



FINE-TUNING YOUR APPROACH TO HEALTH, SAFETY AND HYGIENE IN THE NURSERY

-
- Write a watertight Health & Safety policy
 - Your safeguarding responsibilities
 - Championing challenging play
 - How to teach good hygiene
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Corby Borough Council

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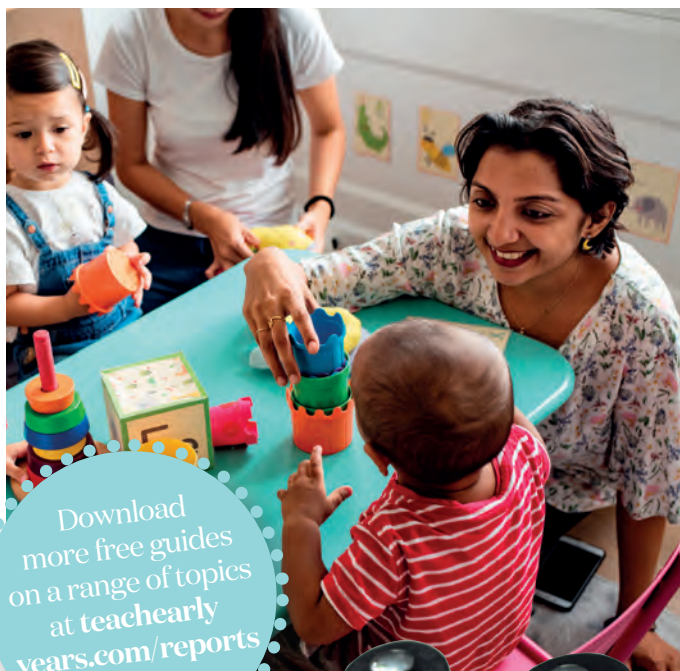
While early years settings' responsibility to support the learning and development of those in their care often receives the lion's share of coverage in *Teach Early Years*, owners, managers and their teams have an even more fundamental duty to carry out, namely to keep children safe from harm in the absence of their parents.

This is not a straightforward task both in the sense that it encompasses a wide range of different issues and given that under-fives cannot be expected to always make sensible decisions when it comes to their wellbeing – but also because it is neither possible nor desirable to completely remove risk from children's play. In many cases of setting life it will be clear that safety is the be all and end all, but in others there's a balance to be struck.

In this report we've addressed health and safety in its broadest sense – so you'll find advice on implementing your setting's core safeguarding responsibilities and tips on learning from both accidents and 'avoidable incidents'; insights into writing an effective health and safety policy and reflections on the difference your team can make in multi-agency efforts to protect vulnerable children. Then there's an expert view on improving the nutritional quality of your menus to encourage healthy diets, and a rundown of six more key areas to consider when assessing your practice. Last but not least, read about the lessons children can learn from handwashing, and get a practitioner's view on incorporating 'risky' activities into your planning.

I hope you find it useful, and don't forget that you can find lots more ideas and information at teachearlyyears.com.

Jacob Stow - Editor



Download more free guides on a range of topics at teachearlyyears.com/reports



THE EXPERTS...



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Childcare health and safety specialist at MCW Support Services.

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MELANIE PILCHER IS QUALITY AND STANDARDS MANAGER AT THE EARLY YEARS ALLIANCE.

'Near misses' and how to learn from them

When a child's safety is placed at risk, you must ensure you reflect on the experience, says Melanie Pilcher...

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Executive definition of an accident is an "unforeseen, unplanned and unavoidable event". Children are experts in this sort of thing, mainly because they've yet to develop the skills to identify a risky situation and avoid it. Practitioners may not always recognise it as such but they are in fact undertaking dynamic risk assessment every day to prevent such occurrences. In other words, they are responding to unpredictable situations and taking immediate action to prevent a child from coming to harm.

TAKING RISKS

In their early years, children develop physically and cognitively at a faster rate than at any other time in their lives. They're constantly testing boundaries and pushing their physical limits in order to grow and learn. Risk-taking is an important part of their development. It makes them aware of their bodies' capabilities, and their limitations. It boosts their confidence and self-esteem as they overcome challenges and achieve their own goals, whether that's taking their first steps unaided or using the big slide for the first time. There are inevitable 'accidents' along the way, resulting in bumps and bruises that document their progress towards important developmental milestones.

In an early years setting, providers are required to take all necessary steps to keep children safe and to ensure that practitioners have the skills and knowledge they need to do

so. There must be rigorous systems and procedures in place as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means that parents should be confident when they use childcare because their children are being cared for in a safe environment where potential risks are minimised or removed completely and accidents are responded to properly.

AVOIDABLE INCIDENTS

There are, however, events when children are left in childcare that cannot be described as an accident because they *should* have been *foreseen, planned for* and consequently *avoidable*. These events can be described as incidents. The child left behind on an outing, the child who has an allergic reaction because they've been given the wrong food, or the child who leaves the premises when a door is left open. Such incidents, while thankfully rare, can have consequences ranging from a near miss to a tragic event that makes headlines and changes the lives of those affected.

