Welcome to the Summer 2019 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.

In this issue:

- **Forest Childcare Association news** and stories – members describe their outdoor experiences, plus links and activity ideas
- **Crafts** Make a height chart and spider counting activity
- **Articles, Blogs and Information Pages**
  - Nine first aid situations – do you know what to do?
  - 10 things childminders should always do when communicating with parents
- **Inspirational best practice**
  - What does cultural capital mean to childminded children
  - Make a cheap mud kitchen
  - Exploring themes with childminded children

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• What do British Values mean to childminders?

• **EYFS Paperwork, Policy and Legislation News**
  • Early Years Inspection Handbook update
  • Education Inspection Framework
  • Updated Official Document Links

• **Free product updates**
  • Free updates to the Ultimate Childminding Checklist and Guided Self Evaluation Pack are coming soon.

The next issue (Autumn) will be coming out in **September 2019**.

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
Forest Childcare Association news

Children who play outdoors a lot grow up with a greater awareness of environmental issues. Children are the future of our planet. If we want them to care about saving it, Forest Childcare trips are a great way to make environmental issues a part of their lives.

Creating a stage in the woods and why there are never two days the same – contributed by Krista Richards

What I love about Forest Childcare is that children are so at ease in these settings; they can be braver, more athletic, more cooperative and more agile than anywhere else. We have enjoyed many activities, hanging from branches, balancing on tree trunks and roots, jumping off tree trunks, creating pictures on the wood floor with leaves, stones, flowers, sticks etc. They have used a large tree trunk to create a stage and sing songs from it, they have made numbers, letters and shapes with twigs, they have built pretend fires and dens, many science activities like identifying leaves, flowers, bugs etc from keys, squelched through mud, splashed in puddles, waded through mini lakes, used magnifying glasses (or toilet rolls!) to look closely at smaller things, created letters and shapes by lying down on the wood floor together, measuring and comparing using sticks, colour matching or finding things which are NOT green or brown, tree tag, hide and seek, leaf fights, finding little hollows in trees and imagining whether fairies live in there and what they look like, finding out about badger sets, rabbit warrens... the list is endless. There are never two days the same! Children often come up with ideas themselves as it seems such a natural setting for them.
Making natural art – contributed by Victoria Kayes

“It was our first real sunshine outing day for a while and it really made a difference.”

The children and I have really enjoyed getting out and about. I often join with another local childminder Debbie Nield who is also a Forest Childcare practitioner. Today we went out with collecting bags around Etherow Country park. After a picnic the children enjoyed sticking their finds onto see through sticky backed plastic. When we returned we put the natural works of art onto coloured paper to take home.

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.

Writing on slate – contributed by Elaine Navis

We really love our outdoor adventures one of the places we use is a wonderful wildflower park called Court Hey and they have a forest where we can make dens we have made bow and arrows found charcoal on the old campfire and even found some slate so the children could write their names with it. We have talked about how children used to write on slate in the olden days and the school aged children have been fascinated by this too.
Art and Activity Ideas

NEW: Childminding Best Practice Club – Themed Activity Packs emailed to you - £2.50 per month – August is ‘Digger 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 digger themed activities like these:

Sunflower Height Chart – contributed by Julie Wilson

Lovely project from Julie Wilson. Julie writes: “The children used foot prints to make sunflower then they all got measured beside it. Then we measured mums and dads too!”
Summer Science: Making Slime – contributed by Samantha Boyd

Kids love making slime, including school age children. We used shaving gel, pva glue, glitter and food colouring and contact lens solution. We had great fun. There are quite a few tutorials online which show you how to make it, and we have experimented with a few, but this was by far the best!! Add the glitter and food colouring to the pva glue and stir well. Then add the shaving gel and stir – continue to add until it is a light fluffy mixture – then add the contact lens solution.

Spiders from playdough – mathematics themed invitation to play – contributed by Jessica Burdon

Lovely simple maths activity idea. Thanks Jessica.
Garden Dinosaur Themed Invitation to Play – contributed by Shani Anderson

I love the way Shani has set this up so there are private spaces, shade for the children and how she has brought books to the garden play area. Every area of learning covered here I think! Lovely work.
Articles, Blogs and Information Pages

Information pages on www.childmindingbestpractice.com

I have added lots of new information pages to my Childminding Best Practice website where I also publish my blog articles. On this site you can search for information, articles, links, and support by topic including:

- Inspection
- New to childminding
- Continual Professional Development (CPD)
- Official document links
- Business tips for childminders
- Themes for childminding settings

Remember to “follow” my blog to receive articles by email. You just need to enter your email address. Please note that the blog is not the same as my newsletter.

