

NURSERY NEWS

Your membership magazine

www.ndna.org.uk



Through frost and friendship

Welcome to our winter edition which is so packed with exciting outdoor ideas and cosy indoor activities that you will wonder where all the time has gone.

This winter we are looking at the warm glow that we get from our friends. Having friendships is so important to our well-being and health, but especially so in winter when it's dark and cold.

For our children, making friends is fundamental but not always easy, so sometimes they need some encouragement.

Being the sort of person who other people want to befriend means being more selfless and looking out for others. As adults in children's lives, we can lead by example, show how to be sociable and how to involve others who are on the sidelines. We offer lots of advice on this in our friendship feature on page six.

We saw the effects of what life is like without friends during the worst days of the pandemic. Let's celebrate our friends and friendships as precious gifts to be nurtured and valued; especially in the cold and darker winter months.



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HUG A TREE



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Showcase the stars of your nursery!

The NDNA Awards 2025 are now open. This is your opportunity to showcase and celebrate the talented professionals in your nursery.

Winning an NDNA award is a huge achievement. Here's what our winners say:

"Winning Nursery of the Year has been an incredible honour for Sunflower. It has boosted the confidence of our team, reaffirming their hard work and dedication. The recognition has strengthened our community and we would absolutely encourage others to pursue the opportunity!"

Nursery of the Year 2024, Elaine Sagar of The Sunflower Children's Centre Hyde

"Upon hearing my name, it was such an emotional moment and I felt so proud to be surrounded by people that wanted to celebrate me and my manager journey."

Manager of the Year 2024, Sarina Kukadia

"Winning Practitioner of the Year offers a multitude of benefits that can significantly enhance both professional development and the quality of care provided in early years settings."

Practitioner of the Year 2024, Leanne Eastwood

We look forward to welcoming you at the Titanic Hotel in Liverpool on Friday 6 June to celebrate everyone's achievements.

Entries and voting close on Friday 10 January 2025.

Scan to enter!

votendna.org.uk

GIVING YOU A STRONGER VOICE

Warming friendships

As the colder, damper weather sets in for winter it is easy to see why cultures around the world celebrate light and hope at this time of the year. The longer, darker nights allow the imagination to run wild and we all look forward to what spring will bring.

Many of you will be looking to next spring and wondering how you will make the Autumn Budget measures work. At the time of writing, we do not know the new funding rates for England, the outcome of the Welsh Government's rate review or how the Scottish Government will meet its commitment to match rising staffing costs. We have been making the case with ministers, elected politicians and officials for the support you need to stay sustainable.

I was fortunate to spend Diwali in India with family and friends - as we cover in this edition, friendships are crucial. Making friends is a vital skill for children as they develop with support from the adults around them. They are an important network for adults too.

We need the comforts of friendship even more during winter. It also brings its own practical challenges. Just as you would check your car is ready for winter, have a look out for our blog about getting your nursery ready for the harsher months.

NDNA is here to give you the advice, support and voice that you need, but you can also find help from people working through the same challenges as you. Our networks support one another, bring providers together and give you a collective, local voice. Membership of the Institute for Early Years Education creates a sense of community for practitioners, with a forum to share

ideas and seek support from your peers.

We have shown that by working together we can make a stronger case for early education and care. The Department for Education no longer talks about 'free' childcare, a position we were told would never change. A new round of funding from the Education Endowment Fund means a further 800 nurseries in England can benefit from Maths Champions. The Welsh Government has made business rates relief permanent and the Scottish Government has committed to a new review of the true costs of delivering early learning and childcare places. There is evidence that change can happen.

So as you prepare for your Christmas activities and other celebrations, I want to take this opportunity to wish you all the best for the season. I hope you spend time with family and friends, enjoy the celebrations and recharge for the year ahead.

PURNIMA TANUKU OBE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Get involved online!

@NDNAtalk

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/ndna.org.uk



Nursery News is NDNA's magazine for members. It is published by NDNA, National Early Years Enterprise Centre, Longbow Close, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, HD2 1GQ. Advertising in this publication is paid for and does not necessarily reflect the views or constitute endorsement from NDNA.

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The wonderful world of coding

Becky Franklin,
New Product
Developer.



The new remote control woodland animal range from Hope has been specially created to introduce the littlest of learners to the fascinating world of coding. We caught up with Hope New Product Developer, Becky Franklin, to find out more about the range.

What inspired the development of the range?

It's important to introduce children to coding and technology resources from an early age to get them comfortable with the resources they will be using throughout their education. The Woodland Remote Control Animals fill the gap of introducing coding to young children in a fun and interactive way, through the cause and effect of pressing the buttons. Enabling children to start to learn coding at a young age equips them for a technological future.

How does the range support children's development?

The range is designed as a woodland animal theme and in natural colours to guide children to make sense of their physical world. The link to natural habitats familiarises children with the environment around them.

What unique benefits does the range offer?

My favourite feature of this product range is the cohesive design, every piece within the range seamlessly integrates with one another, creating a visually inviting product. The curated colour palette, theme and product shape promotes a sense of familiarity and coherence for the child as they progress through the range.

What are the key features of the range?

- A standout feature of this product range is its ability to evolve alongside the child's development. With products increasing in complexity as skills advance, the range provides a seamless progression for learners.
- The products teach cause and effect which builds a foundation of early coding skills and directional language for maths. They do this through play-based learning, promoting play, communication and socialising with friends.
- Effortlessly rechargeable with the included docking station which houses four animals and four remotes and also offers easy storage.



Discover the range at hope-education.co.uk

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Be part of the community - join the Institute of Early Years Education

IMPROVING PRACTICE



Institute of Early Years Education members enjoy many benefits that support personal and professional development. This includes a comprehensive healthy lifestyle package. Membership provides bite-sized training and learning opportunities, along with more in-depth resources.

Manage your continuing professional development (CPD) with access to a professional recognition programme on an ePortfolio. You can track time spent developing skills, review opportunities for reflection and download a personalised CPD report.

The healthy lifestyle offer includes a digital well-being platform with self-care content and access to fitness programmes, meditation, nutrition guides and recipes. Membership also includes access to 24/7 GP services, rewards and discounts.



Susan Hill, Wellside Kindergarten, Falkirk

"I love the elements that support my day-to-day work, but also the more personal resources. I've been actively using the gym classes which can be done from home and are excellent.

"I use the recipes and they are tailored to my individual needs.

"I love the discounts! There are so many and benefit the whole family which is always a plus.

"Our staff are all registered and we are actively using the CPD for group discussions and identifying how we can use our knowledge and whether we need to make changes to our practice.

"I like the bite-sized courses, which don't take you off the floor for too long, and I like the option of being signposted to research and further articles to support the topic."



Leanne Eastwood, First Friends Day Nursery @ Wootey Alton, Hampshire

"Having a membership has opened a wealth of learning resources and opportunities.

"I can share what I am learning with my team which then fosters the same attitude to learning and best practice in our setting.

"I have been focusing on the member resources section. I've recently taken on a third in charge role in my setting and have found the leadership and management section to be extremely beneficial.

"My passion in the early years is additional needs so being able to access a wealth of learning and knowledge around inclusive education has been a huge benefit to my role."

Ready to begin your journey?

