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Newsletter June 2026



Welcome to our June Early Liverpool City Region Years Stronger Practice Hub Newsletter

As we move into an exciting and busy period see below the announcement of the next 18 Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs nationally, we are keen to share a range of opportunities designed to support collaboration, inspire practice, and strengthen outcomes for our youngest learners in our region.

We are particularly pleased to invite you to our upcoming **Saturday Play Conference**, taking place **online via Zoom** on **Saturday 13th June, from 9:30am to 12:30pm.**

We are delighted to welcome the following speakers:

- Dr Denise Wright – The Importance of Play in the Early Years
- Emma-Louise Scott – Play and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Dr Diane Boyd – Play and Sustainability

This event will celebrate the vital role of play in early years development, offering engaging insights, practical ideas, and the chance to connect with colleagues across the region. We hope you can join us for what promises to be an inspiring and reflective session.

Please see the conference details in the flyer to book onto the conference.

Please also see the flyer to book onto the Learning Walk at **Ganneys Meadow Nursery School on Monday 22nd June 12.30-2.30p.m.**

In addition, we are hosting a **STEM Learning Walk at East Prescott Nursery School on Tuesday 16th June from 9:15 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

See the flyer to book onto the Learning Walk. This visit will provide a valuable opportunity to see high-quality practice in action, explore effective approaches to early STEM learning, and engage in

professional dialogue with peers.

Looking ahead, we are keen to expand our network of **Maths Champion settings**. We are inviting expressions of interest from settings willing to host a learning walk and showcase their practice. Hosting settings will receive **£250 to support the visit (for up to 15 visitors)**. If you are passionate about early maths and would like to share your work, we would love to hear from you. We have a Maths Champions Learning Walk on Thursday 2nd July 9.30a.m. to 11.15a.m. Use this link to book onto the Learning Walk.

<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GPL5>

Finally, we will soon be **recruiting settings to take part in Concept Cat in the autumn term**. This is an exciting opportunity to deepen children's understanding of key concepts through language-rich approaches. If you are interested in participating, please get in touch.

Thank you, as always, for your continued commitment to high-quality early years practice. We look forward to working with you and supporting your ongoing professional journey.

New Early Years Stronger Practice Hub Adviser Opportunities now open.

[Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser for Group-Based Provision](#)

Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs are now looking for applicants to join phase 2 of delivery; applicants will need to be willing to provide support in the areas covered by their local EYSPH. Please note that advisers will be required to work across more than one Local Authority.

[Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser for Childminder Provision](#)

Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs are now looking for applicants to join phase 2 of delivery; applicants will need to be willing to provide support in the areas covered by their local EYSPH. Please note that advisers will be required to work across more than one Local Authority.

Closing date: Monday 6th July 2026, 12 noon

To apply, please complete the EOI, and email it to:

SpHubNW@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

June 2026 issue

Welcome, A Growing Network for the North West, Math's Champion, Early Years and SEND Professional Development Network, EYFS Leadership Network, Saturday Play Conference, STEM Learning walk, Nuffield Foundation Baby room final report launch, Wirral Learning Walk, The Education Endowment Foundation Early Years Insights, Send and Play, Dfe Safer sleep, Starting Reception, Listening to Children Listening to Trees, New screen time guidance, Childminder Network Padlet, 'Let's Talk' Childminding Network, CPD Recorded Sessions, CBeebies Parenting, Updates.

A Growing Network for the North West

We are delighted to congratulate **Evelyn Street Primary and Nursery Academy, Warrington and Duke Street Nursery School, Chorley** on being awarded Early Years Stronger Practice Hub status and joining ourselves and **Bright Future North West Early Years Stronger Practice Hub** as part of the expanded North West Stronger Practice Hub network.

This expansion forms part of the national commitment to double the number of Stronger Practice Hubs across England, recognising the positive impact the programme has had in supporting evidence-informed practice, professional development, and improved outcomes for children. We are also excited to be working alongside Ambition Institute, who have taken on the role of delivery partner for the programme. <https://www.ambition.org.uk/news/early-years-stronger-practice-hubs/>

The growth in hub numbers will allow each hub to work more closely with a smaller group of Local Authorities, strengthening local relationships and increasing our capacity to provide responsive, high-quality support to the early years.

