

[Visit our website](#)

[Subscribe](#)



# Newsletter September 2025

---



## **Welcome to the September Newsletter.**

September is a busy month with lots of early years settings organising rooms and the outdoors. We are offering a range of support through the Stronger Practice Hub if you are new to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) or would like more inspiration. We have an online Webinar:

**ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS** on Wednesday 17th

September 3.45-4.45p.m. Join us as we explore evidence-based auditing tools you can use to develop high quality Early Years provision. Email the Hub to register [sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk](mailto:sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk)

**Are you looking for Mathematics inspiration?** Unlock the Building Blocks of Early Mathematical Development!

✨ Join us for an exciting CPD training series designed to explore the fundamental skills that spark a lifelong love of maths — tailored for children aged:

😊 2–3 years

🔍 3–4 years

🎒 4–5 years

### **What to Expect:**

- Dive into the theory behind key mathematical principles with a clear, evidence-based approach
- Explore real-life examples and learning in action through focused learning walks
- Tackle gap tasks in your own setting, then share and grow through group networking and feedback
- Boost your CPD portfolio with enhanced, hands-on experiences
- Share evidence of learning through bespoke case studies, showcasing progress and inspiring practice.

**See it. Do it. Master it.** Join a community of practitioners committed to making maths magical for

young learners! We are offering a network of 5 sessions for you to attend at Evelyn Street Primary Academy and Nursery, Evelyn Street, Warrington, WA5 1BD. See the dates below. Email the Hub to book a place on any of the sessions

[sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk](mailto:sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk)

	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Learning Walk and Face to Face training</b>
<b>September 2025</b>	Teaching the association between number and quantity	Thursday 25th September 9.30-11.30
<b>November 2025</b>	Promoting fluency with numbers and sequences	Thursday 27th November 9.30-11.30
<b>December 2025</b>	Teaching problem solving skills for maths	Thursday 11th December 9.30-11.30
<b>January 2026</b>	Teaching and modelling how to make comparisons and connections	Thursday 22nd January 9.30-11.30
<b>February 2026</b>	Facilitating mathematical language	Thursday 26th February 9.30-11.30

**Don't forget to join our Leadership Network online:**

This will be held the first **Tuesday of each month** on  
Workplace **Zoom**

**3.45pm – 4.30pm**

**Meeting ID: 881 3994 7902**

**Passcode: 005369**

**The same ID and passcode for every monthly  
Tuesday meeting.**

**October 7th**

**November 4th**

**December 2nd**

**January 6th 2026**

**February 3rd**

**March 3rd**

**We also have a SEND/Early Years Network:**

This will be held the first **Thursday** of each month on  
Workplace Zoom

**6.00-7.00pm**

**Meeting ID: 874 2439 5942**

**Passcode: 774607**

**The same ID and passcode for every monthly  
Thursday meeting.**

**October 2nd**

**November 6th**

**December 4th**

**February 5th 2026**

**March 5th 2026**

Don't forget we have our **Ordinary Available Inclusive  
Provision** Conference:

**Saturday 27th September 9.45a.m. to 12.15p.m.** at the  
Holiday Inn, Caton Road, Lancaster, LA1 3RA.

Speakers include: Alex Gower-Jones exploring

**Communication and Language Strategies**, Highfield Nursery School staff **sharing their practice working with children with SEND** and Emma-Louise Scott (Teacher from an Early Years Resource Provision) **sharing strategies of working with neurodiverse 2-5 year olds.**

Audience: All early years professionals working with children aged 0-5 years.

Please contact

[sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk](mailto:sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk) to reserve your funded place.

---

# Ordinary Available Inclusive Provision

Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub are offering an **Ordinary Available Inclusive Provision Conference** on

**Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> September 2025, 9.45am – 12.15pm**

**At the Holiday Inn, Caton Road,  
Lancaster LA1 3RA**

**Speakers include:**

Alex Gower-Jones exploring **Communication and Language Strategies**, Highfield Nursery School staff **sharing their practice working with children with SEND** and Emma-Louise Scott (Teacher from an Early Years Resource Provision) **sharing strategies of working with neuro-diverse 2-5 year olds.**

**Audience: All early years professionals working with children aged 0-5 years**

Please contact [sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk](mailto:sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk) to reserve your funded place.



