

January 2024



## Early Years news, advice and guidance for Square Mile families and settings

### Hello...

Welcome to our monthly newsletter.

Our aim is to share regular local and national Information for families in the city. If you would like to find out anything further on any items or like more advice or information, please contact the Family Information Service.

[EEYService@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:EEYService@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

### Happy New Year!

As part of our Coltale programme (City of London Talks and Listens Enthusiastically) we post Makaton, Rhyme Time and Top Tips videos weekly on our social media platforms. Follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter @sqmilefamilies



2024

Happy New Year!

### Childcare Choices Update...

From the middle of January, more parents will be able to apply to claim their government-funded childcare provision. This will give eligible working parents access to 15 hours of childcare per week from April. Apply for childcare support between mid-January and the end of February to get your code in good time ahead of the start of the offer in April.

Visit the Childcare Choices website to find out more: [childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://childcarechoices.gov.uk)



UK Government



Help for  
Households

**15 hours childcare  
per week for  
two-year-olds**

Eligible working parents can  
apply from January

Childcare  
**Choices**



# 'A Day In The life' of Verity Welch – Early Years Advisor at City Of London



## **My journey to work takes me about one hour on the train.**

When I arrive in the office I will check emails and plan tasks for the day.

Today I spent the morning observing staffs interactions in a local nursery to support the way they extend children's learning and language development. They were excellent and I often feel privileged to be invited in to observe such amazing practice.

## ***"I am currently writing training to support professional development"***

Currently we are developing our training offer so I may research and gather information to put in in the slides for presentations. I have just completed training on supporting under threes and I'm now working on phonics training for the spring term. On other days I'll visit settings to observe children who have been referred to the City for SEND support. After the visit I will type up my observations and send them to the lead SEND advisor so that next steps can be identified.

Lunch times in the City I always take a walk. This helps me clear my head as a lot of the role is multi-tasking and switching from one job to the next. I drink a lot of coffee over the day and keep telling myself that I must stop!

Sometimes there are team meetings or online training to attend, For example I need to keep up to date with DFE information and share this with our Family Information Officers for both social media and website updates.

This term we are producing a new Coltale 'family learning' book, so there has been time spent gathering submissions from our settings and parents to send the illustrator for design.

Over the year I've been visiting settings to complete leadership and management and SEND audits. The information I gather is put into a report to support us in evaluating quality /Impact and identifying next steps.

Each week we also produce Coltale Top Tips, Makaton and Rhyme Time videos to put on social media platforms. I need to ensure that the content is sent to the FIS Officer so that the films can be created on time each week.

I work closely with our wonderful libraries and enjoy visiting their Story and Rhyme Times. I was even asked to present the summer reading scheme winners with a cuddly Coltale toy this year. Last year I judged their amazing colouring-in competition.

One my roles is to also support The Healthy Early Years award in settings. I was privileged to work alongside Aldgate Children's Centre Manager earlier in the term to approve their submission for a Gold award! I'm a director of LEAF (Local Authority Advisors Forum) which works with other London authorities to share good practice.

After my day finishes I might update the LEAF website or self study for a SEND course which I'm currently completing.

## ***"My happiest moments are spending time in settings"***

I've been working in education for over 25 years. Most of this time has been teaching or leading Early Years in schools, Children's centres and Private, Voluntary and Independent Settings. I've also worked in local authority and private consultancy roles in London and internationally. Each time I visit our City providers I am reminded of how hard our managers and practitioners work. We have some amazing Early Years practice in our Square Mile and Children's Centres.

My happiest moments are spending time in settings, catching up with practitioners, managers and playing with children. Last term I created a volcano in the sand with a child I was meant to be observing. It which was definitely one of my proudest moments!

I'm privileged in this role to be able to work from home when I have administrative tasks to catch up on. This gives me much needed time to complete tasks such as this newsletter, write case studies, reports and research ideas to add into our training.

# Coltale's Third Book! Home Learning Ideas.

If your child attends an Early Years setting they will be bringing home a book called "A Year with Coltale" this month.

These are home learning ideas inspired by the staff who work for the libraries, local authority, schools, speech therapists, educational psychologists and Early Years settings the City of London.

Well done everyone involved. There's even several stickers that your child can enjoy!



## Coltale's tip for New Year!

Playing games like Peek-a-Boo and Ring A Ring O' Roses are evidence and relationship based strategies to target connecting, copying, interacting and imitating. These are all cornerstone pieces of helping a toddler learn to communicate!



## Stay Winter Strong

For some Londoners, Flu or COVID-19 can be very dangerous and even life-threatening. Flu and COVID vaccines reduce the risk of serious illness in colder months. Find out if you're eligible by clicking the link below:

<http://nhs.uk/seasonalvaccinations>



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