

Childminding Best Practice BUMPER Newsletter

Issue 34: Spring 2022

Welcome to first of our new look Childminding Best Practice **Bumper** Newsletters. This is our first one since we took over from Kay in January. If you have read the old style Childminding Best Practice Newsletters, you may spot some changes. We now email short newsletters to people every week, but we are still committed to producing what will now be called the Childminding Best Practice **BUMPER** Newsletter four times a year.

We will continue to focus on childminding best practice topics such as health and safety, diversity awareness and childminding in the great outdoors, (Forest Childcare.) We will also update you on any changes to things like legislation which may affect your childminding business.

The next issue will be coming out in Summer 2022.

Happy reading

Jennifer and Amanda

Inspirational Best Practice ideas, stories and links

Childminding Money tips

It is around this time of year that people's thoughts turn to money, and this is especially true this year with prices for basics like food and energy rising rapidly. However there is at least one thing where you will get more for your money while still paying the same price as in the past and that is with a Childminding Best Practice Club Subscription. We have kept the price fixed at £30 and instead of asking you for more money we are giving you more content in your monthly toolkits.

Here are some more financial tips:

- 1) Think about the sorts of outings you are providing. Do you have an outing's budget? Setting yourself a monthly budget or a budget per outing is a good way to keep costs under control. For example, on a monthly basis you may like to provide lots of cheap local outings to places such as your local playpark or library and one more expensive outing to somewhere like a soft play centre. (Don't forget you can have a trip to another childminder's house too!) Don't forget to factor travel costs into your budget. Try to utilise as many places that you can that you can reach by walking instead of having to drive as not only is this better for your wallet, but it is also better for your health and the environment!
- 2) Set a budget to spend on resources. We are all guilty of spontaneously buying resources but try to think whether you actually need the thing you are buying? Instead write a list of the resources that you would like to buy (you can add this to the end of any self-evaluation or action plan documents you have,) and keep an eye on the prices. Then if you see something on your list in a sale or available for second hand you can snap it up!
- 3) However savvy you are with your spending there may come a day when you have to put up your prices to remain sustainable. Rather than putting your prices up in one big jump (and we acknowledge that sometimes this *is* necessary,) try and do as many other childminders do and put

your prices up by small increments each year so that it is not such a shock to your parents! This way you will hopefully get less grumbles.

- 4) When completing your tax return it is important to know what you can claim as an expense and what you cannot. You can check what expenses are allowed by the HMRC by reading the information provided on their website:

[BIM52751 - Business Income Manual - HMRC internal manual - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/business-income-manual/bim52751)
(<https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/business-income-manual/bim52751>)

We have included this link on our useful Official Documents Links page on our website so you can always find it.

[Official Document Links « Childminding Best Practice \(https://childmindingbestpractice.com/official-document-links/\)](https://childmindingbestpractice.com/official-document-links/)

Childminding Best Practice Club News

The Childminding Best Practice Club Packs have been upgraded to 'Toolkits' and we have been getting lots of lovely reviews:

'Loving the packs so much. They really, really help in what has been quite a difficult (and solitary!) couple of years to keep motivated! I feel really supported.'

'I wish I would of known about this a long time ago, the pack is amazing.'

'There's lots more included than previously . . . Is so much better, so many more areas you are covering which helps less experienced, but also experienced childminders, like me, thanks for that, much appreciated'
Karen

'Just want to say thank you for the all the great packs and information that you have provided. Everything is so useful and up to date,' Natasha

If you are not yet a member and would like to find out more about the club you can visit our [Childminding Best Practice Website](https://childmindingbestpractice.com) (<https://childmindingbestpractice.com>) for a list of what is coming up in the next toolkit or our [Kidstogo](https://www.kidstogo.co.uk/childminders/bestpracticeclub.html) (<https://www.kidstogo.co.uk/childminders/bestpracticeclub.html>) website for more information and to join up.



Doing Science with Children (with added dash of the COEL) by Amanda Goode

As an Early Years provider, science does not have to be scary or complicated, or even labelled as 'science'. It's all about experimenting. I have seen two types of 'science experiments' on the internet. The first is usually labelled 'science' and can look impressive and/or entertaining, but there is little discussion about what is going on and there is very little opportunity for input from the child, who simply observes.

The second is almost part of life, (and this is where the characteristics of effective learning (COEL) come in) – an encouragement of a child's natural curiosity, where they are allowed, encouraged and helped to test their

ideas. For very young children, almost anything can be an experiment – What does that taste like? Which toys can I throw a long way? What happens if I do this?

