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Newsletter

September 2024

Welcome to our Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub September newsletter. We hope you managed to have some kind of break over the summer.

STOP PRESS: We are pleased to announce the government has announced in September an extension of the Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs programme until at least March 2025. The programme supports nurseries by bringing groups together across local areas, to share evidence-informed practice, advice and build lasting local networks. We are delighted by this news and aim to build on our work that we established in July 2023.

During August we had our Ofsted update online training. If you would like to access the recorded session, please email our sph email address.

We aim to repeat some of our more requested training during the autumn term. As part of our legacy we will be aiming to put information on line too. Have you seen Craig and Pip from East Prescott Nursery School, Liverpool who have developed an online recording on how to use a range of musical instruments. Childminders across our Hub have the opportunity to borrow a musical instruments bag but many early years educators will have these musical instruments in your provision. Have you seen Amanda, one of our Hub team who has put together a recording on OAP (Ordinary Available Provision) in early years.

If you would like to watch these recordings and any of our previous recordings re mathematics, early emotions and sensory curriculum, please email us on SpHubNW@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

Don't forget Dingleys SEND opportunities and other CPD opportunities advertised in this newsletter.

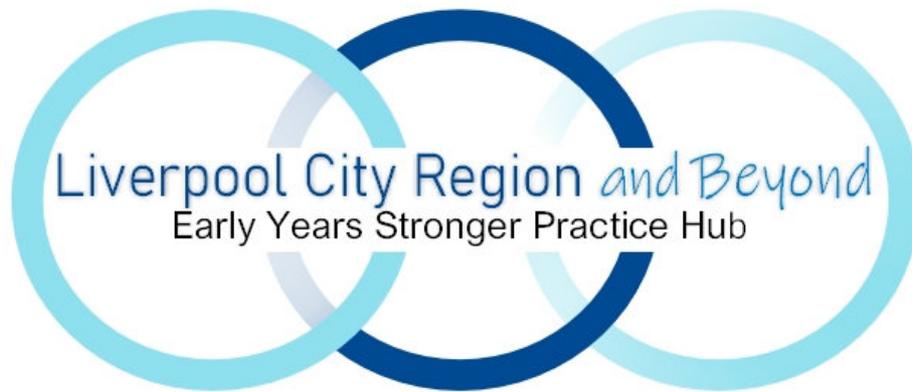
Lesley Curtis

Programme Lead for Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub



September 2024 issue

Welcome, CPD, Movers in the EYFS, SPHub Feedback Form, EEF Annual Survey, EEF Physical Development theme, EEF Self Regulation and Executive Function, Dingley's Promise, Reflections on Forest/Woodland learning Dr. Diane Boyd, Childminding Drop In.



Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub Continual Professional Development Opportunities

All CPD sessions are open to all Early Years practitioners in the Liverpool City Region and Beyond Stronger Practice Hub Local Authorities. To book on any CPD session live or recorded email: sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

LEARNING WALKS

Are you looking for a **Learning Walk** in another school or setting to see early years in action? We have the following on offer. Please email the sph email if you would like to book on.

East Prescott Nursery School, East Prescott Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L14 1PW - Wednesday 25th September at 9.30am – 11.45a.m.

Everton Nursery School, Spencer Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L6 2WF – Thursday 24th October at 9.30a.m. – 11.45a.m.

If you wish to offer your setting for a learning walk to share practice especially linked to research in communication or early mathematics, let us know via email on sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

MOVERS (2 session training)

Thursday 26th September 1-4p.m. and Thursday 10th October 1-4p.m. at Everton Nursery School and Family Centre, Spencer Street, Liverpool, Merseyside, L6 2WF. Face to Face Training. Open to all Early Years practitioners. **FREE Movers book given on the second session for own setting.**

SELF REGULATION IN THE EARLY YEARS (2 session training)

Wednesday 16th October 1-4pm

Wednesday 20th November 1-4pm

at Rainhill Nursery School, Deepdale Dr, Rainhill, Prescot L35 4NW

E-mail the sph email if you would like to book a place.

