

September 2023



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

### Hello...

Welcome to our monthly newsletter.

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

020 7332 1002

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



### Makaton

Talking does not just involve speaking. Watch someone talking, they will also be using gestures, facial expression, eye contact and body language. All this is communication. Makaton uses speech with signs (gestures) and symbols (pictures) to help people communicate. Would you like to learn some useful signs to use with your child?

As part of our Coltales programme (City of London Talks and Listens Enthusiastically) we post Makaton videos every Wednesday on our social media platforms. Follow us on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter or search [#ColtalesTopTips](#)

To find out more about Makaton, please visit their website by clicking [here](#).

### Family Information Service

This is where you will find free and impartial information about local events and services available to children, young people and families living and working in the Square Mile.

Follow us on X twitter [@SqMileFamilies](#)

Click on the link to find out more

<https://www.fis.cityoflondon.gov.uk/>



# 'A Day In The life' of Georgina Poullais– Family Support worker at Aldgate Children's Centre.



**I make my breakfast at 8.15 after I get to school.**

I love healthy food and often have yogurt with added turmeric.

I choose to travel on one bus to avoid changes. It's also a good opportunity

for me to reflect at the start and end of each day and reset my brain!

The day starts with greeting colleagues and parents. I will ensure the stay-and-play sessions are set up with our stay-and-play Practitioner and check everything is okay for the morning.

We have stay and play every Tuesday plus our resident psychologist every other week. This is when I will do referrals to support families and introduce everyone to each other. On some days I cover in the under threes room which gives me a chance to play with the children, meet parents and support the wider school.

## ***"Families know I'm here when needed"***

I often spend time in the family sessions to encourage communication and signpost parents to other services. Sometimes it's just important to be friendly so that they know I am always here when needed. I've sometimes joined them at hospital appointments. It's my role to sign post and if they need someone to hold their hand then I will.

If the health visitor is visiting, I'll also contact the parents to introduce myself. If we have a breastfeeding group with new parents and very young babies, I will also pop in. It's important to make relationships right at the start of their journey.

During COVID I was on site daily and linked up with health visitors and other agencies online to support 27-month development checks. Now the children's centre is full and face-to-face meetings are back.

We link with other organisations such as City Advice, Healthy Early Years program for parents (HENRY) and adult learning courses. This means that I need to be familiar with information, timings and ensure families know about the creches available.

Sometimes parents will disclose sensitive information to me, which means I need to gently guide them to the right support. It's important to always see the bigger picture and build trust so we can help them fully.

Office time is often spent making welcome calls to new parents and letting them know about sessions such as baby massage, and the dolly Parton book scheme. In the past I've visited libraries or knocked on doors to introduce our services. We also give out vitamins at reception which means that we can introduce ourselves to potential clients.

The nature of my role also means that I'm a DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). I work all year round and support the holiday clubs during School breaks.

## ***"My goal is to support health and well-being"***

I'm an advocate for mental health and it's important that I also look after myself. I have regular supervision with 'Family Lives' - they supports my work with families and my own wellbeing. It's also important for me to use the same services which I recommend to parents. By telling them this I can reduce their anxieties about seeking or needing help.

At the end of the day, I'm tired. But it's time to stop, reflect, and plan the next day. Where possible I will attend room meetings with the childcare team.

My journey home on the bus is used to de-clutter my head ready for the next day. My goal is to support the health and wellbeing of all families I meet, and this is the work ethos that keeps me going.

# The 'Small Steps' campaign!

## Encouraging City of London families to get active

City of London Corporation is encouraging families in the Square Mile to take small steps to improve wellbeing. Having a more active lifestyle can have big benefits not only to your health, but to your family. An activities guide can be found here!

<http://cityoflondon.gov.uk/smallsteps>



## Attendance Matters in Early Years

Children with good early years attendance perform better than their peers at the end of Reception. This means that a lack of attendance could affect your child's learning and development.

We recognise that sometimes families may need extra support with attendance, therefore effective communication is essential between you and your key person.

If you would like support with your child's good attendance and punctuality. Why not talk to your child's School and Early Years setting to see how they can help!

## Top tips returning to school if you are worried!

**Find solutions together.** For example: "What can we do to feel less worried? Maybe we can talk with your new teacher and introduce ourselves."

**Build your routine to the new normal.** For example, set aside 30 minutes a day for your child to read, just as they would do at school and play outside at the same time that they would during school hours.

**Encourage positive thinking.** Help your child focus on the great experiences that will come when they're back at school, like seeing friends and their favourite teachers.

**Bring on the fun!** Try setting up a play date with a friend who's also going back to class. Or have a "back to school party" with fun, silly learning activities.

If you would like to find out anything further on any items or you would like more advice or information, please contact the City of London Family Information Service.

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