Here are nine first aid situations that have happened to real childminders

Do you know what to do? Comment in the feed if any of these have happened to you. [more]

Sharing my latest article with you: 10 things childminders should always do when communicating with parents

Are you doing these things in your setting? [more]

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.
Inspirational best practice ideas, stories and links

What does Cultural Capital Mean to Childminded Children

The first and most important thing to say about “Cultural Capital” – the new Ofsted buzz word that has appeared in the September 2019 Inspection Handbook – is DON’T PANIC. You do not need to attend a training course on cultural capital. Ofsted does not want to see a poster up in your setting labelled cultural capital. Most of you will find that the only change you need to make to what you are already doing is to learn the new buzz word so that if you hear it during your inspection you keep calm and carry on!

Cultural Capital is defined in the new framework as ‘the essential knowledge that children need to be educated citizens’ and what is necessary to ‘prepare them for future success’.

Some children arrive at your setting with different experiences than others. When this happens you need to find ways to plan your curriculum to help the child in the area that he is missing or behind.

A key example is talking. Some children arrive at your setting speaking really well because they are exposed to lots of words and their parents read loads of books to them at home. This gives them a massive advantage in school and in life. Other children come from much less fortunate backgrounds where they are not read to so much at home and know far fewer words. Your job as his childminder is to recognise his area of weakness and find ways to enhance it. In other words, you should make sure to plan a curriculum where you read a lot more to children whose parents do not read to them at home.

This applies right across the areas of learning and development and would also apply to the characteristics of effective learning.

Another example Ofsted gave during its webinar was a child who knows everything about dinosaurs, but nothing about plants. In this case, you could enhance his learning by teaching him about plants.

A characteristic of effective learning example might be a child who is never given any choices at home and who appears to passively take everything he is given. You can enhance his learning and prepare him for school by encouraging him to make choices.

Here is what you need to do to ‘do’ cultural capital:

- Do starting points observations on all new children across all the learning and development areas and the COEL. Because this will show you the child’s strengths and areas of weaknesses.
- Ask yourself what you would do to improve the child’s area of weakness.
- Make a plan for each individual child. What can you develop? What can you encourage?

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Follow through on your plans and check that your plans are having an effect.

**Australian sun safety resources** – contributed by Claire Akrill

Check out how the [Australians teach sun safety](#) to their children with Sid the Seagull’s campaign. There are loads of great resources you can download for both yourself and to share with parents.

**Mud kitchen** – contributed by Paula Gerrard of Little People Childminding Services in Blackburn, Lancashire

“We just finished our mud kitchen and I’m very pleased with it.”

I really like Paula’s mud kitchen because it shows just how simple it can be. Sometimes when you see mud kitchens online or in magazines they look frankly nicer than my REAL kitchen. Paula’s example shows us that all you really need is a couple of low cost ‘cooking’ items, an outdoor space and a water supply.

**Do you work with children who have English as an additional language**

Useful guide book for practitioners working with [children with English as a second language](#)

**What British values mean to childminded children**

It is a legal requirement for childminders to ACTIVELY promote British values with childminded children.

These fundamental British values are:

- Democracy
- Rule of law
• Individual liberty
• Mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths.

Many childminders do lip service to British values and the Prevent Duty by putting up a poster with these four words on it. Unfortunately, that isn't good enough and childminders and nurseries have been marked down at inspections for not promoting British values in a more active way.

Promoting ‘democracy’ with EYFS children is all about making sure that children are learning to share and to take turns. This requires an understanding of concepts like fairness and ‘golden rule’. So you can help to teach democracy to the very young by putting in place the basic concepts of equality, that you must share a toy, share an adult’s attention and take your turn.

Promoting ‘rule of law’ is about learning respect for authority. You can help by making a set of house rules that everyone has agreed upon. And then enforcing them. Your house rules should emphasise kindness, sharing and working together.

Teach children about ‘individual liberty’ by helping to give children the language they need to discuss feelings and to think about their place in their families, their communities, and our world. Do ‘all about me’ activities to help children to see themselves as individuals and to start to recognise the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Promote ‘mutual respect and tolerance’ by teaching children about different religions, disabilities and other differences between people like languages we speak, different food we eat, different genders and ages. Celebrate some multicultural holidays like St. Patrick’s Day or Diwali or Eid that are important in the UK, and these will help the children to learn about different cultures.

