

NURSERY NEWS

Your membership magazine

www.ndna.org.uk



Food for thought

Sitting chatting with friends... enjoying delicious food... trying new tastes... and in a safe, happy environment.

We all want children to enjoy mealtimes like this, but some only experience this in nursery. It's so important to create this environment for children and explain to parents why it's a vital part of a happy, healthy life.

These children from Ford Road nursery, Dagenham, are a great example. It should be simple to provide positive mealtimes, but there's a lot going on behind the scenes.

In England, nurseries are battling against Government claims of "cheaper childcare", insisting that parents can

opt out of charges. This is leading to negotiations around whether food can be brought into settings, leaving nurseries with less control over nutritional content and allergens. Staff must adhere to new safer eating guidelines in the EYFS.

Scottish nurseries adhere to updated *Setting the Table* guidance, including nutritional targets, safer eating and staff training. Similarly, nurseries in Wales follow food and nutrition guidance as required within the *National Minimum Standards*.

All children have the right to enjoy mealtimes. We do whatever we can to support you to meet these rights. Bon appetit!



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eymanage

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www.eyworks.co.uk



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NDNA Nursery Awards 2026



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to find out more and
register your nursery.



Expert advice



Have a question about your inspection? Unsure of ratio requirements and qualifications? Want to know more about funded childcare? Call NDNA today and we can put your mind at ease.

Free early years advice

NDNA's team of advisers have the knowledge and expertise to advise you on curriculum requirements, regulatory issues or inspections.

- Inspection outcomes
- Safeguarding issues
- Disputes with parents
- Challenging behaviour with parents and children
- Dealing with the press
- Funded hours and charging guidance
- Staff qualifications and ratios.

Free media advice

If you need help dealing with press enquiries relating to an incident at the nursery, please contact our Press Team for support and advice: pressoffice@ndna.org.uk

Free legal advice with your membership

Members also have free access 24/7 to a legal helpline who can provide advice on:

- Employment law
- Contracts with parents
- GDPR
- Debt recovery.

Find out more at www.ndna.org.uk/Legal

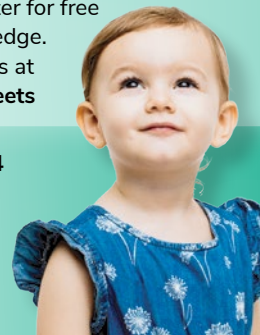
Factsheets

NDNA has put together factsheets on common topics, such as DBS Checks, Music and Motion Picture Licences, vaccinations and more. Download these documents to your computer for free to fill in any gaps in knowledge.

Explore all of our factsheets at www.ndna.org.uk/Factsheets

Call NDNA today on 01484 407070.

All advice and factsheets are free as part of your membership.



Find your member benefits at

www.ndna.org.uk/hub/member-hub





A recipe for more fairness

We return to Liverpool!

We are pleased to announce that our conference and awards ceremony 2026 will be on Friday 5 June at the Titanic Spa Hotel in Liverpool. We had wonderful feedback from our delegates this year so please keep the date in your diary.



Very honoured

We are delighted that four of our members were named in the King's Birthday Honours List. Congratulations to:

Former Chair of Trustees and founder of Old Station Nurseries Sarah Steel OBE.



Acorns Nursery and Forest School in West Sussex - Christina Franks MBE.

Sunshine Community

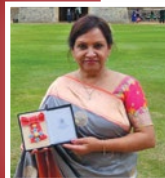
Nursery, Little Rascals Private Day Nurseries and Giggles Day Nurseries in Leeds - Angela Mountain MBE.



Young Sussex Nursery in West Sussex - Sarah Burt BEM.

And here's NDNA's Executive Chair

Purnima Tanuku receiving her CBE in July from HRH The Princess Royal at Windsor Castle.



Coming to the end of what has been a long, hot summer, September once again feels like a time of change. Some children are leaving nursery and others are transitioning to their next steps in your setting.

This year the change feels more momentous with significant changes landing at the same time. And in Scotland and Wales we are gearing up for an election where childcare is already a key battleground.

One of the areas that demonstrates this are meals in early years. From meal charging guidance in England to Universal Credit recipients being told food is an 'optional extra', and from Scottish councils failing to recognise food inflation to updated EYFS guidance - food in nurseries has become a hot topic.

That's why we're bringing you a focus on food, including a close look at allergies in this edition as well as our autumn event on the topic.

The challenges around food in settings reflect the wider case we are making for genuine fairness in early education and care. These stem from a misunderstanding of the reality of delivering high-quality places for our youngest children.

Throughout the autumn we will be building our relationship with a new Minister in England, giving evidence to MPs and making the case to the Treasury for the right investment in early years. At the same time we will be gathering experts in Scotland and Wales to ensure manifestos from the sector, for the sector.

We will be making the case for:

- Fairer funding between early education and schools
- Parity between early years

professionals and other educators

- Fairer support for additional needs in early years
- Fairer distribution of support to create new early years places
- All early years settings judged by the same standards.

Finally, we will continue to challenge language and rhetoric that downplays the value of our sector, or pits parents against providers with talk of "cheaper childcare" or "rip-off" nurseries.

Change often brings challenges, but it also opens the door to new opportunities. At NDNA, we are proud of everything you're achieving. We will continue to champion and defend the sector, ensuring you can make the most of every opportunity while increasing your resilience against even the toughest challenges.

PURNIMA TANUKU CBE,
EXECUTIVE CHAIR

TIM MCLACHLAN,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



Get involved online!



@NDNAtalk



/ndna.org.uk



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Securing funding for free training

By Michelle Gray, Funding Manager at NDNA



NDNA provides a range of training and support to childcare practitioners and the wider sector that is only made possible as a result of funding received from external partners. Over the past two years, we have secured more than £3m which has made the following free training available:

Maths Champions

- We have trained 'Champions' to lead their early years team to gain confidence and new skills in supporting children's mathematical and language development
- We are currently delivering Maths Champions training to over 500 nurseries, including in 18 deprived London boroughs
- We have just secured funding from the DfE for a further 1800 places across England which start from February – see page 22 and 23 to find out how to submit an expression of interest
- The results of an external evaluation demonstrated that on average, children in nursery settings delivering the programme make an additional three months' progress in maths and language development. It also found that children in those settings receiving the Early Years Pupil Premium make six months' additional progress. This progress is maintained at the end of the Reception year www.rebrand.ly/EEFMC
- The Maths Champions programme was shortlisted for the Children & Young People Now Awards 2024.



Communication and Language Champions

- Increasing practitioner knowledge, awareness and confidence in supporting early communication and language to improve outcomes for children
- Currently being delivered in 120 settings across Greater London.



Vitamin Angels UK

- Since 2017, Vitamin Angels UK has provided the funding for NDNA to purchase weekly healthy supplemental food packages for delivery to 18 nurseries, supporting children who are at nutritional risk in areas of high deprivation. NDNA supports over 1,800 children each year through this scheme
- Nominated for the Children & Young People Now Awards 2025.

Championing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SEND

- Supporting staff to fully understand what strategies they can implement to improve the educational, social and emotional outcomes of children with SEN
- A trial of this training is available to 46 nurseries in South East England
- Additional funding was also secured to develop a training module that focuses specifically on supporting children with learning disabilities.



SEND Music

- A bespoke project to support children with special educational needs and disabilities, providing staff with the techniques needed to support children through the power of music
- A trial project was delivered in 15 settings in deprived areas across England. This project was co-designed by NDNA and a professional music therapist, Camilla Farrant.

Childcare Works - all nations

- We have been able to support you with the recruitment crisis through our very effective 'Childcare Works' employability programme. Since 2019, we have delivered 34 programmes to people interested in exploring a career in early education and childcare, including the first two in Scotland and one specifically aimed at recruiting partners of serving military personnel. This has resulted in 248 people receiving introductory training to a career in the sector, with 150 people securing employment.

Explore our amazing partners who enable us to offer these opportunities and how they can benefit you:

ndna.org.uk/FundingPartners



Join our Board of Trustees

Are you enthusiastic about early childhood education and care? Do you want to help create a positive, lasting impact on the future of the sector? We're looking for new trustees to join our Board and play a key role in shaping the direction of our work.

We need people like you who understand the heart of nursery life, to bring diverse experience, leadership expertise and ideas.

