

The Great North Early Years Stronger Practice Hub

December Newsletter and Key Dates for your Diary



Welcome!

Thank you for opening our December newsletter! As it is Christmas, we have decided to have a festive giveaway so as a thank you for opening this months newsletter, you've been automatically entered into our prize draw to win this hamper full of resources to support communication, language and literacy!



Our newsletter will cover how we can help you and your setting through evidence-informed practices. Click below to access the areas of interest.

There are new dates for your diary so please ensure you check them out!

Please note, when you scroll to the bottom of this newsletter, the message might be clipped. Please press 'View entire message' to see the full newsletter.

Recent Events

Dates For Your Diary

Blogs

DfE/NCB News

Other News

Our Recent Events

Our December Highlights: A Month of Collaboration and Learning

What a fantastic December it has been, filled with networking opportunities and exciting events!

- A huge thank you to **Goosehill Early Excellence** for delivering a brilliant session at **Amberley Primary School** titled *'Making our Mark with a Festive Twist.'* Special thanks to Amberley for hosting and providing such wonderful support throughout the event.
- We teamed up with **Northern Lights EYSPH** to host another **Leadership Breakfast Briefing Network**, packed with valuable information. Together, we collaborated on a **'Recruitment and Retention' Idea Sheet**, offering practical strategies and solutions for early years leaders.
- **Susie Drake** delivered an engaging and informative webinar, *'Navigating Nappies: Mastering Toilet Training in the Early Years.'* Attendees contributed to a fantastic **'Toilet Tips and Tricks' Help Sheet** to support parents and practitioners.
- **Pete Moorhouse** delivered a fantastic webinar centered around the *'Spirit of the Studio,'* inspiring creativity and exploration within early years settings.
- Our **Childminder Networks** have also continued in collaboration with **Hartbeeps**, providing valuable opportunities to connect and share. Excitingly, there are **even more sessions in the new year**, so keep an eye out for details!
- Finally, we were delighted to host our first **online SEND Breakfast Briefing Network** in partnership with **Northern Lights EYSPH**, which explored **DfE Support for Early Years Providers** and key insights from essential **EEF documentation**.

Thank you to everyone who contributed and participated in making this month so impactful. Here's to continued collaboration and success in the new year!



Dates for your Diary

Please see below for a range of CPD available to book for FREE. Unless stated otherwise, these sessions are open to all childminders and practitioners working in early years settings across the North East.

[See all our events](#)

Thursday 9th January 4-5pm

Webinar - 'Block Play' with Pete Moorhouse

[Learn more](#)

Monday 20th January 1pm-3.30pm

Online Accredited Training - 'Sensory Processing in the Early Years'

[Learn more](#)

Tuesday 21st January 8am-8.40am

Online Early Years Leadership Breakfast Briefing Network

(This will also run monthly on the following dates 20/2/25, 13/3/25)

[Learn more](#)

Tuesday 21st January 10am-11.30am

'Forest School in Action Network: Woodland Tales' with Goosehill Early Excellence at Amberley Primary School, Killingworth

[Learn more](#)

Wednesday 22nd January 4pm-5pm

Webinar - 'An Introduction to Intergenerational Learning'

[Learn more](#)

Thursday 23rd January 6.30pm-7.30pm

Network Session at Castle Kindergarten, Albany

[Learn more](#)

Friday 24th January 9-11.30am or 12.30-3pm

'The Power of the Page: Getting the most out of picture books' at Lighthouse View, Seaham

[Learn more](#)

Tuesday 28th January 8am-8.40am

Online Early Years SEND Breakfast Briefing Network

(This will also run monthly on the following dates 18/2/25, 25/3/25)

[Learn more](#)

Tuesday 28th January 9pm-3pm

Tiny Tweeties CPD- 'How music, movement and signing can positively impact prime areas of learning' at Lighthouse View, Seaham

Tuesday 28th January 4pm-5pm

'Marvellous Mathematical Materials: Unlocking the Magic of Loose Parts' with Goosehill Early Excellence at Croftway Academy, Blyth

[Learn more](#)[Learn more](#)

There are even more events, networks and CPD available to book for February and March on our website too!