Signing up to the Institute of Early Education is easy and accessible with prices starting at £5 a month. www.instituteofearlyyearseducation.org.uk



NDNA live virtual classroom training

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

Advanced Safeguarding for DSL

£136.50/£182, four modules

- Module 1 on 13 Jan; Module 2 on 16 Jan; Module 3 on 20 Jan; Module 4 on 23 Jan
- Module 1 on 24 Feb; Module 2 on 27 Feb; Module 3 on 03 Mar; Module 4 on 06 Mar

Autism Awareness

£55/£74, two modules

- Module 1 on 05 Feb; Module 2 on 12 Feb

Baby Room Leader

£55/£74, two modules

- Module 1 on 22 Jan; Module 2 on 29 Jan
- Module 1 on 26 Feb; Module 2 on 05 Mar

Brilliant Babies

£85/£115, four modules

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

Building Your Nursery Curriculum

£28/£38, one module

- Module 1 on 15 Jan

Developing Confidence with Your Ofsted Inspection

£85/£115, four modules

- Module 1 on 20 Jan; Module 2 on 23 Jan; Module 3 on 27 Jan; Module 4 on 30 Jan
- Module 1 on 04 Feb; Module 2 on 07 Feb; Module 3 on 11 Feb; Module 4 on 14 Feb

Effective Team Leadership

£85/£115, four modules

- Module 1 on 14 Jan; Module 2 on 17 Jan; Module 3 on 21 Jan; Module 4 on 24 Jan
- Module 1 on 24 Feb; Module 2 on 27 Feb; Module 3 on 03 Mar; Module 4 on 06 Mar

Leadership & Management

£85/£115, four modules

- Module 1 on 04 Feb; Module 2 on 07 Feb; Module 3 on 11 Feb; Module 4 on 14 Feb

Power of Play with Babies

£28/£38, one module

- Module 1 on 29 Jan

Quality Interactions with Babies

£28/£38, one module

- Module 1 on 22 Jan

The Role of the SENCO

£85/£115, four modules

- Module 1 on 03 Feb; Module 2 on 06 Feb; Module 3 on 10 Feb; Module 4 on 13 Feb

Toddler Room Leader

£85/£115, four modules

- Module 1 on 21 Jan; Module 2 on 24 Jan; Module 3 on 27 Jan; Module 4 on 30 Jan
- Module 1 on 04 Feb; Module 2 on 07 Feb; Module 3 on 11 Feb; Module 4 on 14 Feb

Find out more about LVCs on our website at www.ndna.org.uk/LVCs

THANK YOU FOR BEING A FRIEND

FRIENDSHIPS...

Make us feel happy & loved

Help us to feel independent

Build confidence and trust

Boost social & emotional growth

WHAT ARE FRIENDSHIP SKILLS?

For pre-schoolers these skills include:

- Sharing and turn taking
- Co-operating
- Listening
- Peace-making
- Being tolerant
- Understanding and respecting differences.



Friendship and social skills must be learned and understood. The glue that holds all friendships together is kindness. Modelling these skills will help children to develop them. Talk about what friends are, why they are important to us and how to be a good friend.

Little Pioneers (Co-operative Childcare) has a blog called **Making friends makes us happy!**

Their tips include:

- Talk about turn taking and sharing
- Use role play to practise handling disagreements
- Demonstrate good behaviour when speaking to friends and family
- Organise play dates at home with their favourite games to encourage friendships.

LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT

Language and communication are fundamental to making and keeping friends. Use words that encourage caring and kindness, but also fun and interest.

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

Three in every ten children have English as an additional language (or Welsh in a Welsh-medium setting).

It's crucial that they can speak their first language for some of their time in nursery. Ensure the environment reflects the uniqueness of each child – their interests, needs, their language, background and heritage to make each child feel valued, seen, heard and comfortable to express themselves.

Support EAL children with objects, symbols, cards and translation apps. Can the child teach the other children a few words? They will use their home language with ease and confidence if they know their words will be respected and welcomed.

Celebrate diversity and respect differences. A truly welcoming environment with knowledgeable practitioners who are attuned to the unique needs of all children is crucial for forming relationships and making friends.



IT'S EMOTIONAL

Children may need support to value and understand others' feelings and emotions, a foundation for making friendships. In nursery, very young children and babies' first friends are their educators. At home, they are parents, siblings and family friends.

As their first "nursery friend", recognise that you are developing children's emotional resilience and giving them the language to talk with potential friends.

As children progress, they play alongside other children, engaged in activities without direct interaction. Providing activities like blocks, sand or water play encourages children to observe each other and start connecting without the pressure of full interaction.

Model interested, happy behaviour like laughing, smiling and making eye contact. Sharing the good times doubles the enjoyment.

Children learn that listening to others is important, so model that behaviour and verbally describe what you have done: "I listened carefully to what Zara was saying so that I can understand why she is sad. She feels happy that I've listened and that makes me feel happy too."

Nursery children are still developing 'Theory of Mind' and are not yet able to see things from other's perspectives but modelling supports this development from age four.



"EVERYONE IS OUR FRIEND IN NURSERY"

– Zoe Skidmore and Victoria Laird, Greenview Nursery, Hereford

Greenview's values stress "belonging" and "connection" so they prize friendship very highly. Among their supporting measures they use affirmation cards to encourage children to think positively about friendships. They dig deeper into the true meaning of a friend, acknowledging that some of their children may not understand what "friend" means. Pre-school children buddy up and become learning partners, which supports friendships.

"Our nursery culture is professional, friendly and caring. Without the team showing care for each other, such as holding the door open for each other, the children wouldn't be able to observe the basics of being a friend.

"Check-in circles are a great way to have open ended discussions with the children about friendships at home and at nursery. Some children sometimes refer to their pet as a friend.

"Although we like to use the phrase 'everyone is our friend in nursery', we also recognise that children will come up against negative experiences with friendships. That's why we encourage the children to be open and honest about how they are feeling during times of conflict with other children. They recognise there can be resolutions and that their emotions have been acknowledged and validated. This forms the basis of a good friendship."



SUPPORTING FRIENDSHIPS AT HOME

Parental involvement helps children feel more confident in navigating social spaces. Encourage parents to model friendly greetings, sharing and co-operation at home to reinforce these concepts. Remind them that children are learning how to share and to understand the perspective of others - it's a work in progress.

If a child doesn't feel comfortable joining in, take time to observe them and identify if there are any barriers contributing to this. Their social skills could still be developing; they could be distressed at being separated from a parent; there could be language/cultural barriers; they could have physical or sensory sensitivities. Be empathetic and listen to the parent and child. Together put a plan in place to support them at home and in nursery.

HOME GAMES & ACTIVITIES

Children's home lives have a huge bearing on their ability to make friends. Children with siblings tend to already have some friendship skills whereas those on their own at home may need encouraging to seek out friends.

For many children, nursery is their first experience of relationships outside the family which can be exciting and challenging. Giving parents some insight into social development and stages of play (children engage in solitary play up to two years old) will help parents have realistic expectations and respect where their child is on their 'social journey'. They can support and guide them through the process. Here are some ideas to share:

- Organise play dates with children from other families you know – stick to just one if your child is shy or quiet. Have some options – a trip to the park, a particular game. Stay close to support if needed and don't leave them too long
- Family meals are a great opportunity to support children to develop talking and listening skills, turn taking and sharing
- Playing games allows parents to model social skills and for children to practise them. If they lose, praise them for playing a good game with them. If they win, congratulate them and say you enjoyed playing with them.



