Message from the Heads of Early Years Service

As we head towards another summer, there is much to celebrate in our sector.

We continue to work with you to improve the lives of children and families in Cambridgeshire. As local authority teams and officers, we also seek to link up better, to make the most of limited public resources. Our “Best Start in Life” initiative across both councils has moved on, engaging providers in our stakeholder group, and families as we deepen our understanding of how services need to join up.

In Cambridgeshire, we have started work on bringing health data from the two-year-check into our free to use assessment management system, CASEY. Our SEND advisers have collaborated with specialist colleagues to develop a new toolkit supplement to our quality frameworks, and with our training centre team to develop a local model for the new level 3 qualification. Our Forest School activity continues to show promising outcomes for children, both in pre-school and school. And the long-awaited approval of the Early Years Educator apprenticeship standards offers new and exciting opportunities to address the recruitment challenges of the sector.

We hope that our service offer for 2019-20, with its enhanced support for business and governance, will help you to remain sustainable in tough times, so that we can improve young lives, especially for those less favoured children in our communities.

I cannot believe that winter now seems a distant memory and we are fast approaching the end of this academic year.

You will have now received our new Quality Improvement Support and Practitioner Development Programme, having taken on board your recent feedback we hope you find the courses on offer meet your settings needs.

This term is always a busy one with preparing for the transition into school for a number of your children. There are details within this edition of one schools plans for working in partnership with their settings that will hopefully give you some ideas of ways in which you too can develop those partnerships with your schools to ensure children have a smooth transition to the next stage in their learning journey.

Spring term also saw our first Leadership Forum, this has been established in recognition of how crucial effective leadership and management is. We were fortunate enough to visit Fulbridge Academy and hear their thoughts on leadership, the message was that at the core of decision making and leadership there must lie a moral purpose, identifying leadership as getting someone to follow you over the hill – not because you told them to but because they believe in you. We were fortunate to have an incredibly motivational presentation and discussion, with practitioners also able to experience the inspiring environment with many taking away ideas, if you were unable to attend this edition contains an article about the experience.

I hope the rest of the summer term although busy is fun, and that you all have a super summer.

All the best

K. Hingston
Win for local company Bibetta at the Mother & Baby Awards

Cambridge-based baby accessory company, Bibetta, rounded off 2018 with a Gold win at the prestigious Mother & Baby Awards at the Westminster Bridge Plaza Hotel in London.

The awards are tested and voted for by real parents, and Bibetta beat off strong competition to take the accolade in the Best Feeding Product for Weaning category.

The pack is a coordinated collection of printed neoprene baby accessories designed to make feeding easier and less messy.

Emma Bailey, Editor of Mother & Baby magazine, commented, “Weaning is always going to be a messy job, but this product made the mess much more manageable. The usability and durability were second to none, it was easy to clean and ACTUALLY waterproof. “Parents comments included, “Love the style, love the material, but I REALLY love not having to tidy up so much mess.”

Fiona Brown, Director at Bibetta, added, “We are very excited to have won a Mother & Baby Award for our Weaning Pack. We aim to make life easier for parents and little ones with our range of soft, durable and well-designed feeding products.”

Outstanding Ofsted judgements in Cambridgeshire*

Queens College Day Nursery
Brampton Day Nursery

Number of settings with

- ‘Good’ 12
- ‘Requires Improvement’ 9
- ‘Inadequate’ 3

*Since autumn term

Ofsted judgments in Peterborough*

Childcare on non-domestic
Outstanding: Stars Preschool Welland

Number of settings with

- ‘Outstanding’ 1
- ‘Good’ 6
- ‘Requires improvement’ 3

*Since autumn term
Spotlight – news from East Cambs and Fenland

What is the Fenland and East Cambridgeshire Opportunity Area?

In 2016 the Social Mobility Index (SMI) set out the relationship between areas where children grow up and the chances they have of doing well in adult life. Out of 324 Local Authority Districts nationally, the SMI ranked Fenland 319th and East Cambridgeshire 311th.

This led the Department for Education (DfE) to include Fenland and East Cambridgeshire in the 12 Opportunity Areas it identified in 2017 to receive support to address the barriers to social mobility.

The delivery plan published in January 2017 identified four key priorities to address. These are:

Priority 1: Accelerate the progress of disadvantaged children and young people in the acquisition and development of communication, language and reading.

Priority 2: Strengthen the effectiveness of support for children and young people with mental health concerns and those with Special Educational Needs.

Priority 3: Raise aspiration and increase access for young people to a wide range of career choices and post-16 routes.

Priority 4: Recruit, develop and retain the best leaders and teachers in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire.

Since then, we have been developing the projects to help us meet our priorities.

What have we done so far?

• More than 50 schools benefitting from the Evidence Based Fund
• More than 70 newly and recently qualified teachers benefitting from early career development training
• 21 new teachers recruited to the area through the Teach First programme
• More than 30 schools benefitting from fully funded mental health training through the YMCA
• More than 40 teachers accessing fully funded National Professional Qualifications
• 20 teachers recruited to the area using our Recruitment Incentives Grant
• 70 early years practitioners accessing fully funded Phonics training

What’s new?

Early Years Improvement Fund

As part of the Opportunity Area’s Priority 1, the £70,000 Early Years Improvement Fund was launched on 11 January 2019, intended to support early years providers working together to run a workforce development plan, or implement a communication, language and literacy improvement project.

To be considered eligible for funding, clusters needed to demonstrate the following in their application;

• all named providers must be located in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire
• bids must include participation from three or more settings
• the total cost for the intended project or development plan must not exceed £10,000

The fund was welcomed by the sector, with 16 Primary Schools and 13 Early Years providers submitting applications.

Due to the success of this project a further £50,000 has been agreed and another round will open in May 2019. To access this fund for a communication, language and literacy project or development plan, please get in touch with Paula Durrant, Opportunity Area Early Years Lead Specialist, paula.durrant@cambridgeshire.gov.uk or via opportunityareas.EAST@education.gov.uk.
Secretary of State for Education gets REAL in Peterborough pre-school

Secretary of State for Education (SoS), Damian Hinds, visited Busy Bunnies Braybrook in February to see their work with parents to support home learning.

Mr. Hinds met Clare Bamford, senior manager for Busy Bunnies, and Kim Turner-Potter, setting manager, to discuss their Making it REAL (Raising Early Achievement in Literacy) project, along with Kim Neilson and Annie Hornsby from the Early Years Team at Peterborough City Council, the accredited REAL trainers.

The Secretary of State was keen to understand how Busy Bunnies chose the families to work with – reasons include the child’s development, family interaction and also their willingness to be part of the project.

Mr. Hinds heard how the overall purpose of REAL was to deliver key messages about early literacy to parents, and help them continue through talking and everyday activities with their child at home – therefore not overly impacting on the families’ time and at no or low cost.

The visit took in a half-term stay and play session for all families to attend, including those involved in the REAL project. The SoS engaged in all the activities taking a keen interest in their underlying purpose and how they related to pre-writing skills. He saw how each activity influenced the different hand and muscle development children need before learning to write.

Mr. Hinds took time to chat with the parents and children. Parents explained how the setting’s literacy events, and REAL home visits, were impacting on their child’s development and how they were now implementing these activities at home. The SoS was clearly impressed with the parents’ knowledge and the positive impact that nursery/home learning was having on each family.

The nursery has implemented a home/setting library for all families and is about to introduce home/school learning bags covering all aspects of learning. On the morning of the visit, the government announced a new app called EasyPeasy to support home learning, which our setting will also be involved in using (see article on p7).

The overall purpose of REAL was to deliver key messages about early literacy to parents, and help them continue through talking and everyday activities with their child at home.
Herlington Pre-school celebrates Barbara’s 30 years of service with a surprise party

Herlington Pre-school recently held a special celebration to mark an exceptional contribution. Barbara Howlett began her preschool days as a parent with her eldest child, continuing until her youngest started at the preschool, before joining the pre-school committee as a fundraiser.

She progressed from part-time preschool assistant to manager within 4 years, a position she has held for 26 years. The pre-school now has 34 employees working and 180 children on roll, spread over 5 groups. This has increased from one group with 35 children when Barbara began her career.

Barbara offered these reflections: “I had a great time celebrating with the children – one of our practitioners made a lovely cake, our committee helped in the organising and our chairperson gave a speech about my achievements, thanking me for 30 years of care and education for so many children in the local community.”

“I am known as the Queen of Amazon, as resources arrive daily from Amazon, and my celebration cake was a perfect reflection of this!”

“Throughout 30 years at Herlington Preschool, my role has changed enormously as well as the setting, with new legislation, the introduction of a focussed curriculum for all children in our care, planning and observing, the introduction of Ofsted inspections, funding for 2, 3, and 4 year olds, as well as the 30 hour funding.”

“Herlington Pre-school was my first job interview, and I can’t imagine doing anything else. I enjoy my role as much now as I did when I began. There have been many benefits in being here for so long – our standing in the local community, building strong relationships with parents, grandparents and children, as well as local schools and businesses.”

“Teaching children of the children I taught is enormously rewarding – I get to build a whole new relationship with them, not to mention seeing their parents again in their role of grandparent. I have been truly blessed in my career at Herlington Pre-school, and I have an amazing team who helped me celebrate my achievement.”

“People ask me when I will be retiring – I’m not ready to retire yet!”

Childhood vaccination matters

Diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella, influenza … these are just some of the serious infectious diseases your baby/child will be protected from through vaccination, before they start school. Research from around the world shows that vaccination is the safest way to protect your child’s health.

