



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Brilliant transitions for all

Information for Families supporting the transition
from home into Early Years education.



Contents

What is a Preschool	3
What is a Nursery	4
What is a registered Childminder	5
Local Authority role in Early Years education and care	8
Help To pay for your Early Years education and care	9
Acknowledging your own feelings	11
What is a key person	12
The foundation Years	13
How you can support your child	15
Book sharing:	16
Nursery Rhymes:	17
The developmental benefits attached to nursery rhymes	18
What to expect in the settling in process	21
Foster carers and looked after children	23
Home Learning Environment	25
Concerned about your child	28
Developmental support for you and your child	30
Co production	31
Home Visits	32
Progress Check at age 2	34
Caring for your child's teeth	35
Where to go to get more help	37

Families choose Early Years education and care for several reasons. You might be looking to return to work, starting a job, seeking employment, undertake training, or taking some time for yourself. Maybe you want your child to socialise and make friends and develop their independence away from home. Whatever the reason choosing the right Early Years education and care is an important decision for you to make. Whoever cares for your child will have a huge influence on them during the most impressionable years of their life. The thought of handing over your little one to a relative stranger is likely to make you feel a little anxious, this is perfectly usual. Let us guide and support you through the transitions from home into Early Years education, so that your child can have the best start.

What is a Preschool

Pre-schools offer care for young children to learn, develop and play. They provide care for children aged 2 years until they start school) which is divided into multiple daily sessions to fit around each family's needs.

Sessions can be 3 hours in a morning or afternoon during term time only. They usually open from 9am till 3pm. Some pre-schools offer extended sessions or lunch clubs.

All pre-schools must follow the [EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school based providers](#).

They **must** have a manager and a deputy as well as a keyperson approach in place to support all children and all families. A key person has special responsibilities for supporting a specific group of children and building relationships with them and their families. They will have a Special Education Needs Coordinator (Senco) to support all children and their families whose child has an emerging or Special Education Need or Disability (SEND) need.

Some preschools are a (pack away) setting, meaning they are working from buildings that others use such as church halls or community buildings. They must pack away all their resources at the end of the day so others can use the building too. When you contact a preschool, you can explore if they are a pack away setting or operate from a permanent building.

All preschools are registered with Ofsted. You can find each preschool's most recent report on the [Ofsted Website](#).

Preschools accept Early Years Entitlements from the government to help pay for your childcare. To find a suitable preschool and learn more about funding please explore our [Family Hubs](#) website.



What is a Nursery

Nurseries offer care for babies and young children under 5 to learn, develop and play. However, not all nurseries have the facility to take babies, and you can explore this in more depth when you contact them. They offer places on a full or part-time basis and are usually open all year.

Sessions offered will be for a longer day than pre-schools, as all nurseries open before 9am and close later in the day, typically 6pm or later. They can also offer morning or afternoon sessions during term time; you will need to approach the nursery to find out if they offer this type of session.

There are maintained Nurseries, School based Nurseries and Nurseries that are privately owned. All nurseries must follow the [EYFS Statutory Framework for group and school based providers](#)

All nurseries **must** have a manager and a deputy and must have a keyperson approach in place to support all children and all families. A key person has special responsibilities for supporting a specific group of children and building relationships with them and their families. They will have a Special Education Needs Coordinator (Senco) to support all children and their families whose child has an emerging or SEND need.

Nurseries operate from a permanent building that they either own or rent and do not pack away at the end of the day. They operate from larger buildings than preschools meaning they can employ more staff and support more children and families. Due to their higher capacity, they typically employ a room leader. This is a person who oversees a room where children are grouped into ages. For example, a room leader would be responsible of the running of a baby room, two's room or pre-schooler's room. Rooms are not solely organised by age and most nurseries will also take account of each child's level of development.

All nurseries are registered with Ofsted. You can find each nursery's most recent report on the [Ofsted Website](#).

They accept Early Years Entitlements from the government to help pay for your childcare.

To find a suitable nursery and learn more about funding please explore our [Family Hubs](#) website.



What is a registered Childminder

Registered childminders work in their own homes and offer care for babies and young children to learn, develop and play. They can provide full or part time care. This care can be daytime, all year round, term time, before/after school, evenings, or holiday care. Childminders are often prepared to take and collect your child from a pre-school, nursery or school. The childminder can decide what their offer is regarding availability of care.

They work alone, so are restricted into how many children they can support. However, some childminders decide to expand their care and employ a co-childminder. They will work together from the one home.

Childminders take on all the responsibilities of running their own business, so they are your child's key person who will support all children's learning and development including children with emerging and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) needs.

All registered childminders must follow the [EYFS Statutory Framework for Childminders](#).

The majority of our childminders in Bedford Borough are registered with Ofsted.

Some childminders choose not to become an Ofsted registered setting and decide to become registered with a child-minding agency.

If you wish to explore a childminders latest Ofsted report, you can request this directly from the childminder.

DID YOU KNOW?

Most registered childminders in Bedford Borough accept Early Years Entitlements from the government to help pay for your childcare. To find a suitable registered childminder and learn more about funding please explore our [Family Hubs](#) website.

TOP TIP!



Prepare early. If you want your child to gain a suitable place at your chosen setting and with the hours you require then it is important not to leave it to the last-minute. Contact the Early Years setting well in advance and ensure your child's name is on their waiting list. Make sure to stay in regular contact with them to explore where your child is on the list and when the next likely space will be available.

Be ready: Questions to ask the setting so you can make an informed decision about which setting will support you and your child.

For you to be confident with your decision here are some questions that you might consider asking the Early Years setting when you contact them.



- What qualifications and experience do you have as a manager?
- Are all the Early Years staff trained and experienced, ready to learn and respond to my child's needs?
- Have all your staff had appropriate checks to ensure they are suitable and safe to support my child?
- Have you got staff trained in paediatric first aid.
- Do you operate a key person approach? Can you tell me a little more about this approach?
- What is the ratio of staff to children here?
- What is the total number of children you can care for?
- How many key children will a key person at your setting support?
- How do you decide who is the right person to be my child's keyperson?
- What educational approaches do you take to support children to learn and develop?
- What are your policies and procedures on supporting children's behaviour?
- Will my child have playful opportunities to learn and develop in the outdoors. How long can they access the outdoors on a typical day, when does this take place?
- How do you support cultural identity for the child and their family?
- How will you support my child if English is not their first language?
- Do you plan and allow for down time/sleeps/naps whilst my child is in your care?
- How do you ensure children are safe when they are sleeping? How are sleeping children monitored?
- What are your daily routines and how can you incorporate my child's interests and needs in your daily routines?
- How will I be involved in my child's learning and development?
- Do you enable children to be part of their local community, how?
- How do you engage families?
- How do you communicate with your families?
- How will I know if my child is happy, safe and secure and making progress?
- Do you have a Special Education Needs Coordinator (Senco) who will support my child's needs?
- How do you support children with developmental differences?