RESOURCES & BOOKS

Little Moments Together campaign: The Departments for Health and Education created this campaign to support parents to give their child a wide vocabulary and key friendship skills: bit.ly/LMTCResources

There are great books and stories that support friendships such as 'The Colour Monster' a visual way of understanding emotions and 'The Boy Who Loved Everyone' about different ways of expressing love.

Little Pioneers: bit.ly/COOPBlog

First Five Years Count parents campaign: ndna.org.uk/FFYCParents

Expand your horizons

– become an NDNA associate

Seeking out new experiences, taking on new challenges and improving through continuing professional development are key to the role of NDNA associate. We spoke with three associates to get an insight into the benefits of being part of the NDNA team.



The role of associate is both varied and challenging which is part of the appeal and having a passion for lifelong learning is a common thread.

Lorraine Kirkwood of Just Be Kids, Glasgow says: "The role of associate is so important for connecting with other settings, sharing practice and innovation. We are supporting the next generation of practitioners."

Charlotte Roebuck, Hipperholme & Lightcliffe Day Nurseries Ltd, West Yorkshire has 17 years' experience managing settings, has worked as a trainer for seven years. She has been an NDNA associate for nine months.

Karen Pereira has been an NDNA associate for over 20 years with a background in early years teaching and teaching adults. She says: "I don't work in a nursery anymore but like to keep updated about early years."

The value of training

Training is a key role of the associate; the passion is evident when speaking about having an input in shaping the future of the sector. As well as developing the learner, there's an opportunity for the trainer's self-improvement by keeping up with current research and trends.

Lorraine says: "Training is for inspiring and enhancing. My staff team is my biggest resource so it's important to invest in them. This goes for all settings."

What makes a good associate?

Good communication skills and building rapport quickly are everything as is preparation and research. Being able to deliver course material, engaging with learners and encouraging questions and involvement in course activities is also hugely important. A rigorous recruitment process ensures that the role is a good fit for the prospective associate and NDNA.

Karen says: "It's important to make everyone feel comfortable. Reading the room and making sure everyone is having a valuable input and getting the maximum benefits from the course are vital."

Feedback is essential

An internal programme of quality assurance ensures that NDNA's training remains as high quality as possible and provides feedback to associates celebrating and discussing best practice.

Karen says: "It's nice to read the personal comments, it's a real boost when you get the feedback each month."

The NDNA process

When it comes to the NDNA process all three associates say that it is 'very organised' and the training material is 'excellent.' NDNA provide all the necessary materials including session plans with timings and copies of all handbooks. Associates can have an input in content, timing and feedback good ideas picked up from courses.

Benefits of being an associate

Associates get access to the **Development Zone** and are invited to the annual NDNA conference. They are provided with overnight accommodation and meals ahead of training sessions if necessary.

Feeling part of a team

On becoming an associate and starting on her 'new professional journey', Lorraine recalls feeling well supported by NDNA Scotland.

Charlotte says: "I have had such a positive experience working with the NDNA team who are very organised, dedicated and approachable."

"The quality of NDNA's training material is superb and as a result makes my job much easier."

When Covid struck **Karen** was asked if she would like to deliver courses online and originally said: "No, I can't do technology!"

With support from NDNA, **Karen** upskilled and is now tech savvy managing all her training online. The online setup suits her well not having to commute, having time to spend with her grandchildren and being able to offer the flexibility to run courses during the evenings and weekends.

What would you say to someone who's interested in becoming an associate?

Lorraine advises: "Speak to NDNA and ask to shadow someone or ask to do a small segment of a course as part of your own CPD."

Karen advises: "I would go for it and ask to sit in on a course before you deliver it. You see how it works, even though everyone puts their own slant on it."

Find out more about becoming an NDNA associate:



Supporting every child to thrive

In partnership with NDNA

A week of activities to support children with additional needs to thrive in early years.

COMING SOON

27-31 January 2025

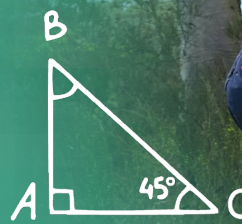
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Whilst you wait, don't forget to use your exclusive NDNA member discount with Hope.



A winning formula

$$A^2 + B^2 = C^2$$



Ankerville Nurseries in Ross-shire won NDNA's Nursery of the Year Scotland 2024. Nursery News asked them what makes them stand out.

Q What makes Ankerville unique and what do you credit your success to?

We are often praised for our attention to detail in creating a secure, stimulating and nurturing atmosphere.

One of the key drivers of success is the commitment and expertise of the staff who are well-qualified, passionate and genuinely care about the children's well-being and development.

We are known for our flexibility in meeting the needs of modern families. Whether it's offering tailored hours, providing updates through various channels or accommodating the diverse needs of parents, we focus on working with families to create a partnership in their child's education and care. High levels of parent satisfaction and loyalty have contributed to the continued success of our nurseries.

Q How would you describe the environment at Ankerville and how does this impact your children and staff?

The environment at Ankerville Nurseries is characterised by a nurturing, stimulating and inclusive atmosphere that promotes both the well-being of children and the professional fulfilment of staff.

Our nurseries create a warm and welcoming space where children feel safe, valued and comfortable. This sense of security is crucial for young children as it allows them to explore, engage and express themselves freely.

Play is at the heart of our learning philosophy with plenty of opportunities for both structured and free play. The spaces are designed to encourage curiosity, creativity and exploration, helping children develop independence, problem-solving skills and a love for learning.

For staff, this child-centred environment encourages collaboration and creativity in how they plan and deliver educational activities.

Q How important is it to develop and maintain a strong connection with your local community?

Engaging with the community not only enriches the learning experiences of children but also fosters a sense of belonging, responsibility and connection for both children and staff. Activities like termly community walks, weekly woods sessions and visits to shops and local amenities play a crucial role in this.

Engaging with the community offers children opportunities to practise important social skills, such as communication, co-operation and

empathy; whether it's greeting a shopkeeper or interacting with fellow community members.

Additionally, it creates strong community ties, encourages environmental stewardship, supports school transitions and promotes parental involvement.

For staff, it enriches their professional experience and helps build lasting partnerships within the community, creating a vibrant and connected environment for all.

Q How important is it to have the appropriate resources available to all children both inside and outside?

Children learn best through play and having access to appropriate resources enables them to direct their own learning. Resources are varied and adaptable to meet the interests and developmental stages of each child. They are carefully chosen to inspire curiosity and creativity, helping children to engage in activities that stretch their imaginations and support cognitive development.

Outdoor play is a cornerstone of the Ankerville Nurseries philosophy. By providing a well-resourced outdoor area, we allow children to benefit from the physical, emotional and cognitive advantages of outdoor learning.

Mud kitchens, gardening tools and playground equipment encourage imaginative play, social interaction and exploration of the natural world. Climbing structures, balance beams and natural landscapes support children's gross motor development, balance and co-ordination. These also promote resilience and risk-taking in a controlled environment.

Indoors, open-ended resources like building blocks, role-play materials and sensory toys allow children to explore concepts like problem-solving, collaboration and creativity.

Q What do you do within your setting to support the well-being and professional development of your staff team, and how do you celebrate them?

By prioritising mental health, offering continuous professional development, recognising and celebrating success and promoting an inclusive, collaborative culture, we create a positive, motivated workforce.

