



Redbridge Early Years Strategy 2023-2028
Building a strong foundation

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1. FOREWORD

Welcome to our Early Years Strategy 2023-2028.

The "Building a Strong Foundation: Early Years Strategy" is a comprehensive plan designed to provide the best possible start for all children during their early years of life.

We know that our first five years fundamentally shape the adults we become. Our vision for Redbridge is that children should have the best possible start in life, growing up happy, healthy and safe with the opportunity to reach their potential, with no one left behind.

A child's experiences from conception to the age of five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important for all children. Good parenting, good health advice and opportunities for high quality early learning together provide the foundation all children need to be healthy and to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up. This is particularly important for children in disadvantaged circumstances, where support in the early years can have the greatest impact.

Recognising the critical importance of early childhood development, this strategy aims to promote strong physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development for every child. By investing in early years, we will lay the groundwork for lifelong success, fostering a society that is inclusive, resilient, and prosperous.

We are committed to continuing to provide integrated services from a borough-wide network of early years' services, working in partnership with the voluntary sector, health partners, parents, families, and community groups. The strategy will also be delivered in partnership with our high-quality early years and childcare providers in the public, private, voluntary and independent sectors.

We have more to do to improve outcomes for children, particularly as there are very challenging times ahead for providers, families and children. We have just emerged from a global pandemic, where some of our children were born at a time when people were wearing face masks and we are facing a cost-of-living crisis which will put pressure on everyone. Now more than ever we need a clear strategy to set out how Redbridge Council intends to support those children, parents and families who need it most.

From:



Cllr Jas Athwal
Leader of the Council

Cllr Lloyd Duddridge
Cabinet Member for
Children, Young People
and Education



2. ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

The time from when a child is conceived to when they are five is a vitally important one. This is a time during which the things that happen to a child will determine the course of their later life and creates the foundations in them to become responsible adults; it is therefore a critical time to provide support to children and families.

There are many different people and services who come into the lives of families with young children, all of whom have an important contribution to make. These people and services need to work together effectively, in partnership with parents, to enable all children in Redbridge to get the best start for life.

The Council has a duty to improve outcomes for all young children, reduce inequalities and ensure that there is sufficient, high quality early years provision and childcare for parents locally.¹

This strategy details how the Council is meeting this duty and sets priorities for the future. It contributes to the Council's ambition that children and young people have the best possible start in life, growing up happy, healthy and safe, with the opportunity to reach their potential. It supports the Redbridge Plan 2022-2026 and the 'Growing a new Redbridge – a partnership plan for 2025', both of which focus on the importance of creating a safe and healthy environment and tackling the root causes of social inequality.

In *Building a Strong Foundation: Redbridge's Early Years Strategy*, we have set out a vision for the changes we want to make to improve the experiences and outcomes of all young children living in Redbridge. Through this strategy we want to enable more children to have positive experiences in their early years and parents to feel better supported.

We would like to thank the many parents who helped to co-produce this strategy and are very grateful for their honest, open and thoughtful feedback and input. We would also like to thank Coram for supporting both us and the parents to work effectively together.

¹ Childcare Act 2006

Early Years in Redbridge



There are over 25,000 children aged 0-5 in Redbridge

Children aged 0-5 make up just under one in ten of the population in Redbridge. The proportion of young children fell between 2011-2021 and this is expected to continue.

The majority of children in Redbridge are from an ethnic minority

Over half of children aged 0-5 are Asian Pakistani, Bangladeshi or Indian. Of the remainder, a quarter are White, one in ten are of Mixed heritage and just under one in ten is Black.



Just over one in ten children in Redbridge have special education needs.

The proportion of children with SEN is increasing and their needs are becoming more complex, partly as a result of isolation during the pandemic.



Many children live in low income families

In Redbridge, over 2,000 children aged 0-5 live in low income families. The cost of living crisis has increased pressure on low income families but there are many families who are just above the threshold for benefits who are also struggling with increased costs for food and energy in particular.