This is where dynamic risk assessment comes in. We can see it as one of three essential types of risk assessment in a setting. There are generic assessments that cover routine elements of health and safety and then there are task-specific risk assessments, for example, organising an outing to the local fire station, both of which are carried out prior to the activity taking place, but not always written down. Then there is

dynamic risk assessment, carried out at the time of the event. On an outing, for example, this may involve:

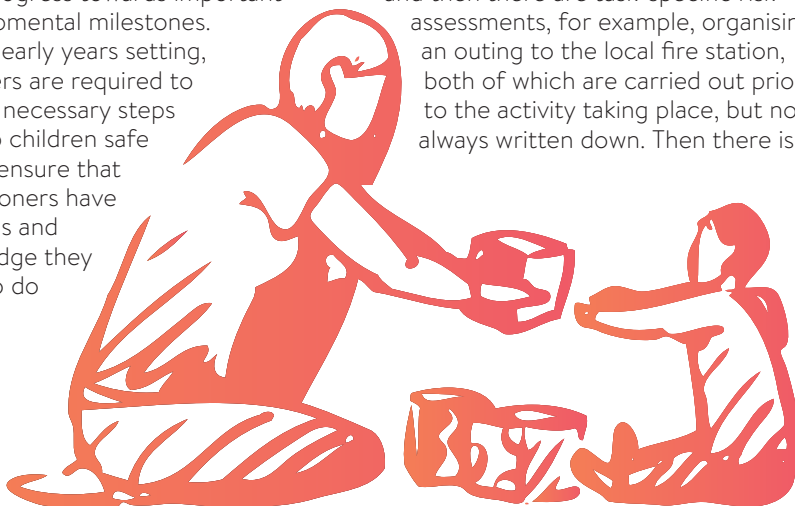
- "Do we turn back to nursery because Jack is feeling sick?"
- "How will we avoid the man who is shouting and swearing at passers-by?"
- "Skylar's mother has not been allowed to see her for three months but is now walking towards us."

For experienced practitioners these situations may be anticipated – but each of them requires an immediate and considered response to ensure that the right action is taken. This is dynamic risk assessment in action.

Effective dynamic risk assessment should mean the majority of incidents in a setting have no serious negative consequences. Even so, the potential for the very worst outcome remains and it must be taken seriously. We should never think that managing risk is complete. Whenever an accident or incident could have taken place we should recognise it as a near miss, reflect on that and take action to prevent a more serious outcome should it recur.

The challenge is to never simply dismiss something as 'one of those things'. A near miss could happen to anyone – but for us as practitioners we have a responsibility to learn from them and adapt our future thinking accordingly.

The Early Years Alliance resource *Not on my Watch!* (£14 members, £20 non-members) highlights the accountability of every member of staff in a setting to ensure children are kept safe and provides a cost-effective way to prompt discussion, increase understanding and raise awareness in your team. Visit shop.eyalliance.org.uk/T203





JULIA GOULDSBORO IS AN EARLY YEARS LECTURER AND EDUCATION CONSULTANT.

Keeping children safe

Do you know your responsibilities?

*Early years practitioners have a duty of care to all of their charges, so safeguarding must always be a priority. Here, **Julia Gouldsboro** shares key advice on policy and practice...*

1 Know the law

It's vital that everyone on your team knows and abides by the law – important and relevant legislation should be the foundation for your policies and procedures. Policies should be read and understood by all staff and updated regularly. Induction for new staff, explaining their responsibilities, is imperative.

Reviewing your safeguarding policy allows you to demonstrate to parents, colleagues and regulatory bodies that you understand the importance of having clear procedures.

Policies should be updated annually or whenever new legislation or information regarding safeguarding is identified.

Policies should be read and signed by all staff and parents.

4 Protect your team

It's essential that you keep yourself safe from any practice that could raise concerns – this means knowing the rules of the setting regarding mobile phones; following the nappy-changing policies (record who changes nappies and the times nappies are changed); keeping up to date with training on issues that could endanger children, such as FGM (female genital mutilation) or child exploitation, and ensuring staff are knowledgeable about all types of abuse and extremism; and checking the suitability of staff and volunteers working with children.

2 Reporting concerns

Staff members or volunteers may raise a concern by bringing it to the attention of the designated safeguarding person (DSP). The DSP will be part of the leadership team and may have deputies who also have responsibility for safeguarding. Never presume that someone else has reported a concern. If a child has told you something, don't question the child but write down what was said and pass this on to the DSP. Ofsted needs to be notified of any allegations of abuse which are alleged to have taken place while the child is in your care.

3 Taking the lead

If you are the DSP, you must take every concern seriously and know the procedure to follow for safeguarding and child protection. Do not make assumptions or judge a family. Abuse can take place in both wealthy and poor communities, and in any family structures. Included in your safeguarding policy should be a requirement for staff to be confident about what to do if a child reports that they have been sexually abused by another child. Child protection concerns that could identify a child must be kept confidential and only shared with people who need to know this information.

5 Be vigilant

Be alert to significant changes in children's behaviour and be knowledgeable about indicators of abuse. Be sensitive when listening to children. Building up positive relationships with children and knowing your children will help you to be alert for and recognise changes that may worry you.

6 Parent partnerships

Parents should notify the setting of any concerns they have about their child and any accidents, incidents or injuries affecting the child, which will be recorded. Work together with parents to ensure the care of their child is consistent and have information accessible to inform them about the types of abuse. Raising awareness of child sexual exploitation with parents and carers and helping them to recognise the signs of sexual exploitation and how to respond is key to protecting children at risk. Our main priority is the child but safeguarding action may be needed to protect children and parents.

