



National Day Nurseries Association

AUTUMN 2023

★Brighter thinking  
for early years

# NURSERY NEWS

Your membership magazine

[www.ndna.org.uk](http://www.ndna.org.uk)

## Express yourself

**W**e love this photo of a group of children who are intensely working on their own clay creations.

Becky Powell of Children's Garden Nursery in Stamford is pictured with a group of their forest school four-year-olds in their outdoor art area. Becky is the nursery's atelierista, an educator with a background in creative arts.

She told *Nursery News*: "Clay is a lovely medium to express your feelings and creativity. It's very transient and open-ended, anything can happen with it. The children add different loose parts or elements such as sand or water. Being able to make something meaningful and beautiful is so important to children and it's also how they communicate."

The group was outside on a cold day, totally engrossed in the moment, building their own pieces of art.

"One child was there for 40 minutes despite the cold, completely immersed. They were going off with intent round the garden looking for specific items they wanted to use with their piece of clay. It was beautiful to watch, their vision was so urgent. I think I will always remember that moment."

The activity was captured on camera by nursery deputy head Annabel Ward and submitted for our front page photo competition. Find out more about supporting your children with their creativity in our centre pages from page 11.

   **3 months**

Children in Maths Champions settings make 3 months additional progress in both maths and language development.

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MATHS CHAMPIONS



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UNUSUAL CONVERSIONS



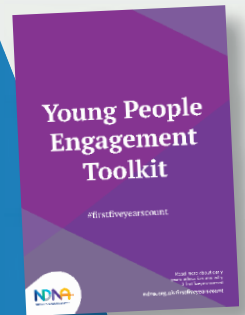
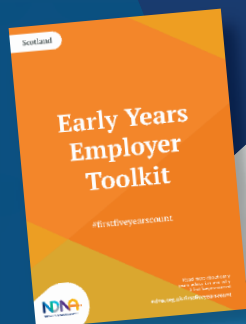
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ART OF STORYTELLING



# Our first five years count.

Download our employer toolkits for recruitment advice.



Get involved by watching and sharing our campaign video.



#firstfiveyearscount

## Support when you need it most

### Expert advice for peace of mind

NDNA can advise you on curriculum requirements, regulatory issues or inspections. Our legal helpline advises on legal matters, from employee issues, health and safety, or contracts with parents.



### Saving you time

Download and use over 90 pre-written policy and procedure templates, giving you the security and reassurance that you are meeting all regulatory requirements.



### Improving practice

Book high quality training from NDNA. We can deliver to your team at your setting, through live virtual classrooms, or via our member-exclusive, low cost online training bundles.



### Saving you money

We can save you money on nursery suppliers, day-to-day essentials, play resources and equipment, insurance, HR and health and safety advice, DBS checks and more.



### Keeping you more informed

Our regular events, email newsletters and membership magazine, Nursery News, make sure that you are always in the know.



### Giving you a stronger voice

Join our campaigns and be heard by MPs, policy makers and Local Authorities. Join forces with peers at free UK-wide NDNA network forums and work together on common goals relating to your local area.



Find your member benefits at  
[www.ndna.org.uk/hub/member-hub](http://www.ndna.org.uk/hub/member-hub)

## Snapshots of your creativity

Thank you to all the nurseries who sent in their entries to our front cover photo competition. We asked for photos of outdoor transient art activities and had an overwhelming response.

Your photos always make us smile and these were no exception, so it was very hard to choose the winner from Children's Garden in Stamford. Congratulations to you! We have used some of our shortlisted photos from Neston Farm Children's Nursery, Atworth; Cheshire Day Nursery, Warrington; Woodlands Day Nursery, Altrincham; Hungry Caterpillars, Northolt and New Moon Day Nursery, Castleford throughout the magazine.

Check out all the best photos here: [ndna.org.uk/yourphotos](http://ndna.org.uk/yourphotos)

Please keep sending your beautiful exciting photos to us because we are always in need of real life activity pictures to: [NurseryNews@ndna.org.uk](mailto:NurseryNews@ndna.org.uk)



## Come TO OUR EVENTS

It's autumn so it's also time for our member events.

**Scotland: 12 October, Glasgow** - Minister Natalie Don invited.

**England: 19 October, virtual** - developing a manifesto for early education and care.

**Wales: 24 October, virtual** - session with play legend Alice Sharp.

For more information and to book go to: [ndna.org.uk/member-events](http://ndna.org.uk/member-events)



## Autumn changes

**While we haven't had the fabulous summer weather we hoped for I know that doesn't stop you from getting outside with the children. Thanks to the team at Children's Garden nursery for our amazing cover photo, showcasing transient art with clay in their outdoor space. If you're inspired by this there's more on pages 11-14.**

The start of autumn brings a new term. Children move on to schools, leaving you with everything they've learned in their time at your settings. And you'll have new children, new opportunities but lots of the same old challenges.

We have had a busy summer getting ready for the next general election, whenever it may come. We don't want to be on the back foot – just responding to the promises made by political parties to parents.

So we have brought together a range of providers, academics, policy experts and campaign organisations in a series of roundtables to set out what a successful plan for early education and childcare would look like.

To give you a stronger voice, we'll be taking the Blueprint for early education and childcare to the party conferences next month. This is to ensure politicians know what you need to be able to offer high-quality, affordable and accessible early education and childcare for the benefit of families and all children.

This month will see new funding rates for every area in England at both the two-year-old and three and four-year-old rates. We know that the two-year-old increases are very helpful but for older children it remains too low.

In Scotland we have again been looking at the 'sustainable rates' councils are setting via our FOI requests. This shows a very mixed picture

with some councils not yet deciding the rates you'll be getting, others have announced stagnant rates while other increases have been very variable.

The Welsh Government has identified deficits in its budgets for this year and next. We have been working with them to address the differences in rates and approaches to Flying Start while also urging them to review the hourly rates for the childcare offer – which have not increased since 2022/23.

We'll continue to press for changes that support you to recruit and retain the skilled staff you need, as it's such a tragedy that settings across the UK are closing or having to reduce capacity just through a lack of staff.

I'm really looking forward to welcoming you all to our member events in the autumn. We've had some really successful face to face events but we know how busy everyone is so we're continuing with our mix of in-person and virtual events. I hope to see you at one of these!

*Purnima Tanuku*

PURNIMA TANUKU OBE,  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Get involved online!



@NDNAtalk



@NDNAtalk



/ndna.org.uk



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# Long-term sickness absence in the nursery sector

## All the considerations you'll need to make

Long-term sickness absence has always been a big, consistent problem for businesses, and the signs show it's only becoming more of an issue. According to the Office of National Statistics, over 15 million people in the UK live with a long-term health condition, and the number of people living with more than one condition now stands at one in four.

### What are the unique challenges of long-term staff sickness in the nursery sector?

There are plenty of ways long-term staff sickness affects the nursery sector, for example:



It's a stressful environment with a lot of pressures and responsibilities on staff. This might cause higher rates of long-term sickness due to mental or physical ill health.



Inspections like Ofsted visits only increase that pressure, and if there are people already off on long-term sickness absence, this adds an extra element of pressure on those staff who are covering for others.

When handling each case of long-term sickness absence, there are some key considerations you should make to check you're meeting your legal obligations and following best-practice advice.



### 1. Is the absence long-term or short-term?

This might be obvious, but it's a good first step to make sure you know what usually constitutes long-term sickness absence. Someone may be off for several long periods, or for one continuous long period, but there's no single definition.



### 2. Put a policy in place

In your sickness absence policy, you should have set out how absence should be reported, and details about any payments. It's important not to take a generic approach when it comes to long-term absences so make sure you engage with the individual and their circumstances.



### 3. Keep in touch with employees

Make sure this is done sensitively. Invite the employee to a welfare meeting to help you understand when they might return to work and how best you can help them do that.



### 4. Return-to-work process

Have a formal return-to-work strategy in place – including a supportive return-to-work interview that discusses ongoing adjustments where needed.

### So, what else can you do to help your staff?



### Create a supportive environment

Try to encourage a culture of open communication and foster an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing issues with managers. Also try to encourage a culture of support amongst colleagues and managers, where everyone is willing to assist each other and maintain continuity of care for children.



### Reasonable adjustments

There are obligations on employers to comply with the Equality Act 2010 for those who meet the definition of "disability". There's a duty to make reasonable adjustments if a disabled person is put at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled – like different working times or duties. Make sure you get medical evidence to fully understand what your duties are and how best to support your employees who may have long-term health conditions. If you don't, you could face disability discrimination claims.

