



WELCOME

It's a busy term ahead, with some important Early Years events coming up that we don't want you to miss out on!

As we prepare for transitions to school, please ensure that any children you would like to discuss are highlighted and shared with Mike.Stapleton-Chambers@halton.gov.uk ahead of the Transition Event on 6th May.

Calling all Reception teachers — please join us for our new Reception Networks, designed to support professional dialogue around the EYFSP assessment. Invitations have already been sent, and we would love to see as many schools represented as possible.

Please also make sure our Summer Term Cluster on 9th June is in your diary. We are delighted that Andy Burt from Early Excellence will be joining us to explore engaging boys and creating learning environments that are right for boys.

As always, please follow us on social media and share our home learning posts with parents and carers. This month's focus is "*Starting the Conversation*", supporting families around toilet training before school. If you would like any advice or support from the team on this, please do get in touch early.years@halton.gov.uk 😊

Best wishes
Sarah

UPDATES

Updated Health Protection Guidance

The UK Health Security Agency has updated its guidance for health protection in children and young people's settings, including education. This includes:

[A to Z of infectious diseases in children and young people's settings - GOV.UK](#)

[Public health exclusion periods in children and young people's settings - GOV.UK](#)

These resources, along with the full guidance document can be found here [Health protection in children and young people's settings, including education - GOV.UK](#)

Supporting Back Health in Early Years Settings

Jolly Back offers [free downloadable resource sheets](#) with practical tips on back health and manual handling for early years practitioners. Key advice includes reducing stooping and awkward postures through well-organised learning environments, ensuring access to adult-height desks and chairs, completing DSE risk assessments where required, and keeping manual handling training up to date, including lifting and carrying children

Could NELI make a difference in Primary Schools

If you have children in Reception who are struggling with speech and language, there's a free programme that could make a real difference.

The Nuffield Early Learning Intervention (NELI) runs over 20 weeks, using targeted small group and individual sessions to build children's vocabulary, listening and storytelling skills. The results are impressive; independent evaluation has shown, on average, children make four months' additional progress in oral language skills. For pupils eligible for free school meals, that figure rises to seven months.

The good news is that funding has been confirmed until the 2028/29 academic year (subject to further spending rounds), giving you the confidence to plan ahead and embed NELI into your longer-term school improvement plans.

For further information and how to register visit <https://www.teachneli.org/>

FEYE FUNDING

The Provider Portal will be open from **5–22 May** to allow providers to input their Summer Early Years Census and Headcounts. The Early Years Census and Headcount Day is **21st May**.

Please note: Census details must be completed **BEFORE** submitting your headcount. If the census is not completed first, an error message will occur.

(Schools and academies are not required to submit the Early Years Census, as this information is collected through the School Census.)

SAFEGUARDING UPDATES



Safer Sleep

The Department for Education (DfE), in collaboration with The Lullaby Trust, has published an article outlining how early years settings can provide babies and children with a safer sleep environment. Settings are encouraged to read the article for practical guidance.

The DfE has also published responses to [frequently asked questions](#) to support early years providers in preparing for the planned updates to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework relating to safer sleep, which are expected to come into effect from September 2026.

TRAINING

Due to popular demand, we have added two online evening workshops: **SEND in the Early Years** and **Laying the Foundations for Phonics**.

To book onto either or both of these courses, please use the booking button below.



BOOK TRAINING

SEND

SENIF Funding

As part of our ongoing work to refine processes and strengthen support for children with SEND, settings are now asked to submit a request for advice and support, rather than requesting a separate SENIF funding visit.

During the advice and support visit, your Early Years Intervention Officer will discuss with you whether SENIF funding is appropriate.

Please note: An application for SENIF funding cannot be made without prior discussion with your linked officer.

To request advice and support from the Early Years Team please use the following link [Early Years' Special Educational Needs inclusion Funding \(SENIF\)](#).



Have you supported early years transitions to primary school for children with SEND? Participants needed for a research study in Halton

My names Sophie Dickinson and I currently training in Educational Psychology at University of Birmingham. For my thesis, I am looking to explore the early-years, enhanced transition process for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from a private nursery to mainstream primary school in Halton.

I am looking for:

- Professionals involved in enhanced transitions to Reception in Summer 2025
- Parent/carers of children with SEND who transitioned to primary school in September 2025 and had an enhanced transition in Summer 2025, without an EHC.