7 Information sharing

Information sharing is essential for effective safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. It's a key factor identified in many serious case reviews (SCRs), where poor information sharing has resulted in missed opportunities to take action that keeps children and young people safe. The updated guidance 'Information sharing: advice for safeguarding practitioners' (bit.do/TEYsfg) gives advice for practitioners and senior managers and helps them decide when and how to share personal information legally and professionally.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

The key documents to include in your safeguarding policy are...

- The Children Act 2004 – bit.do/TEYca
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 – bit.do/TEYwtg
- What to do if you are worried about a child being abused 2015 – bit.do/TEYwca
- The Prevent duty 2015 – bit.do/TEYprv
- Keeping children safe in education 2015 – bit.do/TEYkcs

You should also read Ofsted's documentation on safeguarding, which highlights the recent changes made in 2018 – bit.do/TEYisg

Finally, remember every single child has the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated (UNCRC Article 19)

Read more about your
safeguarding responsibilities
at teachearlyyears.com –
bit.do/TEYsfgSM



Why I Love...

Honey Pot Nurseries' quality and training manager, **Ashley Williams-Day**, explains the benefits of Teal's child-friendly handwashing sinks

Child-friendly and hygienic options

Liverpool-based Honey Pot Nurseries has been operating for over 12 years and has developed an enviable reputation, regularly winning awards. All of its sites were judged 'outstanding' by Ofsted at each of their last inspections. Its other accolades include a 5/5 food hygiene rating, an indication of the importance staff place on handwash education for the children. As part of this, the nurseries make use of nursery sinks from Teal – child-friendly and hygienic options that can be placed exactly where they're needed.

Learning about the importance of handwashing

"The children learn about the importance of handwashing and when the most important times for these practices are," Ashley Williams-Day says. "Staff act as role models, encouraging children to copy hygiene routines, and with the Teal KiddiSynks this can continue even when the access to the bathroom can be inconvenient. "The KiddiSynks have also been purchased for our garden areas so even when children are outdoors, away from handwashing facilities inside the building, we can make sure small hands are washed hygienically."

Portable, robust, easy to clean – and fun too

Ashley also mentions the fact that the Honey Pot nurseries are actively involved in water conservation, part of achieving Eco-School status, and the KiddiSynks support these efforts, as they use water sparingly, helping to introduce the idea of water-saving to children. The Teal KiddiWash range is ideal for nurseries, creches, preschools, outside play areas and children's pet farms, as the warm-water handwash units don't require any plumbing. They are portable, robust, easy to clean – and they are fun to use too!



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Kiddiwash, a range of portable handwash products from Teal Patents Ltd.



6 WAYS TO MAKE your setting safer

*There are many things to consider when
you're responsible for health and safety...*

1 FIRE SAFETY

There's lots to think about when considering fire safety. Settings have a responsibility to assess the risk on their premises and reduce the risk of a fire starting based on this process, ensure they have the correct equipment – whether relating to detection, alarm systems or extinguishers – and provide training for staff on how to respond in the event of an emergency, most crucially with regard to safely evacuating children as quickly as possible.

The latter involves holding regular fire drills, but how you go about this can make a real difference to the preparedness of your team. Read more at bit.do/TEYfdr and bit.do/TEYfsft

2 SECURE SETTINGS

Every early years setting needs to keep its children safely on the premises and anyone who has no business being there out. With regard to the former, keeping doors and gates shut at all times and maintaining an appropriate level of vigilance will thwart the most determined preschooler (though of course parents must be made aware of this too). When it comes to the latter there are high-tech solutions such as door entry and access control systems, which in slightly different ways will ensure that only those you want to let inside will make it past the entrance.

Read more at bit.do/TEYscrt

3 FIRST AID TRAINING

Thanks to 'Millie's Law' all newly qualified early years practitioners are required to be paediatric first aid-trained, while settings whose workforce is 100% first aid-trained can apply for Millie's Mark. But meeting your statutory training obligations isn't the last word in preparedness when it comes to responding in an emergency – it's important to keep first aid at the forefront of practitioners' minds all year round.

Read more at bit.do/TEYfamm



*For more advice
on a wide range of
health and safety
issues, keep an eye on
teachearlyyears.com*

4 EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Sometimes even the best first aid training will not be enough to save a life, but in these situations specialist equipment can make the difference. Every year in the UK around 270 children die following a sudden cardiac arrest, a statistic that has prompted Busy Bees to install more than 350 automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in its settings. The devices can increase the chance of a child surviving a cardiac arrest by up to 75%.

5 MANAGING ALLERGIES

Approximately one in 14 children aged under three have a diagnosed food allergy – that means that every early years setting in the country needs to know its legal responsibilities to safeguard the health of those affected, how to identify allergens when preparing meals, and how to respond should the worst-case scenario transpire and a child go into life-threatening anaphylactic shock. Thankfully, there's a lot of guidance available, from the likes of the Children's Food Trust, the Anaphylaxis Campaign and the Food Standards Agency. For more, visit bit.do/TEYhsal

6 WORK-RELATED STRESS

Mental health is receiving increased attention these days. Early years settings must of course focus on the wellbeing of the children in their care, but owners and managers should not lose sight of the wellbeing of their staff either. Work-related stress can affect practitioners working in stressful circumstances, and NDNA's 2017/18 Workforce Survey reported that amongst the reasons identified for staff leaving employment were "stress, long-term sickness, too much paperwork [...] and demands and responsibilities of the job". Implementing a stress-management policy is a proactive way to address these issues – read more at bit.do/TEYwrs



LAURA WEST IS MCW'S CHILDCARE HEALTH AND SAFETY SPECIALIST.