Being a trustee at NDNA is an exciting and rewarding voluntary opportunity. Trustees work closely with our team to provide direction and ensure that the organisation is effectively serving its members and fulfilling its mission.

Trustees are integral to our decision-making processes, from financial oversight to policy development. It requires dedication, insight, and a passion for early years education.

You'll act as an ambassador for the charity, promoting its work and enhancing its reputation at board meetings and events.

What have you personally gained from being an NDNA Trustee?

Hazel Moody explains: "I've had the opportunity to regularly meet with a diverse group of likeminded, highly experienced professionals from across the sector who are leading the way in the field of early years childcare and education. We share common practices and goals, face challenges and support each other. As a single site nursery, albeit a 270-place setting, it could have been quite isolating for me without this network and support."

"Being on the Board has enabled me to be informed of changes within Ofsted, DfE, Government initiatives and policy changes well in advance of anything taking place, which has helped me to be far more proactive and be ready to adopt any of those changes ahead of time, and allowed me to support all other settings in my area and beyond."

"I have been fortunate enough to have hosted many Ministers and heads of Ofsted and DfE at Advantage. I also had the excitement of enjoying the visit from David Cameron when he was Prime Minister, and Boris Johnson accompanied him as Mayor of London. I had a private meeting with them both to discuss funding and the Government's initiative of the 30 hours funding. From this, I received an invitation to 10 Downing Street and as an NDNA Trustee, I was invited to Buckingham Palace and was presented to the Queen! An absolute highlight of my career and an experience I will never forget."



NDNA's Executive Chair Purnima Tanuku CBE says: "The work of our trustees is fundamental to the success of NDNA. Their dedication and passion for improving the early years sector reflects the impact we make every day. We encourage a wide range of candidates to apply, as their unique perspectives are what will help us grow and thrive."

An application pack is available upon request. For more information about NDNA's governance structure visit: ndna.org.uk/Our-People We look forward to hearing from you!

Send your CV to aleyana.jameel@ndna.org.uk by Friday 10 October

NDNA live virtual classroom training

A more immersive alternative to online training.

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

✓ **Advanced Safeguarding for DSL** £143.50/£192, four modules

- Module 1 on 20 Oct; Module 2 on 23 Oct; Module 3 on 27 Oct; Module 4 on 30 Oct
- Module 1 on 18 Nov; Module 2 on 21 Nov; Module 3 on 25 Nov; Module 4 on 28 Nov
- Module 1 on 01 Dec; Module 2 on 04 Dec; Module 3 on 08 Dec; Module 4 on 11 Dec

✓ **Baby Room Leader** £89.50/£121, four modules

- Module 1 on 21 Oct; Module 2 on 24 Oct; Module 3 on 28 Oct; Module 4 on 31 Oct
- Module 1 on 17 Nov; Module 2 on 20 Nov; Module 3 on 24 Nov; Module 4 on 27 Nov
- Module 1 on 02 Dec; Module 2 on 05 Dec; Module 3 on 09 Dec; Module 4 on 12 Dec

✓ **Brilliant Babies** £89.50/£121, four modules

- Module 1 on 20 Oct; Module 2 on 23 Oct; Module 3 on 27 Oct; Module 4 on 30 Oct
- Module 1 on 18 Nov; Module 2 on 21 Nov; Module 3 on 25 Nov; Module 4 on 28 Nov

- Module 1 on 01 Dec; Module 2 on 04 Dec; Module 3 on 08 Dec; Module 4 on 11 Dec

✓ **Building Your Curriculum** £29.50/£40, one module

- Module 1 on 09 Nov

✓ **Developing Confidence with Your Ofsted Inspection** £89.50/£121, four modules

- Module 1 on 14 Oct; Module 2 on 17 Oct; Module 3 on 21 Oct; Module 4 on 24 Oct
- Module 1 on 04 Nov; Module 2 on 07 Nov; Module 3 on 11 Nov; Module 4 on 14 Nov
- Module 1 on 02 Dec; Module 2 on 05 Dec; Module 3 on 09 Dec; Module 4 on 12 Dec

✓ **Developing Outstanding Practice** £89.50/£121, four modules

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

✓ **Effective Team Leadership** £89.50/£121, four modules

- Module 1 on 13 Oct; Module 2 on 16 Oct; Module 3 on 20 Oct; Module 4 on 23 Oct
- Module 1 on 04 Nov; Module 2 on 07 Nov; Module 3 on 11 Nov; Module 4 on 14 Nov

✓ **Leadership and Management** £89.50/£121, four modules

- Module 1 on 28 Oct; Module 2 on 31 Oct; Module 3 on 04 Nov; Module 4 on 07 Nov

✓ **Positive Behaviour in Early Years** £89.50/£121, four modules

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

✓ **Power of Play with Babies** £29.50/£40, one module

- Module 1 on 26 Nov

✓ **Quality Interactions with Babies** £29.50/£40, one module

- Module 1 on 19 Nov

✓ **Toddler Room Leader** £89.50/£121, four modules

- Module 1 on 07 Oct; Module 2 on 10 Oct; Module 3 on 14 Oct; Module 4 on 17 Oct
- Module 1 on 03 Nov; Module 2 on 06 Nov; Module 3 on 10 Nov; Module 4 on 13 Nov

View and book all our LVCs happening in the coming months here: www.ndna.org.uk/Calendar



Every bite matters: protecting children with allergies.

Around 8% of children and young people in the UK have a food allergy. Allergic reactions are when the immune system wrongly identifies a substance as a threat. Reactions to allergens range from feeling poorly to being fatal within a few minutes. Even tiny amounts can cause severe reactions.

Since Natasha's Law (Natasha Ednan-Laperouse died after eating a pre-packed sandwich) came into effect in October 2021, all pre-packed food must include full ingredients with the 14 main allergens highlighted:



The worst case scenario: anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is "a serious and often sudden allergic reaction, requiring emergency treatment" (Anaphylaxis UK). Usually rapid, it can happen up to three hours later.

The ABC symptoms are:

- **Airway** – swelling in the throat, tongue or upper airways, difficulty swallowing
- **Breathing** – wheezy, difficult or noisy breathing
- **Circulation** – dizzy, faint, sleepy, confusion, clammy, unconscious.

Other symptoms include a red raised rash; tingly or itchy mouth; swollen lips, face or eyes; stomach pain; vomiting. If a child experiences any of these symptoms, treat them immediately for anaphylaxis.



In an emergency:

- Use the patient's adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) then call 999. Say you suspect anaphylaxis. Make the patient lie down
- If symptoms do not improve administer a second AAI after five minutes
- Keep a note of the time you used the AAI's.

Children or adults at risk of anaphylaxis should have two prescribed AAIs with staff trained to use it.

Millie's Mark ensures that all your staff are fully trained and have confidence to act in an emergency, such as allergic reactions.

rebrand.ly/AnaphylaxisUKGuide



Dealing with food allergies proactively

In the process of attaining Millie's Mark, settings must look at managing risks associated with children's allergies. These include staff training and keeping their knowledge of their children up to date.

Children can develop an allergy at any time - which is why sitting with the children at meal times is important. Take particular care of new children who may be exposed to foods they haven't eaten before and to young babies when they are being weaned.

Communication – before a child starts nursery, speak to the parents about potential allergies and create an allergy action plan shared with all staff. Make sure this is included on your registration form. Speak with them regularly about their child's progress and keep risk assessments under review.

Robust policies and procedures - keep your allergy policy and protocol updated and published prominently. Consider keeping "spare" injectors for emergencies but locked away safely. Keep your records up to date and record any incidents thoroughly. Be inclusive – make sure all your children can join in activities.

Staff training - arrange annual allergy-specific training for your staff which includes dealing with anaphylaxis. Make sure they all know any signs and symptoms. Staff must know about the 14 main allergens and which ones are in your meals.

Tanya Ednan-Laperouse OBE, who founded The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation with her husband Nadim following their daughter's death, said: "We recognise that nurseries and out-of-school settings are seeing more children with food allergies than ever before."



"Every nursery wants to give each child the chance to achieve their potential in a safe and inclusive environment but unfortunately, there is a lack of understanding about the seriousness of food allergies and how to manage them.

"We want to end the challenges that children with food allergies face so that they can be fully involved in all activities. To support nurseries, Natasha's Foundation has launched Allergy School - free, practical resources for staff, to help them create inclusive and safe environments for children with food allergies."

