

Email from Carolyn Terry to Essex early years and childcare and childcare providers

From: Free Entitlement Funding Queries <FEEEQueries@essex.gov.uk>

Sent: 03 September 2021 17:49

Subject: Please Read - Covid-19 Update 3 September 2021

Dear All

I just wanted to write and welcome you all to the Autumn 2021 term.

For those of you that have been off over the summer break I hope you have been able to spend quality time with family and friends and that for those of you that have stayed open you and your staff have been able to get some time off to rest and spend time with family and friends too.

Let's hope that this term will start to bring everyone closer to a more stable, business as usual period. Of course, infection control measures still remain incredibly important, and your risk assessments will continue to be dynamic documents, but hopefully the changes to contact tracing, social distancing and bubble management will provide a much welcome relief.

You may have picked up that the Queen's Platinum Jubilee has added an 'extra' bank holiday on Thursday 2 June 2022 to supplement the already 'moved' usual late May bank holiday to Friday 3rd June. As both of these dates fall into the summer half term break the summer term will now end on **Thursday 21 July 2022**, instead of the previous end of term date of Friday 22 July 2022 – this change has been updated on the Funding portal.

You will have seen the news around the evacuation of families from Afghanistan, some of whom will be coming to Essex. So far families are being temporarily housed in two hotels in Essex, one in Chelmsford and one in Colchester, before being permanently settled across the county. This is known as the 'Afghan Relocation Assistance Programme'. So far 28 children have arrived in the county. We are working with the Essex Integration Service to assess the needs of these children, but we will at some point, need to support families to settle their children in early years settings, schools and post 16 provision and we will reach out to you if we do have children needing to find local childcare.

Also included in this email is information on

- A **return to settings** leaflet for parents from Public Health England
- Early Years and Childcare Parents Childcare Sufficiency Survey
- Attendance data collection for Autumn term
- Neurodevelopment Survey
- Updates from the DfE
- Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak
- Vaccine Communication toolkit
- Reminder that from the next Comms, we will be reverting to latest Ofsted email address download to share information

Please find attached a **return to settings leaflet for parents**. Public Health England has published a series of resources to help keep parents informed as their children return to education settings. The [leaflet](#), entitled

“Taking your child to an early years setting: information for parents”, outlines the importance of children attending early years settings and includes a wide-ranging FAQ . Please feel free to use it as appropriate

Early Years and Childcare Parents Childcare Sufficiency Survey we are currently undertaking a survey to gather feedback from parents on their experiences in finding suitable childcare to meet their needs. This survey is currently live, and we would really appreciate it if you signpost your parents to this to give us their views to help us with future planning. The detail is set out below: -

Essex County Council have a legal responsibility to make sure there are enough childcare places to meet all children’s needs across Essex via a Childcare Sufficiency Audit.

As a parent of children aged 0-19 (or 25 if your child has special education needs or disabilities) living in Essex, your views and experiences of childcare and early years are essential for us to understand how to evolve our plans. We also want to hear from you whether you use formal childcare or not. As this is so important, we will be asking about a variety of topics in the survey which will take around 10 minutes to complete. Please click on the following link to complete the survey:

<https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/workforce-development-1/tell-us-about-your-childcare-needs>

The closing date is the 10th September 2021 and thank you for taking the time to complete this survey .

Attendance data collection for Autumn term – as previously shared, the DfE have informed us that they require local authorities to continue collecting regular attendance data from childcare settings and childminders during the Autumn term, due to the fact there unfortunately remains a number of variables, such as progress with the vaccination programme, the spread of the virus and its impact on workforce availability, potential for new variants and the end of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, meaning we are still facing a complex and uncertain picture as we move towards autumn term. In practice this means ECC need to collect the attendance data on a monthly basis as follows: -

- w/c 13th September
- w/c 11th October and,
- there will be 1 date in November, and 1 date in December still to be advised.

A new link will be sent out to providers on Monday 13th September from the Children Community Development Leads as before.

Neurodevelopment Survey on behalf of the Essex Family Forum, please find attached a flyer for the Neurodevelopment Survey. The survey is being undertaken in conjunction with the work being conducted under the Essex SEN Written Statement of Action and approved by the Essex Joint Commissioning Board. Please can you share with your families. Its key that those children’s experience, especially within the early years is represented.

The survey runs until the 30th of September. When sharing the flyer, the Essex Family Forum would also ask that the following link is also included. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NDDSurvey>

Alternatively, they have pinned a post to the top of their Facebook page, which childcare settings and childminders are welcome to share

<https://www.facebook.com/essexfamilyforum>

They also have a link to the same post on their Instagram

https://www.instagram.com/p/CR9aHgl094v/?utm_medium=copy_link

DfE Updates: -

[Protective measures for holiday or after-school clubs and other out-of-school settings for children during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) Change made: Updated information on CO2 monitors in the 'Control measures: Keep occupied spaces well ventilated' section. Updated 27 August 2021

Vaccine Communication toolkit please see the attached vaccinations toolkit that the Cabinet Office has produced a vaccinations toolkit to help encourage vaccine take up in younger people, including links to approved social media assets. Please feel free to use the assets in the toolkit as you feel appropriate.

As a reminder from the next comms we will be reverting to using the latest Ofsted email addresses for settings and childminders, and won't be including the additional email addresses that have been supplied to us since the start of the pandemic

As ever, we all continue to be inspired by your determination and unwavering focus to do the very best for your children, their families and your staff and thank you and your staff for their ongoing commitment.

We are here to support you so do please continue to contact us if you need support with anything, you have any concerns or want to seek advice.

Best wishes

Carolyn

Carolyn Terry

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Please note my normal working days are Tuesday to Friday