



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.

Chat to NCMA's Chair

NCMA's Chair, Susanna Dawson, is taking part in a live web chat on the popular parenting website Babyexpert.com. Susanna is a working registered childminder as well as Chair of the Association, and will be answering questions from forum members on all aspects of home-based childcare. Susanna will be online from 12 noon on Thursday, 29 April to answer questions.

Susanna's webchat is part of an NCMA online campaign to raise awareness amongst parents and parents-to-be about the services that registered childminders can provide for children and families. Babyexpert.com is used by mums and mums-to-be as well as parents with older pre-school children. [Click on this link to find out more about the campaign.](#)

NCMA film on YouTube

NCMA's film, [Home from Home: The Benefits of Home-based Childcare](#), is now available to view on YouTube. The film is designed to give parents and parents-to-be more details about registered childminders. A longer version of the film is still available to view through the NCMA website at www.ncma.org.uk/film. If you work with parents who are interested in finding out more about home-based childcare, ask them to take a look.

Promote NCMA's manifesto

The date for the general election has now been confirmed as 6 May 2010, so now is the time to send a copy of NCMA's general election manifesto to the parliamentary candidates standing in your constituency. Details of the manifesto and how to get involved feature in the latest issue of Who Minds? [You can also follow this link to visit the manifesto page on the website.](#)

Letter to The Sun

In response to The [Sun newspaper's article on Saturday, 27 March 2010](#), NCMA has sent a letter to the Editor to complain about the incorrect use of the word "childminder" when referring to illegally paid unregistered carers.

The letter, from Susanna Dawson, [can be viewed here](#). Many NCMA members were incensed at this inappropriate reference and have also written to the newspaper.

CCF seminar – don't miss out

There are still a few places remaining at the second Children Come First (CCF) seminar of 2010, which takes place in London on Thursday, 13 May. Bookings are being taken for childminding network coordinators wishing to attend.

Hear from a range of speakers including Jean Humphrys from Ofsted and Jennifer Robson from the DCSF. There will also be a discussion on the changing political landscape and how this might impact on early years. More details can be found on the CCF website www.ncmaccf.org.uk. To book your place, please email Julie.fennelly@ncma.org.uk. Children Come First (CCF) is a quality improvement scheme for childminding networks. To find out more about CCF visit www.ncmaccf.org.uk.

Working with children's centres in Coventry

At St Augustine's Children's Centre in Coventry the team has been working in partnership with local childminders.

Nicola Martin was appointed as the co-ordinator of Integrated Services at the centre in January 2009. "When I started, I recognised how important it was going to be for St Augustine's to work positively with our local childminders in order to meet our full core offer."

St Augustine's does not have its own on-site childcare, but does have the support of a privately run pre-school on site. It was decided that the care provision for under-2s should come from childminders.

"Within a week of taking the post here I contacted our designated NCMA childminding development worker, Audrey Griffiths, and started the ball rolling," says Nicola. "We sent all our local childminders an invitation to come and see the centre before it opened to the public. The building may have been empty but it was a chance for our childminders to shape the service and be part of the early development.

"We spoke to the childminders about how they wanted to use the centre, what resources they would like and generally established relationships. It was clear how passionate they were about giving the children they cared for as many opportunities and experiences as they could.

"We now have two childminder groups running and have successfully completed a project called 'Exploring Materials' with a fantastic artist, Barbara Jones. The pictures and work produced now fill the centre and remind everyone of the importance of working with childminders," says Nicola.

Elaine Ward is a childminder in the Radford area of Coventry. "I attend both the Radford and St Augustine Children's Centres; the support from the staff is excellent. I attend many of the groups on offer there, including Rhyme Time and the Stay and Play sessions. I find these groups help me provide a wider variety of opportunities to those already on offer within my setting. This enables the children to develop their communication skills and socialise with a wide range of other children and adults. I find the services provided by the children's centre are excellent and working in partnership has given me confidence in the service I provide."

Childminders are also offered evening training sessions every half term; the childminders choose the topic and share good practice as well as the challenges they are facing.

Joanne Evans is a childminder who uses the centre. "The children's centre is very supportive, offering advice, resources and opportunities to learn from others and enabling us to develop the childminding service that we offer to families living and working in the area. The centre has enabled us to develop our confidence using EYFS; offering training for childminders on planning, observations and risk assessments."

Nicola Martin is delighted at the way in which childminders have integrated into the centre. "It has been an absolute pleasure to work with the childminders at St Augustine's and without them the centre just would not be the same."

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 or call 0845 880 0044.

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