

Newsletter

KU Early Years

Autumn 2024



Welcome!

Welcome to the Autumn Kingston Early Years newsletter. What a super start to the academic year we have had. So many engaged students who are ready to learn and make connections with practice. We are excited to see what the rest of the year holds!

This newsletter aims to showcase all the exciting developments happening in the Early Years department and partnership teams at Kingston University. If you have anything you would like to contribute to future issues, please email hazel.marian@kington.ac.uk before April 30th.



We look forward to seeing many of you at our January graduation ceremony on Monday 27th January at 2pm at The Rose Theatre in Kingston.

Congratulations to all our graduates!

Graduation



Top Tips from Alumni students

A fellow student pointed out council tax exception (I am the only adult in my household. Reduced rates given to households with 2 adults with just one full time student) when I was in year 2 of my foundation course. Luckily the council backdated it and credited it all back to me!

Make a list of references on a separate page to an essay straight away. I spent a frustrating evening once searching for a reference the day after I had written it into my essay. I learnt the hard way!

Read assignments out loud to yourself. It's a really good way of proof-reading your work.

Find a great critical friend. This can push grades up if you find a really good one.

Check student bursaries. Again, mid-course I realised I qualified for a single parent student bursary which has been very useful as I have to take time away from my business to come to university.



I found a dedicated study area at home useful, so it's always set up. That way there are no excuses not to study!!!

Don't forget!

There are many support services available to you at the University. If you are struggling with studying or things at home, please do reach out to the Wellbeing and Counselling services who can offer free confidential advice to all students.

Click here for more information: [Counselling and Wellbeing \(sharepoint.com\)](https://sharepoint.com)

Your personal tutors are available for tutorials so please do email them directly to book in a tutorial at an agreeable time.

The Academic Success Centre are here to support your studies. Please contact them for an appointment.
<https://kingstonuniversity.sharepoint.com/sites/mykingston/mysupport/myskills/Pages/asc.aspx>

Applicant Evenings

We are hosting several applicant evenings for students considering progressing onto their Level 6 BA (Hons) Early Years Teaching and Learning. Come and learn more about the programme, content, delivery and expectations. All sessions are held virtually on Microsoft teams.

Wednesday 23rd October
Thursday 28th November
Wednesday 22nd January 2025
Thursday 13th March 2025
Wednesday 14th May 2025

All sessions will start at 1800 with the exception of 28th November and 13th March which will start at 17.45.

To register your interest, please contact k.arthur@kingston.ac.uk

Updates from the team



An update from:

Hazel Marian, Early Years Curriculum Development and Partnerships Lead

Greetings from Kingston University! It has been an exciting start to a new academic year. We continue to commit ourselves to supporting Early Years practitioners through the various courses, programmes and initiatives that we offer at Kingston University. This year a strong focus will be to ensure that our student practitioners have opportunities to present and showcase their developing skills through presentations, debates, exhibitions, leading CPD activities, contributing to journal articles and other advocacy events. In particular we would like you to join the Early Childhood Studies Degree Network's (ECSDN) Day of Action on the 5th of November 2024. Together we have a stronger voice.

Finally, I want to thank all those who are allies of Early Childhood. We need your support and your voice to champion for quality education in Early Years. Please circulate our newsletter widely to raise awareness of the various activities we coordinate and support to champion Early Years.

