



WELCOME

Welcome back!

We hope you all had a wonderful summer and that the new term is off to a great start, with everyone settling in well.

Please make sure you join us for our Leadership Briefing, where we'll be sharing important sector updates and safeguarding information for the term ahead.

Have you had a chance to explore our latest training brochure? We're once again delighted to offer a wide range of CPD opportunities for you and your team—there's something for everyone!

We're especially excited about our Cluster with Ruth Swailes, and we're really looking forward to shining a light on our youngest age group at the upcoming Babies and Toddlers event. Don't miss out—get booked on now!

As always, if you have any questions or need support, please don't hesitate to contact the team on early.years@halton.gov.uk

Catch up with us on Facebook and Instagram

📌 Help us spread the word. **Sign up new staff** to receive the newsletter directly [here](#)

Best Wishes

Sarah

DON'T MISS OUT!

Leadership Briefing 25.9.2025 (10-11am OR 6.30-7.30pm)

We strongly encourage attendance at one of the upcoming sessions to stay informed on the latest developments in the Early Years sector and safeguarding. These briefings are essential for Managers, Early Years Leads, Childminders and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs). Book your place now using our [online booking form](#)

UPDATES

Important Update: EYFS Framework and Safeguarding Reforms – Now Live

As of 1st September 2025, the updated [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) framework](#) is now in effect for childminders, group-based, and school-based providers. All practitioners are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the new changes and reflect on what these mean for your setting or school. The safeguarding reforms apply to all children within the foundation stage including school nurseries and Reception classes. The Department for Education has published a helpful set of FAQs addressing key aspects of the safeguarding reforms, you can access them [here](#). We will also be highlighting the reforms at our Leadership Briefings

School-Based Nursery Capital Grant Programme

The next phase of the DfE's School-Based Nursery Capital Grant Programme has now launched. Phase 2 will support projects ready to offer new childcare places in the 2026-27 academic year. Applications for phase 2 are open from 22 September until 11 December, with state-funded primary schools and maintained nursery schools eligible to apply for up to £150,000 of capital funding

Please contact the Early Years Team at early.years@halton.gov.uk to arrange an initial sufficiency discussion. More information about the grant can be found [here](#)

FEYE FUNDING

Autumn Term Estimate Checks – Action Required

Please review the estimated hours you've submitted for the autumn term by checking the Summary page for each age range on the Provider Portal. If any amendments are needed, email the updated figures to Jackie.Durr@halton.gov.uk **by 12th September**. Changes cannot be made after this deadline.

Important: If you do not submit estimates but later submit a headcount, funding will be delayed until **December**.



Best Start in Life – New Parent Hub

The Childcare Choices website is now part of the **Best Start in Life** parent hub. This new platform brings together trusted information and support for families from pregnancy through to the early years, including guidance on how working parents can apply for their childcare funding code.

Anyone searching for *Childcare Choices* will be automatically redirected to the new site. Take a look www.beststartinlife.gov.uk/

Autumn Term Headcount – Provider Portal Now Open

The Provider Portal is now open for settings to begin preparing autumn term headcounts.

Headcount Day is **Thursday 25th September**. Please do **not** submit any headcounts until headcount week.

Free School Meals – Only applicable to schools and academies

We'd like to draw your attention to a recent update regarding Free School Meals for nursery aged children, which is only applicable to school and academy pupils. Please look out for an email containing an Information Sheet with Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about eligibility and procedures for nursery-aged children.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATES

Martyn's Law

The DfE have published a policy paper outlining how Martyn's Law affects education (including early years) settings. Click the link below for details on the capacity related tiers that may affect settings. [How Martyn's Law will affect education settings - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/martyns-law)

SEND



SENIF Workshop

Join us for a focused session on SEND Inclusion Funding (SENIF)—formerly known as Top-Up Funding to understand the SENIF processes and explore how to make effective use of the funding to support children with SEND in your setting.

Please see below the upcoming SENIF (SEND Inclusion Funding) panel dates and application deadlines.

Month	Application Deadline	Panel date	Feedback
Sept	27th Aug	17th Sept	1st Oct
Oct	1st Oct	15th Oct	29th Oct
Nov	29th Oct	12th Nov	26th Nov
Dec	26th Nov	16th Dec	31st Dec

Important: Before submitting a SENIF application, you must first complete an Initial Request for Support from the Early Years Team <https://halton.me/senif-initial-request-form/>

TRAINING

Have You Seen the Early Years Training Offer?

Explore a fantastic range of CPD opportunities tailored for you and your team. These sessions are designed to help you enhance your skills, share best practices, and grow professionally together. Book your sessions using our online booking form. Once your booking is processed, you'll receive a calendar invite with all the details — dates, times,

and venues. So please make sure to enter your email address correctly on the booking form.

DID YOU KNOW..?

CPD Opportunity: Supporting Babies and Toddlers

In April, Ofsted published [Getting it right from the start: how early years practitioners work with babies and toddlers - GOV.UK](#)—a research report on how early years practitioners support babies and toddlers. They've also released a podcast, [Getting it right from the start | Ofsted Talks](#), featuring expert insights on the report and the importance of the first two years of a child's life. A valuable listen for anyone working with under 2s.

RESEARCH AND READING

New Disability Guidance & Training for Early Years Providers

The Council for Disabled Children has released free guidance and training to help early years practitioners, governors, and trustees understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Commissioned by the DfE, these resources support inclusive practice and aim to improve outcomes for disabled children. [Click here](#) to find out more

SHARE WITH PARENTS



Take a Seat!

Encourage them to sit on the toilet. Use a potty seat if needed to make them feel secure.

Free Toilet Training Resources

Foundation Years has published a set of free toilet training posters and handouts, including a helpful leaflet for parents. Take a look by clicking the link [Free Toilet Training Posters and Handouts for Early Years Settings and Parents - Foundation Years](#)

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

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