- Is your staff trained and experienced in supporting a child with a developmental difference or SEND?
- What if my child has needs but they have not got an Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) what support do you offer?
- Can you give me an example where you supported a child to develop communication and language in your setting?
- Can you give me an example where you supported a child to make progress with SEND?
- How will you support my child to be ready for the next stage in their learning and development (transition to school)?
- Do you provide meals, snacks, nappies etc, or will I have to provide them? Is there a charge for these?
- How do you support children and their families around weaning?
- How do you support children and their families around toilet training?
- What is included in your daily session price?
- Do you accept the funding for Early Years education and childcare from the government?
- Do you engage with Bedford Borough Local Authority and the training/networks they offer?
- What is your settling in process like? How can I get involved? Is it flexible to meet my child's needs and mine. Do you ensure it is flexible in case my child needs more time to settle?

**DID
YOU ?
KNOW**

If you need any further support to choose a suitable Early Years setting, then please contact Bedford Borough Family Information Service (FIS) at fis@bedford.gov.uk Telephone: 08000 232 057 and they will support you.

Local Authority Role in Early Years Education and care in Bedford Borough

All Local Authorities are required to have agreements and working relationships in place with all registered Early Years settings. This is to ensure there is high quality funded Early Years education and care. To support high quality provision, Bedford Borough Local Authority, support all Early Years settings by providing a full academic training offer, so that all Early Years settings have ongoing training that supports their continuous professional development and learning (CPD). We have Early Years teams, with advisors and teachers who can support the setting to ensure the practice and provision they offer all children, and all families, is of high quality. To ensure the delivery of the funded Early Years Entitlements education and care, each Local Authority must make arrangements with settings on the delivery of these entitlements, so that all settings are meeting the legal requirements to offer this provision. These arrangements are communicated in the Early Years provision and childcare model agreement.



To support the delivery of the funded Early Years Entitlements education and care each Local Authority must make arrangements with settings on the delivery of the entitlements to ensure all settings are meeting the legal requirements to offer this provision. These arrangements are communicated as per our provider agreement. [Early Years provision and childcare model agreement](#)



Help To pay for your Early Years education and care

The government helps families to pay towards Early Years education and childcare. To find out if you are eligible visit [Best Start in Life](#).



Universal hours:

All 3 and 4 year olds in the UK are eligible for 15 hours of funded Early Years education and childcare. Families do not need a code for this funding.

Working families funding:

For children aged 9 months to 4 years. Eligible working families can apply for 30 hours of childcare to use from the term after their child turns 9 months until they reach school age.

If eligible, the funding starts the term after they are 9 months or their birthday.

Family will receive an 11-digit code which should be given to the childcare provider so that they can claim funding.

Foster carers may also be eligible for this funding; they must be working outside of the fostering role, and it must be decided by the foster carer and the social worker that it is in the best interest of the child; please talk to your social worker.

If you have one of these codes, you must reconfirm your code through your account every three months to keep it valid; you will receive a reminder however, it may be a good idea to ensure you have your own reminder in place

2 year old funding for families who receive other financial support from the government:

Your 2-year-old can get funded if you live in England and meet specific criteria eligibility for 15 hours for two year olds receiving support. Beststartinlife.gov.uk

If eligible the funding starts the term after the child is 2.

The family will receive a 6-character code (if applying through Bedford Borough) which they should give to their childcare provider. www.bedford.gov.uk/funding

Children who are Looked After by the Local Authority, have an Education, Health and Care (EHCP) Plan or get Disability Living Allowance or who have left care under an adoption order or special guardianship are automatically eligible for this funding; please talk to the childcare provider or email fis@bedford.gov.uk.

Non-UK citizen who cannot claim benefits:

If the immigration status says that you have ‘no recourse to public funds’ you may still be eligible for 2-year-old funding. It is dependent on joint income, before tax, which can be checked on request, please contact for fis@bedford.gov.uk further information.

What your funding is for?

Your child will be eligible for up to 15 or 30 hours of funding at a childcare setting. Some settings limit their funded hours and may charge for ‘consumables’ so please ensure that you talk to your childcare setting about extra costs; these should be written in your contract so, families should read these documents before they sign them.

Consumables charges can cover items such as snacks, meals, nappies and sun cream. It should not cover anything that the setting must deliver under the EYFS. If families are not able to afford the charges, the setting should have plans in place to help families, for example, a payment plan.

Families may pay a deposit; however, this should be given back within a reasonable time, for example by the end of the first month.

Settings may use the funding for children who attend term time (not attending during the holidays) or they can use it by stretching the funding all year round. If your funding is stretched, your child will be funded for less hours a week but for more weeks a year.

You can use your funding at more than one setting. It is up to families how they claim their funding, and how they split the funding between settings.



Acknowledging your own feelings

Leaving your child with an Early Years setting for the first time can be difficult and it is very typical for families to feel nervous, and anxious. Be assured it is perfectly natural to have these feelings. Important is not to be too hard on yourself. The decision to leave your child will be with the best intentions, whether it's because you need to work, need some time for yourself and want your child to play and learn with others.

It is crucial to be honest about your feelings and share them with the Early Years setting particularly if you are a little anxious. They can support you to feel more at ease and can be flexible in terms of their settling in process, so they can meet you and your child's needs.

Parent to Maria aged 3 starting nursery explains "I am happy to send Maria to nursery. My biggest worry was that Maria might have a toilet accident. I told them the name we use for toilet in my home language and they said they will use this name when helping Maira to use the toilet in the nursery. I feel so happy that they will use our language, I am happy for her to go now and have no more worries".

