

Calderdale Council 2022

School Readiness – supporting children to be ready for Reception at school aged 4/5 years.

‘Children are ready for school’

(Wellbeing Strategy, Calderdale 2022 – 2027, *Living a Larger Life*)

Intended audience.

This document is designed as guidance for all professionals supporting children and their families. Use this document to reflect upon the effectiveness of existing provision in supporting children to be ready for Reception¹ and to consider any gaps in provision, resources, practitioner knowledge and then planning how to address those gaps.

Introduction

The Calderdale Wellbeing Strategy² has identified ‘Starting Well’ as one of its four key domains, focussing on babies and young children and covers ages 0-5 years and expectant families. The Starting Well overarching goal is that children are ready for school with the aim of achieving narrowing of the gap in Calderdale children who have a good level of development at the end of reception, between those receiving the pupil premium and those not receiving the pupil premium (the gap was 25.1% in 2019). Improving readiness for school in Calderdale means addressing differences that result from where people live, their gender and ethnicity, and whether there are additional support needs.

While the revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provides a general definition of school readiness, this term can be widely interpreted. The EYFS defines school readiness as *‘the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.’*³

The aim of this guidance is to establish a common understanding of ‘school readiness’ across all professionals that work with /support families in Calderdale. ‘School readiness’ within the context of this document is referring to children being ready to enter into the Reception class at school when they are aged 4 / 5 years old. There is an expectation on inclusive practice, ensuring any approach to supporting a child to be ready for school, is accessible to children with a broad range of needs and in line with the SEND Code of Practice and Equality Act 2010.

This common understanding of ‘school readiness’ will form part of the Calderdale Starting Well Strategy and sit within the steps on the Calderdale Family Journey. It has been developed as a multi-agency approach in collaboration with all key partners from health, education, Early Years and schools.

¹ strong 30/50 months at the beginning of reception.

² https://www.calderdale.gov.uk/nweb/COUNCIL.minutes_pkg.view_doc?p_Type=AR&p_ID=66736

³ (Department for Education (2021) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. (September 2021).

Position Statement

Calderdale Council agrees with, and supports, the UNICEF description of School Readiness⁴ as a holistic approach consisting of three domains:

- 1) Ready children - focusing on children's learning and development.
- 2) Ready schools -focusing on the school environment along with practices that foster and support a smooth transition for children into primary school and advance and promote the learning of all children.
- 3) Ready families - focusing on parental and caregiver attitudes and involvement in their children's early learning and development, home learning and development and transition to school.

Together, these domains maximise each child's likelihood of success as they progress through their time in school.

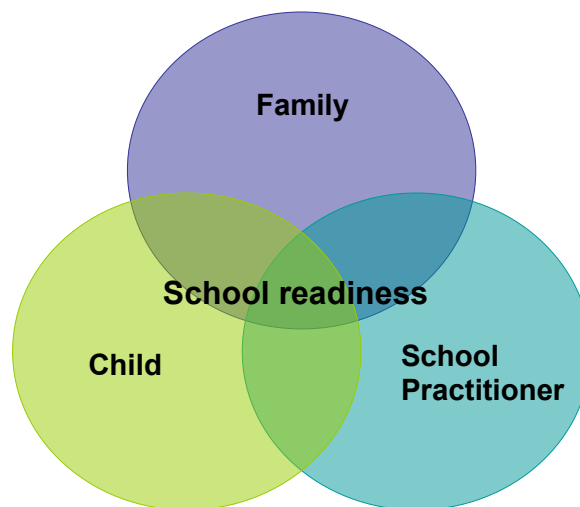


Diagram adapted from UNICEF

In Calderdale, school readiness goes a step further, seeing the child at the centre, with the three domains, around the child, including the child's health and wellbeing needs. Surrounding all these, is the influence of the wider environmental factors.

⁴ United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (2012) *School Readiness: a conceptual framework*. April 2012.