How to write a health & safety policy

*Every provider with five or more employees has to have one, but recording your approach on paper needn't be a stressful experience, explains **Laura West**...*

A HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY is a document that will describe how you intend to deal with health and safety within your settings – i.e. issues that affect what you do and how you carry out your work. It will let your staff and others know about your commitment to health and safety. Your health and safety policy does not need to be complicated or time-consuming, but it should state clearly who is responsible for what, and when and how things happen across your organisation.

When do I need one?

If you have five employees or more it is a legal requirement to have a health and safety policy in writing; however, if you have fewer than five employees, you do not need to have it written down.

How do I write one?

Generally, most businesses set out their policies in three sections:

- Policy Statement
- Responsibility Section
- Arrangement Section.

POLICY STATEMENT: This is also sometimes known as a General Statement of Intent. It sets out your commitment to managing the health and safety aspects of your business effectively, and states what you want to achieve. Your Policy Statement should inform people about the policy itself, your safety aims and objectives, and your commitment to ensuring the health, safety and welfare of all employees, as well as that of people not in your employ, e.g. contractors or members of the public.

The Policy Statement by law must be

signed by the director in charge of health and safety within your business. In many cases this will be the managing director. The statement should be reviewed and re-signed annually.

RESPONSIBILITY SECTION: In this section what you need to do is identify people's roles and responsibilities for specific actions and/or tasks within your organisation, i.e. who is the person responsible for writing your risk assessments or carrying out your checks regarding things like fire safety, security or equipment, etc. As an employer you should appoint someone competent with the correct knowledge and skills to manage the health and safety requirements of your organisation. If you are a small setting it may well be that the same person is responsible for all roles. In either case, the person or persons should be identified and what they are responsible for needs to be documented. Remember to make sure that those given the responsibility understand what it is you are asking them to do. It is also worth remembering that under health and safety legislation, all employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

There are several ways in which this section can be written. In a smaller organisation with not many levels of management, a simple list would suffice, but the most popular approach is to use an organisational chart. An organisational chart generally shows the hierarchy of seniority within your organisation and should state employees' name, job title and their duties towards health and safety.

ARRANGEMENT SECTION: This is the final section of your health and safety

THINGS TO REMEMBER

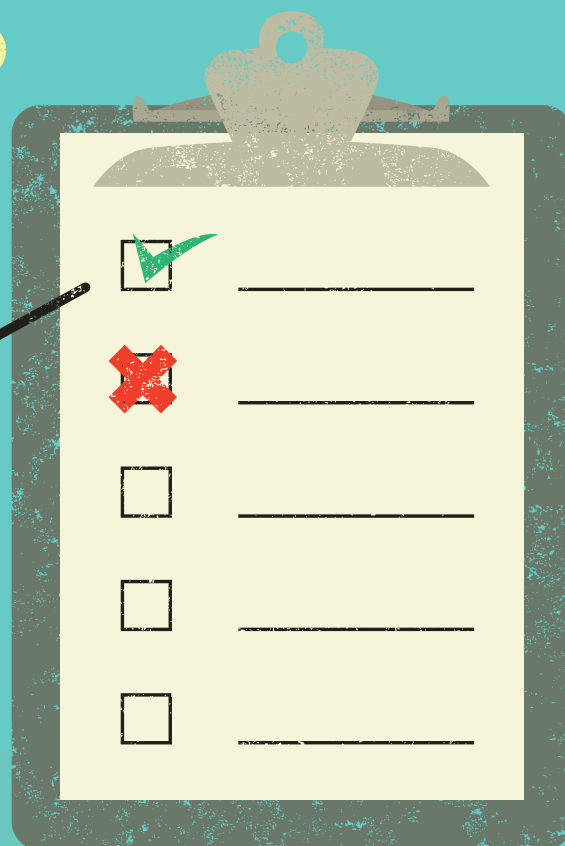
Five tips to help you stay on top of health and safety...

- 1 When writing a health and safety policy, keep in mind that it shouldn't be difficult; it should simply reflect what you do and how to manage it.
- 2 Once the policy is written, share it with people who might be affected – i.e. your employees, subcontractors and, in some cases, people who you are working with.
- 3 Your health and safety policy must be reviewed at least annually, or more frequently if there has been a change that could affect people.
- 4 The policy is a legal document, so only include things that you are actually going to do.
- 5 And finally, remember a health and safety policy will only be effective if you and your staff follow it and review it regularly.



“

A health and safety policy shouldn't be difficult; simply reflect what you do and how to manage it.



policy, and is generally the largest. It should detail how you intend to achieve your aims and meet the commitments you have made in your health and safety Policy Statement. The arrangements give information to people regarding how you intend to manage a particular task or aspect – this should also include information on how you are going to eliminate or reduce the risk of hazards in your workplace. It should detail who the allocated person is for each element, or the position they hold within your organisation. They are then responsible for ensuring that it takes place.