When your child starts at the Early Years setting be prepared for some tears. This is all perfectly natural too. Separation anxiety and a fear of unknown people is usual for very young children. Therefore, there is likely to be some level of separation anxiety when your child makes the transition from home to Early Years. To find out more about separation anxiety, and how to cope and top tips visit [Babies and Toddlers Separation Anxiety NHS](#) and/or [The National Childbirth Trust](#). They can hold face to face and online parenting baby courses that might support you to feel a little more confident with the move from home into Early Years.



What is a key person

In our Early Years settings (Preschools, Nurseries, and registered Childminders) a key person ensures that their key children they support are made to feel; unique, loved, and special, so they are ready to learn and develop. The move from home into Early Years requires the key person to build a strong relationship with the key child and their family. It is almost like an invisible thread of attachment from (Home to Early Years) where the key person and the family supports the child to be confident to leave home and be apart for some time. In simple terms they are the next best person to you! To find out more about attachment visit [What is attachment? Anna Freud](#)

Our Early Years Foundation Stage Framework, which the Early Years setting must adhere to, supports us to understand the role of the key person in an Early Years setting. It states

3.35 Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

[Early Years Foundation Stage Framework](#)

It is important that you find out who your child's key person is at the start and begin to build a strong partnership, where both you and the key person bring your expertise together, for the benefit of your child.

The foundation Years

All children deserve the best start in life. Support during pregnancy and from birth to age five is vital, as this is when children develop the skills they need for the future.

All registered Early Years settings follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework, which guides children's learning and development. The word "must" means a requirement that has to be followed, while "should" means settings are expected to work towards it.

Parents can be confident that EYFS settings meet these standards to support every child's development.

The (EYFS) Framework has 7 areas of learning. We will look at this more closely.

Let's start where the Framework identifies 3 prime (important) areas of development

The 3 prime areas:

- communication and language.
- physical development.
- personal, social and emotional development.

To support your child at home with

- communication and language. [Bedfordshire and Luton Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service](#)
- physical development. [NHS Physical guidelines for children under five](#)
- personal, social and emotional development [Birth to Five-page 20](#)

The first 3 years of your child's life is important, Birth to Five states they are,

"Time sensitive because of their biological factors that enable rapid brain connections, particularly in the first three years of life but continue through early childhood",
[Birth to Five Matters](#)

These prime areas of development are important not just in the first 3 years of life but will remain significantly important for children's learning and development throughout the foundation years and beyond.

When your child starts at the setting the keyperson will discuss the prime areas with you. They will work in partnership with you, so you can support your child to have a strong foundation in the prime areas of development. [Prime areas](#)

When a child has an emerging need it is the prime areas of development that the adults focus on to determine what support is needed.

Creating brilliant transitions for all

The specific areas of learning and development help all children grow, feel confident, and take part in society. [Specific areas](#)

The specific areas:

- Literacy.
- Mathematics.
- Understanding the world.
- Expressive arts and design.

It is important to understand that all the areas are interconnected and intertwined. When the key person is supporting your child within the specific areas, they will still have a strong focus on strengthening and developing the prime areas.

High quality Early Years education and care is vital to make a difference to achieving well later in life, to find out more about the impact of high quality Early Years education visit [Best Start in Life](#)

How you can support your child

Some children settle quickly, and some take their time and the same goes for adults. You may remember your own feelings when you first started a new job, or college. Although you would have felt excitement alongside this feeling would have been some stress and anxiety. You might have worried about; Will I get lost? Will the people like me? Will I get on with them? Will I be sat on my own at lunch time? Who will help me if I don't know? As adults we have had time in our lives to cope with these stresses and we are equipped to cope with change, manage our emotions, so we feel safe and secure.

Babies and young children are not yet able to regulate their emotions, behaviours and thoughts and they need caring adults to co-regulate with them and help them feel safe. Through this co-regulation babies and children's brains develop, and they gradually learn how to begin to regulate their emotions, behaviours, and thoughts. If you want to know more about self-regulation visit [Promoting Self-Regulation Through Play Under Fives](#)

Families whose children are already in an Early Years setting tell us you should try to focus on the positives within the transition from home to Early Years. If you have returned to work, you will have career fulfilment and gain a salary. You might enjoy the time you now have for yourself to train and develop new skills. It could even be time to re-charge your batteries, so when you and child are back together again, you will have lots of energy, and time to give to your child.

Once your child settles in the Early Years setting you will start to feel happier with your decision and you will be surprised how this new situation soon fits in with your life.

Socialise

To help with the move into Early Years education, you and your child might find the process easier if you join a stay and play session or parent and toddler group. Here you stay with your child and can gently encourage them to play with others, explore and play with the toys/resources. This allows your child to have confidence to explore different environments and play with others, knowing that if they need you, you're there! Any attempts made for your child to explore, and play should be praised. It is also fine if they need you to be their side to play and explore. You know your child best and the more relaxed you are they will be too. Our [Family Hubs](#) are a great place for you and your child to socialise.

Book sharing:



By around 18 weeks of pregnancy, a baby's ears are developed enough to hear muffled sounds. By 24 weeks, babies can begin to respond to voices. This is why newborns often prefer their mother's voice. Babies can also recognise other familiar voices and sounds they hear often during pregnancy.

Reading out loud, talking to your bump or singing is proven to help with early bonding and even early language development. To learn more visit [sing and talk to your baby bump](#)



Book sharing can start at birth, and it is a playful way for you and your child to have those back-and-forth interactions, conversations and connections. Talk to your child about the pictures in the books, follow their lead when they are interested in the pictures, they may point (gesture) or hold eye contact on a particular picture. Talking about the pictures in the books supports children's early language development, as the pictures in the books enable children to learn about new things such as feelings, things, people and experiences. Book sharing also supports attention, focus and thinking skills. Sharing books with you child can.

- Strengthen bonds.
- Support cognitive (thinking) and language development. (Immersing children in sounds and language)
- Support listening, attention and focus, (key skills for acquiring language)
- Support social and emotional development. (understanding themselves and others)
- Provides new experiences, outside of their everyday experiences.
- Books ignite children's interests and can have an indirect approach to impacting on a direct approach. For example, reading about growing a plant and then actually growing a plant from seed.
- It supports children's curiosity, imaginations and instils a love of books.
- Books have the potential to support a child for things that might happen in the future or are happening now e.g having a brother or sister, moving home, starting nursery, toilet training.
- Books support children to understand print has meaning.
- Tactile books can support a child's sensory needs.

