



Early Years Quality Improvement Team's Weekly Bulletin 21st May 2026

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

Keep in touch



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www.lancashire.gov.uk/early-years-support-and-training/



Facebook: www.facebook.com/LancsEarlyYears/
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Advertise your job vacancies for free

www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/childcare-and-early-years-settings/ complete this [Form](#)

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!

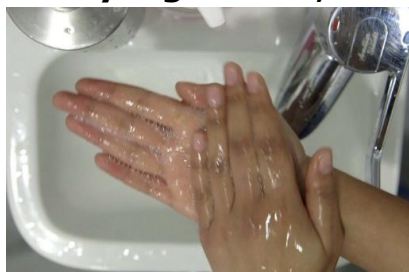
Your sector representatives

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 Think about your general hygiene

The Statutory framework states –

"Safety of premises - 3.64 Providers must ensure that their premises..... are fit for purpose and suitable for the age of children cared for..... Providers must comply with requirements of health and safety legislation, including hygiene requirements."



The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) gives **guidance on hand washing and hygiene at childcare and educational settings**. They state that all children are taught the **proper procedure** for washing and drying of their hands and that they are educated why we have these routines to prevent and **manage the risk of infection**.

The two key messages for early years settings are –

1. There must be provision of facilities for children, staff and visitors to **wash their hands** using **liquid soap** and **tepid running** water. A bowl of water is not sufficient to wash hands hygienically.
2. Children, staff and visitors should be **educated on the importance** of thorough handwashing, the **correct procedure** and the reasons for this (for example, after using the toilet or before eating and why)

The correct procedure for handwashing can be found on the NHS website here –

[How to wash your hands - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

The publication, '**Health protection in schools and other childcare facilities**', preventing and controlling infections, states that **paper towels should be used** to dry hands and that **bar soap should not be used**. This guidance can be found here –

[Preventing and controlling infections - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Further guidance from NICE can be found at –

[Recommendations | Antimicrobial stewardship: changing risk-related behaviours in the general population | Guidance | NICE](#)

Best Start in Life practice cards



Best Start in Life

Collect and share the latest card for practitioners working with 2 year olds.

The topic this week is 'calm bodies, calm minds' 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.

Crisis and resilience fund

Do you have families going through a hard time or facing an unexpected crisis, your local district council may be able to help.

From 1 April, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) introduced the **Crisis and Resilience Fund (CRF)** to support local welfare services. The fund will run until 31 March 2029 and is paid for by the UK Government.

The CRF replaces the Household Support Fund (HSF), which ran from October 2021 until 31 March 2026. Because of this change, free school meal vouchers will no longer be available during school holidays.

How your district council can help

District councils can help with urgent needs such as food, essential household items and other practical support

Families can contact their district council if they are dealing with things like:

- sudden money problems
- a family emergency that makes it hard to cover basic needs
- trouble getting food or essential household items
- a change at home that leaves them without immediate support
- extra pressure on their household budget, for example during the school holidays

Each district has a team that can talk through the situation and explain what help is available. This support may come directly from the council or through local community organisations.

To get help, families should visit their district council's website or contact them by phone.

If you are not sure which district council covers the area, you can check by entering your postcode at www.lancashire.gov.uk/district-council.

If families are already getting support from a professional, for example through a Family Hub, school, health visitor or Early Years practitioner, then they can help contact the district council.

Parent power videos



Parent Power 3 I can get along with others I can make friend...

Early Years Quality Team Lanca...



Parent Power 2 Let's get moving

Early Years Quality Team Lanca...



Parent Power workshop 1 I can concentrate

Early Years Quality Team Lanca...

Supporting parents as their children begin to prepare for Reception

Here you will find a series of 12 videos that are designed to be shared through the EYFS settings online media. They are aimed towards Parents of Preschool and Reception aged children.

The videos are designed to inform parents about key school readiness areas and offer support to improve the quality of home learning. The training titles are based on the Kindred school readiness survey. For further information please refer to [School Readiness Survey | Kindred²](#) .

The videos may be used as part of your settings / schools school readiness curriculum when transitions and inductions are planned for. Through involving parents in this process, it is hoped that children are ready for the next phase of education, and they have the right foundation for good future progress through school life.

[Parent Power Videos](#)

The DfE want to learn from you!

Early years practitioners working with 0-2s needed

The Department for Education (DfE) is inviting early years practitioners who work with children aged 0-2 years old to take part in an important new research opportunity. We want to learn from you!

Purpose of the research

To understand the experiences and views of early years practitioners who work with children aged 0-2, or those who manage early years practitioners who cover this age range.

What the research involves

1 hour Microsoft Teams call Monday 18th May 2026- Monday 25th May 2026
You will receive an incentive worth £50 for taking part

Who can take part

Early years practitioners working with children aged 0-2 across all types of early years settings, including childminders and early years leaders and managers who work with children aged 0-2 (directly or indirectly).

If you are interested, please **complete this expression of interest form** and a researcher will be in contact shortly. If you have any issues, please contact Victoria Ndudim: Victoria.ndudim@education.gov.uk

Please feel free to share this opportunity with colleagues or staff who may be interested. For any questions or further information, don't hesitate to get in touch.