Controlling what food children eat in your nursery

Food charges must be voluntary in England and Scotland; they are limited in Wales although parents can only send food in if nurseries allow it. For many nurseries it has become increasingly difficult to maintain a safe eating environment. And yet nurseries are responsible for keeping children safe and healthy, making sure they eat nutritional meals and controlling allergens.

Consider having a packed lunch policy which spells out what you will allow to be brought into your nursery, including no food at all. Read our blog about what to include: ndna.org.uk/PackedLunches

Read how one nursery came to a workable compromise:

Gemma Lawson from Green Roots Nursery, West Sussex

What was your food ethos?

To support our healthy eating ethos, we aim for all children to eat the same foods whenever possible. For the past 11 years until April 2025, we have ensured our chef meets all children's needs and have not allowed any food to be brought into the nursery. Due to early years funding, we have maintained our ethos by asking parents not willing or able to pay for our food to provide their own in line with our menu. This is a balanced and inclusive approach.

How did West Sussex council try to get you to change this?

WSCC were concerned that requesting parents to follow our recipes and ingredients would cause a barrier to accessing funded hours. WSCC wanted us to allow parents to provide food as they wished.

What was your compromise and how did you reach this?

We escalated our concerns that if we followed WSCC requests children would be put at risk. We shared our risk assessments, management plans and procedures in how our setting needs to manage allergies and maintain our healthy eating ethos.

WSCC agreed that we could ask parents to provide meals in line with our menu if we take into consideration personal, cultural, dietary and financial reasons. We work with parents to understand and support their challenges. They also confirmed we could manage certain ingredients being brought in.

What has been parents' reaction to this?

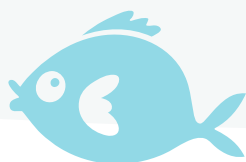
Of the 160 children attending, nine provide their own food. The majority of those parents were disappointed they weren't allowed to provide whatever meals they chose. We used an 'Individual Menu Plan' for each child to understand what the parents could provide which was similar: eg spaghetti with tomato sauce when we serve spaghetti bolognese.

Do you still feel you can control allergens coming into nursery?

When we provided all the food we had full control of allergens, now we no longer have that level of control. However we cannot put in place any further control measures when food is being brought into nursery. We ask parents to sign a declaration agreeing to our policies.

What advice would you give nurseries in similar situations?

We remain focussed that providing the best start for our children is at the heart of what we do. We researched nutrition for young children and supported them forming healthy relationships with food. We reviewed our procedures in managing allergens and how we can keep children safe with food being brought in. Parents appreciate the services we provide and we looked at how this can continue. We support parents in their decision to provide meals but made sure it would not have a negative impact on us or the other children. We wrote our policy reflecting this and can fully explain to parents or WSCC our reasons and rationale.



Food allergy resources

Dealing with Allergies webinar from 25 September:

ndna.org.uk/NDNATalkOnDemand

The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation: narf.org.uk

Allergy School: allergyschool.org.uk

Anaphylaxis UK: anaphylaxis.org.uk

Millie's Mark: milliesmark.com

Scotland Setting the Table: bit.ly/STTGScotland

Welsh Government Guidance: bit.ly/FoodAndNutritionWG

www.ndna.org.uk



ADVISING ON MARKET LEADING DEALS THROUGHOUT THE DECADES

July 2002

KINDERCARE CHILDCARE

The sale of Lancashire-based Kindercare Childcare Centres to Busy Bees Nursery Group. The Transaction comprised of a portfolio of ten nurseries, of which four provide more than 200 places, and an independent primary school.

March 2006

SENAD GROUP

Christie & Co were appointed by Sovereign Capital to provide valuation advice associated to the sale of SENAD Group. The portfolio of SEND schools were sold for £130 million to an undisclosed buyer.

December 2004

DOLPHIN NURSERY GROUP

Through Christie & Co Huntyard Investments acquired four nurseries for £12.6m. Post Acquisition, the portfolio grew to 27 settings and was sold to Bright Horizons Family Solutions for circa £85m in 2012.

October 2009

NUNU NURSERIES

Christie & Co provided valuation advice for the sale of NuNu nurseries, then the UK's fourth largest group of ten settings, ahead of its acquisition by Just Learning.

January 2017

PROJECT OCEAN

Christie & Co facilitated the sale of Magic Nurseries, portfolio of 16-day nurseries, brought by Les Petits Chaperons Rouges, as a platform for them to expand into the UK.

June 2010

PROJECT TRENT

Christie & Co were appointed by CareTech Community Services Ltd to provide formal valuation advice preceding their acquisition of Branas Isaf, a portfolio specialising in providing therapeutic care for young men with behavioural issues.

August 2012

PROJECT MINERVA

Christie & Co valued Just Learning's portfolio of 71 nurseries, ahead of it's £66m sale to Busy bees.

June 2014

PROJECT IMPERIAL

Acting on behalf of Peter Churchley, Christie & Co brokered the sale of Caring Daycare nursery group, 12 settings across Surrey, sold to Busy Bees. Nursery World - Busy Bees acquires Surrey nursery group.

November 2021

PROJECT WOMACK

Acting for the founder, Christie & Co sold Footsteps Day Nurseries, a portfolio of 10 independent nurseries. The portfolio was sold to Family First Nursery Group.

August 2019

LITTLE GARDEN DAY NURSERIES

Acting for the founders, Christie & Co sold Little Garden Day Nurseries, a group of four nurseries, to August Equity.

February 2022

PAINT POTS NURSERY GROUP

We facilitated the sale of Paint Pots Nursery Group to Hampshire based social enterprise, Launchpad Early Years.

October 2024

PROJECT AKOYA

Founded in 1988 by Margaret Mason OBE, Children 1st Day Nurseries operated 24 settings across six counties. Christie & Co, appointed as agents, facilitated its sale to national nursery group Storal.

October 2018

PROJECT QUEEN

Christie & Co facilitated the sale of Direct Care Limited, a portfolio comprising seven children's homes and a school, which was sold to Keys Group.

February 2016

FIRST CLASS CHILD CARE

Christie & Co facilitated the sale of First Class Child Care. Acting on behalf of Andrew Clifford, former managing director of First Class Child Care, the portfolio of nine nurseries was sold to Just Childcare.

March 2025

PROJECT ABACO

Christie & Co facilitated the sale of Perfect Start Day Nurseries' portfolio of 8 settings located across Sussex, Surrey and Kent. The group was sold to Kids Planet Nursery Group.

We have decades of experience, expertise and market knowledge, so whether you're a first-time buyer, looking to expand, planning your exit strategy, or simply seeking insight into how others are managing the daily challenges, we're here to support you.

SPEAK TO THE EXPERTS:

T: 0333 034 1751 | E: childcareandeducation@christie.com

christie.com

Generational paperchains

The Nursery in Belong, Chester, won NDNA's Nursery of the Year 2025. We asked them how they do it.



You're a multi award-winning nursery – what makes you stand out?

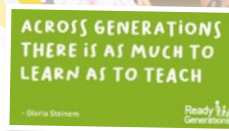
Above everything, we are so very fortunate to have a wonderfully diverse community around us who support us all the way! As an intergenerational nursery, we have people of all ages helping us, offering their wisdom and expertise. Our team, community and children love to spend time together and we prioritise inclusive experiences to involve everyone.

We are also very clear about the importance of leading with moral purpose and courage. We are not afraid to try new things and take safe risks. As a team, we are always looking for ways we can get better so that our children have more opportunities to learn, grow and fully enjoy their childhood.

What about your intergenerational ethos – how does this work?

Our intergenerational ethos is a simple one that is central to everything we do – people always come first! Our focus on relational pedagogy means that we have become 'expert noticers' and observers of children, families and older people. We view needs and aspirations holistically so that we can see how things connect and interrelate as well as understanding the diverse needs of individual children at particular stages of their development.

We consider our environment to be a 'human eco-system' where connection and change are always present. This helps us to make sure we don't overlook something that is important and don't get trapped into ways of working that don't enhance learning or help children and their older friends to make progress. For settings starting out on their intergenerational journey, safe, trusting and reciprocal relationships are literally the beating heart of this work. Strong relationships take consistency and time to achieve but are worth it, enabling both groups to become more confident and curious around each other.



How do your staff stay positive for children through difficult times?

