

NURSERY NEWS

Your membership magazine

www.ndna.org.uk



A decade of Millie's Mark

With the new summer term comes the uncertainty of dealing with new governments across all three nations. But in this edition we are celebrating an amazing achievement: ten years of awarding Millie's Mark, the gold standard in paediatric first aid for nurseries.

Since we began delivering Millie's Mark on behalf of Millie's Trust, thousands more staff have become confident in dealing with medical emergencies in their setting. Every year, hundreds of thousands of children are safer and

families are reassured that their child is as safe as they can be during their time in nursery.

For all these reasons, we are celebrating Millie's Mark Day on Thursday 24 September with activities running throughout that week, stressing the importance of keeping PFA knowledge fresh with confident staff able to act effectively at a moment's notice.

We hope you can share your experiences and photos that week and make this a celebration to remember.



10 OVERCOMING ADVERSITY



12 CHILDREN'S VOICES



16 A SAFEGUARDING PICTURE



Saving you time

NDNA provides you with over 100 policies and procedures templates, to help save nursery owners and managers time and money. Our early years experts, along with a team of employment and contract lawyers, and health and safety consultants have done the hard work, so you don't have to!

10 things you need to know about the templates

1. Number of templates provided: 107
2. Researched, developed and checked by: NDNA's early years experts, legal helpline and health and safety consultants
3. Format: Word – so they're easy to personalise
4. Number of updates per year: two! Published January and July*
5. Matrix of changes document shows you what's changed
6. Countries covered: three! England, Scotland and Wales
7. Languages: two! English and Welsh
8. Hours of research, writing and checking required from members: zero
9. Lawyers' and consultants' fees members need to pay: £0
10. Cost to members to download from our website: they're included in your membership!

*published dates may vary depending on updates from government bodies and legal changes.

Find your member benefits at

www.ndna.org.uk/MemberHub



The templates are intended for use as a resource to develop policies specifically for your nursery. Every nursery's policies and procedures will be unique to their setting. It is important to read every template first and adapt it for use in your setting. You download them as Word documents, so they are easy to personalise.

We have covered all scenarios of running a nursery, from childcare practice, health and safety, employment law and contractual templates. Here are some example template titles:

- Parent contract and terms and conditions
- Extreme weather policy
- Safer sleep policy
- **NEW** – Screen time policy.

If you're not already a member of NDNA, you can see the full range on here: www.ndna.org.uk/JoinUs

If NDNA members need any advice on our templates or on any policy, our early years advisers and legal helpline will be happy to help.



GIVING YOU A STRONGER VOICE

Reach, engage and protect

Since joining NDNA as Chief Executive 18 months ago, I have been shaping a clear vision for our charity's future. It can be summed up in three simple words - **reach, engage and protect**:

Reach more nursery providers, particularly those who have never before experienced the benefits of NDNA membership.

Engage with members, listening carefully to your challenges, ideas and needs so we can provide the support, services and expertise you need to thrive. I am continuing to visit NDNA network meetings across the nations to hear from members first hand.

Protect our members by ensuring our campaigning, influencing and policy work is driven by the issues that matter most to nursery businesses, both today and for the future.

To strengthen this approach, we have established new Policy Advisory Groups representing single-site providers, small and medium-sized groups, and large group operators. These groups bring together members from across the sector, ensuring our policy positions and advocacy are directly informed by the real time experiences, priorities and challenges facing settings.

NDNA exists to champion and strengthen the nursery sector. By reaching more providers, engaging more deeply with members and protecting your interests with a stronger collective voice, we are making an even greater difference: helping nurseries succeed while securing the best possible outcomes for children. As part of our sector representation work, we have also appointed some new Trustees. Continue reading to meet two of them.

T. Mclachlan

TIM MCLACHLAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

MBEs for King's Birthday

Congratulations to our two members who were honoured in the King's Birthday Honours List.

Long-standing NDNA trustee Hazel Moody joined NDNA in 2004 and has been on the Board since 2007! Delighted Hazel said: "Since starting my career in childcare at the age of 16 I have strived to make a difference for all children, ensuring an inclusive environment, meeting the needs of each child whilst supporting their parents on their first educational journey."

"Being awarded this honour has recognised the hard work of Advantage Day Nursery and it has been an absolute privilege to lead the team."



Lucy Owen-Collins is Founder and Director of Bee in the Woods, Brighton which showcases the importance of nature for young children.

"We started with a simple vision: to create the kind of childhood experience that we would want for our children - one filled with play, nature, community and meaningful relationships. To see that vision recognised nationally is incredibly special."



Save THE DATE

We have decided to return to Liverpool for our conference next year due to positive feedback from delegates. This will be on Friday 9 July 2027. Look out for details shortly.



New trustees

Sarah Sanger, founder and CEO of The Woodentops Nurseries, strongly believes that supporting colleagues to deliver their individual missions is a crucial part of driving excellence in early years education. She is a champion for independent and family-run nurseries and schools, speaking regularly on the value of a strong curriculum in early years.

"I am thrilled to be joining the Board at a pivotal time. I know the difference NDNA membership makes, from practical support to the powerful voice it gives providers. I look forward to bringing my strategic lens. My particular focus is raising the status of early years teachers and ensuring that programmes like Maths Champions continue to build the skills that lead to real, measurable outcomes."

Elaine Sagar, founder and director of The Sunflower Childcare Group, brings extensive experience in early years education, childcare provision and sector leadership. She has played a significant role across the sector, serving as Co-Chair of the North West Ofsted Big Conversation and leading a strong network of childcare providers.

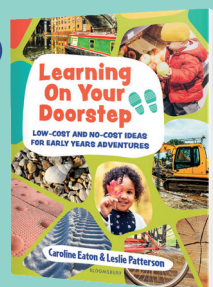
"I'm a passionate advocate for the wider community and sector, speaking out on key issues affecting providers, workforce sustainability and quality provision. I have experience in leading networks, contributing at board level and engaging with stakeholders."

From Big Feelings to Big Ideas

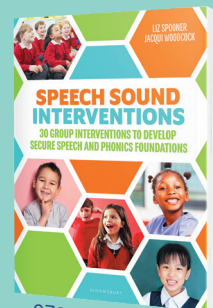
Inspiring new resources to support children's play, communication, creativity and wellbeing in the early years.

Explore

Low-cost, low-prep ideas for making the most of your local environment and outdoor spaces.



9781801994583
PB | £19.99



9781801997492
PB | £24.99

Communicate

30 practical interventions to help children develop secure speech and phonological foundations.

Create

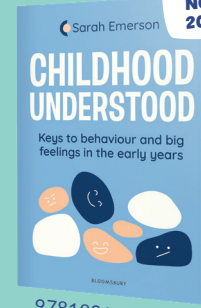
Creative activities and inspiration to enrich children's learning through mud kitchen play.



9781801997966
PB | £12.99

Understand

A fresh perspective on behaviour, emotions and big feelings in the early years.



9781801998864
PB | £19.99

Check out our Early Years webinar!



9781801995177
PB | £12.99

Grow

Discover simple ways to recognise and support children's schematic interests through meaningful play.

Discover inspiring titles from Bloomsbury Education to support every stage of children's learning and development.

@BloomsburyChildrens

BLOOMSBURY EDUCATION

Available at Bloomsbury.com

Get involved online!

[in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-day-nurseries-association/) National Day Nurseries Association [@NDNAtalk](https://www.instagram.com/NDNAtalk) [f](https://www.facebook.com/ndna.org.uk) /ndna.org.uk



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NDNA Cymru 3 Connaught House, Riverside Business Park, Benarth Road, Conwy, LL32 8UB T: 01824 707823
NDNA Scotland SCVO Glasgow Office, Edward House, 199 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3EX T: 0131 516 6967
Editor: Rosey James 01484 407066 rosey.james@ndna.org.uk
Advertising: Chantelle Sahota 01484 407070 chantelle.sahota@ndna.org.uk
Design: Gemma Cox 01484 407070 jemma.cox@ndna.org.uk

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Nourishing the Next Generation: Positive Eating Habits in Early Years Settings



Kindly Written for Hope
by Emalee Caton
Early Years PANCo Lead
Tutor at NDNA

The first five years of a child's life are a time of rapid growth, discovery and development. Alongside learning to walk, talk and explore the world, children are also forming lifelong attitudes towards food and eating. Positive early experiences at mealtimes can shape how children view food for the rest of their lives, making this stage crucial for building healthy habits.

