

LEARNER NEWS



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Apprentice of the Year!**

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Congratulations Kai!
Apprentice of the Year



APPRENTICESHIP NEWS!

Celebrating your success this month

This month we have found out from Elise how her functional skills journey is progressing. Here is what she had to say...

"My functional skills journey has been far from easy. It took me three years and many, many failed attempts before I finally passed my English exam. There were countless times when I wanted to give up when another "unfortunately" felt like the end of the road. But something inside me refused to stop. I then put my mind to it worked harder than ever and prepared with everything I had. Eventually all that effort paid off and the day I finally passed was one of the most proudest and emotional moments of my life.

My Maths journey has been just as long and challenging. It's been over three years and I've had many failed attempts but this time I'm not losing hope. With the support and guidance of Rachel the very best Functional Skills tutor I've found new confidence in myself. She's helped me believe that I can do it and that perseverance really does make a difference.

I know that next time I sit my maths exam I'll be ready because I've learned that success isn't about never failing it's about never giving up no matter how many times you fall."



Congratulations Elise on passing your English Functional Skills!



Last month Kai Burchett from Leicester Meridian Busy Bees has won the Apprentice of the Year award. Well done Kai, a huge congratulations from everyone at Busy Bees Education and Training.

You can read about why Kai was nominated below...

"He represents everything we hope for in the next generation of childcare professionals - kind, committed, and making a positive impact every single day."

We hope Kai's story inspires all our apprentices to achieve their goals and aspire to be inspirational individuals within their roles.

Finished your apprenticeship? Eager to learn and develop? Have a look at our apprenticeships below and feel free to contact a member of the team for more information and guidance.

<https://busybeestraining.co.uk/apprenticeships>

Congratulations Kai!

Health and Wellbeing

Contact Us

Need to speak with an IQA?
Advice on your apprenticeship?
Contact your IQA Team
trainingquality@busybees.com

In the event you have a
safeguarding concern that
impacts on your training please
contact our DSL team BBT.
Safeguarding@busybees.com



**Learning with us, you
can get your hands on
a TOTUM card!**

NUS Apprentice Extra is now TOTUM Apprentice! The only discount card for apprentices in the UK, TOTUM Apprentice has loads of new benefits with hundreds of new discounts, brand new app, new and improved website, PASS proof of age ID (available on renewal) and FREE taste card & Coffee Club!

Find out more here <https://totum.com/campaigns/apprentice-extra-is-now-totum-apprentice>

Menopause

In an update to the NHS health check, the Department for Health and Social Care has announced that Menopause will be included in routine health checks. This aims to raise awareness of Menopause symptoms and support women to seek help.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/major-nhs-update-brings-menopause-into-routine-health-checks>

Menopause and perimenopause symptoms can have a big impact on daily life. Symptoms can include changes in mood and problems with memory and concentration and physical symptoms, such as hot flushes, difficulty sleeping, headaches, changes in skin.

To find out more visit <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/menopause/symptoms/>



Strut Safe is a volunteer organisation that operates a nonjudgmental support line who you can contact if you are going home alone until you are safe. The organisation offers a safe space for individuals, and their overall goal is to make sure people get home safely. You can call strut safe if you are worried about making a journey alone, and the call handler is there to keep you company from travelling from one point to another. Calls to Strut Safe are almost always free if you have inclusive minutes within your phone package. Calls to 03 numbers are charged at normal calls rates depending on your mobile provider. Take a look at the information for contact details and opening times of Strut Safe here <https://strutsafe.org/>





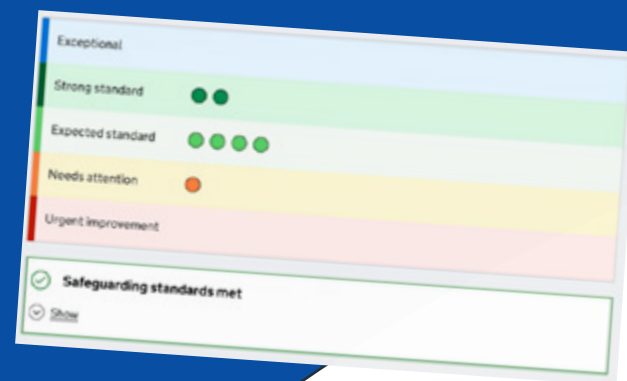
Changes to Ofsted inspections

Ofsted inspections offer an independent evaluation of education providers and identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement. During an Ofsted inspection, Inspectors collect evidence in various ways and assess them using an inspection framework. Inspections ensuring compliance with policies and legislation related to safeguarding, equality, and diversity, ensure expected standards of care and education. As an apprentice working in Early Years, it's important to understand how inspections are changing so you can be prepared and engage positively with the process.