SpHubNW@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

CONFERENCE

Saturday 5th October 9.15a.m. – 12.15p.m. at **Mazuma Stadium, Morecambe Football Club, Christie Way, Westgate, Morecambe, LA4 4TB**. Small buffet included.

Our theme for the conference is: **'Exploring Woodlands through a Sustainable Lense' with Dr. Diane Boyd**.

E-mail the sph email if you would like to book a place.

SpHubNW@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

EXPLORING NURSERY RHYMES

On Thursday 3rd October 2.30-4.30p.m. at **Everton Nursery School and Family Centre, Spencer Street, L6 2WF**. Explore Nursery Rhymes in a fun session with Faye Johnson (Assistant Headteacher) with **free resource bag given** to try in own setting and report back of how the resource was used. Online session will be produced after the training.

RECORDED SESSIONS

We have recorded six sessions online for staff training:

At the beginning of August we had our **OFSTED UPDATE** online training from School Improvement Liverpool. If you missed the session, please email SpHubNW@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk and we will send you the recording.

OAP (ORDINARY AVAILABLE PROVISION) - Amanda, one of our Hub team has put together a recording on OAP (Ordinary Available Provision) in early years. If you would like to access this 30 minute training sessions, email

USING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS - Craig and Pip from East Prescott Nursery School, Liverpool have developed an online recording on how to use a range of musical instruments. Childminders across our Hub have the opportunity to borrow a musical instruments bag but many early years educators will have these musical instruments in their provision.

If you would like to access this 30 minute training sessions, email sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

MATHEMATICS RECORDED ONLINE – Rebecca Morgan (Nursery Teacher) has recorded a practical session online to share with colleagues to explore mathematics. Email the sph email if you would like to access the session via Vimeo.

EARLY EMOTIONS RECORDED ONLINE

An introduction to early emotional health, the issues children face and links to socio-economic backgrounds, previously by Kaya Doyle (Hub Manager) online live.

Now available as a recorded session – email sph email if you would like to access a recorded session for CPD for yourself or your setting.

SENSORY CURRICULUM RECORDED ONLINE - email our sph email address if you would like to access for your school or setting a recorded session from Emma-Louise Scott (Nurture Teacher) sharing her experiences and practical examples of a sensory curriculum.

FUTURE SESSION: PEEP – have you signed up to become a PEEP trainer for your local authority?

If you are interested in finding out more about this CPD session email the sph email address and register your interest. Kaya Doyle (Hub Programme Manager) will contact you with more details.

DINGLEY'S PROMISE

If you are a **Liverpool practitioner** you can access Dingley's Promise free. Please register at the following: Click the link, register, then access whenever suits.

<https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/early-years-inclusion-programme/>

Outside of Liverpool please look at the Dingley's Promise website for more information. If you would like to access any of the modules please register an interest in the sph email address.

<https://dingley.org.uk/>

MOVERS IN THE EYFS

MOVERS IN THE EYFS

THE MOVEMENT ENVIRONMENT RATING SCALE (MOVERS) IS A NEW METHOD OF MEASURING THE QUALITY OF ENVIRONMENT AND PEDAGOGY IN WHICH YOUNG CHILDREN ARE ENCOURAGED TO MOVE AND BE PHYSICALLY ACTIVE.



Course Aims and Outcomes:

Have a greater understanding of the importance of children's physical development.