Parents often have questions about why their baby/child needs to be vaccinated, especially when they don’t hear about most of these diseases any more.

It is because of the effective vaccination programmes in the UK, that the number of children catching these diseases is very low. But if children do not continue to be vaccinated, the diseases will come back. For example, there has been an increase recently in the number of children catching measles in some parts of the UK and in Europe, due to children not being vaccinated.

For more information visit www.nhs.uk/vaccinations
App to make life Easy Peasy

Selected providers in the Cambridge city and Peterborough areas have been given the chance to try out a new app which helps them work with parents to improve young children’s communication and language development.

The software, called EasyPeasy, is being rolled out as part of the Changing the Conversation about Language project, led by national communication charity I CAN and funded by the Department for Education.

It aims to provide a series of activities that parents and children can do together, building up children’s language over time through engaging games. It sends regular messages to parents and links to the work of settings in developing these fundamental skills for children’s lifelong learning.

Shared project gives better information for parents and professionals

A collaboration between Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Early Years teams has developed a new set of information leaflets designed to help parents and professionals get to grips with the different childcare entitlements available to families.

Parents will now be able to access simple summaries of the different entitlements to funded early education and care through a new leaflet. Thanks to the Department for Education’s Delivery Support Fund, this information has also been translated into the main additional languages spoken in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

In addition, there are more detailed leaflets for professionals, to support them in their conversations with parents, and in Cambridgeshire, an A5 flyer aimed at parents setting out the local information about accessing welfare benefits.

The project was led by Laura Hyde from Peterborough and supported by Graham Arnold and Tiina Kunniniva for Cambridgeshire. You will find the information online at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk (search Early Years Education).

Hunts settings will gain from targeted development project

Selected settings in Huntingdonshire are set to be the beneficiaries of a new two-year project designed to create clusters of expertise in children’s communication and language through local training programmes.

The Professional Development Fund from the Department for Education (DFE) is being offered to providers in Cambridgeshire to create “champions” in early communication and language. Training will be provided over a 12-month period, and local leaders will then establish clusters of practitioners who will work together to reinforce learning and develop practice further.

Cambridgeshire has been offered the opportunity to develop up to three clusters – participants will receive local training from a nationally appointed expert provider, with funded release time to attend. Details are still emerging, but the expectation is that we will use data on children’s needs and outcomes to target the activity in particular areas. Training is expected to start in early 2020.
A recent review of safeguarding practice in Cambridgeshire highlighted that children are more likely to attend multiple settings simultaneously, possibly due to increased funded childcare hours.

All relevant safeguarding information logged in Child Welfare Files must be shared, by the Designated Person for Child Protection (DP), with every setting a child attends (this includes childminders, pre-schools, nurseries and out of school clubs/holiday schemes). We advise settings to inform parents that information is being shared unless this may place the child at risk of harm.

Safeguarding children who attend multiple settings

It is recommended that DPs from each setting remain in contact to ensure that any additional information is shared on an on-going basis whilst the child attends their setting. This will ensure DPs in each setting have an overview of the ‘bigger picture’ for children which enables them to make informed decisions when responding to safeguarding concerns.

We advise that settings ask parents routinely, during the registration process, whether their child currently attends other settings.
Settings play an essential role in helping children understand safe online behaviour. Even if children don’t access technology within settings, they are probably using it at home, with their friends or in other public spaces.

Children are naturally curious in understanding the world we live in; our responsibility is to enable them to do so, including helping them to recognise the value of technology and use it safely (UK Council for Internet Safety, 2019).

Press reports earlier this year highlighted safeguarding concerns about some on-line apps, games and web sites. A focus on particular apps or games can provide free publicity for these sites as people become curious and search for more information. It is important for settings to provide general online safety messages to children of all ages and their parents.

Parent Info (https://parentinfo.org/articles/safety-and-settings/all) provides support and advice to parents, with contributions from the leading experts and organisations in matters related to young people and families in a digital world.


Child Exploitation and Online Protection team (CEOP) have launched Jessie & Friends, a new online safety education resource for 4-7 year olds based on a series of age-appropriate animations, which can be found on their Think U Know website: www.thinkuknow.co.uk

FGM conviction (online training)

This year has seen the UK’s first conviction of a parent carrying out female genital mutilation (FGM) on her three year old daughter. FGM – intentionally altering or injuring the female external genitalia for non-medical reasons – carries a sentence of up to 14 years in jail.

We ask our settings to continue to be vigilant of risk factors, and raise awareness in your settings by displaying an FGM awareness poster.

Further information is available to Designated Persons in Cambridgeshire via the DP Knowledge Hub (within the Library in the Abuse and Neglect folder)

The lived experience of the child

Fiona Fletcher introduces new local practice guidance

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board (CPSCB) has recently undertaken reviews of safeguarding practice where it was evidenced that the ‘voice of the child’ was often forgotten, and the question ‘what is life like for them?’ was not asked or considered. This is a missed opportunity, as children can tell us so much about their experiences which effectively informs all of our assessments to understand what is the appropriate support for them.

New Practice Guidance, The Lived Experience of the Child, has been compiled, with tools that could be used to gain information and understand ‘what is life like for this child, right now?’. This guidance is for use by all who have responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting children’s welfare, including setting DPs, managers, staff and volunteers.

The CPSCB definition of the ‘lived experience of the child is; ‘What a child sees, hears, thinks and experiences on a daily basis that impacts on their personal development and welfare whether that be physically or emotionally’.

As practitioners we need to

- actively hear what the child has to say or communicate,
- observe what they do in different contexts,
- hear what family members, significant adults/carers and professionals have said about the child, and
- think about the child’s history (including developmental) and family context.

Ultimately we need to put ourselves in that child’s shoes and think: ‘what is life like for this child right now?’ Children can tell us so much about their experiences which inform our assessments and appropriate support. It is key that we pay attention to all non-verbal communication; body language, behaviour, role play, drawings and writing.

Safeguarding Training Pathway

Peterborough

In Peterborough there are a variety of courses on offer to develop your CPD and understanding in order to keep children safe.

All courses below are available in the Practitioner Development Programme except for those highlighted. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children’s Board (CPSCB) courses can be found on the Safeguarding Board website under Professionals/Training.

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Introducing… Claire Smith, Cambridgeshire’s latest Early Years Lead Practitioner for Schools

My name is Claire Smith. I am the teacher in a mixed Reception/Year One class at The Ashbeach School, where I was also the EY Governor.

I have worked in inner-city schools and abroad, in pre-school, Reception and Primary settings and understand the challenges faced in both small and large schools.

I have also been an induction tutor for numerous newly qualified teachers (NQTs) and have enjoyed supporting them to successfully complete their first years in teaching.

I am passionate about giving children first-hand experiences and understanding current pedagogy. I have been actively involved in the development of outdoor areas at several schools, and also in the development of phonics throughout EYFS and Year 1.

I enjoy working with parents and the community, holding ‘cafes’ to promote reading, phonics and mathematics within school. I have been able to establish good links with some of the GRT families in our area and continue to build on these links.

I believe that robust assessment procedures supporting data analysis can have a substantial impact on teaching and learning, improving outcomes for disadvantaged children.

I am extremely committed to early years and am driven to provide the best outcomes for children. As an enthusiastic and experienced teacher, I am eager to make a substantial contribution to the EYLP role, and look forward to hosting visits and supporting practitioners in their own settings.

Branch meeting

Nicole de Lima from the Old School House Day Nursery shares her experience of the Cambridgeshire Forest School Network

I turned up alone at the recent forest school network at Girton Glebe Primary School. I was welcomed and amazed. The evening ran just like a forest school session, which worked fantastically.

After a brief update about the up and coming conferences, courses and future networks, we were encouraged to look around the facilities together. Questions were welcome, and so we all went off and mingled.

Exploring the various areas of the forest school just as children would, shared interests surfaced in our small groups. The buzz of conversation continued for the full two hours, having to be channelled into a conclusion 10 minutes before the end.

Forest School is a blank canvas which comes to life at the touch of children’s hands and imagination, and the network did the same for practitioners. There was a free flow of learning through anecdotes, opinions and an exceptional level of experience, catering for all practitioners from forest school novices, to those with their own off-site access.

I found the forest school network an encyclopaedia of learning, about forest school sessions, balanced pedagogy and resources for different age-groups. As a specialist in 0-3, I got to hear about hands-on learning approach for babies, allowing them to engage in risk and challenge in environments like forest school or loose parts. We discussed how to overcome barriers in forest schools, and ways to extend children’s learning without intervening in their play. The wide spectrum of knowledge I gained from this single evening saved me many hours of searching the internet.

We ended with a re-group, thanking each other for the sharing of valued stories and experiences, and answering any final questions. Although the evening was over, I didn’t feel I was leaving alone – with the knowledge and ideas I had, as well as the support that was left open by the network leaders, I was leaving reassured, with a plan for my next steps in forest school.
Effective Transitions in the Early Years – Peterborough Conference

Fifty professionals from across Peterborough heard keynote speaker, Doctor Kay Mathieson, focusing on how to support SEND. Kay focused on early identification of needs ‘when normal development goes awry’.

In her usual animated style, Kay highlighted the importance of practitioners looking at the other prime areas, if you notice an emerging need in one of them – they are often connected! She emphasised that parents are never in denial about their child’s needs, it’s just the timing is wrong to consider them.

