



National Day Nurseries Association

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HOPE
is all you need

And the votes are in...

Here are the NDNA Nursery Awards 2025 winners!



The Nursery in Belong

Overall & Central England Nursery of the Year

Judges felt that The Nursery in Belong demonstrated such a strong commitment to both team development and well-being, fostering a supportive environment that empowers staff to grow and thrive. They actively collaborate with wider communities, sharing expertise to strengthen the broader community. Their commitment to intergenerational care and experiences is phenomenal and their use of specialised programmes and collaboration with universities for research further underscores their dedication to advancing best practices and staying at the forefront of educational innovation.



esSENTial Early Years



Bumble Bees Day Nursery

North of England Nursery of the Year

esSENTial Early Years are a unique, small setting supporting children with very specific needs. They prioritise children's development in a holistic way. Recognising that their parents may face additional challenges at home, they build parents' knowledge and confidence to boost the home environment. They receive amazing feedback from external agencies and specialists.

South of England Nursery of the Year

At Bumble Bees Day Nursery, children are at the heart of what they do. They have a clear expectation for the children's learning journeys. CPD is focused around staff's interests and areas of commitment. Colleagues come together to overcome difficult situations. Their support for SEND children has been recognised by external agencies and referenced in academic works.

Other regional finalists: Beeches Park Day Nursery, Honey Pot Allerton, Lambkins Day Nursery and Preschool, Little Pilgrims, Nannie Annes South Woodford and The Early Years Academy Derby.



CHRISTIE & CO

Nursery of the Year sponsor

Christie & Co's Childcare & Education team is here to support childcare business owners with their strategic ambitions; whether that is looking to buy, sell or grow their business portfolio.



Great Western Early Years
- Kingswells

Scotland Nursery of the Year

Great Western Early Years, Kingswells, has an approach to children's rights that sets it apart. Children's voices are heard and taken into account, both collectively and individually. They are given opportunities and encouragement to explore their interests and passions in a meaningful way. They embody a reflective approach, taking on board feedback from parents and children.

Other national finalist: Banana Moon Bridge of Don.



Kensington International
Kindergarten

International Nursery of the Year

Kensington International Kindergarten lead a nurturing, inspiring and growth-oriented environment for the children. Staff development and growth is a priority. Each member has a tailored development plan with collaborative initiatives. Families are well engaged and comment on the blend of academic excellence with emotional and social development.



Ethan Clarke - All Smiles
Pre-School

Practitioner of the Year sponsor

The professional membership body for all individuals working or aspiring to work in the early education and care sector. Supporting your professional development and demonstrating your professional value, boosting your well-being, fostering collaboration and creating a sense of belonging. Access to the Institute of Early Years Education is free for all! Browse your free resources or sign up for free to log your CPD!



Bellevue Nursery

Wales Nursery of the Year

Bellevue Nursery has clear goals for children. Their culture is reflected in the retention of committed staff that deliver consistency and continuity. There is a commitment to ongoing learning and working with the community to support transitions. Parents directly shape improvements and each child is known, supported and celebrated as an individual.

Other national finalists: Little Westbourne Nursery and Ribbons Preschool.



Qurrah Day Care

Practitioner of the Year

Ethan goes above and beyond to ensure all children thrive, especially those who are at a disadvantage. He offers vital support to families in crisis and builds inclusion into daily practice. His impact extends across the sector as he develops learning for his team and mentors others. Parent feedback is outstanding and it's no shock that he has been nominated for other awards within his local authority.

Other finalists: Brad Gray from Spring Carousel and Brittany Lawson from Childsplay Claremont Nursery Cooperative Ltd.



Natalie Jones - Kidzrus Forest
School and Nursery

Manager of the Year

Natalie empowers and supports her team and the parents. She has engaged harder-to-reach parents through initiatives and is proactive in ensuring her team is a step ahead of upcoming changes. She focuses on the impact of her leadership and has truly built a family team. Development is a priority, as is team well-being and showing up for children, families, staff and peers.

Other finalists: Diane Gregory from Childsplay Claremont Nursery Cooperative Ltd and Lottie Draycott from Beeches Park Day Nursery.

Manager of the Year sponsor



At Citation, we're all about making your nursery the best it can be. By supporting you with every aspect of HR and Health & Safety, we give you the time to do what you do best – educate your children.



Charnwood Nursery and
Preschool

Excellence in Additional Needs

Charnwood Nursery and Preschool work with specialists to support children's needs and inclusive practice. They have a clear understanding of the rights-based approach to including children with additional needs in their provision and they embed neuroaffirming strategies. They partner with professionals to upskill the team which provides strong outcomes for children.

