

# Childminding Best Practice Newsletter

Issue 31: Summer 2021



Welcome to the Summer 2021 Childminding Best Practice Newsletter. I produce this newsletter four times a year to promote childminding best practice topics with a focus on safety, health, diversity awareness and childminding in the great outdoors (Forest Childcare). I also use it to highlight any changes to legislation or policy that may affect your childminding business.

The next issue will be coming out in Autumn 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

## What's new for childminders in the Sept 2021 EYFS Framework?

In September 2021 a new release of the EYFS will become statutory. The key changes are to the educational programs and the early learning goals but there are also new welfare requirements you need to be aware of and acting on. Alongside the new EYFS is an updated version of *Development Matters* and *Birth to 5 Matters* which will help you to develop a curriculum for your practice based on the new release. Links to all these documents are available on my [Official Document Links](#) webpage so you can be sure you are using the most up to date versions of important documents.

This article that I have written [summarises the changes in the new EYFS that apply to childminders](#) and this is a good place to start to help you to get familiar with information that you will need to put into practice before Sept.

## Should you use *Development Matters* or *Birth to 5 Matters* as your curriculum guide?

The relationship between the 2020 release of *Development Matters* and *Birth to 5 Matters* is complicated. They have been developed by different organisations, but both are intended as non statutory guidance to the new 2021 EYFS.

There is benefit to both guides and the best thing for you to do is to keep a printed reference copy of both books (see my [Official Document Links](#) page).

*Development Matters* is shorter than the old version and they've simplified the age bands and removed the ELGs. I am not sure why they have done any of that but I think the main goal was to stop people using *Development Matters* as a 'tick list tracker'. *Birth to 5 Matters* has a much more user friendly layout (in fact, it looks more like the old *Development Matters*). It also has more information, clear age bands and examples. It also has a collection of very nicely written articles at the start on different aspects of childcare. I have no idea why they felt the need to make two separate books but there you go. In my opinion they book look helpful and if you only use one, choose *Birth to 5 Matters*.

### New focus on oral health in the 2021 EYFS

The new EYFS makes it clear that you 'must promote the good health including oral health' of the children you look after. This is an addition to what was previously there and is in response to the growing problem of tooth decay in young children, particularly children from disadvantaged backgrounds. The basic message you are hoping to teach to children is that too many sugary foods are bad for you, and that you should brush your teeth.

Planning activities to promote oral health into your curriculum does not have to be complicated. Suppose you look after a child from a home where you know the parents very rarely brush his teeth? You can make an enormous difference to that child's oral health if YOU brush his teeth after he eats lunch with you. You are teaching him skill he needs that will hopefully become a good habit. Furthermore, you are ensuring that his teeth are, at the very least, being brushed once a day while you look after him. And if you really want to do your bit towards helping him even more, you can gently encourage the parents to help him at home, perhaps with a take home reward chart he can use each time he brushes his teeth at home?

Specific activities and resources for promoting oral health are available in my [Be Safe Be Healthy pack](#).

## Promoting Good Dental Hygiene – *contributed by Nicky Nicholls*



I wanted to find a child-friendly way of promoting good dental hygiene so I bought these puppets and the toothbrushes so that the children could practice cleaning some very big teeth. I linked the activity to a story about going to the dentist.



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

### The Early Learning Goals have been rewritten in the 2021 EYFS – but MOST of their content remains the same

The level of development that children are expected to have reached by the end of their reception year in school is defined by the early learning goals. As most childminders are not responsible for the learning of development of reception aged children, assessing the goals has always remained mainly in the realm of school reception teachers. Despite the EYFS making it clear that ‘the ELGs should not be used as a curriculum’, it is still useful for childminders to have in mind what the ultimate aim of some of the activities we do with children is heading towards.

In my opinion, some of the ELGs, especially those in the *prime* areas, often tend to “state the bleedin’ obvious”. Of course we hope that the eventual point of teaching a child to communicate and go to the toilet is that by end of reception year he can ‘hold conversation when engaged in back and forth exchanges with teacher and peers’ and ‘manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs including going to the toilet’. Did they really need to make that into legislation?