Kay challenged us to ask: is it just a phase or something more serious? She reminded us to look for evidence to support or deny our hypothesis of the child’s learning and development. Kay also challenged our thinking with regard to children with developmental delay, to see the world from their perspective, focusing on the similarities as well as the differences for these children.

A range of workshops covered practical aspects of transition, including supporting children with SEND, closing the word gap/increasing vocabulary, and ideas and activities to support parents and practitioners.

Closing the Word Gap
Speech and Language Therapists Seema Chauhan and Natalie Hunt

The workshop focused on the new Word Aware Program that supports vocabulary learning, highlighting that vocabulary at 24 months is strongly associated with later performance in school and beyond. Practitioners were introduced to a range of vocabulary teaching strategies and were given an overview of activities included in the programme, along with the chance to give them a try. This focused on the STAR Approach (Select, Teach, Activate and Review), encouraging us to consider in each activity the form of vocabulary used, such as easy everyday words (Anchor words), topic specific words (Goldilocks words) and words less likely to be encountered again (Step on words).

Effective Transitions
Rebecca Waters and Rachel Jordan from Dogsthorpe Infants School, with Karen Woodcock from Family Action

This focused on an audit across the group of the type of activities settings provide for the transition process; including providing leaflets, parent packs, parents’ evenings, paring up children/peers, photos of the settings, school visits, reception teacher visiting settings etc. Practitioners explored the activities that go well and the challenges. One school talked about the many things they do to support transitions including; using the summer Early Words Together events, home visits, induction evenings. Head teacher and reception teacher visited every feeder setting and talked about the summer holiday sessions they set up for families to come along to, where they explore the school environment and take part in activities.

Delegates came away inspired to go back to their settings, to further develop practice in supporting effective transitions.

Feedback included:
“Really positive day, bringing practitioners from across the city to share good practice and ideas for positive transitions for children”.

“It was great for practitioners to build relationships with each other, developing greater links between schools and early years settings”.

“Inspirational; time to revisit key child development messages... especially when supporting transitions for children with SEND”.

“Made me think about transitions from a child’s perspective”. 
Managing your team – CASEY’s new workforce screens

How can I

• Record the skills of my team
• Match people’s skills to the different roles they hold
• Track who has which lead responsibilities within my setting, and when they had the relevant training
• Capture key points from supervision
• Keep track of the professional development of the whole staff team
• Hold details of their roles and qualifications

CASEY Workforce is compatible with the Early Years and Childcare Supervision Guidance 2018. It will receive a regular feed from the county’s Booking Bug training booking system (for everyone linked to your setting) and ties in to staffing and child details in the CASEY assessment module.

Would you like to be one of the first users of the new CASEY workforce screens? Please contact us at CASEY.earlyyears@cambridgeshire.gov.uk to sign up and get access to the new staff management tools.

CASEY users...

Thanks to all those who continue to use CASEY as a tool for tracking children’s development – your data helps us to see the bigger picture.

Recording assessments in CASEY helps to build a picture of progress over time, so it’s worth going back and making sure assessments are logged for previous terms. We are also seeking to improve response times by hosting CASEY in the cloud.

We are planning to roll out 2-year health check data (ASQ3 and ASQ:SE) through CASEY in the coming months. This will offer additional information alongside the 4,000 assessments logged by Cambridgeshire practitioners for the spring term. Look out for further updates on this.

Early Years providers can sign up to CASEY and access a range of user documentation at https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/early-years/business-support/cambridgeshire-assessment-system-for-early-years-casey
Sunflower Seeds Pre-school

Sharon Smith and Sarah Snart, practitioners from Sunflower Seed Pre-school, invited children, parents and their older siblings to a bedtime story event.

We set up our smaller back room with sleeping bags, duvet covers and cushions on the floor. To make the room cozy we switched off the main lights, had a table lamp near the storyteller’s chair and put some LED lanterns around the room.

Five families attended and nine children, who we’d encouraged to wear their pyjamas. On arrival, there was a choice of warm milk or hot chocolate, and everyone could help themselves to cookies.

We used our recent REAL training to talk about the importance of early literacy, sharing books and stories with children. During the first story, the children sat and quietly listened; in the second, we encouraged them to interact, get involved and we talked about it afterwards – modelling different ways for parents to share books.

We arranged that the older sister of one of the pre-school children, who is in Year 3, would read a story too. She chose the book herself and the children listened and looked as if they were really enjoying it. This was a powerful way to illustrate to parents the impact sharing books and stories can have on young children. It showed how they can become fluent and independent readers who love to read for enjoyment.

We finished the session with some Christmas songs and chose some that parents may be less likely to know – When the Robots Came To Dinner, Christmas Pudding and Father Christmas which the children love!

At the end, each of the children was given a gift bag, donated by the National Literacy Trust, containing a Peppa Pig book, The Booktrust Bath, Book, Bed booklet, which emphasises a story as part of a child’s bedtime routine, and the children’s Bookstart Treasure Pack. We also included some pencils, erasers, stickers, the song words and chocolate coins (enough for all the family)! The school-aged child who read the story was given some glitter pens as a thank you.

After we had thanked the families for coming, a child spotted a Christmas book she liked and asked Sharon if she would read it. The children all agreed, so we read that one, too!

Parent feedback included: “Will you be doing any more? It was such a lovely thing to do”.

School Ready at Dogsthorpe Infants

After two successful summers welcoming new Reception children and their carers, Dogsthorpe Infants School was keen to develop its transition and school readiness programme even further.

Headteacher Becky Waters shares the school’s latest plans.

They were very keen to develop their transition and school readiness programme even further.

In the spring term we visited some of our local settings to look at the way they deliver phonics and offer support with delivery, planning and resources. Following both visits, practitioners were able to visit us to observe Reception staff deliver Phase 1 sessions.

We now plan to hold a ‘Phonics Roadshow,’ and invite all our local settings to attend. Our hall will be set up with different Phase 1 activity stations, so practitioners can pick up ideas for how to deliver sessions in their own settings. Each station will be led by our staff team, so they can be on hand to talk to practitioners about phonics.

We have already secured a sponsor for this event, and would like to provide Phonics goody bags for each setting that attends.

We are planning for this to take place in the first half of the summer term so that the practitioners can then use the ideas later in the term as part of their school readiness work.
At Stepping Stones Day Nursery, we believe that library visits are beneficial to a child’s early literacy as well as holistic development.

As it is sometimes hard to take all the children to the library, we contacted Peterborough Central Library to ask if the book bus could visit the setting.

Olivia Murphy and Katie Scott, two of our practitioners, have recently completed Making it REAL training. We wanted to encourage families to use the library more, and children to have their own library membership cards.

We invited children over 2 years old to visit the book bus. At the first session, a few parents brought older and younger siblings, making the age-range 2-8.

The librarian welcomed children to the bus and told them a story linked to our core story (by prior arrangement). Children also explored a story-sack made by library staff. During the visit, we talked to parents and supported children to choose books to borrow. The children enjoyed lining up to get their books signed out and stamped by the librarian.

Feedback from parents included:

“It’s a great way to make going to the library fun and different”

“It was brilliant to see the librarian tailor the books to the children’s interests...”

“It was lovely to see all the children interested and engaged”.

and from the children:

“It’s so cool on here!”

“It has all my favourite Dinosaur books”.

“I love the squishy sofa it’s sooo comfy”.

The children often talk about going on the book bus, mention the books they borrow and bring them in to share with their friends. As parents and children enjoyed it so much we are arranging for the bus to visit our setting every 4 – 6 weeks. We feel the bus is best suited to small groups of 6 – 8 children, so they can access it comfortably and have freedom and space to move around.

The book bus has had an amazing impact on the children at Stepping Stones Day Nursery. Initially two children had their own library cards, and now all 36 do – a great achievement!
Heather Wiltshire from Yaxley Infants explains how “story scribing” helped to turn around a reluctant writer

M_ is a child who is constantly on the move. When it came to writing, we’d hear moans of “I can’t do it” followed by a reluctance to write. He would occasionally write on my whiteboard, but even then, it wasn’t without a few grumbles.

After training with Anna Ephgrave, I introduced story scribining into our setting. One of our teaching assistants had experience of this from her previous work in a pre-school, and got straight to it, often followed by a queue of children wanting their story scribined for them.

The children of Little Incredibles have been improving their Communication and Language and Literacy skills through working hard on World Book Day epic challenges.

Children from 0 – 4 years old have taken part and had some wonderful adventures while sharing books with different people, exploring fiction and non-fiction books.

They’ve borrowed Little Incredibles story bags with props with a dialogic prompt sheet to share with their parents, they’ve visited the library and shared photos of themselves doing all these wonderful things...

We set aside time at the end of each day for the authors of the stories to become directors, choosing their classmates to be the characters and act out their story in front of the others. It became a huge success!

M_ decided one day it was going to be his turn. He told his story with incredible passion and halfway through, took the pen from the teaching assistant and finished it off! He was absolutely beaming with pride. He couldn’t help but jump on the spot, tap my arm and show me his story. Because of this, M_ had overcome his fear and frustration with writing. It took the pressure off, knowing that if he wanted to write something, he didn’t have to physically do it himself.

Not long after this, M_ came to me with some paper and a pen and asked for help with writing a card for his friend. I sat with him and asked whether he wanted me to write. He didn’t! He had control of the pen and a new-found enthusiasm for writing – albeit (and quite rightly so!) on his terms.
Management or Governance?

Registered Childcare providers should be clear on the differences between Governance and Management within their structure, and should communicate this to directors, trustees, senior management team, day-to-day managers, staff and volunteers to avoid mixed messages in line management.