Here is a book list all about starting Nursery and school [Starting Nursery/School](#) you can request these at your local library.

*Want to access free books then join the library its free!
You can do this by going along to your local library
or joining online [Join the Library](#)*

TOP TIP!



DID YOU KNOW?

*90% of your child's brain development occurs before the age of 5!
These are the critical years in terms of brain development.
What happens in these early year's matters. Here you will find
some great tips and activities you can do with your child from birth
to five to support communication and language [NHS Start for Life](#)*

Nursery Rhymes:

Children will be interested and excited to know about the 'Humpty Dumpty who fell off a wall' or the 'cow who jumped over the moon'. Although this is exciting to find out about these magical characters, singing nursery rhymes has real benefits to supporting your child to develop and learn. Nursery rhymes have stood the test of time because of the way they attract some key developmental benefits for your children. [The benefits of nursery rhymes for babies and toddlers](#)



The developmental benefits attached to nursery rhymes

Cognitive Development: Nursery rhymes contain lots of repetition [Five little Ducks](#) When we repeat things over and over the brain starts to get used to it, understands it and this becomes permanent/fixed in our brains. Babies and toddlers brains need lots of repetition to learn and thrive [How babies and toddlers learn words from repetition](#).



Maths: Nursery Rhymes are a fun and engaging way to introduce your child to numbers [One, two, three, four five once I caught a fish](#) We tend to use our fingers when we count in nursery rhymes and mathematicians tell us that counting on fingers is an effective strategy to support children's early maths learning.

[Why numbers are important](#)



It helps with number ordering too, as holding one finger up for each number in the nursery rhyme not only reinforces that four comes after three, but also that four is exactly one more than three. Nursery rhymes also have the potential to introduce children to mathematical language such as weight, and size.

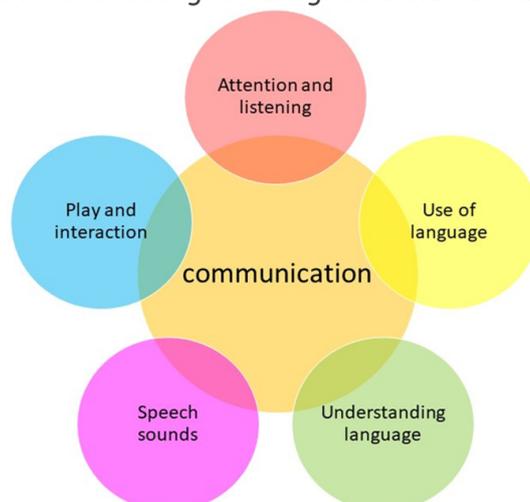
Physical: Most Nursery rhymes will have actions linked to the words, [Hokey Pokey](#). They support children's physical (gross motor) skills [Gross Motor Skills \(DFE\)](#) and (fine motor) skills [Fine Motor Skills \(DFE\)](#). They support and develop children's skills in movement, balance, dance and rhythm. [Singing songs and rhymes with actions](#)



Social and emotional: All children can join in with nursery rhymes, whether they are that the stage of copying some of the actions, doing all the actions, learning new words, singing the nursery rhyme, beginning to learn to rhyme or just enjoying hearing you sing and move. They can join in with some or all the Nursery rhyme it doesn't matter, as long as the child is happy. Nursery rhymes bring humour, and children can find happiness and joy in pretending to be [Wheels on the bus](#). Nursery Rhymes when sung a lot become familiar and they can provide comfort to young children when they are in unfamiliar surrounding or feeling a little unsure.



Communication and language: For a child to acquire speech they must first master (listening, attention, focus) the first building block [Building blocks to Speech NHS](#) Even if your baby or toddler is looking at you whilst you are singing the nursery rhyme be assured you are supporting them to acquire language. Listening is an important skill that is sometimes overlooked when learning to be a good communicator.



Nursery rhymes are also a great way to introduce and increase your child's vocabulary, where else might they hear 'fleece' but in the Nursery Rhyme [Mary had a little lamb](#) Taking part in the actions supports a child to link the word to the action.

TOP TIP!



Find creative ways to introduce nursery rhymes with your child into your daily life, changing your child's nappy, preparing mealtimes, walking up the stairs together, baths times.

Get moving

In the Early Years setting the keyperson will be focusing on your child's physical development (prime area) of development. Physical development is central to children's all-round development. The setting will discuss your child's physical development using these two terms [Gross motor](#) skills that children develop using their whole body and [Fine motor](#) skills that involve small muscles working with the brain and nervous system to control movements in areas such as the hands, fingers, lips, tongue and eyes, skills they need to master control of their body and thrive.

You may have heard your health visitor talk to you about your child's milestones. They identify a significant stage of your child's development in accordance with their age. Milestones help us to be confident the child is developing, and it is also helps us to identify early when a child might need support. To help you understand more about physical milestones visit [NHS Physical milestones](#) and/or [Tiny Happy People Milestones](#)



Get moving to build the brain

Movement and being physical triggers processes that are critical to early learning and development. When children (and adults) move, the brain releases a chemical called dopamine, known as the pleasure response or (happy hormone). This sense of pleasure makes children want to move, explore and learn more. Likewise, physical play can help increase our 'serotonin levels' this a chemical that contributes to our sense of well-being and, in turn, helps children to be more attentive. Physical activity also increases our levels of protein, which is essential for nerve growth within the brain. It helps the brain be healthy and supports memory. Research shows that the more active children are then they demonstrate better attention skills and have faster thinking skills. In essence, movement and being physically active 'turns on' the brain.



DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that "Toddlers should be physically active every day for at least 180 minutes (3 hours)". To find out more visit [NHS Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Under five.](#)



Be a role Model

You will strongly influence the amount and type of physical opportunities available for your child. Therefore, it is important to consider your knowledge and attitude towards physical activities. The interesting thing is that the physical activities that are suitable for your child are also just as good for you!

What to expect in the settling in process

So, you have had confirmation that your child can start at the Early Years setting. You are happy with your choice and have all your questions answered. Next comes the moment for you and your child to let go of each other for a time. In Early Years we call this 'settling in', a time that both you and your child has to become familiar with something new, and to help with this unfamiliarity will be the key person.