Childminder Network Sessions



These sessions are FREE for childminders and for children 0-5 years. They will give you the opportunity to network and build relationships with like minded individuals, whilst supporting the children to engage in fun & interactive singing and storytelling sessions with a highly trained and skilled Hartbeeps Imaginator.

We have organised a monthly childminder network in the following venues:

Prudhoe Family Hub

Wednesday 15th January 10.30am and Wednesday 19th February 10.30am

Click [here](#) to book.

Rising Sun Country Park, Benton

Thursday 9th January 9.45am and Thursday 6th February 10am

Click [here](#) to book.

Blyth Family Hub

Wednesday 8th January 1.30pm, Wednesday 5th February 2pm, Wednesday 12th March 2pm

Click [here](#) to book.

Lanchester Community Centre

Friday 10th January 10am, Friday 7th February 10am, Friday 14th March 10am

Click [here](#) to book.

Dingley's Promise Training have developed a range of inclusion training courses to help others supporting children with SEND in the early years.

Each course has been designed to enable flexible remote learning and includes webinars and resources for practical application of the learning within daily practice. Courses available include:

- Introduction to Early Years Inclusion
- Early Years SEND Transitions
- The Voice of the Child
- Managing Difficult Conversations
- Behaviours That Challenge

[Express your Interest](#)

Blogs

The Power of Reading Aloud in Early Years Settings

[Read the Blog](#)

In early years settings, such as nurseries and childminders, the act of reading aloud is invaluable for young children's language and literacy development. While digital resources like videos and audiobooks can be helpful, nothing replaces the rich, interactive experience of an adult reading aloud. It transforms story time into a shared adventure that sparks imagination, builds language skills and strengthens emotional bonds.

Read the blog to find out more.

DfE and NCB News

FREE Webinar - 'A Special Approach to Making it REAL to support families and practitioners

You are invited to attend a free DfE funded workshop on our **A Special Approach to Making it REAL**, where we provide training to practitioners on how they can use the REAL approach and activities to support children with SEND.

The aim of the workshop is to provide an overview of how to support the home learning environment for families with a child with SEND, with a particular focus on early language and literacy.

In particular,

- To talk about **A Special Approach to Making it REAL** and the early Home Learning Environment.
- To give an overview of the two strands of the approach which provides support to both practitioners and parents.
- To show how **A Special Approach to Making it REAL** supports practitioners in their everyday practice in settings, and in working with parents.
- To share examples of how simple, low cost and fun resources and activities, backed up with information and ideas, have built parents' confidence in their ability to develop their child's early literacy.

[Book now](#)

Updated EYFS Profile Handbook, including a change to the Speaking ELG

The Department for Education has published the updated [Early Years Foundation Stage \(EYFS\) Profile handbook](#) to support teachers and practitioners to complete EYFS Profile assessments in line with statutory requirements.

This update includes a change to allow a child's established or preferred mode of communication (including non-speaking communication, such as signing) to be used for all of the early learning goals (ELGs), including the Speaking ELG.

In order to be judged as expected, children must demonstrate the criteria of the ELG. The mode of communication is the way a child chooses to communicate, not the language a child communicates in. Therefore, when using any mode of communication, the ELGs for the communication and language and literacy areas of learning must still be assessed in relation to the child's competency in English, or competency in British Sign Language.

[Click to read the handbook](#)

Other News



Happy Holidays

Season's Greetings!

Everyone at the **Great North Stronger Practice Hub** would like to wish you all a **Merry Christmas** and all the very best for **2025**.

Thank you for your continued support throughout the year. We look forward to working with you again in the **new year** and achieving even more together!



We are proud to work alongside Town End Research School to raise the profile of using evidence-informed practice and research to strengthen Early Years settings and improve outcomes for children.

[Learn more about Town End Research School](#)

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