This is a challenging and uncertain moment in time for everyone involved in early education and care. The changes we face from September 2025 are unsettling and will require flexibility and a real focus on team well-being and confidence. As a small team trying to pioneer new ways of working, we accept that change can be difficult and that we will succeed at some things and learn from our mistakes at other times. We get through the hard times by being there for each other, both personally and professionally. Domain One of our bespoke curriculum is:

'See Me, Hear Me, Know Me'

We apply this to everyone in our community as we believe that when others really see us we are able to be at our best and do our best work. This gives everyone confidence to share worries and fears in a safe space, knowing that they will be listened to. It enables us to ensure our environment is nurturing, warm and loving for everyone.

How do you support children with additional needs?

We use a range of approaches and strategies to support and understand all our children and try to identify children who may need additional support as soon as possible so they can enjoy all aspects of nursery life and thrive. Domain Six of Our Mirrored Care and Learning Framework prioritises 'intentional environments' that are deliberately planned to not only be warm and welcoming but also structured to meet diverse needs. This means paying careful attention to such things as noise and light levels, air quality, sleep patterns, nutrition, decoration, resource quality and fixtures/fittings. This focus on detail also supports our older friends, particularly those living with dementias.

Do you have any plans for the future?

As a learning-oriented setting, we are always looking for ways to expand our knowledge, skills and understanding so that we feel confident that we're doing the very best possible for our children and community.

We are keen to support other settings to develop their intergenerational ideas and to research more about the potential role of older people in children's learning and development, whether as a grandparent, neighbour, friend or volunteer.

We are working with the University of Liverpool's Centre for Ageing and the Life Course to advance understanding and awareness around the importance of early years in terms of our lifelong health and well-being.



Read the full Q&A here:

ndna.org.uk/GenerationalPaperchains



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/myNDNA



IMPROVING PRACTICE

myNDNA★

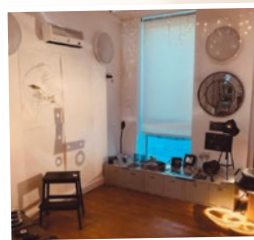
The place to learn, share and grow

Illuminating early years



"In the midst of darkness, light persists."

Mahatma Gandhi



Shadow explorers

Set up a clear, open space where children can move around freely and explore.

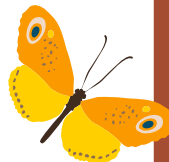
Ensure there is a white wall available or attach a large sheet of white paper or fabric to a wall to create a surface for shadow play. Provide a selection of toys, puppets and objects nearby that the children can experiment with.

Begin by introducing the torches and demonstrating how to use them. Show how light creates shadows by shining the torch onto different surfaces. Encourage the children to explore by directing the light onto the wall, behind or in front of different objects, their own hands or those of a friend.

Allow plenty of time for open-ended exploration, supporting their curiosity as they discover how shadows change depending on where the light is.

Light is fundamental to life — more than a necessity, it's a symbol of hope, joy and renewal. In an early years setting, embracing light offers a multitude of opportunities to nurture curiosity, cultural awareness and create a warm, welcoming environment.

Recent research highlights the importance of thoughtfully designed daylight in early years settings, supporting both visual comfort and emotional well-being. A 2024 multi-city study in China found that kindergarten activity rooms with high-quality natural light foster greater engagement and ease for young learners.



Many cultures honour light through festivals that celebrate triumph over darkness, both metaphorically and in reality; in India during Diwali, people illuminate their homes with oil lamps, symbolising the victory of light over ignorance. In Scandinavia, on St Lucia's Day, children parade the streets carrying candles to light the long, dark days. By making these and other traditions an integral part of your setting's culture, you enhance everyone's knowledge, shining light on the children and their worlds, so that everyone – whatever their background – feels seen, heard and valued.

Past the realm of symbolism, light offers rich opportunities for discovery. Throughout the practice pages, you'll find inspiring activities. For example, our 'Shadow Explorers' investigation and lantern making turn the simple act of illumination into an exciting learning experience. We also suggest introducing the wonders of a light box to your babies which opens a whole new world of sensory discovery.

We invite families to get cosy and share stories by torchlight. We ask you to consider how subtle light adjustments influence the atmosphere of your setting with soft, warm hues in quiet areas to promote calm and rest, while bright, daylight-mimicking bulbs in active zones support energy and engagement. Adding dimmer switches and coloured lampshades allow you to tailor the mood throughout the day from hello to home time.

The following pages guide you through activities that harness this most vital element, because when light persists, so does our capacity to learn, to find joy and to start each day fresh.



Things to try:

- **Big and small shadows:** Explore what happens when you move your torch closer and when you move it away
- **Shadow shapes:** Use hands to make simple shadow animals (like a bird or butterfly)
- **Shadow dancing:** Put on some gentle music and see how the shadows move when the children wave their arms or dance.

Let the children lead the way with their curiosity and ideas – there's no right or wrong with shadow play just plenty of wonder and discovery.

For older children...

why not draw around shadows on paper? Try using a white sheet and shine torches behind it for a mini shadow theatre and encourage children to work together to make a 'shadow show'.





Light and colour discovery box

Create a magical sensory experience for babies with a lightbox and invite babies to explore a world of light, shape and movement.

Making your light box:

- Line a box with white tissue paper
- Place the lights inside the box
- Seal the box securely with the lights turned on and place onto a dark surface.

Dim the room lights slightly to create a soft, calming atmosphere and highlight the glowing effect of the light box. Begin by placing a few translucent objects on the box to spark curiosity. Encourage babies to reach out, touch and move and explore the different items. Describe what they are seeing and doing, using simple, engaging language to support early communication.

Follow the babies' lead and provide plenty of time for discovery - some may enjoy quietly watching the lights while others will be more eager to interact and explore. Offer a variety of carefully chosen resources to enrich the experience, promoting sensory exploration through engaging visual experiences, tactile engagement and early understanding of cause and effect.

You could introduce mirrored or reflective items such as mirrors, metallic objects or foil-covered shapes to invite babies to explore how light bounces and changes.

Enhance the sensory environment by playing gentle, calming music or nature sounds, helping to create a peaceful atmosphere.



Calming light features

Soft lighting can be used to create a relaxing, calm space for children. Choose warm colours and adjustable lights that can be softened when needed or consider dimmable light strips that can be attached across walls. Add them to calm spaces or create your own with curtains and lace.



Tip one

Exploring dark spaces

Provide light-based resources, e.g. torches, glow toys and shiny materials. Drape sheets over tables or use pop-up tents. Let children explore freely and investigate developing curiosity, problem-solving and an understanding of light and its properties.

Lantern making

Creating colourful lanterns offers a playful and engaging way for children to explore light, colour and shape. Lanterns are used in several festivals around the world, so these can be tailored according to whichever festival you are celebrating.

Invite children to decorate a clear container by sticking on pieces of tissue paper in any pattern or design they choose, encouraging creativity and making choices while developing fine motor skills.

Talk with the children about what they are doing to support descriptive language and thinking; use narration to help build understanding and expand their vocabulary.

Once the designs are complete, allow the lanterns to dry. Then support the children to put a hole in either side of the container and thread through a pipe cleaner to create a handle. Place a battery operated tea light inside each one. Dim the lights, move into a darker space or go outside after sunset. Invite the children to observe how the colours and shapes glow and shine through the tissue paper.

Take it on tour!

You could organise a short lantern walk - either around your outdoor area or out into the local community. Each child can carry their glowing lantern, observing the colours, shapes and shadows it creates as they walk. After the walk, gather together for a cosy story and song time with books and songs linked to light, darkness and night-time.

You will need:

- Clear plastic container e.g. cup, yoghurt pot
- Tissue paper and cellophane in different colours and shapes
- PVA glue and brushes
- Battery operated tea lights.





Did you know that all myNDNA members get free access to the Institute of Early Years Education? Browse your free resources or sign up for free to log your CPD!



Colour transparencies

Explore light and colour with translucent colour panels to encourage curiosity.

Choose translucent panels, shapes or sheets for the children to explore. Encourage children to hold them up to their eyes and to look through. Ask them how it changes their vision. Encourage them to try looking through different colours, or layer two or more colours to see what happens.

If you have access to a light box, try putting the coloured panel on top and ask children to note what happens to the colours when they overlap. Explore if they get new colours, or lighter and darker colours.