Key Changes

From 10 November 2025 the updated framework and inspection toolkits will begin to apply to early years, schools and further education providers.

- The frequency of routine inspections for is being reduced from every 6 years to every 4 years.
- A new 5-point grading scale will replace the previous judgement labels.
- The introduction of a new report card style of publishing inspection findings.
- A stronger emphasis on how settings promote inclusion, support children with SEND, and disadvantage children.
- Safeguarding will feature as a separate category on report cards with the grading "met" or "not met".



You can find the Early Years Statutory Framework here:

School and group based providers
click [here](#)

Childminders
click [here](#)

What this means for you as an apprentice

Inspectors will place emphasis on what the setting provides and how it supports all children, your contributions through observations, planning and interactions matter.

Training & development opportunities. If the setting is preparing for an inspection under the new framework, you may be involved in meetings about your curriculum, inclusion and development of children's progress.

Importance of being aware of how the setting meets the needs of children with additional needs and being able to talk about how you support this.

Be prepared. Keeping your professional demeanour, records (learning journals, planning, observations) and awareness of safeguarding will stand you in good stead.

Use the changes in your apprenticeship evidence you're required to reflect on how the setting promotes quality, inclusion or how your role supports children's outcomes, you can reference the new inspection focus to show your awareness of the sector's evolving expectations.

Top Tips to be inspector ready...



- Know the setting's curriculum and your role in it - how you contribute to children's learning and development.
- Be able to explain how you support inclusion, special educational needs and disadvantaged children.
- Understand safeguarding in your setting: you should know the policy; know how to record/report concerns relating to safeguarding and welfare.
- Ask questions - if you're unsure about how inspection changes affect your role, talk to your mentor/supervisor.

Do you know the statutory requirements?

The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework sets the standards that all providers must meet and is mandatory for all providers. There are two separate documents, one for group and school-based providers and one for childminders. You must ensure that you are following the correct version for your setting.

- The Statutory Framework is split in three sections
- Learning and Development - These shape what children and taught, through the 7 areas of learning development and how their development is monitored and progresses.
- Assessment - This section sets out what providers must meet and guidance on formative and summative assessments
- Safeguarding and welfare requirements - Set out what providers must do to safeguard children, ensure safety and suitability of staff, promote, support and understand.

Focus on Theory: Friedrich Froebel (1782 – 1852)

Friedrich Froebel was a German educator and opened the first Kindergarten. He believed that children learn best through play and exploration, with educators supporting their natural curiosity and following their interests.

Key Principles of the theory

- **Unity and Connection:** All aspects of life are interconnected.
- Education should reflect the child's whole world family, culture and emotions.
- **Self-Led, Reflective Learning:** Children learn best through curiosity, exploration and reflection.
- **Enabling Environment:** Settings should provide open-ended, real-life experiences and materials.
- **Value of Family:** Strong partnerships between families and educators help children thrive.
- **Nature:** Outdoor experiences are vital for learning, physical well-being, creativity, and a spiritual growth. This principle encourages children to explore the natural world.
- **Importance of Play:** Play builds perseverance, problem-solving, communication and relationships and is an important tool for cognitive, emotional, and social development.
- **Creativity:** Singing, dancing and rhymes are essential for expression and joy.
- **Gifts and Occupations:** Froebel's "gifts" encouraged open-ended play, while "occupations" supported creativity and problem-solving.



"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul."



Froebel's ideas show us that play is the foundation for lifelong learning.

Can you see any ways that Froebel's theory has influenced our current EYFS?

Healthy Eating

Keep an eye on supermarket price wars! Most big stores compete on festive vegetable prices in December. It's the perfect time to stock up, stretch your money further, and fill your fridge and freezer with fresh, healthy ingredients.

Want to make the most of this, why not try...

- Batch cooking - you could make a vegetable soup or vegetable curry and store in the freezer for a healthy ready-made meal.
- Freeze left over vegetables - most vegetables can be blanched and frozen which will keep them fresh for longer.

You will find more ideas on how to make your fresh vegetables last longer here

https://www.bbc.co.uk/food/articles/how_to_make_vegetables_last_longer

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/howto/guide/top-tips-freezing-food>



Off-the-job training

With festive activities taking place this month, use the opportunity to complete some off - the - job training. You may have some new activities or festive events to plan and implement. Take time to reflect on your new learning from these experiences.