This will be a **single 1-hour interview**, and an optional focus group follow up. Thank you for taking the time to read this and consider my project. Please feel free to contact myself if you have any more questions or would like the advertisement poster and participant information sheet, which holds more information: scan QR code or email me on sophie.dickinson@halton.gov.uk or SXD889@student.bham.ac.uk

HAVE YOU SUPPORTED EARLY YEARS TRANSITIONS TO PRIMARY SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN WITH SEND?

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

RESEARCH STUDY:
-SINGLE 1-HOUR INTERVIEW
-OPTIONAL FOCUS GROUP FOLLOW UP

Requirements:

- Professional experience in supporting an enhanced transition during Summer 2025
- Transition for child with SEND* but no EHCP** (at time of transition)
- Child transitioned from private nursery to mainstream primary school within Halton.

Register your interest
SXD889@STUDENT.BHAM.AC.UK
by 15th May 2026

**SEND: Special Educational Need and Disabilities **EHCP: Educational, Health, Care, Plan

DID YOU KNOW...?

DfE Phase 3 School-Based Nurseries Capital Grant

The Department for Education has announced Phase 3 of the School-Based Nurseries Capital Grant. Local Authority proposals must be submitted by **30th September 2026**. If you are interested in developing a school-based nursery and would like to apply as part of this programme, please contact early.years@halton.gov.uk to arrange an initial discussion.

Supporting a Smooth Transition into Reception

DfE guidance highlights the importance of smooth, well-planned transitions into Reception to support children's wellbeing, confidence, and readiness to learn. Key approaches include sharing information between early years settings and schools, allowing children time to familiarise themselves with new environments, and working closely with parents. Strong transition arrangements help children settle quickly and make a positive start to school. Read the guidance [here](#)

RECEPTION

Reception Network Meeting – EYFS Profile Assessment

As part of our Best Start in Life work, Reception teachers are invited to attend a Reception Network Meeting on **Thursday 21st May, 9:30–11:30am**. The session will support confidence and consistency in EYFS Profile assessment through professional dialogue and shared reflection with colleagues. Practitioners are asked to bring Writing ELG evidence, including examples of emerging, expected and borderline judgements, to support discussion. All schools are strongly encouraged to be represented.

Thank you to those who have already confirmed attendance. If you have not yet responded, please click the link [Reception Network Meeting – Fill out form](#) to confirm whether your school is able or not able to attend.

EYFS Profile Assessment – Online Support

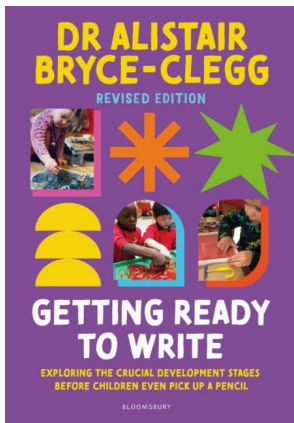
Reception practitioners: the [Help for Early Years Providers](#) website offers clear, practical support for EYFS Profile assessment, including guidance on interpreting the ELGs and making consistent end-of-year judgements.

SHARE WITH PARENTS

HENRY Programme – Places Available

The HENRY programme is a free course for parents and carers of children aged 0–5, supporting families to build strong foundations that help children feel confident, develop routines, and be ready for nursery and school. Places are available on the next 8-week course, starting **7th May**, at Kingsway Family Hub (9:30–11:30am). A crèche is available. [Eventbrite booking HENRY starting 7th May 2026](#)

BOOK OF THE MONTH



Getting Ready to Write clearly explains what children need *before* formal writing begins. Alistair Bryce-Clegg focuses on the importance of physical development, play, mark-making and purposeful experiences in building confident, motivated writers. Packed with practical ideas and grounded in early years practice, the book supports practitioners to create developmentally appropriate environments that lay strong foundations for writing success.

FURTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Early Years SENCO Level 3 – Applications Open

Early years practitioners can now apply for the **Early Years SENCO Level 3 qualification** with **Best Practice Network**. This programme supports practitioners to develop confidence and expertise in the EY SENCO role and inclusive practice.

1 Apply by 3rd May

► **Course starts in May**

[Early Years SENCO 2026](#) | [Best Practice Network](#)

RESEARCH / READING



Fact or Fiction? Myth-busting Early Childhood Writing

In this short video Jan Dubiel and Helen Battelley challenge common misconceptions about early writing and explores what effective, developmentally appropriate practice looks like in the EYFS.

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