[DFE- Expression of Interest - Early Years Practitioners for children aged 0-2 years old](#)

Saturday Play Conference



Please find below the details of 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*

Please open the attached flyer and use the booking link to reserve your fully funded place. You can also stay connected by following our Facebook page for further updates and announcements:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1236737084491871/>

We look forward to seeing you there!

The Early Years Stronger Practice Hub Team

Playful learning outdoors webinar

What happens when children are given space to climb, explore, investigate, imagine and take risks outdoors? Magic. ✨

We are delighted to invite you to our LIVE *Playful Learning Outdoors Showcase* webinar with **James Davolls**, exploring the incredible impact outdoor play can have on children's learning, development and wellbeing.

This inspiring session will bring outdoor learning to life through practical, real-world examples that you can take straight back to your own setting. From adventurous and risky play to creating joyful learning opportunities outdoors, James will share ideas designed to spark curiosity, confidence and creativity in every child. ❤️

🌱 In this session, you will explore:

- ✨ Practical examples of engaging outdoor play
- ✨ Adventurous and risky play in Early Years
- ✨ Creating joyful learning experiences outdoors
- ✨ How outdoor learning supports children's development and wellbeing
- ✨ Ideas that work across a range of Early Years contexts

📅 Tuesday 23rd June 2026

🕒 6:30pm – 7:30pm

To attend, please ensure you register online using your preferred email address.

Once registered, you will receive your own unique Zoom joining link via email. This personalised link is exclusive to your booking and cannot be shared or used by others. You will need this link to access the LIVE webinar.

[Playful Learning Outdoors Showcase Booking Page](#)

Please see the attached flyer for more details.

Asbestos in consumer products information page

The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) have published a page on gov.uk containing [guidance for consumers and businesses on consumer products containing asbestos](#).

The page provides disposal guidance for both businesses and consumers, including early years settings, along with health information. Settings should review the linked [list of contaminated products that are subject to recalls](#) and where products are identified in the setting follow the guidance to ensure their safe disposal.

If you have concerns about a product that you think might contain asbestos but has not been recalled [contact the Citizens Advice consumer service](#)
To read more: [Asbestos in consumer products - GOV.UK](#)

Listen to our latest podcast titled – Let them explore



Listen to our latest podcast episode, **Let Them Explore: Balancing Care, Curiosity and Learning with Catherine Ellershaw**

In this episode, we're joined by childminder Catherine Ellershaw as she reflects on what it really means to balance care, curiosity and learning in early years practice. Catherine shares her calm, thoughtful approach to supporting children to feel safe and secure, follow their interests, and learn through exploration. A reflective and reassuring conversation about relationships, wonder and the small moments where learning really clicks.

Head over to Spotify

<https://creators.spotify.com/pod/profile/lancashire-early-years/episodes/Let-Them-Explore-Balancing-Care--Curiosity-and-Learning-with-Catherine-Ellershaw-e3jhj7o/a-acllru>

Common core of skills and knowledge for the children's workforce



Our **brand new Instant Access training** is suitable for those wanting to work or volunteer with children, including nannies, home-based child carers, activity club leaders, out of school/holiday club staff who require an understanding of the common core of skills and knowledge for the children's workforce. This course is also suitable for those wishing to register on the Voluntary Childcare Register only.

Flexible learning – complete in your own time (approx. 2–3 hours)

Cost: £55 per person

For more information, please see the attached flyer

Or visit our website to book: [Common core of skills and knowledge training - Lancashire County Council](#)

Registering a childminder assistant

A new post, "Registering a childminder assistant: what you need to know" has just been published on the Ofsted: early years blog.

Childminders and childminder assistants play a vital role in childcare. At the end of 2025 there were nearly 25,000 childminders in England, with the vast majority providing education and care for early years children. Of these, 41% have an assistant listed on their registration ...

Read the new post: <https://earlyyears.blog.gov.uk/2026/05/18/registering-a-childminder-assistant-what-you-need-to-know/>

Training opportunities for June

Please find attached your sector's training for June. Book now to avoid disappointment as these courses fill up quickly.

Out of school club members' cluster meeting

A reminder that the out of school club cluster meeting will be held on 17th June 6.30 – 7.30 pm. Members, look out for the flyer that will be emailed to you soon with details of how to join the meeting.

How can we use our Early Years Pupil Premium funding?

Within our nurseries, one question comes up time and again: how can we use Early Years Pupil Premium funding in a way that genuinely closes learning gaps?

Maybe you're also grappling with the same question?
"After reflection, we realised the power of the Early Years Pupil Premium lies not in what we buy, but in **what we do.**"

In this blog for the Education Endowment Foundation, Nicola Cherry shares her experience of taking the time to reflect on what works and how it helped her settings make the most of their funding and resources: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/early-years/strategy-when-using-the-early-years-pupil-premium>

Selected DfE updates 12th – 19th May 2026

- [Using AI in education settings: support materials](#)
Support materials to help schools and colleges use AI (artificial intelligence) safely and effectively. Updated: 19 May 2026
- [Apply for a national professional qualification \(NPQ\)](#)
Steps to start an NPQ or the early headship coaching offer. Updated: 18 May 2026
- [DfE Update](#)
Our weekly newsletter containing actions and information for DfE-funded organisations. Updated: 13 May 2026