Through initiatives such as staff shout-outs, celebrating milestones and providing ongoing training, we ensure that staff feel valued, appreciated and empowered.

Staff support includes:

- Flexible working arrangements whenever possible
- Regular social events and team-building activities
- Staff are regularly encouraged to attend training sessions, workshops and courses.

$$C = 2\pi r$$



$$V = \frac{4}{3}\pi r^3$$



$$\pi = 3.1415$$

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

The power of trees & nature

As the crisp, cold air nips at our ears, we invite you to embrace the wonder of winter and the natural world around us. In this edition, we are celebrating trees, their beauty, their benefits and the wildlife they nurture.

Spending time among trees and nature has been shown to improve both our physical and mental well-being. Research into 'forest bathing' by Akemi Furuyashiki highlighted benefits such as reduced blood pressure, improved immune function and relief from depression. Hug a tree - it'll be worth it!

Trees are more than just scenery for children. They are living breathing play areas that ignite curiosity and imagination. The natural shapes of knotted trees and the uneven ground around their roots challenge and strengthen their bodies, helping them grow more physically confident and coordinated. The endless possibilities for climbing, exploring and observing awakens problem-solving and offers a space where children can be their true selves, soothing anxieties and creating emotional calm.

Winter is a time for slowing down and for finding warmth and comfort in small things, aligning with the hygge philosophy which encourages cosiness and tranquillity. Think soft glowing candles and the aromas of cloves, nutmeg and sticky black treacle from our bean tin Christmas cake recipe.

Our practice pages are packed with winter activities and tips that foster a sense of togetherness and warmth. You'll find ideas inspired by the RSPB's Bird Watch along with ways to care for our local wildlife, such as hedgehogs and bats, encouraging children to show love and care for the creatures that share our world.

As the earth's Northern Hemisphere tilts away from the sun and darkness descends, you'll find some guidance on the important topic of road safety. To brighten your dark winter days we've added in some Christmas sparkle and joy. So, get your cosy socks and scarves on, step outside and discover how trees, nature and nurturing activities can add some magical warmth to this special season.

Branching out with sculptures

Celebrate trees with this engaging opportunity for self-expression, exploration and discovery.

Discuss the value of trees with the children. For example, cleaning air by removing pollutants and releasing oxygen for us to breathe. They also give us shade, provide shelter for animals and make our world beautiful.

Take the children on a walk outside, whether in your own outdoor space or another safe natural space. Together, gather some natural materials, such as colourful leaves, interestingly shaped twigs etc. Encourage them to closely observe the shapes, colours and textures.

In your setting, model how to create a sculpture by placing a piece of playdough or clay onto a base of cardboard or a small tray. Add your natural items, narrating what you are doing and why you chose particular items (such as for their shape, colour or beauty).

Encourage each child to build their own unique creation. Observe as they are handling and sculpting the objects. As children build, they will problem-solve and improve their fine motor skills and hand-eye co-ordination.

You will need:

- Leaves, twigs, pinecones, bark, small stones
- Playdough or clay
- Cardboard or small tray.

Also try this...

Create a collage using natural materials gathered on a nature walk.



You will need:

- String/twine
- Vegetable suet
- Bird seed
- Mixing bowl
- Shape cutters.

Feed the birds

Bird feeders are a great way for children to observe your local bird population throughout the winter months. To attract the birds into your nursery garden, you can make your own bird feeders. These are so easy to make and so effective for supporting birds throughout the winter months.

In a mixing bowl, combine the suet and bird seed - children can use their hands for this. When completely mixed, flatten it out on a surface and use cutters to make the mixture into shapes. Use a wooden skewer to carefully make a hole in the top of each shape and thread the string through to make a hanging loop.

Pop in the fridge for around an hour to set then ask the children to decide on the best spot to hang the feeder outside. If you have space in your setting, it would be great to put them so the children can see the feeder from indoors.

You could store some in the fridge to be used at a later date to keep them fresh and appealing for the birds.

Alternatively, the children may like to take some home and hang them in their own garden or in a park they pass by each day. They could share with family members too so that more people can help the birds during the winter time.



Winter wildlife heroes

This winter, incorporate animal care into daily routines to encourage your children to care for local wildlife. These small actions can make a big difference and inspire children to protect nature.

Establish a weekly rota for each room to take on the responsibility for feeding the birds and providing unfrozen water.

Use your outdoor times to maintain your cosy insect homes by encouraging children to gather more leaves or add sticks to a bug hotel. Ensure you leave parts of your garden wild for food and shelter.

Add a hedgehog home in your garden or look at the hedgehog helper activity to create a feeding station.



Snug as a bug: creating cosy dens for toy animals

Help children understand the importance of caring for animals in winter while exploring their own feelings. Begin by discussing how animals need extra care in winter. Explain that some animals, like hedgehogs and squirrels, hibernate to sleep through the cold months (show images of their hibernation dens). Ask the children how they feel when it's cold outside and what they do to stay warm.

Show pictures of animals and their homes and discuss how they stay warm. For example, rabbits might find cosy burrows and birds fluff their feathers. Provide a variety of toy animals and natural materials.

Invite the children to create warm, dry and cosy dens for the animals for winter.

Discuss how caring for others can make us feel happy and warm inside. Ask the children to think of ways they can make themselves, their families or pets feel cosy and cared for.



"Road safety is our top priority"

At Teepee Day Nursery in Bracknell, road safety is a top priority and we actively promote safe practices through our annual participation in Road Safety Week. This event involves children, parents and staff in various awareness-building activities. Our primary goal is to teach children about road safety in an engaging and enjoyable way.

One of the key activities includes a mini road role-play where we set up a toy road system with traffic lights and zebra crossings outdoors. This allows children to practise being pedestrians and learn basic traffic rules.

Another popular activity is the 'Stop, Look, Listen' game which helps children understand road safety rules while role-playing real-life scenarios. We sing road safety songs, such as "Stop, Look, Listen", to reinforce key messages. Supervised walks in the local area also provide children with practical experience in walking safely on pavements and crossing streets safely.

We encourage parental involvement through various initiatives. We share blogs offering road safety tips with parents along with information packs containing advice on car seat use and reinforcing safety messages. We also introduce a 'Road Safety Pledge' where parents commit to driving slowly near the nursery and discussing safety rules at home.

To make learning fun, children engage in creative activities like crafting traffic lights helping them to recognise the meaning of red, amber and green lights; making road safety posters with important messages; and decorating reflective clothing, which helps them understand the importance of being visible and safe outdoors.



Why not try...?

Follow up with a story about an animal that hibernates and ask the children about the animal's feelings.

Sing sleeping bunnies and replace bunnies with all the animals you have been making dens for.

Think bright, be seen

As the dark winter nights draw in, consider how you ensure maximum visibility for children when walking outdoors. Wear lighter coloured coats, fluorescent safety vests or add reflective strips to prams or items of clothing. You could sew them on, use sticky tape or wear wrist and arm bands. Carry a torch or wear a head torch. Use pedestrian crossings that are brightly lit to cross the road and choose a route that has lots of street lighting so you are visible to both motorists and pedestrians.