Rather than focusing on strict rules, early childhood nutrition should emphasise balance, variety and enjoyment. Helping children feel curious and confident around food lays the foundation for long-term health.

Toddlers and Preschoolers

As children grow, they need a varied diet that includes all food groups in order to provide energy, support growth, strengthen bones and teeth, supply essential vitamins and fibre, and support brain development.

Teaching children about food in simple and positive ways can spark curiosity and build confidence around eating. Explaining that "carbohydrates give us energy to run and play" or "milk helps keep our bones strong" helps children, from an early age, begin to understand how food supports their bodies to function and grow properly. It is important to avoid labelling foods as 'good' or 'bad'. Instead, terms like 'everyday foods' and 'sometimes foods' encourage balance without guilt.

Independence and positive habits

Children's appetites vary naturally, so letting them respond to feelings of hunger and fullness supports healthy self-regulation. Encouraging self-serving and avoiding pressure to finish meals helps build independence and food should not be used as a prize or punishment, for example rewarding eating vegetables with pudding, or restricting pudding if the main meal wasn't eaten.

Age appropriate utensils, like the silicone-handled Little Moments range, help children develop confidence and hand-eye coordination while feeding themselves.



Food allergies and safety

Food allergies and intolerances must always be taken seriously. Clear policies and procedures should be in place to ensure that children with allergies are kept safe during meal and snack times.

Simple measures, such as clearly labelled plates or coloured silicone plates, like those from the Little Moments range, for children with special dietary requirements, can help adults quickly identify and monitor food safely.

Creating lifelong habits

Healthy eating in early years is about more than just nutrition; it is about confidence, independence and positive experiences. With consistent support from parents and early years practitioners, children can develop healthy habits that last a lifetime.

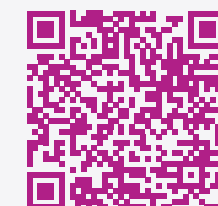
Read the full article on the blog: www.hope-education.co.uk/blog/early-years

HOPE
is all you need

Member moments!
Here are some more of your lovely stories captured in photos. Please send yours for consideration to nurserynews@ndna.org.uk

Scan the QR code to get involved with our latest campaign!

Let's change the narrative and highlight the need for equitable treatment across all early years settings.



ndna.org.uk/TheBestStart



Tops Day Nurseries treated Lincoln, star of its Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole bus campaign, and his family to a photoshoot beside one of his "bus faces" and a meet-and-greet with the bus team.



Busy Bees Glasgow Heritage celebrated its first proposal as centre manager Donna said yes to Tony. Children, including their son, made banners and joined the celebrations!



Little Adventures Nursery in Washwood Heath, Birmingham took 200 children and relatives to Weston-super-Mare for a magical day of discovery, learning and community. For some – both children and the elderly – it was their first experience of the seaside.



Congratulations to **Little Adventurers Nursery Upminster** on achieving Investors in People We Invest in Wellbeing accreditation. Initiatives include flexible working, Pilates, counselling and Mental Health First Aid training.

Nursery:
where the
best start
happens

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** £150/£205, four modules

- Module 1 on 12 Oct; Module 2 on 15 Oct; Module 3 on 19 Oct; Module 4 on 22 Oct
- Module 1 on 09 Nov; Module 2 on 12 Nov; Module 3 on 16 Nov; Module 4 on 19 Nov

✓ **Autism Awareness**

£61/£82, two modules

- Module 1 on 18 Nov; Module 2 on 25 Nov

✓ **Baby Room Leader**

£94/£127, 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 23 Nov; Module 2 on 26 Nov; Module 3 on 30 Nov; Module 4 on 03 Dec

✓ **Brilliant Babies**

£94/£127, four modules

- Module 1 on 12 Oct; Module 2 on 15 Oct; Module 3 on 19 Oct; Module 4 on 22 Oct
- Module 1 on 02 Nov; Module 2 on 05 Nov; Module 3 on 09 Nov; Module 4 on 12 Nov

✓ **Developing Confidence with Your Ofsted Inspection**

£94/£127, four modules

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

✓ **Developing Self-Regulation, Supporting Well-Being**

£61/£82, two modules

- Module 1 on 30 Sept; Module 2 on 01 Oct
- Module 1 on 04 Nov; Module 2 on 11 Nov

✓ **Effective Team Leadership**

£94/£127, four modules

- Module 1 on 06 Oct; Module 2 on 09 Oct; Module 3 on 13 Oct; Module 4 on 16 Oct
- Module 1 on 03 Nov; Module 2 on 06 Nov; Module 3 on 10 Nov; Module 4 on 13 Nov

✓ **Leadership and Management**

£94/£127, four modules

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

✓ **Positive Behaviour in Early Years** £94/£127, four modules

- Module 1 on 23 Nov; Module 2 on 26 Nov; Module 3 on 30 Nov; Module 4 on 03 Dec

✓ **The Role of the SENCo**

£94/£127, four modules

- Module 1 on 22 Sept; Module 2 on 25 Sept; Module 3 on 29 Sept; Module 4 on 02 Oct
- Module 1 on 17 Nov; Module 2 on 20 Nov; Module 3 on 24 Nov; Module 4 on 27 Nov

✓ **Toddler Room Leader**

£94/£127, four modules

- Module 1 on 05 Oct; Module 2 on 08 Oct; Module 3 on 12 Oct; Module 4 on 15 Oct
- Module 1 on 30 Nov; Module 2 on 03 Dec; Module 3 on 07 Dec; Module 4 on 10 Dec

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

Celebrating 10 years of keeping children safer

A decade ago, Millie's Trust partnered with NDNA to create Millie's Mark, the gold standard for paediatric first aid (PFA). At the time, only one person in an English setting needed a relevant PFA qualification, so the accreditation was designed to take a whole-setting approach to keeping children safe.

Millie's Trust

Dan and Joanne Thompson founded Millie's Trust following their daughter Millie's death from a choking incident in a nursery in 2012. Their aim is to train and educate all staff working in nurseries to save children's lives.

Following intensive lobbying, the then Children's Minister, Sam Gyimah, changed the requirements so all new qualified staff had to be PFA trained.

Dan and Joanne Thompson from Millie's Trust said: "Being Millie's parents, we are extremely proud to have brought Millie's Mark alive together with Millie's Trust and NDNA. We are proud to work together to continue to help keep children safe in childcare establishments and we look forward to awarding more Millie's Marks in the future."

Dan Thompson welcoming Andy Burnham to a Millie's Mark nursery in Wythenshaw.



Little Beehive Roseangle Nursery, Dundee – "Having Millie's Mark shows how serious you are about ensuring children are safe"



Laura Dunn, Nursery Manager, from Little Beehive Roseangle Nursery who were awarded in June:

"Having Millie's Mark award demonstrates our commitment to going above and beyond the minimum requirements for keeping children safe. It shows that all our staff working directly with children not only hold a paediatric first aid certificate but are also competent in how to apply this in practice. Together we have reflected on our practice to ensure that there are tight processes and documentation in place and that staff are competent and confident to apply paediatric first aid in practice.

"It is a process that has taken between three and six months and we have ensured that we worked as a team to fulfil the Millie's Mark criteria; that staff are able to keep children safe and minimise the risks and accidents.

"We hold monthly staff meetings where we always refresh on PFA and monthly audits are also carried out. Accidents and incidents will occur and staff have had to use their PFA in which they show great confidence.

"I would recommend nurseries to go for Millie's Mark as it allows staff to be PFA trained and use this confidently. It gives vital skills to help and save lives and staff know exactly what to do, so it helps them to stay calm, carry out their duties and not panic. Having Millie's Mark shows how serious you are about ensuring children are safe when they are in your care.

