

thinking about childcare for your own children ?

thinking about training to gain more qualifications so that you can progress your existing childcare career ?

thinking about childcare as a career, becoming a childminder or playworker, or setting up in business as a nursery or out of school playscheme ?

thinking about providing childcare for your employees ?

whatever you're thinking
about childcare or early years
education call the
Norfolk Childcare Information Service
on **01603 62 22 92**



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languages



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and Super heroes**
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JANUARY 2004

partnership news



**the grand
opening of the
earlham early
years centre**

the Rt. Hon Charles Clarke
pays earlham a visit
after it's £1.4m programme
of improvements





welcome to 2004!

We start this term with great optimism and look forward to the challenges facing us all delivering the new 2004 – 06 guidance. With our strengthened Management Team in place, which we hope will offer us stability and drive in the coming months, we can forge ahead with our plans and I welcome all the newcomers to our team.

2003 seems to have come and gone in a flash, but as we review all the successes of the past year we have all together achieved so much. The last quarter saw us opening a very high number of out-of-school childcare places, and particular praise must go to all those who made that happen, development teams and support services alike.

As we bid farewell to 2003, we also bid farewell to the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) We have had many successes and many sleepless nights securing funding for childcare places around the County! So we welcome the decision that in 2004 the funding will come direct to the Local Authority for the development of Sure Start out-of-school childcare.

2003 successes were numerous, but in particular the opening of the Earham Early Years Centre, the submission of 'children's centre' plan and the crucial announcement of the governments Green Paper - Every Child Matters, which focuses on children's agencies coming together to improve outcomes for children.

In this issue we hear from our teams and partners about the work they have done and will continue to do, enjoy reading and participating in our lighthearted quiz, where hopefully you can gain some useful information and contact numbers.

Best Wishes

Marcelle Curtis

Marcelle Curtis
Head of Early Years and Childcare Strategy

Out-of-school update

Playworker cluster meetings were piloted in November and December 03 in Great Yarmouth, Norwich and Kings Lynn, the meetings covered activity suggestions, training information, marketing ideas and much more. These meetings are aimed specifically at supporting Out of School Groups. More Networks are intended in the near future in areas where it is felt there are enough groups to support.

The possibility of an equipment and toy library is being explored, please contact your local team with any suggestions for equipment, toys or books which you feel may be useful.

Development Workers are soon to be contacting all Out of School Groups (including those who have not received NOF funding) offering support with all aspects including Activities, Training, Marketing, Business and Finance and Ofsted Registration.

If you would like support or advice before you hear from us please contact your local team office.

Important Reminder!

Please remember that any schools which have out of school care which they run themselves for children under eight years, or any schools running pre school provision need to put an application for Ofsted registration in by the end of March 2004.

Online Christmas Greetings

As many of you will have noticed the Early Years and Childcare Team went interactive with their Christmas greetings message. We hope that you all liked the new format. Our decision this year was influenced greatly by the costs and it was decided that the money would be better utilised elsewhere, helping deliver support services. Happy New Year to all.

The Area Senco team - where are they?

In October all settings delivering funded early education were mail shot with the following information –

- an update on Area Senco team developments
- list of contact addresses and telephone numbers for all team members
- copy of the supplement to July 2003 training news – 'training for setting SENCOs'
- a revised referral form for Area Senco involvement at Early Years Action Plus

Universal funding 3 & 4 yr olds – new guidance due soon.

The guidance available to all early education providers is currently being reviewed in line with the introduction of universal education funding from April 2004. We hope to have this available soon and would encourage all to log on at www.norfolkchildcare.info for regular updated information.

NHS project

The NHS project enters it's 2nd quarter with good progress made to date. The questionnaire to all NHS staff has been issued both as hard copy and in an interactive format that can be completed and submitted online. We look forward to the report of the findings of this due back later this month. Awareness raising events, clinics and other outreach work continue to happen and we are working hard with our childcare coordinator colleagues in neighbouring counties to offer a regional approach.

Please note

Change of Area Senco administration address (not pre-school funding panel). All referral forms requesting intervention at Early Years Action Plus now to be sent to:

Linda Shiner, Greenwood Centre, Greenwood Road, Tuckswood Estate, Norwich, NR4 6BN.

If you have not received this information please contact either your local Area Senco or Liz Player on 01692 409517.

Inclusion Update

We recently completed the inclusion and out-of-school support audit questionnaire with 21 out-of-school clubs participating in the pilot. Thank you very much to all those who took part in the pilot. Once we have analysed the pilot we will roll out the full audit to all out-of-school clubs to find out the training and resource needs, and best practice in Norfolk with regard to inclusive practice. With that in mind expect a Development Worker to contact you shortly to carry out the audit questionnaire with you in person.

First of all a reminder to everyone, please make sure the equal opportunities designated person within your setting is booked on an equal opportunities training session. The training sessions are running between September 2003 and March 2004 at various locations around the county. Please see the latest edition of Training News for dates and times.

A new resource pack will be available for the equal opportunities designated person to take away from the training day. It has been compiled to aid providers, practitioners and parents working in partnership to ensure settings are striving to become more inclusive.

Any questions or concerns about inclusion can be directed to the lead responsibility staff person in each development team.

Sue Martin – West Area 01553 667620
Central & Northern Area 01603 598486
Peter Nash – South & East Area 01493 335740

Goodbye to New Opportunities Fund!