Local Authority coverage from September 2026:

Evelyn Street Primary Academy Stronger Practice Hub will support:

- Warrington
- Halton
- Cheshire East
- Cheshire West and Chester

Duke Street Nursery School Stronger Practice Hub will support:

- Lancashire
- Cumberland
- Westmorland and Furness
- Blackpool
- Blackburn with Darwin

Liverpool City Region Early Years Stronger Practice Hub will

continue to support:

- Liverpool
- Sefton
- Wirral
- St Helens
- Knowsley

Bright Future North West Early Years Stronger Practice Hub will

continue to support:

- Trafford
- Salford
- Manchester
- Bury
- Bolton
- Stockport
- Oldham
- Tameside
- Rochdale
- Wigan

The introduction of two additional hubs in the North West is a significant opportunity for the region. It will enable us to deepen our engagement with Local Authorities, Best Start in Life programmes, Family Hubs, education partners, and early years networks, while continuing to share evidence-informed practice that improves outcomes for children and families.

<https://www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk/what-are-eysphs>

We look forward to working alongside our fellow hubs as we continue to build a stronger, more connected early years sector across the North West and beyond

Read the national announcement regarding the 18 new Stronger Practice Hubs:

18 New Settings Awarded Stronger Practice Hub Status

<https://www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk/hubs/national/eysphs-updates/resources/18-new-settings-awarded-sphs-status>

Maths Champion

Join colleagues at **Windsor Community Primary School**, Upper Hill Street, Toxteth, Liverpool, L8 8JE to discuss how the Maths Champion training has supported them in practice with early Mathematics.

<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GPL5>



NDNA
National Day Nurseries Association

Fully funded places now available



Worth £1205 the Maths Champions programme is **FREE** for nurseries in England

Secure your funded place today!

+ = ÷ Maths Champions

Information Sessions

For further details on Maths Champions access the Information Sessions led by a team of expert Early Years Advisors. These sessions provide a comprehensive explanation of the programme, the eligibility criteria for settings to take part, and the commitment involved. There is also an opportunity for settings to ask direct questions to the Early Years Advisors, followed by clear instructions of next steps and how to sign up. Book a session to find out more.

<https://ndna.org.uk/maths-champions-information-sessions/>

Don't forget to join our Leadership Network online:

These will be held as termly events on Workplace **Zoom**

3.45pm – 4.30pm

Meeting ID: 881 3994 7902

Passcode: 005369

The same ID and passcode for each term.

Tuesday 6th October

Tuesday 12th January 2027

We also have a SEND/Early Years Network:

These will be held as termly events on Workplace **Zoom**

6.00-7.00pm

Meeting ID: 874 2439 5942

Passcode: 774607

The same ID and passcode for each term.

Thursday 1st October

Thursday 14th January 2027

Please contact sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk to book place.



Early Years and SEND Professional Development Network



Liverpool City Region and Beyond Stronger Practice Hub are offering 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 on Zoom at
6.00-7.00pm

Meeting ID: 874 2439 5942
Passcode: 774607

- Thursday October 1st
- Thursday January 14th 2027



EYFS Leadership Network

Liverpool City Region and Beyond Stronger Practice Hub are offering 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 on Zoom at
3.45pm – 4.30pm

Meeting ID: 881 3994 7902
Passcode: 005369

- Tuesday October 6th
- Tuesday January 12th 2027

**Childminder 'Let's Talk' Monthly meeting - 2nd Saturday of
Every Month 10am – 11am**

Topics include:

- EYFS
- Nutrition: Safer eating
- Inspections
- Communication and Language
- Safer recruitment - assistants
- Supervision
- SEND
- Mathematics

Meeting ID: 873 2451 0704

Passcode: 506194



SATURDAY PLAY CONFERENCE

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION AND BEYOND
EARLY YEARS STRONGER PRACTICE HUB

This conference will provide opportunities to engage in dialogue and reflect on play, exploring shared meanings, knowledge, and insights about children and the possibilities created through play.