On the other hand, I find the ELGs included in the *specific* areas to be more interesting and more helpful as goals that you would find your curriculum working towards. ‘Know some similarities and differences between different religions and cultural communities’. The Department for Education is saying that yes, you can and should be doing diversity awareness with under 5s. It is also good to know what the ELGs are NOT expecting a child to be able to do UNTIL they are 5. For example, it is not until the end of his reception year at school that a child is expected to be able to ‘write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed’. Many parents are really panicky about their 3 year old not being able to do this!

So it is important to be aware of the ELGs but to keep them in context. What Ofsted doesn't want you doing is teaching children to 'pass' them or in any way narrowing your curriculum to focus on them.

## **Should I throw away my learning journey folders under the new EYFS?**

No. Absolutely not. Well, unless they are wasting your time and you are not using them as you SHOULD be using them: to communicate with parents and monitor a child's development.

The Department for Education has made it clear that they do not want to see DATA. However, the EYFS is still very clear that 'ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of children's learning and development. What has changed in the new EYFS is the emphasis on the 'professional knowledge' of the childminder.

When doing the 'assessment' part of the planning – implementation – assessment process, 'Practitioners should draw on their own knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgment and should not be required to prove this through a collection of physical evidence'. Ofsted is making it clear that they do not want to see data. They are not going to look at your learning journeys with random snapshot photos and hundreds of 'next steps' written out because that sort of data is often meaningless.

You still need to assess children and be very aware of exactly where each child is in their learning and development, but you no longer need to feel you have to 'prove' the observation. In my opinion learning journeys still very much have their place as they always should have: as a means of communication between you and the parents and as a way to keep track of your thoughts about the progress of each individual child.

When you do assessment you should:

- Focus on what is useful
- Establish starting points
- Use the checkpoints in Development Matters as checkpoints, not checklists
- Involve the parents
- Take the attitude of inclusion: every child can thrive

The key points to keep in mind is that assessment remains important but physical evidence of this assessment is not. And you should only do assessments that are meaningful and useful to you. If the assessment isn't useful, don't do it.



## Tips for Outstanding Ofsted Inspections

How do you ensure that the paperwork you are doing is useful to your setting and that you are not doing unnecessary paperwork? Ofsted have made it clear that they do not want you to take time away from children or to waste time 'generating data'. Is the paperwork you are doing useful to you, the parents and the child? If not, what can be reduced?

### **Congrats to Michelle Byrne from Acton who passed her pre-reg visit.**

Michelle writes: "So I passed my pre-reg inspection yesterday and I want to thank you for all your support. When I made the decision to become a childminder, it seemed an attractive idea as I wanted a change in career from a background in digital marketing and journalism but I was perplexed by the unknown. I Googled "Childminding best practice", and stumbled upon your Childminding Best Practice Club. Since then, over time, I've ordered almost everything. Your materials have been life changing in preparing me for my Ofsted pre-inspection visit. I have to give kudos to the Contracts, Policies and Forms where I started, as well as The Ultimate Childminding Checklist for preparing for an Ofsted visit. Learning Journey Plus was excellent for helping me wrap my brain around recording development and I've got some great posters off the Posters Pack for my notice board. I tentatively emailed you a few times for questions, and I was impressed at how quickly you came back to me which shows me you really cared, and didn't want to just sell me stuff. Kay, you've filled that gap of knowledge that I needed filling. Your simple, easy to follow guidance and style of writing has made it so easy for me to put into practice. Thank you!"

### **Raising Butterflies – simple science – *contributed by Katriona Ismail***



If you have never tried one of these kits where you get sent caterpillars through the post and raise them into butterflies, I highly recommend it. They only cost about £20 for everything and you can get them in most toy stores or online. I found it totally fascinating when I did it myself, as well as just beautiful, having the lovely creatures fluttering around on my sideboard before we released them. I love how

Katriona has made a display around the net to enhance the activity for the children.



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### Please [Like me](#) on Facebook

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.

### Official document links page updated

I have [updated this page](#) on my website to include links to all the useful documents that childminders need to refer to and have added the new Development Matters, Birth to 5 Matters, EYFS Statutory Framework as well as documents related to food safety training, SEND and tax matters. I aim to keep this page up to date for you!