Have a greater understanding of how we can support physical development in the EYFS

Become familiar with the MOVERS document

Use the MOVERS rating scales in your setting to audit your provision and plan for improvements

CPD Sessions are delivered by the **Liverpool City Region and Beyond Stronger Practice Hub**

Face to face training at Everton Nursery School and Family Centre, Spencer Street. L6 2WF

One day CPD split into two half days of delivery with a gap task

1pm – 4pm 1st session THURSDAY 26th SEPTEMBER

1pm – 4pm 2nd session THURSDAY 10th OCTOBER

On the second session you will receive a copy of the document

Open to all Early Years practitioners in the LCR and Beyond Stronger Practice Hub Local Authorities. PVI's, Nursery Schools and EYFS school staff. Please e mail below to secure a place.

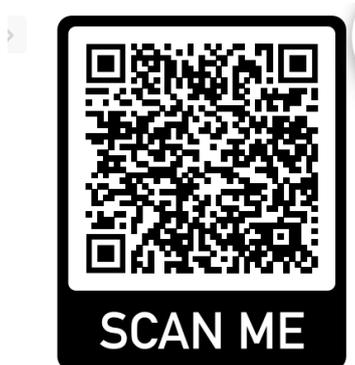


Email: sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

Website: www.evertonnurseryschoolandfamilycentre.org

If you have attended a Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub during 2024 and haven't completed a feedback form, please scan the QR code and complete so we can share your feedback with the National Children's Bureau and the Department for Education. Many thanks.

**Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub
Feedback Form**



On Wednesday 10th July, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) launched a new Physical Development theme on the Early Years Evidence Store.

[Physical Development theme](#)



The Education Endowment Foundation
[Self Regulation and Executive Function](#)

The Education Endowment Foundation website has a new page in the Early Years Evidence Store that includes approaches and practices linked to Self Regulation and Executive Function in the EYFS. Evidence shows that educators can implement approaches that benefit young children's self-regulation and/or executive function. The EEF's Early Years Toolkit finds that self-regulation approaches may also be effective in promoting successful learning. Developing self-regulation and executive function are recognised as crucial parts of children's development across many areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework. Self-regulation forms part of a child's 'personal, social, and emotional development' (PSED) in the EYFS. The 'characteristics of effective teaching and learning' in the EYFS describes some of the behaviours educators may observe as children develop self-regulation and executive function.



[The EEF's Annual Survey](#)

NEW: Help shape the future of the EEF's support and resources
The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has launched its annual sector survey to find out more about the priorities and pressures of practitioners working across a variety of stages. These insights will help them to make sure that the support they offer the education sector is as useful and relevant as possible. Those who complete the survey will be entered into a prize draw to win £50 of Amazon vouchers and a selection of EEF printed guidance reports. There is also the opportunity to sign up to EEF Exchange, a growing community of evidence users working in education, with further incentives available for contributing, including exclusive invitations to join paid focus groups, joining a community of evidence users, advance access to EEF publications.

Find out more and take the survey: [Here](#)



Dingley's Promise

Are you aware of Dingley's Promise - Transforming the Early Years for child with SEND?

If not have a look on <https://dingley.org.uk/dingleys-promise-training/>

If you are based in Liverpool and wish to access any courses, let us know as these are free and we can provide you with a code to access the website and courses. If you are outside of Liverpool and are interested in Dingley's Promise, either contact Dingley's Promise directly and reference our Stronger Practice Hub or our sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk email for more details.

Reflections on
Forest/Woodland learning
Dr. Diane Boyd



Sustainable Development Goal 15 Life on Land specifically highlights the need for everyone to ‘protect’ and ‘restore’ and ‘sustain terrestrial ecosystems.’ It also requires us to support the management of land use and become active participants in halting and reversing ‘land degradation and biodiversity loss’. But what does that mean in terms of early childhood education and is it relevant with young children? As professional early years educators (SDG 4 Quality Education) It is important that everyone understands the importance of the terminology and can relate it to their context.

