



Early Years Quality Improvement Team's Weekly Bulletin

Welcome to this week's bulletin, recent bulletins can be found [here](#)

Keep in touch



EarlyYearsCentre@lancashire.gov.uk

01772 539058



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New Manager/Deputy Academy

Are you new to the role of the manager or deputy manager at a PVI nursery?

Perhaps you have only been a manager for the last 6 months or so or have recently become a deputy manager. Let us know and we can offer you some additional support whilst you fully find your feet (no charge).

One of the Early Years Project Officer's will meet with you virtually to discuss your current challenges and offer advice and guidance and you will also be invited to termly, virtual group meetings to network with other new managers for peer support.

What next: just complete this [Microsoft Teams form](#)

New Practitioners Academy

Are you training or been in early years for less than a year?

Join our new practitioners' academy by completing this [FORM](#) and we will be in touch before each session to share the links with you.

These are free to attend and will help you in your new or future role (there is no need to book, just complete the form).

19th May

4 to 5pm

7th July

9.45 to 10.45am

We will chat to you about all sorts of elements of practice as well as giving you the opportunity to ask questions.

We are really looking forward to meeting you and welcoming you to the best profession in the world!

Your sector representatives

Please contact your PVI representatives on the Early Years Consultative Group, **Rafael Schiel** rafael@giantleapchildcare.co.uk or **Sharon Fenton** sharon@risingstarslancaster.co.uk if you have any comments or questions that you would like them to take forward to the County Council on your behalf.

Something to do this week - review your security



There is a great variety of premises used for childcare; including childminders in domestic homes, small nurseries or out of school clubs in community centres and schools and larger settings in their own buildings.

Whatever your set up, the **Early Years Statutory Framework** is clear about providers responsibilities around the security of their premises:

- children do not leave the premises unsupervised
- they take all reasonable steps to prevent unauthorised persons entering the premises and have an agreed procedure for checking the identity of visitors
- they consider what additional measures are necessary when children stay overnight

The Childcare Register also states:

- make sure that no child can leave the premises, and no one can enter the premises, without someone who is providing childcare being aware

Questions to help you to reflect on how you are keeping your premises secure:

- Do parents and carers understand your systems when dropping off and collecting their child and don't compromise security e.g. not holding the door open for others?
- Childminders - do family members support you by closing doors and gates etc?
- Group care - are staff deployed to support the security of the premises e.g. are they able to open the door to parents and monitor gates in outside areas?
- Do risk assessments identify doors, gates and boundaries as things that need to be checked regularly?
- Shared premises - do you ensure that other users of the premises cannot enter the part of the premises where children are being cared for?
- Are fire exits clear of obstacles and open easily from inside?
- Are visitors supervised and never left alone with children?

Lancashire Early Years Podcast



We're excited to launch our brand new early years podcast - bringing together **real Lancashire practitioners** to explore all things early years. You'll hear **expert insights and diverse perspectives**; pick up **practical tips and strategies you can use straight away** to support professional development and effective practice.

It's all about **shared learning**, celebrating what works, and strengthening our early years community. Please join us and have a listen...

Search for **Lancashire Early Years** on Spotify or follow this link:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/7xRpfEspIgfWRTGqBdjcU0?si=uKHBpU9jQMautNtb0PxawA>

Best Start in Life – Teeth Brushing



Best Start in Life Collect and share the latest card for practitioners working with 2 year olds. The topic this week is **Teeth Brushing** and the card is attached for you to use in your setting and share with parents.

Watch this [short video](#) to find out more about our **Best Start in Life Campaign** and how your setting can get involved

The Early Years Sufficiency Team Vacancies

The Early Years Sufficiency Team are looking to appoint two **Childcare Development Project Officers** (fixed term until 31 March 2028) to support the roll out of the Government's School Age Childcare Strategy, School Based Nursery Programme and Free School Breakfast Clubs Programme.

This exciting role will include the following key responsibilities:

- Supporting the delivery of projects, action plans and tasks associated with childcare creation and expansion, childcare sufficiency and sustainability.
- Undertaking support visits to schools and childcare providers in relation to the creation/expansion and sustainability of childcare places and out of school provision.
- Supporting the development and delivery of initiatives to help ensure Lancashire has sufficient and sustainable childcare places and out of school provision.

Closing date: **25th March 2026**

You will find further information [here](#)

For an informal discussion, email kate.dewhurst@lancashire.gov.uk with your name and telephone number and she will arrange a suitable time to call you back.

Virtual school for children looked after



Sand play; an attachment-based therapeutic intervention designed to support EYFS

Lancashire Virtual School is pleased to be able to offer a **fully funded opportunity** for Lancashire early years settings supporting CL, children previously looked after and children with a social worker in the delivery of **Sand play; an attachment-based therapeutic intervention designed to support EYFS**.