BOOK HERE

Dr Denise Wright – The Importance of Play in the Early Years

Emma-Louise Scott – Play and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Dr Diane Boyd – Play and Sustainability



**Saturday 13th
June 2026**



9.30am - 12.30pm



Online via Zoom



www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk



sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk



Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub



[lcr_strongerpracticehub](https://www.instagram.com/lcr_strongerpracticehub)


Funded by
UK Government


Department
for Education



STEM

Learning Walk

at East Prescott Road Nursery School

Date:

Tuesday June 16th
9.15am – 11.00am

East Prescott Road Nursery
School
East Prescott Road, Liverpool,
L14 1PW

**email us to book your
place**

STEM Early Years Learning Walk – Nursery School Environment

Focus: How effectively
does the environment
promote children's
learning and
development in
Science, Technology,
Engineering and
Mathematics (STEM)?



www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk



sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk



[Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years
Stronger Practice Hub](#)



[lcr_strongerpracticehub](#)



Department
for Education



Nuffield Foundation Baby room final report launch.

Hello,

Thank you so much for your ongoing engagement with our Nuffield Foundation-funded project on achieving high-quality provision in the baby room of English nurseries. We're excited to announce the publication of our final report, *Achieving high-quality provision in English baby rooms: Looking ahead to the future*.

You can access the report through our website: <https://thebabyroom.blog/final-report/>

Our main message in the final report is that central government needs to craft a clear statement of purpose for the baby room. This involves the clear articulation of what the baby room is for - who it serves and how it serves them - to lead how quality provision is defined, enacted and supported across the sector. A statement of purpose brings clarity to the role of the baby room in the lives of children and families, and from this, a cohesive approach to achieving high-quality provision for babies can emerge in collaboration with the sector.

We would really value your support in getting this message to gain traction. You can take action by:

- Raising the need for a clear statement of purpose in your conversations with policymakers and sector leaders
- Referencing the report's recommendations in your ongoing work and networks
- Sharing the report with colleagues and partners who influence policy and practice

Thank you again for your ongoing support and wishing you a lovely day.

With warm regards,

Kayla, Mona, and Sara.



Wirral Learning Walk

at Ganneys Meadow School and
Family Hub

Date:

**Monday June 22nd
12.30pm – 2.30pm**

New Hey Rd, Woodchurch,
Birkenhead,
Wirral
CH49 8HB

As a SEND focused provision, Ganneys Meadow have been deepened their learning linked to nursery rhymes that they teach as part of their curriculum. Join them to see how the team links their identified core rhymes to the teaching of vocabulary, sensory exploration, development of physical skills and reflex/ TACPAC sessions

book here



www.strongerpracticehubs.org.uk



sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk



[Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years
Stronger Practice Hub](#)



[lcr_strongerpracticehub](#)



 Department
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Early Years Insights

The Education Endowment Foundation

Inside this issue:

- Explore early maths support
- Apply for funded research opportunities
- Join the EEF Exchange and help shape our work

[What works for building strong foundations in maths](#)

You want to support your children to build their mathematical understanding in meaningful ways, while having fun. How can you do that?

Explore practical ideas in our Evidence Store, which brings together evidence-informed approaches for early maths. You'll find:

- ✓ Video examples from real settings, showing how educators put approaches into practice.
- ✓ Clear summaries of what the evidence suggests could support children's learning.
- ✓ Downloadable posters to use with your team.

[Explore now](#)

[Take part in funded trials that aim to strengthen language and self-regulation](#)



We're looking for settings to take part in research into two professional development programmes. Our trials are designed to build the evidence base on what works.

If you sign up, your setting will either try the programme or continue your usual practice as part of a comparison 'control group'.