The pandemic has had a big impact on young children

Children born in 2020 spent their first 1-2 years living in isolation, with very little social interaction or access to early years provision. Most people they met in those first two years were wearing masks.



3. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EARLY YEARS

“Science tells us that a child’s experiences from conception through their first five years will go on to shape their next 50. It tells us that the kind of children we raise today, will reflect the kind of world we will live in tomorrow. It tells us that investing in the start of life is not an indulgence, but economically, socially and psychologically vital to a prosperous society.”

– Jason Knauf, CEO of the Royal Foundation, December 2020¹⁴

The early years of a child’s development are vital – starting in the womb, it is during this time that there is the greatest potential to impact on a child’s developing brain. The 1,001 days from pregnancy to the age of two set the foundations for an individual’s cognitive, emotional and physical development.

The 1,001 days are a critical time for development, but they are also a time when babies are at their most vulnerable. Some babies have a disability diagnosed; some have a developmental need that is likely to develop into a special educational need when they enter compulsory education if special provision is not made. For others it may take longer for needs to be identified. Since the pandemic, we have seen a rise in undiagnosed developmental needs in many of our early years’ services.

The quality of a child’s early experiences makes a critical difference as their brains develop, providing either strong or weak foundations for learning, health and behaviour throughout life. Identifying problems early provides the best chance for families to be provided with support to stop these problems getting worse.

This is because our brain is at its most receptive and adaptable when we are young, and although we continue to adapt and evolve throughout our lives, this requires more effort as we age. It is during the first 1,001 critical days when the foundations of the brain’s architecture are built and when babies develop their communication and physical skills. It is also during this period that babies’ emotional and mental health can be most affected by the potentially damaging effects of ‘adverse childhood experiences’ (ACEs) – traumatic events which may result from exposure to poor parental mental health, abuse, neglect and parental drug misuse amongst other factors.

We know that having positive early years and childcare experiences leads to:

- Children having better relationships and attachments with the people around them
- Children being healthier mentally and physically
- Children being more resilient to negative things that may happen in their lives
- Children becoming responsible for their actions
- Children doing better in their education and being more likely to gain fulfilling jobs that enable them to be financial stable and resilient and

- Children being kept safe from harm, including being less likely to engage in harmful and offending behaviour.

All these things lead to children having more positive experiences in adulthood, being able to make positive and accountable contributions to society and their communities, and to being less likely to need to draw on the support of services like social care, including when and if they themselves become parents.

Children are reliant on those around them to develop into strong and healthy adults – whether parents/carers, their family, health and care providers, nurseries, childminders, schools and the wider community. Everyone has a role to play in the future of our children.

4. SUPPORTING PARENTS AND CARERS

We have seen the importance of early years to children and the case for investing in these early years but to invest in children means also investing in the people around them – the parents, carers, grandparents, early years workforce and more.

- **Child development:** Parenting plays a vital role in shaping a child's physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development. Children who receive nurturing, responsive, and supportive parenting tend to have better overall outcomes in terms of their physical and mental health, academic performance, and social skills.
- **Building strong relationships:** Parenting involves establishing a strong bond between parents and children. Positive parent-child relationships contribute to the child's sense of security, self-esteem, and trust. These foundations can influence their future relationships and ability to form healthy connections with others.
- **Socialisation and values:** Parents are the primary agents of socialisation for their children. They help children understand societal norms, values, and expectations. By investing in parenting, parents can instil important values such as empathy, respect, and responsibility, which are crucial for building a compassionate and well-functioning society.
- **Prevention of negative outcomes:** Good parenting can act as a protective factor against various negative outcomes in children's lives, such as delinquency, substance abuse, and mental health issues. By providing a nurturing and stable environment, parents can reduce the risk factors associated with these problems.
- **Parental well-being:** Investing in parenting also benefits parents themselves. Parenting can be challenging, and parents who have access to support, resources, and knowledge are better equipped to handle the demands of raising children. Investing in parenting education and support can promote parental well-being and reduce stress and burnout.
- **Intergenerational impact:** The way children are raised influences their future parenting styles. By investing in positive parenting practices, we can create a cycle of healthy parenting across generations, leading to better outcomes for future children and families.
- **Economic benefits:** Investing in parenting can have long-term economic benefits for society. Children who receive quality parenting are more likely to excel academically, pursue higher education, and secure stable employment. They are also less likely to engage in criminal activities or rely on social welfare programs, reducing the economic burden on society.

