



WORKFORCE TOOLKIT

RECRUITING, RETAINING & SUPPORTING YOUR WORKFORCE

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Welcome to the Workforce Toolkit

This toolkit is a practical resource designed to help build and sustain a strong, skilled school-aged childcare workforce. It offers guidance, tools and templates to support recruitment, retention and workforce development across a range of providers in breakfast clubs and wraparound childcare.

School-age childcare refers to childcare provision for children from reception to year 6, delivered outside of normal school hours - such as before and after school, during school holidays, and on inset days. This includes before and after-school childcare provided on school premises or by external providers and is intended to support working parents, through government programmes such as free breakfast clubs, national wraparound childcare and holiday, activities and food.

This toolkit was commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) and shaped by valuable user research carried out by TPXimpact. A big thank you to everyone who took part and shared their insights. This toolkit has been updated by the DfE in November 2025.

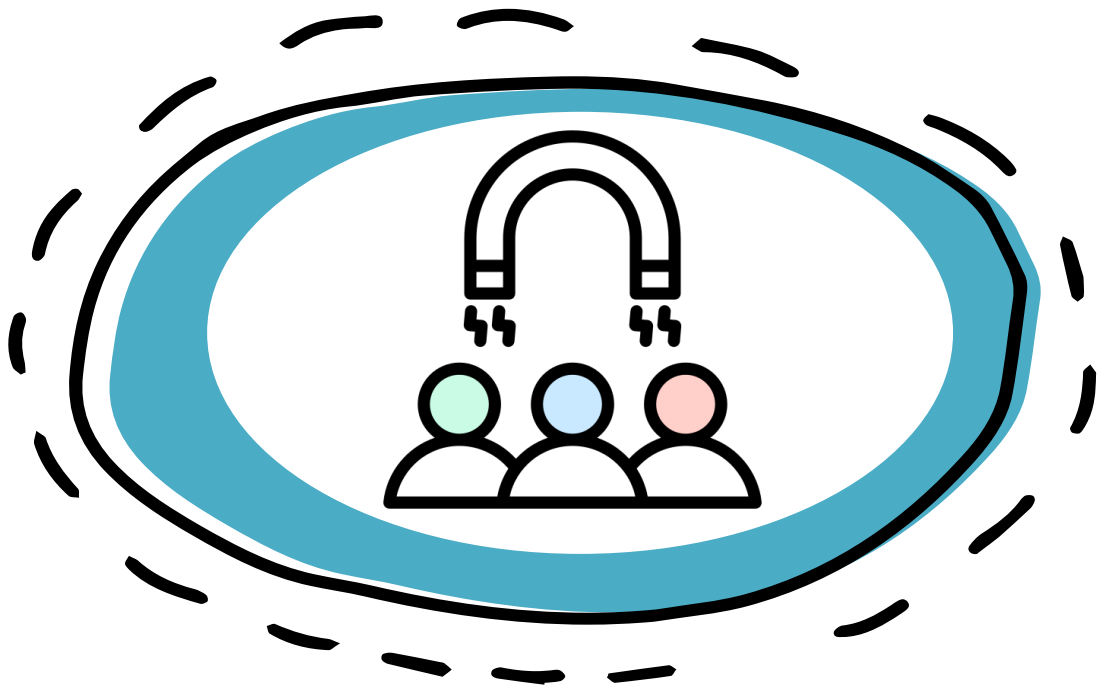
It's designed to support:

- Local Authorities
- Schools and academies, including breakfast club early adopter schools
- Private, voluntary and independent (PVI) childcare providers, including childminders

Use the guide below to navigate through each section:

- [Section 1: Understanding the Workforce Landscape](#)
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Section 1 – Understanding Your Workforce Landscape



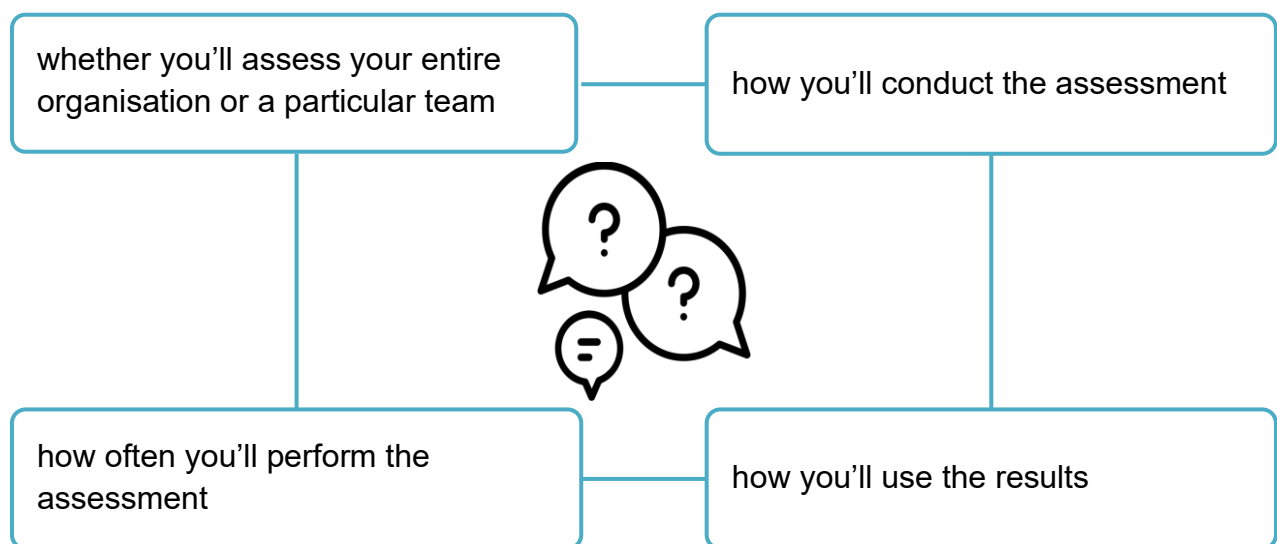
Assessing Your Current Workforce

Once you've identified a need to recruit breakfast club and wraparound childcare workers, it's important to think about the type of people you need, and who might be available to work for your organisation. **This section should help you identify and attract good quality candidates.**

 **Tip:** Some teaching assistants and nursery staff may be interested in taking on breakfast club or wraparound care roles to increase their working hours and income. Before advertising externally, consider promoting these opportunities internally, there may already be enthusiastic staff within your school who are keen to expand their roles. This approach can support retention, boost morale, and make the most of your existing team's skills and commitment.

Identifying who you need to recruit starts with looking at the **skills and the gaps** in your existing workforce. You can use a skills assessment to help you do this.

Think about:



Conducting a **skills assessment** can give you a strong understanding of your team's strengths and highlight areas where additional skills may be needed. This insight is invaluable when recruiting new team members who can complement and enhance your existing workforce.

While it can be challenging to predict the specific needs of children requiring SEND support, aiming to create an inclusive and accessible childcare setting is always a priority. A skills assessment can help you feel confident that your team is equipped to support all children, including those who may need extra support.

You should also **actively engage with your Local Authority** to understand regional priorities, access support, and collaborate on recruitment initiatives. One example being in Thurrock, a job fair coordinated by FE colleges, in partnership with the LA, led to four successful hires after providers submitted their vacancies to be showcased at the event.

Skills Assessment Example

Skills assessments can be conducted through a range of methods. In this example, we use a scoring system out of 5. With 1 being 'employee has not developed this skill' and 5 being 'employee is an expert'.

Employee name	Skill 1	Skill 2	Skill 3	Skill 4	Score out of 20
	Leading activities with children	Written and verbal communication	Preparing food and drink	Working with children who need additional support	
Lisa H	5	3	3	1	12
Ahmed K	5	4	5	5	19
Layla A	2	3	3	2	10
Fatima L	2	5	1	1	9
Liam M	4	4	5	5	18

In this scenario, you might choose to invest in training that equips your team to confidently support children with additional needs. Alternatively, you could bring in new talent with expertise in that area to further strengthen your team's capabilities.