The reality is, however, sometimes termination is necessary. But you should consider consulting with a professional before taking this route, to avoid any potential tribunal claims.



### Citation - by your side.

As an NDNA partner, we're a trusted provider in the industry – so you can have faith that we know how to help you manage the challenges unique to your early years setting.

If you'd like to chat about how Citation can help with your HR and Health & Safety, just give us a call on **0345 844 1111**.

Make sure you quote 'National Day Nurseries Association' when enquiring to access your member benefit and preferential rates!



# NDNA live virtual classroom training

Prices quoted are the discounted member rate followed by the non-member rate.

### ✓ Advanced Safeguarding for DSL

£131/£175, four modules

- Module 1 on 16 Oct; Module 2 on 19 Oct; Module 3 on 23 Oct; Module 4 on 26 Oct
- Module 1 on 31 Oct; Module 2 on 03 Nov; Module 3 on 07 Nov; Module 4 on 10 Nov

### ✓ Autism Awareness in early years

£53/£71, two modules

- Module 1 on 18 Oct; Module 2 on 25 Oct
- Module 1 on 22 Nov; Module 2 on 29 Nov

### ✓ Baby Room Leader

£53/£71, two modules

- Module 1 on 13 Sept; Module 2 on 20 Sept
- Module 1 on 08 Nov; Module 2 on 15 Nov

### ✓ Brilliant Babies

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 09 Oct; Module 2 on 12 Oct; Module 3 on 16 Oct; Module 4 on 19 Oct
- Module 1 on 06 Nov; Module 2 on 09 Nov; Module 3 on 13 Nov; Module 4 on 16 Nov

### ✓ Building Your Curriculum

£27/£36.50, one module

- Module 1 on 11 Oct

### ✓ Effective Team Leadership

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 02 Oct; Module 2 on 05 Oct; Module 3 on 09 Oct; Module 4 on 12 Oct

### ✓ Leadership & Management

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 18 Sept; Module 2 on 21 Sept; Module 3 on 25 Sept; Module 4 on 28 Sept
- Module 1 on 23 Oct; Module 2 on 26 Oct; Module 3 on 30 Oct; Module 4 on 02 Nov

### ✓ Positive Behaviour in Early Years

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 26 Sept; Module 2 on 29 Sept; Module 3 on 03 Oct; Module 4 on 06 Oct
- Module 1 on 21 Nov; Module 2 on 24 Nov; Module 3 on 28 Nov; Module 4 on 01 Dec

### ✓ Power of Play with Babies

£27/£36.50, four modules

- Module 1 on 18 Oct

### ✓ Preparing for Your Inspection

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 03 Oct; Module 2 on 06 Oct; Module 3 on 10 Oct; Module 4 on 13 Oct
- Module 1 on 20 Nov; Module 2 on 23 Nov; Module 3 on 27 Nov; Module 4 on 30 Nov

### ✓ Quality Interactions with Babies

£27/£36.50, one module

- Module 1 on 30 Oct

### ✓ The Role of SENCO

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 24 Oct; Module 2 on 27 Oct; Module 3 on 31 Oct; Module 4 on 03 Nov

### ✓ Supporting Staff Well-being

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 06 Nov; Module 2 on 09 Nov; Module 3 on 13 Nov; Module 4 on 16 Nov

### ✓ Supporting Children with SEND

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 25 Sept; Module 2 on 28 Sept; Module 3 on 02 Oct; Module 4 on 05 Oct

### ✓ Terrific Two-Year-Olds

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 02 Oct; Module 2 on 05 Oct; Module 3 on 09 Oct; Module 4 on 12 Oct

### ✓ Toddler Room Leader

£82/£110, four modules

- Module 1 on 07 Nov; Module 2 on 10 Nov; Module 3 on 14 Nov; Module 4 on 17 Nov

Find out more about LVCs on our website at [www.ndna.org.uk/hub/training-resources](http://www.ndna.org.uk/hub/training-resources)

# WE ARE MATHS CHAMPIONS

Our professional development programme Maths Champions boosts young children's maths skills by three months.

The recent study by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) showed that children made on average three months' additional progress in maths AND language development compared to children not on the programme. Some evidence suggested that children from disadvantaged backgrounds made up to six months' additional progress in maths and language development.

Maths Champions has received the highest security rating from EEF for confidence in their findings. It also received the lowest rating for cost, finding it costs just £7 per child per year.

The Maths Champions programme aims to increase practitioner skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence in supporting early maths. Participating nurseries nominate a Maths Champion and deputy who lead the programme; supporting, inspiring and motivating their staff.

A nine-step programme is accessible across 12 months including one-to-one support sessions from NDNA, bespoke

online training courses, coaching, an observational assessment tool and play-based activities.

NDNA's Chief Executive Purnima Tanuku OBE said: "Maths Champions has been shown to be a low cost but highly effective way of giving children professional, targeted support. This supports early years practitioners to give children the play based experiences they need across a range of mathematical concepts.

"The message is very clear: give children the support they need as early as possible to give them the best start in life."

Maths Champions practitioners reported improved confidence in supporting children with maths skills. Wisbech Day Nursery as pictured told us: "The Maths Champions programme has allowed us to reflect and improve our staff confidence in delivering maths in the nursery by improving our learning environment for maths. The Maths Champions programme will ensure that our children go into formal education with the fundamental skills in maths to support their ongoing learning and development."

**MAKE MATHS FUN IN CELEBRATION OF MATHS WEEK  
NOVEMBER 14 - 18! FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MATHS  
CHAMPIONS [WWW.NDNA.ORG.UK/MATHS](http://WWW.NDNA.ORG.UK/MATHS)**





# No such thing as bad news?

**M**ore nurseries have been asking NDNA's PR and Policy team for help with the press due to a crisis or incident. At the time, it's difficult to see a way out, but there is lots of support available. As a member of NDNA, this is when it's most important to know you are not alone.

A crisis is defined as any unexpected incident or event that can cause harm to people, assets or business operations. Your nursery's reputation is crucial to your success and this is also at stake.

We are seeing more nurseries than ever downgraded by inspectors. Reports are pored over by local journalists. It's even more alarming when an inspectorate closes down a nursery suddenly due to an incident or safeguarding concern. These make good newsworthy stories and present the opportunity for further follow-up articles.

Nurseries have been closing suddenly – temporarily or permanently. News headlines speak of staff not being paid and parents not getting refunds. We have also dealt with disease outbreaks such as E.coli when nurseries are closed by public health officials.

## What happens if you find yourself in this situation?

Don't panic! Take a deep breath and take control of the situation.

Firstly, make sure you have all the facts. If it's an inspectorate report, read it thoroughly and pick out the key points. Do you wish to challenge anything?

Think about communicating effectively with your parents/carers and staff team. Refer to your comms plan if you have one (see our section on page seven). Most parents are supportive if they understand what is happening and how you're dealing with it. Be careful about what information you give out because sometimes emails or letters can find themselves in the media.

Most stories about nurseries are reported in local press rather than further afield, but this can still be stressful.

## Who can help me?

Many insurance policies have PR and media support. If you are paying for this service, do use it.

NDNA's PR team can advise members in this situation. Jonathan Broadbery, NDNA's Director of Policy and Communications said: "Although this is something our team has always offered, we have been supporting members much more recently. While we can't write press statements for members, we can offer suggestions, help you think about what you need and want to say. We can also offer advice on what to expect from journalists and how to deal with the media."

For practice issues especially with inspections and safeguarding issues, our early years advisers can support you.

As an NDNA member, take full advantage of our free Legal Helpline, 24 hours a day.

## To speak or not to speak?

Is it better to comment? It depends on the situation, sometimes there are restrictions on what you can say. However, not saying anything risks looking like you have something to hide so it's usually better developing a carefully worded comment.

An article without the nursery's perspective can be very one-sided – often rumours and misinformation will fill the vacuum. If the journalist includes a phrase: "the nursery declined to comment" readers may assume the worst.

When writing a statement, a good starting point is children's welfare and well-being at the heart of what you do. Keep it as positive as possible. Can you praise the staff's actions and commitment, do you have support of your parents, emphasise how many years you have been running as a dedicated childcare business.

When responding to a negative inspection report, avoid a slanging match which can make you look less than impressive. Focus on what you do well and what measures you have put in place to counter their concerns.

