

WELCOME

A warm welcome back to everyone returning after the summer break. We hope the autumn term has started well for you all and that children are settling in happily and enjoying all the wonderful experiences that Early Years has to offer.

The team has been busy over the summer putting together another fantastic training offer. Details have now been emailed to all schools and providers. There is something for everyone working across the sector and with all age groups. Please take a look and share it with your team. Happy booking!

I look forward to you at the Early Years Leadership Briefing on 30 September. This is an important session for managers, leaders and Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs), where we will be sharing key updates from across the sector. Please make sure you join one of the online sessions, your attendance is essential to stay informed and up to date.

As always, for general enquiries, please contact the team at
early.years@halton.gov.uk

It is always lovely to hear from you 😊

Best wishes
Sarah

UPDATES

Reminder: Updated EYFS Frameworks Now in Effect
The Department for Education's updated EYFS Frameworks for childminders and group and school-based providers came into effect on 1 September 2026.

The changes mainly focus on strengthening safeguarding arrangements and ensuring children are kept safe and well cared for. Key updates include:

- Safer sleep requirements are now included directly within the EYFS framework, making them easier to access without needing to refer to separate guidance

- Registered childcare cannot operate from premises where a banned dog breed is kept or present.
- Providers must have regard to the guidance on screen use in early years settings.
- Ofsted or Childminder Agencies must be informed of allegations of *harm* involving anyone living, working, or caring for children on the premises.
- Enhanced DBS checks are now required for all volunteers, including those who are supervised, and new employees must not start work until their checks have been received.
- Updates have been made to the information staff must disclose that could affect their suitability to work with children.
- Providers of childcare on domestic premises must notify Ofsted or their Childminder Agency of changes to people aged 16 and over who live or work on the premises, bringing requirements in line with those already in place for childminders.
- The Early Years Qualifications Requirements and Standards document has also been updated to provide further clarification on the Level 2 English requirements.

We encourage all providers to take some time to review the updated frameworks and ensure any necessary changes have been implemented within their setting.

Ofsted's new Early Years Inspection Toolkit is now live, bringing together key inspection information, guidance and resources in one place to help providers understand what to expect during inspection and support ongoing quality improvement. Early years inspection: toolkit, operating guide and information - GOV.UK

FEYE FUNDING

Autumn 2026 Headcount and Early Years Census
The Provider Portal will open on **14th September 2026**, allowing providers to begin preparing their Autumn Headcount submissions. The Headcount and Early Years Census Day will take place on **Thursday 1st October 2026**

Early Years Funding Consultation 2026
The Department for Education (DfE) has launched a consultation on proposed changes to the early years entitlements funding system.
We encourage all providers to take a look at the proposals and share their views, as these changes could have a significant impact on the early years sector.
🔗 https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-the-funding-system-for-early-years-entitlements

The consultation closes on **Monday 14th September 2026**. This is a valuable opportunity to have your voice heard and help shape the future of early years funding arrangements.

EARLY YEARS TRAINING

Check your inbox!
Our Early Years Autumn Training Offer was emailed out on Friday so please check your inbox. Packed with a wide range of high-quality training, network meetings and support sessions, there's something for everyone, whether you're an early years practitioner, leader, SENCo or childminder. Take some time to explore the training brochure and make the most of the fantastic professional development opportunities available this term. We look forward to welcoming you to a

session soon

If you haven't received a copy, please email **early.years@halton.gov.uk** and we'll be happy to send one to you.



SAFEGUARDING AND WELFARE UPDATES

Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2026-2028
In July 2026, Halton Safeguarding Children Partnership launched its Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Strategy 2026-2028. To support partners in responding effectively to child sexual abuse, a range of resources, guidance and support materials are available on the Partnership website.

We encourage all practitioners to familiarise themselves with the strategy and access the resources here.

SEND

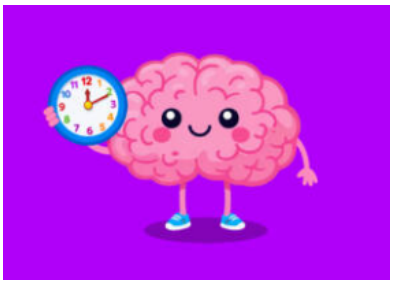
Advice and Support
If you have concerns regarding a child's development or emerging needs, please submit a request for advice and support, together with a signed parental consent form, via the following link: Early Years Providers: EYFS Support and Resources.

Once advice and support have been provided, your linked SEND officer will be able to discuss whether an application for Special Educational Needs Inclusion Funding (SENIF) may be appropriate.

Early Years SEND Surgery Drop-In - 21st September 2026 (10.00-11.00)
Join our Early Years Team for our online SEND Drop-In Sessions. Stay up to date with SEND developments, discuss current topics, ask questions, and receive advice and support from the team. Whether you need guidance on a specific issue or simply want to connect with colleagues and hear the latest updates, you're welcome to join any session. No booking is required – simply click on the TEAMs link and drop in at any time during

the session https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/315937723618800?p=jMEltxUekWCqHFkDuq

SHARE WITH PARENTS



Screens are part of everyday life, but finding the right balance for young children isn't always easy. Share this friendly, evidence-informed guidance with parents and carers to help them build healthy screen habits and make time for the play, conversations and experiences that support growing minds. Click here

HENRY Healthy Families: Right from the Start
Could HENRY support one of your families? Our free **8-week programme** helps parents of children aged 0-5 build confidence and make healthy, positive changes around parenting, behaviour, routines, healthy eating and family wellbeing.

A great support for families and children's development, wellbeing and school readiness. Find out more and book https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1990167767366?aff=oddtdtcreator

LET'S CELEBRATE!



Huge congratulations to Heathside Day Nursery on their Green Flag Accreditation Award. The children have loved learning how to recycle, reduce waste, explore nature and grow their own vegetables. If your setting has achieved something special recently, big or small, we'd love to hear it. Sharing good news helps lift our whole early years community and shines a light on the incredible work happening for children everywhere.

HHEYS HIGHLIGHTS

Thank you to all our Supervised Toothbrushing settings for a fantastic first year. Nearly 1,400 children have already taken part, with some settings now celebrating their one-year quality assurance visit. There's still time to sign up and help more children develop positive oral health habits via the HHEYS link Halton Healthy Early Years Status | HBC forms Expressions of interest for upcoming childminder training are now being taken. For further information, please contact sophie.talbot@halton.gov.uk

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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.



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