

Childminding Best Practice Newsletter

Issue 29: Winter 2020



Welcome to the Winter 2020 Childminding Best Practice Newsletter.

The next issue will be coming out in Spring 2021.

Thank you to everyone who sent in contributions to this newsletter. I welcome contributions from readers on all aspects of childminding best practice.

Happy reading!

Kay



[Inspirational best practice](#) ideas, stories and links

Use my annual free 2021 Diversity Planning Calendar to 'actively' promote British values

2021 Diversity Planning Calendar					
JANUARY 27th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day 27th - Chinese New Year 27th - National Day of Mourning	FEBRUARY 27th - Chinese New Year 27th - National Day of Mourning 27th - National Day of Mourning 27th - National Day of Mourning	MARCH 27th - St. David's Day 27th - International Women's Day 27th - International Women's Day	APRIL 27th - Easter 27th - Good Friday 27th - Good Friday	MAY 27th - Mother's Day 27th - Mother's Day 27th - Mother's Day	JUNE 27th - Father's Day 27th - Father's Day 27th - Father's Day
JULY 27th - USA Independence Day 27th - USA Independence Day 27th - USA Independence Day	AUGUST 27th - Back to School 27th - Back to School 27th - Back to School	SEPTEMBER 27th - Back to School 27th - Back to School 27th - Back to School	OCTOBER 27th - Halloween 27th - Halloween 27th - Halloween	NOVEMBER 27th - Thanksgiving 27th - Thanksgiving 27th - Thanksgiving	DECEMBER 27th - Christmas 27th - Christmas 27th - Christmas

British values continues to be a hot topic for Ofsted. One way to show that you are actively promoting British values at your setting is to plan to celebrate some multicultural holidays and festivals in 2021. There are so many awareness days

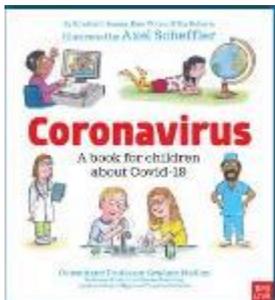
and festivals to choose from! [My free one page diversity planning calendar](#) can give you some focus and help you to get started.



Lockdown is a great time to become a Forest Childcare Provider – *contributed by Liza Alexander*

So lockdown again! I thought I would let you know that I and my mindees are enjoying Forest Childcare and your activity pack. We have enjoyed all the scavenger hunts, made plate hedgehogs and tree rubbings. Baked hedgehog cakes. Made binoculars, used them to look for birds, ducks and flamingoes!! Made bird feeders. Looked for items in the woods. Took photos of things we found and made collages. Played pooh sticks in the stream and even paddled. Made crowns using real leaves. We even saw a deer on one of our walks! Lots of hide and seek, climbing trees. We have got chilly and muddy in our puddle suits and wellies. But hot chocolate and snacks have saved the day! We set up camp on a groundsheet so we can do activities outside.

I feel I am giving the children far better real life learning experiences, being out and about every morning rather than going to toddler groups. **I can honestly say the pandemic has made me rethink about how I engage the children.** Your pack has helped me make these positive changes to my setting. I thank you for the inspiration that I needed, to continue to go outside on colder and particularly wet days.



Free Covid-19 book you can download to share with the children

Axel Scheffler has illustrated [a digital book](#) for primary school age children, free for anyone to read on screen or print out, about the coronavirus and the measures taken to control it.

What does a pedagogy mean to childminders? – by *Samantha Boyd*

What does this new Ofsted term that appears in the revised EYFS guidance and the new Development Matters mean to childminders. What are childminders expected to do differently? Read [Samantha's new article](#) here.

My experience of taking and collecting children from school, throughout the Covid epidemic – *contributed by Ann Stanley*

I have worked as a childminder for 21 years. As well as caring for preschool children, I have taken and collected children from three local schools, G Junior School, R Infant School and St G Primary School. These schools are all located side by side to one another. I hope this article will strike a cord with many

childminders who face similar situations and prompt you as it did me to contact the schools and share both my praise for what is working well and my concerns at the schools where it is not.

When the schools were due to return, the parents were sent out detailed information about the different times the children should arrive and depart from school. Two of the schools stand on a jitty, which means it's not possible to be 2 meters apart. R and G schools are both aware of this advised parents to wear face masks, (unfortunately only a few parents took this advice). To also help alleviate congestion on the jitty the schools put in place a one way system through the schools.