5. CHALLENGES IN EARLY YEARS

As we have seen, supporting parents and carers is key to developing children in early years. However, research from the Royal Centre for Early Childhood showed that almost two thirds (65%) of parents with children aged 0-5 felt that there was not enough support for parents to help children develop in early childhood.²

Although some may have support networks, there are many parents who do not, whether that be because they live away from family, do not speak English as a first language, are single parents or are isolated for health or disability reasons. The parents we worked with to co-produce this strategy told us how lonely and isolating being a new parent can be, even if there is family or other support. For those parents without support, parenthood is even more difficult.

Some parents also feel societal pressure, much of which is created by social media, to be the 'perfect parent' and are scared to ask for help as they are worried that they will be seen as a failure. This can create even greater inequalities for parents which, in turn, creates greater inequalities for their children.

Most of the advice and support parents of children aged 0-5 seek out relates to the physical development of their child – vaccinations, nutrition or key milestones. Very few parents seek support on emotional or social development and rely on family members or friends to help with social and emotional development. Many find it a more difficult concept to grasp or do not necessarily have a clear idea of their parental role in enabling this. Again, if parents do not have social networks to support them, the emotional or social development of their child may be impacted.

However, parents involved in the development of this strategy, told us that access to support can be inconsistent, particularly in relation to social and emotional development, and there are barriers to accessing support. Availability and knowledge of services are clear barriers but also