"Now that we have achieved Millie's Mark we want to shout about our success. As well as offering a great reassurance to our existing parents, this is also a great marketing tool for new prospective families. Having Millie's Mark has impacted our setting in a positive way because all our staff are PFA trained and are confident in using it."

Why do you need Millie's Mark if your staff are trained?

It's more than just having all staff hold a PFA certificate. It's about:

- Equipping professionals to respond quickly and effectively in an emergency
- Giving peace of mind to parents
- Increasing numbers of PFA-trained staff
- Increasing confidence and competencies in applying PFA
- Raising the quality and skills of the early years workforce
- Helping practitioners to deal with day-to-day first aid procedures with added confidence.

Stella Ziolkowski, NDNA's Director of Quality and Training who leads the project said: "Millie's Mark requires that your PFA learning is kept alive and in the forefront of practitioners' minds, so they are confident, ready and capable to deal with an emergency situation. It helps you to identify staff strengths as well as fears and enables you to strategically deploy the most confident staff across the setting.

"Accredited settings complete an individual audit for all staff, supporting risk assessments and training. This ensures that staff are adequately supported, according to their areas of confidence and competence."



Maintaining your award

After receiving the award, the process doesn't stop. It's about continual learning and reflection. Whilst maintaining 100% PFA-trained staff, you are required to submit annual declarations and inform us of any changes, serious accidents, injuries or deaths within the nursery. Also, most nurseries renew the accreditation every three years once the mark expires.

Millie's Mark across the UK

Supported by the Welsh and the Scottish governments, Millie's Mark is available across both nations, recognising providers that exceed PFA and staff training requirements. The award is also open to childminders and wraparound care settings.

What's next for Millie's Mark?

Millie's Trust and NDNA will continue to promote Millie's Mark to settings working with young children and will use Millie's Mark Day on 24 September as a particular focus. We will continue to strive for best practice and stress the imperative nature of first aid training and confidence to improve children's health and well-being.

New Beginnings Day Nursery, Essex – "their actions reflect the values and standards promoted through Millie's Mark"

Area Manager Lisa Vann explains how they handled a febrile convulsion in a child who suddenly developed a high temperature.

"Staff showed exceptional vigilance in recognising the child's deteriorating condition, immediately putting emergency procedures in place. The child remained under continuous supervision, with first aid administered swiftly and confidently.

"Paramedics arrived within six minutes of the seizure being identified. Staff continued to provide reassurance, monitor her condition and support emergency responders. She was safely transferred to hospital and made a positive recovery.

"Nursery Manager Laura Westmoreland coordinated the response, ensuring clear communication, effective delegation and the continued safety and well-being of all children. The value of having a fully first aid-trained workforce was clearly demonstrated, enabling staff to respond immediately when every second mattered."

An internal review of staffing ratios, infection control measures, key person awareness, supervision arrangements and first aid procedures found them to be robust and effective. The child has since returned to nursery with an Individual Healthcare Plan and emergency medication. Staff received additional training to administer the medication and support any future medical needs.

"The review reinforced our commitment to continuous improvement, while staff involved were given appropriate well-being support following what was a highly emotive situation. We are immensely proud of the professionalism, expertise, compassion and teamwork shown throughout. Their actions reflect the values and standards promoted through Millie's Mark and our commitment to the highest standards of care, safety and emergency preparedness."



Millie's Mark in numbers

Since Millie's Mark began we have awarded

2,858 accreditations.

934 settings have renewed at least once.

This roughly equates to **more than 260,000**

children in Millie's Mark nurseries.

"It provides reassurance to parents, families, and our staff, empowering them with the **confidence, knowledge and skills to act** should the need ever arise."

- Shotley Bridge Nursery School, County Durham



A parent's perspective:

"It is impossible to say how grateful we are to everyone at New Beginnings Nursery. When our daughter experienced a medical emergency, the professionalism, calmness and genuine care shown was extraordinary. Their quick thinking and decisive actions ensured she received the care she needed.

"What impressed us just as much was everything that followed. At every stage, our daughter's safety and well-being came first. The care shown went far beyond anything we expected. Every member of staff

was kind, compassionate and supportive, playing an important role in helping both our daughter and our family through one of the most worrying experiences we have ever faced. Their reassurance and professionalism made an enormous difference.

"Knowing that all three of our children are cared for by people who genuinely treat them as individuals and respond with such competence and compassion when it matters most gives us enormous confidence every day. This is a nursery where safeguarding is embedded in everything they do, where staff are exceptionally well trained, and where children are genuinely loved and cared for. Families are supported through both the happiest moments and the most difficult ones. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to everyone at New Beginnings."

HELPING YOU TAKE THE NEXT STEP WITH CONFIDENCE

EVERY JOURNEY BEGINS WITH A FIRST STEP.

Whether you're planning to grow your nursery group, preparing for a future sale, or simply exploring your options, our specialist Childcare & Education team is here to guide you at every stage of the journey.



Specialist childcare
& education business
brokers



Trusted by nursery
owners across
the UK



Delivering successful
outcomes with
confidence

WHATEVER YOUR NEXT STEP LOOKS LIKE, OUR SPECIALIST TEAM IS READY TO HELP.

FOR INDEPENDENT, EXPERT ADVICE CONTACT OUR SPECIALIST TEAM

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

BUSINESS. BUILT AROUND YOU.



RECENTLY SOLD DAY NURSERIES

Pair of busy Coventry day nurseries sold as founding owners leave the sector



Tiny Teddies comprises two busy day nursery settings. Together, they have the capacity for up to 150 children and have hugely benefited from fantastic levels of consistency and a great local reputation.

'Outstanding' Shepherd's Bush day nursery business sold for the first time



Stepping Stones Nursery, an 'Outstanding' rated setting registered for over 89 children aged two to five years, offers both full-day and sessional early years education and care throughout the year.

Charming day nursery in popular North Yorkshire town sold to family buyers



Rooftops Nursery School is an established day nursery setting that provides care for up to 54 children at a time. It offers a calm, nurturing and child-led environment shaped by Montessori principles.

Established Smarty Pants Day Nursery in Dudley changes hands to first-time buyer



Established in 2007, the 'Good' Ofsted-rated day nursery has an effective operating capacity for 32 toddler and pre-school-aged children. It occupies a mixed use council building part of which comprises an open-plan toddler and pre-school area.

Siblings sell Oxfordshire day nursery to expanding operator



Established in 1992 by David Smith, Cygnet Nursery, which is registered for up to 72 children, operates across three buildings.

Highly regarded Warrington day nursery joins the Tiddlywinks family



Established in 1996, Cottontails Day Nursery is a successful 74-place children's day nursery. It occupies a beautifully converted two-storey former church school, which boasts character and charm.

christie.com



The smile stealers

Annefrances McGrath (Operations Manager) and Liz Steenkamp (Manager) from Ivy in the Park, Glasgow, tell us how they turned disaster into success when their subway carriage was repeatedly vandalised.

Q Tell us about your nursery

We are passionate about creating meaningful, inspiring learning environments where children feel safe, valued and empowered. Our practice is rooted in nurturing strong relationships, child-led learning and children's rights.

The subway carriage project reflected these values. We wanted to rescue an iconic piece of Glasgow history and transform it into a unique outdoor classroom.

Q What originally inspired the subway carriage project?

We wanted to move beyond traditional spaces and create something that inspired awe, imagination and curiosity. The carriage offered endless opportunities for child-led experiences.

We wanted children to have access to an environment that communicated value, a space intentionally created for them that respected their right to play, explore and thrive.

Q You were vandalised – what happened?

Over several incidents, the carriage was extensively spray painted and our security cameras were damaged.

The previous December, we suffered a break-in that caused extensive damage. We worked hard to support children emotionally in a nurturing and age-appropriate way. In partnership with our local community police officers, our janitor Paul dressed up as the Grinch and was "arrested" in a playful experience designed to help children process what had happened. This reassured children that adults had listened, action had been taken and their nursery was safe again.

Because the children had already experienced adults responding positively, they were able to approach the subway carriage situation with remarkable resilience. But hearing children ask: "Why is it broken?" or "Why are people drawing on it?" was heartbreaking.

Q How did the vandalism incidents affect everyone emotionally?