In your setting, you can either follow a child’s natural curiosity, or you can introduce themes yourself, but allow and help the child to be in charge of how the ‘experiment’ goes. The stages of an ‘experiment’ with children could be:

- Talk about **what we already know** about the subject.
- Encourage the children to ask a question and talk about **what we want to find out**.
- If the child is capable of understanding, talk about how when we test things. We usually **make sure only one thing is different between the things we are testing** so we know that *that* is what is making different things happen or not (for example, have different objects to try and roll down a slope but use the same slope each time.)
- **Make a prediction**. Encourage the children to say what they think the answer to the question will be – what will happen and why.
- **Test the prediction**. Help the children decide how they will test their idea and how they know if they are right (roll all of the objects at the same time) and how they know if they are right (if we are right, the round shapes will get to the bottom first).
- **Do the experiment**. Following the children’s plan and **observe what is happens**.
- **Talk about what the experiment showed us**, whether our prediction was right, and if we have changed what we think the answer to our question should be.
- **Extend the experiment**. If the experiment didn’t work, is there a better or different way to do it? Can you test something else (make the slope steeper?).

Remember, nothing is a stupid idea – if a child thinks that a red car will go down the ramp quicker than the blue car, let them test it. Being proved wrong is just as important as getting your predictions right. What is most important is being able and encouraged to test their ideas and being able to learn and change their minds when they have discovered something new about something.

Here is a link to a wind experiment that you can try with your children.

<https://childmindingbestpractice.com/wind-experiment-activity/>

Activity Idea



April is a time of very changeable weather. Why not have a go at observing the weather each day with your children? Childminder Sharan Sanger made these weather mobiles with her children.

Characteristics of Effective Learning

Why not have a go at this mini COEL CPD Activity?

[Characteristics of Effective Learning Activity « Childminding Best Practice](https://childmindingbestpractice.com/characteristics-of-effective-learning-activity/)
(<https://childmindingbestpractice.com/characteristics-of-effective-learning-activity/>)

Want to promote the COEL in your setting? Our [COEL pack](https://www.kidstogo.co.uk/childminders/COEL.html) can help.
<https://www.kidstogo.co.uk/childminders/COEL.html>

Physical Development: Using scissors



If you have a child who is wanting to use scissors but finds cutting paper difficult or is too young to be allowed to use metal scissors, why not let them cut play dough instead? Those cheap, plastic scissors that struggle to cut paper are a perfect addition to a play dough set. You can roll playdough into sheets or simply let them cut into the ball of it. Older children can be given a challenge by asking them if they can cut from their rolled sheet: a straight line, a square, a circle, a star.

Forest Childcare News

When one of our Forest Childcare Association members, Emma Cooper, had her Ofsted Inspection she took the inspector along with her on their outing. Here she tells us how it went:



'I have been doing twice weekly Forest Childcare trips for over a year, since the beginning of the first Lockdown. Although I was always doing these types of trips, having a name for them and having some information and resources to hand from the Forest Childcare package really helped. Last month I got the call from Ofsted telling me they would be visiting me within the next 5 days but wouldn't give me a day when. I panicked telling her that I need to know what day as I am out most of the time, including twice weekly for my Forest Childcare trips which I just wouldn't change! To which she answered she would come along should the day she chose be on a forest trip day.

The experience was great, she came to my home and met parents and children at the door, she then followed us to the woods in her car and spent 90 minutes in the forest with us. We did a scavenger hunt activity, then I gave the children their own special gift bag and they collected items that were of interest to them. We then used their objects to do some maths on the rug.

We lifted logs and looked for minibeasts, which children then cross referenced on their laminated minibeast photo sheets. We had snack time and I read a few stories to them whilst we sat in the

wooden dens that were already in the forest. The children remembered words we had used to describe moss the week before and told the inspector. The inspector kept her distance in the beginning then joined in when it was appropriate. On our walk back to the car we sang songs and made tapping tunes with sticks they had found on the floor.

I received a really lovely, complimentary Inspection Report from her saying how much she could see the children were enjoying being in the forest and how much learning the children were doing whilst in the outdoors. She also said she could see my commitment and love of being there too! She thanked me for letting her experience the Forest Childcare trip with me.'

Join the Forest Childcare Association to benefit your children and help promote your setting.

<https://www.kidstogo.co.uk/childminders/forestchildcare.html>

Forest Childcare in Spring

Go to the same place at least once a week and see if the children can spot what is different from last week. Is anything new growing? Is the weather different? Are there any new noises? Are any birds or animals you see behaving differently?



EYFS Paperwork, Policy and Legislation News

Covid News: In case you missed it there is good news. The DfE has said that childminders can now work from home if a person living with them with COVID symptoms, or a positive test avoids contact with the children at the setting. They also shared the following additional guidance:

- 'Where possible, use separate toilet and handwashing facilities. If this is not possible, maintain extra cleaning and hygiene routines, particularly after the person has used the facilities.
- Tell parents and carers of the children attending the setting, and any assistants, about the person who has tested positive or has COVID-19 symptoms, as soon as reasonably possible.
- Reduce the spread of COVID-19 with open windows and extra cleaning.
- Make sure your risk assessment includes how you will make sure children and adults are safe.
- You can still also use alternative places to childmind such as other childminders' houses, where possible.'