Remember to document this in your learning journal on OneFile, ensuring you record...

Intent - What did you want to learn/develop?

Implementation - Detail what you did to learn/develop.

Impact - What did you learn? How will this support your practice?



Functional Skills and Teaching Sessions

Functional Skills and Teaching session calendars

Please take a look at the Functional Skills and Teaching session calendars to select the sessions you would like to attend. Remember to contact your development coach to ask to be booked onto these.

December

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 9.30-10.30 – EPA support session EYP2 12.30-1.30 EPA support session EYE 3 Post April 2024 11.00-12.00 working in partnership with others	2 9.30-10.30 EPA support session EYLP5 9.30-10.30 introduction to leading in an early years setting	3 9.30-11.30 Health and safety Teaching session	4	5 9.30-11.30 Health and safety teaching session 10.15-12.15 Safeguarding teaching session	6
7	8 2.00-3.00 Reflective practice teaching session	9	10	11 10.00-11.00 Using technology teaching session	12	13
14	15 1.00-2.00 OTJ support session	16 9.30-11.00 Development assessment play and pedagogy 12.00-1.00 Equality and inclusion teaching session	17	18 9.30-11.30 Working in partnership with others 2.00-3.30 Safeguarding teaching session	19 3.00-4.30 Development, assessment play and pedagogy teaching session	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Functional Skills Sessions

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	01/12/2025	02/12/2025	03/12/2025	04/12/2025	05/12/2025
10.15 - 11.45	Maths: Shapes (Perimeter, Area & Volume) (1)	English Writing: Sentence, Paragraphs & Planning	English Reading: Purpose, Language, Facts & Opinions	Maths: Percentages (1)	Maths: Probability (1)
12.00 - 13.30	English Reading: Comparing Texts & Bias		Maths: Fractions (1)		Maths: Units & Measures (1)
13.45 - 15.15		Maths: Decimals (1)		Maths: Ratio & Scales (1)	
19.00 - 20.30	Maths: Averages & Range (1)		English Writing: Grammar & Punctuation		

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	08/12/2025	09/12/2025	10/12/2025	11/12/2025	12/12/2025
10.15 - 11.45	English Reading: Writing Styles & Organisational Features	Maths: Interest (2)		Maths: Non Calculator (2)	English Reading: Comparing Texts & Bias
12.00 - 13.30	Maths: Graphs & Tables (2)		Maths: BIDMAS (2)	Maths: Angles & Bearings (2)	Maths: Nets & Elevations (2)
13.45 - 15.15		English Reading: Purpose, Language, Facts & Opinions	English Writing: Sentence, Paragraphs & Planning		
19.00 - 20.30	English Writing: Formatting Texts		Maths: Averages & Range (2)		

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	15/12/2025	16/12/2025	17/12/2025	18/12/2025	19/12/2025
10.15 - 11.45	Maths: Decimals (3)	Maths: Non Calculator (3)	Maths: Probability (3)	Maths: Units & Measures (3)	Maths: BIDMAS (3)
12.00 - 13.30	English Writing: Grammar & Punctuation	Maths: Fractions (3)		English Writing: Formatting Texts	Maths: Ratio & Scales (3)
13.45 - 15.15			Maths: Shapes (Perimeter, Area & Volume) (3)		
19.00 - 20.30	Maths: Percentages (3)		English Reading: Writing Styles & Organisational Features		



Artificial Intelligence

Benefits of AI

- Study Support
- Can help break down topics into manageable and understandable information and can help with correcting spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Creating timetables, schedules and reminders
- Can help with problem solving and creating new ideas

The risks you need to know

- Privacy and Data Protection -Never share personal or company details with AI tools. Make sure to check your workplace policies and procedures before using AI at work.
- Accuracy - AI may not produce accurate results. Make sure to check the information.
- Reliance on AI - AI can be used to support you in studies, but it is important to ensure that this is used as a support tool, not as a quick way of producing that last minute assignment.