Congratulations to all providers and support staff who submitted bids in Round 15. We are delighted to report that ALL were successful. Round 15 sees the last of the NOF bids and we say goodbye to NOF and hello to funding coming directly into the Local Authority for the development of Sure Start out-of-school schemes - more guidance will follow. We would also like to report that the combined success of the entire NOF bids, rounds 1 –15 total in excess of £4,000,000! This represents a huge influx of investment in childcare for Norfolk and a huge amount of work by bidders, business and finance teams and development staff. Well done to all concerned.

New Childminding Support group in Coltishall.

We are a newly established group having set up at the church hall at RAF Coltishall near Norwich.

The church hall is a wonderful venue, which offers a large indoor play area with toys for children of all ages, a seating area for us minders to sit and mull things over and kitchen facilities where we can get ourselves much needed refreshments. We meet on the last Wednesday of each month from 10am to 11.30am.

It is our intention to have training brought to us and with this in mind we plan to have talks in 2004 about Quality Accreditation and being a Kite marked Childminder, have a representative of Ofsted talk about how best to prepare for inspections and a representative from the Inland Revenue talk to us about our tax returns aimed specifically at Childminders.

If you would like to join our group or just want to come along to see if you like us, then all Registered Childminders are welcome. If you would like further information then you can contact either Pauline Cannon on 01692 538538 or Kerry Shepherd on 01603 736028.

What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused



After the publication of the Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report, January 2003, the Secretary of State for Health said that he intended to "Secure the replacement of existing local child protection guidance with new, shorter, clearer guidance which will reach every one of the one million professional staff dealing with safeguarding children".

As a result, the publication 'What To Do If You're Worried A Child Is Being Abused' was produced and over 110,000 copies of this booklet have been distributed to childcare providers.

Did you get your copy? If not, please ring 01603 62 22 92 and the Childcare Information Service will send you one.

Have your staff read the information? Do they know where it is kept? This booklet replaces the dark blue ACPG guidance previously issued.

New Contact Number for Social Services: 0844 800 8014

This is the number to ring for all areas of Norfolk, including for urgent help outside office hours. Calls are charged at local rate. It might be a good idea to record this number in your copy of the booklet.

Ofsted Update

A recent instance has prompted a reminder to all childcare providers about the importance of dealing with the outcome of any Ofsted inspection. This may include actions, checks and or compliance notices. It is vital that these are addressed within the given timescale as failure to do so may result in additional action being taken. Below is an outline of some areas that Ofsted may highlight. Please also be aware that there are many organisations available to offer help and advice. Our contacts page will give you the specific numbers for: NEYSN, Development Workers, Childminding Matters and Link Teachers.

Actions

As an outcome of an inspection you may have been given actions to complete. There are always timescales attached to the actions and it is your responsibility to let Ofsted know the actions have been completed or if for some reason you cannot complete the actions as agreed.

CRB and other checks

Actions concerning the submission of forms for checks to be carried out on staff, committee or volunteers is mandatory. These forms are available from the Childcare Information Service or Ofsted website www.ofsted.gov.uk Ofsted suggest you ring 01279 693581 (or the number at the top of correspondence from Ofsted) to check that the forms have arrived. It is also sensible to phone and follow up any letters you send. If you ring from a mobile phone you will probably go through to the help line in Nottingham. The 01279 number is our Regional Office.

Compliance Notices - a serious step

If you do not complete the actions Ofsted may issue a compliance notice. This is a serious step. Failure to respond to compliance notices will result in further action. Please remember it is your role to ensure that the children's welfare is paramount and that committees/registered persons are responsible for ensuring all of the National Standards are met.

Notification of changes

It is a mandatory requirement in regulations that you notify Ofsted of certain changes. See 14.3 of the National Standards. Guidance and revisions to the guidance are available via the CIS.

Joiners and Leavers

Welcome back to:

Rachel Jackson,
Back from maternity leave, admin assistant at County Hall

Steph Broad,
Link teacher

Sam Goodfellow,
Link teacher

Welcome to:

Jo-anne Lamb,
County Training Manager

Anne James,
Link teacher

Nemonie Grummett,
Link teacher

Lucie Smith,
Admin for Business and Finance

Jo Rust,
Development worker in the West

Catherine Wedge-Clarke,
Marketing & Communications Manager

Goodbye to:

Hazel Francis,
Admin assistant at County Hall

Abi Oliver,
Admin in the training team

Aliona Laker,
Development Worker - Central Team

Got any News?

We are always interested to hear from you. If you have any news stories or feedback please contact Catherine Wedge-Clarke on 01603 223994 or email catherine.wedge-clark@norfolk.gov.uk

earlham early years centre opens!



Earlham Early Years Centre welcomed the Rt. Hon Charles Clarke, Secretary of State for Education and Skills at its official opening. The opening of this new Centre marks a fantastic achievement for Norfolk County Council in its work developing services for families and young children.

Earlham Early Years Centre is based on the Larkman Estate in Norwich. It's £1.4m programme of capital works including the new building, which has nearly doubled the size of the original centre, has been funded by the Department for Education and Skills' Early Excellence programme and the NELM Development Trust.

Earlham Early Years Centre has been developed by Norfolk County Council to offer extended services for families and children in the local area. By linking with key partner organisations in a joined up approach to service provision Earlham Early Years Centre has been able to link together new initiatives such as a childminding training and support network, parent classes and a toy library and outreach support service. Also in the development pipeline is a base for children's health services.