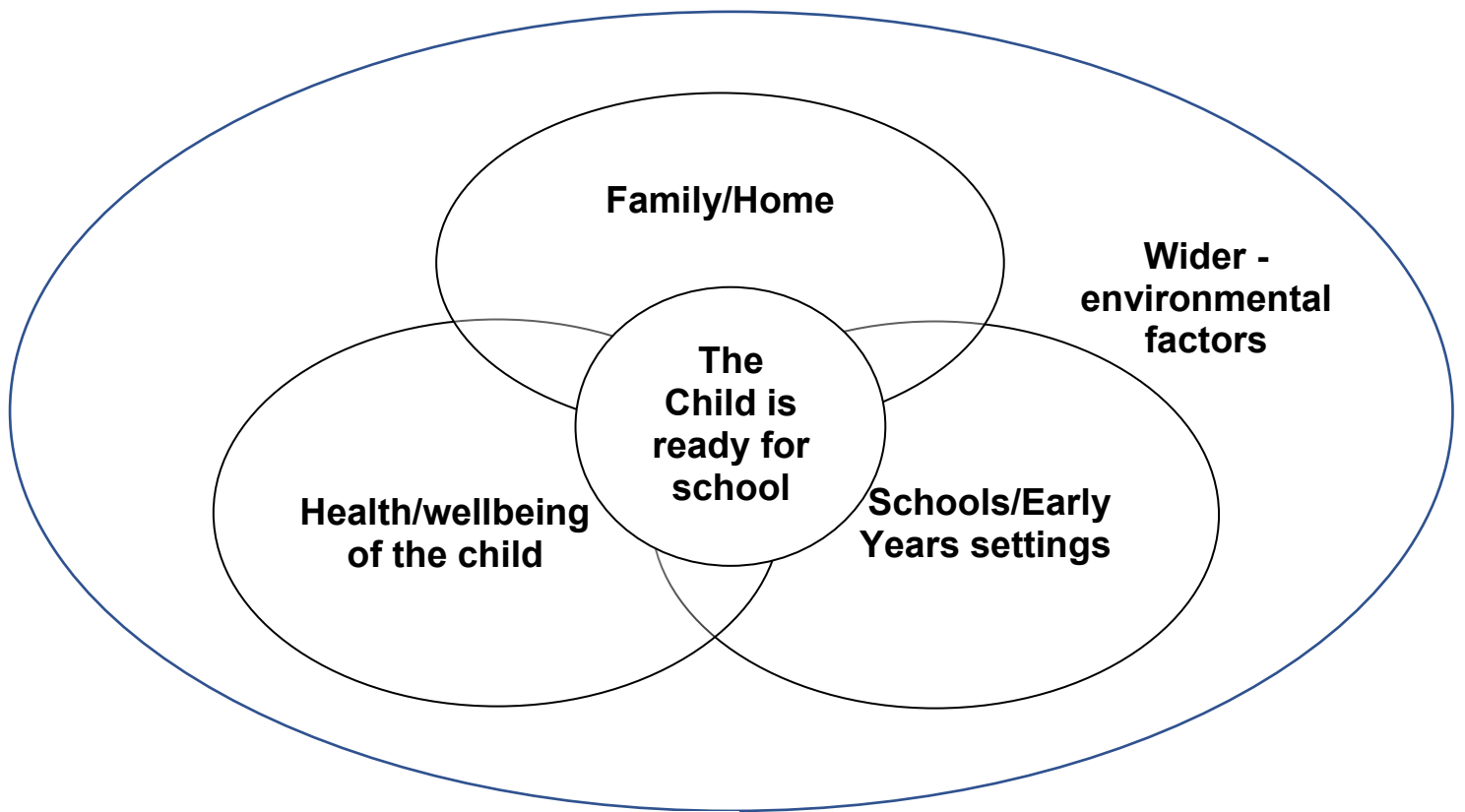


Diagram adapted from Grimmer, T. (2018)

School Readiness is not about compliant behaviour, such as the child’s ability to sit still or line up. Nor is it about embarking too early on a formal approach to learning because encouraging children to do things they are not developmentally ready for can inhibit children’s development in the long term. School readiness is about providing children with developmentally appropriate activities which supports a firm foundation for future learning.