Governance refers to oversight and decision-making related to strategic direction, financial planning, and by-laws – the set of core policies that outline the organisation’s purpose, values, and structure. Governance decisions should provide guidelines for Management, which is the allocation of resources, and overseeing the day-to-day operations of the organisation.

One way to explain this is that Governance determines the ‘What’, the aims of the organisation and its future, and Management determines ‘How’ the organisation will achieve those aims.

Governance is...

- The responsibility of the Registered Provider (Trustees, Directors, Owners)
- Ensuring the organisation has a clear mission and strategy
- Decision making and providing guidance on the allocation of resources
- Monitoring performance
- Providing insight, wisdom and good judgement
- Being the employer
- The overall responsibility for the organisation
- Providing a framework to support the work of the managers

Management is...

- The responsibility of the appointed management staff
- Implementing this clear mission and strategy
- Working within the guidelines on the allocation of resources
- Measuring performance
- Providing action to deliver services
- Being the employee
- The day-to-day running of the organisation
- Supporting the work of those who have governance responsibilities

The 8 Characteristics of Good Governance

- Consensus orientated
- Accountable
- Participatory
- Effective & efficient
- Follow the rules of law
- Transparent
- Responsive
- Equitable & inclusive

Have you read your organisation’s governing document within the past year? Where is it?

Have you implemented national living wage increases from April 2019? www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

Cambridgeshire Early Years Business and Governance team, contact: Alison.morris@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Leadership Forum – Fulbridge Academy

The quality of leadership and management within settings is crucial to the overall quality of the provision and the experience children receive.

However, within a busy setting, leaders, managers and proprietors all too often overlook their own needs or support that is available.

Recognising the challenge faced within settings, we wanted to offer an opportunity for those leading on the delivery of early years and childcare services in Peterborough to come together to explore and discuss the challenges, in a shared and supportive environment.

We decided to offer a termly Leadership Forum, to explore what leadership means, discuss current issues both national and local, explore possible solutions, develop new ideas and encourage debate.

Our first event in February was led by two inspirational educationalists, Iain and Ben Erskine, former Principal and current Principal of Fulbridge Academy. They have received national recognition for their approach to developing engaging learning environments, and spoke of the importance of the quality of leadership which underpins it.

Ben and Ian’s empowering and inspirational presentation, ‘A moral purpose’ looked closely at what good leadership looks like in the delivery of quality provision, whether this be in a pre-school, a nursery or school.

A leader must align staff to the setting’s vision and aims, creating an ethos, culture and climate that results in a unified team. The leader/manager is the key person in creating this culture: they must display all the correct behaviours and attitudes for other staff to emulate. You cannot lead from an office – leaders need to be visible. As in an orchestra, the leader is the conductor, ensuring everyone works together to achieve the setting’s goals.

At the heart of Fulbridge Academy is their ethos that children learn from rich experiences. The school environment (which featured in a recent Parliamentary Review) is testament to this, with every corridor dedicated bringing the curriculum to life, a foundation on which children build their learning with excitement and interest.

Probably the highlight of the evening was a tour of the school to see the amazing environment, which brings to life so many different experiences for children, from the Streets of London in Tudor times, to pre-historic times with Dinosaurs, Mummies and Egyptians, London in the Blitz, The Cat in a Hat, a Disney-themed dining room and so much more. I would not like to guess how many pictures were taken by those attending, but I am sure many ideas will be taken back and recreated over the coming months.

Look out for the next forum in June.
Some benefits in kind are tax-free and should not be entered on your tax return if you get one.

These include:

- Contributions paid by your employer into an approved occupational or personal pension scheme for you as an employee. Nearly all schemes are included.
- Cheap or free canteen meals, if these are provided for all employees, even if separate facilities are provided for different groups of employees.
- In-house sports facilities.
- Counselling services to redundant employees.
- Certain childcare arrangements.
- Works buses, or subsidies to public bus services, to get employees to and from work.
- Bicycles and cycling safety equipment provided for employees to get to and from work and workplace parking for bicycles and motorcycles.
- Reasonable removal expenses if you have to move to take up a new job or are transferred by your employer, up to a maximum of £8,000 for each move.
- Genuine personal gifts given for reasons unconnected with the job, for example, retirement gifts other than cash, or wedding gifts.
- Gifts, other than cash, that you receive from someone other than your employer, for example, seats at sporting or cultural events, providing that any gift or outing is not worth more than £250 in a single year.
- If you are disabled, equipment and facilities provided for you to carry out your job. For more information, go to the Low Incomes Tax Reform Group’s website at: www.litrg.org.uk.

A benefit in kind is considered 'trivial' and is not taxed if it's all of the following:

- Less than £50 in value.
- Not cash or a cash voucher (e.g. a gift card that can be used as cash).
- Not a reward or bonus for doing well in your job.
- Not part of your employment contract.
- Not a 'salary sacrifice'.

Follow these principles, and save your setting and your staff from any unexpected tax bills!

A benefit in kind is considered 'trivial' and is not taxed if it's not a reward or bonus for doing well in your job.

Employee discounts – how do they work?

You may give your employee a discount on goods or services that you produce or sell in your business. This is not a taxable benefit in kind where the amount paid by your employee is greater than or equal to the costs you incur to provide them with the item/service.
In February 2019, the Department for Education published the Frontier Economics Cost Study 2018 report.

This major piece of research aimed to help government and the sector understand the impact of national funding levels and policy changes on different types of provider, and the sector as a whole.

The headline finding is that childcare providers are close to the mark in terms of their financial viability, but variations in cost within the research sample are large. The mean (average) hourly delivery cost for all providers was £3.98, whilst costs varied between £3.56 and £4.40 depending on provider type.

The researchers recognise that occupancy ratios and related financial figures will be more favourable as a result of collecting data in the summer term, when settings are busiest and potentially most viable. In addition, it is pointed out that charged income for 3- and 4-year-olds is on average 74p per hour more than the funding level paid for those children, strongly implying that funding levels are artificially low.

Settings in Cambridgeshire will have given one cheer, perhaps, at the news of the 1p per hour increase on funding rates. But how does it stack up to cost increases within your provision?

Firstly, this funding increase is not as a result of any change in the money available to Cambridgeshire. Rates in Cambs. and Peterborough are locked at their current levels from central government. Money has been reallocated to providers in Cambridgeshire to boost the hourly rate.

For settings, there are cost increases associated with:
- A rise in the national minimum and living wages and other agreed wage rises for staff
- Stakeholder pensions increases
- (Potentially) business rate increases
- Other price increases from general inflation

As an example, let’s look at a medium sized term-time pre-school provider: with an average of 30 funded children for universal provision and 10 for extended hours (averaging 12 hours per week), the extra penny will be worth £217 over the year.

Looking at salaries (typically 77% of total costs), there’s the increase in the national minimum and living wages. This is likely to cost a minimum of £2,000 over the year, and more like £4,000 if you want to maintain your differentials for staff, or you are at the minimum for some staff (this was £7.83 per hour for over-25’s, and is now £8.21).

Stakeholder pension increases are slightly harder to estimate, but the increase in employer contributions from 2% to 3% means that if you were paying £1,000 per year before, that could go up to £1,500 per year from now.

Business rates will vary from area to area, but the multiplier (which generates the charge based on your building’s rateable value) is increased by government in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) each year. The increase for this year is 2.4%. Taking this price increase rate across other setting costs gives an inflation bill of around £275.

Information from the Cost Study report suggested that providers had had to introduce additional charges to the tune of 3% of total income. This set of cost increases could create a further £3,000 of additional income to generate, either in fee increases for chargeable hours or in charges for additional services. The Report gave this view from the sector:

“Most respondents expected their hourly cost to rise and their hourly income to remain unchanged, with the most common planned response to raise parent-paid fee rates, while less common plans included making changes to staffing or to the setting’s child profile or seeking other income sources.”

There is every reason to continue to make the case for additional funding for the sector. We would welcome providers’ own calculations, to build a better picture of how it all adds up.
Is late or non-payment of fees impacting your business?

For every business ‘cash is king’. As soon as you start to run out of cash, life becomes hard, and the viability of the business is jeopardised … Having cash to pay bills and wages on time is critical

Allan Presland, Improving the business of childcare, 2017

Here are some tips from the EY Business and governance team:

1. Have clear non-payment and late payment policies / terms and conditions and follow them fairly.
2. Discuss all costs and payment terms before the child starts; a parent may want to pay for extra chargeable services daily, weekly or monthly
3. Invoice regular sessions monthly in advance, making clear what is charged and what is free entitlement, when payment must be made by and give details of who to discuss this with confidentially if there is a problem. Invoice extras in arrears or as they occur.
4. Review your payment methods; do you offer direct bank transfer option or direct debit, to help busy parents pay? Discuss options available with your bank or software provider. Remember most parents get paid monthly.
5. Prepare a cash flow forecast to help plan for ‘pinch points’ such as gaps between EY Funding payments. Download a free spreadsheet template at www.camblearntogether.co.uk/
6. State consequences for late or non-payment of fees in your terms and conditions/fee policy and on the invoice; a child’s free funded entitlement cannot be suspended but a charged place can be withdrawn until full payment is made.
7. Don’t allow bad debt to happen – follow up late payment promptly before it becomes a non-payment
8. Be persistent with late customers, and ensure that the late payment is flagged with the treasurer/owner promptly, so that they can support prompt follow-up action in accordance with your policies.