Actions:

- **Stop** - hold one hand out in front of you (this encourages children to learn to stop at the kerb)
- **Look** - point to your eyes (encourage children to look right and left several times)
- **Listen** - use both hands to cup your ears (can they hear any sounds of traffic coming?)
- **Think** - put your hands on the top of your head (is it safe to cross the road?)
- **Before you cross the road** - hold up your left arm and use the fingers on your right arm to mimic a walking movement.



Hedgehog helpers

Show children pictures and videos of hedgehogs and ask if they've ever seen one before. Explain how hedgehogs hibernate to stay safe and warm during the cold winter months.

If possible, invite a local hedgehog rescue centre to visit and talk about where hedgehogs live, what they eat and how we can help them, especially during cold or dry periods.

Invite the children to get involved in building a hedgehog feeding station. Engage in critical thinking by discussing the design - the station should be low to the ground for easy access and sheltered to keep the food dry. Explore your outdoor area together to find a quiet, sheltered spot near a bush or fence. Check your borders to ensure there is a gap for hedgehogs to enter.



Use materials available to you. For example, bricks and a paving slab to create a small shelter. Place two shallow containers inside - one for fresh water (remember to top it up and make sure it doesn't freeze) and one for food to supplement their diet.

Explain the importance of regularly checking, cleaning and refilling the feeding station to keep their hedgehog friends healthy.

You will need:

- Four bricks and a paving stone
- Two shallow dishes
- Hedgehog-safe food (meat-based cat or dog food, specially-made hedgehog food or cat biscuits).



Why not try...?

Talk to the children about how hedgehogs are nocturnal, meaning they only come out at night. Share information with parents on how to create a hedgehog door or home in their garden, enabling children to peek outside at bedtime to see if they can spot any hedgehogs exploring their garden or a nearby verge.



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.

You will need:

- Pinecones
- Biodegradable glitter
- Ribbon
- Paint
- Glue.

Pinecone magic

Children can express their creativity and develop environmental awareness along with fine motor skills while creating this low-cost Christmas decoration. Discuss how Christmas is a time for sharing, in particular the sharing of food, gifts and love with the people around us.

Ask families to collect pinecones when they're out and about or take children on a walk to collect them together. Upcycling pinecones is a way of using natural materials, protecting the planet and an opportunity for sensory exploration.

Transform the pinecones with ribbons, twigs, glitter and/or paint. Encourage the children to explore the pinecone with their senses, such as feeling their roughness and inhaling their smell. Notice the silkiness of the ribbon and the sparkle of the glitter.

Reflect on how they've re-used natural materials as well as the beauty and uniqueness of their designs. Share the contentment of contributing to a greener Christmas as the children share their natural decorations with family and friends.

Mini Christmas cakes

Sift the flour and spices into a bowl to combine.

In a separate bowl, whisk the butter, sugar and lemon rind together until light and fluffy. Add the treacle and combine.



Whisk in the eggs one at a time, adding a tablespoon of flour with each one and whisking before adding the next. Fold in the remaining flour and dried fruits and stir well.

Put the mixture in the tins about ¾ full and place in a 180°C oven to bake for 15 minutes. Set to 140°C and bake for another hour.

When cool, the cakes can be iced using ready-made royal icing.

You will need:

- 175g plain flour
- ½ tsp ground mixed spice
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- 150g soft butter/ dairy-free spread
- 150g soft brown sugar
- Grated rind of a lemon
- One tbsp black treacle
- Three large eggs
- 500g dried mixed fruit
- 50g glace cherries
- Six 200g cleaned baked bean tins lined with greaseproof paper
- Mixing bowls & spoons.

What could the bare tree become?

If your setting uses real Christmas trees, plan ahead and think how you could use them after the festive period so they don't go to waste. You could use the bare tree to hang things off or decorate it to match children's current interests. It could be a decoration in the home corner or the beginnings of a den outside. You could use it as a mark making tool, offering the children mud or water to explore the patterns and shapes it creates.

Ask children to think about the wider community and who else might be able to help them decorate the tree. Ideas might include the local librarian, crossing patrol, shopkeepers, family members etc.

Put festive shapes in envelopes with a letter explaining the project for the children to give to community members, family and friends.

Invite them to come to the setting to decorate the tree, celebrating how the tree reflects both individual creativity and the community coming together.

Why not?

Arrange a celebration around your tree and sing some festive songs.

You will need:

- Christmas tree (preferably in a public space)
- Craft supplies.

Worker Protection Act: what early years businesses need to know

As the Worker Protection Act 2023 came into effect on 26 October 2024, early years business owners across the UK are set to experience a significant shift in their responsibilities around workplace harassment. This new legislation puts a responsibility on employers to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment, marking a pivotal change from responding to these incidents to proactively preventing them. This is a big change, so Citation are here to break down what you need to do to get ready.

Practical steps for nursery businesses



- 1. Develop your new policy**
 - make sure your anti-harassment policy is up-to-date, clearly communicated to all staff and accessible. Your policy should:
 - State that sexual harassment is unlawful
 - Outline what happens if it occurs
 - Define what's included as harassment
 - Explain what procedures are in place for handling complaints.



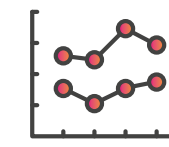
- 2. Carry out regular risk assessments**
 - identify any possible hazards related to harassment and put measures in place to address them. This includes assessing factors like staff diversity, power dynamics and situations where employees might work in isolation or with external providers. For a full breakdown on how to carry out this risk assessment, scan the QR code to read our **Worker Protection Act risk assessment guide**.



- 3. Implement staff training programmes**
 - regularly train all employees on identifying and responding to harassment, and try and tailor them to your early years setting, such as including interactions with parents, guardians or visitors. Your employees should be informed about what harassment looks like and how to report it, and your managers need to know how to handle a complaint. Regular refresher sessions are vital to make sure everyone stays up-to-date.



- 4. Foster an open environment**
 - encourage open communication through regular one-to-one meetings and anonymous staff surveys. An open-door policy also helps reassure staff that their concerns will be taken seriously and handled confidentially.



- 5. Review and monitor**
 - continuously evaluate the effectiveness of your policies and procedures and keep records of incidents to track trends and update practices where necessary.

What happens if you don't comply?

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) will play a key role in enforcing the Act. If you don't comply with your duties, you could face significant penalties, including a **25% uplift on any compensation ordered by a tribunal**. The EHRC can also act if organisations are failing to comply with their duties to prevent harassment by third-parties, so you need to include this in your risk assessment and policy documents.

Citation - by your side

As a partner of the National Day Nurseries Association, we know about the unique challenges early years businesses face on a day-to-day basis. We're here to take Health & Safety and HR & Employment Law off your plate, so you can get back to what you do best. If you'd like to have a chat about how we can help, call **0345 844 1111** and quote 'NDNA' to access your preferential rates.



Scan for our Worker Protection Act risk assessment guide:



Ask the experts...

Sophie Hutton is an award-winning specialist speech and language therapist. Her Nest Therapy Ltd specialist SEND nursery uses Widgit Symbols to help meet children's communication needs.



Sophie Hutton



Q How can symbols enhance communication for young children, particularly those still developing language skills?

Symbols can support children in understanding key routines, assist children making requests, and help them learn new vocabulary and processing information. Symbols create permanency. This means when used alongside verbal messages they remain longer, providing children with more time to process a message and understand its meaning. This is particularly important for children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN). Symbols can be used in almost every aspect of life to support communication.

