NATIONAL NEWS

Primary Assessment in England: Government Consultation Response
The consultation on primary assessment earlier this year sought views on a number of key proposals about the future of the statutory primary assessment system.

Proposals from the consultation include:
• The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile would be retained, but the government will explore the feasibility of reducing the number of Early Learning Goals assessed at the end of the Reception year;
• The descriptors for a typical level of development against the Early Learning Goals will be made clearer and more closely aligned to the curriculum in Year 1;
• Retaining the existing assessment scales (‘emerging’, ‘expected’ and ‘exceeding’), and considering the introduction of an additional band within the ‘emerging’ scale. Scale descriptors will be clarified.
• Developing, testing and evaluating a new baseline statutory assessment ready for introduction in Reception classes by autumn 2020.
• Using the baseline as the starting point for calculating progress measures when pupils reach the end of key stage 2. (It would not be used to track or predict the progress of individual pupils.)

Closing Gaps Early
This report by the Sutton Trust examines the current state of early years policy in light of the evidence about what works. The report covers three types of early years policy: parental leave and parenting; early education and childcare; and financial support to households with young children. Key report recommendations include:
• The shift in focus of childcare policy away from quality towards quantity, with less focus on educational development, is ill-advised and should be reversed.
• Funding to ensure that qualified teachers remain in school nursery and reception classes, and that local authorities can continue to provide support for continuing professional development.
• Parenting policies should build on research evidence to help parents provide the best possible early start for their children.
• Early years teachers should have Qualified Teacher Status and government should invest in improving qualifications for all practitioners in the sector.

Language as a child wellbeing indicator
This report by the Early Intervention Foundation calls for early language development to be regarded as a child wellbeing indicator and treated as a public health issue, like vaccination, obesity and mental health. Other recommendations in this report include:
• Improving monitoring of language development in the pre-school years;
• Further research on the impact of children language development on an individual’s life course;
• More robust evaluation of interventions aimed at children’s language development;
• The adoption of a common criteria and terminology for measuring and identifying language difficulties;
Better Start case studies on speech, language and communication

A Better Start has produced some case studies of innovative practice in language and communication as follows:

- **Talking together (Bradford):** a programme that supports the communication and language development of two-year-olds through home visits that encourage play and conversation.
- **Making it REAL (Lambeth):** an evidence-based programme that works with practitioners to support children’s early literacy, language and communication development in the family home.

LOCAL NEWS

Safeguarding – network meetings

The Early Years Child Protection Information Networks are taking place in the week after half-term, at three venues around the county.

Designated persons for Child Protection can also join the Early Years Child Protection community on the Learn Together Hub (Learn Together Cambridgeshire) which offers all key updates in one place, with alerts delivered by e-mail if you want them.

Practitioner views needed on LSCB Cambridgeshire Threshold Document

As part of the Cambridgeshire LSCB Threshold audit, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Boards would like to gain the views of our practitioners regarding the document and the use of the document as part of their practice in safeguarding children and families.

Please ask/forward this link onto as many practitioners within your organisation as possible. The survey can be accessed here: [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/cambsthreshold](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/cambsthreshold)

The closing date is 6 November 2017.

EYFSP Data 2017

This summer saw a further increase in the percentage of Cambridgeshire children achieving a good level of development (GLD) at the end of reception year. In the 2017 results for the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile, 70.6% of all children in Cambridgeshire met the national measure, an increase of nearly 1% from last year.

The proportion of children eligible for free school meals achieving the GLD went down slightly, but the percentage of children with SEND went up 3%, with over 21% achieving a good level of development. This represents a huge amount of good work from all our providers – well done!

Annual Telephone Contact

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving and developing quality across the sector, we will be contacting all our non-member settings during the year to discuss how you are working, and any issues you are facing. We believe this process, which is just being finalised, will be mutually beneficial, and will help us to improve and focus our support this year and into the future.
CASEY Roadshows
The new look CASEY, our online assessment recording system, is coming later this term, with better functionality, an improved screen layout, and printing options. Sign-up for CASEY is free, and you don’t even have to be a member. CASEY will show you at a glance which children are not at their expected level of development across all the areas of the EYFS.

If you have questions, or have struggled to get to grips with the system, the CASEY roadshows in November, with presentations and surgery slots are now available to book. Full details to sign up for the system and to book roadshow places will appear on the CASEY page on Learn Together (see Business Systems and Tools).

Early Years Provider Reference Group (EYPRG)
The EYPRG is a small and dedicated group of providers who help the local authority with the big decisions about funding. The group represents all aspects of early years provision.

Meetings take place in the daytime, currently in Cambridge, and typically once or twice a term. At its recent meeting, the group gave valuable feedback on the administration of the new extended entitlement (30 hours) and the SEN Inclusion Fund.

The EYPRG is seeking to raise awareness of its work, and would welcome interest from new faces, particularly voluntary managed groups. Please e-mail eycinfo@cambridgeshire.gov.uk if you are interested in finding out more.

Just Play Conference - Get Up! Get out! Get active!
Sue Palmer will be the keynote speaker for this year’s Just Play Annual Conference – ‘Get Up! Get out! Get active!’ on Saturday 11 November at Swavesey Village College.

The conference will focus on the importance of physical activities for children and young people, with workshops to deepen understanding and offer practical ideas to promote physical activity within your settings. Find out more at https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/early-years/conferences-and-events/just-play/

Qualifications
The team are currently recruiting for the following qualifications
• Level 2 Certificate Introduction to Early Years Education and Care
• Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Workforce (Early Years Educator)

If you would like to discuss future career options please contact eyctraining@cambridgeshire.gov.uk and we will signpost you to one of the team.

Skype Training on how to make your Early Years Funding claim
We recently held five Skype training sessions with childcare providers on the Early Years Autumn claims process. Attendance was very good, with 156 providers booking onto the courses and benefiting from the presentation. Feedback has been very positive and we will be offering more training or information sessions in the future so watch this space! The presentation can be found on our webpage www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/eyf and is named EY Autumn Claims process.