

## Welcome

This newsletter is sent to you by the National Childminding Association (NCMA), a charity and professional association. We believe every child should reach their full potential. Since 1977 we have worked with registered childminders and nannies, as well as other individuals and organisations such as local and national government, to ensure families in every community in England and Wales have access to high-quality, home-based childcare, play, learning and family support. This newsletter is supported by funding from the DCSF Children, Young People and Families Grant Programme.

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## Last chance to book!

Only a few places remain at the first Children Come First (CCF) seminar of 2010, aimed at childminding network coordinators and taking place in London on Tuesday, 9 February.

The seminar will be a chance to hear from a range of speakers, including NCMA's professional development manager, Jo Davis, who will talk about the new model for networks and how the flexible model is already running. In addition, a speaker from CWDC and Mary Willis from CACHE will be discussing the new qualifications framework for early years.

More details, including the programme, can be viewed [here](#). To book your place, please email [Julie.fennelly@ncma.org.uk](mailto:Julie.fennelly@ncma.org.uk).

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## National Childminding Week 2010

This year's National Childminding Week will take place from 12-19 June and we are pleased to announce that the theme will be music, to tie in with the National Year of Music. Look out for more information, ideas and inspiration in Who Minds? and on NCMA's website at [www.ncma.org.uk](http://www.ncma.org.uk) over the coming months.

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## Have you visited NCMA's new website yet?

There's a brand new members' area and improved navigation and design on the new NCMA website. Visit [www.ncma.org.uk](http://www.ncma.org.uk) today to see what else has changed and let us know what you think using the feedback form on the site. And don't forget to update your bookmarks and links to the site as well.

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## Using websites and forums

Tell us about your use of websites and forums for a chance to win three children's books for your childminding setting.

A new survey is now online for NCMA members to complete. The survey will help NCMA gauge childminders' use of parenting websites and online forums and will help guide NCMA in finding the best places to increase awareness about childminding and where childminders get their information from.

Complete the survey [here](#).

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## Membership survey

NCMA's annual membership survey will start on 25 January and run for approximately three weeks.

Researchers from the appointed organisation, QA Research, will be conducting telephone interviews with 1,000 randomly selected NCMA members to gather information about their childminding business. This important research helps to ensure that NCMA's work reflects, and is responsive to, the day-to-day experience

of working as a childminder. The results of the survey will be available on NCMA's website in the spring.

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## DCSF launches new directory

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has launched the new Family Information Directory, which will include the details of all childcare provision available to families across England.

It will show parents the range of providers, including childminders and children's centres, available in their area. It will also offer mums, dads, grandparents and other carers information on services and support available to them at every stage in a child's life. The Directory is part of the Government's flagship information service for parents, the Family Information Direct programme, formerly Parent Know How.

The service incorporates independent advice from 18 organisations, charities and voluntary groups. The Directory will increasingly be available on local authority websites and in other locations such as libraries and children's centres.

Visit <http://familyservices.direct.gov.uk>; for more information.

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## Don't forget your tax return

Remember – the deadline for self assessment tax returns online is Sunday, 31 January 2010. If you haven't sent your tax return to HM Revenue & Customs yet, you'll need to be quick, or you may get a £100 penalty. Visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/sa) to complete your 2008/09 Self Assessment Tax Return. For further help, including a step-by-step guide to Self Assessment online and a bite-sized video, visit [www.businesslink.gov.uk/hmrc-taxhelp](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/hmrc-taxhelp).

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## Nursery World conferences

Nursery World is running two half-day conferences on Tuesday, 27 April at The Ibis, Earl's Court, London.

The morning event, Engaging Parents, addresses ways in which to get parents more involved in their children's learning and provides practical examples and solutions of how practitioners can successfully build partnerships with parents and how this can facilitate children's learning journeys. Visit

<http://www.haymarketevents.com/conferenceDetail/423/effectively-engaging-parents> for more information.

The afternoon event, Upskilling the Early Years Workforce, aims to clarify staff training options that exist and identify which are most appropriate to individual settings. Sessions will include information on the roll out of the new level 3 qualification as well as EYP Status and ongoing professional development.

Visit <http://www.haymarketevents.com/conferenceDetail/431/upskilling-early-years-workforce> for more information.

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## Every Child a Talker Project, Southampton

In July 2008 the government launched its Every Child a Talker (ECAT) project, providing £40million worth of funding to train and support those working with young children on language development. The ECAT project aims to improve practitioners' knowledge and understanding, enabling them to support the development of children's speech and listening skills and identify any children with difficulties at an early age.

In Southampton the ECAT project has been implemented with great success. Jacqui Gaunt, NCMA Childminding Network Coordinator, was invited to join the ECAT team as an Early Language Lead Practitioner (ELLP). "I've embarked on a range of training to enhance my understanding of how language develops from 0-5 years and how to interact with and talk to children effectively." ELLPs regularly monitor how children's language is developing and are trained how to identify children who might be falling behind.

In June 2009 Jacqui helped to set up a group of network childminders who specialise in working with children to enhance their speech and language skills. The childminders use the ECAT principles in their settings and attend a Communication Friendly drop-in group at a local children's centre, where they are able to engage in group stories and are actively encouraged to spend time listening to the children.

Sue Willcock, a local ECAT Childminder says, "The evaluation activities I completed for my setting really encouraged me to focus on the environment I provide and helped me to make the most of every opportunity for talking. The training evening provided a welcome opportunity to share ideas for language development."

Lee, another ECAT childminder says, "I learnt how important it is to give a child the time to answer when you ask them a question – at least seven seconds. I now give the children in my care more time and I think it has helped them. I think all childminders should work with ECAT as it benefits every child, not just those with speech difficulties."

The introduction of the Communication Friendly drop-in group has been a great way to help childminders focus on children's language skills and the interaction between child and childminder is key. Activities such as messy play, dens, snack time, story and rhyme time are used as a medium for enhancing communication.

"The next phase of the project is to get parents involved," says Jacqui. "To do this we aim to use the Communication Friendly Family Project, which provides families with a bag of den-making equipment that they can use at home, with advice on how this can be a focus for language development. Our aim in Southampton is not just to improve the skills of children and practitioners during the two years that the project runs, but to embed good practice so that its impact lasts long after the project has finished."

Many of the ECAT projects across the country work solely with group settings and it is due to the forward thinking and inclusive nature of Southampton Early Years Director, Jill Lakeman, and NCMA Project Manager, Kathy Whittaker that childminders have been included from the beginning of this project. Kathy says, "We are extremely proud of the work our childminders are doing. Due to the small ratio of adults to children, childminders are in an ideal position to spend quality time listening and encouraging the development of good communication skills. I am looking forward to seeing the long-term impact of the project on children in Southampton."

For more information on Every Child a Talker visit <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/earlyyears>.

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NCMA is the National Childminding Association of England and Wales. NCMA is a membership organisation and national charity which promotes quality home-based childcare for the benefit of children, families and communities. Charity Number 295981.

For more information about NCMA and its work, visit [www.ncma.org.uk](http://www.ncma.org.uk) or call 0845 880 0044.

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