Q What strategies can be used to introduce symbols to children new to the setting?

Starting at a universal level where symbols are available for all children, this could be a visual routine of the day or introducing symbols at snack times where children can point to what they would like. This can be a single symbol, symbols on a communication board or a menu. Having symbols for children to request help and let someone know how they're feeling can be reassuring for those who may be anxious to communicate or are not yet verbally communicating.

Sharing these symbols with families before a child starts nursery can also create a sense of familiarity.

Q Which children benefit most from using symbols? Are there specific developmental or language needs, such as autism or hearing impairment, that this resource addresses?

All children benefit but children with SLCN will benefit far more with the support of symbols. The most effective way to find out what works is to identify what a child can do and what barriers are in place. An autistic child who struggles with transition could benefit from a visual timeline, or a child with a hearing impairment may benefit from a symbol-supported story.

Q How can symbols aid in the communication and learning of children with English as an additional language (EAL)?

Symbols help EAL children by providing a visual representation of new vocabulary in both languages. Consistency across home and nursery environments is crucial. Even if a child doesn't understand a word, the symbol helps them grasp its meaning. Widgit Online's dual-language feature is especially useful, translating both languages alongside symbols to support children and their families.

Q How do visual timetables assist children, especially those who are non-verbal or have difficulty with transitions between activities?

Visual timetables offer structure, reducing anxiety for children who struggle with transitions. By providing a visual reference for current and future activities, children can better understand changes. Symbols can be used in countdowns or 'first, then' sequences, helping children anticipate transitions smoothly.

Q How can settings integrate symbols into play-based learning to engage children more naturally?

The permanency of visuals means symbols become part of the environment and continuous provision to be used by all, but are there for those who need them most. This also supports other children to understand how to use symbols to communicate, creating an inclusive environment.

Q What role do symbols play in fostering independence and confidence in young children?

Symbols foster independence by providing clear, permanent instructions. A symbolised checklist can help children complete tasks like getting dressed or packing their belongings. Symbols empower children to express needs, make requests and share experiences, boosting their confidence when used consistently across environments.

Q How can symbols help children better understand emotions or regulate their own behaviour?

Symbols allow children to express emotions when they lack the vocabulary or are overwhelmed. Adults modelling the use of symbols for emotional expression can help build emotional literacy in children. Symbols can also support emotional regulation by helping children understand their feelings and learn coping strategies.

Q What kind of professional development is available for SENCOs and Early Years Practitioners to effectively implement symbol-based communication?

Widgit offers webinars and training to help practitioners integrate symbol use effectively. Whole-team training is especially valuable for embedding symbols into the daily routine.

To find out more, go to:
widgit.com



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Advanced Safeguarding training updated (England)

Our advanced safeguarding training has been given a full makeover to reflect changes around Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024. In particular, delegates now look at building a safe organisational culture which includes safer recruitment, having a child-centred approach and professional curiosity.

We have updated policies and procedures and new safeguarding legislation, including rules and responsibilities of the staff team. We look at measures within supervisions and staff meetings and what that should look like in practice.

Our new real life case studies include closer scrutiny of what happened at Tiny Toes where a baby died and two members of staff have been jailed. Early years expert Fiona Bland said: "This teaches us that we have got to be vigilant and have professional curiosity. Do you have whistleblowing procedures in place? Some of the examples we use are of a staff member being over-friendly, having favourites, using their own phone to take photos.

"What kind of example was the room leader setting? We ask you to think about what happens in your own setting, what kind of language practitioners use."

Another new section is about recognising abuse taking place outside the setting.

Advanced safeguarding for designated safeguarding leads training can be delivered through Live Virtual Classroom (LVC) or in-house face-to-face (F2F).

Call 01484 407070, email training@ndna.org.uk or book online now.



Safeguarding training for all

Did you know we offer online safeguarding and child protection training separately for all three nations?

Find out more: ndna.org.uk/Training



Supporting children with additional needs

The National Audit Office reported that 140% more children in England now have an Education Health and Care Plan compared with 2015. This huge jump is replicated in Wales and Scotland.

NDNA offers you a offer a range of online training to support children with SEND (for England) and in Wales and Scotland to support with additional learning needs.

This includes our free entry course Introduction to **Supporting Children with SEND**. We have four low cost courses which follow this up: **Supporting Children with SEND, SEND Awareness, Understanding Education, Health and Care Plans and SEND: working with parents**. We also have the **Role of the SENCO** which can be done virtually via LVC and also F2F.

Why not look at our **Championing SEND** programme? We train two members of staff, the Champion and Deputy Champion, who then embed good practice across the setting and disseminate their knowledge among the team.

Take a look at our inclusive practice webpage for NDNA Cymru: ndna.org.uk/Inclusive

For all three nations, **Courageous Conversations** which we have just updated is a very useful course. It could help with speaking to a parent about a child with developmental needs, a member of staff about their performance or a parent about safeguarding issues.

Don't forget our popular **Autism Awareness** course which can be done virtually via LVC and F2F. This looks at strategies to support children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and creating autism-friendly environments.

Our **Promoting Positive Behaviour** course (LVC and F2F) supports all children, including those with additional needs. This has been recently updated in line with the latest requirements and best practice.



Review of Quality Practice NDNA In-house Support

Get an independent review of your practice

We are offering Review of Quality Practice across the UK at a lower cost from January to March 2024.

One of our experts visits your setting to carry out a thorough review of your practice. They can focus on any aspect – such as the quality of the environment, the curriculum you offer – or the whole offer. It's an opportunity for all staff to experience an independent external evaluation of practice.

The expert provides a comprehensive review, giving practical ideas and strategies to further develop quality. They write a report with suggestions for development. The cost for members will be £845 including VAT.

ndna.org.uk/RoQP



Hello from Jane

As the nights get darker and colder there is a lot going on in ELC in Scotland. I met with the Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise, Ms Natalie Don-Innes in September.

We are very excited to launch our NDNA Scotland Children's Rights Award which we will present at our Spring NDNATalk event in March. We also bring you news of the refreshed Setting the Table guidance and the new shared Quality Improvement Framework from Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland. Lots to think about!

If you want any information about the Children's Rights award please contact us. We are looking forward to you sharing your excellent rights-based practice with us. We look forward to applications from you all.

Jane

Jane Malcolm
Policy Manager,
NDNA Scotland



Refresh of Setting the Table

The updated guidance published on 8 October 2024 aims to ensure that children from birth to five years in childcare settings across Scotland are given meals, snacks and drinks that meet their nutritional requirements and make a positive difference to their health. It replaces the previous guidance from 2015, updated in 2018, reflecting the latest scientific and nutritional advice.

Scottish Government has engaged closely with the sector, including NDNA Scotland, through the expert working group to ensure that the guidance meets the sector's needs.

All ELC providers in Scotland are expected to implement this guidance by August 2025 to give you time to familiarise yourself with its contents and make changes where necessary.

bit.ly/STTGScotland



NDNA Scotland meet with Minister

In September, Jane Malcolm, National Operations Manager, met Ms Natalie Don-Innes, Minister for Children, Young People and the Promise. They discussed sector issues including continuing support for paying the Real Living Wage, sustainable funding rates, Shared Inspection Framework and qualifications.