Let us unpick some of these terms – **sustain terrestrial ecosystems.**

National Geographic defines this “as a land-based community of organisms” that is dependent upon the particular place where they are found, for example, grasslands, deciduous forests or deserts. This reiterates the importance of drawing on and being connected to the local community/neighbourhood which is outside and beyond the gates of your setting. Developing ecological connections supports children in their understanding in becoming familiar with the different aspects of their locality. Additionally, inside the gates you could also create examples of local ‘land -based organisms’, such as wildflower meadows, marshy pond areas and sandy rock terrains. By developing indigenous gardens for children to use in their play, it will provide a valuable resource for the children’s scientific discovery and explorations that are needed for the EYFS(DfE,2024) specific area ‘Understanding the World.’ It will also offer opportunities to extend early literacy and numeracy through sustained shared thinking, extending and consolidating organically. During the Stronger Hub NW Beach Training in Morecambe Bay one participant acknowledged her nursery was not near enough to the coastline for the children to visit. But through our reflective conversations and sharing of ideas, she realised that the same principles of the beach (place -based learning) can be applied to her own countryside situation too. She became excited at the thought of engaging with her local place-based locality, in this case developing a strong relationship with her neighbouring farmer, understanding the hedgerows and wooded areas surrounding her setting to enhance their pedagogical learning.

Land degradation and biodiversity loss.

As quality educators it is important to develop relationships within your locality (both human and non-human) through neighbourhood walks during the year. Not only will it provide opportunities for seasonal variations to be noted – such as the leaves on the trees, (Questions when do the leaves start to change colour? Do all trees start changing at the same time?

Are all the greens the same green?); the changes in the soil in the parks (When observing can you tell the difference between drought ridden soil or frost hardened soil?) or water in ponds or rivers (How can you tell how high the water was previously? Can you see a current moving in the water?) but also to notice human impacts (What non-human species was living in this area before diggers moved in?). Answering these types of questions together would support children authentically with the Specific Area, Understanding the World (DfE,2024) which requires you to guide “children to make sense of their physical world”.

Consider this previous example- when reflecting upon the nursery that was going to draw on local country lanes and hedgerow.

During the year whilst out together walking in the lanes the children will be naturally immersed in the changes of the hedgerows, for example, their colour, depth of foliage, branch thickness, and sounds. Hedgerows are extremely important in nature and become alive with young birds furiously tweeting hungrily for food during the nesting period, and the children would be able to use their senses to become part of it respectfully. Hedgelink.org UK ([5 threatened British species that rely on hedgerows | \(hedgelink.org.uk\)](https://www.hedgelink.org.uk)) provides details of lost or endangered species, such as song thrushes, dormice or butterflies which are declining because of hedgerows are being destroyed for housing projects by humans. Children need to be aware of this ‘loss’ and have opportunities to reflect upon it and consider solutions. The foreword to the DfE Strategy on Sustainability and Climate Change (2023) actively encourages children to have hope that they can be ‘agents of change’. It also stresses children must be given the “truth” about environmental loss and how it is impacting on the ecosystems locally, nationally and globally and crucially be ‘knowledge aware’. [Sustainability and climate change: a strategy for the education and children's services systems - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114242/sustainability_and_climate_change_a_strategy_for_the_education_and_childrens_services_systems.pdf)

Being ‘*knowledge aware*’ is a must for both the educator and child. When you are in the woodlands with children, remember it is important to use the correct terminology rather than just saying leaf or tree. Supporting the children to identify the names of local indigenous foliage and be able to differentiate between evergreen or deciduous trees will develop their early literacy skills as well as early research techniques. One participant during the recent Stronger Hub NW Forest training in Liverpool commented upon her lack of confidence in using the correct terminology. She reflected on an incident in her nursery when a young child brought a sycamore key to her (she had no idea what it was or which tree it came from) and asked what it was.

She reflected on how in the past she would have ignored or glossed over this question due to her own lack of knowledge or confidence. Now, however, after the Forest training she excitedly shared how they both researched together, finding out what it was, enhancing both her knowledge and that of the child.