A hazard is something within your business that could potentially cause harm to people, such as electricity or chemicals – e.g. cleaning products that fall under COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) regulations. Risk in relation to occupational safety and health is “the likelihood that a person may be harmed or suffer adverse health effects if they are exposed to a hazard”.

The arrangements will vary from company to company, but some examples that may be included are:

- General work environment
- Manual handling
- First aid procedure and provision
- Alcohol and drug policy
- Risk assessment procedure
- Fire safety
- Electrical safety
- Chemicals – managing them safely under COSHH regulations
- Provision of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS:

These are additional actions you can take to ensure you manage health and safety effectively. Additional arrangements should also be set out in the Arrangement Section of your policy. These could include:

- Staff training
- Safety signage

- Replacing hazardous chemicals with less harmful alternatives
- Improving safety equipment
- Anti-slip flooring
- Finger guards.

Stay informed

Keeping abreast of the latest news and events in the sector will help you keep your health and safety policies and risk assessments up to date. Keep an eye on news feeds to your mobile device or computer, free e-bulletins and podcasts for the latest information. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website is an extremely useful tool that will allow you to access accurate information quickly – visit hse.gov.uk

MCW Nursery Support Services is a family-run business specialising in health and safety, auditing and training for the childcare industry. Visit mcwnss.co.uk for information on its IOSH Managing Safely, First Aid and Fire Courses and other training.

Did you know **12 young people die each week** from sudden cardiac arrest?
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PHILIPPA FRASER IS AN EARLY YEARS TEACHER.

"Let children do as we do"

*Those in our care are ready, willing and able to manage risk if only we give them the opportunity, says **Philippa Fraser**...*

WHEN WE DISCUSS HOW TO CREATE enabling environments within our settings, what factors do we consider? Are our children's resources accessible at all times, are there enough materials for the entire room, and are the activities on offer stimulating enough; in short, does everything work together motivating young children to learn? Answering such questions seems integral to following the EYFS, and yet there is another way of empowering children which is sometimes overlooked in our safety-conscious society: giving them the opportunity to 'do as we do'. By this, I mean that they are afforded the same utensils as us grown-ups, along with enough time and space to use them well. This idea of children working with tools is not new to Montessori nurseries or forest schools, and would be beneficial to implement in all childcare and educational settings.

Supervising the children wielding these tools may feel like a great challenge to nursery practitioners. The work may carry the risk of injury and some children in mixed age and ability groups may struggle to perform; these are two ideas which may discourage

those in our industry from such provision. Despite such fears, childcare professionals must soldier on with 'dangerous' play; hopefully our youngsters, in turn, will follow suit and learn patience, problem-solving and resilience. On the contrary, however, a child's creativity and physical development may be stifled if they are not permitted to perform their own risk assessments or take part in managing the level of threat at hand (e.g. not being able to slice their own fruit at snack time or having only limited access to working scissors). Our insistence on always playing it safe can put children in frustrating and embarrassing positions. We would not dream of standing over a friend's shoulder as she worked, highlighting every mistake she had made, before eventually taking the tools away from her and concluding that we "might as well do it ourselves". What an unproductive attitude! This is not only irritating and possibly anxiety-provoking, it is also downright rude.

This is one way in which I argue that childcare workers should uphold the same gold standard of behaviour with babies, toddlers and preschoolers as

we would do in the presence of a cherished guest; you would want your guest to enjoy every moment of their stay, and maybe even to stay longer. This desire should be at the forefront of practitioners' minds, especially in our work with not-yet-verbal children – those who cannot tell us themselves how delightful or insufferable our behaviour towards them might feel. If we are friendly enough, and the child warms to us, he or she may eventually relate to nursery staff as with extended family members. Being generous with our time and resources – as well as our positive personal qualities – tells the child that he or she is important to us. Moreover, it conveys the sense that the products of the child's mind (e.g. self-made artwork and stories) also have value. Repeatedly withdrawing or limiting their chosen activities suggests the opposite: that they are small, weak and incapable of said tasks. This is how children can be dismissed and de-skilled from certain hobbies before they have even had the chance to join in. It is up to us childcare professionals to ensure this does not happen.

Childcare professionals must soldier on with 'dangerous' play.



LINDSAY GILBERT IS A PAEDIATRIC DIETITIAN AND JOINT DIRECTOR OF FOODTALK.

DO YOUR *menus* make THE GRADE?



*Take advantage of the latest advice on early years nutrition and make a difference to your children's lifelong health, says **Lindsay Gilbert**...*

FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS I'VE been involved with a project to implement the 'Eat Better, Start Better (EBSB) Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England'. To say it has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career would be an understatement, so when the news broke last year that the Children's Food Trust had closed its doors, there were many people, myself included, who were very concerned that all the hard work and great resources would go to waste, and with them the recent strides forward in promoting early years nutrition in this country.

Fortunately, the guidelines have been saved, updated in line with recent changes to national dietary guidelines and given a new look, and will continue to improve the health of the nation's preschoolers. At the same time, the government has recently released its 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings', so it has never been easier for providers to meet the voluntary food and drink guidelines.

Eat Better, Start Better

In 2012 the Children's Food Trust released the EBSB guidelines with funding from the DfE. Since then, more than a thousand early years settings across England have implemented them, and they now form one of the key elements of the government's Child Obesity Plan.