If your nursery has been closed due to a safeguarding issue or police investigation, make it clear you are working closely with the authorities to achieve a positive outcome as soon as possible for the children, staff and community.



## Know your "right of reply"?

It's best practice journalism to report fairly and accurately, but sometimes an article may be missing one side of the story – or you may perceive the facts to be reported unfairly.

It's enshrined in the Editors' Code of Practice on the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) website that if you feel an article is unbalanced and you haven't had a chance to respond, you should ask for a right of reply.

## What does this mean?

You are entitled to ask for a follow-up article in which to give your side of the story. You can also ask for a misleading or inaccurate section to be put right. This is generally in the form of a press statement or rebuttal, but if you prefer you could give them an interview. Be sure of what you want to say and stick to it, don't get drawn anywhere else. A statement is usually a safer option.

Contact the original journalist, their news editor or editor.

## How long have you got to reply?

Any inaccuracy must be corrected promptly and given "due prominence", comparable to the original article.

## Who can I complain to?

If you are still unhappy, let the editor know you will complain to IPSO. Details are on their website. Sometimes the threat alone will suffice.



## Future positive

When dealing with a crisis, it's difficult to think ahead, but once the months have passed and you are doing much better, why not plan a positive story for the press to cover?

We often suggest a fundraising event or learning activity for the children. Consider inviting parents, the local community, your MP and mayor. Consider what event would produce good pictures – for example a mini sports day or celebration. Replacing a negative article with a positive one will help you move on and leave a lasting feel-good factor.

Photo from Toad Hall Winnersh, Berkshire.

## Crisis Comms plan

Don't wait for something bad to happen, create a plan now when you are not under pressure in case you need one.

Here's what you could consider:

- Effective internal communication is important but often forgotten in a crisis. Staff need to have the latest information to continue to perform their role and have confidence the situation is being dealt with
- Good external communication is essential, providing accurate and timely information to parents and if necessary the wider community and press
- Decide who will be co-ordinating the actions and the comms – will you have a team or specific people dealing with this? Who will make decisions and how?
- Make sure you have contact details available both online and offline, don't forget to keep within GDPR rules
- Consider how and when to write a statement and how to use that to maintain the nursery's good reputation. Have some sample statements ready for a few scenarios which you could adapt in a crisis.



## It happened to me

In February, Ofsted closed Shining Stars Nursery in Appleby, Cumbria over an alleged breach of safeguarding regulations. The suspension was reported locally. The nursery had been told they could not put out a press statement. Five weeks later, Ofsted reopened them.

Director Sam Alderson sent a positive statement to the press, delighted to be reopening again and thanking parents, their local community and NDNA for their support. She said: "I would advise people to send something to the press once the situation is sorted so people know you are open again. It hurt very much but we are building back up to where we had been and doing fine again now."



## Resources

Legal helpline - [ndna.org.uk/legal](https://www.ndna.org.uk/legal)

NDNA's PR team - [pressoffice@ndna.org.uk](mailto:pressoffice@ndna.org.uk) or ring **01484 407066**

NDNA's early years advisers - **01484 407070**





# Let's network!

In recognition of the dedication and outstanding achievements of our NDNA networks, we asked three of our Network Chairs about the benefits of being part of a network.

NDNA Network Chairs bring a wealth of knowledge and experience from within the sector and play a vital role in joining together the nursery community.



Cat Hirst, Chair of Chester and West Cheshire, highly commended for NDNA's Network of the Year 2023, said: "My role is a facilitator to ensure the settings in my region have a place to go for support and guidance. I look for trends in our meetings and tailor our agenda and funded training to accommodate those themes."

Being part of an NDNA network is not just about being part of a social network, it's about feeling connected and empowered to voice concerns, get advice and feel supported. A network can be "a powerful tool when addressing issues within the sector at a local and national level, creating an energy from its members to have meaningful conversations and drive necessary changes."

Philippa Perks and Sharon Fenton co-chair the Lancashire Network. "It brings members together to discuss sector issues, provide advice and support, provide links with the local authority."



They see the benefits of a network for nurseries providing a "sounding board, group pressure and peer to peer support."

These benefits of peer to peer support are invaluable when it comes to managing a nursery. Cat Hirst adds: "We come together to give peer support and advice. We also ensure we have a voice within decision-making at local authority level."

Positive outcomes are key to the ongoing success of NDNA's networks and sharing examples of specific activities prove just how important that 'group pressure' is when members come together to influence improvement. NDNA networks work hard to provide innovative solutions to tackle challenges. Recruitment is high on the current agenda.

Cat Hirst shares their success in tackling the problem: "Each setting has its own challenges to overcome which includes location of the setting (we have a lot of rural nurseries), qualification levels and rates of pay of small settings."

"Our chair has visited our local university to deliver a session to Early Childhood Study and PGCE students to promote a career in early years. It was also an opportunity to promote current vacancies within settings and students' details were passed to those who are struggling for staff."

"We have shared university and college placement contacts with settings so that they can apply to host students with the potential for long-term employment."

Funding is another ongoing challenge. The Edinburgh Network which won NDNA's Network of the Year 2023 came together to work on a successful outcome. Chair Sandy Towers explained: "The Edinburgh network has made representations at local authority education committee meetings. With assistance from some councillors and Freedom of Information requests we got the council to disclose that it spends significantly more per child on local authority settings than it pays partner providers."

"This is a very important disclosure and provides a platform for parents and NDNA settings to lobby for equality. The Edinburgh network has been able to gain significant representation on committees set up by the local authority to liaise with private sector settings."

"The aim is to achieve a fair and equal distribution of funds provided by Scottish Government and that payments for preschool funding are sufficient for the sector to be sustainable."

Sandy added: "We have a plan in place after our last member's meeting to communicate several specific financial sustainability metrics in a more targeted fashion. The objective is to furnish decision-makers with accurate detail from a nursery perspective in the hope that this will deliver a more measured response to future funding rates."



From holding local authorities accountable to arranging themed meetings with expert speakers and maintaining the network voice, it's clear from the determination and dedication that the future is bright for NDNA's networks.

For more information about joining your local network and taking an active role within it please contact [jackie.davy@ndna.org.uk](mailto:jackie.davy@ndna.org.uk) or visit [ndna.org.uk/ndna-local-networks](https://ndna.org.uk/ndna-local-networks)



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★Brighter thinking for early years

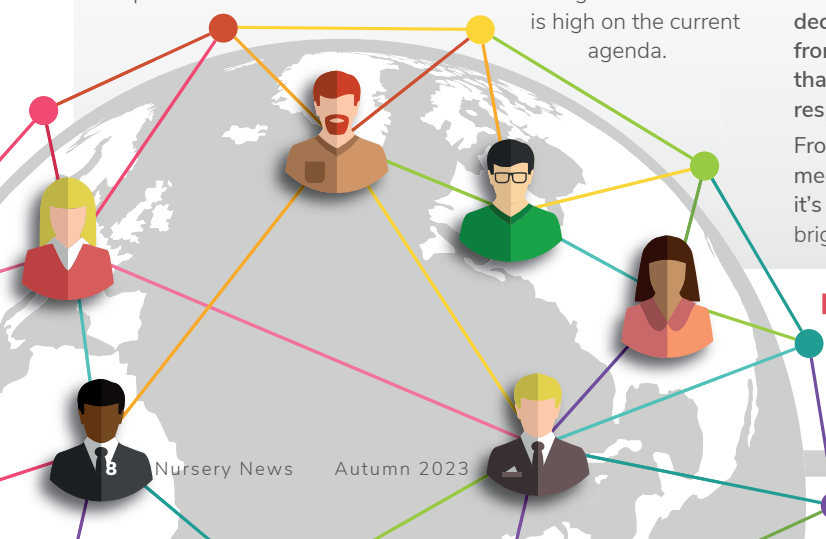
# Food Safety and Hygiene for £5\*

Be confident that your team meets legal and curriculum requirements with our Level 2 Food Safety & Hygiene course.



[ndna.org.uk/foodhygiene](https://ndna.org.uk/foodhygiene)

\*Applies to NDNA members from 1 September until 30 September 2023.