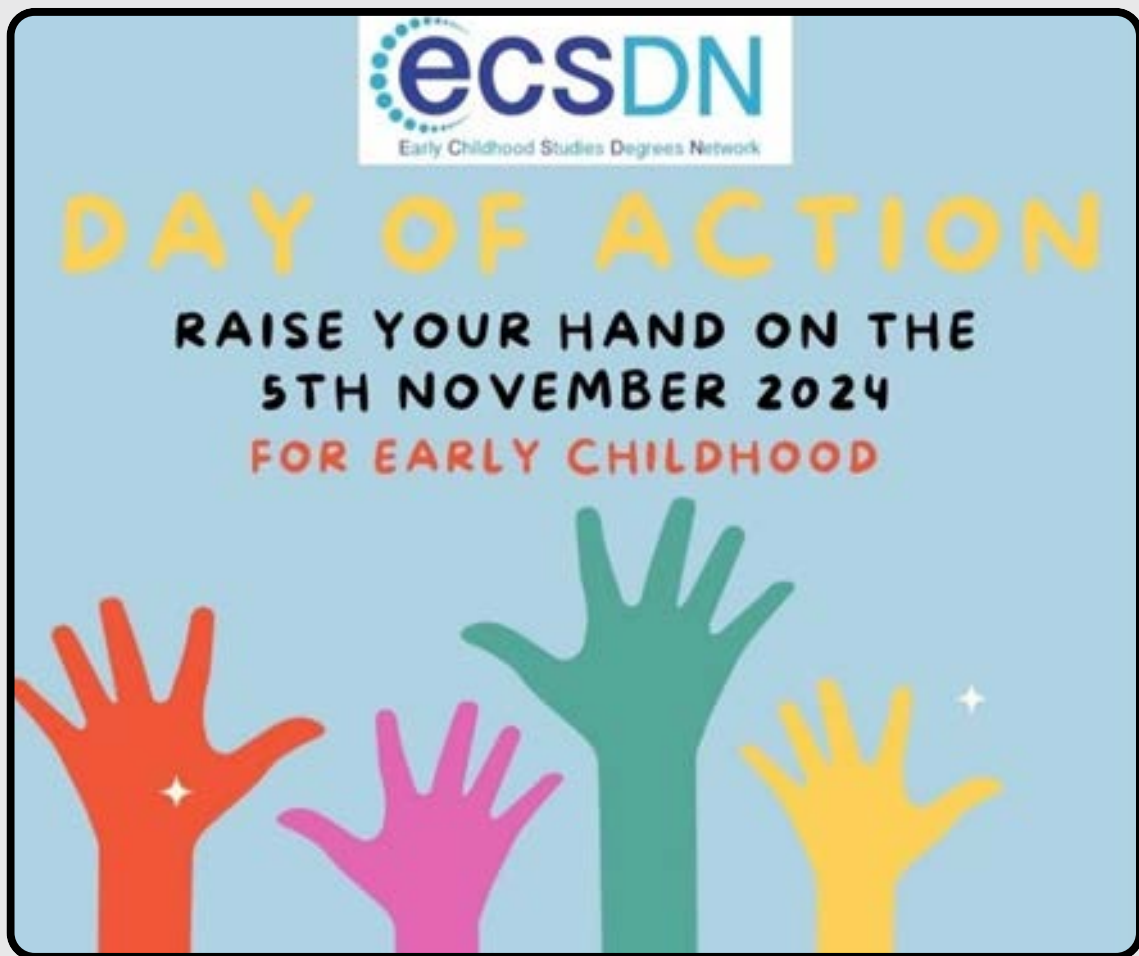
Till the next issue, I wish you all the best.

We would like to welcome James Hughes, Senior Lecturer for Early Years to our Kingston University teaching team. James brings with him a varied range of leadership experiences and has a particular interest in outdoor learning.

We would also like to thank Dr Caroline Guard who has been with the Early Years team at Kingston University leading the Top Up programmes in Early Years. Dr Caroline Guard is moving on to a research based position at the University of Oxford and we wish her all the best. Dr Caroline Guard has significantly contributed to raising the profile of babies and toddlers and her research in this area has helped to shape the development of our Early Years courses. We will truly miss her at Kingston University.



Kingston University has validated three new courses, two for delivery from September 2025 which is the BA Hons in Early Years Teaching and Learning and the BA Hons in Inclusion and Wellbeing which will be delivered one day a week on campus. In September 2026, a distance learning pathway for the BA Hons in Inclusion and Wellbeing will commence to support those who are interested in pursuing a degree via distance learning. These are exciting developments in the Department of Education at Kingston University.