Now, charity Action for Children has picked up the baton, becoming the new custodians of EBSB. Apart from the rebranding, you'll find the

same comprehensive information as before, including supporting fact sheets (e.g. Catering for Special Dietary Requirements) and practical tools (e.g. a Menu Planning Checklist) in an easy-to-read format that guides settings through the sometimes challenging process of developing their own menus and food policy.

The new Eat Better, Start Better guidelines reflect the latest dietary recommendations on calories, free sugars and fibre for children over two years of age. As a result, settings already implementing the guidance will notice changes – fruit juice is no longer allowed on the menu, for example. This will help reduce the intake of free sugars, which are so detrimental to young children's teeth and can contribute to obesity.

Example menus

The government's 'Example Menus for Early Years Settings in England' were prepared by the Children's Food Trust (prior to its closure) for Public Health England, with input from the DfE and

Department of Health. They come in two parts:

The Guidance – this includes much of the content contained in the EBSB guidelines but with a new section covering infant feeding and complementary feeding, and an expanded section on food safety and hygiene.

It has never been easier for providers to meet the food and drink guidelines.

The Menus – a huge document containing two three-week menus (spring/summer and autumn/winter), including breakfast, lunch, tea and snacks. The menus meet the nutritional needs of all children from six months to their fifth birthday and have been

WHY IMPLEMENT THE GUIDANCE?

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, supporting early years settings to implement the EBSB guidance has been a professionally rewarding experience. Not only do the menus and guidance provide an illustration as to how settings can meet Early Years Foundation Stage requirements to provide "healthy, balanced and nutritious meals for children", but also the wider impact of the guidelines has been incredibly impressive. Ofsted is also starting to appreciate the impact that implementing the guidelines has and may soon begin making specific mention to settings' commitment to EBSB within their inspection reports.



EXAMPLE MENU

- **Breakfast – Crisped rice cereal and milk. Half a bagel with spread and melon**
- **Mid-morning snack – Banana slices. Milk or water**
- **Lunch – Bean and veggie sausage wholemeal pasta bake. Plain Greek yoghurt with raspberry puree**
- **Mid-afternoon snack – cucumber and carrot sticks with crackers and cream cheese. Milk or water**
- **Tea – Crustless quiche with potato salad and pepper sticks. Apple slices and raisins**



designed to include a variety of tastes, textures and colours across the day and week. They can be used by all early years settings, from large nurseries and children's centres to childminders and play groups.

There are recipes for every dish, which can be made for as few as five children up to as many as 20, and the ingredients used are in line with dietary guidance or best practice, e.g. canned pulses contain no added salt or sugar. Each recipe contains typical portions for both 7–12 months and 1–4 years, as well as relevant allergen information.

Settings can choose to use a complete example menu in its entirety or use individual recipes within existing menus, so it's really flexible. The important thing to remember is that you will still need to audit your menus using the menu planning checklist found at the back of the EBSB guidelines if you have created your own bespoke menus.

The benefits to you

Implementing the EBSB guidelines may seem like a big step, but even though they remain voluntary, meeting your EYFS requirements are not. So whether you only provide snacks or the whole day's provision, the EBSB guidelines and accompanying menus are there to make the process as easy as possible, and you may be pleasantly surprised at the huge impact they'll have. Going ahead will...

- help you meet your statutory obligations under the EYFS to "provide healthy, balanced and nutritious meals for children";
- provide evidence around leadership or improved learning outcomes for Ofsted;
- support a 'whole-setting approach' to health and wellbeing, and provide an avenue to link in with local health promoting activities, e.g. encouraging breastfeeding;
- improve staff knowledge and confidence about childhood nutrition (e.g. portion sizes) and their role in supporting children to eat well (e.g. fussy eating);
- help children to adopt healthy eating habits for life, which will protect their teeth, encourage healthy growth and promote good health into adulthood; and
- be great for business – parents are more concerned than ever about the food served to their children, so show them you care too!

If you are already implementing the guidelines, you can download the new document on the Action for Children website (foundationyears.org.uk/eat-better-start-better) and use the government's new menus and recipes to revamp your old ones (you'll find them at bit.ly/2yz9xnC). Don't forget to use the Menu Planning Checklist – remember, you're only as good as your last menu! – and keep your policy up-to-date by reviewing it every year. In particular, take a look at the new section on food safety and hygiene and feeding under-ones if you provide food for infants.

Foodtalk is a social enterprise specialising in the provision of nutrition training and educational resources to early years practitioners. Visit foodtalk.org.uk or email Lindsay at lindsay@foodtalk.org.uk



GETTING STARTED WITH EBSB



Make sure your team is ready. Decide who will take the lead – the manager, cook, a staff member with an interest in nutrition or a combination of these people?



Register for the EBSB online learning modules, which can be accessed via the British Dietetic Association Trust's learning network.



Complete Action for Children's audit, 'Promoting and Supporting Healthy Eating in Early Years Settings', to help you consider your current approach. This can be found on the Action for Children website.



Make time for reading the guidelines, planning how you are going to implement the guidelines, and updating/creating your menus and food policy.



Get help! If it all seems too daunting, you could approach your local public health team or look for a freelance dietitian/nutritionist specialising in early years nutrition to support and guide you through the process.