Other finalists: Ankerville Nurseries and Training Centre and The Old School Nursery at Shapwick.

Excellence in Additional Needs sponsor



Widgit are a company with a passion for symbol-based communication. Our Widgit Online and InPrint software gives users access to over 20,000 symbols to meet the unique needs of symbol users worldwide.



Chloe Thomas - Ribbons
Preschool Ltd

Apprentice of the Year

Chloe is creative, resilient and a leader in the making. She seeks out professional development and is a strong source of support for her peers. Her passion for working with children shines through. Chloe is dedicated to supporting children with additional needs. She's created her own resources to help non-verbal and autistic children communicate and thrive. She has gone above and beyond by overcoming barriers - modelling language and learning new languages to better connect with the children in her care.

Other finalists: Angela King from Cumnor House and Katie Crompton from esSENTial Early Years.



Little Lodge Nursery

Nursery Group Community Impact

Little Lodge Nursery has plans to become a charity, encouraging lots of community and parental engagement. Leadership has an ambitious long-term strategy, linked to EYFS and child nutrition. They work with local care homes, involve their council in initiatives and engage families in events, such as litter picks and healthcare days where they gather local medical experts, free of charge.

Other finalists: St Aubin Nursery Roath and The Early Years Community.

Nursery Group Community Impact sponsor



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Best Family Childcare

Learning Through Play: Outdoor Explorers

Best Family Childcare is strong on cultural capital and although in a city environment, they've worked hard to give the children opportunities. Staff are trained and inducted on their outdoor vision in an urban environment. Their sense of play, fun and learning is strong. Children are confident, free and active, leading their own learning and taking appropriate risks in outdoor spaces.

Other finalists: Gryffe Manor Nursery and Haddo Woodland Kindergarten.

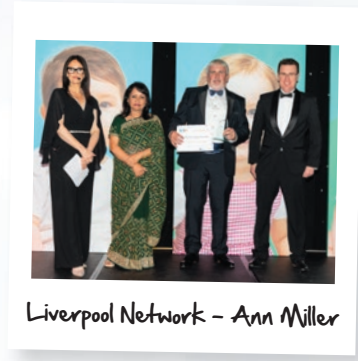


Childsplay Claremont Nursery Cooperative

Community Support & Charity Fundraising

Childsplay Claremont Nursery Cooperative showed lots of evidence of the impact of community activity on individual children. They have endorsements from their local council and mayor and have built reciprocal relationships with families being involved and feeling the positive impact too. The judges were particularly impressed by their use of intergenerational activities, which has been a huge success all round.

Other finalists: Just Be Kids and The Nursery in Belong.



Liverpool Network - Ann Miller

Network of the Year

The Liverpool Network is one of NDNA's longstanding networks, supporting members in the area for many years. Ann has worked hard to represent the network with the local authority to voice members' concerns on charging guidance, the recruitment crisis, late payments from the council and SEND support. They have shown tenacity in trying to improve communication with the local council, but most importantly the network regularly meets and provides mutual support for their members.

Other finalists: Leicestershire Network (Bev Coltman and Matthew Leedham) and Nottinghamshire Network (Karen Richards and Laura Gapski).

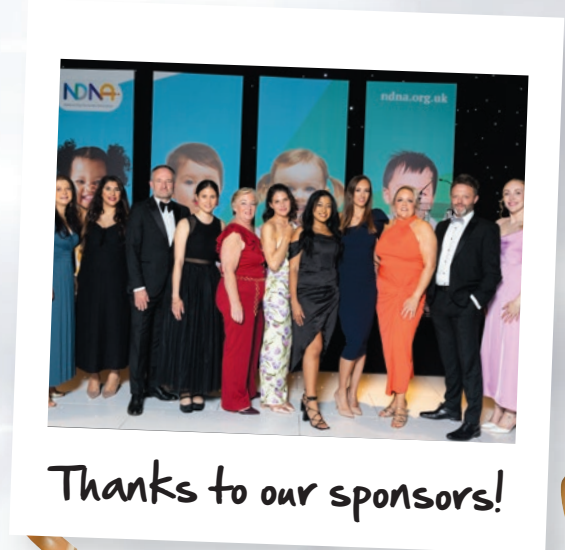


Courtney Donaldson

Outstanding Contribution

Courtney is a go-to authority with extensive, specialised knowledge in the nursery sector. There aren't many owners and operators who haven't benefited from the advice and expertise she has provided. She has been a strong supporter of NDNA and been a representative on our Board for more than a decade.

Congratulations to all of our winners and finalists! We would like to thank everyone in the sector for all of the wonderful work you do for children and their families.
See you next year!



Thanks to our sponsors!