A Day of Action organised by the ECSDN is an opportunity for students to raise their hands and voices for Early Childhood through collective action on the 5th of November.

Kingston University Early Years team were proud to get involved and encouraged students to write to their MP. We spent time in lectures discussing issues in the sector and how collectively as a graduate workforce they could come together to voice their advocacy for children and families.

Updates from the team



An update from:

Kyle Moore, Liaison Officer for Early Years Foundation Degree

We are proud to share some highlights of recent FdA events with you.

Our recent induction events for Level 4 and 5 FdA in Early Years students were a fantastic success. The energy and enthusiasm from you as students was inspiring and evident in our thought provoking conversations and your reflections on practice. It was wonderful to see so many of you from various locations and partnerships, contributing to a rich and diverse dialogue.

This has been followed by your Academic support day. Where we have explored academic writing and reading skills with the excellent Matt Cunningham, and completed our Future Skills teaching sessions with Sue Blackwood. The day was particularly highlighted by the great attendance of Critical Professional Advocates, who engaged with their CPA training, preparing to support you in your workplaces this year.

Thank you for your continued dedication and enthusiasm. We are excited about the journey ahead and look forward to seeing you at the upcoming events!!

Updates from the team



An update from:

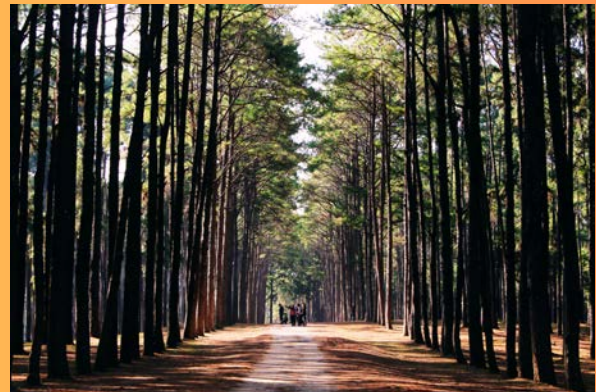
James Hughes, Course Leader for the Foundation Degree in Early Years

Hello everyone! I'm James Hughes, and I'm thrilled to introduce myself as the course leader for the FdA in Early Years and I am the new GPC module leader. With over 11 years of experience in education, I'm passionate about innovative teaching methods that inspire and engage our students.

A little about me and my motivations.

Throughout my career, I've been a strong advocate for outdoor learning. In my past practice, I've seen firsthand the transformative power of taking education beyond the classroom walls. Whether it was opening a school farm, school trips to an inland beach or pond dipping the impact on student engagement and skill set has been amazing.

"It is my opinion that outdoor learning not only enhances academic performance but also promotes physical health, emotional well-being, and environmental awareness. It provides unique opportunities for students to develop problem-solving skills, resilience, and a deeper connection with their surroundings".



As we move forward, I'm incredibly excited about the prospect of building strong, ongoing relationships with all our partners. Your expertise and support are invaluable in creating diverse, enriching learning experiences for our students. As I study for my master's this year, I will be further investigating the relationship between FE and HE. It is my aim that, together, we can create a dynamic educational environment that combines the best of traditional teaching methods with exciting possibilities of future learning. I look forward to collaborating with each of you to make this vision a reality.

Updates from the team



An update from:

**Caroline Guard, Course Leader for the
BA Top Up Early Years pathways**



This is my last newsletter as editor as I will be moving on from Kingston University in November. I wanted to thank you all for your engagement and dialogue over the last few years. I have learnt so much from all students, colleagues at partner institutions and at Kingston. I hope to remain in contact with many of you as I move on to pastures new. I will be taking up a research position at The Department for Social Policy and Intervention at the University of Oxford where I will be working on some exciting research projects.