Use empty kitchen roll holders to create a 'colour-scope' by attaching sheets of colour to one end. Invite the children to look through colour-scopes indoors and outdoors. Try cutting the kitchen roll holders in half to make binoculars by attaching the two halves together. Cover each end with different colours so children can observe the different effects.

You could try! Use coloured acetate sheets to create stained glass pictures for your windows.



Snack baskets

To complete their Start Life Well Award, Tasnim and Alice at Cheeky Monkeys Day Nursery, Nuneaton collaborated to create a project to support the development of children's nutritional awareness. Tasnim explains the experience below.

"Our idea was to introduce snack baskets, thoughtfully created to align with our weekly snack menus. Each basket contains a variety of resources and produce designed to promote curiosity and learning:

- **Snack facts:** Each week, we provide a fun and informative fact related to the snack the children will be eating. For example, when serving bananas, the snack fact might be about where bananas come from, or their nutritional benefits
- **Conversation starters:** To ensure enhanced learning opportunities, we include conversation prompts for staff to use during snack times. The prompts are designed to encourage discussions about the food's origins and benefits, helping to expand the children's knowledge and vocabulary
- **Real food items and ingredients:** We believe hands-on exploration is crucial in early years. Therefore, we provide fresh, whole ingredients for children to experience each week, to engage them in full sensory exploration and investigative play. It's a great opportunity for our younger children who may not always see fruits and items in their complete form because they're usually cut up. A whole apple, for instance, offers a different sensory experience than apple slices.



All rooms have implemented the snack baskets into their daily routine. Some of our rooms implement it through their morning group time, talking about which fruit children may select at snack time, and looking at which ingredients go into our savoury snack of the week. These ingredients will be included in their entirety and in broken down forms so the children can see the stages the ingredients go through to make our savoury snack of the week.



Tip two

Develop a co-creating culture

Invite families to share stories and objects. Let the children lead and be the 'experts'. Co-create activities and experiences based on the knowledge they share. Use open-ended questions to encourage discussion and peer-peer sharing so it's less daunting. Actively listen to their insights and adapt celebrations to children's cultural contexts.



Most rooms implement the basket alongside snack time. Our younger rooms use the basket in whole groups throughout snack time, whilst our older groups implement the snack basket in small groups, with children self-serving their snacks. This way, all children have an opportunity to explore all ingredients in their entirety, chopped down and crushed."



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.

Festival feast

Host a 'Festival Feast' at nursery to involve families in celebrations while promoting cultural awareness and language development. Invite families to bring in a small traditional dish and share information about a festival they celebrate, such as Diwali, Eid, Christmas or Lunar New Year (remember to consider allergies and intolerances when serving home-made food). Encourage them to include a short story, photo or greeting in their home language. Set up a display table with decorations, food and child-made artwork related to the celebrations.

Support each child in introducing their family's contribution using simple language prompts like "This is called...", "We eat this at...", and "It tastes...". Encourage the group to ask questions and try new foods, helping children to expand their vocabulary and social skills through real conversations with other families.

Take photographs so children are able revisit their learning and reflect on what happened.



Tip three

Social meal times

Use meal and snack times as relaxed opportunities to talk with children. Sit at their level, model sociable conversation; encourage them to describe their food, express preferences and ask questions. These occasions naturally build vocabulary, social confidence and turn-taking skills—all essential for strong communication and language development.



Mystery box story

Develop descriptive vocabulary and narrative skills as children explore light, shadow, translucency and cause-and-effect as light reveals the wonder of a new world.

Cut a small hole in the top or side of a sturdy box – large enough to shine a small torch and peek inside. Paint the inside matte black. Once dry, encourage the children to choose a variety of natural, translucent and colourful loose parts – glass beads, fir cones, sticks, resin shapes, white shells etc.

Once the scene is arranged, each child peers through the hole, shining the small torch to spotlight objects. As the light reveals each loose part, encourage children to narrate what they've found in the darkness. Use prompts such as, "What's going on in the world of glowing adventures?" or "Who/what lives there and what are they doing?", "Is there a problem that needs solving?", "Who/what will solve it?"

Children can work together and build on each other's narrative to create a whole story – motivated by the ideas of the child before them. You could record the children narrating the story to play back to others who peek inside.

You could write up their story. Make it into a book to sit alongside the mystery box.

Sharing candlelight stories

Children thrive on close, warm moments with you and snuggling up together in a relaxing, cosy space to read a story is a fabulous way to do this.

There are lots of options for creating a calm space. You could create a story space in a child's pop-up tent or tepee. Or you could create your space by:

- Making a book corner in a bedroom
- Throwing a sheet or blanket over a headboard to create a den story space
- Putting dark coloured blankets or sheets over a table to create a cosy hideaway
- Climbing into an outdoor climbing frame and cover the entrance spaces with sheets.

Add soft lighting to make it feel relaxed and magical. Use electric candles or tea lights (that use an electric flame to prevent fire hazards) or choose a torchlight, camping light or soft coloured, twinkling fairy lights.

Pick one of your child's favourite storybooks or make up your own tale! Children love hearing stories about people and places they know. Try telling a story about a recent family day out or a made-up adventure featuring familiar names and characters.

Are your fire safety basics in place this September?



September signals a new term: new children settling in, room changes and parents trusting you with their children. But as the autumn term kicks off, now's the time to pause and ask if your fire safety essentials are ready for the year ahead.

Whether you're welcoming first-timers or preparing for new routines, having robust fire safety measures in place is crucial. As a nursery owner or manager, it's your responsibility to make sure that every child, staff member and visitor is protected if a fire does break out. The experts at Citation are here to tell you what you need to check off your list before the new term is in full swing.

Start with a fire risk assessment



A fire risk assessment isn't just a box-ticking exercise – it's your first line of defence in keeping children, staff and visitors safe. All premises, regardless of staff numbers have to record a full fire risk assessment, so here's what yours needs to do:

- **Identify hazards** – what could ignite and what could fuel a fire
- **Pinpoint who's at risk** – including vulnerable children and staff
- Evaluate and reduce risks with clear action plans
- Record everything in detail and keep it updated
- Review regularly – your nursery changes with new cohorts, so your fire risk assessment should too.

Evacuation plans: do you have one for everyone?

You might know the escape routes, but do your new starters or temporary staff? Are your emergency exits kept clear every day? Do you have Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for children or staff with mobility or sensory needs?

A clear, practised evacuation plan is essential. Key points to cover include...

- Multiple accessible escape routes
- Doors that open easily without needing a key or code
- Emergency lighting that works when you need it most
- Communicating your evacuation meeting point to all
- Drilling the plan so it's second nature – at least once every six months is recommended.



Don't lose touch with TED

TED – otherwise known as Training, Equipment and Drills – always needs to be in place.

- **Training** – new term means new faces. Get staff up to speed on fire safety protocols and refresh returning team members
- **Equipment** – are your fire alarms, extinguishers and emergency lights up-to-date, fully serviced and working? Don't forget monthly checks for emergency lighting and twice-yearly fire alarm servicing
- **Drills** – practise evacuations with your team (and children if appropriate) to build confidence and speed.



What could the consequences for non-compliance be?

Your local fire and rescue service might visit your premises at any time, and if they do, they'll be looking to see if your fire risk assessment and prevention measures are up to scratch. If they're not, inspectors can issue notices requiring immediate improvements, and non-compliance could lead to unlimited fines or even prison sentences. But more importantly, the safety of your children, visitors and staff is at stake if you're not managing fire risks properly.

Want a quick and easy way to make sure your fire safety measures are up to scratch? Citation has created a free, practical guide for nurseries to help you tick off the essentials and stay inspection-ready. Scan the QR code!



Why partner with Citation?

As an early years business owner, fire safety is just one part of your responsibilities. With Citation by your side, you get specialist Health & Safety and HR support tailored to the nursery sector, freeing you up to focus on what matters most: giving the children in your care the best start in life.

Our fire risk assessments and e-learning make sure you stay compliant and confident, while our 24/7 advice line means help is only a call away. Plus, we already support thousands of nurseries across the UK, helping them get (and stay) inspection ready. Even better? As an NDNA member, you've got access to preferential rates on our affordable, ticks-all-the-boxes Health & Safety and HR support – just call **0345 844 1111** and remember to quote 'NDNA' to access your discount.



