



***Welcome to Growing Together,
Lancashire and Beyond Early Years
Stronger Practice Hub October
Newsletter***



**Growing Together
Lancashire and Beyond**
Early Years Stronger Practice Hub

Growing Together is here for Lancashire and Beyond!

Meet the Hub



Welcome to our first Growing Together update

A very warm welcome to Growing Together, the Lancashire and Beyond Early Years Stronger Practice Hub.

Our role is to support childminders, nurseries and early years teams in schools find evidence, share experience and use practical ideas in their settings. We bring together practitioners, leaders, teachers, SENCOs and partners across five local authority areas:

- Lancashire
- Blackburn with Darwen
- Blackpool
- Cumberland
- Westmorland and Furness

You can expect useful updates from us: evidence explained in plain language, opportunities for professional development, resources to explore and the experiences of local practitioners.

There is already so much excellent practice across our region. We want to help practitioners share that expertise, reflect together and develop approaches that improve outcomes for children and families, particularly children experiencing disadvantage.

This is your Stronger Practice Hub. Wherever you work across our region, we want Growing Together to be a place to **connect, share, learn, reflect and grow**.

Meet our team 



Growing Together Lancashire and Beyond

Early Years Stronger Practice Hub



1 - Sue Conron: Hub Lead

Sue provides strategic leadership for Growing Together, helping to shape our vision and programme across the five local authority areas.

An Executive Headteacher across two maintained nursery schools, Sue brings more than 20 years of headship experience and extensive knowledge of early years education. Sue will work closely with settings, partners and practitioners to ensure our offer responds to the needs and priorities of the region.



2 - Laura Johnson: Project Manager

Laura coordinates the development and delivery of our Hub programme, including professional development, networks, events and opportunities to share practice.

As an experienced early years teacher, Laura will work alongside our advisers and partner settings to provide targeted support that strengthens children's development, improves outcomes and helps narrow the disadvantage gap.

We look forward to getting to know you and working alongside you over the coming months!

Meet our lead setting



Duke Street Nursery School

Duke Street Nursery School in Chorley is the lead setting for Growing Together, providing a base for our Hub and hosting some of our face-to-face learning opportunities.

Its vision centres on nurturing children, building strong relationships and recognising the strengths and individuality of every child:

- **All children are loved like our own.** Children are nurtured to help them feel safe, secure and emotionally supported.
- **Strong relationships are valued.** Families join a community built on respect, support and understanding.

- **All children are able to succeed.** Practitioners recognise each child's starting point and build on their interests through an engaging, interactive curriculum.
- **Equal opportunity means a flexible approach.** Support is adapted to meet individual needs, with each child's best interests at heart.
- **Strong community links matter.** The nursery is part of the Chorley community, helping children develop kindness and respect for the world around them.
- **Expertise in child development guides practice.** Experienced practitioners use their knowledge to support children's learning and development.

Through visits and learning walks, practitioners will have opportunities to see practice in action, reflect with colleagues and consider how ideas might translate into their own settings.

We look forward to welcoming you to Duke Street throughout the year.

Meet our partner settings

Our partner settings bring diverse experience and expertise, helping shape a Hub by the sector, with the sector and for the sector.



A welcoming nursery community in Chorley where everyone matters. Highfield celebrates individuality, diversity and curiosity, working closely with families to help children become confident, capable learners.



Based in West Cumbria, Little Learners places outdoor exploration and positive relationships at the heart of learning. Daily outdoor play and Forest and Beach School experiences support children's communication, confidence, independence and wellbeing.



Chell's Childminding Services

Michelle brings 13 years of childminding experience to a nurturing setting for children under four. Child-led play, community outings and mixed-age learning create moments of awe and wonder, supported by close relationships with families.



Christ the King's foundation unit welcomes children aged three and above into a shared nursery and reception environment. Rooted in its Catholic ethos, the team nurtures confidence, creativity and independence through play, strong family partnerships and indoor and outdoor exploration.



Supporting children from birth to school age, Buckshaw Village Nursery combines play-based learning with nurturing relationships and strong family partnerships. Its team brings expertise in SEND, transitions, early intervention and communication, with facilities including a swimming pool and vegetable garden.



A maintained nursery school in Burnley offering an inclusive curriculum tailored to every child, including those with SEND. Meaningful interactions, language development and emotional wellbeing help children feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

Learning from one another: Our partners share effective practice, host learning opportunities and connect practitioners, helping shape a programme that reflects the needs of our early years community.

Putting evidence into practice



The Education Endowment Foundation's **Early Years Evidence Store and Early Years Toolkit** brings together research on approaches for children aged birth to five, alongside examples of how these can look in practice.