BA (Hons) Top Up Teaching and Learning

After nearly four years of leading the growth and development of the Top Up pathways, I will be handing the baton over to **Kyle Moore** who I know will continue to develop the Teaching and Learning pathway from strength to strength. Kyle is excited and eager to develop new aspects of the course and will continue to offer his excellent expertise to students.

BA Top Up update

We have had a busy start to the BA Top Up programme this year, with students focussing on Transitions and Transformations, led by Kyle Moore. The students have worked hard to integrate into a new, larger cohort and have been developing their academic writing skills. Students have explored first relationships, the importance of working closely with families and other professionals as well as considering broader themes such as Neoliberalism, Intersectionality and Global Transitions. First assessments are due in on Monday 11th November and we are looking forward to seeing how they have interconnected practice reflections with literature and research. Good luck to everyone!

Community of Practice

We have had a slow start to growing our Community of Practice but last academic year saw some super contributions from Dawn Rigby, author and EY specialist and Brighter Together, an Intergenerational Charity. We are hoping to continue to push forward with our plans to develop some resources for parents and families on the importance of Play based experiences in Early Childhood and more policy advocacy. We would like to form a small committee to drive forward the projects which will now be led by Hazel and Kyle. If you would like to be involved, please let them know.

Partnership update

Morley College

Congratulations to Marie Warner, Level 5 (2023-2024 cohort), who won the Morley Social Justice Award, and Shackera Yvonne Mclean-Boyce Level 4 (2023-2024 cohort) who won the Morley HE Award. Both students have progressed onto the next level of studies. We are all very proud of your achievements.



Partner college?

Proud of your students? Got something exciting going on, or have a burning desire to share your views on something Early Years? Why not contribute to the next newsletter issue...



Early Years Taster Event

Back in June we hosted a Taster and Employer event at Kingston Hill campus. The event saw over 12 employers and organisations come together to share advocacy for the Early Years Workforce by advertising vacancies and sharing career development opportunities. The event was well attended by alumni, current and upcoming students as well as individuals new to Kingston University and the Early Years sector.

We were very fortunate to welcome Helene Mark from Outdoor Owls who offered a free CPD event for all delegates. Helene shared her expertise around Wellbeing and the Outdoors, speaking for nearly hour about the Outdoor Owl ethos and its success in promoting children’s curiosity, discovery and wellbeing.



Thank you to all who attended and helped to make the event the success that it was. Watch this space for the next event in the Spring!

- With thanks for the organisations who attended:
- Brighter Together
 - Rocket Productions
 - Fennies Nurseries
 - Jancett Childcare Academy
 - Brooklands College
 - N Family Club
 - Morley College
 - Seahorse Nursery
 - ABC Studio
 - Outdoor Owls
 - Kingston College
 - Kingston University
 - Richmond College

Pedagogy of Value

by Elle Dipper

'Pedagogy' can be defined as our approach to teaching - how we choose to help others to learn. It is paramount that educators reflect on their pedagogy, rather than take it for granted (Stephen, 2010) or merely accept the status quo. Reflecting causes us to consider the epistemology - the why - behind our pedagogy.

My journey of developing the Pedagogy of Value began not with the children, but with my Grandfather, depicted in this photograph with my Grandmother.



He was an engineer and is still a highly skilled and intelligent man. However, he recently broke his hip and consequently, has moved into a residential home where he is dependent on his carers. When I visited him, I wondered whether his carers see and respect him as an individual, as I do, or whether his identity is secondary to his care needs. It then occurred to me that every resident was an individual with an identity and a family who knew them as such. Although I am certain they are well taken care of, it caused me to consider whether the residents feel valued in the home.

Reflecting upon this provoked a contemplation of the children at my setting in this light too. They are like the "residents" of the nursery. However, each child is an individual with ideas, interests, knowledge and experiences. I found myself questioning: Do they feel valued as such?