This guidance describes how the attributes of a child, the family and input from all professional services who have contact with children and families link together to enable a child to be ‘school ready’. The ‘three influencing domains of school readiness’ table below describes how this would present from these three perspectives.

In Calderdale, our ambition to support children to be school ready is embedded within the Wellbeing Strategy⁵ seeking to support all children in Calderdale to have the best start in life. Supporting children to be school ready will include:

- A strengthened focus on addressing the differences that result from where we live, our gender, and ethnicity and whether we have additional support needs.

⁵ *Wellbeing Strategy, Calderdale 2022 – 2027, Living a Larger Life*

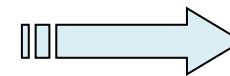
- Ensure multi-agency working to meet the needs of all children through early identification and early support.
- Understanding how services available in Early Years work together across Calderdale to support children's learning and development.
- Continuing to ensure the availability of high-quality childcare and early education places.
- Offering relevant workforce development across all sectors, to address gaps in qualifications, knowledge, and other areas of need.
- Commissioning services to meet the needs of children and families through consultation and joint strategic needs assessments.
- Signposting parents/carers to materials to support their child's home learning and development particularly focusing on opportunities to chat, play and read with their child.

The Three Influencing Domains of School Readiness table

In the table, the first column presents what the parent/carers can do to support their child to be ready for school. The second column documents what a professional/setting/school can do to support a child to be ready for school. The third column details how it would be observed from the point of view of a child.

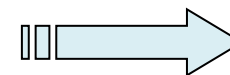
When developing the table, it incorporated detail from the new Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework, but it should not be interpreted as only being limited to these statements. When using this document with parents/carers, practitioners should remember to make the detail in the first column more accessible to families and signpost them to the supporting resources.

The three influencing domains of school readiness



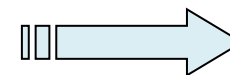
Families / home environment will	Professional / early years setting / school will	This will enable the child to – or my child will be able to do..
<i>From a family's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a professional's / setting's /school's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a child's point of view this means...</i>
<p>1. Personal, Social and Emotional Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Understanding and meeting your child's emotional needs and recognising their own feelings and emotions regarding your child's transition to school. > Recognising and talking through your child's feelings and different emotions. > Discovering what is available locally / make the most of local provision (on your doorstep including parks, outdoor spaces, libraries, Children's Centres, playgroups). The '50 things to do before you're five' app has lots of ideas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consider the changing emotional wellbeing and development needs linked to school readiness needs of children as they enter different phases of their education. > Using tools to support/identify when a child is not showing emotional wellbeing within a provision such as a wellbeing scale (the Leuven Scales). > Have a rich and sensitive understanding of each child's individual background and experiences and respecting the value of each unique home learning environment. > Provide effective care for children's physical, social and emotional needs ensuring that high levels of wellbeing and involvement are supported, enabling deep level learning to take place. > Establish positive relationships and effectively consult parents. > Operate in the best interests of the child and adapt practices when necessary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Be excited, enthusiastic, curious and confident about learning. > Feel socially, emotionally, and physically secure enabling them to become confident active learners using all of their senses. > Ask questions, take risks, and find solutions. > Begin to show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and begin to regulate their emotions and respond to them accordingly. > Help them be able to separate from parents/carers more easily, feeling secure in the knowledge they will return.