From stories to sustained dialogue: Talk With Tales for Children (TWiTCH) 

A professional development programme that aims to improve language development for three- and four-year-olds through training for educators on how to deliver interactive book reading sessions.

What does this look like in practice?

Settings selected to deliver the programme receive on-site training, followed by ongoing coaching and support. They nominate a 'TWITCH champion' who receives additional training to support delivery and share learning across the setting.

What are the benefits of participating?

→ Receive a high-potential programme for free. In an earlier study of this programme, educators reported that children's vocabulary, narrative skills, and confidence improved.

→ Financial incentives. Settings selected to deliver the programme receive £575, plus the training and coaching. Settings in the control group receive £1,000 for taking part in the evaluation.

Who's eligible?

Settings in most local authorities in the North West of England, the East Midlands, and Yorkshire & the Humber.

Supporting behaviour and belonging: Positive Early Childhood Education (PECE) 🗨️

A professional development programme that gives educators practical strategies to model self-regulatory behaviour. The aim is that helping educators improve how they talk and listen will improve three- and four-year-old children's self-regulation and peer interactions.

What does this look like in practice?

The programme combines coaching and training for the setting manager, with four self-paced online modules for up to 10 educators. Following this training, the setting manager takes on the role of in-house coach, supporting other staff to embed self-regulation strategies in everyday practice.

What are the benefits of participating?

→ Receive a high-potential programme for free. Evidence indicates that professional development has potential to support children's self-regulation

skills, particularly for disadvantaged children.

➡ Financial incentives. Settings selected to deliver the programme receive £400, plus contribution towards backfill costs. Settings in the control group receive £1,450 for taking part in the evaluation.

Who's eligible?

Settings across England.

🔍 Search your setting now to check eligibility and apply.

[Search](#)

[Join the EEF Exchange](#) 💡

Want to help shape our future research, resources, and guidance?

The EEF Exchange is a community of educators who share feedback, experiences, and ideas to help inform our work.

Whether you'd like to review new resources, contribute to discussions, or share your experiences - there are flexible ways to get involved.

Why join?

✦ Shape future EEF guidance and resources

✦ Share your experiences and perspectives

✦ Get early opportunities to feedback on new ideas and projects

✦ Receive incentives and recognition for contributing your time and expertise

We'd love to hear from you.

[Find out more](#)

Send and Play

By Alex Gower-Jones

On June 11th, 2026, Liverpool will be celebrating the annual UNICEF International Day of Play. The global theme for the day is "Protect play, protect childhood".

Play is vital for all young children as play is a fundamental aspect of early childhood development. Play supports children's social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth. Play helps children explore their environment, build relationships, communicate effectively, and develop essential life skills. However, as early years educators, we can often feel under increasing pressure to timetable more formal teaching to the detriment of these opportunities for children to play. With increasing numbers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

attending mainstream settings, these opportunities for extended periods of play are even more critical. For children with SEND, play is essential to them as a way of learning and developing.

As we can read in 'Play Matters', multi-sensory learning offers a particularly inclusive approach that benefits all children while still supporting those with SEND. Engaging multiple senses can enhance learning, cognitive development, and motivation. Activities such as sensory trays, messy play, water play, and tactile exploration promote both fine and gross motor development while supporting mathematical, scientific, and language learning. These experiences also encourage communication and social interaction with peers.

At Everton Nursery School and Family Centre, Emma-Louise Scott is the school's SENCO and teacher in the Local Authorities specialist resource provision. All of the children in her class are neurodivergent learners and either have a diagnosis of autism and/or ADHD, or are on a pathway to a diagnosis (agreed through an early years panel for their place). The setting understands why, for children with SEND, play is particularly important. Emma-Louise provides the children with rich and varied opportunities for sensory based play throughout the day. Although these children may engage in play differently from their peers, these differences are respected and valued within the setting. Emma-Louise and the team take time to focus on understanding what children's play means to them and

supporting that play appropriately.



As many neurodivergent learners have difficulty processing sensory information, this can lead to children being over or under stimulated in certain situations. Some children may present as being a combination of both a sensory avoider and a sensory seeker.

