



WELCOME

Thank you to everyone who attended our Early years Cluster last week - it was a fantastic day, and we received some great feedback and shared ideas on supporting boys learning and creating engaging learning environments 😊

If you would like to get in touch with the team please contact us on
early.years@halton.gov.uk

Best wishes
Sarah

UPDATES

Vacancy Opportunity – Early Years Representative

We are currently looking for an Early Years representative to join the Schools Forum. This is a great opportunity to have your voice heard and contribute to important discussions that shape education locally.

For more information or to express your interest, please contact:
early.years@halton.gov.uk

Business Support Tools for Early Years Providers

A new suite of business support materials is now available on the Foundation Years webpage. These resources provide practical guidance for early years providers on areas including business planning, finance and cashflow, marketing, and HR to support effective day-to-day and strategic management.

The webpage also highlights key national guidance and the importance of understanding local provider agreements, funding rules, and consumer law to ensure compliance and high-quality provision.

In addition, ready-to-use tools—developed by a local authority and supplemented by Childcare Works—are included to help providers apply this guidance, manage finances, and promote their services confidently. Find out more [here](#)

FEYE FUNDING

Free School Meals (FSM) – Guidance Update (May 2026)

Updated non-statutory FSM guidance has been published, confirming expanded eligibility to all households on Universal Credit from September 2026 and the end of transitional protections.

Children in early years provision may be eligible if they are registered pupils at a state-funded school, attend before and after lunch, and meet FSM criteria.

It is important to ensure eligible families are aware of their entitlement, including those who will become newly eligible from September.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATES

Whenever you are around water:



In an emergency:



Water Safety Reminder

Recent hot weather has sadly been linked to a number of incidents involving young people in open water. Closer to home, we were deeply saddened by the death of a 17-year-old at Pickmere Lake. Our thoughts are with everyone affected.

These tragedies highlight the dangers of cold water, particularly during warmer weather when rivers, lakes, and reservoirs can appear inviting but remain hazardous.

Both the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS.org.uk) and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI.org) have excellent resources available to download

The Voice of the Infant

Babies and infants communicate their needs and feelings in many ways, both verbally and non-verbally. Listening to the infant's voice helps us understand their lived experience and respond effectively to their needs.

The NSPCC has produced a series of expert insight videos to support practitioners in recognising and incorporating the infant's voice into practice.

🧑‍🎓 Access the videos here: [The voice of the infant: expert insight videos | NSPCC Learning](#)

TRAINING

Don't Miss This Fantastic Opportunity!

We're delighted that Tamsin Grimmer will be leading an online session all about 2-year-olds. Make sure you've booked your place – you won't want to miss the chance to hear from and be inspired by Tamsin!

👉 Secure your place now!

BOOK TRAINING

Free Online Child Development Training (Early Years & Reception)

The Department for Education's [Early years child development training](#) offers a free, flexible online child development programme designed for educators working with children from birth to reception. It supports practitioners to build their knowledge, gain practical strategies, reflect on their practice, and learn from real early years and reception settings, with modules accessible anytime and certificates awarded on completion. The training covers key areas such as brain development, personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, physical development, mathematics, curriculum and assessment, and supporting individual needs. Recent updates include more reception-focused guidance and EYFS profile assessment support. The training can be accessed via the [Early years child development training](#) portal, and additional free resources for ages 0–5 are available through [Help for Early Years Providers](#), including case studies, short videos, and safer sleep guidance developed with The Lullaby Trust.

SEND

SEND Surgery Drop-In Sessions

Join our monthly online SEND Surgery drop-ins. Drop in anytime between 10:00–11:00am or 6:30–7:30pm, where Early Years Intervention Officers are available to answer your questions and offer support. Sessions take place on the third Monday of each month. Use the following link to join our June sessions.

10.00-11.00am session <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/351058403556219?p=s2fyY9QtFNGzgSNFeQ>

6.30-7.30pm session <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/36394901479867?p=HFgcZneJ33hcOSPAN3>

Free Early Years SENCO Level 3 Training

An Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinator (EYSENCO) plays a vital role in supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). By working closely with families and professionals, they help ensure every child receives the right support to thrive and reach their full potential.

🎓 The Best Practice Network is offering FREE Level 3 EYSENCO training, funded by the Department for Education.

⚠️ The June intake is now full, but there's still time to secure your place for July!

📅 Deadline to apply: 21st June

👉 Don't miss out on this fantastic professional development opportunity – register your interest today using the link below.

[Become an EYSENCO](#)

SHARE WITH PARENTS

Toy Safety Alert – Squishy Dumplings

Does your child love these squishy dumplings? They're the latest craze, with unboxing videos getting millions of views – but their popularity has led to a rise in counterfeit versions that may contain harmful chemicals.