On the first day I went to collect children, from St. G's I was astonished; there were parents, children and staff everywhere. There was no social distancing and only a few people wearing face masks. The staff wearing nothing, one even cuddling a parent. In the six months since the lockdown, it's the first time I felt frightened for myself and my children. I was horrified at the lack of any organisation from the staff and the parents ignoring any kind of social distancing.

I eventually got to R Infants School. The organisation and atmosphere could not be more different. There was staff everywhere, keeping their distance, helping parents/carers and children to be where they should be without any confusion. When I got to G Junior School, they had a different process for the start and end of the day. They had a one way process in place, and all the classes came out in 10 minute intervals. It was and still is a great method. The children are brought out on time. They stand in a marked area waiting for parents, and are gone within minutes, then the next class comes out, it's brilliant.

5 weeks on and St G's is still a mass scrum, there is still no social distancing from parents or teachers. Only a handful of parents wear masks and only 2 teachers ever wear them. I feel anxious every time I go to the school. I struggle with the complete lack of respect for safety from both the parents and the school.

I believe R Infants School should be given some kind of recognition for the way their headteacher, Mrs D, her teaching staff, office workers and caretaker, have behaved throughout this pandemic. When entering the school, there is always someone at the gate to welcome you. As you go round the school to the various classrooms, (which have safety barriers in front of them to ensure there is always a safe distance) there is always teachers outside, welcoming the children and parents. On the way out there is again someone there saying goodbye. I am sure that the happy environment the staff promote from entering the school to leaving it has a positive impact on the children at the start of their day. I know it has an impact on me!! Mrs D has to be congratulated on her way she has handled this very unusual situation; I know everyone I speak to feels the same.

As a childminder using the three schools for over the last 21 years, I find it remarkable the difference in the way each school has approached this pandemic. R who's approach has been outstanding. G have had rigid start and finish times, keeping the number of parents around the school to low numbers. St G who appear to have no organisation, and a total disrespect for anyone's safety. I am aware that schools rely on adults to support their processes and act in a sensible manner. However the approach taken by both G and R does enable parents to realise this pandemic is serious and helps create an atmosphere of careful vigilance whilst still maintaining a welcoming atmosphere.



Do you know how autism affects the areas of learning and development?

Autism is likely to impact upon all areas of Learning and Development in the EYFS.

Personal, social and emotional development: Children with autism will need additional support to develop understanding of the needs, views and feelings of others and to form good relationships with adults and make friends with peers. Children with autism may find it difficult to concentrate and maintain attention, and to take turns and share.

Communication, language and literacy: Children with autism will need help to interact effectively with others, to take turns in conversation, to understand jokes and idioms (expressions such as 'pull your socks up'), to make up their own stories and to predict what might happen next in a story. Some children may need to use augmentative methods of communication, such as visual support materials, for example, gesture, photographs or symbols.

Problem solving, reasoning and numeracy: Basic numeracy can be a relative area of strength for some children with autism as numbers are ordered, predictable and the way in which they are used in calculations follows consistent logical rules. Problem solving and reasoning can be more of a challenge for the child, given difficulties in flexible thinking, social understanding and verbal reasoning.

Understanding of the world: Children with autism will need support to help them to make sense of the world, particularly the social world. They may need encouragement to investigate new objects and materials and to use all their senses effectively. They are likely to have difficulty generalising knowledge and concepts from one context for another. For example, a child may know that the washbasin in his own family bathroom is for washing hands, but may not realise that other washbasins he encounters serve the same purpose. Remember that children with autism are likely to have difficulty in seeing things from other points of view so they are likely to need support to appreciate the cultures and beliefs of others.

Physical development: Children with autism may need encouragement to try out new things, as they may have developed strongly preferred physical activities which they feel secure with and choose to repeat. Although some children with autism can be very agile, others may have reduced awareness of their own bodies, leading to difficulties with navigating obstacles and with fine motor tasks such as fastening buttons or zips.

Creative development: For some children with autism, art or music may be relative strengths. However, it is a myth that lots of children with autism are highly gifted in these areas. All are likely to need support to express their thoughts, ideas and feelings and to take part in imaginative play and role-play with other children. Some individuals with autism have very elaborate ideas and may develop stories



My new [Characteristics of Effective Learning Pack](#) is tools, activities to put the CEOL into practice

about fantasy worlds, but they do not have the creative and flexible social imagination which would allow them to take part in activities such as pretending to be another person.