Settings will have a policy about this process, so it is important you have time to read and understand the policy. It might be called their 'settling in' policy or 'transition' policy. This can be a time of uncertainty for all involved but if the focus is on the parent and child within the process and in particular going at the speed of the child and how comfortable they are with the change, then you are likely to have a successful transition to the setting.

The setting will suggest 'settling in' visits, where you are likely to accompany your child. Speak to your setting about what these arrangements look like and how flexible they are to meet the needs of you and your child. Penny Tassoni (Early Years Expert) suggests [five useful steps](#) Helping your child to settle in that a parent and a keyperson can undertake to support the 'settling in' process. Every child and family are unique, and settings should not presume a 'one size fits all' approach when they are settling in children.

A range of information about the child and family is collected during the settling in process. The registration form is collected, and this holds personal information about you and your child, all families must complete one. Information such as, dietary requirements, medical information, and family dynamics is captured. Other information is also collected through meetings and conversations so that an individualised settling in plan can be put in place. To support the 'settling in' process forms such as (all about me) or equivalent are completed with as much information on the form about your child, so that the keyperson is equipped to meet your child's unique needs.

Knowing that 'settling in' is different for all children it is important to set realistic expectations during this period. For instance, do not be concerned if your child does not come out to share a piece of work to take home, that you notice other children are doing, this does not mean that your child did not join in today. The keyperson may have been tuning in and attaching to your child during the time this activity took place. It is important the key person values the child's play and meets them where they are at. The keyperson may have been close by your child's side playing and discovering with them whilst the activity took place. If you have any concerns about expectations talk to the keyperson and they can reassure you.

DID YOU KNOW ?

Your child will learn through play whilst at the Early Years setting, in the Early Years we understand that "Play is the vehicle for all learning", so be assured play does not always mean you need a finished product to prove this.

Creating brilliant transitions for all

A child with SEND will have many appointments that the family must attend with professionals, so time will be spent away from the Early Years setting. Therefore, effective home learning is key to ensure the child does not get left behind in their learning and progress. The keyperson and Senco should work together to ensure this is prepared and planned for and discussed with the family.

If your child has sensory sensitivities talk with the keyperson and Senco about what these sensitivities look like. They can then adapt the practice and provision at the setting to ensure your child gets the support the need.

Any decisions about your child must be co-produced with you.

In Early Years settings, positive interactions between children and adults are essential. Understanding a child's behavior helps the key person support them effectively.

“All About Me” forms can help families share how their child behaves when they feel happy, sad, frightened, excited, worried, or angry. Even if a child cannot explain their feelings yet, knowing how they show their emotions helps adults respond in the right way and provide the support the child needs.

The keyperson with the support of the Senco will take on a graduated approach [Graduated Approach](#) to ensure a child with an emerging need makes good progress and learning. The Senco will be responsible for overseeing of the ‘assess, plan, do, review’ cycle. You should be supported to participate and contribute and to the graduated approach.

If applicable it might be helpful to create a social story to support your child with the transition to Early Years. The family and setting can discuss this with the SEND professionals. These visual aids can help prepare the child and support their understanding of what will happen.



Foster carers and looked after children

Attachment and Looked After Children (LAC)

The majority of 'looked after children' (LAC) children will have some form of an emerging need maybe a SEN need too. Many of these needs are not just educational but are around attachments. Attachment refers to a relationship bond between a child and their primary caregiver. This bond is formed in the early years and has a long-term impact on a child's learning and development, building relationships and emotional wellbeing. Through secure attachments children feel safe, happy and secure and are ready to explore the world confidently. To find out more visit [Anna Freud Attachment](#)

Many (LAC) may have complex social, emotional and psychological needs because of their early childhood experiences. The impact of trauma and attachments will explain why they may have some differences in their learning as opposed to their peers. Therefore, it is vital that you understand attachment and know how best to support secure attachments. The [Virtual School Bedford Borough](#) and the foster care team [Fostering at Bedford Borough](#) can support you with attachments around the unique child in your care. Early Intervention is paramount, and this will be discussed with the social worker and if applicable expert help is sought. A successful placement is one where the foster carer understands, loves, and responds to the child's needs. Being available and confident in meeting a child's emotional needs helps the child develop a secure attachment.

Key Person

The key person will play a vital role in supporting the (LAC) and the foster carer. It is important you work closely with them. Once the child has a place at the Early Years setting find out who is the keyperson supporting your (LAC). They should be involved in the PEP's and will be key to informing all attendees on the child's learning, progress and wellbeing. The key person will support the child to feel safe, happy, secure, and ready to learn. The keyperson will be the child's advocate, at the setting, ensuring the child's voice/opinions are heard and actioned. Effective communication from setting to home is a must, all adults supporting the child should work cohesively and consistently to ensure the transitions for the (LAC) is successful.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)

All children who are 'Looked After' will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) when they are in an Early Years setting or School. If you want to find out more about PEP's visit [Personal Education Plans](#).

The PEP will be part of the child's care plan. Foster carers are always invited to be part of the looked after child's PEP. The meeting takes place every 3 months (termly) through a TEAMS meeting online or face to face. Dependent on the child's needs they can on occasion be held earlier than termly, for instance when a child transitions from an Early Years setting to school, or if the child needs more support. It is typical to also invite teaching staff from the school to the PEP when the child is transitioning from the Early Years setting into school.

PEP's ensure education, social services, foster carers and in some cases the paternal family are all actively involved and working together within the PEP. The meeting sets out short term and long-term plans for the child to reach. Practitioners supporting a LAC child in an Early Years setting will also be working within the [Early Years Foundation Stage Framework](#)

The Virtual school reviews and audits the PEP to ensure they are of a high standard and that the

child's needs are being met. The child's wellbeing is a priority due to their previous circumstances, so it is always expected that discussions around this are a focal point within a PEP.

The role of the Virtual School

All Local Authorities in the England have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children and young people.

As part of this duty, all local authorities in England are required to have a virtual school and a virtual school head (VSH) to ensure that looked-after and previously looked-after children receive the maximum opportunity to reach their full potential. The virtual school is not a physical school space and does not exist as a real school building. The Children and Families Act 2014 requires local authorities in England to have a (VSH) who monitors looked after children, previously looked after children and those children with a social worker as if they were in one school, the virtual school.