Once you identify in detail the skills that you already have available in your team, you can focus on the kinds of skills you want to attract. This means you can target your recruitment and hire people into the right roles. This increases the chances of them staying with you for the long term.

Engage with Your Local Talent Pool

Consider the unique characteristics of your local area and the types of individuals who may be seeking part-time work. Tailoring your job adverts to reflect their interests, availability, and motivations can help attract the right candidates and build a stronger, more connected team. You should also **speak with your Local Authority**, as they often have insights into local workforce trends.

This could include:

-  people specifically looking for part time work
-  people studying specific subjects who can gain experience through this role
-  local childminders
-  retired people
-  people looking to switch careers
-  people aged over 50 looking for part time work
-  parents, carers or volunteers
-  people who work in schools and could use this role to supplement their hours
-  students who could benefit from the experience and hours being around study

Consider Employing an Apprentice

You could also consider employing apprentices in wraparound childcare roles. This not only supports young people in gaining hands-on experience and qualifications but also helps build a motivated and skilled workforce from the ground up. Apprenticeships can be a valuable way to invest in long-term talent while meeting current staffing needs.

Apprentices:

- ✓ are aged 16 or over
- ✓ combine working with studying to gain skills and knowledge in a specific job
- ✓ can be new or current employees
- ✓ must be paid at least minimum wage
- ✓ must be employed for at least a year. They can last up to 5 years depending on the level the apprentice is studying



Patrick works as a wraparound childcare coordinator while studying for his apprenticeship. This allows Patrick to gain on the job experience whilst also completing his qualification.

“A normal day for me starts with getting up at 6.30am and heading to the breakfast club. The children arrive and we feed them breakfast and then play board games, do arts and crafts or some light physical activities. I return home and turn my laptop on to work on my apprentice role with the company. I support other apprentices with their coursework or help with planning activities. In the afternoon, I am back out to run the after-school club.”

Patrick

Apprentice Wraparound Childcare worker

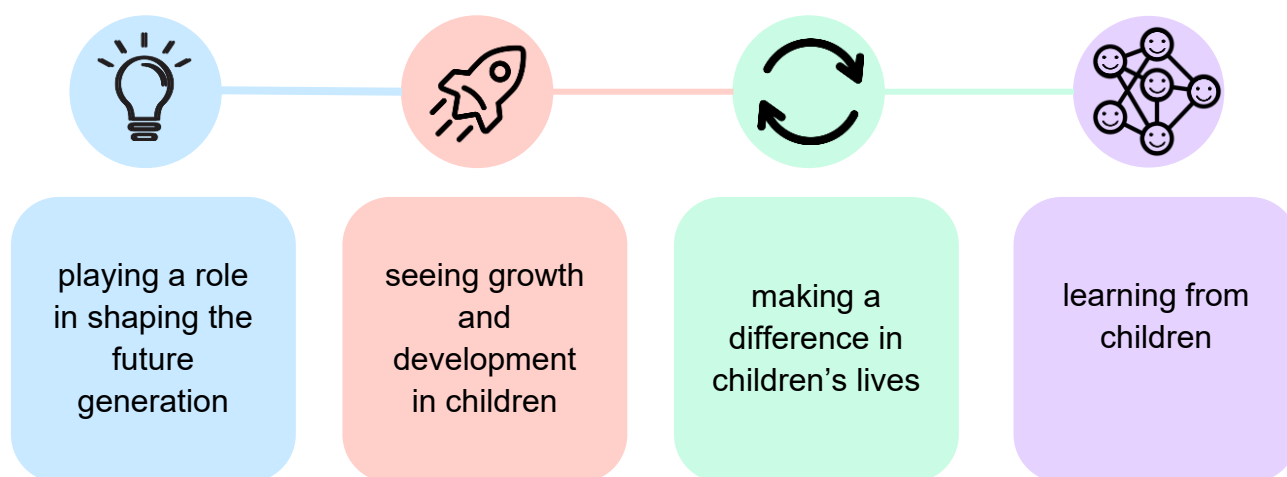


If you cannot offer sufficient hours to meet the requirements, talk to your apprenticeship provider about stretching the length of the programme. You can find more [information about employing apprentices on the GOV.UK website \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

Inspire with the Benefits of Working in School-Age Childcare

When recruiting for breakfast clubs and wraparound childcare roles, it's helpful to **highlight the many benefits** of working in this rewarding sector. Sharing the positive impact and meaningful experiences that come with supporting children can inspire potential candidates and help them see the value of the role.

While practical skills can be developed through training, it's especially important to find individuals who are **genuinely passionate** about working with children. Emphasise the unique joys of the role - like **making a lasting difference**, **nurturing growth and development**, and experiencing the fulfilment that comes from **helping young people thrive**.



Wraparound care roles can also lead to or become **full-time opportunities**, making them a valuable pathway for **career development**.

If you're a **PVI childcare provider**, consider partnering with local schools to identify recruitment gaps you could help fill. For example, you might engage teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, or nursery staff who are interested in increasing their hours. This approach can also uncover opportunities for PVI team members to support the wider needs of the school.

With the right training, wraparound childcare staff can also support planning, preparation, and assessment (PPA) time, adding further value to their role.

For **schools**, combining breakfast clubs and wraparound childcare with existing roles, such as those held by teaching assistants, lunchtime supervisors, or nursery

staff, can create more **consistent staffing** and offer staff greater **flexibility** and **progression**.

Attracting Passionate People to Wraparound Care and Breakfast Clubs

Breakfast clubs and wraparound childcare roles offer a fantastic opportunity for individuals seeking fulfilling work with flexibility. While the unique hours may not suit everyone, they can be ideal for those looking to make a meaningful impact in children's lives while balancing other commitments. These roles are not only rewarding but also play a vital part in supporting families and communities. Perceptions and barriers can include:



shift-like hours



the perceived lack of career development within the role



before and after school shift patterns



lack of awareness and understanding of what it is and what opportunities there are in the sector

Wraparound care roles are especially well-suited to **university or college students, parents, grandparents**, or anyone looking to stay active in their community. These roles offer flexible hours and meaningful experiences, providing valuable hands-on opportunities in a supportive and rewarding environment.

To attract the right candidates for wraparound childcare roles you could:

- Work with your **Local Authority**
- Advertise through **local colleges and universities**
- Share opportunities on **community boards and social media**
- Highlight **flexibility, term-time hours, and training opportunities**
- Collaborate with your local **Job Centre**
- [Use the “Do Something Big” campaign to attract interest \(opens in new tab\)](#)

Section 2 - Advertising Breakfast Club and Wraparound Childcare Roles



Tips for Writing Job Adverts for Breakfast Club and Wraparound Roles

Attracting great people starts with a well-crafted, targeted job advert. Make sure your adverts are **clear, specific, and focused** - clearly outlining the role, responsibilities, and what makes the opportunity rewarding.

Avoid long blocks of text. Instead, use bullet points to break up information and make it easy to scan, especially for busy job seekers.

Think carefully about the tone and language you use. If you're aiming to attract a particular audience, such as young people or those new to the workforce, tailoring your wording to reflect their interests and motivations can make your advert more appealing and relatable.

To help the advert stand out, some schools have involved students and school councils in the drafting of the job advert. For example, older pupils have written a few sentences for the job description, describing the qualities and attributes they think are important for the role.

Choosing a Job Title That Attracts the Right Candidates

Not everyone will know what wraparound childcare is, or what a playworker is. Recruitment experts suggest using job titles which describe the type of work involved, like:

Breakfast Club Assistant/Leader

After School Club
Assistant/Leader

Childcare Sports
Coach

 **Tip:** If your job ad isn't getting the desired reach, try changing the job title. Look at what similar organisations in the area are using as job titles for the same roles or speak to your Local Authority for advice.

Introducing the Role and its Impact

Begin by **clearly explaining what the role involves and how important it is** to supporting families in your local community – helping to give children the best possible start in life. This is where you might want to mention and explain in more detail breakfast clubs, wraparound childcare or playwork.