Ms Don-Innes gave her continued thanks to the sector for all it does for Scotland's children, saying she understood the challenges and issues facing the PVI sector. She is committed to doing what she can to resolve these issues and will continue to work with NDNA Scotland to do this. She re-iterated these messages to NDNA members in her address to our Autumn Scotland NDNATalk event.

NDNA Scotland Children's Rights Award – Enter your nursery now!

NDNA Scotland is bringing you a new Children's Rights Award! It is designed to showcase the best of rights-based practice in ELC in Scotland.

The UNCRC is now incorporated into Scots Law. ELC settings are already champions of children's rights and we want to celebrate your contribution to realising these rights daily. We want to hear about all the fabulous work you are doing. If you take a rights-based approach and children are aware of their rights, then nominate your setting!

The award is open to all NDNA Scotland members. Nominations can come from practitioners, room leaders, deputy managers, managers and owners. (We would expect the nursery to get 'Good' or above in their latest Care Inspectorate grading).

The winner will be announced at the Scotland NDNA Talk event in Edinburgh in March 2025 when we will celebrate children and their rights.

We want as many nurseries as possible to apply so that we can celebrate our fantastic rights-based practice in Scotland. Any questions? Please contact Hannah Murison on 0131 287 1552. Go on, nominate your nursery for this amazing new award!



New Quality Improvement Framework – Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland

We have worked alongside other representative bodies with Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland on their draft of the Quality Improvement Framework. We shared our concerns about the initial drafts of the framework with the two inspection bodies, Scottish Government and the Minister Natalie Don-Innes to ensure that the framework is fit for purpose and reduces the burden on settings.

The initial plan was to soft launch the new framework in September, however following our feedback, this has been postponed until 14 January. In November some of you joined the Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland in some familiarisation sessions for the sector, but the framework won't be shared for a few weeks. They will pilot the methodology for inspection early next year.

NDNA Scotland is developing resources to support members with understanding this new framework and we will bring you more information on these in due course. bit.ly/QIFramework





Cymru
National Day Nurseries Association

*Hello gan
Sarah*

Diolch i bawb
wnaeth gwblhau
ein harolwg trethi
busnes. Heb eich mewnbwn
chi ni fyddem wedi bod mewn
sefyllfa i gyflwyno tystiolaeth i
Lywodraeth Cymru ar yr angen
i barhau gyda'r gostynigad
trethi.

Mae'r diweddariad yma hefyd
yn cynnwys gwybodaeth am
sut i fewnblanu y Gymraeg ac
ymarfer adfyfyriol. Os ydych chi
angen gwybodaeth pellach neu
gefnogaeth, cysylltwch ag aelod
o'r tîm.

Sarah

Sarah Coates,
Rheolwraig Partneriaethau Polisi a
Strategol, NDNA Cymru

*Hello from
Sarah*

Thank you to all those who
took the time to complete our
business rates survey. Without
your input we would not have
been able to evidence to the
Welsh Government the need
for the rates relief to continue.

This update also includes
information about embedding
the Welsh language and
reflective practice. If you need
any further information or
support, contact a member of
the team.

Sarah

Sarah Coates,
Policy and Strategic Partnerships
Manager, NDNA Cymru



Why Welsh?

NDNA Cymru are here to
help you implement Welsh
language into your setting,
with a wide range of factsheets
and bilingual resources
available.

ndna.org.uk/WelshFactsheets

ndna.org.uk/WelshLanguage

There are so many benefits to having
Welsh as an additional language, here are
just a few:

W - Why

Why Welsh? Why now? Cymraeg 2050
aims to get 1 million Welsh speakers by
2050, and you can play a part in that!
Having an additional language has shown
to improve memory, listening, concentration
and problem-solving skills.

E - Early

Children under five learning an additional
language require the same part of the brain
that is used when learning a first language,
making it easier for children under five to
learn an additional language.

ndna.org.uk/FFYC

L - Listening

Children aren't born with the ability
to speak; they don't have a vocabulary.
Children learn every word before they can
read by hearing the words.

S - Speaking

Speaking to someone
in Welsh helps to
improve confidence.

H - Heritage

We are fortunate
to live in a generation
where Welsh is being
used and we are being
encouraged to use it.
People who have an
additional language are
more positive about
their country and culture.
We can learn Welsh
and teach it to the next
generation.



Pam Cymraeg?

Mae NDNA Cymru yna i'ch cynorthwyo i
roi'r Gymraegar waith yn eich lleoliad, gyda
amrywiaeth eang o daflenni ffeithiol ac
adnoddau dwyieithog ar gael.

ndna.org.uk/WelshFactsheets

ndna.org.uk/WelshLanguage

Mae cymaint o fanteision o gael y Gymraeg
fel iaith ychwanegol, a dyma rai ohonynt:

W - Why/Pam

Pam Cymraeg? Pam nawr? Mae Cymraeg
2050 yn anelu i gael 1 miliwn o siaradwyr
Cymraeg erbyn 2050, a gallwch chi gymryd
rhan yn hyn! Mae cael iaith ychwanegol
yn gwella'r cof, gwella gallu i wrando,
canolbwyntio a sgiliau datrys problemau.

E - Early/Cynnar

Mae plant o dan bump oed sy'n dysgu
iaith ychwanegol yn gofyn am yr un rhan
o'r ymennydd sy'n cael ei ddefnyddio wrth
ddysgu iaith gyntaf, sy'n ei gwneud yn
haws i blant o dan bump oed i ddysgu iaith
ychwanegol. ndna.org.uk/FFYC

L - Listening/Gwranddo

Nid yw plant yn cael eu geni gyda'r gallu i
siarad; nid oes ganddynt eirfa. Mae plant yn
dysgu pob gair cyn iddynt allu darllen drwy
glywed y geiriau.

S - Speaking/Siarad

Mae siarad gyda rhywun yn Gymraeg yn
gwella hyder.

H - Heritage/ Treftadaeth

Rydym yn
ffodus i fyw mewn
cenhedlaeth pan
mae'r Gymraeg yn
cael ei defnyddio
ac rydym yn cael
ein hannog i'w
defnyddio. Mae
pobl sydd â iaith
ychwanegol yn fwy
positif am eu gwlad
a'u diwylliant. Gallwn
ddysgu Cymraeg
a'i phasio ymlaen i'r
genhedlaeth nesaf.

Minister: small business rates relief a permanent fixture for registered childcare premises

Following research and lobbying from NDNA Cymru which fed in to Welsh Government's review of small business rates relief for registered childcare premises, Dawn Bowden MS Minister for Children and Social Care and Mark Drakeford MS, Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Welsh Language have announced that 100% small business rates relief for registered childcare premises will be made permanent.

The relief was due to end in March 2025. Dawn Bowden MS made the announcement when she visited NDNA member Daisy Day Nursery in Cardiff.

Ahead of this positive decision, NDNA Cymru had surveyed members, discovering that 43% of respondents would have to close their businesses if business rates were re-introduced.

Of those who would be able to remain open, 67% would have to increase their fees to parents; 47% said it would impact on their sustainability and 37% were concerned about quality of provision if they were unable to reinvest in their business, training and resources.

NDNA's Chief Executive Purnima Tanuku OBE said: "We are delighted and very relieved that the Welsh Government has made the right decision. This support to members is vital at a time when they face huge challenges with their sustainability."