The Rise of AI Companions

AI companions or virtual friends are becoming more common, especially on social media and chat apps. They can hold realistic conversations, remember personal details, and respond with empathy-like messages. But they come with serious risks:

- False sense of connection
- Impact on Mental Health
- Data and privacy dangers

Recent news stories have highlighted the need to stay vigilant on the use of AI Chatbots, with reports suggesting that Chatbot conversations have become inappropriate and harmful. To find out more about these stories, please visit <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ce3xgwyywe4o>

AI is becoming increasingly part of our everyday lives, this could be as part of social media feeds, chatbots, virtual assistants, voice assistant and search engines. AI can bring efficiency and productivity to our lives, such as automating schedules, generating reports, and greater access to information. As with all technology, AI poses risks which we should be mindful of when using this technology.



The importance of mathematical skills in Early Years

2

Maths plays a crucial role in the effective running of an early years setting and in supporting children's holistic development. For childcare practitioners and apprentices, a strong understanding of mathematical concepts is essential – not only for everyday practical tasks but also for promoting children's cognitive growth and problem-solving abilities.

5

Maths in professional practice

- Calculating ratios of staff to children to ensure compliance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- Measuring and weighing ingredients during cooking or craft activities, modelling accurate use of units and quantities for children.
- Managing time effectively to plan structured routines – such as knowing how long to allow for group activities, rest, or transitions.
- Recording observations and data, such as tracking a child's progress, monitoring attendance, or maintaining accident logs.
- Handling money when planning fundraising events, ordering resources, or supporting role-play activities related to shopping and budgeting.

These tasks require accuracy, problem-solving, and reasoning – all key mathematical competencies.

1

Supporting children's mathematical development

Early years practitioners play a vital role in introducing mathematical ideas through play-based learning. According to the EYFS (DfE, 2021), maths is one of the prime areas of learning, focusing on number and numerical patterns. Practitioners can encourage this by:

- Providing opportunities for counting and one-to-one correspondence, for example, counting how many children are present or how many cups are needed at snack time.
- Encouraging spatial awareness and shape recognition through construction play or shape-sorting games.
- Supporting early measurement skills, such as comparing the heights of towers, the lengths of ribbons, or the capacities of containers in water play.

4

In summary, maths is not just a subject – it is a vital professional skill and a cornerstone of early education. By applying mathematical understanding in daily practice, childcare apprentices contribute to both the smooth operation of the setting and the developmental progress of the children in their care.

3

Through these experiences, children develop confidence in mathematical language, reasoning, and problem-solving – all of which lay the foundations for future learning.

The professional importance of numeracy

A confident approach to maths enhances a practitioner's professional competence and the quality of care provided. It ensures accuracy in record-keeping, health and safety compliance, and supports reflective practice. Moreover, demonstrating enthusiasm and

confidence in maths helps foster a positive attitude toward learning in children, showing them that maths is relevant, engaging, and part of everyday life.



Safeguarding

**What's
happening
in your area?**

Scotland

Domestic Abuse

[Click here to read more](#)



Yorkshire and the Humber

A thematic review concerning Adrian, Henry and Sam.

[Click here to read more](#)

North East

'I was beaten and treated like a dog by my boss'

[Click here to read more](#)

East Midlands

Warning issued after reports of courier fraud

[Click here to read more](#)

East of England

New group helps parents of sexually abused children

[Click here to read more](#)

London

Met Police reviewing 9,000 grooming cases

[Click here to read more](#)

South East

Local child safeguarding practice review: Child Zeta.

[Click here to read more](#)

West Midlands

Attacks on two women prompt police hunt

[Click here to read more](#)

South West

Working with our communities to prevent suicide

[Click here to read more](#)

North West

Brave survivors share open letters to help others facing Domestic Abuse

[Click here to read more](#)



Things going on during December...

Safe Gifts and Toys Month

Highlights the importance of choosing appropriate and safe gifts for children.

If you're shopping for children, check for age-appropriate labels, safety standards marks and check for any loose parts

<https://capt.org.uk/toy-safety/>



1st December - World AIDS Day

A global day to raise awareness and reduce stigma relating to HIV and AIDS

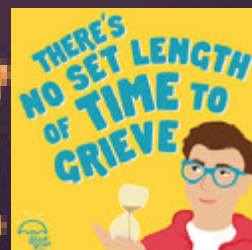
Wear a red ribbon to show your support.

<https://worldaidsday.org/join-in/>

1st-24th December - Advent

Advent means 'coming' and it's the period before Christmas which celebrates the birth of Jesus.

Whether you follow the tradition with a calendar, reflection, or acts of giving, Advent is all about spreading joy and hope.



1st-7th December - National Grief Awareness Week

Reach out, listen, and support those who may be struggling.