The work at Earlham Early Years Centre compliments and is shared with other providers of early education all around the county. When interviewed, Alec Byrne, Cabinet Member for Education agreed. He said "Earlham is very much a leading light in the field of early education and the work that goes on here is not only important for Norfolk but is nationally recognised. I am delighted that Norfolk as a county is yet again at the forefront of good early educational practice."

Felicity Thomas, head of the Centre comments, "the new and refurbished buildings provide a wonderful basis on which we can continue to grow the range of services available to our local community."



Felicity Thomas,
head of the Earlham
early years centre

Diary Dates

Childminder Information Sessions

Day	Date	Area	Venue	Times
Monday	12th January	King's Lynn	Alderman Jackson School, Marsh Lane, Gaywood	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Tuesday	13th January	Norwich	Greenfield's Community Centre, Ives Road, Norwich	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Tuesday	20th January	Wymondham	Wymondham High School, Folly Road	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Monday	23rd February	Watton	Wayland Community High School, Merton Road	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Thursday	26th February	Norwich	The Anna Sewell Room, County Hall Annexe, Martineau Lane	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Thursday	26th February	Great Yarmouth	St. Nicholas Children's Centre, St. Nicholas Road	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Wednesday	3rd March	Holt	Holt Community Primary School, Norwich Road	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Thursday	18th March	Dereham	Dereham Neatherd Community High School, Norwich Road	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Thursday	25th March	Thetford	Queeensway Community Junior School, Hillary Road	7.30pm to 9.30pm
Monday	29th March	Norwich	Cloverhill Village Hall, Humbleyard, Bowthorpe	7.30pm to 9.30pm

Forum Dates

North Norfolk Forums:

Ladybird Preschool,
Cromer Road, Sheringham
2nd February 2004, 7-30pm

Norwich Forums:

Starting Out Day Nursery,
Wolfe Road, Norwich
3rd March 2004, 4pm

Sunningdale Nursery,
Lakenham Sports Centre, Lakenham
19th May 2004, 4pm

Treehouse Nursery,
Chatham Street, Norwich
15th September 2004; 6-30pm

Hamlet Centre, Ella Road, Norwich
10th November 2004; 4pm

Eastern Forums:

St Nicholas Children's Centre,
Great Yarmouth
Tuesday 20th January at 4pm

West Norfolk Forums:

West Early Years and Childcare Team
Office, Unit 5, North Lynn Business Village,
Bergen Way, King's Lynn
Tuesday 13 January 2004 at 6.30pm

South Norfolk Forums:

South Norfolk District Council offices
Tuesday 3rd February and Thursday 25th
March, both at 7.30pm

Breckland Forums:

Venue To be confirmed.
Tuesday 9 March 2004 at 7.00pm

Useful contact numbers

Norfolk Childcare Information Service

For information on available childcare,
training and recruitment and developing
your services

01603 62 22 92

Area Offices

Kings Lynn

01553 66 76 20

Yarmouth

01493 33 57 40

Norwich

01603 59 84 84

Childminding Matters

Norfolk County Childminding Association.
Offering a support service for childminders
in the county

01603 61 56 67

NEYSN

Norfolk Early Years Support Network.
Offering help and support for providers of
early years education/childcare

01603 21 93 00

PLA

Pre-school Learning Alliance. The local branch
of this national charity offers support for early
education and the development of children

01603 76 75 25

NATLL

National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries

020 7387 9592

KCN

Kids Club Network. Offering help and
support for 'out of school' childcare
providers across the UK

0207 512 2100

Ofsted

general enquiries

0845 601 4771

complaints

0845 601 4772

Job Centre Plus

Childcare Partnership Manager
Louise Gedge

01603 636030

war,
weapons
and super
heroes

Penny Holland at the SENCO Conference June 2003

An intriguing title at a seminar at the SENCO conference. Penny Holland, from Royal Metropolitan University London, has carried out research about the effects of a zero tolerance to playing war games. Her latest book is called, "We Don't Play with Guns Here".

How many times do we say this? But children always try and make guns from anything, unifix, lego, duplo etc. They put on a hat to become a super hero, camouflage trousers to become a soldier. Then they fall to the ground going Tt, Tt, Tt, Tt. And you're instantly zapped by the machine gun.

Penny talked through the many reasons why settings decide to adopt a zero tolerance to any kind of war games and weapon play. Often we just don't like it, we feel it makes the children aggressive, it creates problems for those who are not in the game. We do it for all the best reasons but are we helping or hindering?

Penny's research was based on work in a Nursery where they had followed a zero tolerance policy to any kind of war games. They decided to see what would happen if they allowed children to make guns if they wanted to as part of their games. They discovered that the fantasy/pretend play that followed was not overtly aggressive. It actually created co-operative activities and role reversals. When allowed to develop further, other children were also involved in the game. Children who were difficult to control received positive rewards from adults, instead of being treated negatively and always being told, "Not to do something and to go and play nicely".

But of course it is not easy. In a group at a summer fun scheme the children were playing with soft balls. One of the boys asked, "Can't we pretend these are bombs, Miss and then we could all get killed?" What should we do? Did I really want to pretend to be dead! Wouldn't we lose control of the activity?



By being tolerant of war, weapons and superhero games we are actually being more inclusive and embracing all children, particularly those who need more physical activity.