A useful starting point is to choose a question your team already has, explore a relevant theme and discuss what might fit your context.

For example:

- What are we trying to improve for children?
- What does the evidence suggest?
- How could we adapt an approach for our setting?
- How will we recognise whether it is helping?

In future editions, we will unpack individual ideas and hear how practitioners adapt them in their settings.

[Explore the Early Years Evidence Store](#)

Our first professional development programme

All sessions are fully funded and free to attend.

In-person learning walks

Explore how brain development, stress and relationships influence learning, with practical approaches to co-regulation, emotional safety and attachment-aware support.



Join Us - in person learning walk

WE WILL EXPLORE HOW EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT, STRESS AND RELATIONSHIPS CAN IMPACT CHILDREN'S ATTENTION, REGULATION, RELATIONSHIPS AND LEARNING. WITH PRACTICAL IDEAS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING, CONNECTION AND LEARNING

Fully funded - free to attend

With: Laura Johnson
Title - Teacher

Friday
6th November 2026
9.30am - 11.30am

booking link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HAWF>

scan to book your place

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 **Ambition Institute**

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 **Department for Education**

Duke Street Nursery School, Chorley, PR7 3DU

Friday 6 November 2026 | 9.30–11.30am - [Book your place](#)

With Laura Johnson



Join Us - in person learning walk

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Fully funded - free to attend

With: Kayleigh Robertson and Laura Johnson

Title - Owner & Manager of Little Learners Nursery - Egremont and Hub manager/ Teacher at Duke Street Nursery School, Chorley

Friday
13th November 2026
1.00pm - 3.00pm

booking link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HBKY>



scan to book your place

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 **Little Learners Nursery and Beach School, Egremont, CA22 2BD**

Friday 13 November 2026 | 1–3pm

With Kayleigh Robertson and Laura Johnson - [Book your place](https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HBKY)



Join Us: fully funded C&L network meeting

EVERY CONVERSATION COUNTS
SUPPORTING SPEECH, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION FROM 0 TO 5: PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE



"Bring a question. Share what works. Leave with a practical plan."

With: Vicki Maughan

Title: Speech and Language Therapist

Tuesday
20th October 2026
3.45pm-5.15pm

Booking link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HATW>



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 **Communication and Language Network**

Tuesday 20 October 2026 | 3.45–5.15pm - [Book Your Place](#)

With Vicki Maughan, Speech and Language Therapist

Recognise children's communication needs, discuss practical strategies and leave with an action to try.



Join Us: Childminder network meeting

CHILDMINDER NETWORK:
CURRENT UPDATES:
SAFER SLEEP, REAL-LIFE CHALLENGES, PRACTICAL ANSWERS

With: Michelle Bennett
Title Childminder

Wednesday
21st October 2026
6.30pm-7.30pm

Booking link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HASG>

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scan to book



Join Us: Childminder network meeting

CHILDMINDER NETWORK:
CURRENT UPDATES:
SAFER SLEEP, REAL-LIFE CHALLENGES, PRACTICAL ANSWERS

With: Michelle Bennett
Title Childminder

Tuesday
3rd November 2026
6.30pm-7.30pm

Booking link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HAFW>

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With Michelle Bennett, expert childminder

Discover the Hub, meet colleagues and discuss current updates, including safer sleep.
Choose from:

- **Wednesday 21 October 2026 | 6.30–7.30pm — [Book](#)**
- **Tuesday 3 November 2026 | 6.30–7.30pm — [Book](#)**



SEND Network: Every Child Included

Tuesday 17 November 2026 | 3.45–5.15pm - [Book your place](#)

With Louise Phillips and Natalie Sinclair

Explore a core word curriculum and practical tools to support children with communication and language difficulties.



Improving outcomes for disadvantaged children

Wednesday 21 October 2026 | 3.45–5.15pm - [Book your place](https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HASM)

With Sue Conron and Laura Johnson

Explore factors affecting children's outcomes and practical ways to support children experiencing disadvantage.

Join Us - Live Online Webinar

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE EARLY YEARS PUPIL PREMIUM PLAN (EYPP) GUIDED BY THE EEF.

Fully funded - free to attend

With: Sue Conron and Laura Johnson
Title - Early Years Executive Head and Teacher

Wednesday
18th November 2026
3.45pm - 5.15pm

booking link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HASS>

scan to book

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EYPP: writing an effective action plan

Wednesday 18 November 2026 | 3.45–5.15pm - [Book your place](https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HASS)

With Sue Conron and Laura Johnson

Use EEF guidance and practical examples to identify needs, plan support and evaluate the impact of EYPP funding.