Outlining a Job Description

Provide a detailed overview of the responsibilities and tasks involved in the role, such as:

supervising
children

teaching them sports or other
activities

preparing
food

cleaning

Make sure you mention any administrative tasks expected of the role, like:

paperwork

updating children's files

maintaining accurate
records of attendance

filling in accident logs

Qualifications and Skills

There are **no specific qualifications** that people should have before starting their role in breakfast clubs and wraparound childcare (unless registered on the voluntary part of the general childcare register). **For a lot of providers, a desire to work in childcare with children, and willingness to learn is more important** than how many qualifications someone may or may not have. It's also worth noting that people can gain skills while they work, if your organisation offers training courses. This can be helpful in supporting staff retention.

List any desirable qualifications or criteria for the role, and any skills or experience you're looking for. For example:



a childcare qualification

previous experience in a
childcare setting

ability to work well in a
team



references from previous
employers

experience working with children with SEND, and in
inclusive settings

An Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Check with Barred Lists, along with references from previous employers, are essential requirements for these types of roles. These checks are **mandatory and not optional**, as they ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in your care. For more clarity on what is considered work with children and why these checks are important, you can read the [guidance here](#) (opens in new tab).

Hours and Contractual Details

Be clear about the working hours of the role, and how it could be combined with other positions to create a full-time opportunity. Clearly state whether the role is permanent, temporary or seasonal and if staff are expected to work in the school holidays, include this.

You could also consider the following contractual approaches to build flexibility into your workforce:

- Extend contracted hours for existing Teaching Assistants or support staff to include wraparound care responsibilities.
- Incorporate breakfast club duties into new Teaching Assistant or support staff contracts from the outset.

Pay and Benefits

Highlight the pay, any training opportunities and benefits.

If you're looking for managerial staff as well as breakfast club and wraparound childcare staff, you can adapt your basic job template to include the extra managerial responsibilities, such as:

- Managing other childcare workers.
- Owning rotas.
- Liaising with parents.
- Differences in hours and pay.

Example Breakfast Club or Wraparound Childcare Job Advert



Breakfast Club/After School Club Assistant or Leader

Please note: This is an example job description provided for illustrative purposes and should not be copied word for word. It can be adapted to suit your specific setting and role requirements.

Job Title: Breakfast & After School Club Assistant or Leader.

Location: Lincoln

Contract Type: Part-time, Term-Time only.

Start Date: As soon as possible.

Salary: £13.50 per hour.

Hours of work: Wraparound roles include Breakfast Clubs typically running for 1 hour between 7:30 – 8:45 am and After School Clubs running between 15:00 – 18:00 pm. Hours vary according to the role.

Make a Difference Every Day

Are you passionate about working with children and creating a positive start and end to their school day?

We're looking for a caring, enthusiastic individual to join our team as a Breakfast Club and After School Club Assistant or Leader.

This is a rewarding opportunity to support children's wellbeing, development, and happiness in a safe and nurturing environment. Whether you're helping them ease into the day or unwind after school, your role will be key in making each moment count.

This role is perfect for someone who enjoys working with children, values creativity, and wants to make a positive impact every day.

Key Responsibilities

- **Engage and Supervise Children:**
Create a welcoming atmosphere, lead play and learning activities, and ensure children are safe, happy, and supported.
- **Support Daily Routines:**
Assist with mealtimes, hygiene routines, and transitions, promoting healthy habits and independence.
- **Maintain a Safe and Clean Environment:**
Keep play areas tidy and hygienic, ensuring toys and equipment are cleaned and stored appropriately.
- **Communicate with Families and Colleagues:**
Collaborate with other childcare staff to exchange information about children, as well as communicate with parents regarding daily updates, concerns, and milestones.

Skills and Experience

We're seeking someone who:

- Has a genuine passion for working with children.
- Brings creativity, energy, and empathy to their role.
- Is patient, reliable, and confident in managing group activities.
- Communicates well with children, parents, and colleagues.

This role doesn't require any specific qualifications, but the following are beneficial:

- Experience working with primary school aged children.
- Paediatric First Aid, Food Hygiene & Safeguarding Training.

Please note: The successful candidate will be required to complete an Enhanced DBS check.

What we offer

We're committed to supporting our staff and offer a range of benefits, including:

- Access to fully funded training and development courses.
- Flexible working patterns.
- Holiday pay.
- Discounted childcare.



Where and How to Advertise: Reaching Students, Parents and Wider Audiences

Students

Some providers successfully connect with local colleges and universities by:

- reaching out to ask about upcoming recruitment or career events they can attend.
- offering to deliver talks or presentations to student groups.
- requesting permission to distribute flyers or promotional materials on campus.
- exploring opportunities to advertise roles through the university's careers service or student union.



You can also look at advertising on job boards specific to students and graduates, such as:

- [Give a Grad a Go \(opens in a new tab\)](#)
- [Student Job \(opens in a new tab\)](#)
- [Save The Student \(opens in a new tab\)](#)

Communicating with Parents and Grandparents

To attract local community members to your roles, particularly parents and grandparents of the children in your local community, you could:

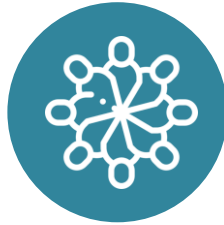
- consider attending or giving flyers to be distributed at local community groups.
- identify relevant online community groups to post vacancies on.
- use schools as a way to get the message to parents, grandparents and other people in your school network.
- consider advertising in local newspapers.
- put up leaflets at your local GP surgery (with permission).
- speak to your existing parents to see if they know anyone who might be looking for work that fits in with their family life or other commitments.

Reaching a Wider Audience

To get your job adverts to as wide an audience as possible, advertise in places such as:



nearby colleges
and universities



community
centres



local Facebook
pages &
Instagram



local family
groups



job centres



libraries

Other online job boards include:

- [Indeed \(opens in a new tab\)](#)
- [Find a job \(opens in a new tab\)](#)
- [Eteach \(opens in a new tab\)](#)
- [Teaching Vacancies \(opens in a new tab\)](#)

You could also consider working with a recruitment agency.

 **Tip:** Consider creating a 30 to 60 second snapshot video to attach to your job vacancy. This can help bring the role to life by showing a glimpse into wraparound childcare. You could also signpost to the [‘Do Something Big’](#) campaign videos, to give candidates an insight into what a typical day looks like working in breakfast clubs and wraparound childcare.

Recruit Through a Skills Bootcamp

Skills Bootcamps are flexible training courses for adults aged 19 and over. They last up to 16 weeks and offer participants a job interview on completion. You can use this scheme to hire new staff or upskill existing staff.

[Learn more about Skills Bootcamps \(opens in a new tab\)](#)

In addition, there are courses that may be particularly relevant for your current team, such as the [Skills Bootcamp for Teaching Assistants \(opens in new tab\)](#).



“We had a lack of level 3 qualified staff to allow pre-school children to join our after-school club. We tried various recruitment methods such as:

- rolling out an apprenticeship scheme.
- advertising on more premium platforms such as LinkedIn and ETeach.
- having a stand at a university.

All these methods vastly improved the number of quality candidates applying for positions.”

Luke

The Apres School Club



Section 3 - Interviewing Candidates



Structuring your Interview Process

Once you've attracted interested candidates and are ready to begin interviews, it's important to consider the structure and approach of your interview process.

You have flexibility in how you design and run your interviews. This could involve multiple stages and include different ways of seeing a candidate's suitability, including a practical exercise either at interview or during the application process. Whatever format you choose, it's essential to follow **safe and robust recruitment** practices when recruiting adults to work with children.

During an interview, aim to **create a welcoming and respectful environment**. Start by greeting the candidate warmly, outline the format and clearly restate the role the candidate has applied for. Focus on asking questions that are directly relevant to the position, keep the conversation concise, and ensure there's time for the candidate to ask their own questions. This creates a more engaging and respectful experience for both sides.

Example Interview Questions

Here are some useful questions you might ask during the interview stage to assess a candidate's suitability for working with children:

Motivation and Experience

- What motivated you to apply for this role?
- Can you tell us about any relevant experience you have?
- Do you hold any training or qualifications related to this role?