But if we don't allow it are we encouraging only passive, compliant, 'nice' games. By always trying to prevent playing with 'weapons' are we suppressing freedom of expression and creating more long-term problems.

Sue Martin Partnership
Development Worker

quiz time!

...how about a bit of business fun, tick one answer to each question and then see how the early years and childcare team might be able to assist you with running your provision



Q1. Marketing

You set aside £1000 for your marketing budget at the beginning of the year. It's now 6 months in and you haven't spent anything. Do you:

- ☐ A Spend it all on a fun day out for your staff and children, after all nothing's come up so far
- ☐ B Revisit your marketing plan and find out why, and adjust the budget accordingly
- ☐ C Spend a little on much needed equipment and keep a little in reserve

Q2. Business and Finance

You're thinking about submitting a bid to apply for money to expand your business. The Business and Finance Officer has suggested that as part of this you need a detailed business plan of how the money will be managed. Do you:

- ☐ A Dismiss that idea. You manage your home accounts with no problems whatsoever and after all YOU know where the money is going to be spent.
- ☐ B Agree. It would be good practice to have that in place and use it to plan the expansion of your business.
- ☐ C Have a basic plan written down, but in reality use your experience to handle the actual detailed spending.

Q3. Care Standards

Your provision has received a grant for expansion. You can now convert the unused rooms into an additional area for the children. Do you:

- ☐ A Get a local building firm in quickly. You need the conversion done as soon as possible as the children are crammed into the existing space anyway.
- ☐ B Link with your local development worker and the Care Standards Officer to discuss the size, use and plan for the room, thereby ensuring maximum effectiveness of the additional space.
- ☐ C Talk it through with your staff and get their ideas. Plan your space according to your 1999 copy of the guidance, things rarely change that much and it's only one room.

Q4. Early Education

Your provision is thinking about offering early education places for 3 and 4 year olds. Do you:

- ☐ A Get a copy of the guidance and then apply for the money to deliver it.
- ☐ B Link with the Local Authority Early Years and Childcare team about how to proceed, they should be able to offer helpful advice about all aspects of early education.
- ☐ D Contact the local school for advice. After all they provide education.

Q5. Training

You have a 50% unqualified staff in your provision and you've been encouraged to up-skill these workers by offering them opportunities to train, Do you:

- ☐ A Make training literature available but emphasise that you would encourage weekend and evening courses only. Finding cover is difficult and training usually means that staff leave for a better job.
- ☐ B Ensure all the most up-to-date training information is available. Qualified staff are hard to find and its important for personal development that staff are given every opportunity to progress.
- ☐ C Talk about training and it's advantages, but hope in reality that no one takes up a course. Managing cover and staff's increased aspirations are hard.

Q6. Information

Your provision has undergone some major changes, both in staff and services. A staff member has mentioned updating the information that the Childcare information Service offer, Do you:

- ☐ A Worry about that at a later date. Your places are full at the moment and actually publicising your provision via the CIS just means increased phone calls at a time when the administrator is off sick.
- ☐ B Get on to it straight away, by phone or online. If the CIS are talking to and sending out information to potential parents and carers, it's vital that this information is as up-to-date as possible. Also you may miss out on current information if the wrong contact details for you are listed.
- ☐ C Put it on the "to do" list and hope to get round to it. If numbers drop off or you need to use the CIS services then it'll soon become a priority.

Q7. Development

You are a new business providing childcare and have received money via NOF to get established. A few months into your project and you get a monitoring call from the local development team. Do you:

- ☐ A Avoid their call and hope they go away. You've got the money now and you know what you're doing. The more people who interfere the longer it'll all take.
- ☐ B Take the call and arrange the meeting. It'll be good to have a quick overview of the project and where you're at. The more support and advice you can get the better. After all there's no point charging off in the wrong direction.
- ☐ C Put it on the list, but realise in reality you'll wait for them to ring back. It's something you know you need to do but there are so many other immediate things to sort. Anyway generally things are fine.

Q8.

You are a member of a voluntary committee thinking about setting –up an after-school club. However things have become difficult, meetings are unproductive, committee members come and go and the whole scheme looks in jepordy. Do you:

- ☐ A Resign and spend the time going to the gym. It's a load of hassle and you don't want to be part of something that fails anyway. Your child will have to go to his Nan's instead.
- ☐ B Seek advice from your local development worker. Is there a course about Committee Management that might be helpful. After school care is really important for the children, as some don't have any alternatives.
- ☐ C Agree to stick with it for one more session then leave. Sooner or later there will be an enthusiastic parent who'll get the whole thing going again. After all your child doesn't really need the club as his Nan can take him for a few hours.

Q9.

Your playgroup has been going for 29 years and you're coming up for the 30th anniversary celebration. However numbers have dropped off and children have moved to a new provision down the road who are offering early education. Of course you don't want to be the one who closes the playgroup, but how can you continue with so little support? Do you:

- ☐ A Apply for financial help. There must be some money available from the government and it would sort the problem for now. The party can go ahead and things are bound to pick up soon.
- ☐ B Seek advice from your local advisor. She has links with support services within the local authority as well. You know what the issues are and what actions could be taken to help sustain your group.
- ☐ C Chuck money at the problem by advertising your services and by trying to introduce some new people to your group. If that doesn't work and you can't get a grant, then close. By that time the issue of the anniversary party will have come and gone.