For children, it was confusing to see something created for them repeatedly damaged but many were able to engage in thoughtful conversations about fairness, kindness, safety and community. It gave them confidence to express their feelings.

For the team, the incidents felt deeply personal because so much had gone into creating the project. However, it also reinforced how important nurturing relationships and emotionally responsive practice are within nurseries.

It highlighted that children are incredibly capable of understanding difficult situations when supported sensitively by trusted adults.

Q How did you cope in the aftermath?

We focused on helping children understand resilience, advocacy, emotional well-being and community support. This was a chance to model positive problem-solving and emotional resilience.

Q Why did you decide to reach out to your local community?

The carriage represented local history, creativity and hope. We wanted children to witness the power of community connection and collective responsibility. Neighbours kept an eye out and local businesses provided practical and financial support.

Children saw real examples of kindness, collaboration and advocacy. It showed that people care deeply about protecting spaces created for children. The community shared social media posts and newspaper articles asking the vandals to stop. We came up with the name "the smile stealers."

Q Can you tell us more about the fox artwork and how the children became involved in that idea?

We commissioned a spray paint artist to work with the children and families to develop artwork for the carriage. The large fox was inspired by wildlife the children had spotted through our CCTV. It became symbolic of resilience, curiosity and adapting through challenges, reflecting the children's own journey.

Q How are things now?

It is used daily for outdoor learning, shared lunches and child-led exploration. We've developed the surrounding environment into an adventure playground with plans for a forest-inspired area and fire pit. What once represented setback and disappointment now represents resilience, creativity and community spirit.

We held a special reunion event with former preschoolers experiencing the finished carriage. We had a fantastic turnout, the children certainly gave our upgraded subway carriage their seal of approval and had an absolute ball exploring it. They also thoroughly enjoyed playing on our newly refurbished playground.

Q What have you learned from the situation?

Children are more capable and resilient than people realise when supported through nurturing, rights-based relationships. Rather than excluding children from adversity, supporting them through it helped build confidence, understanding and emotional literacy.

Q How would you advise a nursery in a similar situation?

Stay focused on your "why." It is easy to become overwhelmed by practical challenges, disappointment or financial pressures. Keeping children at the centre of decision-making guides the way forward.



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

What if we slowed down?

Working in early years can sometimes feel like a race. What if we did something different and slowed down?

We know that children learn best when they feel safe, unhurried and truly seen.

When we slow down, we notice more. When we notice more, we see the child who exists in a family, a culture and a community.

Slow practice isn't passive practice. It's intentional, attentive and deeply respectful of children as capable, complex people. Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Emilia approach, famously emphasised that children are highly capable, creative and "possess a hundred languages" – a metaphor for their endless potential.

Slowing down allows us to pause long enough to notice the child who always reaches for the same toy, or the child who has so much to say but needs a little more time to find the words.

The ideas shared in this edition are an invitation to slow down. You'll find practical activities and provocations to help you build an environment where children feel known. The 'My roots bag' activity is a beautiful way for children to share the stories and objects that make them who they are. Making space for children's roots isn't about cultural events or colourful displays. It's about the everyday interactions, the questions we ask, the books we choose, the songs we sing and the way we welcome families as genuine, valued partners.

Ask children about their favourite places both indoors and out. Our "Top tips" offer everything from simple voting activities that demonstrate to children their ideas matter, to examining what it really means to listen to the child's voice. We suggest a home learning idea that invites families to share something they are proud of, sparking conversations to bring into the setting, deepening practitioners' knowledge of each child's world. We celebrate the inspiring work of Scotland's Children's Rights Award winners, whose practice reminds us of what's possible when we put children at the very centre of practice.

The child in front of you has a story worth knowing.

So, let's resist the race and slow down.



You will need:

- Drawstring or paper bag
- Letter home to families
- Photos from nursery/home.

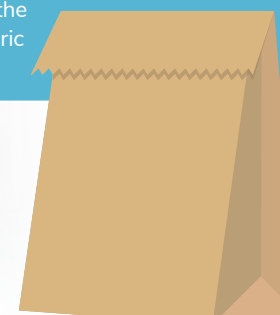
My roots bag

When a child sees their world reflected back to them, they feel seen, valued and confident to engage with the world around them.

Before the activity begins, invite families to share items that are meaningful to their child to put into their bags, for example, a favourite book or teddy, a piece of fabric. Request photos of special events, of family members, of favourite food, plus family words etc. Children use items from home and/or things that are special to them at nursery to fill up their roots bag to represent who they are and what they enjoy.

Children can then choose to explore the bag by themselves or share the experience with others. Some children may prefer to share it with their key person. If so, make this a special moment, give them time and let them see how honoured you feel by them choosing to share their lives with you. As children share their items, they step into the role of storyteller, boosting their confidence and improving language skills. In this context, the child is the expert, they hold information that others don't know – it's empowering. Encourage other children to ask questions and share a connection to build understanding and empathy for each other.

Why not... use some of the ideas from the children's roots bag in the role play area to make the role play resources meaningful to the children rather than generic multicultural objects.



My ideas matter

Offering children choices promotes inclusion, well-being, independence, confidence and decision-making skills. When adults involve children in meaningful decisions and act on their choices, it shows that children's voices are valued.

Voting is a simple way to include children's choices in everyday practice. Adapt voting methods to suit different ages and stages. For example, babies can choose between items to explore, while older children might vote on whether to have their snack indoors or outdoors.

Talk with children about the importance of everyone having a chance to share their ideas. Discuss choices they already make, such as selecting a rhyme, choosing a favourite book, deciding what to play with, where to play, who to play with, or what snack to have. Encourage children to think about choices they make at home too.

Explain that people often have different preferences, which can make it difficult for everyone to agree. Introduce voting as a fair way to make group decisions, where each person has one vote and the option with the most votes is chosen. Practice this by voting between two songs and singing the one with the most votes.

Ask children which parts of the day they think could involve voting. Also discuss situations where voting is not appropriate, such as when decisions are needed to keep everyone safe.

Provide regular opportunities for children to vote on meaningful choices and ensure that the outcome can be acted upon.



Top tip

Voting

Use a variety of ways to enable children to vote: putting hands up, standing next to their particular choice, objects such as balls being placed in a container, using thumbs up or down, using picture cards or their individual photograph alongside their choice or pegs clipped onto a choice board.



Children will experience making meaningful decisions and seeing their ideas brought to life - sending a clear message that they are active participants with valuable ideas that can influence their environment and enrich their learning experiences.

For younger or non-verbal children:

Adapt this by recognising that children communicate through gestures, facial expressions, movement, actions and preferences. Offer simple, meaningful choices using photographs and objects, and observe children's responses and preferences.



Top tip

Involve families

Parent relationships are built on good two-way communication. Reflect on how you gather parents' views to meet a range of communication preferences. For example, voting on key decisions, stay and plays, parent ambassadors, feedback boards, voice note/video feedback, emoji voting cards (for anonymous feedback) or community coffee meetings.



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!



Top tip

Valuing children's thoughts and ideas

Support children's learning by listening to their thoughts and ideas. When they share something, whether through words, play, expressions or actions, pause to acknowledge it and respond with genuine interest. Comments such as, "That's an interesting idea," help children feel valued and this builds their confidence.

Embedding children's rights through meaningful participation

Just Be Kids Nursery celebrates and values children's voices by embedding the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into everyday practice. Leaders ensure that the commitment is meaningful with children's rights reflected in the environment, interactions and daily experiences.

From the start, children make meaningful choices. When settling in, they choose their own key person, giving them ownership of an important relationship - respecting their views and feelings.

Communication is central to ensuring every child has a voice. British Sign Language (BSL) is embedded along with other signs, e.g. Makaton, throughout with songs, stories and rhymes. It has a positive impact, especially for children later identified with communication difficulties. Happy, sad and confused symbols allow all children to express their opinions about activities, food and experiences. Children are involved in decision-making. They vote on choices, such as visits to the park, learning that decisions bring responsibilities and consequences.