Dealing with debts

9. If a bad debt occurs, deal with it promptly, send parents a letter giving them 14 days’ notice to clear the debt before you pass the matter to your legal team, remind after 7 days if still unpaid. On day zero ask your legal adviser to send a ‘letter before action’
10 Have information available to signpost, so that parents can check whether they are accessing all their entitlements such as Free 2’s, 30 hours extended entitlement for 3 year olds, Tax free childcare – www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
11 To take someone to court visit www.moneyclaim.gov.uk or apply for forms at your local County Court, It is easier and cheaper than you probably think
12 PayPlan – this service has no hidden charges or management fees so every penny goes towards paying off consumers’ debts as quickly as possible. Call 0800 085 4298 or visit www.payplan.com
13 National Debt Helpline – expert advice and a free self-help pack. Call 0800 808 4000 or visit www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

If you are still unsure, seek help:

• Your Accountant/Legal adviser if you have one
• LAWCALL (EYLA members only): 01455 255 205
• Citizens advice bureau: 03444 111 444
• EY Childcare Adviser 01223 699732
• EY Business and Governance Team 01223 714745
• EY Funding Team 01223 699780

Peterborough settings 01733 864017
New qualifications on offer from CACHE

CACHE has launched a new Level 2 qualification for early years practitioners, and a Level 3 Award for Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCo) in Early Years. Both of these qualifications will be offered to practitioners in the autumn term.

We continue to deliver the Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications below.

- **NEW** CACHE Level 2 Diploma for the Early Years Practitioner (Early Years Educator) launching in September 2019
- CACHE Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Workforce (Early Years Educator)
- **NEW** CACHE Level 3 for Special Education Needs Coordinator in Early Years
- CACHE Level 4 Certificate for the Early Years Advanced Practitioner (Early Years Educator)

If you would like to speak to one of the training team regarding qualifications, or to express an interest in any of the qualifications above, you can email eycqualifications@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Early Years and Childcare Training Centre

Cambridgeshire Early Years and Childcare Training Centre delivers accredited early years and childcare qualifications throughout the county. The team strives to reach out to settings and practitioners and adapt to their learning styles/needs.

This includes

- training delivery in the evenings
- twilight sessions
- term time only
- tutorials
- Skype
- distance learning (for some units)
- online portfolio.

Tutors have a rolling library for students to borrow relevant text books. Course fees are incredibly low, with the setting/learner paying £175 non-refundable registration fee (subject to eligibility for funding), and the outstanding fees funded by the training centre.

Look out for the 2019-20 Training and Support Programme!

The new training and support programme will be available on Learn Together and also sent to you towards the end of the summer term.

The programme will include:

- Details of membership and training discounts
- Qualifications training
- Statutory training
- Training for schools delivering the EYFS, childminders, day nurseries, out of school clubs, early years management and pre schools
- Training at several levels to suit the experience and needs of your staff
- Conferences and masterclasses, several delivered by national and international speakers who are experts in their field.

So come on what are you waiting for! Contact us now to discuss your professional development journey! eycqualifications@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Celebrating success

The Early Years and Childcare Training Centre would like to congratulate the following practitioners on completing their qualifications recently. Good luck in your childcare careers!

**Level 2 Introduction to Early Years Education and Care (EYE)**

Kaye Morris
Laura Hind
Roseanne Cull

**Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Workforce (EYE)**

Sophie Davis
Maxine Bester
Terri Lee-Lewis

If you are ready to taking a positive step in your personal and professional development by enrolling for a qualification, please contact eycqualifications@cambridgeshire.co.uk
**IN FOCUS**

Learner journeys

Have you considered undertaking a qualification and wondered how it works?
The following learner journeys are from early years practitioners who have undertaken qualification training with us. They show the range of learners and roles we support.

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**Victoria Bourne**

Pre-school Nursery Assistant, Newmarket area

CACHE L2 Certificate in an introduction to Early Years Education and Care

*October 2018 – June 2019 (expected)*

My manager arranged the course for me through Cambridgeshire County Council. On application, I was invited to an Induction evening. Weekly training sessions on a Wednesday evening in Cambridge work well for me. I would be unable to do a daytime course due to having young children and working.

Most of the work is through written tasks sent by my trainer/assessor, 2 pre-planned direct observations in the workplace and one professional discussion at the end.

Some weeks I spend about 12 hours studying, but the average is around 8 hours – it took a while to get used to managing the work. Positive comments in feedback from my assessor helped my motivation.

Nine of us set up a WhatsApp group so that we could all support each other if and when needed.

The course has built up my confidence. I feel it is a confirmation of my competence and will benefit the setting and myself as I will be able to be left on my own with the children and will support the setting’s adult to child ratios.

From the training, I took on board an idea around the use of the children’s names at snack time. I felt the idea would improve our practice and shared with my manager. She has agreed to make the change, and supported my reasons why it would benefit the children.

The course has given me an understanding of the rationale for what we do, why we put out the resources that we do in order to ensure we cover all the areas of learning.

We are currently using ‘in the moment’ planning, and completing the training session on creating the play environment developed my interest in creating a play space and how to do this.

Resources were good, textbook and resources on OneFile. I have completed some independent research as although at L2, I did not have to research theorists, they were introduced and I followed up on Maslow.

I hope to take my L3 EYE with the Training Centre this September. We also benefit from in-house training with the County Council and I have taken part in phonics, care for 2 year olds and specialist training for children with SEN.

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**Amie Tresadern**

Deputy nursery manager, South Cambs

Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Workforce (Early Years Educator)

*November 2015 – March 2017*

The early years training centre was able to signpost me to a range of courses, which gave me more options and suited my budget. The course was on a Thursday evening at 7pm, which allowed time for travel after work and also to eat!

Evidence was collected in written tasks and in face-to-face observation. I really enjoyed the method of observing in the setting, because this gave me a chance to show my practical skills and capabilities.
The course lasted a year, and was an equal balance of learning and support with assignments. It was rewarding to work with a range of people with different backgrounds and experiences. We all contributed to class discussions and topics, and were able to support each other throughout the year.

Our tutor was very supportive and focused on our well-being – she knew how to get the best from a diverse group, and made the learning suitable for all types of learners. She was contactable anytime via email and phone, and was very responsive via both.

I absolutely loved my course – it gave me solid foundations from which to support my daily practice. It consists of a really inspiring learning content with support from other students and tutors who are understanding and want the best for you.

Parents got involved in supporting me and would ask if there was anything they could do or prepare. I would always share new ideas I had at group meetings.

Completing my level three inspired me to continue in the childcare/education sector. I have now moved to a deputy manager position at a 100-place day nursery, where I am also a Behaviour champion and designated Safeguarding Officer. I have gone on to start my degree in education, and am looking forward to taking this on to a Masters.

Sarah Bullock

Pre-school practitioner
Level 3 Diploma for the Early Years Workforce (Early Years Educator)
October 2018 – Oct/Dec 2019 (expected)

I did not want to do an online course and wanted it to be local: classroom-based learning works best for me. I enjoy listening to other people from a wide range of settings.

As I had completed the Level 2, I was prepared for the amount of study involved and that we would be set a task every week. Some Level 3 topics were linked (communication and language followed by literacy), which helped with reading and independent research.

Having completed my Level 2 with the Council, I was familiar with many of the subjects, and felt confident with the OneFile system.

The Level 3 requires independent research and one’s own reading for each unit. I found the training sessions would point me in the right direction to do this. Resources on OneFile for each task are helpful. I have enjoyed learning more about the range of topics we have covered and developing a deeper understanding of the theories behind what we do. I feel I am growing in confidence and in my own professional abilities.

We are a group of 16, and sit with different people each week, so I have been able to get to know some of the other learners on my course.
enjoy the group discussions, and find people are more willing to open up in smaller groups.

I have been able to share and talk over ideas with my manager, and feel that the course has given me ideas to try out.

The biggest change is my own approach to how I support children: sustained shared thinking has enabled me to think more about two-way interactions with children, and I check myself to ensure I am using open questions. The course has made me a more reflective practitioner, thinking how I could do things differently to increase the children’s learning.

I have enjoyed the units on supporting children’s development in the prime and specific areas, especially learning about the relevant theories and then linking them to my daily work.

On completion of my Level 3, I want to gain more experience and take on more responsibility. I have an interest in developing my skills to support children with SEN, particularly speech and language. I understand there is to be a new SEN qualification which I would be interested in learning more about that.

Kirsty Empson

Curriculum Lead Manager (at time of study) – now Quality Lead

Level 4 Early Years for the Advanced Practitioner

September 2016 – December 2017

I was keen to undertake the Level 4 qualification for the advanced practitioner which the Early Years Training Centre was offering.

The course was delivered through evening sessions, and also consisted of home learning and on-the-job training. I was also able to contact my assessor through the online system (ONFile). Delivery was good, though I feel more sessions allowing participants to study/carry out assignments in a classroom environment, with assessor support, would have been beneficial.

My learning journey was definitely a rollercoaster! It takes a lot of time and dedication to complete the course. The study was intense, but also very rewarding and the feeling of achievement on completion is great. The course allows you to develop and improve at your own pace, with the support of tutors.

Those undertaking the Level 4 would benefit from being in a senior role, though it is not impossible to achieve the Level 4, no matter what level you are at. I would also advise anyone undertaking the Level 4 to ensure they have time in and out of the setting to complete research and written assessments.

Throughout the course my assessor was great! She made the time and effort to make sure I understood what was expected from me, and provided me with constructive feedback and reassurance.