# Strong foundations



*Meet Early Learning Partnership, a group of seven nurseries in the North East who have received eight Outstanding Ofsted gradings in a row and were shortlisted for three NDNA awards. Owner Eamonn Gribben speaks to Nursery News about his unusual approach in converting old buildings into exciting, unique nurseries.*

## Q What kind of buildings have you converted into nurseries?

We have converted six derelict brownfield sites using old buildings such as a police station, fire station, care home, library, old college building and most recently, a nuns' convent. We chose to use derelict buildings to make use of the building in their current state. We feel it is also more exciting as well as environmentally friendly. We then modernised the buildings installing modern equipment such as air source heat pumps, solar panels and underfloor heating with the best heat transfer screeds. This allows the buildings to run more efficiently.

## Q Why did you decide to go down this route? What are the benefits for children, families and staff?

I recognised the demand for childcare provision within South Tyneside and due to my personal difficulties with dyslexia, I wanted to promote opportunities and provide a platform for staff enabling them to deliver outstanding childcare, education and development. We were able to provide over 112 jobs within the company, including our own admin team and IT specialists. We provide the highest care standards to the children in our community. South Tyneside was considered the second worst in the country in respect of Ofsted gradings. We feel we have we have really helped to turn this around.

## Q How have you sourced finance and how difficult was this?

Finances 23 years ago were also extremely difficult. I worked full-time including evenings and needed to put every penny I had into making the business work. I was supported by my wife and her wage. Being a builder by trade, I physically carried out the work myself and I used every skill I had along with financial support to enable me to do what I did. Lloyds Bank was the main support for building the nurseries. However, I had to self-fund the first one and convert it before Lloyds Bank were able to financially support me. Within two years of running the business proving we were successful, Lloyds Bank allowed additional borrowing.

## Q What challenges have you faced along the way and how have you overcome these?

The challenges have been endless, however, the best support I received to overcome these challenges was the continuous support given by the staff who worked endlessly as a team. The Covid pandemic was one of the biggest challenges we had to face but again the staffing team, who are like an extended family to me, stuck together throughout the pandemic and along with the Government's furlough scheme, we were able to retain all jobs to keep our nurseries flourishing.

## Q What advice can you offer to other nurseries looking to extend or convert buildings to be able to offer more places to children?

Make sure you do your research on all building materials to find the lowest prices without compromising on quality. Share a sound business case with the bank and borrow as much as you can comfortably repay. Carry out as much of the work as you can by yourself along with the support of your family and friends.

We have a number of Sure Start centres within South Tyneside which posed a conflict of interest between the sectors, so all of our success has been from the commitment and dedication of our own staff along with one or two exceptional people within our local authority. Under the present climate, opening new nurseries or converting old buildings is a very difficult and expensive project. I would advise anyone who is starting off in the childcare business to try and look at partnerships with schools, local community centres and other landlords to see if they are able to part-share in any profits created to give an equal support. We have a secondary business that will support any financial shortfalls, which is why we are able to offer affordable and flexible childcare at the highest standard.



Welcome to this special four page myNDNA guide for practitioners. myNDNA is free - sign up for your weekly tip and activity! Go to [www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna](http://www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna)

# Fearless creativity

*"To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong."*

Joseph Chiltern Pearce (1926-2016)

Young children are natural explorers of the world around them and possess a remarkable capacity for creativity and imagination. Imagination is the ability to be creative and resourceful while creativity is individual responses to what children see, feel and hear through materials, experiences and ideas.

Children engage in imaginative play, invent stories and create artwork without worrying about whether their ideas are 'correct', or the outcome is 'perfect'. Adult expectations or focus around the finished product rather than the creative process, can lead children to become hesitant to try new things or pursue their own ideas for fear of criticism or failure.



## You will need

- Terracotta clay (stays soft outdoors and eventually washes back into the soil)
- Natural autumn finds eg, conkers, twigs, leaves, moss.

## Valuing the process

Dr Ken Robinson highlighted the value of nurturing creativity in children and emphasises allowing children to 'be wrong' and explore multiple possibilities. For example, asking children to build 'a house' from a selection of blocks will result in different house designs, whereas asking them to make what they want will lead to unknown, extravagant results with endless possibilities, depending on children's interests and creativity.

Valuing the process and encouraging children to experiment, take risks and follow their imagination fosters divergent thinking skills and creative problem solving. Divergent thinking (referred to as lateral thinking by Edward de Bono) supports children to think outside the box and develop concepts, not only in art, but in other curriculum areas too.

Children try out different materials and test what they can do. Evidence shows that children who score well on divergent thinking tests also produce unique ideas and are better at problem solving and higher-level evaluative thinking. Shifting the emphasis from product to process enables children to learn that mistakes are an inherent part of creativity which generates resilience, adaptability and a love of learning.

With encouragement and guidance, we should give children freedom to make their own choices, experiment and take ownership of their own creative endeavours. They will learn to trust their ideas and their own abilities. They will gain confidence to transfer their new found skills and apply creative thinking into other contexts such as drama, music, dance, art and craft. Let fearless creativity commence!



## Autumn forage boggarts

Forage for natural autumn finds. As they collect items, encourage children to notice different autumnal colours of golden yellows and orangey reds, explore how items feel, discuss their properties such as whether they are pointy, rounded, bumpy or smooth. Talk about the autumnal changes they notice in the natural environment.

Find space on a tree, fence, or wall for children to create their boggarts by squishing and moulding a lump of clay onto the surface. Encourage them to use foraged items to create their unique boggart.

Create imaginative stories about the boggarts, helping children to introduce a narrative and new vocabulary to their play. Leave the boggarts in place to visit each day where children can add to and change them using different foraged items.

Provide autumnal themed loose parts alongside play dough for another transient art opportunity.





# Nurturing creative potential

*"Creativity is inventing, experimenting, growing, taking risks, breaking rules, making mistakes and having fun."*

Mary Lou Cook

The key to nurturing children's creative potential is to adopt a supportive and non-judgemental approach. Create an atmosphere where children feel safe to express themselves without fear of criticism. Encourage their ideas, display their creations in progress, provide positive feedback on their curiosity and explorations, and value their unique perspectives.

Model exploring by inviting children to problem solve with you and share your own mistakes - these will help to build their confidence and increase their desire to experiment and take creative risks.

Artistic expression in the form of painting, drawing, sculpting, constructing, singing, role play, music and dance provide effective opportunities for young children to explore and develop creativity. Read on to discover some activities and top tips to support children's creative potential.

## Dot-to-dot

International Dot Day is celebrated every year in September, inspired by the children's book 'The Dot', which sees a child start her journey to creative potential by being encouraged to make a simple dot on paper.

The message is to encourage children to 'have a go' and to celebrate creativity, courage and collaboration. More information can be found here: [www.internationaldotday.org](http://www.internationaldotday.org)

Introduce a range of resources for children to create dots. Cotton wool balls, cotton buds (plastic free) and fingers dipped in paint, bingo dabbers, pens, pencils, paper circles and so on can all be used to create a variety of 'dots'. Encourage children to compare the sizes of dots, create repeating dot patterns or simply allow them to follow their own imagination and create a dotty masterpiece.

Celebrate children's achievements but remember to focus on the process - the unique ways children use the resources and their different ideas.

### You will need

- Paper, paper circles (various sizes)
- Bingo dabbers, pens, pencils
- Cotton wool balls, cotton buds
- Glue, paint.

*"Just make a mark and see where it takes you"*

Peter H. Reynolds



## Falling leaves dance

Use autumn as a stimulus for movement and dance. Firstly, take children on a walk to observe leaves as they blow in the breeze, fall from trees or get thrown in the air. Discuss how they fall, twirl, flutter, spin and swirl down to the ground.

Back at your setting hold a falling leaves dance where children can re-enact the movements to music of different tempos.

- **Quick tempo:** Run, skip, jump and hop like leaves in the breeze
- **Medium tempo:** Twirl, flutter, swirl and spin like falling leaves
- **Slow tempo:** Lie, stretch, roll and curl up on the floor like settled leaves.

Provide a range of props for children to use in their dance such as red, yellow and brown scarves, create streamers with the children or coloured paper leaf shapes.

Create autumn songs to known tunes, for example:

- **Here we go round the mulberry bush** - "This is the way we sweep the leaves..."
- **London bridge is falling down** - "Leaves are swirling to the ground...Can you show me?"

Encourage children to create their own verses or songs.



## Celebrate & display artwork

Use empty picture frames for 2D art, hang them from walls and ceilings and add string lights to highlight their work. Display 3D creations on child height shelves, with name labels. Remember to provide children with space to store structures they are working on so they can return and continue with their ideas.