In preschool, children complete a 'Being Me' booklet, beginning with a child-led mind map of what they would like to explore and learn. Educators use these to plan engaging experiences and provocations,

ensuring children's interests shape learning whilst maintaining a broad and balanced curriculum.

Educators encourage critical thinking by asking questions e.g. "Is there a safe way we can do that?" rather than simply saying, "No". This develops independence, resilience and problem-solving skills.

They promote healthy lifestyles and responsibility towards others. Children learn about healthy habits and take part in activities such as litter-picking, helping them understand how to care for their environment and contribute positively.

Through Article 8 of the UNCRC, children celebrate what makes them unique. They explore personal characteristics, family heritage, nationality and cultural identity, sharing what makes them proud. These experiences help children respect and celebrate difference.

Just Be Kids Nursery has created a culture where children's voices genuinely influence decisions, individuality is celebrated, and children develop the confidence to become respectful, responsible and active members of their community.

You will need:

- Large sheet of paper or individual pieces
- Pictures of indoor and outdoor places
- Crayons, pencils or markers.

My favourite places

Show pictures of familiar environments e.g. homes, classrooms, libraries, parks, beaches, playgrounds and gardens. Talk about where the children enjoy visiting. Encourage children to identify their favourite place and discuss it. Use open-ended questions e.g. "What do you like to do there?", "Who do you go with?" and "Why is it your favourite place?" to support language development and critical thinking.

Invite children to draw or paint their favourite places. As they create, engage them in conversation about their pictures, encouraging them to describe the activities, experiences and feelings associated with these places. Record children's comments alongside their pictures.

To conclude, gather the children together to share their work with the group. Develop speaking and listening skills through encouraging listening and turn-taking while building vocabulary related to indoor and outdoor environments. Celebrate all forms of participation, ensuring every child feels included and valued.

Children's council

Place children at the centre of decision-making, empowering them to think, question, contribute and lead.

Invite children to become part of a council, where they are given responsibility for making decisions that matter to them e.g. selecting new resources, improving the outdoor environment, planning a visit or shaping an aspect of daily provision.

Introduce the project's purpose and encourage children to share ideas, opinions and questions. Create opportunities for genuine discussion and show that their contributions will influence outcomes.

Support thinking through open-ended questions: What would make this better? Is there anything missing? What ideas do you have?

Depending on the project focus, children may draw plans, carry out simple research, speak to family members or gather ideas from their peers. Record their comments word for word to demonstrate that their voice is valued and respected.

Bring everyone together to present and discuss proposals. Encourage children to compare ideas, explain their reasoning and thinking by asking questions.

Support democratic decision-making through voting and work together to agree a plan.



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.

Proud moments together

This home learning activity supports children's confidence, communication skills and personal development while helping them recognise the importance of spending time together and sharing moments with people around them.

Invite them to share something they are proud of or something special they enjoy doing together. Encourage children to share an activity, a newly learned skill or a moment that makes them feel happy and confident.

Families could spend some time completing an activity e.g. baking, drawing, reading, playing a game, going for a walk or helping with a task. Children can talk about what they have done and explain why they are proud.

To celebrate their achievements, they could: share a short video or photo of their child taking part in the activity, draw a picture, make a collage or create something that represents their special moment.

Once upon a sound

Invite children to explore a selection of instruments (shakers, drums, bells, chime bars, rainmakers, claves, tambourines etc.) and the sounds they can make. Explain that you're going to tell a story together but instead of using only words, you'll be using sounds too. Begin slowly, leaving plenty of pauses for children to listen, respond and contribute.

Story starter:

"Once there was a little fox walking gently through a magical forest..." - children can tap or shake their instruments softly to represent gentle footsteps.

Continue the story, inviting children to create the sound effects:

- The leaves rustled in the breeze...
- Raindrops began to fall...
- Twigs snapped under her feet...
- A tiny bird sang from a tall tree...
- The wind became stronger...
- The fox found a sparkling waterfall...
- At sunset, all the animals played music before quietly falling asleep.

Pause frequently to allow children to add their own sounds or ideas. If they begin playing with something unexpected, consider weaving it into the story, e.g. "Suddenly a friendly rabbit jumped out to say hello."

Dancing out loud

Gather the children and put some instrumental music, e.g. Saint-Saens' 'Carnival of the Animals,' Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons', or a Latin American/African percussion track.

Invite the children to close their eyes and listen. Ask what images they see as they listen. There's no wrong answer! Value their imagination, creativity and individuality.

Invite them to move to the music in whatever way it makes them feel. You might need to model this, so be prepared to move to the music yourself. After a minute or two, pause the music and ask, "What did your body tell us?" Some children will answer in words, others will simply repeat the movement. Both responses are valid and demonstrate children making a connection between internal feeling and an outward expression; an important step in developing emotional literacy.

For children with limited spoken language, this is an opportunity to communicate fluently and be understood without translation.



Top tip

Child's voice

Use a staff meeting to agree an understanding of the term 'child's voice' to ensure a consistent approach to amplifying children's voices across the setting. Share good practice ideas of how this is done, thinking about how methods can be adapted for all age ranges and individual needs.

Helping you create safe places to learn and grow

HR, Health & Safety, and compliance support designed for early years providers.

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- Shield from cyber threats**
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*vs national average

**Citation client survey, 2024

Scan the QR code





Ask the experts...

Rick Gardner, Managing Director of CPOMS, has over 20 years' experience in EdTech. Having worked with leading organisations such as RM, Advanced Learning, Impero and Iris, he specialises in cross-platform integrations that support decisions informed by data in education.



Rick Gardner

Q What is CPOMS StudentSafe™, and how does it support nursery settings with safeguarding?

CPOMS StudentSafe gives nursery owners, managers, practitioners and safeguarding leads a single, secure platform to record, track and manage any concern about a child's welfare. The solution has been utilised to support safeguarding in education for the last 15 years, with 70% of English schools using the platform today. More recently, StudentSafe has been adopted by 700 nursery settings, including 500 just in the last 12 months, helping them to keep pace with the evolving challenges of safeguarding in early years.

Rather than recording concerns across unsecured spreadsheets or handwritten notes, every entry is logged digitally, forming a clear timeline for each child so that important details are less likely to be missed and concerns can be followed through consistently.



Q How can the effective use of technology help to reinforce an organisation's safeguarding culture?

Technology on its own won't build a safeguarding culture; it supports the culture that leaders create around it. When used well it gives every member of staff, however junior or new to the role, a simple and consistent way to document a concern. This matters especially in nurseries where teams are often small, staff move between rooms and shifts, and concerns need to reach the manager quickly, rather than get lost at handover.

Q How can settings balance confidentiality with effective staff communication?

The two don't have to pull against each other if the right system is in place. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone, but confidential information needs to reach the authorised staff securely, not get discussed at pick-up or left on a note in the staffroom. This is particularly important in nurseries, where staff, parents and often extended family are in and out of the building every day.

In StudentSafe, any authorised member of staff can log what they've noticed even from a mobile device, while the information is fresh in mind, but role-based permissions are designed so that only the designated safeguarding leaders can see the full picture.

Q How can safeguarding leads and nursery owners use data to identify patterns, monitor risks and improve practice?

A single incident can look minor or even be overlooked in isolation, but these individual concerns may tell a different story when viewed as a complete chronology. Good reporting brings those patterns into view, so safeguarding leaders can see a chain of events and identify developing risks early, rather than reacting after serious incidents occur.

For owners running more than one setting, safeguarding data can provide visibility and insights across the whole group, highlighting recurring concerns or potential training gaps. That kind of clear audit trail supports the standard of record-keeping that all inspectors will expect when assessing safeguarding practices.

Q Where should a nursery start when improving its safeguarding recording and management?

Take an honest look at how a concern currently travels through your setting: who writes it down, where does that note end up and how quickly does it reach the manager or safeguarding lead? If the answer involves a diary, a spreadsheet or "I'd need to check", that's the gap worth closing first and it's exactly where a system like StudentSafe can help.

See how CPOMS can strengthen safeguarding in your setting by visiting www.cpoms.co.uk or scanning the QR code below:



Rick joined our panel of safeguarding experts at NDNA's conference in June 2026



The Big Bang

– our expanded early education universe

Following the recent elections, new governments in Scotland and Wales have plans to expand their funded offers. A year on from the big expansion in England, Nursery News examines what's gone well, what needs to be improved and what lessons need to be learned for other nations.