DR EUNICE LUMSDEN IS HEAD OF EARLY YEARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHAMPTON.

“Child protection must be a priority”

*Your setting can make a difference to vulnerable children, whatever the challenges you face, says **Dr Eunice Lumsden**...*

HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE standing on the top of a mountain and screaming, “Why will you not listen!?” Increasingly, I find myself shouting so much that I get fed up of my own voice, and resort to weeping inside. Why? The answer is simple – 40 years ago I started on a career pathway to work alongside children and adults whose life chances were severely impacted upon by factors often outside their control. Roll forward to 2018 and I am still driven by the same naive belief I had at 18, that one day we will eradicate what is commonly known as the ‘cycle of deprivation’ – the ‘intergenerational DNA’ that permeates some families and provides ongoing barriers to social mobility and inequity of life chances.

As my knowledge and practice experience has evolved, so has my focus on early childhood and how we can collectively improve the life chances of children who are abused. Currently, national and local policy initiatives tend to be short-term and driven by political ideology, rather than a holistic long-term integrated approach to early childhood. Real change can only happen when health, social care and early years education policy works hand in hand.

For example, the decision to extend 30 hours free childcare to foster carers needs applauding. Providing rich, well-planned early

learning opportunities for those who have faced abuse and trauma, that fully appreciates their unique daily challenges, is essential. However, this potentially life-changing opportunity was marketed as a recruitment opportunity, highlighting that foster carers can combine work with their role. Many foster carers already combine the two, but it is not an easy balance. They have to attend numerous meetings and facilitate contact sessions as well as providing nurturing care to children with complex needs.

EARLY INTERVENTION

The (in)visibility of the needs of young children who require protection is

deeply concerning. The risk to children is not just about being abused; they are also ‘at risk’ because of the environments in which they live. Government statistics in England evidence that the majority of children referred for child protection initial assessments live in households

characterised by domestic violence and drug and alcohol abuse. Consequently, for some children, their early life is typified by ‘Adverse Childhood Experiences’ (ACEs), which include toxic environments where domestic violence, drugs and alcohol prevail, as well as abuse. Moreover, there is increasing research evidence of the effect ACEs have across an individual’s life, including mental and physical health issues.

Intervention that is timely and evidence informed can and does make a difference, especially in early childhood.



Consequently, intervention that is timely and evidence informed can and does make a difference, especially in early childhood. Insights from neuroscience and molecular biology are having a massive impact on our knowledge and understanding of child and brain development. While caution must be used when applying the findings from research, the ever-increasing knowledge about the science of child development affords us with new opportunities to foster practice that improves young children's developmental outcomes.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings have a vital role to play in ensuring that a holistic approach to early learning is promoted through nurturing care. Research, including the EPPE project (bit.do/EPPE), reinforces the need for high-quality ECEC provision. Moreover, the importance of a well-qualified, graduate-led, early years workforce cannot be underestimated. I have seen some amazing practice and worked with some incredible people who I admire greatly – but I have also visited settings, where, had it been a family home visit, I'd have been asking, “Are these young children's emotional needs being met or am I seeing ‘neglect’?”

This is a really ‘tricky’ area, but our most vulnerable young children have the right to the highest quality services to enhance their life chances, not least because most children who experience ACEs continue to live with their families. They may experience episodes in the care system but only a small percentage of children are legally separated from their families through adoption.

A SUPPORTING ROLE

Working with children who have been abused is emotionally demanding and requires extensive knowledge and practice skills. Traumatized young children need highly qualified staff who understand and are attuned to their complex needs, recognise the importance of a holistic approach and are able to provide nurturing care. They must be able to provide young children with constructive early learning experiences that reflect not only the child's developmental stage but also take account of the wider adverse factors impacting on them.

Children in need of protection, also need positive role models, leaders and practitioners who understand their own responsibilities and roles in meeting complex and multifaceted needs. They need practitioners who take responsibility for their ongoing learning and can navigate the continually changing policy landscape, understand research findings and apply them in practice. However, ECEC settings continue to struggle with qualifications levels and staff recruitment, as well as pay and conditions. Consequently, a setting may not have the capacity, knowledge and skills to ensure a planned integrated response to the early development needs of young children, let alone the ability to release staff to attend essential meetings.

Despite these challenges, collectively we can make a difference to the life chances of young children living in adversity. However, we

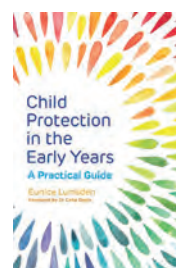
IN PRACTICE

How does your setting ensure that young children with ACEs are:

- **Seen** – How do you try to understand how a child's adverse experiences are impacting on their behaviour?
- **Soothed** – How do you help children to self-regulate? Do you know how to self-regulate yourself?
- **Secure** – How do you provide nurturing safe environments that promote holistic development and early learning?
- **Safe** – How do you avoid actions and responses that have the potential to frighten or harm a child?

Based on Siegal and Bryson's framework for supporting parents with attachment in *The Whole-Brain Child* (bit.do/WBChild)

need to take responsibility in our own practice and ensure, whatever the challenges we are facing, that the needs of our youngest children who need protection are visible in all we do.