**Funded by  
UK Government**



## **September 2025 issue**

**Welcome, Early Mathematical Development, Ordinary Available Inclusive Provision Conference, Carbon Action Plan, Early Years and SEND Professional Development Network, EYFS Leadership Network, CONCEPT CAT, Enabling Environments, BBC CBeebies Parenting, DfE EYFS Statutory Framework, Foundation Years toilet training, CPD.**

---

---

### **Are you looking for inspiration to write or add to your Carbon Action Plan (CAP)?**

Have a look at our Sustainable Hub website (designed with content from Highfield Nursery School/East of England Stronger Practice Hub) that has lots of suggestions to help you begin your journey.

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



# Early Years Sustainable Hub

Search...

Email: [spubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk](mailto:spubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk)

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership.

## Featured Resources

## UNESCO Sustainable Development Goals



<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

## Early Years and SEND Professional Development Network



Liverpool City Region and Beyond Stronger Practice Hub have an Early Years Professional Development Network for the Early Years Sector

The aim of this network is to offer bitesize training, legislation and policy updates, a safe space to ask questions to other professionals and share best practice.

**Audience: Childminders, early years educators and those working in practice with under 5s.**

This will be held the **first Thursday of each month** on Workplace Zoom **6.00-7.00pm**

**Meeting ID: 874 2439 5942**

**Passcode: 774607**

**The same ID and passcode for every monthly Thursday meeting.**

- **August 7<sup>th</sup>**
- **September 4<sup>th</sup>**
- **October 2<sup>nd</sup>**
- **November 6<sup>th</sup>**
- **December 4<sup>th</sup>**
- **February 5<sup>th</sup> 2026**
- **March 5<sup>th</sup> 2026**



## EYFS Leadership Network

Liverpool City Region and Beyond Stronger Practice Hub have an Early Years Leadership Network for the Early Years Sector.

The aim of this network is to offer, legislation and policy updates, updates on training for your staff teams, a safe space to ask questions to other professionals and share best practice.

**Audience: School leaders, EYFS Coordinators, Nursery Manager, Childminder Leads, LA reps**

This will be held the first **Tuesday of each month** on Workplace Zoom  
**3.30pm – 4.15pm**

**Meeting ID: 881 3994 7902**  
**Passcode: 005369**

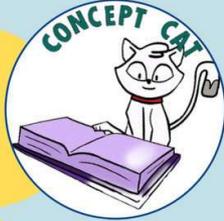
**The same ID and passcode for every monthly Tuesday meeting.**

- **August 5th**
- **September 2nd**
- **October 7th**
- **November 4th**
- **December 2nd**
- **January 6<sup>th</sup> 2026**
- **February 3rd**
- **March 3rd**

---

## CONCEPT CAT

by Alex Gower-Jones




# The Purrrr-fect Way to Teach Vocabulary

## by Alex Gower-Jones

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION AND BEYOND EARLY YEARS STRONGER PRACTICE HUB



**Alex Gower-Jones** has over twenty years of experience in primary education, and has worked across a range of roles from a teacher to a leader and now as an Early Years consultant. She has experience of developing and delivering evidence-based professional development. She has supported educators to build their skills across a variety of early years settings. Her passion lies in Communication and Language and she is driven by a genuine commitment to improving outcomes for young children.

### What if the secret to boosting children’s language skills had whiskers, fur and a playful pounce?



Following the results of the Concept Cat trial, published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF), it looks as though Concept Cat could be part of the solution to the current challenges we are facing with children’s language development. The desperate reality is that, according to [Speech and Language Link](#), around 25% of children are starting school with poor language skills, particularly those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds. As language skills at age five are the biggest predictor of later attainment, addressing this issue should be high on every educator’s agenda. A challenging aspect of language for children in early years age, is early conceptual vocabulary. Enter Concept Cat! Concept cat is a clever, clever cat who is adored by both the educators who use him to explicitly teach vocabulary, and the children who want to carry him around the setting and apply that new language in their play. By the time the programme comes to an end, Concept Cat is usually so loved and overworked, he looks like he could use a catnap that lasts all summer.