Q10.

Your neighbour has told you that to earn a bit of extra cash you should become a childminder. Childminding seems easy, you can work from home, earn money and pick hours to suit yourself. Do you:

- ☐ A Begin by having a few children in your house after school. Try it out and see how you get on. It can't be that hard because in your experience most children are happy to watch a video after school. You have your own children and so you are in touch with what they like to do.
- ☐ B Contact the Childcare Information Service for details on an introductory course for would-be childminders. Speak to other registered people and get an idea of what it's really like. If you're going to do it, you may as well do it properly and gain some professional qualification into the bargain.
- ☐ C Try it out by having a few children round. You can see what it's like and then register later. It seems a shame to go through all the hassle if you don't end up liking the work. Put a reminder on your shopping list to get a first-aid kit and some plug guards.

answers...

Mostly A's

Oh Dear, your provision looks set for disaster! However don't despair help is at hand. You need to link with the various departments within your local Early Years and Childcare team and ask for help and guidance to sort the issues you are facing. Many other provisions have experienced similar problems and there are solutions out there. The biggest hurdle is the recognition by you that there are challenges you need help with. Don't delay and get on that phone today.

Mostly B's

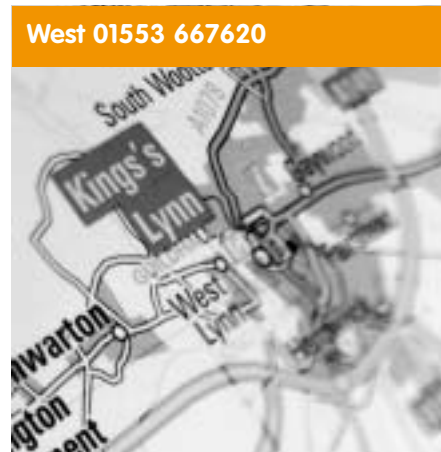
Well done you've got it sussed! Help and advice is available to you as a childcare provider from a range of sources. You have already indicated that you are going to tap into as many as possible and take advantage of the advice and guidance they have to offer. You seem fully committed to providing good quality accessible childcare. Your business will thrive if time is spent on planning and laying strong foundations for the future. However don't sit back on your laurels, keep going as your next challenge is just round the corner!

Mostly C's

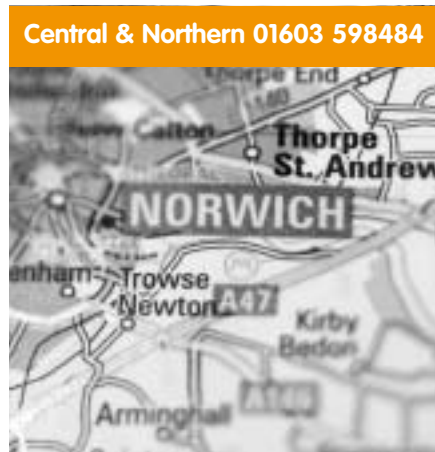
There's still hope for you! In essence you understand what is needed and when, but have some difficulty putting that into practice. Take some time out to plan what your next steps should be. You seem aware that helpful advice and support from professionals is available, but can't seem to make it happen. Sooner or later you will face a red alert. Avoid the red alert by taking positive action now!

Next issue we're hoping to introduce a Marg Proops type page 'Dear Partnership News'

If you would like to see this, or have questions or contributions to make please contact us at catherine.wedge-clark@norfolk.gov.uk.



West 01553 667620



Central & Northern 01603 598484



South & East 01493 335740

news from the development teams

This term has seen lots of new childcare settings opening including groups funded through New Opportunities Fund (NOF) such as Breakfast Clubs, After School Groups and Holiday Playschemes. We are pleased to announce that our final NOF round was successful with all groups securing funding to develop new out of school services. The three development teams look forward to working with providers to open these as soon as possible. We will still be monitoring all NOF funded projects through regular review meetings to make sure we keep everyone on track and if any problems arise we will be able to offer support and advice at an early stage.

Although the NOF funding has now finished we are pleased to let you know that there is new funding through National Sure Start to support further development of Out of School Childcare. In particular we are encouraging the development of schemes for older children. Building on the success of our NOF work, the development workers will be taking a more strategic approach in their planning to ensure we reach the children and families most in need of childcare. We are working closely with colleagues in Childminding Matters to develop Local Area Strategic Plans and if you would like to know about developments in your area – contact your local team. As a result of the change in legislation that allowed schools to directly provide childcare we are starting to see an increasing number of childcare groups managed under the Extended Schools model.

It was good to see so many of you at the Active Club Training Sessions across the county. We have had brilliant feedback and hope that you are now enjoying using the activities you learnt in your group settings. We hope to hold further sessions in the future.

Wishing you all the best for 2004 and we look forward to continued contact with many of you. If you are considering any new childcare development or have concerns about your existing provision please contact your local development team listed at the top of the page.

childcare information service update

The Childcare Information Service (CIS) has had a busy summer. We have transferred all our provider information to a new database, Foundation Systems Early Years, which went live in August of this year. The new system is much more flexible than the previous one and has modules covering Finance, Visits, Training & Recruitment which will help improve all our services. With over 2000 records to manage, ensuring our information is accurate has been a priority. We would be grateful for your help in this task. Please send us back any forms we send you with your up to date details listed. Registered childminders are now able to update their information electronically by using the questionnaire available on line by accessing our local website www.norfolkchildcare.info.