Working with Children

- What types of activities have you led or facilitated with children?
- Describe a time when you led a successful activity with children.
- Tell us about a time when an activity didn't go as planned - how did you handle it?
- Can you share an experience where you managed a difficult interaction with a parent?

Safety and Wellbeing

- How do you ensure the safety of children in your care?
- What steps would you take if a child in your care was injured?

Inclusivity and SEND

- What experience do you have working in inclusive settings?

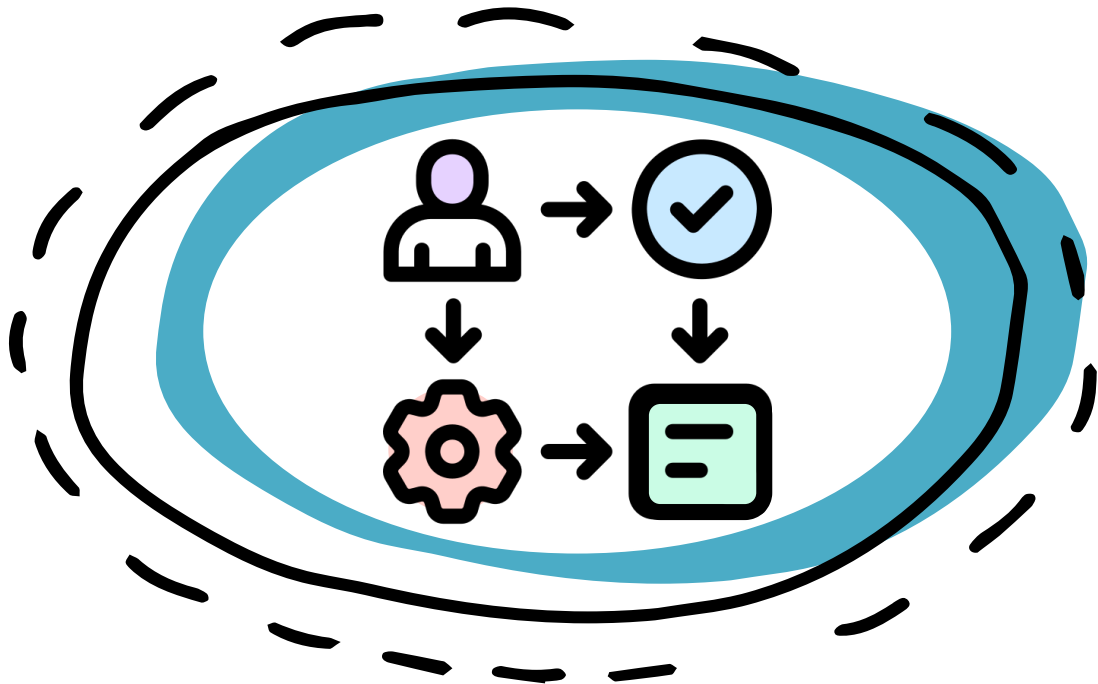
- How do you ensure the childcare environments you work in are inclusive?
- Do you have any qualifications related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)?
- What do you do differently to support inclusion for all children?

Behaviour and Engagement

- How would you respond to a child displaying unacceptable behaviour?
- What does child-led engagement mean to you?
- How would you support child-led engagement?

 **Tip:** One provider we spoke to invites candidates to submit a short, recorded video explaining how they would approach a problem or plan an activity with children. This creative approach allows the provider to get a sense of the candidate's personality and enthusiasm, while also demonstrating their willingness to invest time and thought into their application.

Section 4 - Onboarding New Staff



What you Need to Have in Place

To employ people, there are essential requirements to ensure safe and legal recruitment, which include DBS checks and other paperwork, such as right to work documentation.

DBS Checks

Employers can check the criminal record of someone they've offered a role to. This is known as getting a DBS check.

There are 4 levels of DBS checks:

L1	basic
L2	standard
L3	enhanced
L4	enhanced with barred lists

GOV.UK offers a free tool to [find out which DBS check is right for your employee \(opens in a new tab\)](#). But if a breakfast club and wraparound childcare worker is working with children under 18, it is a legal requirement to have **an enhanced with barred lists DBS check**.

The cost of an enhanced with barred lists check is £49.50 and can take around 14 days to process.

DBS Update Service

The DBS Update Service is for:



employees to keep their
DBS certificates up to date



employers to check a DBS
certificate

It's a good idea to encourage your workforce to [register with the DBS Update Service \(opens in a new tab\)](#) which helps you ensure that they remain suitable to work with children, but also saves employers time when checking someone's certificate.

You can also encourage applicants to join the Update Service:

- with their application form reference number before the application is submitted or during the application process - you can provide this, or they can find it in the top right-hand corner of the front page of the application form.
- with the application e-reference number if you submit applications electronically.

Without the Update Service, the wait can be long, and candidates may accept other offers in the meantime.

GOV.UK has issued [an application form checklist to help applicants join the Update Service \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

Right to Work in the UK

You must check that an applicant is allowed to work for you in the UK before you employ them.

You can:

- [check the applicant's right to work online \(opens in a new tab\)](#), if they've given you their share code.
- [check the applicant's original documents \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

Refer to the [employer's guide on right to work checks \(opens in new tab\)](#) and the GOV.UK guidance on [checking an applicant's right to work \(opens in a new tab\)](#) for further information.

Workplace Pension

It's your responsibility to check if you need to put an employee into a workplace pension scheme.

If you're employing someone for the first time, read through the [guidance about employing someone for the first time \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

If you already employ people, [check your ongoing duties \(opens in a new tab\)](#).

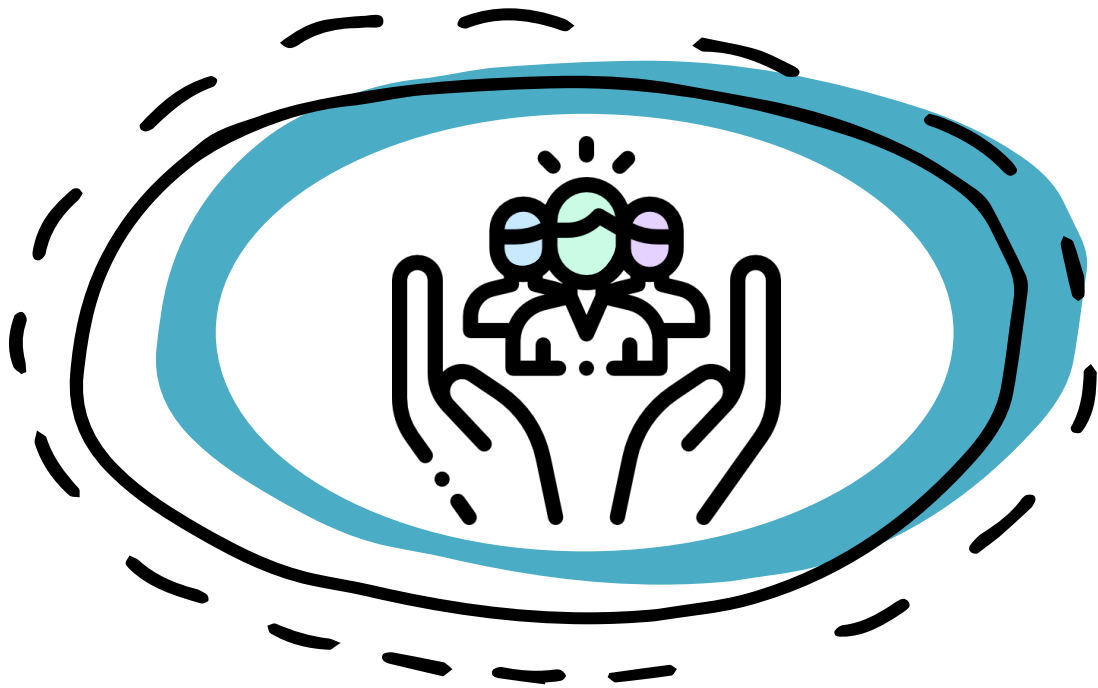
Create a Consistent Onboarding Experience

Proper onboarding **increases employee retention rates**. When new employees feel welcome, supported, and well equipped, they're more likely to stay at your organisation for the long term.