**Barriers to accessing support**

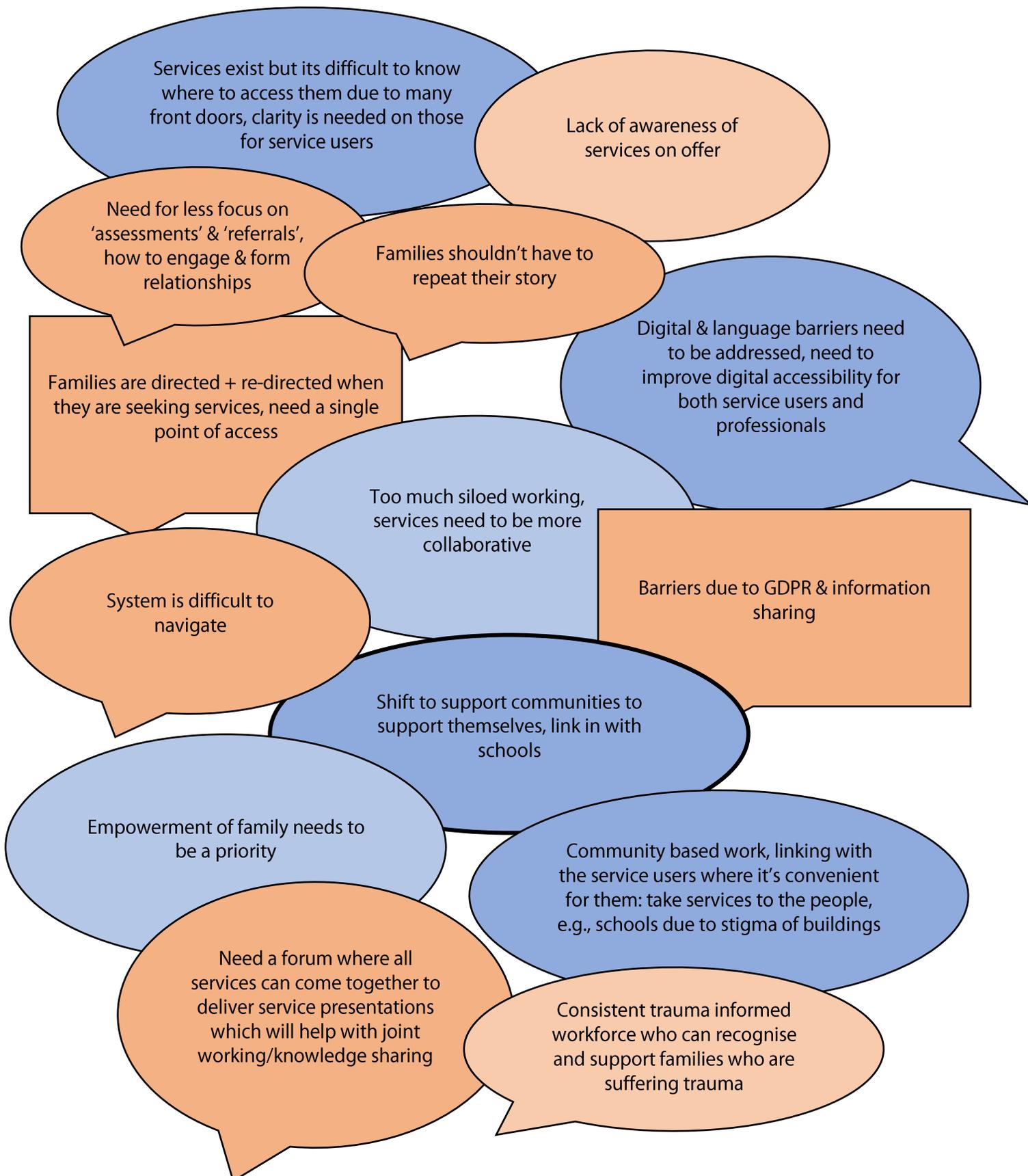
- Lack of **local availability of classes** such as parent and baby groups, especially since the pandemic.
- It can be **daunting** for parents to attend classes for the first time.
- It can be **difficult to judge what information is trustworthy** or relevant on the internet.
- Perceived **stigma about asking for support** and concern this will indicate that parents are not coping, especially when their children are no longer babies.

perceived stigma about reaching out for support can be a barrier. Taking that first step to reaching out can be difficult for some parents. However, once they have done so, many parents find that interacting with other parents and children helped them feel reassured about how they were doing as parents and how their children were developing.

² Public Perceptions Survey, 2022,

The Barking, Havering and Redbridge Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2022 identifies a range of challenges services face to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people in the boroughs. These challenges include:

- The capacity, rather than the availability, of health and care services for children and young people
- The lower uptake of key preventative measures such as childhood vaccinations, which has been declining for a number of years, or healthy eating habits which would help to address the increase in childhood obesity
- The mental health of children and young people is a significant and growing concern, as well as that of parents/ carers – only one in ten children and young people with a diagnosable condition will be under the care of specialist services at any point in time
- The increasing number of children who are born with or develop significant and lifelong problems who will need support from health, social care and education professionals to learn
- The growing number of looked after children in the borough who will have had complex and difficult childhoods, many will have mental health problems and their long-term life chances are significantly poorer than the norm
- Impact of poverty in childhood with significant and long-lasting effects and associated poorer outcomes in all aspects of life, including health
- The impact of the pandemic on children and parents/carers including access to health and community services, pre-schools or nursery settings with the most disadvantaged children most affected, which will have further increased existing health and social inequalities. Lockdowns also deprived children of social interaction and may have increased exposure to adverse childhood experiences in the home such as domestic violence. The disruption to education and health visiting may also have delayed the identification of children at risk of abuse and neglect
- The take up of funded early education places by eligible two-year-old children in 2021 has decreased by around 12% from 2018 in Redbridge. In 2021, take up of places in Redbridge was 45% compared with 76% in Barking and Dagenham.
- Children experiencing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are far more likely to engage in risky behaviours such as having a poor diet, smoking or using illegal substances. Preventing exposure to ACEs in the first place e.g. help re parental attachment, parenting skills courses, resilience building, education and awareness raising re sex and relationships, drug and alcohol etc is key. Alongside this, early intervention and mitigation in support for those affected are also important.



6. ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES – REDBRIDGE PLAN AND CHILD FRIENDLY REDBRIDGE

The Redbridge Plan sets out the key ambitions for the borough, how the local authority will work and the priorities it needs to deliver. There are four priorities in the plan: safe and healthy; clean and green; jobs and skills and home and neighbourhoods.

In addition, Redbridge is committed to becoming a Child Friendly borough, a Unicef Programme aimed at making Redbridge a great place for children and families. The children and young people in Redbridge identified three themes that were most important to them – safe and secure, healthy and place. (<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/childfriendly/>)

The Early Years Strategy will link to the Redbridge Plan and the Child Friendly Redbridge Plan in the following ways:

Priorities	How will the Early years strategy contribute?
Safe and Healthy/ safe and secure/ healthy	<p>Our priorities for early years will promote the healthy development of young children and support for their parents/ carers so that young children have the best start in life. The strategy aims to help reduce inequalities for children and their family and will support healthy, physically active lifestyles.</p> <p>We will provide tools, resources and support so that children and their families can live safely and be active members of their community.</p>
Clean and Green	<p>Access to green space benefits physical and mental health. The strategy will strengthen the links with our partners who provide parks and open spaces across Redbridge. We understand the importance of these spaces for young children and their families and will ensure that their use is a key part of the strategy.</p>

Priorities	How will the Early years strategy contribute?
Jobs and skills	<p>The early years strategy will support parents/ carers to develop their skills as key care givers as well as in the workplace, access appropriate childcare funding and support them to be active members of their community.</p> <p>We will continue to provide appropriate advice and guidance to support families during the cost-of-living crisis and better understand the resources available to them.</p>
Home and neighbourhoods/ place	<p>With our partners in the voluntary, community, health and care sectors, we will support families to be active in their community, contributing to developing where they live and those around them.</p> <p>The strategy will commit to continued co-production with parents/ carers and families to ensure that they continue to be key partners in the implementation of the strategy.</p>

The Redbridge plan sets out the way we will work with an emphasis on prevention, collaboration and responsibility. These three principles underpin this early year’s strategy as well and will determine how we implement the priorities set out in this document.

7. ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES – THE FAMILY HUB APPROACH

This early years strategy is strongly rooted in the Family Hubs approach - a system-wide model of providing high quality, whole family, joined up, family support services. Family hubs deliver these family support services from pregnancy, through the child's early years and later childhood, and into early adulthood until they reach the age of 19 (or up to 25 for young people with special educational needs and disabilities).

The core principles of the Family Hub model are inherent in this strategy:

- **Early years' excellence**

The Family Hub model starts with the early years, recognises the importance of this period and prioritises the need to support parents to ensure children have the best start in life. It places importance on continually improving the Start for Life offer so outcomes improve. This strategy sets out Redbridge's commitment to delivery in this area and sits alongside the early help strategy, the carers' charter and other relevant plans in delivering early years' excellence.

- **Early help and prevention**

As with the family help model, this strategy aims to ensure parents, carers, children and families can get help in the right way at the right time. It aims to improve children's lives through supporting the family unit and strengthening family relationships to enable children to thrive and keep families together, helping them to provide the safe, nurturing environments that children need.

- **Integrated**

To achieve better outcomes for families, practice-based evidence shows that integration makes a significant difference. Effective, integrated systems and successful partnership work require creating a health culture and commitment from a range of stakeholders. This commitment has already been demonstrated in the development of this strategy, which has been developed in partnership with stakeholders for health and social care as well as with parents. The delivery of this strategy depends on an integrated approach and will only be successful with the support, commitment and understanding of our partners.

Multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams work together closely and in a co-ordinated way, so families get the support they need and helping them solve their problems is at the heart of processes. Families tell their story once and services and people then work together to give that family the right help.

By delivering a system for everyone from those with universal through to intensive needs, families can experience seamless transitions from one level of help to another.

Being 'integrated' also means sharing data. We need to overcome the barrier of data sharing and work together with other agencies and by asking families for consent to share information, in the right way at the right time.

We also need to ensure we have shared outcomes – all agencies involved in supporting families must agree the shared outcomes we are working toward and then work out, who is going to do what, to make sure those outcomes are achieved. By sharing outcomes, goals are more likely to be met.

- **Whole family approach and relationship support**

Rather than focusing on the child or member of the family needing support in isolation, this strategy will deliver a model where the interventions or approaches consider what is most appropriate for the child within the context of their core relationships and the people around them. This could include considerations such as older siblings, schooling or SEN needs in the family as well as more challenging issues such as unemployment, housing issues, domestic violence or substance abuse.

Accessing support aimed at a whole family can feel stigmatizing for parents but is sometimes core to the needs of the child. With help, some relationships can become more resilient, others still come to an end, even with support and families may need help with the transition this entails. This strategy champions the value and importance of relationship support and carefully challenges the fear of being judged and other taboos around talking about relationship health.

- **Access**

Families need to know where and how to get help and straightforward access is key. The Council is already working on the 'one front door' approach which will be a central point where services are accessed. Within this will be an early help front door where parents, carers, families and children will be able to access the support they need. As part of the Early Years' strategy, we need to ensure that this access includes all the agencies involved in the young child's life and that we supplement the virtual one front door with physical access to services.

- **Working with the voluntary sector, embedded in the community**

Transforming family support services and outcomes, in a sustainable way, needs to involve the voluntary and community sector from the outset. From providing universal services through to partnership in delivering statutory services, we need to work with the voluntary and community sector to reach more families and provide a more comprehensive offer.

8. THE EARLY YEAR STRATEGY - VISION AND GOALS

Our vision is to create a caring and nurturing environment for parents/ carers and children so that every child thrives and is able to reach their full potential and inequalities in parenting are minimised.

We want a society where every child has access to high quality early childhood support, regardless of their background or circumstances, and every parent has the skills, abilities and confidence to support their child's emotional, physical and social development.

By 2028, we will ensure that parents/ carers have the skills, resources and access to services that will help them to give their children the best start in life.

We will do this through:

1. Universal Access and Inclusion:

- Ensure universal access to high-quality, co-ordinated early childhood education, health and care services for all children, irrespective of their background, location, or ability, focusing on play-based learning, social-emotional development, and school readiness and the Healthy Child programme.
- Promote inclusion by creating environments that are diverse, culturally sensitive, and accommodate the needs of children with disabilities or special requirements.
- Collaborate with community organisations, health services and other stakeholders to reach marginalised and vulnerable populations.
- Facilitate smooth transitions for children as they move from early years' settings to primary schools, supporting them to be 'school-ready' with the relevant skills to have a successful experience in primary school.

2. Parent and Family Engagement:

- Foster strong partnerships/relationships between families, service providers and the community to create a seamless and supportive environment for children and their parents/carers so that they are able to access the services and support they need most.
- Provide tailored resources, workshops, and parent education programmes to empower parents and carers with knowledge, information and skills to support their child's learning and development.
- Establish communication channels to facilitate regular feedback, dialogue, and collaboration between families and early years' service providers.
- Ensure parents and families are considered in other local authority and partner plans and strategies and priorities are joined up.

3. Improving Health and Well-being of parents and children:

- Prioritise the physical, emotional and mental well-being of children, ensuring access to nutritious meals, health screenings, oral health and early intervention services.
- Encourage physical activity, outdoor play, and the development of healthy habits in both parents/ carers and children.
- Collaborate with health professionals and agencies to identify and address health and developmental concerns at an early stage.
- Identifying and addressing developmental delays or special educational needs, ensuring that all children receive the support they require.