Join Us:
fully funded Online
webinar -
Speech, Language
and Communication

SUPPORTING SPEECH,
LANGUAGE AND
COMMUNICATION IN THE EARLY
YEARS: BIRTH TO FIVE

**"Bring a question.
Share what works.
Leave with a practical
plan."**

With: Vicki Maughan
Title: Speech and Language Therapist

**Tuesday
24th November 2026
3.45pm-5.15pm**

Booking link:
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HAXG>

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Institute**

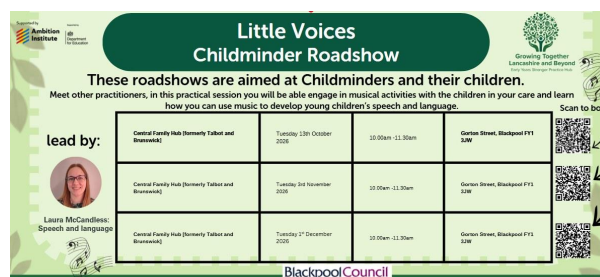
Supported by
**Department
for Education**

scan to
book

 **Speech, language and communication: birth to five**

Tuesday 24 November 2026 | 3.45–5.15pm - [Click to book](https://www.trybooking.com/uk/HAXG)

With Vicki Maughan, Speech and Language Therapist



**Little Voices
Childminder Roadshow**

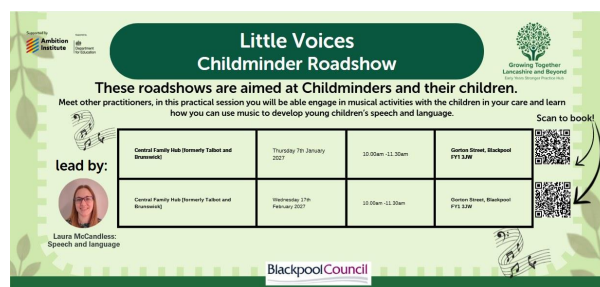
These roadshows are aimed at Childminders and their children.
Meet other practitioners, in this practical session you will be able engage in musical activities with the children in your care and learn how you can use music to develop young children's speech and language.

lead by:

Laura McCandless
Speech and language

Central Family Hub (Dunmurry Tabbet and Broomfield)	Tuesday 13th October 2026	10.00am-11.30am	Gorton Street, Blackpool FY1 3JW
Central Family Hub (Dunmurry Tabbet and Broomfield)	Tuesday 3rd November 2026	10.00am-11.30am	Gorton Street, Blackpool FY1 3JW
Central Family Hub (Dunmurry Tabbet and Broomfield)	Tuesday 17th December 2026	10.00am-11.30am	Gorton Street, Blackpool FY1 3JW

Blackpool Council



**Little Voices
Childminder Roadshow**

These roadshows are aimed at Childminders and their children.
Meet other practitioners, in this practical session you will be able engage in musical activities with the children in your care and learn how you can use music to develop young children's speech and language.

lead by:

Laura McCandless
Speech and language

Central Family Hub (Dunmurry Tabbet and Broomfield)	Thursday 7th January 2027	10.00am-11.30am	Gorton Street, Blackpool FY1 3JW
Central Family Hub (Dunmurry Tabbet and Broomfield)	Wednesday 17th February 2027	10.00am-11.30am	Gorton Street, Blackpool FY1 3JW

Blackpool Council

 **Little Voices: Childminder Roadshow**

Central Family Hub, Blackpool | 10–11.30am

With Laura McCandless, Speech and Language Therapist

Join other childminders and their children for musical activities that support speech and language.

Explore communication development, recognise additional needs and discover strategies for supporting children and working with families.

Become part of our team 



Growing Together Lancashire and Beyond
Early Years Stronger Practice Hub

WE'RE RECRUITING

Three Early Years Learning Lead roles

Maths Lead
Early Years Learning Lead
3 days per week | 114 days per year
Champion numeracy and spatial reasoning.

Communication and Language Lead
Early Years Learning Lead
4 days per week | 152 days per year
Support language-rich environments and communication development.

PSED Lead
Early Years Learning Lead
Personal, Social and Emotional Development
2 days per week | 76 days per year
Support emotional wellbeing, social skills and resilience.

Experienced early years leader or setting manager?
Funded until March 2028 • Job shares considered

Apply using the relevant Expression of Interest form
Email completed forms to:
GrowingtogetherEYSPH@dukestreet-nur.lancs.sch.uk

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Department for Education

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Email us for further information and how to apply:

growingtogetherEYSPH@dukestreet-nur.lancs.sch.uk

Keep learning and developing 

Alongside the Growing Together programme, there are national opportunities to support your professional development.