The (VSH) and assistant head teacher do exist, and they work at Bedford Borough. They have a team of people who support PEP's, and if your child is in an Early Years setting, they will gain support from the Early Years team. It also offers support, guidance and advice for previous children in care and children with a social worker. [Bedford Borough Virtual School](#)

Early Years Funding Entitlements

All children in foster care are eligible for the disadvantaged entitlement for two-year-olds regardless of foster parent employment status. [Early Education and Childcare for Two-year-olds](#) This equates to 15 hours childcare each week, term time.

If the child is between the ages of 3 and 4 years, they are eligible for the 'Universal Entitlement', found on the Best Start in Life website. Every 3- and 4-year-old child in England can receive this funding of 15 hours per week term time. Foster carers and all other families do not have to apply for this funding as it processed by the child's Early Years setting.

Foster carers of children aged 9 months to 4 years old may be able to claim 30 hours of childcare, if they meet certain criteria and it is deemed right for the child in their care to be placed in an Early Years setting. A foster carer must speak to their social worker about the 30 hours. Further support about all childcare funding be accessed from [Best Start in Life](#)

It is important that a child forms a strong attachment with their primary carer, in this case the foster carer. This requires quality time and sensitive care. Too many changes can be difficult for a young child, so placing a looked-after child in an Early Years setting may not always be in their best interest. The decision will be made by the social worker, as the child is in Local Authority care.

In some instances, the foster carers might have a second job working outside of their fostering role, and require childcare, the social worker will make the decision about childcare, as the child's interest will be at the heart of every decision taken. If you need any support around Early Years Funding for foster carers contact [Bedford Borough Family Information Service](#)

Home Learning Environment

Government, Early Years educators, and researchers all agree that the home learning environment is vital for developing language. Everyday activities at home, such as housework, gardening, shopping, or trips to the park or library, provide many chances for children to learn new words.

Consider all the language you could introduce your child to when they help to sweep the floor. Language such as; brush, sweep, lift, dust, germs, rubbish, stroke, grip, hold tight, steady, tip, clean, dirty, and remove. These daily routines offer endless opportunities to support your child's communication and language development.

If you are looking at fun activities to do with your child in the home to support language and communication check out [BBC Tiny Happy People](#). Choose your child's age range and let the fun and learning begin!



TOP TIP!



Think of all the times you can engage your child to join in with you, then consider the language linked to the activity, describe what you are both doing a little bit like a commentator, your child will begin to understand the meaning words and begin to communicate!

DID YOU KNOW?

Warm, nurturing parenting behaviours were the adult and child both take turns to listen and speak, with each other supports language.

Creating brilliant transitions for all

In the first five years, your child's brain is growing at a fast rate, in fact this is the fastest it will ever grow. These important years lay the foundation for how they think, move, communicate, and build relationships, which are important lifelong skills.

Screen time has the potential to impact on these lifelong skills and on the quality interactions between a child and their care giver. It reduces the amount of time you and are child interact with each other, connect, this can have a harmful effect on your child's development.

Early language development occurs when children hear our voices, notice what we are doing and link those actions to the words that are spoken. Parents/carers tune into their child's gestures, where they begin to point at things that interest them. Although children are growing up in a digital world, it is important that screen use does not affect your connection with your child or their healthy development. Research shows that too much screen time can be linked to delayed speech and language, communication difficulties, poor concentration, sleep problems, eyesight issues, and mental health concerns.

**DID
YOU ?
KNOW**

*Children birth to two years should not be exposed to any screen time!
Health Professionals for Safer Screen times.*

YOUR TIPS FOR A HEALTHIER SCREEN TIME

'How much is too much screen time for children?'



Birth to 5 years

6 to 10 years

11 to 17 years

Waking up



No screen time between birth - 24 months



Waking up without screens. It is recommended that social media/screens are not used for the first hour of the day



Phones, tablets and computers should not be in any child's bedroom overnight.

Hours per day

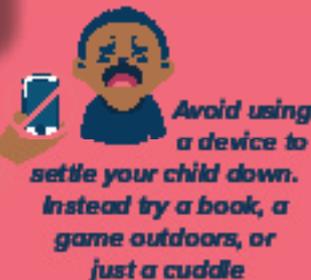


2 - 5 year olds no more than 30 mins/day



Walk, run, ride a bike, anything that gets kids up, outside and off their screens*

Watching lots of short videos is being linked to concentration difficulties in children.



'Try and ensure screen-free time together'



Stay active. More green time, less screen time

Leisure

Reports suggest adults touch their phones over 2000 times a day.

Sleep Hygiene



'Bedtime stories are the best and healthiest way to settle your child'

Under 5s should not use a screen at least 2 hours before bedtime



'Buy an alarm clock so that screens are not in the bedroom'

No screens at least 1 hour before bedtime



Accepted by NHS England Mental Health Leads

'Studies have shown a clear link between excessive screen time and issues such as delayed speech and language development, short-sightedness, communication difficulties, reduced concentration spans, poor sleep and mental health problems.'



HEALTH PROFESSIONALS FOR SAFER SCREENS



SCAN ME

Concerned about you child

What to do if you have any concerns about your child

Have you sat and watched your child and thought that something is unique about them, something different in the way they understand the world, but you are unsure what to do? You could be a friend, relative or neighbour noticing these differences. It could be an obvious difference such as difficulty with sleep, not talking, walking or responding at the same time or age as most children their age. It could be a particular behaviour, perhaps the way they need things done in a certain way each and every time. The difference could also be less obvious, for example, how they respond to sensory stimulation such as sounds, smells and touch or needing their own space and time more than most.

For some parents their children are doing really well and reaching milestones noticeably earlier at nursery or school and physical developments too. But they notice that their child finds it difficult to cope with heightened emotions such as happiness, sadness, excitement and it all gets too much for their child. This can result in what could be misunderstood as being a tantrum.

Where do I go for help?

You feel that you should be talking to someone for some advice and guidance but who do you talk to and where do you start? There may even be something that is stopping you from taking the next step. It could be you are thinking and feeling: "I don't know where to start" ; "I didn't realise I needed help" ; "It is so subtle I am not sure there is professional help available" ; "I have mentioned it to professionals, family or friends and the conversation has stopped but my worries have not." ; "What will people and family think" ; "In my religion we pray for help and now I also want professional help but where do I go?".