It could also be useful to create an onboarding checklist for your organisation to use, so employees get everything they need and have a consistent experience. Like:

-  Setting up a meeting with them on their first day to welcome them, and give them an overview of your organisation's culture, mission and values.
-  Making sure they understand important policies. For example, sickness policies, holiday policies and pay dates.
-  Providing any necessary paperwork, like employment contracts.
-  Scheduling meetings for them to meet key team members.
-  Arranging a tour of the site.
-  Providing training sessions on essential tools, software, and systems used within the organisation.
-  Assigning a buddy to help answer any new questions they might have.
-  Giving them access to any relevant training. For example, first aid training and food hygiene.
-  Setting up necessary accounts and access permissions for company systems, email, and other tools.
-  Creating time for regular one-to-ones to discuss job responsibilities, goals, and performance expectations.

Section 5 - Retaining and Supporting Staff



Retention Strategies

Once you've hired a member of staff, you want to support them to stay in the role for as long as possible. Understanding typical staff turnover can guide realistic expectations, but **making people feel valued is key to retaining them longer**. Providing **opportunities for training and professional development** not only helps staff grow in their roles, but it also shows that you're invested in them, which can increase job satisfaction and encourage long-term commitment.

It can be good to take time to reflect on what you can offer as an employer, to help staff feel supported and motivated to stay. [This short recording offers practical strategies for attracting and retaining high-quality staff \(opens in a new tab\)](#).



“We believe in upskilling our staff and showing the team their own capabilities and encouraging them to strive to work towards the next level - whether that be within our company or elsewhere in childcare or even a completely different field. We always aim to promote from within the company to show this in practice. We have examples of people who have studied for a qualification in childcare while working for us and now hold a position of management in nurseries and other organisations, and staff who have left to gain a teaching qualification or become a teaching assistant in schools.”

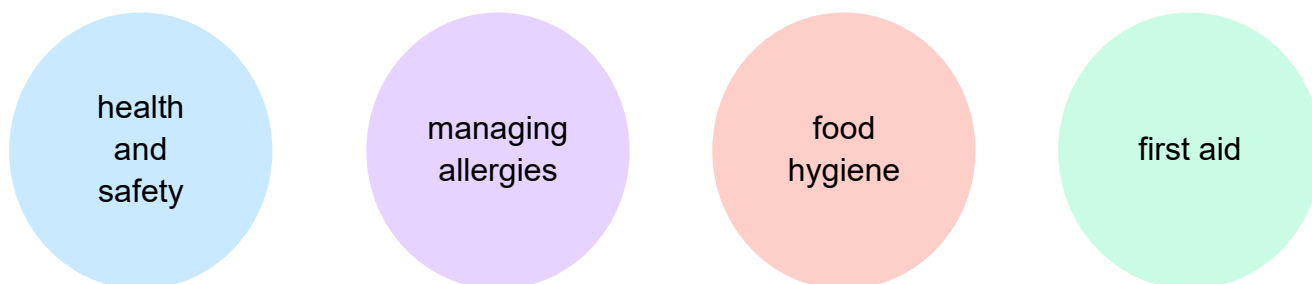
Amy

Rocketeers Childcare



Make Sure Staff are Adequately Trained

As a provider, you may want to offer courses or training in relation to:



The Out Of School Alliance recommends [a list of training providers \(opens in a new tab\)](#) that may be of interest.

Consider Offering Free Childcare for Employees with Children

Some providers offer free childcare as a benefit of the job. This means staff can bring their children to work with them, at no cost.

If this is something you're looking to offer, you should consider:



Invest in Personal Development

Taking time to understand your employees career goals and aspirations shows that you value their growth and can lead to greater **motivation, confidence, and retention**.

Common forms of personal development can include:

- on the job learning, such as new responsibilities or challenges.
- attending courses or relevant training to develop specific skills.
- attending conferences and events to encourage networking and information sharing.
- books, blogs, articles, podcasts and subscriptions.
- mentoring other employees which can reinforce or develop leadership skills.
- shadowing other employees to gain insight into other roles or approaches to childcare.
- knowledge sharing with the team to encourage collaboration throughout staff members.
- developing content such as blogs to share experiences and expertise.

 **Tip:** Some providers we spoke to build dedicated playback time into their working week, so employees can share learnings from a recent course or event they attended.

This encourages active knowledge sharing across the organisation and shows employees that the provider is engaged in their personal development.

You could also consider creating a personal development plan with employees. This can be a good way to:

- help employees assess their skills and assess future development needs.
- set goals for personal and professional growth.
- create a plan of action to achieve those goals.

Personal Development Plan Example

Objective	Key result 1	Key result 2	Key result 3	Target completion date	Actual completion date
1. Improve my knowledge about understanding the needs of children with SEND	Identify and participate in an online SEND course	Playback my course learnings to the rest of the team	Create an action plan to implement learnings from my online course	April 2026	April 2026
2. Increase my confidence in leading playwork sessions with larger groups of children	Shadow at least 2 members of more experienced staff	Look for free online courses on building confidence	Ask for feedback from an observing member of staff on how I ran my session	March 2026	Ongoing
3. Become qualified in health and nutrition so I can improve my cooking skills	Understand the relationship between a child's development	Gain the understanding to offer children the necessary nutrients at mealtimes	Practice cooking more regularly, nominating myself to cook at least 3 meals a week	March 2026	Ongoing

Online Courses for Personal Development

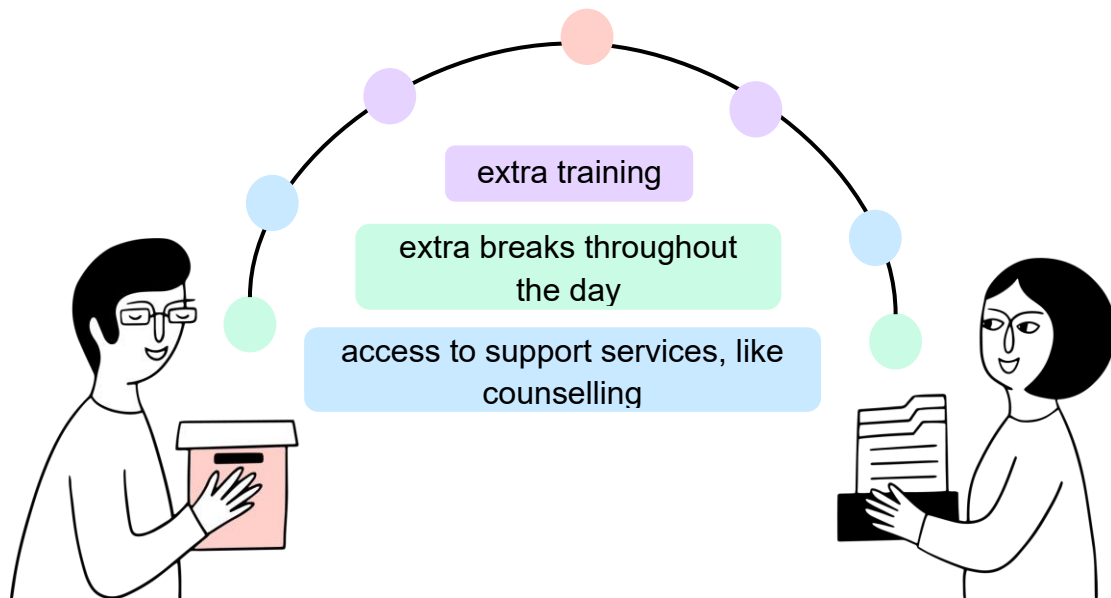
Training courses can be a great way to support staff with their personal development, helping them build confidence, expand their skill sets, and progress in their roles. [This short recording covers key approaches to staff training \(opens in new tab\)](#).

[The Out of School Alliance Academy \(opens in a new tab\)](#) offers providers a selection of hand-picked, specialist online and live training courses.

You can also **contact your Local Authority** to see what training opportunities they may have available.