National Professional Qualifications

The **National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL)** supports current and aspiring early years leaders to develop knowledge and skills across areas including child development, curriculum, SEND, professional development and organisational management.

Funding may be available to eligible applicants; check the provider's current eligibility and funding information before applying.

[Explore the NPQEYL with Ambition Institute](#)

You can also explore the **National Professional Qualification for Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators**:

[Read the DfE's SENCO NPQ guidance](#)



Best Start in Life

Best Start in Life brings together information and resources relevant to the early years workforce. We will share relevant professional development updates through our Hub channels as they become available.

The Early Years CPD Communications Toolkit also provides materials to help leaders share opportunities with their teams.

[Explore Best Start in Life](#)

[View the Early Years CPD Communications Toolkit](#)



Maths Champions

Maths Champions supports early years practitioners to strengthen their confidence and practice in early mathematics. The programme helps settings identify strengths and development priorities, create a mathematics action plan, support staff learning and develop mathematical opportunities within everyday experiences.

[Find out about Maths Champions through NDNA](#)

[Explore the EEF's information about Maths Champions](#)

Supported by



Early Years Child Development Training

This free online programme supports practitioners to strengthen their understanding of child development and reflect on their practice.

Topics include brain development, personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, physical development, mathematics, curriculum and assessment, and individual differences and needs.

[Explore the Early Years Child Development Training](#)

More national CPD opportunities

Further early years training and support covers areas including SEND, safeguarding, communication and language, child development, leadership and mathematics.

[Explore the DfE's early years professional development and support offer](#)

Find training and resources in one place 

To Join our mailing list, for upcoming CPD, events, network meetings, resources, early years updates and opportunities to share practice.

Follow this link:

☆☆☆ [Sign up - Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs | Ambition Institute](#) ☆☆☆

or

scan the QR code:



Growing Together will share evidence-informed training, practical ideas, resources and opportunities to connect with other early years professionals.

Visit our Hub webpage for information about our programme and explore our Padlet for useful resources, links and opportunities. We will continue adding to these as our Hub develops.

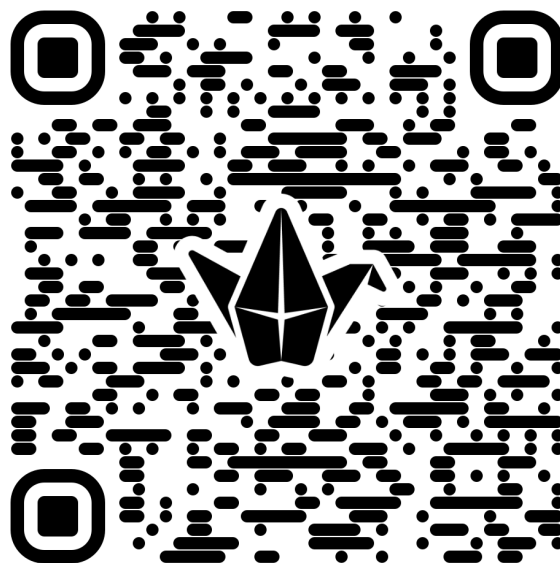
[Visit the Growing Together Hub webpage](#)

Save these links and keep checking back for updates.

Stay connected

Follow our social media channels for upcoming CPD, events, network meetings, resources, early years updates and opportunities to share practice.

[Explore training and resources on our Padlet](#)



3 - [Explore training and resources on our Padlet](#)



Instagram: @growingtogethereysph

Facebook: @growingtogethereysph



Contact our team

Email: growingtogetherEYSPH@dukestreet-nur.lancs.sch.uk

Help shape our next update 

What is one question you would like us to explore in a future update?

It could be about communication and language, professional development or another area of practice. You might also have an experience, approach or idea that other practitioners could learn from.

Reply to the email you received, contact growingtogetherEYSPH@dukestreet-nur.lancs.sch.uk.

Your questions and experiences will help shape our future content and programme. Please keep child information anonymous.

Thank you for being part of Growing Together. We look forward to learning alongside our early years community.

Connect. Share. Learn. Reflect. Grow.

Every second counts. Every practitioner matters. Every child deserves the best start in life.

We can't wait to connect with you! Let's grow together!



Growing Together Lancashire and Beyond

Early Years Stronger Practice Hub

Thank you for reading, If you have attended any of our training, please scan the QR code below and send back feedback, many thanks!

Growing Together EYSPH Training
Feedback Form