The three influencing domains of school readiness



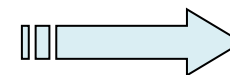
Families / home environment will	Professional / early years setting / school will	This will enable the child to – or my child will be able to do..
<i>From a family's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a professional's / setting's /school's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a child's point of view this means...</i>
	<p>> Focusing on the emotions that leads to situations rather than focusing on the behaviour which is usually the language of emotions.</p> <p>> Use the “Graduated approach to behaviour” to ensure behaviour is supported appropriately.</p>	
<p>2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development</p> <p>> Ensuring the child feels safe. This can be achieved by many factors including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being consistent in the responses you give to your child • minimising the amount of conflict that is present • ensuring children have good routines • safe sleeping including routines and sleep hygiene • ensuring the environment is safe and stimulating <p>(Also see section 7)</p> <p>> Seeking professional advice and guidance, particularly in terms of learning /development / health related</p>	<p>> Involve families and support transition between services by sharing each child's unique transition journey.</p> <p>> Implement a robust ‘key person’ / continuity of care approach in which adults are sensitive to children's needs and ensure that needs of groups and individuals are well met.</p> <p>> Build secure attachments from which children can develop self-regulation skills.</p>	<p>> Form positive attachments, to be able to develop the skills and awareness able to show sensitivity to others to feel that they are loved.</p> <p>> Begin to become confident to try new activities, show perseverance and resilience in the face of challenge.</p> <p>> Begin to understand rules and the reasons for them. Begin to understand right and wrong to feel safe secure and cared for.</p>

The three influencing domains of school readiness



Families / home environment will		Professional / early years setting / school will	This will enable the child to – or my child will be able to do..
<i>From a family's point of view this means...</i>		<i>From a professional's / setting's /school's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a child's point of view this means...</i>
	<p>matters in all areas of child development.</p> <p>> Saying to your child you love them and giving them cuddles.</p>		
2. Personal, Social and Emotional Development	<p>> Recognising you are your child's most important role-model.</p> <p>> Looking for opportunities to extend your child's speaking skills. Model how to listen as part of a conversation and how to say words.</p> <p>> Engaging with your child's learning setting to understand ways you can support your child's development at home.</p>	<p>> Expectation to keep up to date with professional development and CPD relevant to early years.</p> <p>> Develop meaningful and respectful relationships with parents / carers and families to foster their engagement and full involvement and participation in their child's learning.</p> <p>> Practice a fully inclusive approach that meets the diverse needs of all children.</p> <p>> Provide active opportunities to promote 'appropriate' behaviours through intrinsic motivation and coaching children to develop self - help skills so they can look after themselves.</p> <p>> Provide opportunities to extend children's communication skills by demonstrating good listening and language skills, ensuring the needs of children who communicate in alternative ways are met.</p>	<p>> Know they are at the forefront of the adult's mind.</p>

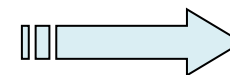
The three influencing domains of school readiness



Families / home environment will		Professional / early years setting / school will	This will enable the child to – or my child will be able to do..
<i>From a family's point of view this means...</i>		<i>From a professional's / setting's /school's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a child's point of view this means...</i>
4.Communication and Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Making time to chat, play and read together with your child. > Having fun with your child: playing, talking, and sharing activities, experiences together regularly and frequently. > Celebrating your child's achievement in speech, language, and communication development by singing, signing songs. Look for ideas on 50 things to do before you're five, Tiny Happy People and Hungry Little Minds. > Reading or telling stories with and to your child, every day if you can, introducing new words and sounds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Consider individual interests and needs, plan purposeful activities that engage and interest all the children. > Enthuse, engage, and motivate all children and allow them the opportunity to make decisions, giving them the confidence to learn around the characteristics of effective learning⁶. > Practitioners understand activities to support SLC development at Universal and Targeted levels and when to refer to Specialist Services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Develop their knowledge, skills and understanding across all areas of learning as demonstrated through the characteristics of effective learning. > Make comments about what they have learnt and begin to ask questions to clarify thoughts and ideas. > Feel that their efforts will be recognised and celebrated. > Begin to be able to express their idea and feelings for themselves and others. > Engage with / opportunity to listen to stories and engage in conversations.

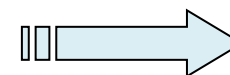
⁶ Department for Education (2020) *Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage*. September 2020 [online] (accessed 26/11/2020)

