



WELCOME

Thank you to everyone who joined our leadership briefing — it was fantastic to have so many of you on the call. Our new early intervention officers have now begun visiting settings and are already enjoying meeting SENCOs and spending time with the children.

Please ensure your whole team is signed up to receive the newsletter directly; you can use the link at the bottom of the page. We also encourage you to continue sharing our social media posts with parents to help promote key skills ahead of starting Reception

Best wishes
Sarah

Get in touch with the team on early.years@halton.gov.uk

UPDATES

Reminder: Charging Policies and Website Information

All providers are reminded to ensure that:

- Charging policies are fully up to date, clearly setting out any optional or additional charges.
- Website information is current and accurate, including details of charges and how they relate to the funded entitlements.
- Any changes to fees, optional extras, or consumables are updated promptly so parents receive consistent, transparent information

Keeping this information accurate supports compliance and helps families understand exactly what is included within the funded hours.

Government Announces Major New SEND Training Initiative

In January 2026, the UK government unveiled a major national initiative to strengthen Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) training across all education sectors. The programme includes a new Early Years CPD offer, providing free and accessible training for early years practitioners, with a strong focus on inclusive practice, child development, and practical strategies for supporting children with SEND. [Read more here](#)

SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE



Handling Difficult Conversations

Talking to other adults about a child's safety or welfare can feel challenging. The NSPCC offers clear advice to help make these conversations easier, along with guidance on what to do if talking alone isn't enough.

[Handling difficult conversations with adults](#)
[| NSPCC](#)

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) for Childminders

Best Practice Network now offers a dedicated EYITT route designed specifically for childminders. This pathway recognises the crucial role childminders play in early development and supports their ongoing professional growth within the sector. Through this programme, childminders can complete Early Years Initial Teacher Training and achieve Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS), strengthening their skills and enhancing the quality of provision for young children. Find out more by [clicking here](#)

APPRENTICESHIPS

We currently have a number of local Halton residents who are very keen to start their careers in the early years. They will have recently completed an Early Bootcamp Training course that covers key aspects of the role as an early years practitioner and will have gained experience on a placement to ensure they understand the role and career they are embarking on. Including:

- Level 3 Award in Pediatric First Aid (Ofsted/EYFS requirement)
- Level 3 Award in Learning Beyond the Classroom
- Level 2 Award in Safeguarding and Protecting Children and Young People

They have a DBS and are ready to get going! This Apprentice week, could you consider taking on an apprentice? If so, there is funding available to support you to do so. This is available through Liverpool City Regions Apprenticeship Levy Funding

Please contact: Kate.morris@liverpoolcity-ca.gov.uk for more information

For more information about what Levy Funding is visit <https://lcrbemore.co.uk/levy-pledge/>

DID YOU KNOW..?

Webinar Spotlight: “A Family is Made in the Heart” by Louise Bomber

We're pleased to highlight “A Family is Made in the Heart”, a supportive and insightful webinar created by renowned attachment specialist Louise Bomber. Designed specifically for Early Years practitioners—including those working in nursery settings, preschool, and reception classes—this webinar explores how to best nurture, reassure and communicate with children who are living away from their birth families. Please contact the Early Years team to receive the link to access this webinar.

Ofsted: Considering Local Area Context

Under the new Ofsted Inspection Framework for Early Years, Ofsted sets out that inspectors will consider data relating to the context of the local area, including deprivation levels, take-up of the early years pupil premium, obesity rates etc to inform their discussions with leaders during the planning call. Information like this about a local area can be accessed via the link below.

[Ofsted: explore an area - GOV.UK](https://gov.uk/ofsted/explore-an-area)

NATIONAL YEAR OF READING 2026



Storytelling for Early Years – Free Pre-Recorded Videos and Virtual Workshops

Two exciting pre-recorded Early Years videos are now available, along with three interactive virtual workshops hosted by expert storytellers for UK schools and home educators.

For Early Years, enjoy “Rhyme, Rhythm and Wiggles” – engaging singalong and storytime sessions led by poet Simon Mole and musician Gecko. These fun, high-energy videos are perfect for supporting early language, creativity and a love of stories.



February Favourites

This week we emailed you about our upcoming February Favourites social media campaign. Thank you to everyone who has already shared the books that are capturing your children's imaginations – we can't wait to highlight some beloved classics alongside a few new hidden gems! If you haven't sent in your book recommendation yet, please do so as soon as possible. We'd love to include your favourites in our February celebrations.

SHARE WITH PARENTS

PEEP Language Builders – Drop-In Sessions

Families are invited to join PEEP Language Builders at the Family Hub—fun, friendly sessions designed to boost children's communication, language and literacy skills. These drop-in sessions include songs and stories, sensory play and craft activities. Perfect for children aged 2 years and over, this universal group offers an engaging environment where families can learn together and have fun.



Enjoy songs, stories, sensory play and craft activities to help boost your child's Communication, Language and Literacy skills

2 years + universal group/drop in and have fun

CHILDMINDERS

Childminder Briefing – Find Out More about Supervised Toothbrushing

Come along to our Childminder Briefing on **Tuesday 27th January, 7:00–8:00pm** (ONLINE) to find out about the supervised toothbrushing programme and to help you decide if it meets your setting's needs.

Supervised Toothbrushing Training for Childminders

To take part in the supervised toothbrushing programme and access the supporting resources, childminders are invited to attend our training session on:

 **Monday 3rd February**

 **6:30–8:30pm**

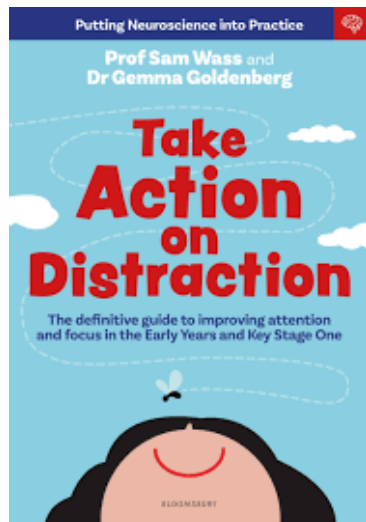
 **Runcorn Town Hall**

Book using the link <https://halton.me/halton-healthy-early-years-status/>

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Each month, we'll be sharing a book that we hope you'll find inspiring and useful in your early years practice. Our aim is to choose titles that spark meaningful discussion within your team, offer practical strategies you can apply in your setting, or simply give you a moment to pause and reflect on your own practice.

We hope you enjoy exploring these monthly recommendations and find them valuable in supporting the children and families you work with.



Take Action on Distraction is an inspiring and practical guide for anyone working with children in early years and primary settings. It brings together clear insights from research with easy-to-use classroom strategies to help improve children's focus and concentration. With reflective questions to spark discussion among children and colleagues, the book supports the creation of calmer, happier and more effective learning environments where all children can thrive.

Subscribe

If this newsletter has been shared with you via your setting/school and you would like to receive a copy directly to your own inbox please click on the subscribe button and complete the relevant information.



Take a look at the FREE information and resources on Halton's Communication Hub

Search



Talk Halton



Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QF