Don't worry, there is support available for you. You are not the first parent, carer, friend or relative thinking this way. When you know something feels different... please reach out and get help. In this short video [Something feels different](#) which is available in different languages will show you where you can go for information, support and advice. We hope this video helps you and makes your journey and your child's journey more positive.

Many children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), along with their parents, carers, and professionals, have worked together to create helpful resources. These include the Neurodevelopmental Disorder (NDD) Pathway, the Diagnosis Support Pack, and the Local Offer pages. There are videos [Bedfordshire Neurodevelopmental Disorder \(NDD\) Pathway](#), tips and information on where to go for help and so much more .

The (NDD) pathways starts with asking what your concerns are. There are purple circles you can click on to find help. For example, with Sleeping, Behaviour, Mental and Emotional Health. It then takes you through how to access professional help from health and mental health services.

The [Neurodiversity Support Pack](#) has been created by families with children and young people who have special educational needs and disabilities so, they can help other families. The Neurodiversity Support Pack has lots of helpful advice, and information and where you can go for support and guidance in your local area. It's available to print, read online, or you can listen to it and read it in many languages as well.

Your health visitor and GP can also support you and your child, if you have any concerns. The [Bedford Local Offer](#) can also provide lots of support and guidance in your area.



Developmental support for you and your child

Feeding and Eating:

Your midwife, or health visitor and Family Hubs can support you and give you the advice and support you need. Here are some useful links

[Health Visiting in Bedfordshire](#)

[NHS Weaning and Feeding young children](#)

[NHS Fussy eaters](#)

[CONTACT Common concerns for children with SEND and eating](#)

[Breast feeding support baby friendly team](#)

[Nutrition and Dietetics Bedfordshire](#)

[Bedford Family Hubs](#)

Potty/toileting training:

It might be the right time to consider supporting your child to use the toilet/potty.

[NHS how to potty/toilet train](#) can help.

If you noticed that your child is slower than most children at developing control over their bladder or bowel, then your health visitor or GP can give you advice and support. They may refer you to the [Continence Team Bedfordshire](#)

More information and support can be found at [ERIC](#)

Sleeping

Children need a good sleep routine, if they are to cope with the time spent in an Early Years setting and fully engage with the activities. They also need enough sleep to grow healthy and thrive. To find out how much sleep your child needs visit [NHS Sleep hygiene](#) and [NHS Sleep and young children](#) to explore strategies when your child needs support to sleep.

**DID
YOU
KNOW** ?

You can get support from the [Specialist Nursing Team](#) who advises and supports children and their families, particularly with sleep and behaviours. They also offer support around continence. They are based at the Child Development Centre (CDC) in Kempston.

Co-Production

When your child starts at an Early Years setting, you will be invited to meetings to talk about their learning and development. You will discuss what your child has achieved and how both you and the setting support their learning.

These meetings are usually with your child's key person, who knows your child best. The setting should also give you advice on how to support learning at home. So far, you have taken part by listening and being informed, but the next step is to actively sharing your own views and ideas.

For you to truly contribute, the setting must see you as an equal partner. Together, you plan and support your child's learning and development. The setting will continue to keep you informed and consult with you regularly.

This partnership helps achieve the best outcomes for your child. The setting brings Early Years knowledge, and you bring expert knowledge about your child. This mutual respect is called co-production, where both families and settings work together for the child's benefit.

- Better outcomes for your child.
- Mutual respect is formed.
- You support the setting when they must make important decisions that will impact your child.
- You are more likely to attend meetings and consultations if your views and opinions are heard.
- Expectations are set and agreed, and everyone knows what outcomes they are all wanting to achieve.
- Both parties have differing skills, knowledge and expertise and bringing both together has positive impact for your child.
- You will support the settings by providing them with the opportunity to further develop their active listening skills and parent partnerships.
- In times when some families might feel a sense of (loss of control) particularly if the family are seeking a diagnosis, or under a paediatrician's care, authentic co production can provide them with an authentic sense of control in their child's education and care.

**DID
YOU
KNOW** ?

*In Bedford Borough we ensure co production is in all our work
and we strive to deliver and create better outcomes for all.*

Bedford Borough Co Production Charter

Home Visits

You will be more relaxed to talk and share more information about your child in your own home environment as opposed to an unfamiliar environment.

The practitioners will get to observe your child in their natural familiar environment. Children are typically more confident in their home environment and this helps practitioners to start to gain a good understanding of your child's needs.

They support the transition from home to setting as, during the home visits the practitioners will explore what your child is interested in, can do, needs a little support to do, and would like to do. This information can then be used to plan activities and support the needs of your individual child.

As you have invited the practitioners into your home your child will begin to trust the unfamiliar adults, a circle of trust is starting to take shape.

The home visits will usually have more than one practitioner attending. One practitioner will talk with you whilst the other practitioner plays and engages with your child. The roles can then be reversed. This process gives time to listen to both the parent and child.

As the practitioner has been in your home, playing with your child, this begins a personal relationship one that the practitioner can share with your child when they start at the setting. Children get excited when they hear "I came round your house, and we played with your toys". Your child will value this important event and the connection that took place.

For some communities the opportunity of a home visit will enable the practitioner to meet with your extended family, such as grandparents, as they might be living in the same house as your child.

It allows practitioners to share home learning tips, so you can support your child's learning and development in your home.

Practitioners gain a better understanding of your culture within your home.

Benefits of a home visit.

- You will be more relaxed to talk and share information about your child as you are in your own home.
- The practitioners will get to observe your child in their natural familiar environment. Children are more confident in their home environment and this helps practitioners to start to gain a good understanding of your child's needs.
- They support the transition from home to setting as during the home visits the practitioners will explore what your child is interested in, can do, needs a little support to do, would like to do. This information can then be used to start to build a curriculum to meet the needs of your child.
- As the family has invited the practitioner into their home the child will begin to trust the unfamiliar adults, a circle of trust is starting to take shape.
- When a practitioner visits your child at home and plays with them, it helps build a personal connection. This connection can be shared when your child starts at the setting. Children often feel excited when they remember, "You came to my house and we played." This shared experience helps children feel valued and secure.
- For some communities the opportunity of a home visit will enable the practitioner to meet the extended families' grandparents, as they might be living in the same house as the child.
- It allows practitioners to share home learning tips, so you can support your child's learning and development at home.
- Practitioners gain a better understanding of culture and practice within your home.