From a standing start at the Spring Budget in 2023, providers in England are now delivering up to 30 hours of funded childcare for children in working families from the term after they reach nine months old. This has resulted in 35,000 extra places since last year, with 92% of that growth delivered by PVI providers.



We have lift off!

The policy has benefited families in England, helping more parents to work or increase their hours. DfE figures show that 45% of parents with a one-year-old use formal childcare, while 74% of parents with a two-year-old say they have greater flexibility at work. Coram's childcare report also found that full-time childcare costs have fallen by 39%, despite rising fees in Scotland and Wales.

Our survey found that 79% of respondents said the funding rate for under-twos covered their costs. However, this was cancelled out by the relatively lower rates for older age groups. Despite ongoing challenges, strong demand, improved financial stability (as found by Christie & Co) and the sector's place in the foundational economy continues to attract investor interest.

It's not rocket science...

Funding rates for three and four-year-olds still fail to cover costs for 87% of providers, with the shortfall increasing year on year. Two-thirds are unable to generate a surplus to reinvest in staff training and resources, making it harder to improve quality. With government-funded places now accounting for around 80% of childcare provision, funding rates are increasingly critical, especially in deprived areas where parents purchase few additional hours.

The Government recognised workforce pressures and introduced recruitment campaigns, free training and financial incentives. However, action came too slowly for many providers, and the benefits are yet to be fully felt. Increasing funding rates remains the most effective way to attract and retain staff.

Houston, we have a problem!

Regular changes to language and guidance caused confusion and harmed relations between parents, PVI providers and councils. First it was 'free', then the F word was dropped to reflect the reality of the policy, before making a comeback after an Ombudsman case.

Providers faced a postcode lottery of requirements. From differing agreements lengths, to different payment methods, late notice on rate changes and new requirements like Havering quadrupling insurance requirements overnight to £20m.

Government communications to parents about funded places was at times appalling. Both former Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson and former PM Keir Starmer advised against "rip-off nurseries" and claimed to be fixing the issue for parents.

To infinity and beyond!

Scotland: Currently all three and four-year-olds are entitled to 1140 hours per year (around 30 hours per week term time) with SNP plans in motion to eventually offer year-round childcare to all children from nine-month-old babies to twelve-year-old schoolchildren.

Wales: The new Plaid Cymru-led government is continuing with their plans to support the two-year-old expansion, with all councils on track to deliver 12.5 hours per week by March 2027. This is their first step on the road to universal childcare for children from 9 months to 4 years old.



Ground Control to Major Tom – lessons we are taking to the Scottish and Welsh Governments

Do:

- ✓ Consult with providers before embarking on any expansion plans
- ✓ Fully cost out any plans and build in inflationary rises
- ✓ Allow lead-in time to enable the sector to recruit sufficient staff
- ✓ Be honest and open about what is and isn't funded
- ✓ Support councils to fund cross-boundary children.

Don't:

- ✗ Rush – sustainable change takes time, as Minister Siobhian Brown recognised during the recess
- ✗ Pitch parents against so called "rip-off nurseries"
- ✗ Let local authorities interpret the guidance against the spirit of the policy.

NDNA will continue to support members and lobby to shape policy over the coming months and years to ensure nurseries have a sustainable future.

Supporting you with new-look inspections

Over the last year, the way you are being inspected across England, Scotland and Wales has changed. Here's what NDNA is doing to support you with these changes and give you confidence when your time comes.

Our new inspection consultancy for England gets a thumbs up

We launched our new service to support you with the new inspections - *Nursery inspection consultancy: From compliance to confidence*. Our experts visit your nursery and support you to demonstrate the quality of your practice in a confident way so you are prepared.

Here's what *Little Rainbow Stratford, London* said about the service:



"Paula was truly exceptional during the training session. Her welcoming and relaxed demeanour immediately made the staff feel at ease, creating an environment conducive to learning. She maintained a high level of professionalism while also being approachable, making it easy for us to discuss any questions or uncertainties we had."

"What stood out was Paula's calm and collected approach, which was both thorough and insightful. It was clear she had taken the time to familiarise herself with our setting before her visit, as her feedback and suggestions were tailored specifically to our needs. She delivered her insights in a way that was constructive and encouraging, allowing us to engage without feeling intimidated. Overall, her positive approach left a lasting impact, and we truly appreciated the experience."

Find out more: ndna.org.uk/InspectionConsultancy

New Joint Inspection Framework

From September 2026, *Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)* will roll out an updated joint inspection framework for the non-maintained sector.

Engaging with the *Early Childhood, Play, Learning and Care (ECPLC)* guidance documents will support settings to develop a clear, child-centred approach to high-quality practice. It can help settings to embed core principles in order to demonstrate quality provision and positive outcomes for children.

If you would like additional support with an upcoming inspection, or one that has just taken place, as an NDNA Cymru member, you can access face-to-face, email, phone call or video call support.

Contact a member of the team:

Regional Development Manager, Sarah Warburton
Sarah.Warburton@ndna.org.uk

Early Years Education Officer, Hayley Grayson
Hayley.Grayson@ndna.org.uk



QIF resources for Scotland

Our *Quality Improvement Framework (QIF)* resources will help support your understanding of the new framework and save you time. It has been updated to reflect the latest changes and includes:

- **Overview of QIF**
- **Challenge Questions Cards** - for all staff to use to contribute to ongoing improvement
- **Self-evaluation document** - to fill in to summarise the evidence from your challenge questions cards
- **The linking document** - to help you situate the QIF in the context of guidance and documents that you use on a day-to-day basis.

Order yours here: ndna.org.uk/QIF

New well-being course

Included in your membership, our *Supporting Well-being in the Early Years Workforce* course helps you support your most valuable asset, while demonstrating a focus on well-being to inspectorates across the UK.

ndna.org.uk/WorkforceWell-being



Ofsted Inspections: A Step-by-Step Guide

Download our brand new digital publication *Ofsted Inspections: A Step-By-Step guide*.

This guide will help you to prepare for inspections and reflects the revised inspection toolkit.

ndna.org.uk/OfstedGuide



Hello from Hannah

Hello, and welcome to a new term. I know many of you will be reading this while juggling the daily pressures of running high-quality childcare in an increasingly challenging environment, so I want to begin by saying thank you. Your commitment to children and families, even when the system around you feels increasingly stretched, continues to be at the heart of our work.

There have been many changes in the last few months that are going to frame how the ELC sector progresses over the next five years. The 2026/27 term begins at a significant moment for ELC in Scotland. Holyrood has a new parliamentary term, a refreshed group of MSPs, and a new Scottish Government team with manifesto commitments now needing to move from ambition into delivery.

In this policy update, I wanted to bring together the key developments we are tracking. Please keep sharing your experiences with us. Your evidence, stories and insight are what allow us to speak with credibility and urgency on behalf of the sector.

Hannah

Hannah Murison
National Operations Manager
(Scotland), NDNA Scotland



New Scottish Government



May 2026 brought us a new cohort of MSPs in Holyrood. The SNP kept power as a minority government, securing its fifth consecutive election victory in Holyrood's short history.

We have a brand new cabinet and ministers. Màiri McAllan is the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Culture and Gaelic, and Siobhian Brown is the new Minister for Children, Young People, and The Promise.

NDNA has been working hard to build relationships with MSPs interested in childcare. We have met with the Minister and have begun to share your concerns and progress our manifesto asks on your behalf.

18 councils set rate increases at or below Scottish Government's minimum requirements of 5.2%



Nine in ten nurseries say: funding doesn't cover our costs

Thank you for filling in our sustainability survey earlier this year. Our findings are grim:

- 93% make a loss on three and four-year-old places
- Average shortfall was £2 per hour per child
- 68% expected to run at a loss or break even
- As a result, 83% had to increase parental fees
- Average staffing costs rose by 12.5% but the average fee increase was 7%
- 81% care for children with additional support needs but only 12% receive any financial help.