Gascoyne (2011) suggests we carefully observe our children and aim for a personalised 'sensory diet' for each child. Overall, the opportunity of a story offered a rich blend of mathematical, creative, and literacy-based learning experiences. The children have shown curiosity, imagination, and increasing confidence as they explored ideas, expressed themselves, and engaged in collaborative play.

Play opportunities are provided for sensory avoiders – children who are over sensitive (this may be referred to as 'hypersensitivity'). These children may experience sensory input more intensely than the average person.



There are also play opportunities for sensory seekers – children who are under sensitive to input (this may be referred to as ‘hyposensitivity’). These children are looking for more sensory stimulation.



Our early years environments, both indoor and outdoor, can offer rich and varied opportunities for play. So, if you are feeling under pressure to reduce your provision for play and formalise learning for young children, particularly those with SEND, take time to carefully consider the impact this could have on the children. When children are denied opportunities to play in ways that are meaningful to them, stress and frustration can increase. Overly structured or academically focused environments may also heighten anxiety and limit children's ability to self-regulate. Play is a cornerstone of children's development and learning, so let's consider how we can protect and promote play to give the children in our settings the best start in life.

We have two fully funded opportunities to access soon from Liverpool City Region and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub.

On Saturday 13th June at 9.30a.m. – 12.30p.m. we have our online 'Play Conference', which is a repeat of our in-person session which took place in March. Emma-Louise Scott will be speaking about Play and SEND at this event, alongside Dr Denise Wright who will be discussing the importance of play in early years and Dr Diane Boyd who will be focusing on 'Play and Sustainability'. This has been a popular event but there are still some places available. To book your fully funded place, please [click on this link](#).

On Monday 22nd June at 12.30p.m. – 2.30p.m. we are offering the opportunity to visit Ganneys Meadow Nursery School and Family Hub. As a SEND focused provision, Ganneys Meadow have been deepening their learning linked to nursery rhymes that they teach as part of their curriculum. Join them to see how the team links their identified core rhymes to the teaching of vocabulary, sensory exploration, development of physical skills and reflex/TACPAC sessions. Places are limited for this offer. To book, please [click on this link](#).

References:

Bradbury, A., Wright, D., Boardman, K., Thompson, P., Jarvis, P.,

Cowley, S., Veale, V., Wayne, D., Swailes, R., Scollan, A., Grimmer, T., & Renshaw, K. (2025) Play Matters. Available at: <https://www.early-years-reviews.com/play-matters>

Gascoyne, S. (2011) Sensory Play (Play in the EYFS). Salisbury: Practical Preschool.

Follow [this link](#) to find out more about UNICEF's International Day of Play 2026



Department
for Education

Safer sleep from the Department for Education

This [guidance](#), created in collaboration with the Lullaby Trust, provides advice to help early years providers create and maintain safer sleep environments for babies and young children in their care.

It includes information on:

- Providing an appropriate sleep space for babies and children
- Safe use of cots, mattresses, bedding and sleep bags
- Supervising children while they are sleeping
- What to do when babies and children fall asleep whilst travelling, managing their temperature, positioning and use of comforters.
-

The Department for Education has also published answers to [frequently asked questions](#) to help early years providers prepare for planned updates on safer sleep to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework, expected to come into effect from September 2026.

Starting Reception

Starting school is an exciting milestone. To help make the transition into Reception as smooth and positive as possible please can you encourage early years settings to share the following resources from Starting Reception with parents and carers:

- [Starting Reception website](#)
- [Starting Reception Guide \(Downloadable PDF\)](#)

Starting Reception is a free, practical online resource designed to support parents and carers in preparing their child for school. It offers simple activities, helpful advice and clear guidance on the

key skills and routines that help children feel confident and ready for their first day.

Starting Reception have also provided guides for Potty Training and Children's Toothbrushing. Children being able to use the toilet independently and having healthy routines such as brushing their teeth is an important part of getting ready for starting school.