Source: Ofsted Childcare Registration Facebook Page

Updated Significant Events Guidance: Ofsted has published amended guidance about things you need to inform them about, such as a change of address or changes to your health which may affect your ability to work. You can find the guidance here: [Childcare: significant events to notify Ofsted about - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-significant-events-to-notify-ofsted-about?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=a52eec1f-d0ff-4395-93ee-c0f7baf49c5c&utm_content=immediately&dm_i=6L45,H7H0,1GOVRM,23HL3,1) (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/childcare-significant-events-to-notify-ofsted-about?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=a52eec1f-d0ff-4395-93ee-c0f7baf49c5c&utm_content=immediately&dm_i=6L45,H7H0,1GOVRM,23HL3,1)

Food Allergy Training: If you have not done any food allergy and intolerance training since before 16 September 2020 then the Food Standards agency recommends you refresh your training as changes have been made due to changes in legislation. They have a FREE course which you can access via their web-site at [Food Standards Agency food allergy online training](https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/?msclkid=899b304fa60011ec8c6342a58c7aec83) (<https://allergytraining.food.gov.uk/?msclkid=899b304fa60011ec8c6342a58c7aec83>)

Ofsted Focus on Early Years: Ofsted's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman, made a speech at the Nursery World Business summit 2022 during which she spoke about things like (but not limited to,) the revised EYFS, the impact of COVID on children and communication and language. She also spoke about Ofsted's new focus on the Early Years, saying *'So we've chosen to have a specific strategic focus on the early years in our next 5 years. We think it's the area in which our work can have the most impact. Our curriculum reviews in schools have helped developed conceptions of high-quality education in different subjects. And we would like to do what we can to build the same level of evidence for early years.'* You can read her full speech here: [Amanda Spielman at the Nursery World business summit 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielman-at-the-nursery-world-business-summit-2022?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=afa7ef13-8152-41d1-a399-fd7f53c9c94d&utm_content=daily) (https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/amanda-spielman-at-the-nursery-world-business-summit-2022?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=afa7ef13-8152-41d1-a399-fd7f53c9c94d&utm_content=daily)

Updates

This is a long section this time as although we took over running Kids To Go and Childminding Best Practice in January we have been working behind the scenes for a lot longer, starting to update all the Kids To Go products and services.

We updated several products in the Autumn last year so that they remain in line with current legislation. They are:

Ultimate Childminding Checklist. This has been fully updated to reflect the changes to the EYFS so if you have the latest version, you can be assured that it is completely up to date.

Guided Self Evaluation: This has been updated to reflect the changes to the EYFS and the Early Years Inspection Handbook. There is also a BRAND NEW Guided Self Evaluation workbook for those of you that want to use it as a useful tool to help you complete and record continuous self-evaluation. After customer feedback we have also introduced another BRAND NEW document which sets out the most useful questions to consider when doing a self-evaluation. This is designed for people who just want to do a very quick self-evaluation (for example if they have an Ofsted Inspection imminent) or just don't know where to start!

Age 2 Progress Check Pack: This has been fully updated to reflect the September 2021 changes to the EYFS and make the format compatible with our BRAND NEW product, 'Super Summative Assessment and Gap Tracker Kit.'

We are continuing to update all the Kids To Go products which we inherited when we took over in January, including:

Childminding Best Practice Club: Members of the Childminding Best Practice Club will have noticed a big change in the monthly packs which we are now calling toolkits. They now contain a lot more content including things like: ideas to try out with children under 2 years old, full themed planning grid, more CPD ideas to cover all the seven areas of learning, a monthly special feature, printable resources, new dates for your diary and monthly tasks sections and more. Our aim is to provide you with a childminding toolkit containing just about everything you need for the month ahead, keeping you up to date and inspired.

Contracts and Policies

For those of you who have the current pack, the contract has been fully updated to be a much more robust and comprehensive document. If you have bought this pack in the past and would like an updated contact document, please email us at jennifer@kidstogo.co.uk

However, the Contract, Policies and Forms Pack in its current format is going to be retired and new packs with more content and completely updated tools are going to be launched shortly. Please keep an eye on the weekly newsletters for more information about this.

Forest Childcare Association

The logo and Facebook Page have been updated. More updates will follow.

New Web-site coming Soon . . .

We have a brand new Kids To Go website currently in development. This will be more user friendly than the current website and will have more options for how you pay for your products. Watch this space!

To visit our (current!) shop website for more information about all of the products we have mentioned please visit www.kidstogo.co.uk

As you can see, we are very busy at the moment! We will probably have even more updates to let you know about in the summer edition of our BUMPER newsletter but in the meantime keep an eye on our Facebook page at 'Kids to Go,' and our weekly mini email newsletters.

Bye for now!

Jennifer and Amanda