4. Early Years' Workforce Development

- Offering ongoing training and professional development opportunities for early years educators, equipping them with the latest research, best practices, and pedagogical approaches.
- Implementing strategies to attract and retain high-quality early years professionals through competitive salaries, career progression pathways, and supportive working environments and working with colleagues in other parts of the Council to make Redbridge an attractive place to live and work.
- Establishing networks and partnerships with local educational institutions, organisations, and professional associations to promote knowledge sharing, mentoring, and peer support among early years practitioners.
- Develop activities that improve collaboration between early years' providers and primary schools such as joint training, sharing of information and aligned curriculum approaches.

5. Sustainable funding and provision

- Advocate/ lobby for increased investment from government and other funding streams in early years' provision.
- Explore opportunities for partnerships with private and voluntary sector organisations to supplement available resources.
- Ensure parents/carers and providers are accessing all possible funding and financial support available to them from central and local government.

6. Improve data and information sharing between services

- Through sharing of data, identify those parents who may not access services, (for whatever reason) but who could benefit from the services and encourage parents to access services.
- Using the data, work with partners and other organisations to jointly understand and address barriers to access including for both practical and cultural reasons and we need to adapt our services accordingly

- Work together with partners/ service providers to ensure we are sharing data, wherever possible, about children, parents, (including prospective parents) and families so that they do not need to keep repeating their needs and get quicker access to the support required.
- Develop, with partners, digital access to information and services for parents, families, communities and providers that covers health, care and education provision so that everyone is aware of the services available, whether provided directly by that service or others.
- Develop early years' pathways which secure integrated early childhood services with seamless transition from universal, to preventive, to targeted services, meeting needs in the most efficient and cost-effective ways.

9. HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS

We will create an achievable and co-produced action plan that will deliver our strategic vision, working with partners in health, social care and leisure, parents and carers, care leavers and the voluntary and community sector to develop the plan for delivery.

We want to start having an impact straight away and some of the work we need to do to deliver this strategy has already begun or will do so imminently. During the co-production, we identified a number of 'quick wins' to improve access to our Children's Centres which are being or have already been implemented. We have also redesigned our Children's Centre model so that we are now delivering a wider range of universal activities, across the week, giving parents and their children greater choice and opportunities for support.

Here are some of the other ideas we are proposing or are committed to in relation to the Early Years Strategy:

Universal access and inclusion:

We will develop integrated family centres providing access to wider support, resources and sign posting that focus on the whole family, operating from available health or local authority buildings across the borough. These centres will bring together existing services across health, care and education, mirroring the children's centres approach of timetabled activities delivered by a range of partners, and will supplement the One Front Door virtual model.

The centres will offer a broader set of interventions aimed at the whole family including family learning, therapy groups, parenting courses, early learning and school holiday activities, SEN and disability support and access to a range of statutory and community services including midwifery, health visiting, domestic violence team, young carer support, Work Redbridge – helping families to get employment, Housing, Benefits, our SEND services and cost of living team.

The action plan will identify activities that will increase capacity across the system to identify and support children who have special education needs and disabilities at an early age, particularly in relation to learning disabilities and difficulties, speech, language and communication needs and autism, the three most common primary needs identified in EHCPs. We have begun this work in our Redbridge Primary Children's Centre which is developing its offer for early years SEND children and will work with Empowering Parents Together to continue to build our offer.

Parent and family engagement:

As part of the development of this strategy, the charity, Coram, worked with us, our partners and parents to develop skills in co-production. We want to continue this work, ensuring that co-production is built into the implementation of this strategy and other work.

We will continue to strengthen and extend our Parent Champions network and build our relationships with other groups such as Empowering Parents Together and our Care Leavers. Alongside this, parents will be invited to be part of the governance of this strategy and will be key players in its implementation.

Plans are already in place to develop our online Family Information Service and Local Offer and we will continue to work with parents, carers and families to ensure that the website is accessible and effective for them.