The learning environment was good, although after a long day at work, it was sometimes a struggle. Other learners were all in the same position, and we helped each other along the way. I am still in contact with some of them, and we meet up regularly.

The research project was challenging: you need to implement the research, gain evidence and apply it to what you had learnt to get an outcome. It allowed me to look more in-depth at a topic which I was interested in. It also taught me a lot about managing time both in and out of the setting, developing better bonds with children, staff and parents/carers.

My research project did benefit the setting, giving practitioners more information on the topic, and allowing me to implement some improvements.

Parents and carers were interested in the outcome of my Research Project. I also received feedback that my practitioner skills, attention to detail and observation techniques had improved.

I learnt a lot about personal organization whilst completing the course. I also gained more skills in observing children, and understanding the ways observation can be carried out. As well as this, I learnt several different theorists and their theories and put them into practice.

I would love to undertake a higher level in Childcare and Education or be able to teach others Childcare and Education.
Let’s Talk …
Narrowing the word gap in Early Years

Early Years Conference 2019

The conference was opened Jonathan Lewis, Director of Education, on Thursday, and Councillor Simon Bywater on Friday. Their opening remarks highlighted the challenges of delay in children’s language and communication skills, highlighting the significance of the ‘UK Millennium Cohort study’. The study claims children from socio-economically disadvantaged groups are twice as likely to experience language delay as other children.

Practitioners were reminded a Good Level of Development (GLD) is awarded to a child who has achieved at least the expected level in all the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in the Prime Areas of Learning and the ELGs for Literacy and Mathematics (12 ELGs in total) at the end of their Reception Year. A child achieving a GLD at age five is on track to achieve 5 GCSEs at grade 4-9 (C or above), a key aspiration for all children, and a key part of our reason for attending the conference.

Jonathan and Simon praised practitioners for their dedication and commitment to the children of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and invited them to embrace the challenge utilising the wealth of expertise within the conference audience: ‘Aim higher, dream bigger, recognise your contribution to the sector and talk to us (Council representatives) about how we can work together to give Cambridgeshire (and Peterborough) children the very best opportunities’.

This year we were delighted to invite Di Chilvers, Advisory Consultant for Early Childhood Education, and Kathy Sylva, Professor of Educational Psychology at Oxford University, to lead the conference. They inspired practitioners to challenge and reflect on their current practice, and consider new approaches to enhance children’s communication and language skills.

Di Chilvers’ keynote on Serve and Return Conversations made the link between talking and thinking. It unpicked how the crucial process of serve and return conversations with babies, toddlers and young children underpins the development of communication, language and understanding.

Di uses “learning stories” and examples from practice to show how this all leads to Sustained Shared Thinking. Her interactive workshop
‘Narrowing the gap – Talking and thinking in action!’ shared examples of her own studies, and how to become more aware of children’s talking and thinking through child-led play.

Kathy Sylva’s keynote focussed on ‘the role of early childhood education: school readiness and 21st century skills’. Throughout the keynote, Kathy’s perspective on 21st-century skills included communication language and literacy analysis of the EPPSE longitudinal study, based on 3,000 children, and covered self-regulation, assessing quality in pre-school classrooms, pedagogical drivers in child development and the effects of global v. pedagogical quality in children’s development.

Her key take-home messages were: pedagogical quality drives children’s outcomes, oral language skills predict reading comprehension, and self-regulation matters.

Practitioners were able to choose workshops in the afternoon which were aimed to inspire and consider different approaches to enhance children’s language and literacy development.
New SEND Toolkit will support all activity for children with additional needs

Cambridgeshire’s SEND Toolkit for Early Years has been developed to provide basic information to support Committees, Governors, Managers, SENCos, Early Years Practitioners and Childminders to reflect upon their roles and responsibilities in relation to SEND. This new resource will support reflective practice, adding to what is already in place in the Quality Framework.

The Toolkit will particularly support settings when they are identifying emerging needs and SEND, implementing actions and considering initial strategies to be put in place in a timely manner. It offers information that may be of use alongside guidance from outside professionals and it can also be part of staff induction and development.

The Toolkit will be available on the SEND Knowledge Hub, and Cambridgeshire settings will receive a hard copy with this edition of Jigsaw.

Language in action: talking walks with Talking Together in Cambridgeshire

Early in April we met up with Lottie & Cherish from Wisbech Oasis Child & Family Centre to deliver the first of three Talking Walk sessions.

We had a great time in Wisbech Park with parents who wanted to learn more about how to support their child’s communication & language development. We shared our handouts & modelled some of the Talking Tennis strategies so parents could then try them out too.

Crouching down to the children’s level, we showed them the Talking Walk activity sheet. After ten seconds, once the children had had an opportunity to look at all the photos, they showed us which objects they were interested in, communicating with us in a variety of ways. Some used their eyes to focus on a particular photo, some pointed at the photos and some voiced their choice while others started to move towards the object as they had seen the object in the park before.

We followed the lead of each child in turn, naming the object, pointing to the photo & adding ‘Let’s find the (object name)’. By repeating the object name, we were supporting the children to make the link between the word heard & the object in the photo. When we found the object we said ‘It’s the (object name).’ We found the (object name), giving the children the opportunity to make the link between the word and the object. We found five of the eight objects – a bird, a wall, sticks, the spinner and the slide, also naming many other objects around the park the children showed an interest in.

While the children played on the slide, the spinner and the swings, we talked with the parents about using simple language to describe their child’s play. For example, ‘You’re pushing the spinner. Push, push.’ We explained how this helps the child experience the language in action, bringing meaning to the words used. We finished with a picnic at which we sang a few nursery rhymes chosen by each child from our song cards.

If you’d like to go on your own Talking Walk, you can download our free resources for four different parks from our webpage – www.cambslearn together.co.uk/early-years/community-literacy-project. As and when we run a new round of Talking Walks, we’ll add a flyer to our Talking Together in Cambridgeshire Facebook page.
Early Years SEN specialist and portage service

Peterborough Portage, Caverstede Nursery and Barnardo's Children Centre are working in partnership to deliver groups for parents of children with complex developmental needs or SEN in an informal and relaxed manner.

The aim is for families to benefit from sharing experiences with others in a safe environment, empowering parents who may feel unable to access universal services and groups.

The group provides opportunities for children to actively use their senses as they explore their world through sensory play, which supports cognitive growth, language development, gross motor skills and social interaction.

Practitioners observe and listen to children, along with their parents and learn about what they are interested in and put this into future planning.

The groups give parents the opportunity to talk to other parents and staff, as well as enjoy the resources available and engage with their child.

Parents Comments:

“I feel confident to play and interact with my child at the centre”

“It’s great to have the opportunity to talk to trained staff about ideas to use with the children in the home”

“Since starting the group my son is now touching sand, water and is trying new textures”

Supporting parents with Foodbank

At Bees at the Hive Pre-school (Early Years Alliance) in Bretton, over two-thirds of the children currently on roll receive the deprivation supplement. The pre-school was aware of at least two families accessing Peterborough Foodbank. Practitioner Bev Huscroft asked if she could explore how the pre-school could become a Foodbank agency supporter.

Bev attended training to allow individuals to issue food bank vouchers to families. The course provided Bev with information and the authority to be able to distribute Foodbank vouchers appropriately to the right families. It also informed Bev about other services such as community fridges, which allow families to pick up a quick supply of food for the day.

The pre-school informed families, and Bev issued her first voucher over Christmas.

More information about the Foodbank can be found info@peterborough.foodbank.org.uk
Season of Goodwill: Reverse Advent Calendars for Christmas

During December, we had a basket for our children to put in different food or toys each day. We explained to the children that we were collecting things so we could give them to the food bank, then the people at the food bank would distribute our donations to families that did not have as much as us. The children enjoyed counting what we had, and talking about the different things we had collected and who might use them. We took them to the food bank on our last day of term. They weighed them and were very thankful for all our donations.

Later we got an email saying how much we had taken and how many families we were able to help. It was a great way to finish with the children before Christmas.

Benny Kingsbury and Sara Newell
Childminders in St Neots

Rock solid road safety

At Rock Solid Childcare in Littleport, the children have enjoyed learning about road safety.

It all started with the children’s interest in our giant road puzzle. From this we did some safety walks in our local community, crossing the road at the zebra crossing, pelican crossing and looking at the various road signs in our community. The children enjoyed ticking items off on a picture chart.

We talked to the children about the importance of holding hands whilst out. Seeking to extend our children’s learning on this topic, we contacted Cheryl at Cambs Road Safety. The Road Safety team were very accommodating and arranged to drop off the road safety kit at the setting.

What a great success it was! The children had the opportunity to engage with story sacks related to road safety, dress up as people who help us and role play with the zebra crossing. The children learnt so much during these two weeks and the parents commented on the impact it was having outside of the setting too.

Several parents commented: “they have been reminding us to hold their hands”.

At the end of the two weeks we run two parent sessions to find out more about the topic: the kit came with an informative letter and other resources for families to take home. A giant book on road safety was also included for the setting to keep, which has become a new favourite book within the setting.

On our visits to the local care home, the children loved sharing their knowledge with the residents and modelling the police and traffic patrol dressing up items. Following on from this project the children have made our very own set of traffic lights from recycled materials.

We really feel it has had a long-lasting impact on our setting and the children’s understanding. Since the project, all children hold their parents’ hands at drop off/collection time and whilst out and about.

We hope that other settings will access the road safety kit through Cambridgeshire County Council.