Eunice Lumsden is the author of *Child Protection in the Early Years* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, £16.99) – an accessible and practical guide to supporting young children who have encountered abuse. Visit jkp.com





BARBARA ISAACS IS A MONTESSORI GLOBAL AMBASSADOR.

Learning from handwashing

Barbara Isaacs explains how promoting good hygiene can benefit children's development across the EYFS...

IT WAS MONTESSORI'S AIM, as early as 1907, to encourage children's autonomy by supporting their fierce drive for independence. She made clear links between autonomy and a child's positive self-image and self-esteem. All parents, practitioners and teachers have seen the intense pride and sense of achievement when two- and three-year-olds manage to put on their shoes, serve their own snack or manage to complete an activity successfully. These accomplishments are possible because we show children how to go about managing such

tasks and give them time to become competent. The initial steps are often clumsy and inefficient, but practice makes perfect! Once they can do it for

themselves, young children often offer help to their friends and those who may be struggling. Their self-esteem is enhanced further by making these social connections and promoting a sense of belonging and wellbeing within the group.

Montessori started by making sure that children established good habits of hygiene, by demonstrating how to wash themselves thoroughly and how to use the toilet independently. Even today, we need to show children how to wash and dry their hands, particularly after painting or a craft activity or gardening, as well as before and after meals or following a visit to the toilet. In such situations they may need to brush the dirt from behind their nails and ensure that their wrists

The initial steps are often clumsy and inefficient, but practice makes perfect!

are clean too. Many settings find handwashing a challenge because they are located in church halls, with limited access to running water. However, it is possible to set up a handwashing activity in the classroom. This will involve having two small buckets, a jug, small bowl and soap dispenser and a small nail brush, and paper towels for hand-drying.

AWASH WITH IDEAS

One bucket (with a lid) will be partly filled with warm water and will have a jug inside. Children who need to wash their hands must fill the handwashing bowl with the jug. They will also need to learn how to access the soap from the dispenser and how to rub their hands together to make lather, and

ensure that they wash their fingers carefully, checking their nails for dirt. Whilst purposeful, handwashing gives two- and three-year-olds a great deal of pleasure, and it can be a drawn-out process. When finished, children are expected to pour the used water into the second bucket and wipe out the bowl in readiness for the next person.

Just think what skills and learning take place during this simple activity. Children will need to remember the sequence. They will improve their hand-eye coordination and estimation during the pouring activity. They will grow in their awareness of their own body whilst being reminded of the need for personal hygiene. Finally, their sense of self within the group will also increase.

You may not want to have permanent access to handwashing as described here, as it can occasionally end up with much spillage, but you may want to try it out when doing finger painting, printing and other activities within the art area.

Another element of personal hygiene which can challenge the practitioner is children's ability to blow their nose. Why not try having a box of tissues, a smallish wall-mounted mirror and a rubbish bin available in close proximity? A child can then be encouraged to blow their nose, check that they have managed the task properly and dispose of the tissue in the bin provided. Young children will need to be shown how to blow their nose and be reminded about checking if they have wiped their nose properly – but once successful, they have gained a skill for life!

This is just a beginning. Why not try to develop a routine for brushing teeth after lunch, or if you have the space, for each child having their own hair brush for use first thing or after naps?

MCI offers distance learning Level 3 & 4 Diplomas in Montessori pedagogy – Birth to Seven (Early Years Educator). Visit montessori.org.uk/mci_training





Nursery Team of the Year – Celebrating the Unsung Heroes of the Early Years Sector

What is Nursery Team of the Year?

Teach Early Years' 'Nursery Team of the Year' celebration is all about recognising the hard work and commitment that early years practitioners across the country put in on a daily basis. If your setting goes above and beyond to provide the very best education and support for children and their families, we want to hear from you – it's easy to take part and you could win some fantastic prizes!



Free download for everyone

Everyone who nominates in the Nursery Team of the Year Awards will receive a FREE downloadable resource pack to use in their classroom, which is packed with 60 fantastic activities!



How it Works



Nominate your Team

Simply click below and let us know a little bit about your nominated nursery team and why you think they deserve the accolade. Don't forget, you'll receive a free 60 page resource pack just for nominating!



The Shortlist Announced

Once the nominations stage has closed on 12th August, the nursery teams will be shortlisted and we will then get in touch with those who are through to the next stage of the awards.



Winners Announced

The winners of Nursery Team of the Year will be announced on the 1st October, so be sure to keep an eye out and check back then to see if your favourites won.

Win one of our celebration bundles, worth £200+

By nominating in the awards you'll automatically be entered into our prize draw with the chance to win one of our celebration bundles, which is worth over £200.



Nominate your Team!

The clock is ticking so ensure you nominate your nursery team by 12th August. Help us to celebrate the fantastic nursery teams out there, Don't miss out, simply click below and let us know about yours.



6 Reasons to Get Involved



Activity packs for everyone

Everyone who nominates gets a FREE 60 page downloadable activity pack.



Celebrate your setting

This is your chance to have your team's talents and passion recognised.



Win some great prizes

Be in with a chance of winning one of our celebration bundles, worth £200+



Feature in Teach Early Years

Share your story with the sector and earn a spot in our Awards supplement.



Smile for the camera

We'll visit the victors to take fantastic photos of their practitioners in action.



Promote your business

Make the shortlist and receive an exclusive logo to use on your marketing material.