### So how does the programme work?

The beauty of Concept Cat is that the programme’s principles fit seamlessly with early years pedagogy. Concept Cat introduces children to concepts like ‘empty’, ‘under’, and ‘long’ through a structured and engaging programme. This is delivered over a full academic year (approximately 30 weeks), where each week coincides with the introduction of a new key word. During the explicit, whole class, teaching element, children hear the word, say the word, act the word and sing along (at the tops of their voices) to the catchy Concept Cat songs. Educators then use the toy cat to act out the scripted story which, by the end of the week, children will often be able to join in with and retell independently during their own play.

Every educator in the setting has a role to play as they 'activate' the children's learning of the new word of the week. The conceptual vocabulary is used everywhere in the setting which gives the children opportunities to deepen their understanding within meaningful contexts. Only minor adjustments need to be made to the environment to provide children with repeated exposure to this new vocabulary. For example, if the word for the week is 'empty', sand and water trays would be available, and staff would incorporate the word 'empty' during periods of play. The word would also be used during snack times and lunchtime, for example, 'Oh I can see you've finished your milk, your cup is empty.'. Through these quality interactions, educators use everyday conversations to support the children's learning of the concepts.



Families are involved through simple activities and share photos of the children using the vocabulary at home. During the trial, children sometimes arrived at settings with physical items to demonstrate the concept, 'I found a long stick on the way to Nursery.' Families commented on how much their child enjoyed retelling the stories and singing the songs at home too.



## What was the impact of the programme?

In July 2025, the results of the research trial to test the impact of Concept Cat, were published by the EEF. The evaluation found that children in Concept Cat settings made, on average, **two months' additional progress in understanding conceptual vocabulary**. Children who were eligible for the **Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) made three months' additional progress**. As Concept Cat specifically teaches vocabulary which is integral to the maths and science curriculum, children in Concept Cat settings also demonstrated, on average, **two months' additional progress in their early numeracy development**, compared to children in other settings. Now consider how your setting intentionally introduces, teaches and models new vocabulary in context? Do you have a consistent, robust approach in place? If not, could



## Are you interested in learning more?

### **The Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub**

Our Stronger Practice Hub is currently offering the opportunity for settings to receive fully funded access to the Concept Cat programme. This offer will include training for educators, resources and bespoke, in-person coaching. If you are interested in accessing this offer, please contact the Hub using the details below. You can find more information on other offers from the Stronger Practice Hub [here](#).

### **Concept Cat Programme Resources**

If your setting would like to explore the Concept Cat programme and the related resources further, please visit the **'Thinking Talking' website**.

### **The Education Endowment Foundation**

Please visit the EEF's website [here](#) if you are interested in reading the full report on the Concept Cat Trial. To learn more about other approaches to the teaching and modelling of vocabulary, visit the EEF's Early Years Evidence store [here](#).



<https://www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk/hubs/nw/liverpool-city-region-and-beyond-eysph>



[sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk](mailto:sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk)



0151 233 1969



Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub  
C/O Everton Nursery School and Family Centre  
Spencer Street  
Liverpool  
L6 2WF



Please scan the QR code and sign-up to receive news from our Hub by email, including upcoming CPD and events, links to additional resources, and more.





# ONLINE WEBINAR ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS



Save the Date  
**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September**  
**3.45-4.45p.m.**

**EMAIL THE HUB TO REGISTER**

[sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk](mailto:sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk)



Join us as we explore evidence-based auditing tools you can use to develop high quality Early Years provision.

**DELIVERED BY THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION AND  
BEYOND EARLY YEARS STRONGER PRACTICE HUB**

**Funded by  
UK Government**

# CBeebies

## PARENTING

**BBC CBeebies Parenting** has launched a brand-new [Skills for Starting School](#) collection to support families. The resources include expert-informed tips and fun activities to help with everything from building independence and easing separation anxiety, to supporting language development, and listening and attention skills.

---



Department  
for Education

DfE has published new versions of the [EYFS Statutory Framework](#), which come into effect on 1 September 2025, with significant changes to safeguarding requirements. NSPCC Learning has [published](#) a handy briefing summarising the safeguarding and welfare changes including whistleblowing; child absences; references; and safer eating. Additionally, DfE has produced a [template](#) for references to assist with safer recruitment.