NDNA shared these findings with the Scottish Government and is urging them to look at a fairer system in which funding truly follows the child.



100 Days for 100 Families

NDNA Scotland launched 100 Days for 100 Families.

We want to achieve local action to save 100 families in the Central Belt from being forced out of their choice of childcare. We also want action from the Scottish Government within their first 100 days to ensure parental choice is protected across Scotland. We are urging members to get involved with the campaign using

#100Days100Families on social media, and signing our petition: www.rebrand.ly/NDNAScotPetition

Expansion diaries

In their manifesto, the SNP were clear about their ambition for a huge, generational, expansion of childcare from 9 months up to 12 years. So far here is what we know:

- Consultation with the sector is a very high priority for Scottish Government, as well as with families and children
- This is a long term plan, Ministers have committed to progressing expansion within the current parliamentary term (five years), recognising the scale and complexity involved
- Detailed design, delivery models and timelines are not yet confirmed.

NDNA's current role is to make sure the experience of private, voluntary and independent nurseries is truly heard as these plans develop. www.rebrand.ly/NDNAMSPVideo



Councils fall short on rates

An NDNA Scotland investigation into the rates paid by councils in Scotland has revealed that the majority are failing to adequately cover the increase in costs for partner providers in their funding rate for the 2026-27 period. This leaves both parents and providers to cover the difference and pay for the increase in costs themselves. At the same time, two areas still don't even know the rate they should have been paid from April at all.

Read the full investigation here: www.ndna.org.uk/ScotCouncilRates



Helo gan Sarah

Mae llawer yn parhau i ddigwydd ar draws y sector, gyda chyhoeddiad o'r Safonau Gofynnol Cenedlaethol diwygiedig, diweddaru Fframwaith Archwilio ar y Cyd a chynllun uchelgeisiol Llywodraeth Cymru i ehangu gofal plant.

Wrth groesawu mwy o fuddsoddi mewn gofal plant, rhaid i unrhyw ehangu cael ei gefnogi gan gyllid cynaliadwy. Byddwn yn parhau i ymgysgu dros y blaenoriaethau yn ein manifest; system ariannu sy'n adlewyrchu cost wirioneddol darparu sy'n unol â chost chwyddiant, cynnydd mewn cyflogau statudol a chyfartaledd enillion.

Diolch i chi am rannu eich profiadau gyda ni – mae eich adborth yn hanfodol er mwyn i ni sicrhau ein bod yn cynrychioli'r sector yn effeithiol.

Sarah

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

Hello from Sarah

There continues to be lots happening across the sector, with the publication of the revised National Minimum Standards, the updated Joint Inspection Framework and the Welsh Government's expansion ambitions.

While we welcome greater investment in childcare, any expansion must be supported by sustainable funding. We'll continue to champion the priorities in our manifesto: a funding system that reflects the true cost of delivery and keeps pace with inflation, statutory wage increases and average earnings.

Thank you for sharing your experiences with us – your feedback is vital to represent the sector effectively.

Sarah

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



Safonau Gofynnol Cenedlaethol (SGC) Diwygiedig

Daeth y SGC ar gyfer gofal plant a reoleiddir i rym ym Mehefin 2026.

Mae adran newydd Darpariaeth o Ansawdd Uchel wedi selio ar Oedolion sy'n Galluogi Dysgu, Amgylcheddau Effeithiol a Phrofiadau sy'n Ennyn Diddordeb, gan annog lleoliadau i edrych tu hwnt i gydymffurfio a chanolbwyntio yn hytrach ar adlewyrchu a gwella parhaus. Mae'n tanlinellu pwysigrwydd perthnasau cryf, amgylcheddau cynhwysol a phrofiadau chwarae ystyrlon er mwyn galluogi plant i ddatblygu hyder, gwydnwch a theimlad o berthyn.

Mae strwythur y SGC wedi cael ei adnewyddu. Mae pob adran yn cychwyn gyda Llais y Plentyn a Deiliant Llesiant perthnasol, gan annog ymarferwyr i ystyried effaith eu hymarfer ar brofiadau dyddiol plant a bywyd teuluol. Mae nifer o Safonau hefyd wedi cael eu cryfhau;

- **Safon 7: Cyfleoedd i chwarae a dysgu**, cysoni ag egwyddorion Chwarae, Dysgu a Gofal a'r Cwricwlwm i Gymru, gan gynnwys ffocws cryfach ar arsylwi, sylwi, dadansoddi ac ymateb i chwarae a dysgu plant
- **Safon 11: Meddyginiaeth** mwy o eglurder ar weinyddu, storio a chofnodi meddyginiaeth, cymhwysedd staff a chefnogi plant sy'n rhoi meddyginiaeth i'w hunain; canllaw newydd ar parasetamol hylifol (Atodiad CH)
- **Safon 13: Person Addas (Holl staff)** Mae safonau newydd 13.4 (GD) a 13.5 (GD) yn darparu mwy o eglurder ar drefniadau staffio. Ni fydd newid mewn cymarebau staff, ond maent bellach yn berthnasol i'r lleoliad cyfan, gan roi mwy o hyblygrwydd i ddarparwyr i drefnu staff yn ôl anghenion y plant. Rhaid asesu risg ar benderfyniadau ynglŷn â staffio fel rhan o'r cynllun staffio cyflawn
- Mae'r safonau yma hefyd yn cydnabod rôl staff atodol uwchlaw'r cymarebau staffio.
- **Safon 20: Diogelu** er mwyn sicrhau bod staff yn gallu gweithredu canllawiau diogelu, rhaid iddynt ddeall a chydymffurfio gyda chanllaw Llywodraeth Cymru: Gweithio Gyda'n Gilydd i ddiogelu pobl a Gweithdrefnau Diogelu Cymru
- **Safon 24: Diogelwch** disgwyliadau asesiadau risg tân manwl: trefniadau dianc rhag tân mwy eglur, ysmegu a fepio, dim canhwylau ar y safle, oni bai am ganhwylau pen-blwydd bychan.

Mae'r SGC diwygiedig yn darparu fframwaith ar gyfer darparu gofal o ansawdd uchel sy'n fyfyrion ac sy'n canolbwyntio ar y plentyn, gan sicrhau bod llais, llesiant a phrofiadau plant yn ganolog i ymarfer.

Sicrhewch eich bod yn defnyddio'r SGC diwygiedig a'ch bod yn adolygu polisiau, gweithdrefnau a phrosesau hunanwerthuso i adlewyrchu'r gofynion newydd a'r egwyddorion allweddol.

Os oes angen cymorth arnoch, cysylltwch â ni: wales@ndna.org.uk

Gofal Plant Cyffredinol wedi'i ariannu gan y Llywodraeth

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru wedi cyhoeddi ei uchelgais i ddatblygu cynnig gofal plant cyffredinol i blant o 9 mis oed hyd at 4 blwydd oed erbyn diwedd tymor y Senedd yma.

Bydd y cynnod cyntaf yn canolbwyntio ar gwblhau darpariaeth ar gyfer plant dwy flwydd oed. Yna, cynyddir y gefnogaeth i 20 awr wedi ei ariannu, pob wythnos am 48 wythnos, gan hefyd ymestyn y cynnig cyffredinol i blant tair a phedair oed. Wedyn bydd plant o 9 mis oed yn cael eu cynnwys.

Bydd cynnydd llwyddiannus yn golygu gwaith i fireinio costau a chynlluniau gweithredu, gan gynnwys capasiti'r gweithlu, hyfforddiant, cefnogaeth i blant ag anghenion ychwanegol a sicrhau bod gan ddarparwyr y cyfleusterau a'r adnoddau sydd ei angen arnynt i gynnig llefydd ychwanegol

Tra bydd y manylion yn cael eu datblygu, mae'r cyhoeddiad yn rhoi arwydd clir o'r bwriad i sicrhau cynnig gofal plant mwy syml a chysion i deuluoedd. Bydd NDNA Cymru yn parhau i weithio'n agos gyda Llywodraeth Cymru fel mae'r cynnig yn cael ei ddatblygu. Byddwn yn sicrhau bod eich lleisiau chi, eich profiadau a'ch pryderon yn cael eu hadlewyrchu yn y trafodaethau.