For more information contact: cheryl.morgan@cambridgeshire.gov.uk / 01223 699 691
Little Owls cross the road

After seeing an article on the PACEY website about Brake and road safety, I asked my local lollipop lady, Bridget, to come in and speak to my and Amanda’s children about road safety, using our free Tesco community room as a venue.

It was fabulous. Bridget brought lots of props for the children to use, and activity books. She brought her uniform and put each piece on, waiting until the children guessed who/what she was. She told me she had never been asked to speak to children in this way before! She was lovely, and the children loved her!

She played games involving the zebra crossing. The children got to dress up and be a lollipop person, stopping the traffic (Amanda and I!) and allowing their friends to cross. Bridget explained exactly how she stops the traffic on her busy road.

The other children learned how to stop, look and listen when waiting to cross. Many of the children already knew this, and put their hands up to tell Bridget!

We made our own lollipop sticks, traffic light playdough, traffic light biscuits, and drew a huge road map for the children to play on with cars.

A great day was had by all, and the children learned a lot. We thanked Bridget with a card and a bunch of flowers. All the children enthusiastically explained to their parents what they had learned when they got home.

Bridget sent me a message the next day to thank me for inviting her to meet us all and told us that the children’s behaviour was a credit to us both!

Natalie Jackson
Little Owls Childminding Setting

Flopsy the speech and language rabbit

Talking Together in Cambridgeshire Childminding Champion Michaela Ellis describes how an activity bag brings her training to life for families.

My colleague Kerrie (Forsey) and I have enjoyed the different modules of the ICAN training which informs practitioners on how to support children and their families with speech and communication.

In our Childcare setting we have lovely parents who are always willing to try new things at our recommendation and are eager to listen to new training we have been on and how to support their children at home.

This is where the idea of ‘Flopsy’ first came from. We thought that if children were receiving consistent support in their childcare setting and home environment then their communication and language would flourish.

The activities we offer with Flopsy are very easy and not time consuming as we understand that parents/carers have busy lives and their weekends should be their time to relax. Although they seem simple activities the possibilities for language and communication are endless and the activity can be developed further depending on the child’s interest.

We trialled the activity with our own children first to see how the children respond to it and then offered a model for parents to follow.

The activity we are sending out to parents is a simple bubble blowing activity where children explore bubbles and can ask questions about what they are doing.

The activity bag includes: Flopsy the Bunny, an activity outline and list of resources that are in the pack, some background on Speech and Language and why we have devised this weekend bag, some questions that parents may want to use when carrying out the activity in case they get stuck and a diary for parents to fill out with pictures and information on how they thought the activity went with their child.

All the parents that have taken Flopsy home have enjoyed this activity with their children and the children have loved telling us all about it too, which again encourages core language and communication.

Kerrie and I intend to change the activity when all the children have had the chance to participate.

We believe this weekend Activity bag supports not only children with their speech and communication skills but gives parents an allocated time to spend talking with their children which sometimes we can all take for granted in the busy lives we lead.
After working with a social worker with one of my minded families who lost a family member, I became aware that many childminders may lack the knowledge of how to handle bereavement.

We could all benefit from training in handling changes for the children we care for – the loss of a pet, parents separating, moving away from loved ones and friends, but most importantly, losing a family member.

Sadly, I mind a child whose daddy died of cancer. We have all been through the battle for the last three years. It was a very difficult time for the little girl who lost her daddy just weeks before her sixth birthday. Moreover, I have now been told by one of my mums that her child’s father has suddenly become very ill, and it’s just a matter of time.

Understanding how to offer appropriate support with bereavement is crucial. I became very close to the family of the little girl who lost her daddy.

We all grieved together due to the knowledge that the battle of cancer could not be won. To see a little girl I care about say goodbye, along with her brothers, at the funeral was heart-breaking, especially as I was on standby for her. I took her out of the funeral service, and we cried together, before I found the strength to talk to her and settle her.

After the initial shock, I decided I needed to gain more knowledge. Working closely with the parent and the family, we turned to the Macmillan helpline and their fantastic cancer support. Their range of information from the patient, child and family’s perspective was invaluable.

One family asked if a social worker could come to my house to work with the children. I jumped at the chance! The social worker brought a book to read: The Dragonfly Story. It’s a beautiful book which helps explain the death of a loved one to children and families. The Dragonfly is now our symbol, and we look for them when we are out and about. I have pictures on display drawn by the little girl, and I proudly wear a beautiful dragonfly brooch that she gave me.

We have created some wonderful activities around dragonflies from the story, which were of great comfort to the child and her peers.

Going through all I have has been a challenge. It has helped me grow in knowledge and I now feel more confident to offer support to a family going through difficult and sad circumstances such as this.
Supporting forces’ children

Our armed forces do a fantastic job, but it’s easy to forget the impact their job has on the little members of their family. RAF Wittering childminder, Jodie Williams, shares her experience of working with forces’ children and families.

Supporting forces families has been embedded into my practice for many years. As a forces’ wife, I know the struggles and support needed by families who have a member deploying for any length of time, often living miles away from family and even their home country.

Preparing a child for a parent deployment is essential. I talk to the children about where their parent is going and why they need to go away. We talk about what plans they have while parent is away, maybe family visiting and fun day trips. We share stories that relate to us such as ‘My daddy’s going away’, promoting discussion about how the children are feeling and any worries they may have.

Keeping a child in contact with a deployed parent can often be difficult, depending on the child’s age and the time zone where the parent is deployed. Often children will go weeks without talking to their parent. One way I help children keep in contact with their parent is to send them photos and messages of what their child has been doing. Parents need this support, too. They will send messages and photos back for me to share with the child. Children also draw pictures and write letters which are sent home for the other parent to send off in a small care package. This is a slower form of contact as it can take a few weeks to receive, but they really look forward to it.

When parents are due to return, the children are so excited, and talk about all the wonderful plans they have when their parent returns. We love to make “Welcome Home” banners and cards. I feel very privileged to be able to understand the needs of forces’ families and support those in my care, and will continue to develop new ideas to enhance my setting in order to support all ages of children.

Peterborough childminder offers free hours for cervical screening

With cervical cancer screening hitting a 20-year low, and only 71.4% of eligible women being screened, Werrington childminder Cherie Pearce, is joining the national campaign to raise this figure by offering to provide a free one-hour childcare session so that ‘mamas out there can go and get it done’.

Let’s all encourage mums and indeed staff in our settings to get booked in – a child needs their Mummy!
Following the great success of the 2018 PACEY Childminding Conference, the Cambridgeshire team are pleased to announce that they will be holding another one this year!

We are delighted that Penny Tassoni will be returning as the keynote speaker, and delivering a workshop. Please put this date in your diary!

The cost will be £30, but if you are a member of the Early Years membership scheme, then the cost is only £25. This is an excellent price for a full day of CPD, with networking, refreshments, and a bit of shopping!

Look out for the email invitation and booking form!
Research indicates that a healthy bond or attachment between a child and carer at the earliest opportunity will help to provide that child with lifelong resilience.

At East Cambs Child & Family Centre, we are using the five “building blocks to a healthy brain” outlined in Five to Thrive (Respond, Cuddle, Relax, Play, Talk) to explore how parents and carers help their baby’s brain to grow in the first few months.

Over five weeks, we use a range of media, information, baby toys and sensory equipment to demonstrate how responding, cuddling, relaxing, playing and talking with your baby has a profound effect on their development.

We are now in the third year of running this programme and we have received some very positive feedback. For example:

“It made me aware about all the good things I already do with my baby and the things I need to work on a bit more.”

“Very informative and useful for a first time mum who doesn’t know anything”

“P gave us lots of ideas and practical examples to help our child’s mental and brain development. I really enjoyed the course.”

Elklan in Wisbech

Last term, in Wisbech Child and Family Centres, we’ve been offering ‘Elklan Let’s Talk with Under 5s’ training to staff from within our own centres some of our colleagues across the county.

The programme has just finished and our seven participants – pictured below – have just submitted their workbooks in order to gain accreditation.

The seven weekly sessions, led by Helen Wootten from Talking Together in Cambridgeshire, with Early Help Assistant Manager Jayne Smart, who completed Elklan ‘Train the Trainer’ training last summer, covered the following topics:

1. What is communication?
2. Adult – Child Interaction
3. The link between play and language development
4. Understanding language
5. Using words and sentences
6. Sharing books and asking questions
7. Helping children with unclear speech

Participants attended 2-hour sessions at Wisbech South Child and Family Centre, supplemented by many home tasks in their workbooks. The focus of home tasks was to observe and then support a specific child’s communication development.

Practitioners monitored their own interactions and tested out many of Elklan’s recommended ‘helpful hints’, often with quite amazing results. Everyone found that limiting the number of questions asked had a really profound and positive effect on children’s communication.

At the end of the course, learners were asked to consider how their learning had supported their chosen child to develop his/her communication skills.

I hope information from our sessions will continue to be shared with parents and colleagues across district teams so more children can benefit from this learning.

Sadie Golding
Wisbech Child & Family Centres
In January 2019, two very talented musicians from Cambridgeshire Music led a Music group at the North Cambridge Child and Family Centre.

Penni and Clare ran six sessions funded by MusicNet-East through Youth Music, and the Cambridgeshire Music Education Hub. The sessions were part of Talking Together in Cambridgeshire, the Council’s early language project, supported by the National Literacy Trust.

Listening to and creating music helps children learn numeracy, literacy and emotional skills. Incorporating music into routines and play in the early years has a positive influence on a child’s early development. It can get them moving, thinking and inspire creativity.