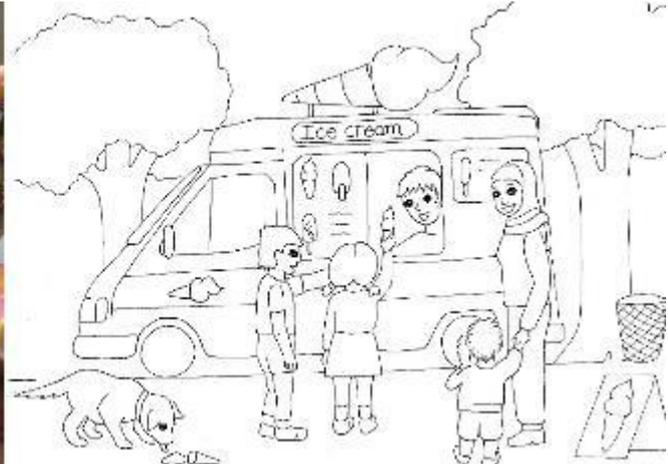


[Childminding Best Practice Club – monthly activity packs and membership](#)

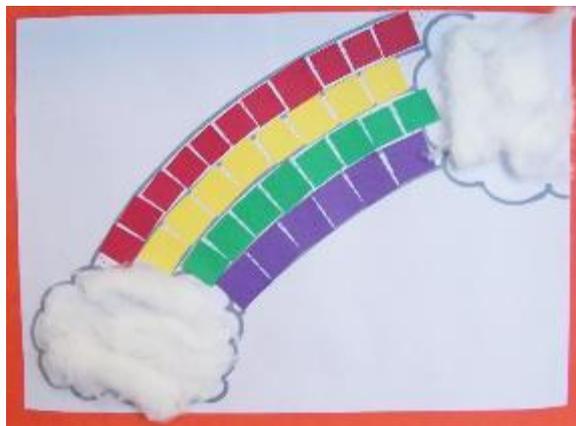
## Art and Activity Ideas

**NEW:** Childminding Best Practice Club – Themed Activity Packs emailed to you - £2.50 per month – June is ‘Birds’ themed. July is ‘Ice Cream Shop’

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 ice cream themed activities like these:



## **Rainbow Mosaic with EYFS Observations**



Do your children know the names for colours? Even if they don't know the names for colours yet, can they correctly MATCH colours? Use [this free template and guided EYFS instructions](#).

## Two Plates of Cakes with EYFS Observations

Practice counting and dividing while dividing paper cupcakes between two or three plates. The [free EYFS art project printable](#) gives you guided observations you can use to observe the children while you teach dividing and counting.



## Kindness Tree – *contributed by Ann Ross*



I am really pleased with our Kindness Tree. We all wrote kind things about the people in the Childminding setting. Every time someone says something kind about someone else or has a kind thought or deed we are going to put it on the tree. I'm thinking of doing mini ones about each child's family to take home.



Helping you to stay on top of the paperwork

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

### **The Department 2021 EYFS Statutory Framework**

From [September 2021 the new EYFS will become statutory](#), so please download a copy and start reading it through now. The key changes are to the early learning goals, and also more details about the educational programmes of your 'curriculum'. There are also other minor changes to welfare requirements. I have written [an article for childminders about the changes](#) here.

### **Inspections have restarted**

Ofsted restarted inspections on the 4th May but only to certain providers. They are prioritising new starters, childminders graded inadequate or requires improvement, and providers who are still waiting for an inspection from the last cycle. The last cycle ran Aug 2016 - April 2020, so if you weren't inspected during that time then you can expect to be inspected as a priority. If you are being inspected soon, remember that Ofsted will almost certainly want to talk to you about your care during the pandemic, how you kept the children safe and how your curriculum was impacted etc. So make sure you are ready to answer those questions. Similarly, make sure that if you used any disapplications (like Paediatric First Aid) that you are up to date on what you need to make up. [Read the latest Inspection Handbook which includes info about Covid inspections](#) here.



The [Ultimate Childminding Checklist](#) is 3 checklists in 1 including a count down to your Ofsted Inspection.

### **Updates to 2019 Inspection Handbook**

Ofsted updated their inspection handbook mainly to add sections on the pandemic. So much of this will not be important once all this is behind us. However, if you are being inspected any time soon, then I do think you should be prepared to answer questions about the pandemic.