Click on the Childcare Information Service button and then the Forms page. Here you will find the update form and also the Data Protection Agreement form and letter.

Our website has been completely rewritten over the past few months to offer more information and allow customers to get in touch with us to request childcare. We also have all our leaflets & publications on line, so you can download your own copies.

The CIS has been awarded the MATRIX Quality Mark in Advice and Guidance, by the Guidance Accreditation Board. We achieved this in October of this year after a concerted team effort and support from our colleagues and customers. Several areas of good practice were identified, including our commitment to good customer service.

The CIS continues to expand and has two new members of staff employed to run the National Health Service project, Margaret Dewsbury, NHS Childcare Coordinator and her administrator Nicki Bird. The project is trying to overcome the childcare barriers faced by NHS staff.

Finally we wish manager, Julia Gurney our congratulations on her recent marriage - she will in future be Julia Haig!

Julia Haig, Olwyn Peers, Angela Oxenbury, Lynne Janes, Emma Watson, Rachel Elvin, Margaret Dewsbury & Nicki Bird.



Norfolk Early Years Support Network

Since the last edition of Partnership News the Network have been continuing the work supporting settings with pre-inspection support visits and general advice and information around Health & Safety, Charitable Law, Committee issues and recruitment and training of staff.

In October Jo-anne Lamb left us to take up the post of County Training Manager for the Norfolk County Council Early Years and Childcare team. Jo had been with us as Training Manager since the start of the Network in 1998 and we wish her lots of luck with her new post.

We are delighted that we had a strong field of candidates interested in replacing Jo-anne as Network Training Manager, and the successful applicant was Jane Heyburn, who will be known to many of you as she has been the Daycare Advisor in the Norwich area for the last five years. Jane is also an experienced tutor with a history of designing and delivering training courses for the Early Years sector.

One of the first tasks for Jane is the setting up and delivery of a new range of workshops which Network tutors have designed to meet the needs of member groups. We are hoping that these fun workshops will give practitioners the chance to meet together and share their expertise whilst finding out about new activities they can introduce in their setting.

The workshops include 'Can't Sing - Won't Sing' for those of us who find music a challenge, 'Sensations', to think about activities which encourage children to use all five senses, 'Being Crafty on a Shoestring', developing craft activities for little or no outlay and 'Food Glorious Food', how to introduce something other than Rice Crispy cakes in to your cookery sessions.

These workshops are funded from the Network membership subscriptions and donations and will be free of charge to members. Information about booking places has been sent out, but if you have not seen it and you are interested in coming along please contact Jane at the Admin Centre.

May we wish everyone a Happy, Healthy & Peaceful 2004.



PLA: Pre-school Learning Alliance

Recent workshops

Two music workshops in Watton and Thetford were much enjoyed and those present took many new fun ideas back to their groups and homes. Thanks to Paul Schofield for giving his time and expertise.

A Health and Safety Awareness workshop in Horsford was extremely useful and included vital legal information for all of us. Thanks to Sadie Ditton for making a rather serious topic fun and interesting.

General research has shown that the following are some common accidents recorded in pre-school settings. While many of these incidents are rare or might only happen once or perhaps never in the average pre-school, it is worth considering and being aware of how parents and staff can work together to prevent them

- 1 **Staff injured while storing or lifting equipment. Most frequent back injuries etc**
- 2 **Staff or visitor falls as a result of defective flooring e.g. water on floor**
- 3 **A child falls from slide or climbing frame. Often this type of accident is not seen because the closest staff member was momentarily distracted.**
- 4 **Children's fingers trapped in a door**
- 5 **Children's fingers trapped or scratches from using a defective piece of equipment.**
- 6 **Children injured by falling chairs that have been badly stacked or by falling over equipment**
- 7 **Children's or babies mouths burned by hot food.**
- 8 **A child leaves the room or the pre-school building without being noticed.**
- 9 **Assault cases e.g. biting another child / being hurt by a member of staff**

There are important legal responsibilities for employers and employees (paid or unpaid) stated in the Health and safety at Work Act.

Regular safety inspections are essential as is in-depth risk assessments and training for everyone in Manual handling

There are various helpful resources to access:

- National Ofsted Standards documents
- Information pack on Risk Assessment telephone: 08701545500, or www.hse.gov.uk
- Specially tailor-made risk assessment forms when pre-schools insure through the Sun Alliance/Pre-school Learning Alliance scheme. Available to non-members for £10
- Repeat Pre-school Learning Alliance workshop

For further information or to book another workshop (any topic) please ring the resource centre on 01603 767525

PLEASE NOTE:
PENDING NEW FUNDING WE ARE STILL BUSY,
READY AND WILLING TO HELP YOU.

Partner Focus: Childminding Matters

By Patsy Withers

New National Standards

The new National Standards are now in force and we are delighted that childminders have now been recognised as professional day carers in that they can no longer use physical punishment or smoke in the presence of children at any time, even if parents were to give permission.

Many childminders will be pleased that they can now care for 2 children under the age of 1 year if they can demonstrate to Ofsted that they can meet and reconcile the varying needs of all the children they mind.

Under Standard 12, childminders need to demonstrate that they take prompt action if parents raise concerns and that they keep a record of any complaints made. Our County Liaison Officers will be pleased to help any childminders who have not yet written a complaints policy and procedure and would appreciate some advice.