- ✅ Buy from trusted retailers where possible
- ✅ Check for proper safety labelling
- ✅ Stop using if the toy is damaged, leaking, or smells unusual
- ✅ Avoid for children under 3, who are most at risk



Your child's appointment matters

Every appointment is an opportunity to support your child's health, development, wellbeing and future.



Child Not Brought (CNB) means a child misses an appointment that they need and we haven't been told.

When this happens, it can be harder for professionals to make sure your child is getting the right support at the right time.

When appointments are missed, children may:



Miss important support

Delays in assessments or check-ins can mean needs are not identified or met.



Have delayed progress

It can take longer to monitor progress or put plans and support in place.



Be at increased risk

Professionals may not have the information they need to keep your child safe and well.



Miss opportunities

Early support can make a big difference to your child's wellbeing and future.



If you can't attend, let us know as soon as possible.

We understand that sometimes things change. By letting us know, we can arrange another time or talk about any support that might help.



We are here to work in partnership with you to:



Help your child receive the support they need.



Understand and address any barriers to attendance.



Ensure your child remains visible to services that support their wellbeing.



Promote positive outcomes for every child.



Children benefit most when services and families work together.

Thank you for being an important part of your child's journey.



Halton 0-19 (25) Service

We are here to support your family.



01928 593056

Please get in touch if you need to.

Every appointment is an important opportunity to support your child's health, development and wellbeing.

If you're unable to attend an appointment you've been offered, please call **01928 593056** to rearrange.



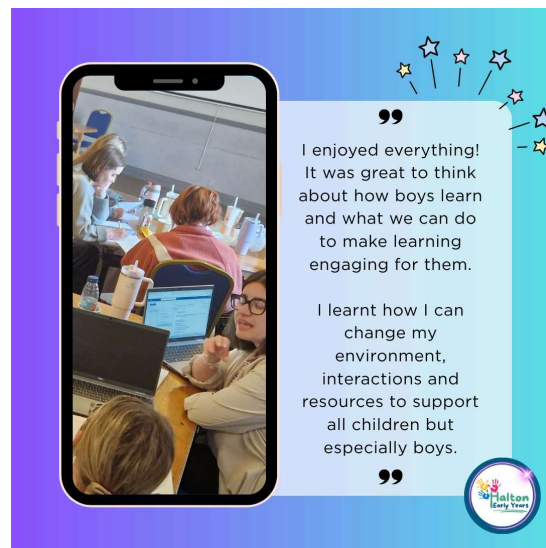
Halton 0-19 Service - North Cheshire and Mersey NHS Foundation Trust

EARLY YEARS CLUSTER



“Really useful ideas and ways to create effective provision. Ways to support and develop boys writing within continuous provision and their interests. I will look at each area using the 'characteristics of effective learning'. A great training session, I got so much from it and feel inspired ready to teach my Reception class in September.”





SUMMER TEDDY CHALLENGE

Summer is fast approaching – have you shared our Summer Teddy Challenge with the families you work with?

These fun activities are designed to support children on their journey to school, helping build confidence and key skills along the way.

📄 If you haven't seen this resource yet, we'd love to share it with you!

Simply contact early.years@halton.gov.uk and we'll send you a copy.

Let's work together to give children the best start this summer!

Get ready, get steady, go teddy!
Encourage your child to complete our summer challenges with a teddy or favourite toy

Name: _____

When you complete a challenge colour the ticked circle

Show teddy your school uniform. You might like to go to the shops to buy it together.	Show teddy how you put your shoes on. Don't forget to practice with your new school shoes too
Show teddy how you eat with your knife and fork, and how you use your knife to cut up food into smaller pieces	Show teddy how you wash and dry your hands independently
Show teddy how you put your coat on by yourself. Do you know the coat flick trick? Can you show teddy?	Share a bedtime story with teddy. Show teddy how you turn the pages carefully
Sing lots of nursery rhymes and songs with teddy. Can you tell teddy your favourite rhyme or song?	Take teddy to the library and see if there are books about starting school you can share together
Take teddy to the park and talk about all the things you can see and hear on the way	Show teddy how to be a good friend by playing a game with someone else and taking turns

BOOK OF THE MONTH



What comes before phonics? by Sally Neaum

This book by Sally Neaum clearly and thoughtfully explains the foundations children need in place before formal phonics teaching can be effective. Sally explores the vital role of spoken language, listening skills, play and meaningful experiences in early literacy development. Grounded in research and practical examples, the book supports early years practitioners to reflect on their practice and create rich, language-focused environments that prepare children for successful reading and writing. A highly recommended read for anyone working in the EYFS.

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