## Nursery Rhyme Week

Celebrate Nursery Rhyme Week 13-17 November by finding new ways to engage children with familiar nursery rhymes:

- Use different singing tempos (fast/slowly) and dynamics (loud/quiet) to create different moods.
- Introduce characters, for example, sing in a loud roaring lion voice, a big booming bear voice or a small squeaky mouse voice
- Encourage children to make up new lyrics for familiar rhymes using words which are personal to them, such as their name, favourite food or toys
- Create props to engage children in rhyme time. For example, cardboard box tunnels with twinkly lights for babies to lie under while adults sing Twinkle, twinkle
- Provide percussion instruments, modelling how to use them and giving children time to practice playing and singing
- Hold a nursery rhyme concert where children choose and perform their favourite nursery rhymes in their preferred style of voice and accompanying percussion
- Create your own nursery rhyme book containing your children's favourite rhymes and add it to your book area.

[www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna](http://www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna)

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The place to learn, share and grow

## Let's play Pumpkin Soup

Share the story Pumpkin Soup by Helen Cooper with children:

Cat, Squirrel and Duck live in a cabin in the woods. They play music during autumn evenings. Cat has bagpipes, Squirrel has a banjo and Duck sings. They work together to make pumpkin soup, until one day things go terribly wrong.

Support children to re-enact the story, using the enhancements for small world and role play.

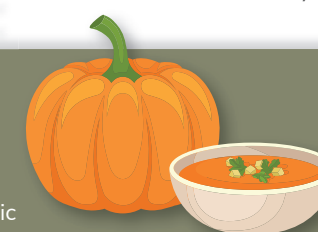
### Make pumpkin soup

When preparing the pumpkin, encourage children to scoop out the seeds with their hands describing how it feels. Afterwards, add the pumpkin skin and seeds to your mud kitchen.

Find out if any family members or members of the local community play the bagpipes or banjo and invite them in to play for the children so they can hear and see the instruments. Alternatively, watch and listen to the instruments on a video.

### Extension activity:

Provide a range of paints and food colouring which do not include the colour orange. Set the children the challenge of making orange paint or orange water in the tray. Which did they use to make the best orange colour?



### You will need

- Continuous provision enhancements eg cat, squirrel & duck figures or story stones
- Wooden spoon & large pot
- Images of the instruments
- Pretend or real pumpkins
- Smaller spoons & bowl
- Box for the cabin
- Wheelbarrow
- Hat.



## Creative environment top tips

Provide open-ended materials that can be used in multiple ways, such as blocks, clay, paint, natural materials and cardboard boxes. Give children time to explore and ask questions, to develop their natural sense of curiosity and wonder, desire to learn, to discover and create new things.

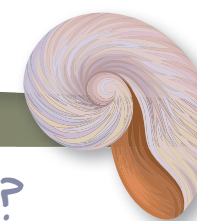
Provide 'provocation stations' where unusual or interesting objects are displayed next to creative areas to encourage children to represent them using a variety of different media. Emphasise the process, helping children to focus on their ideas, imagination and creativity without restrictions or judgement.



## What are loose parts?

Loose parts are resources that are open-ended and can be used in multiple, creative ways. Examples include wooden planks, sand, pebbles, shells, tins, blocks, reels, fir cones.

Providing children with loose parts develops creativity and offers endless opportunities for children to follow their own interests, creativity and imagination. There are no expectations on how loose parts are used so children can problem solve, make mistakes, start over, think creatively and make connections.





Activities with children must always be risk assessed. Children must have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

# Encouraging creativity at home

## Celebrating Diwali

Purnima Tanuku OBE, NDNA's Chief Executive, shares how her family celebrate Diwali at home:



Diwali is celebrated by all communities across the whole of India, making it India's biggest festival. Diwali translates as 'a row of lights' and is often called the 'festival of lights'.

The date of Diwali changes each year but it usually falls between mid-October and mid-November, this year it is on 12 November. Diwali celebrates 'good over evil' and communities celebrate stories based on where they live. Hindu communities in Northern Indian celebrate King Rama's return after Ravana's defeat. Hindu communities in southern Indian celebrate the day that Lord Krishna defeated the demon Narakasura.

Ask your Hindu families to understand how they celebrate Diwali in their home.

Purnima and her family prepare for Diwali by cleaning the house, buying new, colourful clothes and laying lamps around the home, especially at the front of the house. Figures of Goddess Lakshmi (goddess of wealth and good fortune) and God Ganesha are placed in rooms.

The altar is decorated with flowers and gold or silver jewellery is placed next to Goddess Lakshmi. Food plays an important role in Diwali, so vegetarian food and sweet treats are prepared.

On the day of Diwali, Purnima's family bathe and wash their hair before putting on their new clothes and performing puja (worship) at home. At around 6pm, family and neighbours gather to light oil or electric lamps in clay pots around the home and exchange gifts of sweets and nuts.

In India, shops are full of displays of light, smells of incense and colourful flowers. Celebrations continue with firework displays and sparklers and the Diwali lights are left until they go out of their own accord.



## Multilingual nursery rhymes

Our society is multilingual, with an estimated 360 languages spoken across the country according to the DfE and evidence shows the value of protecting the linguistic heritage of children in our settings whose first language is not English. Reflect on how you currently engage any families with English as an additional language (EAL) and how you celebrate and include their home languages into your setting.

Hold a celebration event inviting families into your setting to share nursery rhymes or songs in their home languages. Introducing common words such as 'hello' or 'friend'. For families who are unable to attend, ask them to share a recording of their child's favourite nursery rhyme or song in their home language to play in the setting for others to hear.

## Transient art at home

Transient art can be described as 'moveable art' and it's a great way for parents to support creativity at home, using resources freely available. This can include natural objects (leaves, twigs, etc), pasta, bottle tops, tin foil, and so on.

Big art can be made using boxes, fabric and recyclable materials from around the home. Provide families with examples of creations – patterns, constructions etc – and encourage them to share images of the artwork children create.

## Creating together at home

Encourage parents to engage in creative activities to foster imagination, cognitive development and self-expression. Remind parents to follow their child's creative ideas. These might include:

- **Dancing days** – move the furniture back and dance away to your favourite tunes, as well as some less familiar; find some classical or marching music and create new moves
- **Sensory tray** – in a shallow tray, add materials such as sand, flour, cotton wool, pasta etc to explore with their hands, spoons or cups.



# Creating a home from home environment

Helping new children to settle into nursery can be one of the biggest challenges faced by practitioners and is an emotional time for both the child and their parents.

To help make the transition as smooth as possible, we have developed a beautiful range of nursery accessories designed to create a home from home feel within your setting. Having a homely environment helps little ones settle more quickly and feel more at ease in their new surroundings, allowing you to focus on doing the most important job on earth – supporting the development and education of our youngest generation.

We have teamed up with expert Ines Lawlor to bring you her top tips on creating a home from home environment.



**Ines Lawlor**  
Ines spent over 20 years working as an Occupational Therapist, is an author and MSc Children & Youth Studies.

- Babies and young children have not yet developed the ability to reason and self reflect. Practitioners therefore need to provide sensory feedback to calm the child's sensory system. Through touch is one great example of how this can be achieved. A cuddle, a favourite blanket or toy will all help.
- The self-sufficient stage of emotional regulation depends, in part, on a child being exposed to a variety of different sensory experiences, so the child can learn which sensations are calming.
- Try having different zones within the nursery e.g. a quiet/calm corner where children can choose to go if they are feeling upset or overwhelmed for a quiet talk (once they are calm) or time with a book or toy.

## Discover our newest nursery accessories at Hope



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T&Cs: The member benefits are only available to active NDNA members. To claim your exclusive discounts you will be required to provide proof of your NDNA membership. Whether you are a new customer or an existing customer you will need to contact us to add these benefits to your account. If you cancel your NDNA membership your Hope benefits will be withdrawn. The 20% promotion is valid off one order before 31st March 2024 and can be used at any given point within the year. The 15% discount will be applicable on every order, excluding items that are not eligible for further discount. The savings of up to 70% will be clearly displayed as a 'contract price' when you log in. The pricing of these product could change at any given time. You will receive free delivery on all orders with no minimum spend. Next day delivery is available on stocked items when requested prior to 2pm. The promoter reserves the right to vary or withdraw any offers at any time without notice or cause.

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## Ask the experts...

Jack Lander is uCheck's Head of Business Development and is responsible for the growth of the UK's largest DBS umbrella body. Having worked for uCheck for nearly eight years, it's fair to say he's become quite expert on all things DBS!