Illuminating Possibilities: The Power of Light in Early Years Education



Kindly written for Hope
by Sophie Pallash Shaikh
Pedagogy Coach at LEYF

A recent professional retreat led me to a moment of personal and professional revelation: how deeply light, its presence, its playfulness, and its absence, shapes our experiences from early childhood through to adulthood.

I was fortunate to attend a three-day training session for Alice Sharp's Fabulous Fascinations Retreat at the breathtaking Caer Beris Manor in Builth Wells, Wales, in partnership with Hope Education. The atmosphere was electric from the start: a warm welcome, a shared sense of purpose and a passionate group of educators devoted to improving early years experiences.

The sessions were designed to delight the senses and challenge our perspectives. Through immersive workshops, we reflected deeply on what we offer children and how a simple shift in approach or environment can reframe their entire learning experience.

Hope Education's resources were displayed with such care and creativity that it felt like stepping into Aladdin's cave. As I engaged with them, I was reminded of the sensory magic children feel when stepping into well-designed nursery spaces, where thoughtful provocations spark curiosity, joy and awe. These moments embody the heart of cultural capital and demonstrate why teaching and experiences matter so profoundly.

Returning from the retreat brimming with inspiration, I turned my focus inward, to our own training offering at the London Institute of Early Years, part of the London Early Years Foundation. As a Pedagogy Coach, I asked myself: Were we truly embracing the creative potential of light? Do we harness its full range of potential for imaginative play, exploration and cross-curricular learning?

Light play offers children endless ways to explore science, art and storytelling. From crafting dioramas to experimenting with shadows and designing mixed-media installations, children learn how light behaves and how they can manipulate it to express and understand the world around them.

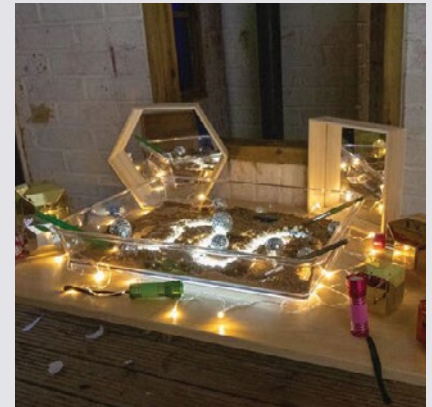
Hands-On Inspiration: Lighting the Way with Hope Education

As the journey to enrich our curriculum with light-based provocations would begin through targeted training, my first port of call was clear...Hope Education. I knew that carefully selected resources could ignite a deeper curiosity and drive to explore in both educators and children alike.

Hope Education did not disappoint. Each item selected was chosen to inspire investigation, encourage hypothesis-building, a testing of one's own ideas and nurture a spirit of playful experimentation. From light trays, colour rods, light and shadow kits to rainbow torches, the possibilities felt limitless.

I envisioned how these resources would be used not just in training, but in hands-on experiences across our nursery settings. The idea that these resources could travel between sites, supporting educators through role-modelling setups and sparking rich pedagogical conversations, felt like a new beginning in our playfulness with light.

Ultimately, our role as educators is to kindle wonder. Light is more than illumination, it's a tool for thinking, dreaming and becoming. By offering children experiences rooted in beauty and curiosity, we don't just teach, we transform!



HOPE
is all you need

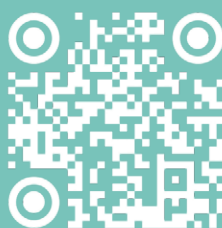
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As an NDNA member you get
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ndna.org.uk/FoodHygiene



*Applies to NDNA members until 30 September 2025





Wednesday Webinars

- live sessions, free to members

We have launched a series of Wednesday Webinars on a number of topics that are mostly relevant to all nations. These live sessions are one hour long and access is free to NDNA members.

See below for upcoming sessions which run from 1.30 – 2.30pm – book via our LVC page here: ndna.org.uk/WednesdayWebinars

📅 19 November 2025 – Toilet training: Why, when and how – (All nations)

This webinar will provide practitioners with strategies and practical ideas for supporting babies and toddlers to use the potty/toilet. We will also discuss positive strategies for supporting preschool children who have barriers to using the potty/toilet.

🎭 21 January 2026 – Play, pretend, learn: A guide to symbolic and role play – (All nations)

This practical webinar will provide insights into the value of symbolic and role play for supporting children's development, particularly in the areas of personal and social learning, as well as communication and language. We will address reasons why children may experience barriers to accessing these types of play and explore the role of the adult in maximising opportunities for engagement.

🧐 18 March 2026 – Hidden harm: Recognise and respond to fabricated and induced illness (FII) – (England only)

We will clarify the definition of Fabricated and Induced Illnesses (FII) along with Perplexing Presentations (PP) and the signs and symptoms to look for. As FII/PP have specific requirements regarding the involvement of parents and other professionals, we will review the role of all early years practitioners in relation to these.

Can't attend the webinars? No problem!

We know you are often too busy to attend webinars at certain times so we are making recorded webinars available for you to watch at your convenience. Our on-demand webinars are suitable for all three nations unless otherwise stated:

📅 EYFS safeguarding reforms 2025 (England only)

Taking practitioners through the main changes to the EYFS, with strategies for implementing them in the setting ready for September 2025.

🦷 Bite-sized solutions: How to respond to biting behaviours

How to understand, respond to and reduce biting behaviour in early years settings with real examples.

⚠️ Building safer environments: Identifying and reporting low-level concerns in safeguarding (England only)

It is essential that all staff are aware of what constitutes a low-level concern and how to use their professional curiosity to identify and report a concern.

🧺 Natural play and learning: A guide to treasure baskets and heuristic play

Using footage from a member setting, it explores how treasure baskets and heuristic play support babies' natural curiosity, sensory exploration and holistic development.

There is a one-off cost to buy each on-demand webinar which gives access to your whole setting.

ndna.org.uk/RecordedWebinars



FREE anti-racist practice training

Although this training course is aimed at settings in Wales so they work towards the Welsh Government's anti-racism action plan, members from across the UK have found the teaching within it useful.

Topics include understanding different types of racism and discrimination; how you tackle racism and promote equality; and talking to children about racism.

ndna.org.uk/Anti-RacistPractice

Here's our supporting resources:

ndna.org.uk/Anti-Racist



New for Development Zone

We have two brand new online DZ courses.

Toddler Room Leader

This course will support new and established room leaders to develop their skills so that they can support the toddler room team to provide the highest quality of care for their toddler-aged children.

ndna.org.uk/ToddlerRoomLeaderDZ

Making Sense of Summative Assessment (England only)

This course will support leaders, managers and owners to develop skills and confidence in tracking the attainment and progress of children in their setting and learn how to apply this to strengthen progress and improve outcomes for individuals and groups of children.

ndna.org.uk/SummativeAssessmentDZ

Both of these courses are part of our core bundles.



Scotland
National Day Nurseries Association

Supporting you for 20 years

10 councils set rate increases at or below Scottish Government's minimum requirements of 3.75%



Findings from our Freedom of Information research.

Goodbye from Jane



Some of you will know by now that I left NDNA in July this year. I wanted to take the opportunity to thank all of you for the great work that you do for children and families in Scotland. I know it has not been easy and there are still many challenges, but the ELC workforce are among the most amazing and resilient people I know.

This edition of the Nursery News Scotland page is my last and in it we bring you news of the start of inspections using the new Quality Improvement Framework (QIF), and the resources we have developed to support you.

With that I say a sad goodbye.

Jane

Jane Malcolm

Hello from Hannah

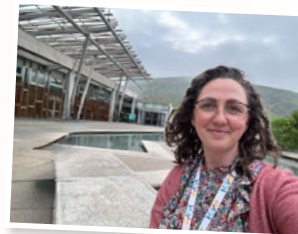
Hello NDNA Scotland members! I am delighted to take up post of National Operations Manager in Scotland. I've worked with NDNA for four years representing you in our training and resources, but also in meetings across the sector.

I have recently completed my Master of Education and done a piece of research titled "Reasons to stay and reasons to go: Factors influencing recruitment and retention in the Scottish ELC workforce."

I want to thank those of you who took part in the survey at the beginning of 2025. I found that amongst all the issues in the ELC sector just now, people reported that they stayed in ELC because they love children. It's with that knowledge that I represent you and advocate for a better future for the workforce, to let you do what you do best: love and support children.