<https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/ngaw/>



5th December - Walt Disney's Birthday

Take inspiration from Walt himself — dream big, stay curious, and believe in your ideas.



8th December - Bodhi Day

A Buddhist celebration marking the day Siddhartha Gautama reached enlightenment after meditating under a Bodhi tree for 49 days

10th December - Human Rights Day

Marks the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/>



11th December - Christmas Jumper Day

It's time to pull out your most festive, funny, or outrageous jumper! Join the fun and help raise funds or awareness for a good cause — all while spreading some Christmas cheer.

14th-22nd December - Hanukkah

The Jewish Festival of Lights begins — a time to celebrate hope, perseverance, and miracles.

Happy Hanukkah to all who celebrate!



21st December - Winter Solstice

The shortest day of the year and the official start of winter.

From here on, the days get brighter — a symbol of renewal and looking ahead.

24th-26th December - Christmas Eve, Christmas Day & Boxing Day

A time to rest, reconnect, and recharge. Whether you're celebrating or simply taking a break, enjoy good company, good food, and good energy.



31st December - New Year's Eve

Time to celebrate your achievements and look ahead to new goals!

Busy Bees Education and Training will be closed from 25th December to 1st January.

Wishing all our learners and employers a safe, joyful, and inspiring end to the year!

Level 5 Workshops

If you are studying Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner with us, we have some monthly online workshops planned for next year. These sessions are drop-in sessions where you can come along to ask questions or complete some work with a Development Coach on hand for support.

23rd January 2026

20th February 2026

20th March 2026

17th April 2026

22nd May 2026

19th June 2026

24th July 2026

28th August 2026

18th September 2026

23rd October 2026

20th November 2026

11th December 2026

Speak to your Development Coach if you would like to be booked on to any of these sessions.



One of our Development Coaches, Rachel Guy, has just completed a three-week Talent Exchange Programme. We've caught up with her to find out about her time, here's what she had to say ...

Over the last three weeks, I have had the privilege of collaborating with some of the most amazing and inspiring people. Together, we created a safe and open space to share practices, exchange ideas, and learn from one another. This experience has given me a whole new appreciation for outdoor learning—the benefits, the importance, and in particular, how to use outdoor environments creatively to facilitate storytelling without relying on books. By being experimental and imaginative, we can engage children in unique and meaningful ways. I am currently putting together a PowerPoint discussing the benefits of outdoor storytelling, which can be used in support sessions and for OTJ tasks. I will also include links to the resources we created on the programme; including a podcast and videos for educators explaining how they can implement these ideas in practice.

We look forward to these being available soon!



Have you ever wondered what next?

**Thinking about your next steps in your career?
Want to go further in Early Years Education?**

If you're passionate about working with children and making a real difference in their early development, becoming an Early Years Teacher could be the perfect next step for you.

Early Years Teacher (with Qualified Teacher Status, QTS)

Early Years Teachers are specialists in working in with children aged 0 – 5 years. Their role is about leading learning and ensuring high-quality teaching and care that meets every child's needs.

They:

- Plan and deliver engaging, play-based learning experiences.
- Observe, assess, and track children's progress using the EYFS framework.
- Work closely with families to support each child's development.
- Lead teams of practitioners, modelling best practice and mentoring others.
- Ensure environments are inclusive, stimulating, and safe.
- Have comprehensive knowledge of teaching and course planning

How can I get there?

This could include:

- Undergraduate routes studying full-time at university.
- Postgraduate routes (PGCE) for those with a degree, combining study with practical teaching placements.
- Employment-based routes earning while you train.

For further information visit the National Careers website

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/early-years-teacher>



Spotlight on setting roles: THE ROLE OF AN EARLY YEARS TEACHER

Have you ever wondered what else you could do with your skills and experience?

Your time in nursery has given you knowledge and skills that open up lots of exciting paths.

You could look at becoming a Teaching Assistant within a school.

As a Teaching Assistant, you can support teachers in schools, help children thrive in the classroom, and gain valuable experience in a different education setting. It's a fantastic way to stay connected to children's learning while exploring a new career route.

What TAs Do:

- Help children in lessons, work with small groups, or provide 1 2 1 support
- Build confidence, social skills, and independence
- Assist with behaviour, organise resources, and create a positive learning environment.
- Work with teachers, other staff and parents.

For further information visit the National Careers website

<https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/teaching-assistant>



**We would like to
wish everyone a
safe and healthy
Christmas a Happy
New Year - and
Happy Hogmanay**