- [Potty Training Guide website](#)
- [Potty Training Guide \(Downloadable PDF\)](#)
- [Children's Toothbrushing Guide website](#)
- [Children's Toothbrushing Guide \(Downloadable PDF\)](#)

Listening to Children, Listening to Trees

A new toolkit, [Listening to children, listening to trees](#), has been published to share the outcomes of a UKRI-funded research project led by Abi Hackett of Manchester Met University, called Voices of the Future. It aims to give voice to children and young people regarding the Government's commitment to planting millions of trees.

New screen time guidance

The Best Start in Life website has published new screen time guidance for children under 5, designed to help parents and carers support healthy digital habits in early childhood. It provides clear, evidence-informed advice on screen use, suitable content, and how adults can create positive routines around technology.¹

Full guidance: [Baby and toddler screen time guidance - Best Start in Life](#)



Please find below the link to the **Childminder Network Padlet**, Childminders can access this centralised resource it at any time to fit around your busy schedules and is updated weekly or when latest information is released.

<https://forms.gle/EPBVXAxTvAfirBiGA>

It is a versatile resource and includes:

- OFSTED updates
- EYFS Framework
- EEF Resources showcasing evidence-based research and showcases good practice
- Food Safety
- Business Matters
- Childminding legislation and Publications
- Safeguarding
- Professional Development
- Evidence based programmes
- Support and signposting
- training opportunities
- Specific LA information

This Padlet will support all your childminding needs in one user friendly space using versatile content through videos, text, links, recommendations and documents. Its showcasing creativity and good practice and created to support you through all your childminding practice.

For more information contact:

Tracie Dowling

traciestreasureschildminder@gmail.com

‘Let’s Talk’ Childminding Network every 2nd Saturday of each month.

We will look at topics for the next six months to ensure it is relevant for your Childminding needs.

This is a monthly Zoom meeting for childminders to have a ‘safe space’ to discuss ‘Childminding Issues’ and gain Peer support and foster a Childminder community to building connections.

Each month we have a specific lead topic, invite guest speakers, signpost for further support, recommend CPD and resource recommendations.

Meeting ID: 81654991912 Pass: 369243

‘Maths Crusaders’ Network’

A Monthly 1hr zoom Network o includes Childminders and their children. It is an interactive session supported by the ‘PEEP’ <https://www.peeple.org.uk/> evidenced based Programme and is Maths based. Each session we investigate different mathematical concepts to include activities, stories and singing to make it fun. Childminders will be signpost to further evidence-based information, training where needed and resources. The session will support your setting to include parents by encouraging home learning activities initiated by the children. Information and certificates will be emailed monthly, and a WhatsApp group can be accessed for on-going support.

Limited spaces please contact Tracie on traciestreasureschildminder@gmail.com to book a place

CPD AND RECORDED SESSIONS

Here is a list of some of our recorded sessions.

EARLY WRITING 25 minutes with Laura Johnson, Early Years Teacher from Duke Street Nursery School, Chorley.

SELF REGULATION AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTION 25 minutes with Emma Doran, Early Years Co-ordinator from Whitefield Primary School, Liverpool.

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.

Please contact our sph email if you are interested in accessing other recorded sessions for your setting.

sphubnw@evertoncentre.liverpool.sch.uk

Information to share with families.

CBeebies Parenting

Check out the BBC CBeebies Parenting collection of expert-backed tips, simple activity ideas, and practical advice to make play easy to fit into everyday life, helping parents/caregivers to support their children's early development. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/play>

There is a range of activities available from [sensory play for newborns](#) and [tummy time tips](#), to [creative crafts](#), [outdoor adventures](#), and [quick 10-minute games](#) there's something for every age and stage.