Hannah

Hannah Murison
National Operations Manager
(Scotland), NDNA Scotland



New National Operations Manager (Scotland)

With Jane's departure NDNA has recruited Hannah Murison to the post. Hannah is already known to members for her work on the training offer in Scotland and has supported members for the last four years since joining NDNA in 2021.

Hannah will continue to work closely with members and network chairs to ensure NDNA Scotland continues to advocate strongly on your behalf.

82% of Scottish Councils spend less on partner providers than the proportion of hours they deliver



hours, but received just 23% of council budgets, a 6% gap.

The second investigation found that a third of councils are not meeting Scottish Government guidance on sustainable funding rates: this requires rates to rise by more than 3.75% to reflect increases in the Real Living Wage and other inflation pressures. However, nine out of 27 councils set uplifts at or below this threshold.

NDNA Scotland warned that failing to fairly give funding to providers risks undermining the sector's ability to remain open and deliver high-quality places for children.

Jonathan Broadbery, NDNA Scotland's Director of Policy, said: "If the funding is not fairly distributed, truly following the child to the settings providing these places, then it risks undermining nurseries' sustainability and the positive impact this policy can have."

With staffing costs rising by at least 5% and inflation at 3.8%, NDNA is urging councils to meet the guidance in full. Without fairer funding, NDNA warns, childcare quality and accessibility in Scotland could face huge strain.

Still a significant funding gap

Our latest research has revealed significant gaps in how councils fund partner providers for ELC, raising concerns about the sustainability of nurseries and childminders.

The findings, gathered through FOI requests, show that more than 80% of Scottish councils allocate a smaller share of their ELC budgets to PVI providers than the proportion of hours they deliver. On average, partner providers delivered 29% of funded

QIF Inspections

The Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland's HM Inspectors have begun using the framework in inspections from September 2025.

You can expect Care Inspectorate single inspections to start using the framework from September, and Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland joint inspections to start from October. From January 2026 onwards, both single inspections from

Care Inspectorate and Education Scotland, and joint inspections will be rolled out.

NDNA Scotland has developed resources that can support preparing you and your team to use the new framework.
ndna.org.uk/QIF

Funding rates for ELC in Scotland v rising costs from April 2025:





Cymru
National Day Nurseries Association

Helo gan Sarah

Mae'r argraffiad yma o Newyddion Nursery News yn siarad am ymgynghoriad y Safonau Gofynnol Cenedlaethol. Byddwn yn cynnal gweminarau i esbonio'r newidiadau arfaethedig yn y ddogfen ymgynghori. Edrychwch allan am wybodaeth am ddyddiadau a sut i archebu lle, yn eich bwletin aelodau.

Mae Gorchymyn Drafft Eithriadau Gwarchod Plant a Gofal Dydd (Cymru) 2026 a'r Cynnig ar gyfer Cynllun Cymeradwyo Gwirfoddol ar gyfer Darparwyr Gofal Plant, Gwaith Chwarae a Gweithgareddau hefyd allan i ymgynghoriad. Manteisiwch ar y cyfle i leisio eich barn drwy gyfrannu at yr ymgynghoriadau hyn.

Sarah

Sarah Coates,
Rheolwraig Gweithrediadau
Cenedlaethol (Cymru),
NDNA Cymru



Hello from Sarah

This edition of Nursery News talks about the National Minimum Standards consultation. We will be holding webinars to further explain the proposed changes in the consultation document. Please keep a check on your member bulletin for dates and how to book.

The Draft Child Minding and Day Care Exceptions (Wales) Order 2026 and the Proposal for a Voluntary Approval Scheme for Childcare, Playwork and Activity Providers are also out for consultation. Please take the opportunity to have your voices heard by feeding into these consultations.

Sarah

Sarah Coates,
National Operations Manager (Wales),
NDNA Cymru



Gofal Plant ar Waith - llwyddiant parhau

Yn ystod yr haf, daeth dau o'n prosiectau Gofal Plant ar Waith i ben, yn dilyn cyllid gan Ymddiriedolaeth Cronfa Cyfamod y Lluedd Arfog - Rhaglen Cefnogi Partneriaid a Sefydliad Moondance.

Roeddem yn hynod o falch bod 75% o hyfforddeion wedi mynd yn eu blaen i gael gwaith cyflogedig yn y sector Gofal Plant a Chwarae. Llongyfarchiadau iddynt, mae'n wych gweld bod ein prosiectau yn cefnogi'r argyfwng recriwtio yn y sector.

Dyma ddywedodd un o'r meithrinfeydd oedd yn cynnig lleoliad am y prosiect Gofal Plant ar Waith:

"Pan ddaeth yr NDNA atom, roedd ganddynt berson priod oedd yn symud i'r ardal gyda'r lluedd arfog, oedd yn awyddus i ddod ar leoliad atom ac roedd eisoes wedi cwblhau y rhan fwyaf o'i hyfforddiant gyda'r NDNA, oedd yn golygu bod ganddi wybodaeth eisoes fel byddai'n ofynnol gan weithiwr.

Drwy gydol y lleoliad, roeddem yn derbyn galwad ffôn gan ein cyswllt Lesley i holi sut oedd y lleoliad yn mynd ac oes oedd gennym unrhyw bryderon (doedd ganddom ni ddim) Roedd Lesley pob amser yn gyfeillgar a chynnes ac oherwydd y profiad yma, byddwn yn argymhell i unrhyw un i gymryd rhan yn y prosiect ym, byddai'n bendant yn rhywbeth byddwn yn ei wneud eto."

Gallwch ddysgu mwy am Gofal Plant ar ndna.org.uk/ChildcareWorks

Childcare Works - continued success

This summer two of our Childcare Works projects finished, following funding received from The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust's Supporting Partners programme and The Moondance Foundation.

We were very pleased to see that 75% of trainees have gone on to secure further employment within the Childcare and Early Years sector. Congratulations to them, it is great to see that our projects are supporting the recruitment crisis within the sector.

Here's what one of our placement nurseries said about the Childcare Works project:

"When I was first approached by the NDNA they already had a possible military spouse who was moving to the area who was keen to take up a placement with us and had already completed most of her training with the NDNA, meaning she had a sound underpinning knowledge of certain areas required of a practitioner.

Throughout the placement we received weekly calls from Lesley our point of contact to check how the placement was going and if we had any concerns (which we didn't). Lesley was always very friendly and warm and due to the overall experience, I would recommend anyone to become involved in this project, and this is definitely something I would do again."

Find out more about Childcare Works
ndna.org.uk/ChildcareWorks



Ymgynghoriad SGC - mae Llywodraeth Cymru yn cyhoeddi lansiad ymgynghoriad ar gynigion i newid elfennau o'r Safonau Gofynnol Cenedlaethol ar gyfer Gofal Plant a Reoleiddir

Gan Amy Castle, Uwch Reolwr Gofal Plant, Polisi a Deddfwriaeth, Llywodraeth Cymru

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi ymrwymo i gefnogi plant yng Nghymru i gael y cychwyn gorau mewn bywyd a sicrhau bod ganddynt fynediad at ofal plant a chyfleoedd chwarae o safon uchel sy'n cyfarfod eu hanghenion, ac anghenion eu teuluoedd.

Mae'r Safonau Gofynnol Cenedlaethol (SGC) ar gyfer Gofal Plant a Reoleiddir hyd at 12 oed wedi ei gynllunio i gynorthwyo darparwyr gofal plant i gyfarfod â rheoliadau sy'n berthnasol i'r math o wasanaeth maent yn ei ddarparu.

Bydd yr ymgynghoriad ar y newidiadau arfaethedig i'r Safonau Gofynnol Cenedlaethol yn helpu i gefnogi'r ddarpariaeth o wasanaethau gofal plant a chwarae o ansawdd uchel a hygyrch i blant a theuluoedd.