Supporting Inclusion: Building Staff Confidence in SEND

You can offer extra help to staff working with children who need additional support and children with SEND, such as:



It's good practice for all employees to have some level of awareness and training on SEND and inclusion. Relying on reactive training can unintentionally create barriers for families, especially when staff are not equipped to respond confidently and sensitively to children's needs.

There are **lots of free and paid for training courses** available to help staff gain more knowledge of SEND and other inclusion practices, including:

- Free Course in England: [Offers a free online course to improve knowledge of SEND.](#)
- Range of CPD training courses from high quality practice to condition specific introductions: [Events listing | Nafen.](#)
- Online short course providing: [An introduction to speech, language and communication from Speech and Language UK.](#)
- [Autism Education Trust: Autism Training and Development.](#)
- Series of online CPD units for schools and education professionals: [Online CPD Units | Whole School SEND.](#)
- A series of 10 training videos produced by NASEN to support inclusive practice in wraparound provision: [Inclusive Practice in Wraparound Provision.](#)

- [List of suggested training providers for schools and childcare providers.](#)

In collaboration with Mott Macdonald and NASEN, the Department for Education has launched the ‘**Creative Inclusive Provision (CIP) Toolkit**’. The toolkit is an interactive digital toolkit developed to support schools, private, voluntary and independent (PVI) childcare providers, childminders, and local authorities in creating inclusive wraparound provision that is accessible to families of primary aged children with special educational needs and disabilities. This includes breakfast clubs, after school childcare and holiday provision.

The toolkit includes a section on ‘**Developing the Workforce**’ which you can access here: [Creating Inclusive Provision Toolkit - childcareworks.org.uk](https://childcareworks.org.uk).

Supporting Staff to Effectively Manage Allergies

Managing special diets is a key consideration for any setting offering food, whether this incorporates full meals or smaller snacks. Some children may have medical conditions that require a specific diet, while others may have personal or cultural food considerations. Understanding and accommodating these needs is all part of creating an inclusive setting, and staff play a key role in ensuring these dietary requirements are managed safely and appropriately.

All staff should be able to **recognise and manage signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and anaphylaxis**. Clear protocols should be in place for dealing with allergies, including gathering this information, following emergency procedures, and having accessible contact information for parents and carers. If a child has an EpiPen or allergy medication, this must also be easily accessible to staff.

Some children, for example, those with particular physical disabilities, may require adult support with feeding as part of their care plan. Staff undertaking this should be well-trained and maintain regular communication with parents/carers, and external professionals, to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the individual child. Having the same person to support with this will provide consistency, but it’s important that a range of staff are trained and able to support, in case of absence.

A wide range of resources and training courses are available to help staff effectively manage allergies, including:

- Advice on providing allergen information and avoiding cross-contamination in a food business: [Allergen checklist for food businesses - Food Standards Agency \(opens in new tab\)](#).
- Department for Education allergy guidance for schools: [Allergy guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(opens in new tab\)](#).
- Training and courses on food health and safety: [Food & Health Safety Courses & Training | Safer Food Group \(opens in new tab\)](#).
- Interactive Allergy Training developed by The Food Standards Agency: [Food Allergy and Intolerance Training \(opens in new tab\)](#).

Building a Talent Pool

Even if you don't have current vacancies, it's smart to keep the door open for future opportunities. Inviting people to submit their CVs or express interest in working with your organisation helps you build a ready-to-go talent pool. This proactive approach can significantly reduce the time it takes to fill critical roles and ensures you're never starting from scratch when staffing needs arise.

A well-maintained talent pool can help you:

- **Respond quickly to staff changes**
Have potential candidates on hand when turnover occurs or new roles are created.
- **Maintain service continuity**
Reduce disruption to children and families by filling roles faster.
- **Spot emerging talent**
Identify individuals who align with your values and have potential to grow within your organisation.

Consider:



creating a recruitment mailbox to advertise on your website,
encouraging people to send a CV
and a cover letter



adding a form to the vacancies
section of your website to capture
details from potential candidates

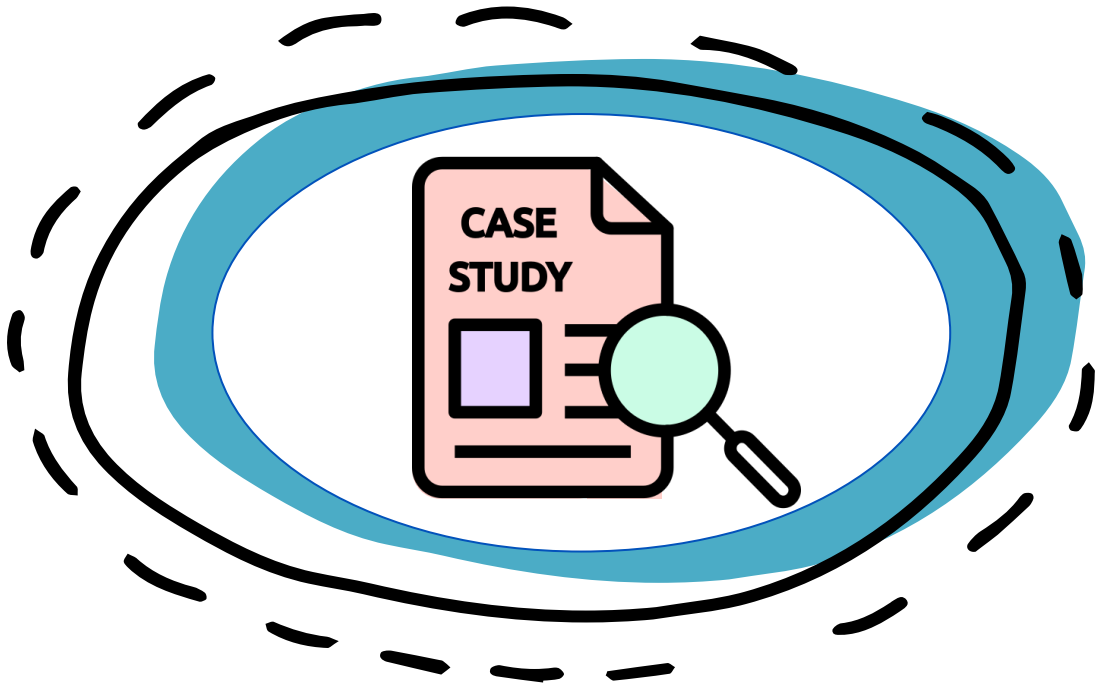


encouraging **current staff to refer people** they know who might be a
good fit



keeping in touch with **former employees or volunteers** who
may be interested in returning

Section 6 - Case Studies



Case studies from breakfast clubs and wraparound childcare staff can be **powerful tools in your promotional materials**. They showcase the real-world impact of your provision and highlight success stories. By sharing the voices and experiences of your team and others in similar roles, you create a relatable and engaging picture of what it's like to work in the sector and within your organisation - encouraging others to consider joining your workforce.

Do Something Big: Real Stories

[Meet Monica - Monica began as a Teaching Assistant but saw an opportunity to grow. She embraced a new challenge and became an Extended Services Coordinator, leading both Breakfast and Wraparound clubs \(video opens in new tab\).](#)

[Meet Bernie - a Breakfast Club team member who's passionate about giving children the best possible start to their day \(video opens in new tab\).](#)

[Meet Diamond – a Wraparound Manager creating safe, nurturing spaces where children can play, connect, and feel supported beyond the school day \(opens in new tab\).](#)

Developing Breakfast Provision: Knockhall Primary School

Knockhall Primary School is a Free Breakfast Club Early Adopter school based in Kent who have developed a flexible, inclusive, and sustainable breakfast club model that supports around 180 children daily. By integrating breakfast provision into both the canteen and classrooms, the school has created a welcoming start to the day that meets the needs of a diverse pupil population, including those arriving via school transport.

Expanding Breakfast Provision

Knockhall Primary previously ran a small, targeted breakfast club for around 15 children. It provided a welcoming space where children could enjoy breakfast while engaging in activities such as Lego and other play-based learning opportunities.