The three influencing domains of school readiness



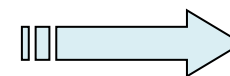
Families / home environment will		Professional / early years setting / school will	This will enable the child to – or my child will be able to do..
<i>From a family's point of view this means...</i>		<i>From a professional's / setting's /school's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a child's point of view this means...</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Encouraging your child to think of their own ideas of stories and play, listening carefully to them and following their play. 		
5. Characteristics of effective learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Using everyday experiences as learning opportunities and giving your child opportunities to take the lead. > Encouraging your child to try out their ideas and different ways of doing things. > Supporting your child's self-help / independence skills so they learn to do things for themselves e.g. feed themselves, wash their hands. > Promoting children's independence skills by giving them choices. > Providing opportunities for your child to meet and relate to others including adults beyond close family and friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Share ideas about how to support children's development and learning with parents, including home routines. > Ensure opportunities for children to exercise independence, autonomy and resilience rather than 'doing things' for children. > Understand the different stages of child development, how these relate to each other and how to plan developmentally appropriate responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Play and work co-operatively, learning to accept others' differences, to be resilient. > Feel that the contributions they make are valued and respected. > Initiate activities, showing their own initiative and making decisions. > Develop their concentration and becoming deeply involved in activities. > Begin to manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, by using self-care skills e.g. eating, tooth brushing, toileting, washing hands and dressing.

The three influencing domains of school readiness



Families / home environment will		Professional / early years setting / school will	This will enable the child to – or my child will be able to do..
<i>From a family's point of view this means...</i>		<i>From a professional's / setting's /school's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a child's point of view this means...</i>
	so they positively experience socialising, sharing toys and turn taking.		> Start to develop their turn taking and co-operative skills.
6. Personal, Social and Emotional Development Communication and Language.	> Doing familiar and different things together and showing your interest in discovering new things. e.g. the '50 things to do before you're five' app, has lots of low cost/no costs ideas and activities to try as a family. > Giving encouraging feedback and showing an interest.	> Ensure the '50 things to do before you're five' app and resources are shared with parents/carers. > Offer a high quality and inclusive environment inside and out where continuous provision is sufficiently flexible and challenging to meet individual needs, interests and motivations through the different areas of learning.	> Have a broad range of knowledge and skills gained through everyday experiences and play. Whilst also setting simple goals, give focused attention and be able to understand instructions involving more than one idea.
7. Physical Development, Wellbeing and Coordination	> Ensuring your child is as active, well-nourished and healthy as they can be. > Supporting your child to be a healthy weight for their height and age. > Allowing enough time for your child to have rest, relaxation, and play. > Providing opportunities for physical /	> Ensuring families are aware of the importance of childhood immunisations. Signposting on to the Health Visiting Team for further information. > Ensuring the setting has all the resources required to enable children to be physically active / undertake active play as recommended for their age. > Ensuring the setting or professional supports the parent and child to understand the importance of healthy food choices.	> Be active and healthy. > Sleep well. > Know how to keep themselves safe and begin to negotiate space and obstacles safely with consideration for themselves and others. > Understands the importance of

The three influencing domains of school readiness



Families / home environment will	Professional / early years setting / school will	This will enable the child to – or my child will be able to do..
<i>From a family's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a professional's / setting's /school's point of view this means...</i>	<i>From a child's point of view this means...</i>
<p>active play as recommended for their age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Establishing a good bedtime routine. > Brushing your child's teeth twice a day for two minutes. > Ensuring your child is registered with a dentist and has been for regular visits. > Ensuring your child is registered with a GP and accessing support from your Health Visiting Team. > Ensuring your child is up to date with their immunisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Ensuring families are engaged with the Healthy Visiting Service and your setting contribute to the 2-year-old integrated review. > Ensuring families are aware of the importance of good oral health and registering their child with a dentist. > Ensuring families are signposted to the Calderdale Family Journey. 	<p>healthy food choices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Have good dental health.

Supporting Resources

[50 Things To Do Before You're Five](#) – this free to download app gives you 50 activities that parents, and carers can support their children to try out and repeat.

[Calderdale Family Journey](#) is a new webpage created for families, with families. It follows the family journey from pre-pregnancy right through to a child starting school. It tells you about the key steps along the way, what parents/carers can expect from their midwife and health visiting team and the ways parents/carers can support their child to be ready for reception at age 4.

[Calderdale Family Journey video](#) – created with parents for parents about supporting their child to be school ready.