Strategies for supporting children in each of the areas of Learning and Development can be found in the [Learning and Development monitoring section](#) of this handbook.



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Please like and follow my Facebook page. I share inspection tips, craft and activity ideas, news stories affecting childminders, articles supporting best practice, legislation updates and some funnies. Liking my Facebook page is also a totally free way to support my small business and I really appreciate you taking the time.



What would you do if this happened to you: Restraining violent tantrums on a 4 year old?

A four year old you look after has violent tantrums. You've been punched, kicked, and scratched but so far have avoided the other children coming into the firing line. You are not sure of the best way to restrain her when these happen. What should you do?

Here's what other childminders say:

The best thing to do is to move everyone else out of harm's way and leave her alone somewhere safe while she calms down.

She might be in need of a trip to a counsellor or a behaviour management centre. I think you should talk to the parents and make sure they are aware of the extent of the problem. We have an ABC centre for that type of behavioural problem. They teach the children new ways to manage behaviour and have traffic light system and rewards.

Can you talk to her about ideas of things she can do when she is angry? Things I have seen be effective include, take 10 deep breaths, sit in a special place, scribble on a piece of paper. Not a quick fix but if you keep up with it, you may be able to stop the tantrums before they get too crazy.

I used to be a teacher so we had training in deescalating issues like this. See if you can find some local training. Ask at your council. We learnt all the techniques to de-escalate situations and calm children etc plus all the holds and ways to move children safely. You have to be really really careful when you restrain a child that you are doing it correctly.

My own daughter has special needs and I have to restrain her sometimes, but it's a different matter when it's not your own isn't it.

A lot of the time when something's escalated they can't see a way out so it becomes a frenzy, so soft kind calm words to try and reassure, and hug it out. Sounds mad at first but it really works.

Get her to count or focus on something else to distract from the tantrum. This has worked for me before or a sensory bottle to shake.

Make a note anytime you have to use physical restraint too just to cover yourself. This is an EYFS requirement.

Best way is to cuddle her from behind like a bear hug and keep your head back from any head blows, loop arms around waist under her elbows and over arm to hold her wrists. That way you're in control of her arms but your arms under hers so she can't bend and bite you and if need wrap your legs around hers so she can't wriggle away if you then keep calm she will calm with your heartbeat. EYFS cover you to restrain if it's best interest for hers, yours and others safety and I've had that confirmed from council support.

I worked with adults and young people with autism and we attended [this training](#) it was very good if you are worried see if you could find something similar in your area - it is scary please take time to ensure you can talk about it to someone as well as we would have full debriefs after a large incident.



Tips for Outstanding Ofsted Inspections

Communication skills are a biggie with Ofsted and if you want to get outstanding then you need to have a clear feeling for HOW you are encouraging children to become better communicators. There is a direct link between good communication skills and good behaviour. Especially if you have a child with communication skills that seem behind in any way, then it is especially important that you can tell the Ofsted inspector how you helping that child to improve.

Congratulations Childminding Best Practice Club Member Carole Banting on another outstanding

“Hi Kay, I just wanted to thank you for all the amazing work you do. I recently had my Ofsted inspection and am very happy to say that I've maintained my Outstanding. I'm a member of your [Best Practise Club](#) which I love along with the inspector. I love how you write and make all that confusing jargon from Ofsted easy to understand! All the information packs you are so well written as well. Thank you x”



[Childminding Best Practice Club – monthly activity packs and membership](#)

Art and Activity Ideas

NEW: Childminding Best Practice Club – Themed Activity Packs emailed to you - £2.50 per month – December is ‘Christmas and Hanukkah Themed’

Members of my [new Childminding Best Practice Club](#) are emailed a monthly pack of themed activities, plus activities that support continual professional development (CPD). Please join today to get templates and instructions for fun seasonal themed activities like these:



Dinosaur Egg with EYFS Observations

Observe the children’s developing fine motor skills while they attempt to connect the dots to make a dinosaur picture. [Download the free templates](#) and observations here.



Christmas display idea – contributed by Sarah Handforth

Sarah writes: “Started with a plain Xmas tree and fireplace for the children to add their own baubles they’d painted and stockings they’d decorated. Makes everyone feel part of it and get into Christmas spirit!”



