Learn & Grow Together
Early Years Stronger Practice Hub
Staffordshire | Stoke-on-Trent | Telford and Wrekin | Shropshire

Welcome to The Learn and Grow Together Stronger Practice Hub Information Session

Supported by
Ambition Institute

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BEST START IN LIFE

Welcome to the Learn and Grow Together Stronger Practice Hub

Our vision is to make evidence-informed practice and research accessible to all early years providers, enabling babies and young children to thrive. Drawing on a breadth and depth of early years knowledge and leadership, our Hub brings together trusted experts and partners, including SENCOs, Early Years Area Experts, PVI managers, childminders, and experienced leaders from across the sector.

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Our Commitment

We are committed to learning, growing, and improving together.

- We believe that every early years professional deserves access to high-quality research, practical ideas, and meaningful professional development that can make a **real difference** to children's lives.
- By making **evidence-informed** practice accessible, sharing effective approaches, and nurturing **strong professional networks**, we create opportunities for educators to reflect, collaborate, and develop their expertise.
- Together, we support babies and young children to thrive, ensuring they get the **Best Start in Life** and build strong foundations for future learning and development.

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Our Theory of Change

Through collaboration, professional development and shared learning, we strengthen early years practice so that every child has **the best start in life.**

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Strengthen Partnerships
Work in collaboration across Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire to add value, share expertise and maximise impact.

Build Knowledge and Expertise
Enable early years practitioners and leaders to learn from the best available evidence and sector practice.

Invest in People
Make the most of public funding to provide high-quality professional development, coaching and support for the early years workforce.

Be a System Leader
Act as a system leader, working with stakeholders in the wider early years sector for settings, childminders and schools.

Develop a Sustainable Workforce
Support, retain and develop the early years workforce for the future.

Our Purpose
To strengthen early years practice across Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire through collaboration, professional development and shared learning.

Our Outcomes

Improved Practice and Leadership
Practitioners and leaders have increased knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver high-quality early years education.

Inclusive, High-Quality Early Years Provision
Settings are supported to create inclusive, nurturing environments where all children can thrive, including those with SEND and disadvantaged children.

Better Outcomes for Children
More children are ready for school, with strong communication and language, PSED, early maths and foundations for future learning.

A Stronger, More Sustainable Sector
A skilled, confident and valued early years workforce, working together to create a lasting, positive impact across our region.

Our Long-Term Impact
Every child in Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent, Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire has **the best start in life,** supported by high-quality, inclusive early years education and a connected, confident workforce.

We cover...



The Hub supports providers across:

- Staffordshire
- Stoke-on-Trent
- Telford and Wrekin
- Shropshire

Staffordshire County Council

City of Stoke-on-Trent

Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Shropshire Council

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Our Lead Setting and Partners

Lead Setting

Oaklands Nursery School
Hub Lead – Sally Lynch

EYSPA Programme Lead
Jude Brown

Partners

- Little Owl Childcare Ltd
- Burnwood Primary Academy
- Shiny Stars Day Nursery
- Hednesford Nursery School
- Cindy Hayden Childminder
- Halesfield Day Nursery