The first session was an introduction to music: Penni and Clare brought drums and guitars for the children were able to handle and listen to. As the two musicians sang and played guitar, the children were in awe.

Each session started with a song ‘Rat-a-Tat-Tat’, where a hat was passed around for the children to wear and their name was sung – a great way to learn the children’s names and introduce them to the group. The sessions featured a range of instruments, including a ukulele and an accordion, and a range of styles from action songs, folk songs, nursery rhymes and they also encouraged the parents to make up their own songs.

The group content was also led by the children at times – one child suddenly sang a line of a modern song and Clare immediately played the tune on her guitar and everyone joined in.

Overall, 12 families took part in the sessions with their children aged from 7 months to 21 months. Feedback was very positive – all the parents wrote that they would use what they have learnt at home.

Sally McGivern, Centre Worker at North Cambridge Child and Family Centre summed up the value of the project. “The children really loved having hands-on experience with the instruments and singing in a group. This boosted their confidence and the families are much more comfortable in making music together.”

Matthew Beams, Child and Family Centre Manager for Cambridge City District said, “Partnerships, such as this one add up to a product that is greater than the sum of its parts. As a result, parents and carers are so much more confident in using music as a means of boosting children’s language and communication skills.”

Sally McGivern

South Cambs Child and Family Centres

Music and Movement

In South Cambridgeshire, we have launched a new Music and Movement group, packed with loads of fun for children and their parents/carers. Our lively themes are well incorporated in structured sessions to aid child development.

We aim to build relationships and actively support the principles of Five To Thrive by encouraging parents to relax and have fun in with their young children, developing speech and language skills, physical strength and agility.

The programme works to encourage healthy lifestyles and should help to reduce childhood obesity by increasing activity levels, with potential benefits for parents as well. Healthy and happy parents are a key to healthy and happy children!

We have worked closely with parents to evolve the group and meet the needs of the community.

Our programme makes these opportunities available to a wider group of parents so that all children can have the opportunity to benefit from the experience.

Lina Laurinaviciene
Child & Family Centre Worker
South Cambs Child & Family Centres
Huntingdon and St Ives Child & Family Centres

Join our Cub

Vicki Cox from the Huntingdon and St Ives Child and Family Centre introduces their newest group, Little Bears

As a team, we provide a huge variety of groups for all ages. Bumps to Babies is for expectant Mums through to birth, continuing until their baby is around 12 months. The groups run in St Ives, Huntingdon and Godmanchester.

Once our babies get too big, we have lots of other groups for our families to socialise in their own communities. We have Messy Play groups twice a week, Stay and Play groups 4 times a week, reading programmes at St Ives library, and parenting courses such as Terrific Twos and Shine. We take huge satisfaction from the gratitude we receive from parents weekly. We are privileged to be able to welcome families, from the very beginning of their parenting journey.

One of our newest groups is Little Bears, a Stay and Play group based at Godmanchester Football Club. This venue was chosen as it is next door to the new Roman’s Edge development, to provide somewhere for families moving into the community to meet other families who have also recently joined the community.

Cross Keys Homes, who provide affordable housing on the new development, have kindly offered to sponsor the group, by paying for the venue. The football club is run by a family local to Godmanchester, and they have been very supportive by offering the use of the football pitch for outside play during the warmer months.

The group has a steady number of families attending, with the first week seeing 20 children. There is a variety of activities available – we have a baby area, a quiet book corner, tents/tunnels/dark dens, construction toys, role play, arts and crafts, play-dough, puzzles and much more.

Families say how nice it is to have a group on the new development so they don’t have to travel far to socialise. They are enjoying meeting their new neighbours in a happy, fun environment. Childminders and nannies who attend appreciate having a new group so local to them. Little Bears runs every Tuesday morning, 10am-11.30am.

Vicki Cox
Child & Family Centre Worker

Little Einsteins in Ramsey

In January, St Neots RSY Child & Family Centre created and ran a 4 week course titled Little Einsteins at the Ramsey Child & Family Zone.

As a trained scientist, I wanted to share my love of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) with the scientists and engineers of tomorrow. With technology changing so rapidly in modern society, sparking a child’s attention at an early age seems vital.

Our topics included How My Body Works and The Land Before Time, with a variety of different activities and experiments. The children enjoyed making Lego models, learning shape names while making dinosaurs, creating fizzing experiments and sometimes (although, not always!) we made things fly.

This was originally planned as a trial with a small number of parents to see whether it was something the families would engage in. The speed of booking and length of waiting list showed that this is a popular topic with parents. Feedback was incredibly positive with many saying it had given them new ideas to try at home. But the one thing all the parents asked for was for me to be called “Science Sam” and wear a lab coat and goggles for the next course!

Sam Matthews
Child and Family Centre Worker
Spurgeons helps mums and dads ‘enjoy parenting’

Peterborough Spurgeons children’s centres are now offering free parenting courses to parents with young children. The 4-week ‘Enjoy Parenting’ course aims to promote positive family relationships, help parents and children to feel valued and respected, and support parents to be positive role models for their children.

The course is aimed at parents with children from 18 months to 4 years and focuses on sharing play and effective communication, encouraging parents to take time out and adopt consistent boundaries and routines.

1. Things you learnt from Enjoy Parenting:
   • No one is perfect
   • Enjoy and work on the positives.
   • Things will get better with persistence
   • Reward/routines are important
   • The importance of what we are saying, how we are saying and how we act with [all] members of the family.
   • How important play is and what it does for us and kids

   • Labelling the behaviour is better than labelling the child.

2. How do you feel that the course will enable you to make some changes for your child?
   • It will change how I speak to my children taking into consideration how they will feel.
   • I already started reinforcing and changing the routines to fit us all and changing circumstances
   • It will help me to try and be a better parent and that persistence is key.
   • I will be more positive, a better tone of voice and more praise … this will create a … happier mum and children
   • It will enable me to be more assertive with routines

Spurgeons Saturdads celebrates ten years of supporting fathers

Spurgeons has been running Saturdads at Honeyhill Children’s Centre in Peterborough since 2009, and since then over 250 dads and 400 children have enjoyed the fortnightly group.

At the weekly Saturday morning sessions, fathers can be more involved with their children and develop their confidence as a dad. The scheme also helps fathers to create peer support networks and enables them to socialise with other parents.

Dads can really make a difference

In Saturdads sessions, activities are based on the children’s and fathers’ interests, including woodwork, cookery, first aid, den building, gardening and story sack making.

Staff, volunteers and other dads act as role models and offer play ideas, and the talk time in the session enables fathers to share and develop their parenting capacity. While the sessions are primarily for dads and children, mums can come along to support their partners.

What people say about Saturdads

“The Saturdads group is particularly successful because it enables male role models to establish productive relationships with the children. It also helps fathers learn more about how to support their children’s learning and development. … [And] is also proving to be a good opportunity to make new friends.”

Ofsted

“As a father especially, I don’t think you know where to turn for support. It’s always family and friends who I would reach out to first. We love the sessions though and I get as much out of them as the boys do – I’ll keep taking them until they tell me they don’t want to go anymore.”

MB, Parent

“I had little confidence with fatherhood and how to socialise with other dads and children. Saturdads helped me to come to a group and watch them play and be more involved and confident as a dad. I have also learnt how to cook at this group!”

A father with four children under the age of ten

For more information visit www.spurgeons.org
In March 2019 – playwork legend Meynell Walter returned to Cambridgeshire to deliver an inspirational, fun and practical workshop.

Eighteen of us spent the morning learning about Hammers and Nails, and practicing the art of hammering. This was followed by playing with saws, with lots of team work trialling different types of saws and hammers. We then had the chance to make a small structure together in small teams. The team I was in made a chair, with the small pieces of wood and some nails.

It was inspirational to explore how this can be used in a variety of settings, from pre-school to wrap-around care, and in school-based environments.

After a very brief networking lunch, we were given free rein with some larger items outside, with the use of the small items from the morning. We had Pallets, Cable reels and planks of wood.

We separated into two teams and built two very different structures: one team built a cart which rocked, the other team built a two-storey fort to climb on.

The key messages were to allow the children to play and explore, to give them solutions to solve problems like holding a nail with a pair of pliers while they hammer. To keep an area safe without the children noticing you moving around. We were shown some special tricks like how to sand a piece of wood without sandpaper (on the concrete path outside).

As a result of this training, my setting is having a very special Loose Parts week, playing with all-natural resources.

Little Wombatz will also be working closely with Smartkidz Play and Learn (shortlisted for a national playwork award) to develop lots of forest school and alternative play opportunities for the children –some of which was learnt by the Smartkidz staff on the above training.

Amy Brooks
Little wombatz Preschool

How Not to Hit your Thumb with a Hammer!
Acknowledgements

Articles, letters and pictures
We are keen to receive all contributions. Please send to Jigsaw Editor, Early Years Service, Cambridgeshire County Council, Box OCT 1215, Shire Hall, Cambridge, CB3 0AP / email: eycinfo@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Notes for contributors
Ideally, articles should be 300-500 words and smaller contributions and news items are also welcome. Please include good quality photographs if possible, as separate files, ideally 1 megabyte or larger in size. All photos should have parental permission to print, for any children shown. To request a guidance note for contributors, please email the Early Years Communications Team: eycinfo@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
The editors reserve the right to edit articles for length and content in order to best meet the needs of the audience.

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Cover pic: Little Incredibles take World Book Day to the Fire Station (see page 16)

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