[Chief Medical Officer Physical Activity Guidelines for children](#) Active children are healthy, happy, school ready and sleep better. Find out about the guidelines for the different ages and stages of child development.

[Healthy Early Years Calderdale](#)

An online health and well-being guide for parents of children aged birth to five years.

[Hungry Little Minds](#) - Simple, fun activities for kids, from newborn to five.

[ICAN resource](#) that outlines Speech Language and Communication development to help parents understand typical development.

[Tiny Happy People](#) - helps you develop your child's communication skills. Explore simple activities and play ideas and find out about their amazing early development.

Supporting Services

Calderdale Community Midwifery

Support from the Calderdale community midwifery team. For non-urgent queries:

- Phone 01422 261364

Calderdale Public Health Early Years' Service (PHEYS)

Support from the Health Visiting Team (breastfeeding, maternal mental health, in pregnancy and for children from birth to 5 years):

- Phone: 030 0304 5076.
- Facebook: [Locala Health Visiting Calderdale](#).

Children's Centres offer a friendly one-stop shop for families with young children. They are welcoming places where there are activities for families and children, health services, training opportunities and support. To find out more about the services at Children's Centre please visit:

- www.childrencentres.co.uk
- www.surestartchildrenscentresnhp.org.uk

Early Years & Childcare Sufficiency Team: For information on early years, childcare and services to support your family call 01422 392576
email fis@calderdale.gov.uk

Healthy Futures Calderdale

Health and well-being advice, support, signposting and referral service from public health nurses. This is for school-aged children and their families:

- Phone: 030 33 309974.
- Social media, search for "Healthy Futures Calderdale".

New - Chat Health confidential secure text messaging service launched on 27th April 2020:

- Text: 07480 635297 for the young people's service.
- Text: 07507 332157 for the parents and carers service.

Libraries for Children

Joining the library is free for everyone. For details on any early years' specific events or activities in Calderdale contact the Early Years Librarian

- Phone: 01422 392638

Open Minds Partnership (was Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - CAMHS)

Are you a parent/carers, young person or professionals who has concerns about the emotional health of a young person? Please contact the First Point of Contact:

- Phone: 01422 300 001.
- Email: firstpointofcontact@calderdalecamhs.org.uk.

Safeguarding Calderdale

Advice and support if you are worried about any adult or child:

- Phone: 01422 393336 for the Multi Agency Screening Team.
- Phone: 01422 288000 for the Out-of-hours Emergency Duty Team.

Supporting Documents

4Children (2015) *What to expect, when?* March 2015.[pdf] Available [here](#)

4Children (2021) *What to expect in the early years foundation stage: A guide for parents.* Available [here](#)

Calderdale Council (2019) *50 things to do before you're five.* Available [here](#)

Calderdale Council. *Vision 2024.* Available [here](#)

Calderdale Council and NHS Calderdale Clinical Commissioning Group. *Healthy Early Years A parents guide from birth to five.* Available [here](#)

Department for Education (2020) *Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage.* September 2020 [online] Available [here](#)

Department for Education (2015) *Summer-born children 'to get the right to start school later.* 8 September [Press Release] Available [here](#)

Department for Education (2021) *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage.* September 2021. Available [here](#)

Department for Education and the Department of Health (2011) *Supporting families in the Foundation Years.* Available [here](#)

Grimmer, T. (2018) *School Readiness and the Characteristics of effective learning. The essential guide for early years practitioners.* February 2018. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Hampshire County Council (2013) Hampshire County Council Position Statement. *School Readiness*, January 2013.

Kent County Council, (2016) Education and Young People's Directorate. *School Readiness*, February 2016

Public Health England (2020) *Best Start in Speech, Language and Communication.* 30 October 2020. Available [here](#)

United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (2012) *School Readiness: a conceptual framework.* April 2012. Available [here](#)

World Health Organisation (2019) *Guidelines on Physical Activity, Sedentary Behaviour and Sleep for children under five years of age.* 2 April 2019 [pdf] Available [here](#)

*On behalf of the Mind the Gap group,
Rachel Smith, Health Improvement Specialist, Calderdale Council, October 2022*