Rhai o'r prif newidiadau sy'n cael eu hystyried yn yr ymgynghoriad yw:

- Diweddaru strwythur a dyluniad yr SGC i fersiwn HTML gyda dolen i reoliadau perthnasol a chanllaw ymarfer gorau.
- Diweddaru pennod Darpariaeth Safon Uchel Updates i alinio egwyddorion Chwarae, Dysgu a Gofal Plentynod Cynnar (ECPLC) gyda'r safonau: rebrand.ly/ECPLC
- Cyflwyno agwedd gyfrannol i ofynion y SGC o ran cymwysterau staffio a hyfforddiant cymorth cyntaf ar gyfer gwasanaethau Chwarae Mynediad Agored, yng ngoleuni argymhellion yr Adolygiad Gweinidogol o gyfleoedd chwarae: rebrand.ly/ReviewOfPlay
- Diweddaru Safon 12 SGC mewn perthynas â meddyginiaeth a chyflwyno atodiad ychwanegol gyda chanllawiau ar weinyddu parasetamol hylifol
- Eglurhad pellach ar ddyraniad staff yn effeithiol ar draws y lleoliad
- Cyflwyno rhywfaint o hyblygrwydd ar gymarebau i ofalwyr plant, a chaniatáu i ofalwyr plant i gael un plentyn ychwanegol o dan 5 oed ond heb gynyddu uchafswm niferoedd.

Bydd buddion cynnal yr adolygiad a'r ymgynghoriad yma yn caniatáu i Lywodraeth Cymru i ystyried a SGC mewn modd beirniadol gyda chynulleidfia eang, gan sicrhau bod safonau yn parhau i wella ac yn addas i'w pwrpas ac yn cefnogi'r sector gofal plant a chwarae i gynnig gwasanaethau o safon. Darllenwch fwy am sut mae'r ymgynghoriad yn effeithio arnoch chi a sut gallwch rannu eich syniadau"

Ewch i ndna.org.uk/NMSConsultation

NMS consultation - Welsh Government announces the launch of a consultation on proposals to change elements of the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare

By Amy Castle, Senior Childcare Policy and Legislation Manager, Welsh Government

The Welsh Government is committed to supporting children in Wales to have the best start in life and ensuring they can access high-quality childcare and play activities that meet their needs and those of their families.

The National Minimum Standards (NMS) for regulated childcare for children up to the age of 12 are designed to assist childcare providers to meet the regulations that are relevant to the type of service they provide.

The consultation on proposed changes to the NMS will help to support the delivery of high-quality, accessible childcare and play services for children and families.

Some of the main changes being considered in the consultation are:

- Updating the structure and layout of the NMS to a HTML version with links to relevant regulations and best practice guidance
- Updates to the High-quality provision chapter to further align Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC) principles within the standards: rebrand.ly/ECPLC
- Introducing a proportionate approach to the NMS requirements of qualified staff and first aid training for Open Access Playwork services, in light of recommendations from the Ministerial Review of Play: rebrand.ly/ReviewOfPlay
- Updating NMS Standard 12 relating to Medication and the introduction of an additional annex with guidance on administering Liquid Paracetamol
- Clarification on effective deployment of staff across the setting
- Introducing some flexibility on ratios for childminders, and allowing childminders to have one additional child under 5 years but not increase the maximum number.

The benefits of undertaking this review and consultation allow Welsh Government to consider the NMS critically with a wide audience, ensuring that standards are continuously improved, and are fit for purpose in supporting the childcare and play sector to deliver quality services. Read more about how the consultation may affect you and share your views."

Go to ndna.org.uk/NMSConsultation





National Day Nurseries Association

Ofsted's new framework – how we are helping you

Ofsted published its new inspection framework in September, introducing a “report card” grading system that will apply across all remits from 10 November. Ofsted's regulatory work will continue through this period under the current framework.

Routine inspections under the current framework continue until 30 September, after which they will pause before resuming under the new framework in November. Ofsted published a new early years inspection toolkit and operational guides, available here: rebrand.ly/OfstedToolkit

Here's some of our products we have developed to support you:

- Live webinars looking at what the changes are and what actions providers need to take – the recorded webinars will also be available
- Live virtual classroom and face-to-face in house training – **Developing Confidence With Your Ofsted Inspection**
- Ofsted framework quiz



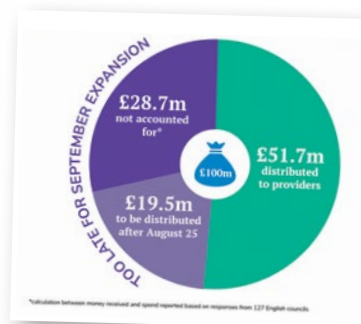
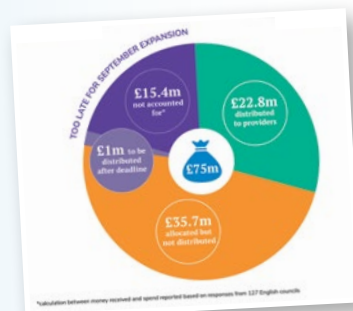
All our resources can be found here: ndna.org.uk/Training

NDNA CEO Tim McLachlan and Director of Quality and Training Stella Ziolkowski met Jayne Coward and Rachael Flesher from Ofsted to discuss NDNA feedback and next steps.

New safeguarding actions

The new safeguarding reforms are now in place. Here are some resources that we have developed to support you:

- We have delivered three live webinars about the changes, why they matter and how settings can ensure that they are compliant with the new requirements. There is a recording available on our website ndna.org.uk/RecordedWebinars
- All relevant LVC, F2F and DZ training has been updated and meets the Annex C training criteria
- All relevant products (factsheets, policies) have been updated and now include a new attendance policy and a new whistleblowing safeguarding concerns factsheet
- A table of changes is available on our EYFS webpage ndna.org.uk/EYFSChanges



Millions in expansion funding hasn't reached nurseries

A new NDNA investigation has revealed that more than £65 million in government funding to help nurseries expand their capacity for the September 2025 childcare rollout has not been distributed.

Through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, NDNA found that less than a third of the £75 million Early Years Expansion Grant, announced in December 2024, had been distributed by early August. A further £35 million had been allocated by councils but not passed on, leaving providers unable to benefit ahead of the new term. (Top left image)

Similarly, only £52 million of the £100 million Childcare Expansion Capital Grant, paid to councils in February 2024, has reached providers. More than half of councils admitted they would not have spent their full allocation before September. (Top right image)

Tim McLachlan, NDNA's Chief Executive, said: “It's a shocking state of affairs that millions of pounds of money made available for nurseries to be able to increase their capacity for the childcare expansion has still not been paid out – eighteen months after councils have received it in some cases. This money could make a real difference to underfunded providers who have been struggling with the recruitment crisis, exacerbated by the increased National Insurance Contributions, and who are trying hard to meet local demand for places.”

New Early Education Minister

Following the September reshuffle, the MP for Reading West and Mid Berkshire Olivia Bailey was appointed as the new Early Education Minister, taking over from Stephen Morgan. NDNA's Purnima Tanuku CBE and Tim McLachlan met with Olivia during her first day in the role to discuss the challenges you are facing including underfunding, staffing issues and parental charges.



Ministerial visit to Maths Champions nursery

We are delighted to announce that the Government has so much confidence in our Maths Champions early intervention programme that they are investing to create an additional 1800 places.

Any early years setting across England can take part in our professional development programme free of charge.

Former Early Education Minister Stephen Morgan MP visited Flying Start nursery in Ashstead, Surrey to see the positive impact of the programme on staff confidence and children's development and well-being.

He said: “It's vital to our Plan for Change that we close learning gaps before they get the chance to grow. That's why we're backing successful, evidence-based programmes like Maths Champions – helping early years staff build their confidence in teaching maths and setting children up for success.”

Scan the QR code on page 23 to register your interest.

Find out more about the programme ndna.org.uk/Maths



Sign up for fully funded Maths Champions Programme with NDNA

Support early years practitioners with their confidence and ability to teach maths to children in early years settings.

Maths Champions is an evidence-based, professional development programme delivered by National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA). It is aimed at increasing early years practitioner skills, knowledge, awareness and confidence in supporting children's early mathematical development.

The Maths Champions programme is a fully funded initiative. The only criteria for nurseries is that Maths Champions must be at least Level 3 qualified.

Commissioned by the Education Endowment Foundation, the independent evaluation team from the Universities of Durham and York analysed the results of the programme, which showed that children in a setting that ran the programme made on average three months additional progress in maths and language development.

“Children are not born with maths anxiety; they learn this from adults surrounding them. Evaluation of the Maths Champions programme provides evidence to show increased confidence levels of all staff in participating settings in providing high quality educational experiences for children within their everyday routine.”

+ **Stella Ziolkowski**
NDNA's Director of Quality and Training

To register your interest, fill out the following form:



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