If you need some help getting started, the activities in my Diversity Awareness pack are all activities that will promote different aspects of British values.
Chat, Play and Read

This new site has information on talking with small children aimed at parents. It is hoped that childminders will share the page with parents to encourage them to chat, play and read more with their children at home.

Tips for Outstanding Ofsted Inspections

If you want to get outstanding, then as well as doing excellent work all the times, the inspector will also want you to be sharing best practice ideas to inspire others. How will you show your inspector that you help to inspire other childminders? One great way is to write a short article or contribute an idea to my Childminding Best Practice newsletters which are read by thousands of childminders across the country. Please get in touch if you have a story, photo or idea to share.

Fact or Myth: You shouldn’t do themes with children because they aren’t child-led.

Myth: The EYFS Statutory Framework specifically says that it expects childcare providers to provide a balance of child-initiated free play and adult led structured activities. It is a myth that all activities need to be ‘child-led’. Most childcare professionals agree that it is actually best to offer a mixture of child-led activities (free play) and structured activities which tend to be initiated by you.

Some people will still insist that you should wait and investigate only things that interest the children and that the children ask questions about. In other words, you should wait to explore mini beasts until the day the children stumble over a snail and notice it. Unfortunately, I have known plenty of young children who if left entirely to free play would never do anything other than play with the same fire engine/ train day in, day out and any questions they ask tend to be … fire engine and train-related. Those types of children do not come in one morning and announce: “today I am interested in mini beasts” or “tell me about Diwali”. No, if left alone, those children would continue to play with the same fire engine/ train as they did yesterday. Some people would say that this is fine then, that the child is exploring his own interests. But I tend to prefer that children are occasionally encouraged to try something different and the children's parents tend to agree...
Within any given theme it is still possible to make the activities child-led, but many children need guiding onto interesting topics. So, within the broad theme of ‘mini beasts’ for example, there is a range of activities that the children can do that will allow them to explore their own interests at their own levels while at the same time still joining in with the activity. For example, we will all do a snail race (because those are great fun) and we will do that all together. But while Olwen might want to investigate spiders, Beatrice might prefer to dig up worms. Whatever mini beast each child chooses to investigate, we can all look at our own mini beasts under the stand magnifier (because all children should learn about ‘big’ and ‘small’) and we can all enjoy a trip to the Butterfly House.

So it is perfectly possible to make activities child-led, even if you are the one who originally initiated them.

But what if a child doesn’t want to join in with the themed activities?

This is a difficult question because children can all concentrate for different lengths of time and it is up to you to know what you can expect from each individual child. But in general when I am doing structured activities at my setting I do insist that all children come and join in for short periods of time. This is my way of demonstrating that I have high expectations of the children I look after and also to help them to get ready for school. (Many people would disagree with this approach) but as I allow plenty of time for free play each day, when I am doing an activity like a craft project or a learning activity that I have intentionally set up, I do expect ALL of the children to come and join in and practice their concentration and listening skills for a short (sometimes very short but that’s ok) period of time.

Exploring themes and topics with childminded children is a great way to promote the characteristics of effective learning. It is also interesting for you to try new things and will keep you from getting stale. Nobody wants small children to have to grow up too quickly, but offering small children a balance between free play and structured activities will help to set them up for success in school as lifelong learners.
EYFS Paperwork, Policy and Legislation News

The Common Inspection Framework has been replaced with the Education Inspection Framework.

This [new document](#) comes into force in September 2019. You can download a copy here.

New Early Years Inspection Handbook

This [document comes into force in September 2019](#) and replaces previous versions of the Inspection Handbook. There are some major changes to inspection areas you need to be aware of.

Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings

This [document has been updated](#) for Sept.

Official Document Links Page - updated

I have updated my [Official Document Links Page](#) with all these new documents where I keep links to all the major documents childminders need to be aware of including the Stat Framework, Development Matters, safeguarding manuals, Prevent duty, Inspection handbook, “What to do if you think a child is being abused”, Food Safety etc.
Free Product Updates

Ultimate Childminding Checklist and Guided Self Evaluation pack

I am in the process of updating these documents to reflect the changes from the new Inspection Framework. When they are finished I will put a note in my weekly emails to let you know. Anyone who has bought a copy of the checklist or Guided Self Evaluation pack in the past 6 months will be emailed the update automatically. Everyone else who has bought it further in the past and wants a free copy of the updated document should request one from me at that time.

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