By developing children's relationship with their ecological indigenous trees, plant life or hedgerows, care and empathy for their planet will organically evolve, as you cannot care for things you do not know by name! As educators we need children to become "wisdom shepherds" (Boyd, Lee and Scollan,2024) to understand how to "*nurture and protect their ecological world and knowledge acquired to co-exist*". Forest and woodland experiences provide children with learning opportunities that highlight the interconnection of their ecological world and for children to see all non-human inhabitants as equal within this system. This strengthens not just SDG 15 Life on Land, but also SDG 13 Climate Action (UNESCO,2015).

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) highlights the importance of Physical Development in early childhood in their latest publication. The woodland/ forest area provides multiple ways to develop both fine and motor skills, as well as this empathy and care for their planet. When considering their fine motor skills, woodland experiences provide multiple opportunities to develop '*hand muscle strength, wrist movement, and pincer control*', key requirements noted in the EEF research. The research also highlights that physical development in early childhood, is crucial in supporting children's capacity '*to engage with the world around them,*' and helps to lay '*the building blocks for later physical capabilities and health*' [EEF | Physical Development \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) Key requirements for those empathetic and caring self-regulatory behaviours in early childhood.

We need children to love their locality, their woodland and all it embraces. When considering fine motor control activities you could do with children in woodland spaces, foraging for wild blackberries is a wonderful example. From an early literacy perspective this also involves identifying the correct berry and being able to recognise and articulate the various stages of ripeness. Seasonally children will start to make connections and recognise different signs of Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter resonating with one of the Forest School Principles([The 6 Forest School Principles \(thepracticalforestschool.com\)](https://www.thepracticalforestschool.com)) The language opportunities in foraging for blackberries could initially start with colour identification- green to red to black. But by observing the differing stages of maturity, the children will also be able to articulate that blackberries that are not ready for picking are small and hard, whereas the ripe ones are fatter, fuller and squishy! But be careful, however, to only take those that are ready. As a quality educator (SDG 4 Quality Education) try to research and become aware of other foraging opportunities in woodlands – for example, can you eat Dandelions? Or Hawthorn leaves or nettles?



These valuable early literacy exchanges “*based on their immediate experiences and activities*” are “*likely to be more effective*” (*PREPARING FOR LITERACY Improving communication, language and literacy in the early year, EEF research*) if they are consistent and relevant to the children’s context. [Preparing_Literacy_Guidance_2018.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684842/Preparing_Literacy_Guidance_2018.pdf) ([d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/684842/Preparing_Literacy_Guidance_2018.pdf))

However, remember that practitioners need to have the awareness of how to keep children safe whether it is foraging for berries with thorns and prickles, by encouraging careful hands (strong fine motor skills). Or when children are stung by nettles, so ensure that as part of the woodland experience children are shown and understand the relevance of those dock leaves nearby!

Highlighting the importance of understanding ecological life cycles for observation, you could also grow fruit in your nursery in planters if you do not have a forest or garden area on site. Crucial statistics from the Soil Association claim the UK is importing a massive 80% of fruit from abroad, which is simply unsustainable when our global food system is so fragile. The earlier we can encourage children (and their parents) to grow fruit and vegetables, or to shop locally, reducing the carbon footprint, the better it is for everyone living on the planet.

The Northwest Stronger Hub provided both beach and woodland training for practitioners this year, linking the pedagogical experiences with the Sustainable Development Goals (UNESCO,2015). A key element of the training was the opportunity to consider what constitutes a ‘forest area’ and the participants were able to reflect upon the outdoor area at Everton and were able to identify crucial elements they would like to incorporate into their own Forest area. The Forest training stressed that wherever possible, whether beach, park, or woodlands, children must develop their gross motor skills using different textures and undulating spaces to climb, clamber, roll down, and then climb back up, pulling themselves along. These were clear at Everton for the participants to observe.



