



Children's Centres Online services to support families in lockdown

Most people understand that the first two years of a child's life from conception are the most critical in terms of laying the foundations in the brain for future learning and development. Communication and understanding, emotional development, social skills and critical physical skills all begin in the womb and are shaped by experiences, particularly the interactions they have with their parents and care givers. So important are these 'early years' that an accurate prediction of future educational attainment at 26 years, which strongly influences financial, physical and mental well-being, is possible when a child is just 22 months old.

The lockdown and the temporary closure of Children's Centres, pre-schools and nurseries not only poses both a threat to the development of children in this critical phase of life, but it also provides a unique opportunity, providing we as parents take advantage of it. As our children's foremost teacher, we can use this time together to really help them and make a life-long impact.

Understanding this, Redbridge Children's Centres launched their new 'virtual' services in April 2020 to help parents focus on the key activities that will boost their young one's progress across the main developmental areas.

The new service is called **EYPaD (Early Years Play & Development) and Family Support On-line**; and there are four main strands to this initiative:

1. Online resources: 3 specific do-it-at-home timetables based on a child's age; these are birth to 12 months, 12 to 24 months and 25 months plus. Each day has an area of focused activity against each of the three Prime Areas of child development, with a fact sheet full of ideas, links to online resources, demonstrations and 'join-in' activities.

- [0-12m;](#)
- [12-24m;](#)
- [25m+](#)

Website: <https://find.redbridge.gov.uk/childrenscentres>

There is also a huge amount of support available at 'Ready to Learn' i.e. on our School Readiness website:

<https://find.redbridge.gov.uk/readytolearn>

2. 'Live' video groups: For those wanting something closer to the Children's Centre experience, we have a growing range of sessions and courses such as Baby Massage, Baby/Toddler Music, Busy Babies and Great Parenting with Parent Gym you can join for free using Zoom. These are completely secure but will allow you to join in along our staff and other parents. [Live Event Timetable](#)

<https://find.redbridge.gov.uk/childrenscentres>

3. Social Media: further boosting the range of ideas, key messages, information, and training available to parents and carers along with ways to get in contact and receive support, we are now on Facebook and Instagram.

- [Facebook link: <https://www.facebook.com/childrenscentresredbridge/>](#)
- [Instagram link \[https://instagram.com/redbridgechildrens_centres?igshid=39wihize2zfl\]\(https://instagram.com/redbridgechildrens_centres?igshid=39wihize2zfl\)](#)

In addition, recognising that some parents and carers have specific issues they may need help with:

4. One-to-One Family Support: Parents/carers can access one-to-one direct support by telephone or video conferencing by emailing a request to childrens.centres@redbridge.gov.uk

Whilst social distancing restrictions persist, Redbridge Children's Centres will continue to innovate new services to support children and families and provide the very best advice, information and practical support to anyone who needs it.