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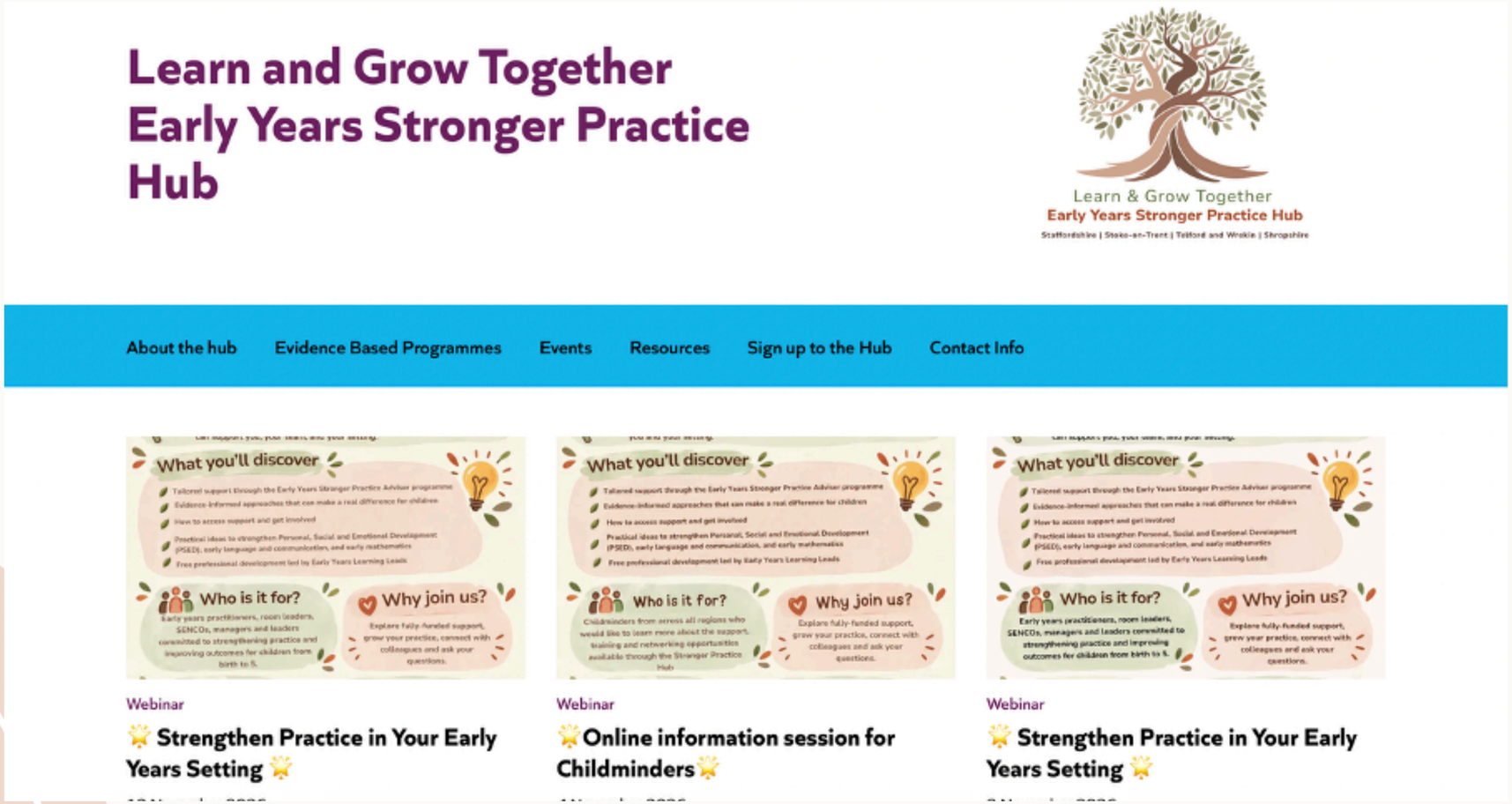
Learn and Grow Together Hub Page



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Share you ideas for the hub here!

SCAN ME!

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Our EY Support Programmes

The hub will deliver 2 fully funded programmes starting in January 2027

- EYSPA (Early Years Stronger Practice Advisors)
- EYLL (Early Years Learning Leads)
- For all settings that have children aged 0-4

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EYSPA

Early Years Stronger Practice Advisors

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Our EYSPA Team

Melanie Wright
Group-based EYSPA



Lauren Atkinson
Group-based EYSPA



Natalie Tranter
Group-based EYSPA



Charlotte Cartwright
Group-based EYSPA



Cindy Hayden
Childminder EYSPA



Our experienced team of advisors will work across all 4 local Authorities: Shropshire, Staffordshire, Stoke on Trent, Telford & Wrekin. 4 group-based advisors and 1 childminder advisor.

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BEST START IN LIFE

- The Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser Programme is a new iteration of a previous offer called Experts and Mentors.

- This was part of the Early Years Education Recovery Programme and provided bespoke, targeted support in the post-COVID-19 period.

- It focused on developing childcare professionals' skills to reduce the pandemic's effects on children’s development.

An independent evaluation found:

> Strong evidence that the programme had a positive impact on practitioners' confidence in supporting children's communication and language and children's personal, social and emotional development.

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The Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser Programme is building on those foundations by delivering targeted support to eligible early years settings to:

- Boost children's development
- Improve outcomes
- Narrow the disadvantage gap

- As announced through the Best Start in Life Strategy, an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub can offer bespoke support, coaching, and guidance from early years experts to address issues quickly and effectively.
- EYSPA supports leadership across the setting in identifying areas for improvement and making sustainable changes.

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To be eligible for support, a setting will have at least one of the following:

- Have received a ‘Needs Attention’ or ‘Urgent Improvement’ grading on their most recent Ofsted report card (or ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’ under the old framework)
- Have a high number of children on roll eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium
- Have children on roll eligible for the disadvantaged 2-year-old offer
- Have a significant number of children on roll with SEND and who qualify for support
- Settings that do not meet the criteria can still self-refer or be referred by their local authority; however, eligible settings will be given higher priority.

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If eligible. you will be matched with one of our EYSPAs

They will:

- Childminder advisers will support groups of childminders.
- Each adviser will typically support one cluster per term, consisting of up to four
- childminders.
- Childminder advisers have the equivalent of 6 days per term to provide the following:
- four days directly supporting the cluster
- two additional days for planning, preparation or Hub activity
- Advisers may use some planning time to provide additional support where appropriate.