Chinese New Year (12th Feb) writing with chopsticks activity – contributed by Lou Hacking



I painted gold card with red paint. Once it dried I gave it to the children with a set of chopsticks and Chinese numbers for them to copy. They loved revealing the gold beneath.



Helping you to stay on top of the paperwork

[EYFS Paperwork, Policy and Legislation News](#)

Ofsted Inspections restart in January. New 6 year cycle

Ofsted has confirmed that its plans for returning to childminding inspections in January 2021 is being kept under review, although has not yet changed. In the meantime, Ofsted will continue to carry out registration visits, early years interim visits and childcare register inspections. Inspectors will decide on a case-by-case basis whether this work can be carried out virtually or on-site or through a combination of the two.

Ofsted inspections for childminders, as soon as they resume, [will now be actioned within a 6 year window](#), with their focus being on those that have not yet achieved a good outcome, or if there are any concerns. New childminders should still receive an inspection within 30 months of registration. Details are available [here](#).

You must inform Ofsted about cases of Covid

[Ofsted must now be informed](#) if any children that attend the setting are confirmed to have COVID-19 (coronavirus) within 14 days of notification, and if you have to close as a result.

Covid impact on Early Years

An Ofsted report outlining the impact on Early Years children, their families and providers makes interesting reading. They interviewed 208 Early Years providers, including childminders. Almost all noticed an impact on children's personal, social and emotional development and that some children were less confident and more anxious. The report also highlighted that as more parents are working from home, the demand for childcare had reduced. But childcare providers had adapted well to all the changes that were expected of them, with many focusing on emotional wellbeing, health and self-care, becoming more responsive to children's needs and focusing on opportunities for outdoor play and independent skills. Technology also played an important part in communicating with families, especially during lockdown. [You can read the report here](#)

Covid Resources – all free on my webpage

I try to keep [this page on my website](#) up to date with the latest news from the government on Covid relating to childminders. It also has free risk assessments, policies etc you can modify for your own setting.



Forest Childcare members make a commitment to weekly outdoor outings.

Forest Childcare Association news

Members of the Forest Childcare Association commit to taking the children on an outdoor outing to a 'wild' place once a week – even in the Winter! I love seeing children all wrapped up running around outside on cold and frosty Winter days. So much better for everybody than being cooped up inside all day.

Gruffalo Walks – contributed by Chris Harle



"Oh help! Oh no it's a Gruffalo."

The overall best Forest Childcare days have been spent in Hamsterly forest and children constantly ask to return to the forest where there is a Gruffalo child trail. Children have enjoyed retelling the story of the Gruffalo's Child as we go round the trail, along with playing Pooh Sticks and of course jumping in puddles, with activities along trail. There are 15 Gruffalo sculptures in different poses in Gruffalo trails all over the country. Here is the website for anyone wanting to check out [Gruffalo trails](#) near you.



Forest Childcare Facebook Page – join our online community

The Forest Childcare Association has its own [Facebook Page](#). Please like my page and join our discussions, share your photographs and enjoy the links, stories, craft and activity ideas, poetry, photos and inspirational ideas we share.

Jo Macklin, Forest Childcare provider, talks about inspiring yourself out when it's cold

When I first read about Forest Childcare Association I immediately thought what a good idea! Not only will this give me extra ideas whilst we are out the house but it will also help my enthusiasm about going out through out the whole year. Since Christmas I have to admit it has been harder to get out, especially since all my lo's are part time and they would like to make the most of my home setting. Having said that we still manage to get out even if it's just for 20/30 minutes. In the cold it's just about all they and I can manage. It's surprised me just how lovely it's been to give the children new experiences and know that this will help and inspire them to learn in the future, especially those who wouldn't have this opportunity if they weren't in my care.

Use the Forest Childcare logo to advertise your business like Dee's Childcare does



We have Using the [Forest Childcare Association logo](#) on your website is a great way to show parents what makes your setting unique. Take a look at [Dee's Childcare childminding page](#). She has a special tab just for Forest Childcare to show parents what it is all about. It's a great way to advertise.

Free duck guide from the Canal and River Trust

Everything you ever needed to know about ducks. This [free guide](#) looks great.

Free Product Updates

There are no product updates at this time.

If you like reading my newsletters, chances are your childminding friends will like them too. Please share this newsletter on social media such as Facebook.

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