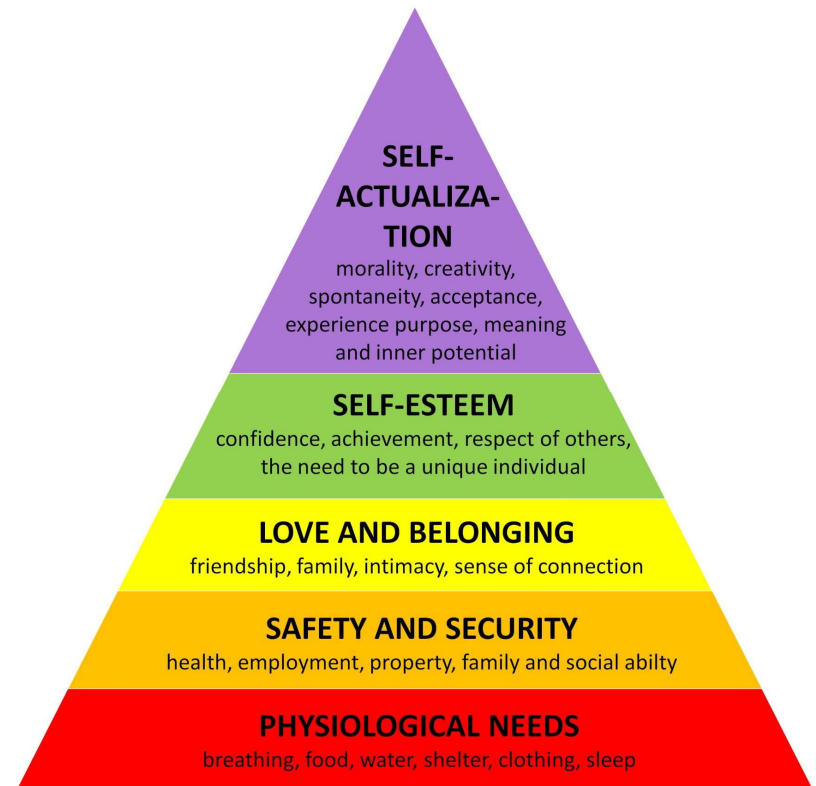
Do you get any feedback from schools?



Attendance/Belonging/Inclusion



- Why does attendance matter?
- How do you monitor attendance?
- How do you identify concerns?
- How do you address concerns and provide information, advice and support?
- How do you support children and families to feel welcome and included?



Childminder support



- Networking groups
- Peer support
- Would you like to get involved? Email your setting support inbox.
 - SettingSupportCrawley@westsussex.gov.uk
 - SettingSupportHorsham@westsussex.gov.uk
 - SettingSupportMidSussex@westsussex.gov.uk
 - SettingSupportChichester@westsussex.gov.uk
 - SettingSupportAdurWorthing@westsussex.gov.uk
 - SettingSupportArun@westsussex.gov.uk

VOLUNTEER



Are you a Reflective Educator?



- Do you have an improvement plan?
- Do you use tools to support your practice?
- Do you audit your learning environment?



Thank you