Jack Lander

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### Q What are the different types of DBS check and what do I need to get for my staff?

The different types are DBS Enhanced, Standard, and Basic DBS checks. Enhanced DBS is for those working in a limited range of establishments, such as regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults. An enhanced DBS will disclose any spent and unspent convictions, cautions, warnings, reprimands and any other information the police find relevant to disclose. Standard is a check that can be used for financial advisors, or a builder working in a school outside of term time, for example. A basic check has no criteria and can be conducted on anyone.

### Q How often do I need to renew a DBS check?

Good practice is to renew every 12-36 months. This really will depend on each setting's individual practices. Checks are essentially out of date once they have been completed so it's best to run them every 12-36 months. We recommend every 12-18 months to give nurseries extra peace of mind! You can use supervision meetings to keep track of any updates.

Applicants can register for the DBS update service direct with DBS, they must do this within 30 days of the DBS certificate issue date and it will cost £13 annually.

### Q How long does it take on average to get the check completed?

The average turnaround is 48 hours.

### Q What about staff who have been living out of the country for a period or who have moved here from abroad – how long will that delay the check for?

It won't necessarily delay a check but a DBS will only disclose any UK held information. To obtain an overseas check they would need to complete a specialist overseas check or they can process checks through embassies.

For more information see Home Office guidance: [www.bit.ly/43G9jcp](http://www.bit.ly/43G9jcp)

### Q Do we need checks for apprentices and those on work experience?

This is quite a broad question but yes, they would need a check if they are working in regulated activity with a child frequently. Why not reach out to uCheck for more information on eligibility.

### Q What about those who work in the nursery but not directly with the children?

Yes, you would need to undergo a DBS check if you work in the setting and have access to children.

### Q What DBS information does a setting need to record?

It really is down to each setting and their individual policies. Most nurseries keep note of the reference number of the DBS, the date and who obtained it but any sensitive information must be kept stored securely. The Code of Practice says that employers should consider the information that has been revealed for the purposes for which it was obtained and then destroy this after a suitable period has lapsed, usually no longer than six months. Find out more: [www.bit.ly/30f03ED](http://www.bit.ly/30f03ED)

### Q What will regulatory bodies expect to see?

Anyone working in regulated activity with children should undergo an enhanced DBS check. You should see

their hard copy certificate and keep a copy.

### Q In Wales, regulatory bodies (CIW and Estyn) are wanting to see DBS checked with barred lists for registered persons as well as practitioners. Is this something you can help with?

Anyone working in the setting can obtain this level of check, however we would recommend that nurseries in Wales ensure they follow the DBS guidance set out by CIW for Registered Persons and Responsible Individuals: [www.bit.ly/47ln8zT](http://www.bit.ly/47ln8zT)

### Q In Scotland, do they just need to run these by Disclosure Scotland or does uCheck do that for them?

Scottish nurseries should be conducting a PVG check. This can be done directly with Disclosure Scotland. You can go directly to their website or ring 0300 020 0040 if you have any queries. [www.bit.ly/476bado](http://www.bit.ly/476bado)

### Q Why is it better for NDNA members to use uCheck for their DBS checks?

NDNA members get free access to the uCheck platform and preferential rates on their DBS checks. Nurseries would usually pay the DBS fee of £38 plus the uCheck admin fee of £15.20. NDNA members are charged a reduced admin fee of £4.20 – that's just £42.20 per Enhanced DBS check!



NDNA members can sign up here: [www.ucheck.co.uk/ndna-registration](http://www.ucheck.co.uk/ndna-registration) and use code **NDNA-MEMBER** to sign up free of charge.



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# Once upon a time...

We all know that reading is important for children. But do we know exactly why?

This summer's year six SATS results showed a drop in reading skills, a worrying indicator that children's development is not progressing as much as it should be. It begins with the foundations for reading and a love of stories.

*"Reading is a passport to many adventures" (Mary Pope Osborne)*

Storytelling is as old as human culture. In Ancient Egypt orators were given special status. Storytelling has existed for thousands of years to remember history, pass on wisdom and share cultures.

For children, stories are magical, exciting and powerful. They give flight to their imagination and open up new worlds and new words! They teach as well as entertain, helping children understand a range of emotions and situations, developing empathy, a feeling of belonging and connection.

Early years practitioners have the wonderful privilege of being able to inspire a lifelong love of stories and books in the children they care for. They can give them the skills they need for later reading and writing. This means they can enjoy the humour and fun in many stories, learn about other cultures and different countries; be able to identify with others' experiences.

As well as opening up endless worlds of mystery and adventure, children need to be able to read to function in their daily lives as they mature. Having poor reading skills affects job prospects, self-esteem, communicating thoughts and ideas, relationships and creativity. Reading develops problem-solving, concentration, listening skills. Being unable to read impacts the most basic tasks and makes life extremely difficult, especially in the digital age.

**So how can you be the catalyst for all this?**

Expose children to a rich variety of multi-sensory experiences, repeat and practice activities to strengthen those brain connections and use a broad range of vocabulary with babies and toddlers.

With this in mind, our experts have developed a new course **Creative Storytelling in the Early Years** which focuses on developing storytelling skills. Not everyone is a Jackanory natural narrator but there are some simple skills you can work on to really bring stories to life in your setting.



Photo of Carole Blackwood courtesy of Stuart Vance/ the Daily Record.

*Special offer!*

Members can enjoy **20% off** this course in September and October 2023. Take advantage by using this discount code:

**STORYTIME2023**



**Are you sitting comfortably? Then let us begin**

Planning is key in order to transform a simple book into an epic storytelling adventure. Taking a bit of time before settling down the children for storytime will pay dividends. Think about your own experiences as a child listening to stories – what can you remember that really stands out for you? Can you evoke that in your storytelling sessions?

Think about creating different voices for your characters, building anticipation by using a quiet voice before getting suddenly louder. Learn by example and share experiences within your nursery – how do your colleagues bring a tale to life? What do they do that really captures the children's interest and keeps them engaged?

You have to find your own voice for narration, but here's some ideas to consider:

- Can you use your storytelling skills in different settings – outdoors, in the woods, on a walk?
- What are your facial expressions when storytelling? Are you just using your face or can you use your whole body?
- Can children take part with you – could they be some of the characters?

**Enjoy yourself, immerse yourself in the story, and the children will too!**

Carole Blackwood of Oakwell Nursery in Linlithgow won NDNA's Practitioner of the Year 2023 Award. She loves dressing up and reading the children stories.

Here are her top tips:

- Make sure the children are sitting comfortably, lots of different furnishings and something to help them relax
- If you really like the book yourself it will help you to make it more interesting for the children
- Bringing a story to life through the use of puppets etc makes it far more exciting.



Scotland  
National Day Nurseries Association

GIVING YOU A STRONGER VOICE

*Hello from Jane*

Despite the watery summer, you have been sharing some lovely photos of your time outside which has been fun to see.

In this edition of Nursery News we have news of an online webinar that explores how to meet the National Standard with confidence.

Check out Poppies Pre-School which has gained top scoring inspections over the years.

There is also an interview with Rosslyn Corrie one of our fabulous associate trainers. We are always looking for new associates to come on board. This is something you can do alongside your current role, so if you are interested, please let us know.

*Jane*

Jane Malcolm  
Policy Manager,  
NDNA Scotland



**Hit for six!**

**A huge congratulations to Poppies Pre-School in Laurencekirk, South Aberdeenshire who achieved an amazing full score of sixes in all areas in their recent Care Inspectorate report.**

Since 2014 Poppies have achieved excellent grades across the board in four different inspections. The nursery is part of the Froebel Trust, an organisation that researches children's learning. Owner Sharon Imray has many talents and took the lead in the Trust's latest publication about sewing.



She said of their success: "We have a sound commitment to play, and in particular 'play in the outdoors', the nursery offers an environment which allows each child to grow and develop at their own pace.

"Our garden at Poppies is the culmination of years of work because we believe firmly that the children should be able to fully immerse themselves in and through nature."

**Meet our associates!**

**We have wonderful associates who deliver NDNA's training across Scotland. We are pleased to introduce Rosslyn Corrie.**

**Where are you based?**

I am based in Dumfries & Galloway in the south-west of Scotland.

**What is your background?**

I have been an SVQ Assessor and Internal Verifier since 2006 and run my own training company called Step-Up, delivering Modern Apprenticeships in Social Services (Children and Young People) Levels 3 and 4. I also deliver the PDA in Childhood Practice at SCQF Level 9 and am the co-owner of a Daycare Nursery & Forest School in Kirkcudbright having previously had my own Daycare Nursery in Castle Douglas for 11 years.