Please read flyer attached for further details, consider if you have a need for the training and if you can commit to the delivery of such intervention (and provide evaluation). Due to a limited number of places, we can only offer 1 delegate per setting. **Places will be confirmed on a first come, first served basis on 13th April.**

Apply here (you may need to right click and open hyperlink) - [clickDelegate Drawing and Talking Sandplay Foundation Course](#)

Spring PEPs

Spring PEPs should have been submitted by the 7th March. Please check your portal account using this link - <https://professionalportal.lancashire.gov.uk>, complete any outstanding sections, save a PDF copy and submit asap. Remember, the Virtual School require 3 SMART targets for every CLA and evidence that the EYPP spending is linked to the child's targets. You can view lots of information to support PEP completion, access training, view info around supporting EHWB, pre-school to reception transition, educational resources, etc on their website - [Lancashire Virtual School - Lancashire County Council](#).

If you are experiencing technical difficulties with accessing the portal, please contact pepqueries@lancashire.gov.uk or sharie.mayren@lancashire.gov.uk. Thank you for all your hard work with PEP meetings and form completion.

DfE Consultation

DfE is consulting on new statutory guidance on [Supporting children with medical conditions at school](#). It is proposed that the guidance will be mandatory for schools (excluding maintained nursery schools) and will be non-statutory but of assistance to early years settings. **The consultation closes on 1 May.**

Foundation Years - National Year of Reading Early Years activity

We've had an inspiring start to the year, with thousands of early years settings and practitioners taking part in National Year of Reading activity.

Catch-up

[Professional Development webinar](#) - Explore how we can nurture a child's identity as a reader and embed storytelling into everyday routines.

[Early Years Spring Term resources and toolkit](#) - Download fresh resources and a self-reflection tool focused on the Spring Term focus of building a Reading for Pleasure culture in your room.

Coming up

[Share stories with me booklet](#) - March release: A parent booklet to help make the most of storytelling through everyday moments.

[Early Words Matter conference](#) - 27 March | London: With the theme of Science to stories, we'll celebrate the benefits of shared reading and storytelling on the developing brain.

The easiest way to take part in early years activity is through our Learning Management System. It has everything you need in one place, with a childminder's pathway coming soon! You can [sign up for free](#).

Healthy Eating Factsheet

Eating well is an important part of keeping healthy. Children who eat a nutritionally balanced diet tend to be ill less often, have more energy and a better attention span.

Early years practitioners are in an ideal position to have a positive influence - not only on the nutrition of young children, but also in developing positive attitudes towards food and healthy eating. See NDNA's free factsheet on healthy eating, written by early years experts [here](#).



From Conception to Reception: free webinar on school readiness

This free-to-attend webinar will explore how communities, services, and early years professionals can work together to create the best start for young children, leading from conception to their first year at school. Following the publication of the first A Better Start (ABS) insight report on school readiness, this webinar will look at what 'school readiness' means for young children, their families, and the people that support them.

Date: Tuesday 24 March

Time: 11.30am to 12:45pm

Booking: [Eventbrite](#)

We will reflect on policy, shared learning, and real-world examples from the five ABS sites in Lambeth, Blackpool, Bradford, Nottingham and Southend. This session anyone interested in early childhood development, offering an accessible space to reflect, learn and be inspired.

Inclusion Sway

[Inclusion Newsletter \(schools and settings\) 17 Mar 2026](#) (flyers attached)

In this edition of the Inclusion Newsletter:

- A message from Paula Green, Head of Service, SEND & Inclusion
- New investment to strengthen the SEND & Inclusion Service
- High Needs Block Mitigations
- SEND Roadshows update
- LEHSS March newsletter
- Update on backdated EHCP funding
- CPD opportunities
- Several other updates and reminders

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

The Department for Education has released the updated [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#) guidance, strengthening expectations for how agencies collaborate to support and protect children. The guidance reinforces a **child-centred, family-focused** approach and encourages earlier identification of need, improved information sharing, and coordinated support across all services.

Key changes:

- Stronger focus on **early help** and **preventative support**
- Greater emphasis on **family networks** and whole-family approaches
- Clearer **multi-agency roles and accountability**
- Enhanced involvement from **education settings**, including early years
- Continued attention to **contextual safeguarding** and harm outside the home
- Alignment with wider **children's social care reforms**

Summary of changes: www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2026-summary-of-changes

Ofsted and DfE Updates

[Claiming expenses and keeping records if you're a childminder](#)

Find out how all childminders can continue to get tax relief for wear and tear, household costs, food and drink, and other business expenses, following changes announced at Budget 2025.

A new post, ['Scam text messages claiming to be from Ofsted'](#) has just been published on the Ofsted: early years blog. We're aware of a rise in scam text messages claiming to be from Ofsted, so we wanted to reassure you and let you know what you can do if you receive one.