Although Ofsted Child Care Inspectors will no longer check planning permission documentation, please be aware that in certain circumstances planning permission will still have to be sought e.g. childminders with assistants or working from the same premises. So, even though the Child Care Inspector will not be asking about planning permission, childminders may have to apply to their district councils before setting up or expanding their childminding businesses.

If any childminder is having difficulty with planning permission, please contact Sarah Mutch, County Liaison Officer on 01953 499912.

Childminding Trip to Sardinia

Three childminders visited Sardinia at the end of October this year to learn about social co-operatives and childcare provision there, and share their work and experiences in childminding.

They flew to Sardinia on Wednesday 29th October and stayed in Cagliari as the guests of Advertere, a Sardinian organisation working with social co-operatives. Their Sardinian host, Roberto Doneddu, organised an international conference on 31st October, at which a presentation on childminding was given and a further conference on 3rd November, when the childminders gave presentations on their work and the work of Childminding Matters. During the trip they were taken to see three day nurseries in the Cagliari area, after which they had the opportunity to discuss good practice with the nursery managers. There is no registered childminding in Sardinia, so their childcare colleagues there were interested to hear about all the benefits of high quality childminding care. In fact, they are thinking of visiting Norfolk in June 2004!

More details about this trip will be published in "Between You & Me".



Network Opportunities for Childminders

Good news! Funding for a new childminding network in Thetford has been confirmed and we have just advertised the post of Network Co-ordinator. If childminders are interested in joining and so benefiting from the extra support, vacancy matching, toy and equipment libraries and training; please contact Sarah Mutch on 01953 499912.

Funding for a new network in North Norfolk has also been confirmed. This network will cover the Poppyland Sure Start area and will be co-ordinated by Sue Farrow. Please contact Sue if you live in the Cromer, Mundesley, Bacton, Happisburgh area and you are interested in joining.

A new Childminding Development Officer post has been advertised for the Thetford area, to encourage local people to register as childminders and help to provide more local training and support for childminders.

We will soon be re-advertising the post of Network Co-ordinator for Great Yarmouth. If anyone is interested in this post an application pack is available from Childminding Matters at First Floor, St Andrews House, St Andrews Street, Norwich NR2 4UH.

Network childminders from all over Norfolk enjoyed a Saturday Seminar on Early Education at Childminding Matters' offices on 18th October. These opportunities to meet childminders from other networks and share some training will be repeated quarterly. The next Seminar will be in King's Lynn on 31st January – please book through your Network Co-ordinator.

Childminders who are interested in joining networks should contact the Network Co-ordinator for the area, who will give more details:

Great Yarmouth - Sarah Mutch/Nikki Bird	01493 445556
North Norfolk - Sue Farrow	01263 821997
Emneth - Sarah Vick	01945 587990
King's Lynn - Steph Copeland	01406 350756

New Training Programme

Childminding Matters will be launching a new programme of post-registration training for childminders who are interested in caring for children with special educational needs or disabilities.

If you are interested in this training please contact the Acting County Training Manager to put your name on a waiting list: Mandy Maguire 01953 717582.

Grants for Childminders

If you are starting out as a childminder or struggling to keep going because you have unfilled vacancies, ring Childminding Matters' County Liaison Officers for advice on Start-Up Grants or Sustainability Grants. They will talk you through your application and, if you would like, they can visit you to help you with your application for a Start-Up Grant.

North Norfolk - Glynis Hannant	01692 404904
Norwich - Linda Wright	01263 722744
Norwich/North Norfolk - Hazel Auckland	01263 721734
Eastern Norfolk - Sarah Mutch	01953 499912
Eastern Norfolk - Nikki Bird	01986 872181
Western Norfolk - Mandy Maguire	01953 717582

Business Advice and Help with Filling Vacancies

Childminding Matters is starting a new service to help childminders fill their vacancies. A new post of Business Adviser has been advertised and will work from head office in Norwich, visiting childminders anywhere in the county to help them fill childcare vacancies. We also plan to produce some briefing sheets full of ideas and practical advice to support this work.

WEETU: working with Childminding Matters to support Childminders

WEETU (Women's Employment Enterprise and Training Unit) is working in partnership with Childminding Matters to offer childminders two types of loan to help them set up or develop their business.

An interest free mini-loan of £60 is available to new childminders to help meet registration costs, repayable when the Start-up Grant is received. Application forms can be obtained from WEETU and the loan cheques could be released within two weeks of form completion.

A loan of up to £1000 is available via WEETU's Full Circle programme. Full Circle works through establishing small support groups, i.e. lending circles, that will help childminders through the development of their business and application for a Full Circle loan, and the programme provides additional business support e.g. for writing a business plan.

For more information you can contact me on 01603 665555, or by email at t.davies@weetu.org

Childminding Matters Website

Don't forget to look at our website! It contains loads of information about childminding in Norfolk and details of all our training courses and events. The address is www.childmindingmatters.org.uk



new recruitment initiatives

Norfolk County Council links closely with all childcare providers in Norfolk to offer help and advice with recruiting staff. As part of this service we offer a free advertisement, which appears on the national childcare link site and is promoted to all jobseeker enquirers.

However recruitment of good quality trained and untrained staff is always a high priority and in this issue we find out about the enhanced links that are being made with our partners such as JobCentreplus and Connexions Norfolk to further promote these vacancies.