---



Free toilet training posters and handouts for early years settings and parents are now available to [download](#) from Foundation Years.

---

## **CPD RECORDED SESSIONS**

We have a number of recorded sessions online for staff training:

**CELEBRATING DIVERSITY, PROMOTING INCLUSION, AND ANTI-RACIST CULTURES IN THE EARLY YEARS** 25

minutes with Sian Phillips - Anti-Racism Advocate/Researcher/Consultant.

**MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF PUPIL PREMIUM IN THE EARLY YEARS** 20 minutes with Kaya Doyle, Programme

Manager.

**INSET SESSION 1 TEACHING AND MODELLING LANGUAGE:**

30 minutes with Alex Gower-Jones (Independent Consultant). This has an accompany written sheet of activities to support this recorded Inset session.

**INSET SESSION 2 TEACHING AND MODELLING VOCABULARY:**

30 minutes with Alex Gower-Jones (Independent Consultant). This has an accompany written sheet of activities to support this recorded Inset session.

**INSET SESSION 1 EARLY LITERACY – TEACHING**

**SOUND DISCRIMINATION** 30 minutes with Alex Gower-Jones (Independent Consultant).

**INSET SESSION 2 EARLY LITERACY – TEACHING**

**SOUND MANIPULATION** 30 minutes with Alex Gower-Jones (Independent Consultant).

**INTERACTIVE READING CONFERENCE:** Conference from 29th March on Interactive Reading re 1 hour, 30 minutes with Alex Gower-Jones (Independent Consultant).

**17 SUSTAINABLE GOALS:** Conference from Saturday 22nd March on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals – An Introduction re 2 hours with Diane Boyd.

**WORKING WITH 0-3's:** An introduction to working with children 0-3 years by Amanda Quirk (Early Years Advisory Teacher).

**SENSORY FUN** Tiny Happy People sensory fun for babies indoors and outdoors with low cost/no cost activities shared by Denise Wright (Independent Consultant). The webinar shows educators how they can inspire parents to undertake sensory activities at home to support their child's learning and development through play.

**INTERACTIVE READING** online recorded session by Alex Gower-Jones (Independent Consultant) explores how early years educators can explore interactive reading in their practice.

**SKILLS BEFORE WRITING** online recorded session by Amanda Quirk (Early Years Advisory Teacher) has put together an online programme for early years educators exploring skills before early writing.

**EMOTIONAL REGULATION** online recorded session by Maria Beale (SENDSCO) and Emma Doran (Early Years Co-ordinator) from Whitefield Primary School, Liverpool. Maria and Emma share how they have worked with children in the early years and their families exploring emotional regulation.

**NURSERY RHYMES** online recorded session by Faye Johnson, Assistant Headteacher from Everton Nursery School and Family Centre has put together a session on exploring Nursery Rhymes with young children.

**COMMUNICATION AND LANGUAGE** online recorded session by Amanda Quirk, (Early Years Advisory Teacher) has put together an online programme for early years educators exploring communication and language.

**OAP (ORDINARY AVAILABLE PROVISION)** – Amanda Quirk, (Early Years Advisory Teacher) has put together a recording on OAP (Ordinary Available Provision) in early years.

**USING MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS** - Craig and Pip from East Prescot 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.

**MATHEMATICS RECORDED ONLINE** – Rebecca Morgan (Nursery Teacher) from Everton Nursery School and Family Centre has recorded a practical session online to share with colleagues to explore mathematics with under fives.

**SENSORY CURRICULUM RECORDED ONLINE** - Emma-Louise Scott (Nurture Teacher) from Everton Nursery School and Family Centre shares her experiences and practical examples of a sensory curriculum.

### **EARLY EMOTIONS RECORDED ONLINE**

Kaya Doyle (Programme Manager) shares an introduction to early emotional health, the issues children face and links to socio-economic backgrounds.

If you would like to access to any of the recorded training sessions, email

enhubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

Don't forget to access information from our National Stronger Practice website:

<https://www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk/hubs/nw/liverpool-city-region-and-beyond-eysh>

---

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

If you have attended any of our conferences or face to face training,  
please scan the QR code and send us feedback. Many thanks.



0151 233 1969

Share on social



Check out our site