**How long have you been an associate with NDNA?**

I have been an NDNA Associate for about 12 months.

**What's your favourite training to deliver?**

I have delivered NDNA's Positive Behaviour training and Leadership & Management training and thoroughly enjoyed delivering both of these!



## The Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard

**NDNA Scotland is delivering a Funding Follows the Child and the National Standard refresher webinar for members. We were hearing reports from all over Scotland that nurseries have been losing their local authority funding for delivering 1140 due to not meeting all the aspects of the National Standard at reapplication time, whether through procurement or otherwise.**

Our goal is to support members to fully understand every aspect of the National Standard to give you confidence that you are evidencing how you can meet each criterion. We know our members always aim to give children the very best experiences. It's important now to ensure that all improvements are framed within the National Standard alongside other quality documents.

To support this, we have developed a framework to signpost you to the links between the National Standard and other quality documents that you already gather evidence for. This will support you to ensure that you are meeting every aspect of the National Standard with confidence.

Some key messages from our webinar:

- New operating guidance is due this year, there will be no changes to criteria
- Commitment to professional development – use the national CPL modules from Scottish Government
- Evidence your use of the national induction resource and other key documents
- You are already gathering evidence for most of the criteria – our tool can show you where there is crossover
- There are challenges across the board for meeting the criteria, being able to provide evidence of where you believe you are meeting the criteria will be of support in professional discussion with local authorities.

We will notify members of the webinar event, recording and supporting framework through our e-bulletin, so keep an eye on your inbox.





**Cymru**  
National Day Nurseries Association

## Helo gan Sarah

Mae'n amser cyffrous iawn ymg Nghymru, mae canllawiau ar gyfer ymarfer blynyddoedd cynnar wedi cael ei ddylanwadu, ei siapia a'i ysgrifennu gan ymarferwyr ar gyfer ymarferwyr. Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ymgysylltu gyda nifer o randdeiliaid ar draws y sector i gynhyrchu dogfennau a chanllawiau sy'n benodol ar gyfer y sector ac yn tanlinellu pwysigrwydd y Pum Mlynedd Cyntaf. [ndna.org.uk/firstfiveyearscount](http://ndna.org.uk/firstfiveyearscount)

Rydym hefyd wedi gweld cyhoeddi We have also seen the publication of the updated Safonau Gofynnol Cenedlaethol ar gyfer gofal plant wedi'i reoleiddio sydd wedi cymryd i ystyried eich barn, rannwyd fel rhan o'r ymgynghoriad. Rydym wedi cynnal rhai sesiynau ar y SGC diweddaraf, fodd bynnag os oes gennych gwestiynau pellach, cysylltwch â ni, mae tîm NDNA Cymru yma i'ch cefnogi!

Buasem hefyd yn hoffi rhannu eich ymarfer da, felly cadwch mewn cysylltiad gyda ni drwy greu tag ar **Trydar/ Twitter @NDNACymru**, neu drwy ein tudalen Gwpeylfr neu drwy [wales@ndna.org.uk](mailto:wales@ndna.org.uk)

*Sarah*

Sarah Coates, Rheolwraig Partneriaethau Polisi a Strategol, NDNA Cymru



## Hello from Sarah

It is an extremely exciting time within Wales, guidance for early years practice has been influenced, shaped and written by practitioners for practitioners. Welsh Government have engaged with a range of stakeholders across the sector to produce guidance documents that are specific to the sector and highlight how the First Five Years Count [ndna.org.uk/firstfiveyearscount](http://ndna.org.uk/firstfiveyearscount)

We have also seen the publication of the updated National Minimum Standards for regulated childcare which has taken into account your views which you shared as part of the consultation. We have held some sessions on the updated NMS, however if you have any further questions please get in touch, the NDNA Cymru team are here to support you! [www.bit.ly/3DxMRre](http://www.bit.ly/3DxMRre)

We would also like to share your good practice with others so please keep in touch with us, tag us on **Twitter @NDNACymru**, via our **Facebook** page or at [wales@ndna.org.uk](mailto:wales@ndna.org.uk)

*Sarah*

Sarah Coates, Policy and Strategic Partnerships Manager, NDNA Cymru



## Ymunwch â y safon aur ar gyfer cymorth cyntaf pediatriig

Rydym yn cymryd ymadroddion o ddiddordeb gan feithrinfeydd a blynyddoedd cynnar ar draws Cymru i 'Farc Milli', am ymarfer o'r safon uchaf mewn cymorth cyntaf paediatrig.

Bydd hyn yn golygu bod lleoliadau ar draws Cymru yn fuan yn gallu ymuno gyda lleoliadau yn Lloegr a'r Alban yn dangos i rieni eu bod yn cymryd diogelwch eu plant o ddifrif. Nid yn unig byddant wedi hyfforddi yr holl staff sy'n gweithio gyda phlant, byddant hefyd yn rhoi mesurau mewn lle i sicrhau bod yr wybodaeth yn gyfredol a rhoi hyder i staff i weithredu cymorth cyntaf mewn argyfwng pan ac os bydd ei angen.

Meddai Sandy Clayton o Feithrinfeydd Toad Hall Montessori yng Nghaerdydd, wnaeth gymryd rhan mewn cynllun peilot Marc Mille yng Nghymru: "Mae'r buddion i staff wrth dderbyn ac adnewyddu eu hyfforddiant cymorth cyntaf wedi rhoi hyder i'r staff ddellio gyda unrhyw sefyllfa neu argyfwng allai godi, yn y ffordd gywir."

"Mae buddion hefyd i rieni a gofawlyr am eu bod yn teimlo'n hyderus wrth adael eu plant mewn amgylchedd diogel gan wybod bod yr holl staff wedi derbyn hyfforddiant cymorth cyntaf paediatrig."

"Mae Marc Millie yn caniatáu i pob plentyn i dderbyn gofal yn y ffordd gywir pan ac os mae angen cymorth cyntaf arnynt, gan wneud i'r plant deimlo'n ddiogel a hapus o fewn amgylchedd y feithrinfa."

I gofrestru diddordeb anfon e-bost i: [info@milliesmark.com](mailto:info@milliesmark.com)

## Get on board with the gold standard for paediatric first aid

We are taking expressions of interest from nurseries and other early years settings across Wales for Millie's Mark, an award for best practice in paediatric first aid.

This will mean that settings across Wales will soon be able to join those in England and Scotland in being able to show parents that they take the safety of their children extremely seriously. Not only have they trained up all staff who work with children, they have also put in place measures to keep that knowledge fresh and boost staff confidence to deliver emergency first aid as and when they need it.

Sandy Clayton from Toad Hall Montessori Nurseries in Cardiff, who took part in the Millie's Mark pilot in Wales, said: "The benefits for staff having and renewing their first aid training gives staff the confidence in dealing with any situations or crisis that may arise in the correct way."

"The benefits for our parents and carers are that they can feel confident in leaving their children within a safe and secure environment knowing that all staff are paediatric first aid trained."

"Millie's Mark allows all children to be cared for in the correct way if and when first aid is needed, making the children feel safe and happy within their nursery environment."

To register your interest please email [info@milliesmark.com](mailto:info@milliesmark.com)



## Canllawiau Ymarfer Blynyddoedd Cynnar

Mae'r Cwricwlwm ar gyfer lleoliadau meithrin a ariennir nas cynhelir yn rhoi'r plentyn yn ganolog, yn dathlu unigolyddiaeth pob plentyn, ymarferydd a lleoliad yng Nghymru yn ogystal ag adnabod pwysigrwydd chwarae a deall datblygiad plant. [www.bit.ly/3DxN0Li](http://www.bit.ly/3DxN0Li)

Rydym hefyd wedi gweld cyhoeddi Trefniadau cwricwlwm ac asesu ar gyfer lleoliadau meithrin a ariennir nas cynhelir i gefnogi'r cwricwlwm. Mae'r trefniadau asesu yn cefnogi datblygiad cyffwrdd drwy sicrhau bod anghenion pob plentyn yn ganolog i ymarfer addygsegol. Mae'r trefniadau yma yn amlinellu prif egwyddorion a phwrpas asesiad ac maent wedi eu cynllunio i gefnogi cynnydd ar gyfer pob plentyn unigol. [www.bit.ly/3Dz8OGc](http://www.bit.ly/3Dz8OGc)

Mae eich adborth wedi bod yn gadarnhaol iawn tuag at y ffordd hon o fynd i'r afael â'r cwricwlwm ac asesu. Mae'r rhan fwyaf o ymarferwyr wedi adrodd bod y cwricwlwm wedi lleihau gwaith papur, gan alluogi ymarferwyr i dreulio mwy o amser yn dod i adnabod a chefnogi eu plant. Mae plant wedi cymryd mwy o ran yn eu chwarae ac maent yn dangos cynnydd rhagorol yn eu dysgu a'u datblygiad.