Mel, tell us what does this new initiative do ?

It a very exciting link between the local authority and us at Jobcentreplus. In essence we work with the Early Years and Childcare team to take the job vacancies supplied by childcare providers in Norfolk and integrate them into our system. The adverts can then be publicised to our audience countywide.

Why link with the Early Years and Childcare Team ?

We have noted that in previous years our level of childcare opportunities is low and we want to look at increasing these types of vacancies to our clients. We hope that through joint advertising our clients get more and varied job vacancy opportunities and childcare providers are assured that a brand new audience is viewing their positions.

In the past Jobcentreplus has been criticised for not matching the vacancy with the correct job seeker. Is that still occurring ?

At Jobcentreplus we recognise the importance of providing the employer with candidates whose skills and experience match the job specification. All our staff are trained to screen applicants against the vacancy requirements on behalf of the employer ensuring the best match possible.

How does the new system work ?

The job vacancies will continue to be managed by the Early Years and Childcare Team at Norfolk County Council. We will link with them and upload the vacancies onto our main system. The adverts will then be advertised at the Jobcentre closest to the vacancy, although vacancies can be accessed by anyone searching for work in the county. Jobcentreplus will put forward clients for these vacancies as and when appropriate and will monitor the response rate and outcomes.

Can you offer providers any other support ?

Yes we can. Our new recruitment Centre in Theatre Street in Norwich now has state of the art interviewing suites, which are available to employers free of charge. We have identified that some employers don't have the use of a private room for this purpose, and also some wish to interview off-site. Our dedicated team also provide options such as the issuing of job vacancy packs and sifting and short-listing services.

So these childcare vacancies are advertised in your job centres only ?

No. We also advertise a high proportion of our job vacancies in local press and on commercial radio. All these media offer the employers maximum publicity for their vacancy. To reach as many potential childcare recruits as possible we ensure that anyone who reads the paper or visits the job centre or listens to the radio, may see and hear about these jobs. We aim to catch as many people as we can!

How will we know whether the new system is working ?

We aim to evaluate and monitor any vacancy that we advertise. We can link with the Early Years and Childcare team and feedback to them our results. Likewise employers can tell us direct what they think. All this evaluation will provide us with useful information and indicators about how to improve our services.



Matthew – we've heard from Mel about the links with Jobcentreplus, tell us about the new initiative between the Early Years and Childcare team and Connexions ?

This new initiative is an interactive and online system, hosted on our website – www.cnxs.nfk.co.uk, which will offer a vacancy matching service to young people in Norfolk. In essence it acts upon information supplied by a young person as to the type of career they might be interested in. The young person will be notified when a job matching their criteria appears on the website.

How does this notification work ?

The young person logs their email and or their mobile telephone number on the website. The technology matches their pre-specified criteria with the job vacancy and emails them or text messages them that there is a match.

In your opinion, how important is this service ?

Very important. Many young people are criticised for not having a clear direction of where they want to head, particularly with their career. We aim to offer as much information, advice and guidance to them as possible.

Why use the website ?

Young people are used to obtaining information interactively and look to the internet to meet many of their information demands. To provide this service any other way seems a miss-match. We need to provide information to young people the way they want to receive it. However we are aware that not every young person has access to the internet at their home, so that's why we offer cyber cafes in all our connexions centres, where they can surf for free.

Why link with the Early Years and Childcare?

Young people need as much choice as possible. We want to plant the seeds of childcare as a career alongside choices such as medicine, law and IT opportunities.

What's the name of this new initiative ?

Well as you know we have already produced our PIG's (Portable Information Guides) and we wanted this new system to have a similar type of identity. After much deliberation we've decided to call it JON! Job Opportunities Network. We're hoping that we can launch the system officially in the spring.

We've talked quite a lot about the service to young people what about the service to employers ?

My understanding is that a career in childcare has traditionally been under-rated. We at Connexions are hoping that by emphasising opportunities to young people this will help raise the profile and in turn offer routes to jobs that otherwise may remain untapped. For example a young person might not go to the jobcentre or visit the early years and childcare website, but will now be able to learn about careers in childcare and provider vacancies via us.

recruitment (early years and childcare) advertising authorisation form

provider details

Name of Group

Type of Setting

Address

Postcode

Email

vacancy details

Job Title

Rate of Pay

Hours (actual days and hours to be worked)

Duration (permanent or temporary)

Location of Work (including post code)

duties, please include the following:

- Exactly what the job involves
- Essential skills, experience and qualifications required for the job
- Desirable skills, experience and qualifications
- Equipment that will be used
- Any available training

how does the employer wish clients to apply for the job?

- Jobcentre to call employer to arrange interviewer
- Applicant to ring employer
- Jobcentre application form back to the employer
- CV and letter to employer
- Employers own application form
- Other - please specify:

Closing Date of Applications

Start Date

Any Other Information

I consent to the Recruitment Team (Early Years and Childcare) using the above details

please tick appropriate box/boxes: ☐ On the Childcare Information Service website ☐ Job Centre Plus Employment Service

Signed: Date:

NB This must be signed by the person named in 'contact details' above, before the information can be included on the website

Please return the completed form to: Job Vacancies Recruitment Team (Early Years and Childcare), First Floor, St Andrews House, St Andrews Street, Norwich, NR2 4UH.