Progress Check at age 2

The two year old progress check is the first statutory check that is carried out when children are attending early years education, as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The check is usually carried out between the age of two and three years, usually by the child's key person. The child's progress will be reviewed and a written summary of development in the Prime Areas completed. Sometimes, the report will also include learning and development in the Specific Areas as well.

Best practice is that this check is carried out when the child is settled in the childcare setting; usually around 6 weeks after they have started or moved into the toddler room.

The report should identify strengths and any areas of development where there are any emerging concerns; a targeted plan to support future learning should then be developed.

The child's family should be involved in the two year old progress check at every step; they should be asked to share information from other professionals, including the child's health visitor. The family should receive a copy of the report so that they can share this with other professionals as well.

[Progress at age 2](#)

In the final term of the reception year, schoolteachers complete an assessment known as the EYFS Profile for each child. The Profile is a check of your child's learning, which will be shared with you.

[Early Years Foundation Stage Profile](#)

TOP
TIP!



Your child's prime areas of development; Communication and Language; Physical Development; Personal, Social and Emotional Development is assessed and it is a valuable opportunity for you to be involved with the progress check. .

Caring For Your Childs Teeth

Children's teeth need protecting from the moment the first baby tooth appears. It's good to start out with a mild mint flavoured toothpaste to get them used to the taste.

However, flavouring in toothpaste can be a barrier for some children, so it may help to use an unflavoured one, such as Oranurse, which also does not foam in the mouth: www.oranurse.co.uk

Help your child to brush their teeth and gums at least twice a day. Brushing before bedtime is the most important time. Try to brush for two minutes and avoid rinsing out with water or a mouthwash directly after brushing.



Which toothpaste?

Toothpaste needs to have a minimum level of fluoride which is measured in ppm (=parts per million) and is marked on the tube and the packaging:

- 0–3-year-olds need at least 1000ppm and only need a tiny amount of toothpaste, the size of a grain of rice
- 3–6-year-olds also need at least 1000ppm and can have a pea-sized blob as long as they are able to spit out
- 7+ years to adults need at least 1350ppm of fluoride and need only a pea-sized blob



Which toothbrush?

A baby/child's toothbrush with a small head and soft to medium bristles is best. Some parents/carers may have only a few seconds to access a child's teeth, and these triple-headed toothbrushes may help to make the most of the limited time as they clean three surfaces with each movement.

If the sensation of bristles is a barrier to toothbrushing try gradually getting the child used to the feel of bristles on their skin for example on the back of their hand, their arm or on their cheek. Over time this may desensitize them to the feeling.



Dr Barman's Superbrush 1 for 0-6 years
www.drbarmans.com



Collis Curve Baby Brush
www.colliscurve.co.uk

Is toothbrushing challenging? These tips may help:



Brush your teeth together



Let them do it first – then you



Brush teddy's teeth

Try a song or rhyme



To the tune of 'Row, row, row your boat'...

Brush, brush, brush your teeth. Brush them twice day.

Up and down. And round and round. Smile the day away!

For a child who clamps down or likes to chew, try using a second toothbrush or a safe chewy toy when brushing the teeth. This may allow an adult to access other areas of the mouth. Consider keeping track of which areas are brushed each morning and night so that any missed areas can be cleaned first next time.



Which food and drink?

Sugary snacks and drinks need to be kept to mealtimes! This minimises the sugar attacks on the teeth each day. Here are some tooth friendly food and drinks for in between meals:

- Breadsticks
- Crackers
- Cheese
- Fresh fruit
- Fresh vegetables
- Hummus
- Milk and plain water

It is recommended that baby bottles and dummies are not used after the age of one.

Dentist appointments

Take your child to the dentist before they turn one year old!

You can search for an NHS dentist here www.nhs.uk
<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-dentist>

Fun ways for you and your child to learn about caring for teeth...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owbp5F0K45c>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CFG1k88xtLw>

Where to go to get more help

Who	What
Bedford Borough Family Information Service (FIS)	Provides free and confidential information and advice to support you in your family life. Parents, carers, children, young people and professionals can find the services they need when the contact (FIS). They will help you to find suitable childcare, children and family activities.
Family Hubs	Provide services for all families, children and young people up to the age of 19 (25 with SEND). They allow families to access a range of services supporting play and learning activities for babies, children and young people, workshops to help with all aspects of a parenting and child
Health Visting Services	0-19 Service, provides community-based health services to all children, young people and families in Bedford.
Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum	A group of parents/carers of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) working together in partnership with local authorities, education, health social services, to meet the needs of all children with SEND and their family. There to support you.
Bedford Local Offer	Bedford Local Offer provides information and support that is in place that the Local Offer expect to be available across education, health and social care in their borough for all who have SEND and their families.
Special Educational Needs advice and support services (SENDIASS)	SENDIASS provide a free, impartial and confidential service to parents and carers of children who have special educational needs and or a disability (SEND).
Cbeebies Grownups	Tips and ideas for top parenting.
Foundation Years	Advice and support for parents about the Foundation years (birth to five)
NHS Learning to talk (1-5) years	Activities you can do in the home to support your child's language development. Home
Speech and Language UK	For parents who are concerned or want to support their child's language and communication development.
Contact	Free advice and support for families whose child has SEND 0-25.
National Childbirth Trust	Parenting support.
NHS Taking care of children's teeth	Dental/Oral Health advice
BBC Tiny Happy People	Help and support to develop your child's language and communication skills.
BBC Tiny Happy People SEND	Help and support to develop your child's language and communication skills when your child finds it difficult.
Harvard Education Brain development serve and return	A video that will help you to understand how simple serve and return interactions between adults and young children help make strong connections in developing brains.

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

Për Informacion

معلومات کے لئی

للمعلومات

माहवारी लघी

Informacja

برای اطلاع

Za Informacije

Per Informazione

তথ্যের জন্য



Early Years SEND

Bedford Borough Council
Borough Hall
Cauldwell Street
Bedford
MK42 9AP



www.bedford.gov.uk