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi dangos eu hymrwymiad i gefnogi



ansawdd Chwarae, Dysgu a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar (ECPLC) ar gyfer plant 0-5 oed yng Nghymru trwy gyhoeddi cyfres o adnoddau i gefnogi ymarferwyr mewn lleoliadau gofal plant a chwarae ac ysgolion. ECPLC yw'r enw newydd ar gyfer gwaith a elwid gynt yn Addysg a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar (ECEC) yng Nghymru.

Mae'r adnoddau hyn yn cydnabod y rôl sylweddol y blynyddoedd cynnar yn ystod plentynod yn ogystal ag wrth lunio ein dyfodol. Er mwyn sicrhau bod pob plentyn rhwng 0 a 5 oed yn cael y dechrau gorau posibl mewn bywyd, mae'r dogfennau canlynol wedi'u cyhoeddi:

- Fframwaith Ansawdd ar gyfer Chwarae, Dysgu a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar yng Nghymru
- Chwarae, Dysgu a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar yng Nghymru: Pecyn Cymorth Ymarfer Myfyriol
- Chwarae, Dysgu a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar: Llwybrau Datblygu 0-3 oed.

[www.bit.ly/3K4I9Vw](http://www.bit.ly/3K4I9Vw)

Mae'r Llwybrau Datblygu 0-3 oed yn garreg filltir arwyddocaol yng Nghymru fel y canllaw cyntaf i leoliadau gefnogi gyda dysgu a datblygiad plant o'u genedigaeth!

Lawrlwythwch y dogfennau, rhannwch gyda'ch tîm ac ystyriwch sut y gallant lywio eich ymarfer. Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiynau neu adborth, cysylltwch â Swyddog Addysg Blynyddoedd Cynnar NDNA Cymru – Hayley Grayson [Hayley.grayson@ndna.org.uk](mailto:Hayley.grayson@ndna.org.uk)



## Early Years Practice guidance

A curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings is child centred, celebrating the individuality of each child, practitioner and setting in Wales as well as recognising the importance of play alongside an understanding of child development. [www.bit.ly/3DxN0Li](http://www.bit.ly/3DxN0Li)

We have also seen the publication of Assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings to support the curriculum. The assessment arrangements support holistic development by keeping the needs of all children at the forefront of pedagogical practice. These arrangements outline the key principles and purposes of assessment and are designed to support progression for the individual child. [www.bit.ly/3Dz8OGc](http://www.bit.ly/3Dz8OGc)

Your feedback has been overwhelmingly positive towards this way of approaching the curriculum and assessment. Most practitioners have reported that the curriculum has reduced paperwork, enabling practitioners more time to spend getting to know and support their children. Children have been more engaged in their play and are showing excellent progress in their learning and development.

Welsh Government has further demonstrated their commitment to supporting quality Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) for 0-5 year olds in Wales through the publication of a suite of resources to support practitioners in childcare and play settings and schools. ECPLC is the new name for work previously known as Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) in Wales.

These resources recognise the significant role the early years play in childhood as well as in shaping our futures. To ensure that all children aged 0 to 5 years have the best possible start in life, the following documents have been published:

- A Quality Framework for Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care in Wales
- Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care in Wales: A Reflective Practice Toolkit
- Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care: Developmental Pathways for 0-3 years.

[www.bit.ly/3K4I9Vw](http://www.bit.ly/3K4I9Vw)

The Developmental Pathways for 0-3 years marks a significant milestone in Wales as the first guidance for settings to support with children's learning and development from birth!

Please download the documents, share with your team and consider how they may inform your practice. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact NDNA Cymru's Early Years Education Officer – Hayley Grayson [Hayley.grayson@ndna.org.uk](mailto:Hayley.grayson@ndna.org.uk)



## NDNA's Blueprint for Early Education and Childcare

Over the summer months we were busy bringing together representatives from over 20 early years experts, providers and policy organisations including Institute for Fiscal Studies, Pregnant then Screwed and the Royal Foundation for round table discussions on the future of policy.

The aim was to develop a Blueprint for early education and childcare which will inform our manifesto for political parties ahead of the general election set to take place next year. We will take this to the main party conferences in September to help shape policy debates.

Our main messages will include:

- Quality is key and stems from trained, skilled staff – decision-makers must consider children's outcomes not just economic benefits
- Early education must be treated with the same level of importance as mainstream school-aged education
- The funding should support families, providers and children looking at funding for threes and fours and business rates.



## Education Committee recommends scrapping business rates and supporting sector

NDNA members Gemma Rolstone of Puffins and Emma Gardener of Spring Nurseries give evidence to the committee (above right)



The Committee's first inquiry led by chair Robin Walker MP was about sustainability and workforce issues within the childcare sector. It also heard evidence, including from NDNA and members about the impact of the Government's expansion.

Its report *Support for Childcare and the Early Years*, published in July, set out the barriers that providers and parents faced. Its recommendations included increasing funding, not calling the entitlement "free", scrapping business rates, monitoring the 1:5 ratio for twos, mandatory SEND training for staff and boosting career development.

Purnima Tanuku OBE, NDNA's Chief Executive told the press: "Here is yet another report laying bare the challenges facing the early years sector. The Committee has made some important recommendations but without a magic goose laying golden eggs, nurseries will struggle to make this a reality."

The Government response is due by the end of September.



## September – new rates, new EYFS

With the new academic year come a few changes.

The EYFS has two major updates which Ofsted will be inspecting from now on. The two-year-old ratio change to 1:5 can now be used by nurseries, but this is not mandatory. Regulations around mealtime supervision have been tightened, so children must always be within sight and hearing of staff to reduce the risk of choking.

Ofsted told NDNA: "Changes to the EYFS will not impact our inspection policy. As always, we will inspect early years settings in line with our inspection handbook. While we inspect early years provision in line with the principles and requirements of the EYFS, we don't use it as a checklist during inspection. We want to know what it is like to be a child at each setting, and where a requirement from the EYFS is not being met, we would consider the impact of this on children."

Check out Ofsted's recent blog on inspection [www.bit.ly/3s1BI4R](http://www.bit.ly/3s1BI4R)

The DfE has boosted funding rates for three and four-year-olds by an average of 33p, although it's much lower in some council areas. For eligible two-year-olds, this increase is much higher, with the average rate now £7.95 from £6 previously.

It's crucial that providers check to make sure they receive 100% of this additional payment. The Government has told LEAs that they should pass on all this money. If you're unsure or believe you are not receiving what you are entitled to, email [investigations@ndna.org.uk](mailto:investigations@ndna.org.uk)

## Making sure your voice is heard

There have been several consultations ongoing during the summer. Here's a round-up:

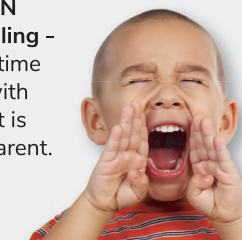
**EYFS consultation on regulatory changes** - this closed on 26 July. NDNA held a webinar with members to look at the key points and responded on behalf of the sector. NDNA agreed with some of the qualifications proposals but making sure quality of provision is not impacted.

**Home Office consultation on mandatory reporting of child sexual abuse** - this closed on 14 August. We consulted with

members and designated safeguarding leads during a webinar. Our response focussed on the need to support the sector if regulations are changed as well as taking concerns into account around existing staff shortages. [www.bit.ly/3OAKOYp](http://www.bit.ly/3OAKOYp)

**DfE consultation funding rates 2024-25** - last chance to give your views on the funding mechanism for two-year-olds and under from April. [www.bit.ly/3KW3VLN](http://www.bit.ly/3KW3VLN)

**Ofsted consultation on complaints handling** - this closes on 15 September so there's still time to send in your views. We held a webinar with members and spoke about how important it is that a complaints process is fair and transparent. [www.bit.ly/44YAgtD](http://www.bit.ly/44YAgtD)



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