We will work with parents to identify what would best support those without family support networks around them. Early ideas include facilitating parent networks, both physically and virtually through social media.

We will also work with Early years' settings and health visitors to develop or increase joint assessments at the two year checks so there is early identification of any development needs in relation to school readiness. We will use this data to identify population groups or communities at greater risk of being non-school ready and the reasons why, as well as to help ensure that there is adequate provision for children with more significant needs.

Improving health and well-being of parents and children

We will provide training, guidance, resources and support for parents on a range of topics including good parenting, first aid for children and understanding common child ailments including asthma and other common conditions. We will also continue to promote the benefits of childhood vaccinations across our early years' settings, schools, family and children's centres and encourage the uptake of this. Our action plan will consider how health visiting, children's centres and other early years providers can work together to strengthen the ability of parents to manage minor childhood illness and injury (and their confidence to do so).

As part of our action plan, we will also look at how we can improve the capability of services to support perinatal mental health as well as children and young people's mental health, build resilience of children and young people and give those around them the skills and knowledge to identify and help them cope with mental health problems.

We will work to reduce the stigma around mental health and create an environment where parents feel able to talk about their mental health and seek support early, before they reach crisis point. We will explore the possibility of creating parental mental health champions within the community and work with parents to identify what else would best support them.

We will also review the use of Family Plans in other boroughs to determine their effectiveness in providing seamless transition for families from one service to another, focusing on shared outcomes and avoiding the need for referrals and for parents/ carers to repeat their story.

Parents have identified the need to improve housing for children, particularly those in temporary accommodation or unsuitable housing. We will work with our Housing teams to deliver appropriate and affordable housing for children and families, with suitable facilities to meet their needs.

Finally, we will work with Vision to ensure our outdoor play facilities and venues have equipment suitable for children with additional needs and their parents/ carers. We will also work across our services to develop healthy eating programmes to help reduce childhood obesity and improve the health of young children.

Early Years' workforce development

We will work with colleagues in other parts of the council to develop a plan to attract, retain and increase early years' health, care and education professionals to Redbridge including affordable housing, workforce development programmes and apprenticeships.

We will continue to encourage and support early years settings to maximise the health and wellbeing benefit to children through participation in the Mayor of London's Healthy Early Years London (HEYL) scheme.

We will ensure we deliver our duty to provide sufficient early years childcare support and education, with adequate support, especially if the child has special education or development needs.

We will also explore ways of changing ways of working and develop a more integrated and inclusive culture across all of the early years' workforce in health, care, education and the community. This will help to address inconsistency of advice, reduce duplication and create opportunities for joint training and development.

Sustainable funding and provision

We have recently published an Early Years Sector Review which set out a number of recommendations around funding and sustainability. We have shared the findings from this report with the Department for Education and will continue to lobby for increased sector funding.

As part of our anti-poverty strategy and cost of living plans, we have been actively promoting Healthy Start vouchers through social media and our children's centres. We will continue to do so alongside other existing food and financial support mechanisms such as free early years provision, access to NHS healthy start and free school meals as well as the holiday activity programmes.

Improve data and information sharing

We will work with partners directly and through the Redbridge Borough Partnership to overcome the barriers to sharing data and information including issues of consent, system compatibility and training in GDPR.

10. GOVERNANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

In order to ensure the delivery of this strategy, we will establish a new Early Years Strategy Board, consisting of partners from health, social care, community and voluntary organisations and parents/ carers. The board will be chaired by a parent/carer to ensure that families are at the heart of all implementation decisions.

The Board will report progress on the delivery of the strategy through relevant forums such as the Redbridge Borough Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board. It will publish its action plan and regularly report on progress towards it so that there is transparency for all stakeholders.

It will be supported by task and finish groups who will be directed by the Board and be responsible for progressing actions effectively.

An early years' dashboard will be developed through the Board to monitor the impact of the strategy and ensure we are achieving the vision set out in this document.