Gweinidog: gostyngiad trethi busnes yn cael ei wneud yn barhaol ar ar gyfer lleoliadau gofal plant cofrestredig

Yn dilyn gwaith ymchwil, a lobïo gan NDNA, a gyfrannodd at adolygiad (review) Llywodraeth Cymru i ostwng trethi busnes bach ar gyfer lleoliadau gofal plant cofrestredig, mae Dawn Bowden AS Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol a Mark Drakeford AS, Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Gyllid a'r Gymraeg wedi cyhoeddi bod y gostyngiad treth busnesau bychan o 100% ar gyfer lleoliadau gofal plant yn cael ei wneud yn barhaol.

Roedd y gostyngiad i fod i ddod i ben ym Mawrth 2025. Gwnaed y cyhoeddiad gan Dawn Bowden AS mewn ymweliad ag un o aelodau'r NDNA, sef Meithrinfa Daisy Day Nursery yng Nghaerdydd.

Cyn y penderfyniad cadarnhaol hwn, roedd NDNA Cymru wedi cynnal arolwg o aelodau, gan ddarganfod y byddai'n rhaid i 43% o ymatebwyr gau eu busnesau pe bai trethi busnes yn cael eu hailgyflwyno. O'r rhai a fyddai'n gallu aros ar agor, byddai'n rhaid i 67% gynyddu eu ffioedd i rieni; Dywedodd 47% y byddai'n effeithio ar eu cynaliadwyedd ac roedd 37% yn pryderu am ansawdd y ddarpariaeth pe na baent yn gallu ail-fuddsoddi yn eu busnes, hyfforddiant ac adnoddau.

Meddai Prif Weithredwr NDNA, Purnima Tanuku OBE: "Rydym wrth ein bodd ac yn teimlo rhyddhad bod Llywodraeth Cymru wedi gwneud y penderfyniad cywir. Mae'r gefnogaeth hon i aelodau yn hanfodol ar adeg pan maent yn wynebu heriau sylweddol gyda'u cynaliadwyedd."

Reflective practice in Wales

Reflective questions have popped up everywhere in recent years, within: curriculum and assessment documents; the Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) resources (a whole toolkit dedicated to them!); CIW and Estyn resources and reports and within early years resources and training.

Reflective practice is an integral aspect of quality early years practice. It supports us to improve our knowledge, understanding and skills. It's fundamental in supporting children's care and development. Understanding and implementing successful reflective practice helps us to become effective, compassionate and insightful practitioners.

NDNA Cymru has developed an online training module about reflective practice, its benefits, what it looks like in practice and to highlight tools to support you.

ndna.org.uk/RPWales



Ymarfer adfyfyriol yng Nghymru

Mae cwestiynau adfyfyriol ym mhob man yn y blynyddoedd diwethaf o fewn: dogfennau cwricwlwm ac asesiadau; adnoddau Chwarae, Dysgu a Phlentyndod Cynnar (ChDPC) (mae pecyn cymorth cyfan ar eu cyfer!); adnoddau ac adroddiadau AGC ac Estyn o fewn adnoddau a hyfforddiant blynyddoedd cynnar.

Mae ymarfer adfyfyriol yn agwedd gyfannol o ymarfer blynyddoedd cynnar o ansawdd. Mae'n ein cefnogi i wella ein gwybodaeth, dealltwriaeth a'n sgiliau. Mae'n sylfaenol i gefnogi gofal a datblygiad plant. Mae deall a gweithredu ymarfer adfyfyriol llwyddiannus yn ein cynorthwyo i fod yn ymarferwyr mwy effeithiol, gyda dealltwriaeth lawn.

Mae NDNA Cymru wedi datblygu modiwl hyfforddiant ar lein am ymarfer adfyfyriol, y buddion, sut mae'n edrych yn ymarferol, ac hefyd mae'n tynnu sylw at yr adnoddau sydd ar gael i'ch cefnogi.

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Another manifesto win! Funded not free

Following years of lobbying Government about the entitlement not being free to either parents or providers, the DfE has amended its wording in all its parent-facing communications.

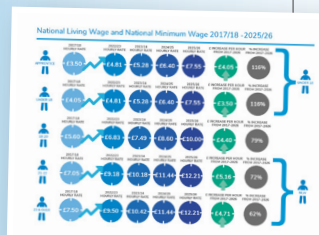
They are now referring to the hours as “government-funded” not “free”. This has been a conscious decision taken as a result of feedback from the sector to support providers manage parental expectations around charges.

Extra pressures on the sector

Following the Budget, employers will have additional costs to pay from April including higher minimum wages and National Insurance contributions. NDNA has briefed MPs who have asked questions in Parliament about this to ensure these costs are all factored into the funding rates. We had assurances that the guarantee given by the previous Chancellor that rates would include average earnings increase, new minimum wage rates and inflation will be upheld.

At the time of going to print, we were still waiting for funding rates to be published. These could be as late as early December. We will look at these and consult with you to make sure this percentage increase looks sufficient enough to cover your costs. From next year, the Government will be buying around 80% of childcare hours so it's vital that they pay a fair rate.

Any Government investigation into charges and subsequent change of guidance must also involve you. This is our message as we head towards 2025 and the jump to 30 hours for all eligible children over nine months old.



800 nurseries fully funded for evidence-based Maths Champions

We are delighted to be able to offer fully-funded Maths Champions programmes to another 800 nurseries across England. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has secured money for the project through the DfE's Accelerator Fund.

NDNA's Maths Champions builds the knowledge of nursery practitioners to support children's early mathematical development. It is an online, one-year programme with one-to-one support throughout and live webinars delivered by our Early Years Advisors.

Maths Champions supports practitioners to create maths opportunities for their children in everyday play which has been proven to boost their attainment by three to six months.

You will need to sign up between October 2024 and April 2025 to be eligible. Register your interest to start the programme in 2025.

Read our FAQs here: ndna.org.uk/MCFAQs



School-based nurseries

By 19 December, schools will have put in their bids for the first round of funding for school-based nurseries. This is to expand existing school nurseries or create new nurseries to help ease demand. NDNA has been clear – and so has the guidance from DfE – that this must not displace existing PVI provision.

Even so, we have already heard from members based in schools whose provision is threatened because their leases will not be renewed and schools will be taking over their provision. In many cases, the new school offer is less than is currently being delivered.

NDNA is logging all these cases and would like to hear from any members who are in a similar position. Please email policy@ndna.org.uk



Ofsted's plans and new safeguarding measures

Following Ofsted's Big Listen, the biggest consultation they had ever held, we are now in a period of consultation: the Government will work with us, providers and parents to design a “report card” which will replace the current one-line judgements. Once the new system comes into force, probably during the next academic year, nurseries will be judged as either meeting or not meeting the requirements, with more detail in the report card.

As part of their framework reforms, new safeguarding measures have already been announced with more changes to the EYFS including the experienced-based route updates in the pipeline.

The new safeguarding measures announced in October are based on best practice so many of you will already be doing these. They come into force in September 2025.



As we speed toward the busy Christmas period and with 2024 drawing to a close, it's been a notable year - bustling with activity and change. We've seen heightened appetite from buyers, investors and lenders and we're incredibly proud to have achieved unprecedented prices for those selling successful nursery businesses this year.

Looking ahead to 2025, we predict this trend will continue.

LET US HELP SHAPE YOUR PLANS FOR 2025.

SPEAK TO THE EXPERTS: T: 0333 034 1751 | E: childcareandeducation@christie.com

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