Updated National Minimum Standards (NMS)

The revised NMS for regulated childcare in Wales came into effect in June 2026.

There is a new High Quality Provision section, built around Enabling Adults, Effective Environments and Engaging Experiences, encouraging settings to look beyond compliance and focus on continuous reflection and improvement. It highlights the importance of strong relationships, inclusive environments and meaningful play experiences in helping children develop confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging.

The structure has been refreshed. Each standard begins with the Child's Voice and a related Well-being Outcome, encouraging practitioners to consider the impact their practice has on children's daily experiences and family life. Several standards have also been strengthened:

- **Standard 7: Opportunities for play and learning** aligned with the Early Childhood Play, Learning and Care principles and Curriculum for Wales, including a stronger focus on observing, noticing, analysing and responding to children's play and learning
- **Standard 11: Medication** greater clarity on administration, storage and recording of medication, staff competence and supporting children who self-administer medication; new guidance (Annex D) on liquid paracetamol
- **Standard 13: Suitable person (All staff)** new standards 13.4 (DC) and 13.5 (DC) provide greater clarity around the deployment of staff. Qualification ratios remain unchanged, but are now applied across the setting, giving providers greater flexibility to deploy staff according to children's needs. Staffing decisions must be carefully risk assessed as part of a comprehensive staffing plan
- The standards also recognise the role of additional staff above ratios
- **Standard 20: Safeguarding** to ensure staff can implement safeguarding procedures, they must understand and adhere to the Welsh Government's Working together to safeguard people guidance and the Wales Safeguarding Procedures
- **Standard 24: Safety** enhanced fire risk assessment expectations: clearer escape arrangements; smoking and vaping; no candles on the premises, other than small birthday cake candles.

It provides a framework for delivering high-quality, reflective and child-centred care, with children's voices, well-being and experiences at the heart of practice.

Ensure you are using the updated NMS and review policies, procedures and self-evaluation processes which reflect the new requirements and key principles.

If you need any support, please get in touch with us at wales@ndna.org.uk



Universal Government Funded Childcare

The Welsh Government has announced its ambition to develop a universal childcare offering for children aged 9 months to 4 years by the end of this Senedd term.

The first phase will focus on completing the rollout of funded two before increasing support to 20 funded hours a week for 48 weeks and extending a universal offer to three and four-year-olds before including children from 9 months.

Successful expansion requires work to refine costs and delivery plans, including workforce capacity, training, support for children with additional learning needs and ensuring providers have the facilities and resources needed to deliver additional places.

While delivery details are still being developed, the announcement signals a clear direction of travel towards a simpler, more consistent childcare offer for families. NDNA Cymru will continue to engage with Welsh Government as proposals develop. We will ensure your voices, experiences and concerns are reflected in discussions.

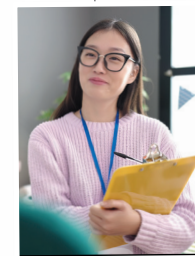
Fframwaith Archwilio ar y Cyd

O fis Medi 2026, bydd lleoliadau a ariennir yn cael eu harchwilio o dan Fframwaith Archwilio ar y Cyd AGC ac Estyn. Bydd yn cyflwyno dull mwy clir a mwy ffocws, gydag adroddiadau byrrach a mwy hygrych sy'n ystyried yr hyn sy'n bwysig i blant, rhieni ac ymarferwyr. Bydd tri thema yn lle chwech:

- **Llesiant a Gofal:** pa mor ddiogel, hapus, mae plant yn teimlo, os ydynt yn cael eu cefnogi a'u cynnwys, ac os yw ymarferwyr yn cyfarfod a'u hanghenion unigol
- **Addysgu, Dysgu, Chwarae a Datblygu:** ystyried ansawdd profiadau dysgu'r plant, cyfleoedd chwarae, cynnydd ac annibyniaeth; effeithiolrwydd arsylwi ac asesu
- **Arweinyddiaeth a Rheolaeth:** hunan-arfarnu, rheoli staff, partneriaethau a threfniadau diogelu.

Bydd y broses archwilio ei hun yn teimlo'n gyfarwydd. Bydd arolygwyr yn arsylwi ar ymarfer, siarad gyda staff a chanolbwyntio ar brofiadau'r plant. Bydd y dull adrodd newydd yn rhoi esboniad mwy eglur o'r effaith mae

ymarfer yn ei gael ar chwarae, dysgu, datblygiad a llesiant plant.



Joint Inspection Framework

From September, funded settings will be inspected under an updated Joint Inspection Framework.

It introduces a clearer, focused approach, delivering shorter, more accessible reports looking at what matters most for children, parents and practitioners. There will be three themes instead of six:

- **Well-being and Care:** how safe, happy, included and supported children feel, and how well practitioners meet their individual needs
- **Teaching, Learning, Play and Development:** considering the quality of children's learning experiences, play opportunities, progress and independence; effectiveness of observation and assessment
- **Leadership and Management:** self-evaluation, staff management, partnerships and safeguarding arrangements.

The inspection process will feel familiar. Inspectors will observe practice, talk to staff and focus on children's experiences. The new approach will provide a clearer explanation of the impact that practice has on children's play, learning, development and well-being.



New Ministers (again)



With the new term comes new ministers at the Department for Education who were appointed at the end of July.



Manchester Central MP Lucy Powell now heads up the DfE as Secretary of State for Education, with Rochdale MP Paul Waugh named as the new Early Education minister. NDNA's CEO Tim McLachlan has already met with him to begin discussing your challenges and issues.

Here's what's in their inboxes:

- **Business rates** – NDNA won't let them forget our aim of scrapping business rates altogether for PVI nurseries which would put them on an equal footing with school-based nurseries
- **CCTV requirements** – we are still awaiting the Government response to their consultation and how this will impact on nurseries across the country
- **Safer sleeping** – we have asked for their guidance on coracles to be clarified for outdoor settings – also for financial support and relaxation of floor space requirements for settings to be able to comply
- **Ofsted gradings** – it's important they are aware of the lower grades that schools are receiving compared with PVI nurseries and that they bear this in mind when planning to invest further in the sector. Schools with early years provision were also more than twice as likely to receive a "needs attention" grading, according to our own analysis
- **CMA investigation** – although the Competition and Markets Authority is into its second phase of their investigation, we need Government to continue to invest in early education places for all types of providers and keep Government communications accurate and fair.
- **Workforce** – continue with their strategy to encourage more talent into the sector and to enable nurseries to keep those staff members.

Children & Young People Now Awards 2026

Finalist

Could you be a Maths Champion?

NDNA's Maths Champions programme supports early years practitioners to build confidence in teaching maths through everyday play, routines and interactions. Participants receive expert-led training, practical resources and ongoing support to help children develop strong early maths skills.



Following its success, the programme has been shortlisted for two 2026 Children & Young People Now Awards: The Learning Award and The Workforce Development Award.

Following strong demand, places for July, September and October are fully booked. Early years practitioners can now apply for funded places available on the November cohort.

Apply or find out more about becoming a Maths Champion today. www.ndna.org.uk/MathsChampions

Are schools ready for children?

Before schools broke up for their summer holidays, NDNA published our survey findings which revealed that only 11% of nurseries said that all their local schools engaged well with them, supporting their children's transitions. The biggest group of respondents – 42% – reported good engagement with only some schools, or even none at all.

Our survey also highlighted that more than 95% of children leaving nursery have the practical and developmental skills they need to move into formal schooling – including 98% who are fully toilet trained.

NDNA's CEO Tim McLachlan told the press: "It is clear from our research that the vast majority of children who attend nursery leave with the skills they need for school and beyond. We need to ensure that children don't regress when they start school. We can all support this by making sure a good transition process is in place so that all children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have access to high quality early education.

"With a lot more work needed from schools to ensure these effective transitions this has to be a focus of the DfE's new early years partnerships project. Clearly something is happening between when children leave formal early education, like nurseries, and when teachers report issues with the life skills children have in school."

www.ndna.org.uk/SchoolEngagement



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