In our reflective session, as a group we sat at the top of the bank and reflected on the peacefulness and how important it was to allow for quiet moments. Making daisy chains and flower crowns captivated the idea of a slow pedagogy, which celebrates opportunities for mindfulness, as well as developing fine motor skills.

One practitioner from the training later shared images of the children playing with mud for fun, which is a lovely activity both in the setting or the forest woodland area. Think of all the wonderful mud words children could create whilst making potions and mud patties! You can also introduce new terminology with the children in their mud play, such as kneading and consolidating it further when making bread another time. Through their play and pedagogical experiences children should be able to recognise the importance of wet and dry soil, so they can comprehend the needs of trees and plants growing healthily in their planters or woodland area.



During the forest school site visit two practitioners pondered and reflected upon their need to try and provide an area for digging in their settings. They recognised that they needed to incorporate in their outside area a specific space for the children to use real spades and forks for gross motor development and provide valuable investigation and observation of the soil. EEF research on Physical Development highlighted the need for children to “use their whole body” and learning to manipulate a small scale wooden/metal spade (not plastic) would support this organically.



Providing children with real tools outside is important as it develops children's physical capabilities but also their independence and confidence. For example, installing outside taps in the woodland area will help children to understand water conservation (SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation) as well as strengthen their fine motor skills when turning the taps off and on. One setting demonstrated the importance of children being responsible (developing self-regulation) encouraging them to tidy up after their mud play, providing small scale sweeping brushes.



During the Stronger Hub Training reflective session, another practitioner shared how she encouraged creativity by giving children mud and leaves to create imaginative patterns and art, in their free play. It is important that we allow children to feel mud/soil and let them understand the complexity of it naturally over the seasons, even if you do not have a designated woodland mud area in your setting.



As a result of the Stronger Hub NW Training opportunities another nursery has embraced the idea of embedding the 17 SDGs into their planning- and highlights to parents and children now the interconnections between all 17. Because of attending the forest school /woodland training, they now embed the picture logos for example, SDG 3, 4 13 and 15 are clearly visible in their plant project plans for preschool. By using the language of sustainability with both practitioner, parent and child, the nursery is making green steps towards Agenda 2030(UNESCO,2015).

Honey Pot
day nursery

Project: Plants

Books

- Errol's garden
- Lola plants a garden
- The amazing life cycle of plants
- Sam plants a sunflower
- Where does my food come from?
- Let's grow vegetables

Things to do at home

- Visiting allotments.
- Growing own vegetables/plants in the garden.
- Visiting the garden centre/flower show.

Links to the Sustainable Development Goals

<p>15 LIFE ON LAND</p>	<p>13 CLIMATE ACTION</p>
<p>3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	<p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p>

The NW Stronger Hub will be running a repeat Forest school training in Liverpool in the Autumn term so please watch out for details.

CHILDMINDER INFORMATION:

CHILDMINDER DROP IN

Every Wednesday 9.30-11.30a.m. at Deysbrook Community Centre, Liverpool, L12 4XF.

Every Wednesday 9.30-11.30a.m., term time, St Hilda's Church Hall, Hunts Cross, Stuart Avenue, Liverpool, L25 0NG

If you attend a drop in or meet up with other childminders across the Liverpool City Region and Beyond area, please let us know so we can advertise, allowing local childminder colleagues to attend, join in and network.

WELLCOMM BAGS

If you are a Liverpool Childminder and wish to borrow a Wellcomm bag to use with your children, email the sph email as we can support you and loan a Wellcomm bag to you for a period of time.

CHILDMINDER RESOURCE BAGS



CHILDMINDER RESOURCE BAGS

Each bag of carefully selected items will be a welcome addition to your setting which in turn supports your children's development.

Each resource bag is designed to be used individually, with a group of childminder colleagues and shared as a lending library.

If you would like to access these resources, email us on our sph email address.



<https://www.evertonnurseryschoolandfamilycentre.org/strongerpracticehub>

0151 233 1969

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