Updates

- [Protecting your setting's images from AI manipulation and abuse](#) is newly published UK-wide guidance developed by the UK Online Harms Early Warning Working Group . It provides guidance to settings on protecting children's images as a core safeguarding responsibility.
- The Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood has published [Foundations For Life: A Guide to Social and Emotional Development](#). It has been designed to give anyone working in early childhood a shared, foundational understanding of social and emotional development. It has been written primarily for practitioners and volunteers, whether in education, health, family support, or other services.
- Coram PACEY's new report [The magic of childminding](#) highlights the unique and transformative role childminders play in supporting children, families and communities, while warning that, without urgent Government intervention to reverse the decline in childminders, this option for families could disappear entirely within the next decade. The number of registered childminders across England and Wales has fallen steadily in recent years with just 24,990 remaining in England and 1,043 in Wales..
- RLSS UK's [Splash Safely at Home](#) is a water safety campaign designed to educate parents and carers of babies, infants, and young children about the importance of home water safety precautions. The website includes free resources to display in your setting.
- DfE have updated the [Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities](#). From the start of the 2026-27 academic year, all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be entitled to receive a free meal, including

those in maintained nursery schools and school based nurseries who meet the criteria (attending full time or, if part-time, attending before and after lunch). The guidance states that “Funding arrangements for school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools will be confirmed in due course.”

We expect this to mean that funding will be provided rather than the cost having to be met from existing funding, which would be a real step forward.

- DfE have published [The Steps for School campaign toolkit](#) which includes context about the campaign, why it's important and information on how you can help amplify, including messaging and links to download a range of assets - including the MC Grammar “Steps to School” rap video
- On 13 May 2026, the Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) published [guidance on consumer products found to contain asbestos](#). The OPSS is working with local Trading Standards and the UK toy industry to ensure businesses act immediately to remove products and dispose of them appropriately. All early years, school, and college settings should review the guidance and follow the steps to safely dispose of the products listed on the page. For more information you can access the business’ contact details within the alert, the [Citizens Advice Consumer helpline](#) or, [your local Trading Standards department](#)
- The Department for Education (DfE) have:
 - o updated the content of their [child development online training modules](#) with new videos and content for staff working in Reception, including advice on supporting the EYFS profile assessment.
 - o opened the application process for local authorities to apply for the [School-based Nursery Capital Grant 2027-30](#). They have

also updated [Establishing school-based nursery provision](#) to reflect recent changes in the Ofsted registration process, entitlements funding and the significant change process and added further information to support schools on their technical builds and a link to statutory guidance on local-authority-maintained schools.

o published details of the [eligibility criteria for the autumn 2026 National Professional Qualifications \(NPQs\) cohort](#). The NPQ for Headship and NPQ for SENCOs will continue to be fully funded, regardless of disadvantage criteria, as will the NPQ for Early Years Leadership for participants working in Early Years settings.

- - New EYFS profile content, plus additional videos to support children in reception, to Module 7 of the online [early years child development training](#)
 - [Reception baseline assessment IT guidance](#) - updated for 2026-27
- The Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA centre) has launched a free, easy to use [Whole School Approach framework](#) to help early years settings, schools and colleges strengthen how they prevent, spot and respond to child sexual abuse. The framework helps settings audit practice, identify gaps and drive improvement, backed by practical tools, templates and guidance.
- The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) are offering opportunities to participate in current funded trials of early years programmes including Talk With Tales for Children (TWITCH) - and Supporting behaviour and belonging: Positive Early Childhood Education (PECE). [Find out whether you're eligible](#).

• The Sutton Trust and Social Market Foundation have

published [Room to Grow](#), a report which highlights a significant gap between the government's ambitions for school-based nurseries and the realities facing schools and families, with many disadvantaged communities continuing to experience "childcare deserts". Only 16% of entirely new nurseries established under the current scheme are located in the most disadvantaged schools.

- BookTrust have launched [Trends, Drivers and Inequalities in UK Childhood Reading](#), The research explores changing patterns in early years reading and highlights that while 90% of parents and carers report high levels of enjoyment from reading with their child, daily shared reading has fallen markedly since 2021. The findings suggest reading habits vary across groups in ways that reflect broader inequalities in time, routine stability, resources and caregiving support.
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