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EYSPA Childminder Delivery Model

Delivery Expectations:

Support may be delivered through a combination of:

- virtual meetings
- Face-to-face meetings where possible
- group sessions
- individual coaching conversations
- signposting and follow-up support

As childminders often work independently and across a wider geographical area, support is likely to involve a greater proportion of virtual delivery than the group-based model, but in-person support is welcomed if possible.

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EYSPA Support Cycle



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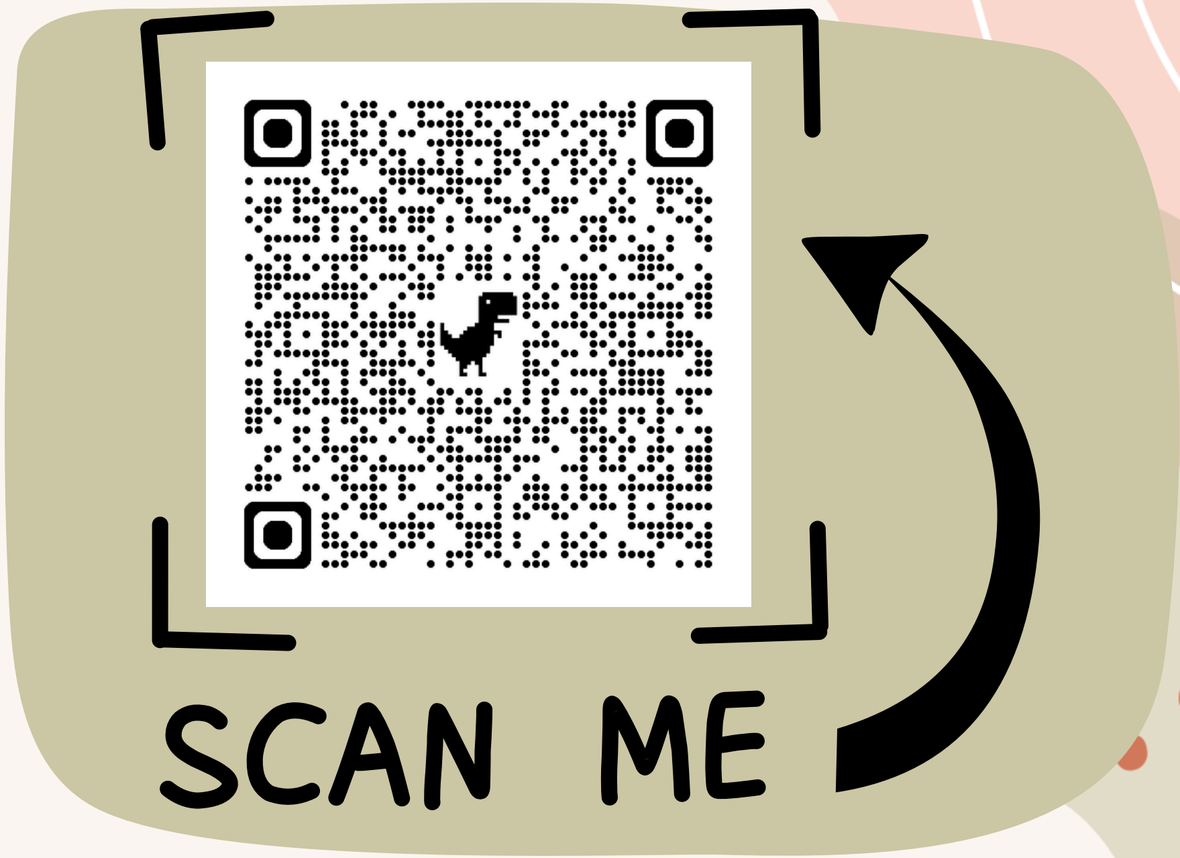
How to apply

Application is through a self-referral form

- Settings that are offered support through the programme will be asked to complete an online diagnostic form.
- This allows the EYSPH to learn more about the setting and their main areas of concern.
- The precise balance of activities will depend on the setting's needs and the priorities identified through the diagnostic process.



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EYLL

Early Years Learning Leads

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The EYLL Programme

EYLLs will deliver evidence-informed professional development programmes, designed by early years experts, to strengthen knowledge, confidence, and practice in key areas of children's learning and development.