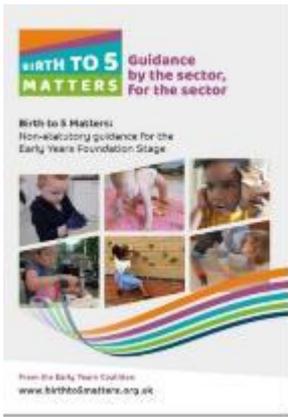
The other key change to the latest Inspection Handbook was to highlight the new 6 year inspection cycle. Ofsted inspections will now be carried out on a 6 year rather than a 4 year cycle as they had been done previously. [A summary of changes is here.](#)

### **Development Matters 2020**

This document is a non-statutory guidance to developing your childminding curriculum. It is based on the revised educational programmes in the EYFS 2021. The key change to this version of the document is that the early learning goals have been removed. The idea behind doing this is to stop people trying to use Development Matters as 'trackers' or as 'tick lists' – both practices are being strongly discouraged by Ofsted. You can [download the latest version](#) here



## Birth to 5 Matters 2021



A second non-statutory guidance to support delivery of the revised EYFS that has been released at the same time as the Development Matters. This is really confusing because Birth to 5 Matters actually looks really similar to the old Development Matters with the addition of new sections. But this guidance has been published by a collaboration of different organisations than those who updated Development Matters. Really both books are good to help you to develop your curriculum. The child development information inside of them has not changed after all! Just the layout. The articles in the front about the COEL, communication with parents and the importance of play are really good and well-written and I encourage you to read them. I have also always liked and found the simple layout of the three column information broken down by age band nice and simple to use. So I feel this document is definitely my preferred of the two. [You can download a free copy here:](#)

## Early Years Compliance Handbook



There is often confusion about the times you need to inform Ofsted about changes in your childminding setting. [This document](#) has a useful table beginning around page 15 of the PDF that outlines situations in which you need to notify Ofsted. It is worth knowing that this document exists in case you ever need to refer to it.

## Cyber Security for Early Years

This page is full of practical information that childminders can use to check that you are doing everything you can to keep you, your setting and your data safe from cyber attacks. The site reminds you that “For Early Years practitioners, cyber security also plays a role in safeguarding the children in your care.” [The link to this page was included as a footnote in the new EYFS.](#)

## Vodcast about changes to EYFS and Development Matters

This [vodcast about the new EYFS and Development Matters](#) is aimed at childminders and includes presentations from DfE, Dr Julian Grenier and Ofsted. Lots of great information in this video, presented in a non patronising, accessible way about changes you need to make to how you run your setting. Well worth a watch.



Forest Childcare members make a commitment to weekly outdoor outings.

## Forest Childcare Association news

Members of the Forest Childcare Association commit to taking children on weekly outdoor outings to 'wild' places. Forest Childcare is an ongoing commitment because frequent, regular time spent outdoors is more valuable to children than occasional big day trips as it allows them to build familiarity with nature. Most importantly, Forest Childcare teaches children to fall in love with wild and beautiful places so they will grow into adults who will protect them for the next generation.

### **Our First Forest Childcare Walk – contributed by Venetia Jones**



*“All the children got stung by stinging nettles but hopefully they will soon know what a stinging nettle looks like!”*

Today I took the children out on their first of many outings into our local woods which I have never done! We had a fantastic time. The children loved it as did I. I read all the information and set off well prepared. All the children got stung by stinging nettles but hopefully they will soon know what a stinging nettle looks like! Again a big thank you the information in the guide it has been great and given me the incentive to get out in the woods each week with the kids.



### **The Bumblebee Trust**

You will find lots of interesting facts and [activities about bumblebees](#), including tips on how to spot bumblebees and identify different types.

### **The Danish school where children play with knives**

[Video](#) shows just what you can do with children with a proper risk assessment and a bit of common sense.



## 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.



## Forest Childcare at Loch Ness – *contributed by Karen MacKenzie*



We have been very busy and spend so much time outside. Den building of any kind is always a huge hit with all ages in my care. We also had fun building Fee our lovely scarecrow. This is the view over Loch Ness, where we live, whilst out for a wee hike one day over the Easter holidays when I had older children....with views like that on your doorstep who would want to be inside!

## [Free Product Updates](#)

### **Updates for products for new EYFS**

Products like my Ultimate Childminding Checklist and Guided Self Evaluation Form will be updated in the summer so that they are ready for you to use in advance of Sept. There will not be huge changes to these documents. I send free updates and will notify you when the updates are ready.

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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