Before the launch of the new breakfast club, the school surveyed parents to understand expected take up, identifying around 70 families likely to use the service, though not daily. The breakfast club now serves toast and cereal to around 180 children daily. Most students arrive in the first 10-15 minutes, but the school operates a free following system, allowing children to enter up until the start of the school day.

Previously, the school operated a 20-minute soft start before the school day began at 8:50. Now, gates open at 8:20 for the breakfast club, and children and parents are greeted by senior leaders.

Flexible Breakfast Spaces

The school uses their canteen and classrooms for their breakfast club provision. While the canteen can seat 200 children at lunch, breakfast proved more complex to manage due to the less structured nature of arrivals.

Children can choose to eat and stay in the canteen, which is arranged by year group to encourage social interaction, or can take toast into their classrooms, where there is a mix of activities including reading and times tables from 8.30.

Staffing for Success: Creating a Calm and Coordinated Start

The breakfast club in the canteen is staffed by a behaviour mentor, a community liaison officer and one or two teaching assistants per day. The school's premises manager puts tables out and brings the food in each morning.

Before launch, teaching assistants were surveyed for early availability, and they start at 8:15am to set up and prepare food. This is done on a rota basis, averaging one earlier start each week. Other teaching assistants start at 8:30 and go straight to the canteen to help with the breakfast club and move younger children from the canteen to their classrooms.

Initially, staff walked around offering cereal to each child, the school now has a designated cereal station which has helped with reducing staffing need. One member of staff manages this area, and children independently approach the station, choose from a selection of cereals, and are served before returning to their tables.

Teaching staff are in their classrooms from 8:30 to welcome children who wish to eat there. Before launching the breakfast club, teachers were in the playground from 8:30 to welcome children and speak to parents.

Senior leaders now greet children and parents in the playground from 8:30 to address concerns that having teachers in classrooms at the start of the day would negatively impact the relationship between parents and teachers due to reduced visibility and interaction.

Investing in Facilities and Equipment

The school used their start up grant to purchase two industrial six-slice toasters (approx. £160 each), which were ordered online. In addition, storage containers for dry food were purchased to ensure compliance with food safety standards.

The school owns all kitchen equipment, allowing breakfast club staff to use the space without conflict with the lunch contractor.

Impact of the Breakfast Provision

The school serves a diverse cohort, including 27 children arriving by bus and 25 by minicab from over four miles away. These children previously missed out on before and after-school clubs due to transport schedules. With the earlier gate opening, these pupils can now participate fully in breakfast club without altering transport times.

Children are noticeably more settled at the start of the day, and staff are able to address any worries or concerns before lessons begin. Some children also benefit from one-to-one support when they enter the classroom at 8:30. The breakfast club has consistently targeted pupils who are persistent absentees or frequently arrive late. While this group remains challenging to engage, the breakfast club is beginning to have a positive impact by encouraging more consistent attendance and punctuality.

Working with Private, Voluntary or Independent (PVI) Childcare Providers to Maximise Staffing Opportunities & Create a Sustainable Workforce

One of the benefits of choosing to work with a PVI childcare provider, is that they can provide their own qualified and experienced workforce to deliver breakfast club provision. Often, the staff that the PVI employs are well integrated into the school, get to know the children well and sometimes even work in the school outside of childcare provision as demonstrated in the case study below.

Case study – Junior Adventures Group (JAG) and St Nicolas CoE Primary School, Surrey

JAG work in partnership with a small 1 form entry school in Surrey (St Nicolas CoE Infant school), for both wraparound (breakfast and after school) and holiday clubs. The 64 children on the wraparound roll and their parents, rely heavily on the service to maintain their employment. The school rely on the service to ensure they can remain competitive within the area and fulfil the needs of the families, as the school do not have the resources or time to operate the clubs themselves.

Partnership working between JAG and the school is key to ensuring the breakfast club and after school provision is sustainable, and the high-quality standards of the team are maintained. Due to the nature of split shift and limited hours for team members working in breakfast clubs and after school clubs, it can be challenging to recruit and deploy team members. To address this, JAG and the school have worked together to identify opportunities for JAG team members to support the wider needs of the school, beyond breakfast club and after school provision.

This has led to the breakfast and after school club manager being allocated hours to support a child with SEND in some classroom activities and providing support to that child during lunch breaks. JAG invoices the school for these additional hours at a lower rate than agency team members, and in line with school rates per hour. This provides extra hours needed for the club manager, who remains employed by JAG, helps to alleviate the schools wider workforce pressures, build stronger relationship with school staff, and most importantly ensure continuity of care for the specific child.

Complementing Staff Resources with Volunteer Support

Park Primary School is based in Colne in Lancashire with 324 Pupils on roll. The school's breakfast initiative, known as "The Lodge", has been made possible through a collaboration of parent volunteers and the generous support of a local business. Each morning, the Bagel Bar transforms into a lively social hub with a flurry of activity of pupils and their families, all grabbing a bagel and engaging in conversation. The friendly, inclusive atmosphere creates a calming start to the day, welcoming pupils into a positive environment.

Goals: Providing Breakfast Without Stigma

The school's aim was to ensure that every pupil started the day with breakfast, free from any stigma. By making the Bagel Bar accessible to all students, the school has created an inclusive space where everyone can enjoy a morning bagel together, free from judgement.

Funding and Support for the Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club is sustained through a generous donation from a local business and the commitment of parent volunteers. As well as funding the food for the provision, the local business has funded a professional-grade toaster and additional food items such as jam and spreads for the bagels. Each morning, a dedicated team of parent volunteers operates the Bagel Bar, while school staff manage orders and oversee stock.

About the Breakfast Club

The Breakfast Club runs from 7:30 am to 8:50 am and provides a warm, family-style setting. In addition to breakfast, pupils have access to games, toys, and a cozy corner with bean bags and large cushions. One of the staff members also offers sign language lessons, which have become a popular part of the morning routine.

The Bagel Bar

The Bagel Bar is set up in an outdoor classroom known as "The Lodge." Each morning, starting at 8:30 am, children can head to the lodge from the playground to enjoy their bagels. Initially, school staff collaborated with parents to manage the Bagel Bar, but the parent's enthusiasm and efficiency led them to take over the responsibility completely. Parents organise a weekly rota, and two volunteers arrive each morning at 8:00 am to begin toasting and preparing a variety of bagels. The parents bring their children along with them, who have a bagel and socialise before school begins. They prepare plain bagels with a selection of spreads and jams. The

bagels are arranged on trays for the pupils to help themselves as they arrive. They usually have one tray of jam and one of butter - both piled high and then the trays can be taken through to the school buildings if there are any leftovers. The pupils enjoy having choices and often arrive eagerly to grab their favourite bagel.

Impact of the Breakfast Provision

Prior to the Bagel Bar, attendance needed improvement, although it remained above the national average. Punctuality was a challenge, with many children arriving late. Behaviour was generally good, but hunger impacted children's concentration. Since the inception of the Bagel Bar, attendance and punctuality have notably improved, and pupils' behaviour and concentration have increased as they no longer arrive hungry.

Helping Individual Students Thrive

The Bagel Bar has become an essential part of many students' routines, particularly for younger pupils and those with special educational needs (SEND) in Key Stage 1. The predictability and welcoming atmosphere help these children transition smoothly into the school day. The initiative has also positively impacted families, as siblings from nursery or high school often accompany students, making the Bagel Bar a part of the family's morning routine.

Ricco's Case Study

In 2020, Ricco found himself at a crossroads in his career. He took a leap and applied for an apprenticeship with FitForSport (Junior Adventures Group), an opportunity to engage children in the world of sports. Drawing from his experiences with younger family members, Ricco realised his natural ability for working with children.