Support will include:

- Specialist support in early language, early mathematics and PSED for educators working with children aged 2 to 4 years
- Dedicated early maths and early language professional development for educators working with children under 2 years
- Practical strategies that can be applied within everyday practice
- Opportunities to collaborate and learn alongside other professionals
- Guidance to help translate research into meaningful action
- Resources and tools to support continued professional development

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The Delivery Model

EY Stronger Practice CPD	Early Language	Early Maths	PSED
2-4 year olds*	A minimum of 2 cohorts per term	A minimum of 1 cohort per term	A minimum of 1 cohort per term
Under 2s	A minimum of 1 cohort per term	A minimum of 1 cohort per term	n/a

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The Delivery Model

- Between 12 and 18 participants to take part in each cohort, aiming for an average cohort size of 15 participants.
- Online self-guided learning modules
- Face-to-face seminars
- Facilitated group sessions
- Opportunity to learn with peers
- Settings can apply to the hub for bespoke support
- Each learning lead also has capacity to offer bespoke support to a number of settings each term
- Leads will be able to collaborate with you to develop personalised action

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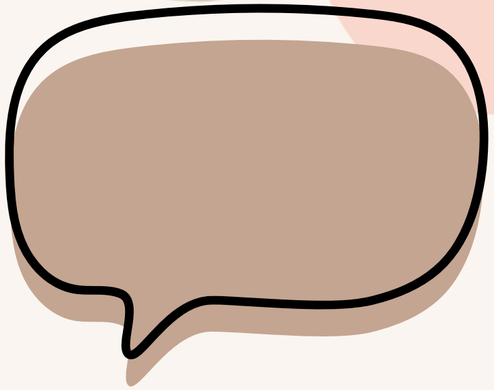
Early Language Programme includes



- Building Communication Skills
- Supporting children's language development
- High-quality interactions and conversations
- Developing vocabulary and communication
- Practical strategies for everyday practice

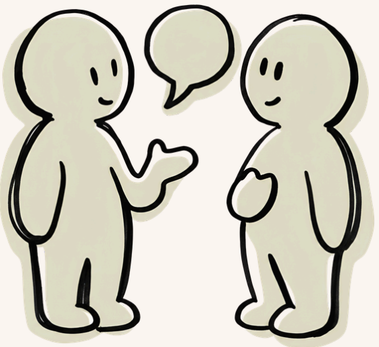


Early Maths Programme includes

- Developing Mathematical Thinking
- Number sense and counting
- Mathematical language
- Problem solving through play
- Embedding maths in everyday routines

PSED Programme includes

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Self-regulation
- Emotional wellbeing
- Positive relationships
- Supporting children's resilience



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EY Stronger Practice CPD	Early Language	Early Maths	PSED	Qualification criteria for participants
2-4 year olds	14 hours of online self-led learning comprising 7 units with 1.5 hour live webinars/ seminars after each unit (24.5 hours total)	12 hours of online self-led learning with 1.5 hour live webinars/ seminars following units 2, 3 and 6 (16.5 hours total)	10 hours of online self-led learning comprising 5 units with 1.5 hour live webinars/ seminars following each unit (17.5 hours total)	Aimed at staff qualified at L3 and above.
Under 2s	8 hours of online self-led learning comprising 4 units with live webinars/ seminars following each unit (16 hours total)	8 hours of online self-led learning comprising 4 units with 2 hour live webinars/ seminars following units 2,3 and 4 (14 hours total)	n/a	Aimed at staff qualified at L2 and above, but open to other staff who wish to take part and are confident that they can engage with Level 2 content.

Benefits for Settings

- Building Stronger Practice
- Increased staff knowledge and confidence
- Evidence-based approaches
- Reflection and improvement of practice
- Better outcomes for children

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Early Years Learning Lead (EYLL) CPD Programmes

Choose a programme

- Early Language
- Early Maths
- PSED

Register your interest

- Complete the application/Expression of Interest form
- Confirm staff availability and commitment to attend sessions

Join a cohort

- Access online learning through the Learning Management System (LMS)
- Attend live webinars and seminars throughout the term

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Wednesday 2nd December 2026
13:30-15:00



Facilitated by: Dr Susan Richards, Lead Advisor, Speech and Language UK

Speech and Language UK
Changing young lives.

Clap and sing along to discover how songs and rhymes are not only fun – they are providing children with the fundamental building blocks of language. Drawing on over a decade of research, Dr Susan Richards, Lead Speech and Language Advisor at Speech and Language UK, will talk about how songs, rhymes and rhyming books can contribute to children's language development.

Attendees will learn

- how neuroscience is helping us understand how language rhythms form the basis for language learning
- how the structured auditory patterns of songs, rhymes, and rhyming books can scaffold language processing for children from the very beginning.

This event is open to Early Language Leads and the wider early years workforce within the Early Years Stronger Practice Hub regions. Please find the link on our hub Padlet and page.

Thank you

We are excited to be part of the Stronger Practice Hub Community

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