

Early Years **School Readiness** **Partnership Agreement**



This document is a statement of principles which can be applied across the County, but delivered in a localised way, close to families and built around Family Partnership Zones (FPZ).

- 1.1** The purpose of this agreement is to ensure that services work effectively together using a consistent approach to school readiness enabling children and families to achieve the best outcomes and life chances.

The core stakeholders in this are:

- A.** Health Visitors
- B.** School Nurses
- C.** Early Years Providers (EY Providers)
- D.** Schools
- E.** DCC Care and Protection
- F.** Children's Centres
- G.** DCC Education Advisory Services
- H.** DCC Early Years and Childcare Service
- I.** Voluntary Sector Providers

The role of each of the stakeholders with regards to school readiness is described below so it is clear as to how they work together.

Every service has the responsibility to identify and support families. They will initially use the resources within their service and then if necessary signpost to ensure that families get a comprehensive response.

A. Health Visitors

- To implement the Healthy Child Programme:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/healthy-child-programme-pregnancy-and-the-first-5-years-of-life>.
- To support the health needs of children and families.
- To work jointly with partners on identifying the additional support needs of children and families.
- To complete the Integrated Review and share findings with EY Providers (2 ½ year old check/ ASQ).
- To share the ASQ findings and plan with relevant partners.
- To promote Early Education for children who qualify for 2 year old funding.
- Health and Wellbeing (e.g. signposting to other agencies and services, mental health support, attachment, supporting vulnerability - domestic abuse).

B. School Nurses

- To liaise with the Health Visitors to ensure a child's transition to school is seamless and their healthcare needs are met.
- To monitor the health of the child and make referrals where necessary.
- To work in partnership with schools, Parents/Carers and other agencies to ensure that children with healthcare needs are supported.

C. Early Years Providers

- To provide high quality care and learning for young children before they start school.
- To support children and families as they move on from the provider ensuring that they have a successful start to school, developing the children's readiness and resilience to cope with change and transitions throughout their school life.
- To identify the children and their families who require additional support.
- To promote the uptake of Early Years Pupil Premium funding.
- To signpost, support and work in partnership with Parents/Carers to assist with take up of other services.

D. Schools

- To care for and educate children using the Early Years Curriculum.
- To work in partnership with families to support the children's learning.
- To work in partnership with EY Providers to develop a smooth transition into school.
- To liaise with other partners for support and to share information about a child/family where necessary.
- To promote the take up of Pupil Premium funding.

E. Care and Protection

- A named Social Worker to be based in each zone to work in partnership with other services, children and families to support statutory plans and to contribute to plans around the families for the most vulnerable.
- Support EY Providers to make appropriate contact with a representative of the Care and Protection team for advice and guidance.

F. Children's Centres

- To be a central hub for Parents/Carers and practitioners for advice and guidance around local services which will support the under 10's to reach their full potential.
- Delivery of services on a one to one or group basis to support families with children under 10 in:
 - Parenting aspirations (e.g. adult learning, parenting courses, return to work support).
 - School readiness (e.g. opportunities to support child development and learning, 2 year old funding, Bookstart, parenting support).
 - Health and Wellbeing (e.g. signposting to other agencies and services, mental health support, attachment, supporting vulnerability – domestic abuse).
- To develop a joint strategy with local partner agencies to meet the needs of children within the zone.

G. Education Advisory Service

- To support schools to continue to improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that all children make good progress.
- To support schools in making links with EY Providers and Children's Centres.
- To facilitate moderation of judgements and transition meetings.
- To have an overview of data, understanding patterns of need and progress in children's zones.
- To provide and promote sharing of data between services, especially schools.

H. Early Years and Childcare Service

- To support EY Providers to continue to improve the quality of teaching & learning.
- To ensure that all children make very good progress.
- To encourage EY Providers to make strong links with their schools & Children's Centres.
- To promote take up of funded two year old places.
- To promote take up of Early Years Pupil Premium.

I. Voluntary Sector Providers

- To work jointly with partners on identifying the additional support needs of children and families.
- To signpost, support and work in partnership with Parents/Carers to assist with take up of other services.
- To work in partnership with families to support the children's learning and school readiness.
- To liaise with other partners for support and to share information about a child/family where necessary.
- To encourage parenting aspirations.
- To promote Health and Wellbeing, including signposting to other agencies and services if required e.g. mental health, domestic abuse.

All stakeholder teams involved with children and families have a responsibility to implement the following:

2.1 Early Identification

- To identify areas of concern as early as possible and get agreement for information sharing from Parents/Carers to seek appropriate support for their family. Use the 7 golden rules guidance from the document called 'School Readiness – Information Sharing'.
- When emerging needs are identified, to enable programmes of early help, where necessary in partnership with a range of service disciplines to be delivered in a co-ordinated way, in partnership with Parents/Carers.

2.2 Sharing of Information

- Ensure data is shared with the relevant stakeholders to promote the interests, safety and wellbeing of the child. The Data Protection Act 1998 provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately. (See document: 'School Readiness – Information Sharing').
Remember - If it is in the child's best interest then share - if in doubt, ASK.
- To make links with other local services to enable the families to access the right service at the right time to meet their needs.
- It is important to share anonymised progress data between services to assist in understanding need and planning targeted services.

2.3 Working Together

- Services to acknowledge receipt of communication and respond in a locally agreed and timely manner.
- Children's Centres/Health Visitors to liaise with EY Providers/schools and/or other involved agencies (or professional organisations) to support vulnerable families e.g. Outreach Workers to come into the EY Provision and observe children they are supporting.
- Minimise families' experiences of episodic service delivery by a commitment to a Team Around the Family approach.

2.4 Common Tools

- Children's Centres/schools/EY Providers should share data or liaise about numbers of vulnerable families in Family Partnership Zones.
- Schools/EY Providers/Health Visitors/School Nurses should make use of the common assessment framework to clarify the needs of a child, especially where this may involve a range of emerging issues. They should invite appropriate agencies to a Team Around the Family meeting if they are concerned re child/family circumstances.
- When concerned about a child's/families' readiness for school, EY Providers should complete a School Readiness Reflection Tool to support their judgements.

2.5 Communication

- Schools/EY Providers to invite Children's Centres/Health Visitors/School Nurses to attend parents evening or pastoral times/sessions to support vulnerable families. If they are unable to attend a conversation should be held regarding issues for the family and next steps for the child.
- Schools/EY Providers and Children's Centres could lead annual moderation events and hold individual discussion meetings regarding the children going into school. This is in addition to a member of school staff visiting to meet the children in the EY Provision as part of transition.
- EY Providers to highlight children of concern to their local Health Visitors/Children's Centres - use the 'Diagram of Interagency Roles'.

2.6 Implementing this agreement

- All local EY Providers and teams who are partners to this agreement must ensure its implementation. The effectiveness of the school readiness strategy and the local partnership agreements will be monitored as part of the function of local Family Partnership Zone Boards.
- If you feel that this agreement has not been followed or are concerned about how partnership working is happening, please contact your senior local leader for the specific service involved to resolve issues in the first instance e.g. Head Teacher, Children's Centre Cluster Manager, Early Years Provider Leader, Health Visiting and School Nurse Lead and Voluntary Service Manager. If this cannot be resolved through local measures, please refer to the relevant services' complaints procedures to ensure that the issues are addressed.