Today, Ricco is a driving force in bringing children from diverse backgrounds into the vibrant world of sports and creativity through wraparound childcare. With a passion for arts and crafts, he constantly seeks opportunities to infuse joy and meaning into the children's lives, using events throughout the year for fun and educational activities. ***"It's all about pushing the boundaries of imagination and coming up with exciting activities to engage the children," said Ricco.***



His days are now dedicated to providing wraparound childcare for children every day after school. Reflecting on his journey so far, Ricco shares, ***"Working with children is an incredible experience, guiding them, witnessing their transformation from shyness to openness - it's crucial to invest time with them. Childcare is not just a job, it's about creating positive impacts with these children."***

Describing the before and after school childcare sector as a close-knit community, Ricco emphasises the support and camaraderie within the team. ***"It feels like one big team, we can always rely on each other,"*** he notes. Ricco strongly believes that access to wraparound childcare is a gateway for children to express themselves, breaking down barriers, including financial ones. ***"Every child deserves equal opportunities - to make friends, explore self-expression through music, art, play, and writing".***

Reflecting on his personal growth, Ricco attributes his newfound confidence to the apprenticeship, emphasising how it has empowered him to not only excel independently but also enhance the experience for the children in his care. As he continues to make a positive impact on young lives, Ricco's journey stands as a testament to the transformative power of meaningful childcare.

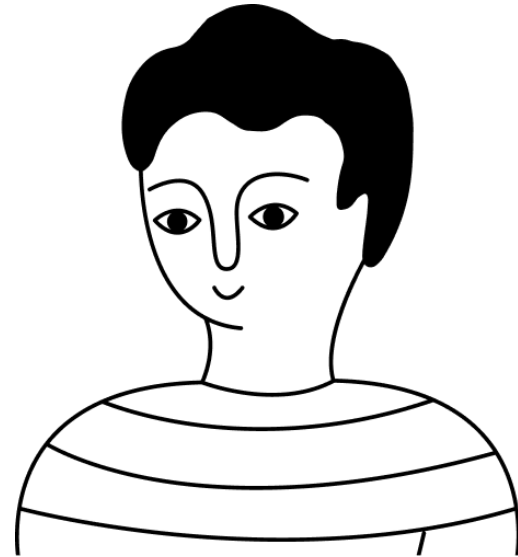
Alan's Case Study

Name: Alan Birmingham

Location: Barlby Primary School, North Kensington

Job title: Playcentre Manager

How long have you worked in wraparound care? Over 35 years



What did you do before you joined the wraparound care sector?

When I left college, I trained as a chef and worked at Coconut Grove in Barret Street which is sadly no longer there. Exceptional service was required, and I served well known personalities such as Michael Cane and Luther Vandross. I was required to check the standard of the food being delivered and quality control the stock as expectations were high.

Tell us how you entered the sector, was there a specific entry route you took?

I have always liked to stay busy so when I wasn't working at the restaurant on shift, I did youth work working with 16–25-year-olds. I was 19 myself but often supported young people older than me. They didn't realise I was younger, but I did my best to work with them to make good decisions. In my current role at Barlby as the Playcentre Manager I know many of the parents from my youth work days which helps to foster the sense of trust in the community.

What qualifications did you have before you joined/or training you completed?

I had achieved my qualifications relating to my work as a chef and also gained qualifications in sports such as football and badminton. I also studied for NVQs specifically for childcare and play.

What inspired you to join the wraparound care sector?

For many years I have worked with primary age children, and this was a natural progression for me after youth work because I realised that I could influence children to make good decisions and support their aspirations before it became more difficult in the teenage years. I felt that moving into playwork would help mould young mindsets and hopefully raise aspirations.

No two days are the same, but can you share a typical day for you, the activities you do?

I work as a learning support assistant (LSA) in the afternoons at Barlby, where I manage the after school playcentre. I support the PE curriculum and mostly deliver this in the afternoons. At the end of the school day, I liaise with the school office to check how many children are signed up for the after-school play provision. We open to three schools, and I set up the evening's activities ensuring there are a range of activities on offer. It is important to provide activities to promote the interests of the children as individuals, so we cater for sport and more creative tasks.

I have a team to facilitate play which frees me up to prepare the 'tea' which is a light evening meal for all children attending later than 4.30 pm. I have always loved cooking. The three schools come together in the middle of the session to eat and there is usually time for a 'brain break' which is a few mindful moments to reflect on the day and relax. The school I work in is a MindUp school, so the children are familiar with this sort of activity. The children get involved in serving the food and clearing up afterwards and we aim to create a warm environment where the children can express themselves. Having more than one school attending is important to us as it establishes more links in the community and supports transition to secondary school.

The service finishes at 18:00 pm every day, sometimes later and I often have a chance to catch up with the parent or carer collecting the child. I think this gives me and the school an insight into what is going well and how we can support.

What's your favourite part of the working day, with children?

I enjoy using my skill set. I am a personal trainer in the mornings so I enjoy leading games for the children, and I can also use my skill set in the kitchen. I feel I can really be myself.

How do you feel you're making a difference?

It is very rewarding to look after others. I come from a massive family so I like being surrounded by large groups and think that I can influence them positive in a different way. Not in a formal way using the curriculum. Playwork is a structured time, but it also gives children more freedom to be independent, collaborate and make decisions. I can make a difference here.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I am required to be professional but within that I can stay creative and use my skills and experience.

What are your career highlights so far?

I was nominated and won best playworker in RBKC and I was commended in two Ofsted inspections, but my biggest highlights are when adults remember me. When they meet me on the street and remember something I said to them as a child. Recently, Miquita Oliver visited Barlby where I work for a skipping workshop linked to mental health. She remembered when I used to look after her as a child and some of the teachers also taught her team, so it felt like a real community and full circle moment.

Do you feel like you are part of a supportive team? What are ways the team works well together?

Absolutely. Communication is so important, and I have a committed playcentre team and approachable school leadership. Ideas are welcome and we share the same vision for wraparound provision.

What support and/or training do you have?

I am always open to learning new skills and training. I have my qualifications and experience in nutrition, sport, play and childcare but there is always more to learn.

Why would you recommend others join the sector?

Children today probably need more guidance than ever to prepare them for the future. It is important to invest in the younger generations and build their confidence.

What advice would you have for anyone wanting to work in wraparound care?

Firstly, you need the will and passion for working with children. The tools can be learnt along the way.

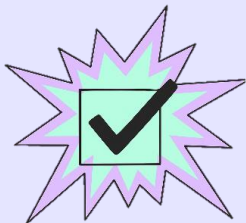
What kind of qualities do you think someone needs to do this job?

Consistency, fairness and resilience. You need to be a team player, and you need to embrace difference. Not every child wants to play football or dance so be creative. You also need to use your initiative!

What is one thing you want people to know about wraparound care work?

Workforce Checklist

*This checklist is a practical tool to help schools with wraparound workforce planning.
Print it out or keep it handy as a quick reference to ensure you cover all the key steps.*



Planning & Assessment

- ☐ Review current staff capacity & skills
- ☐ Complete skills gap assessment (scoring matrix available in the Workforce Toolkit)
- ☐ Identify internal candidates for extra hours
- ☐ Engage with your Local Authority to understand regional priorities

Recruitment Strategy

- ☐ Write clear, engaging job adverts (use the example in the Workforce Toolkit as a guide)
- ☐ Use accessible job titles (e.g. “Breakfast Club Assistant”)
- ☐ Advertise via schools, colleges, online, social media
- ☐ Explore apprenticeships & Skills Bootcamps
- ☐ Highlight the benefits (flexibility, free childcare, career development, impact on children)

Interviewing

- ☐ Think about the structure of your interviews
- ☐ Ask role-relevant questions (you can find examples in the Workforce Toolkit)
- ☐ Include practical tasks if suitable

Onboarding

- ☐ Complete Enhanced DBS & Barred Lists check (consider registering for DBS Update Service)
- ☐ Verify Right to Work in the UK
- ☐ Set up pension (if applicable)
- ☐ Provide onboarding: welcome, tour, buddy, training

Retention & Development

- ☐ Hold regular 1:1s
- ☐ Run anonymous satisfaction surveys
- ☐ Support personal development (plans, courses, shadowing)
- ☐ Plan for turnover & succession
- ☐ Use exit interviews & maintain talent pool for future recruitment

Inclusion & Safety

- ☐ Ensure staff are suitably trained for the role (e.g. Safeguarding, SEND & inclusive practices, Paediatric First Aid, Allergy Management)
- ☐ Ensure dietary/feeding support are documented and understood