Pedagogy of Value is shaped by themes of being: respecting and valuing children for who they are as an individual and allowing them to develop their interests; belonging: children feeling valued as active members of their learning community (Papatheodorou, 2010); and becoming: supporting children to see their own value as we help to prepare them for their future - as citizens who contribute positively towards society.

However, in order to understand how we can communicate to children that they are valued, it is pertinent to decipher what 'value' is. I reflected on how I feel valued and deduced two key attributes:

Recognition (as an individual, celebrating my knowledge, strengths and experience); and

Participation (being involved in decision making, being listened to and being encouraged to actively participate by using my strengths).

These are two distinct themes that are interwoven throughout my analysis as I encourage educators to examine whether our learning communities reflect value.

Pedagogy of Value

by Elle Dipper



Our Education System: Fields of Daisies



This photograph of a field of daisies represents how I perceive the children in our education system. To me, this communicates that children all look the same, as daisies do, because they have all learnt the same knowledge and skills.

Pedagogy of Value: Gardens of Flowers



Froebel coined the term Kindergarten, which literally means “child’s garden”. He stated that ‘children are like tiny flowers; they are varied and need care, but each is beautiful alone and glorious when seen in the community of peers’ (Froebel, 1842).

Liebschner (1992:36) explains this metaphor beautifully, stating that, ‘each individual is unique, has the power to express himself in his distinctive way... each person has to contribute to the whole in a unique way. Each person, each child has a particular gift which will become visible if circumstances are right and freedom for expression... is given.’

In contrast to the field of daisies, this notion values children because it recognises and respects children as individuals and encourages their participation - by using their gifts - within their community. The picture Froebel presents us with illustrates the concept of ‘unity’, where through our relationship with others we gain an understanding of ourselves as ‘a member of a larger whole, a part of something bigger’ (ibid). Dewey believed that it is only through belonging to a community that true individuality can be achieved, and a fundamental role of education is to sculpt each child’s individuality whilst supporting them to contribute towards their community (Kegley, 2011).

Pedagogy of Value requires adults to relinquish control of the curriculum and reconceptualise their idea of education. Rather than viewing teaching as imparting our knowledge, I encourage adults to step back to recognise children as individuals, celebrating and nurturing their strengths and interests; and invite children to participate in their learning communities by including them in decision making and encouraging them to actively participate by using their strengths.

I believe that this will communicate to children that they are valued, and that if children gain a sense of their value, they will be more likely to contribute productively - in their early years and in the future - rather than destructively to their learning communities and towards society. Adopting a Pedagogy of Value could therefore impact upon society as a whole.



Student Voice Committee

Student Representatives

Brooklands College

Katy Firth L4 - K2411746@kingston.ac.uk
Jessica Paul L4 - K2453201@kingston.ac.uk
Lulu Masterson L5 - K2362459@kingston.ac.uk

Kingston College

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Isabel Dance L5 - K2356820@kingston.ac.uk
Delecia Calderwood L5 - k2372719@kingston.ac.uk
Evie Rigg L5 - k2335027@kingston.ac.uk

LETTA

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Husna Begum L5 - K2368804@kingston.ac.uk
Farhaana Rahman L5 - K2364990@kingston.ac.uk

Morley College

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Millie Beddall L4 - K2440713@kingston.ac.uk
Sasha Sweet L5 - K2372663@kingston.ac.uk
Jessica Lester L5 - K2375266@kingston.ac.uk

Reach Academy

Sinead Carroll L5 K2365036@kingston.ac.uk

Richmond College

Abigail Mcleod-Hancock L5 - K2374267@kingston.ac.uk

Flourish Learning Trust (Whitefield)

Sara McKenna L4 - K2453974@kingston.ac.uk

BA Top-Up EARLY YEARS

Khushi Sneh T & L - K2256831@kingston.ac.uk
Charlotte Page T & L (GPC) - K2250649@kingston.ac.uk

**Student Voice Committee Meetings: Thursday 21st November
4-5pm and Tuesday 18th March 4-5pm**

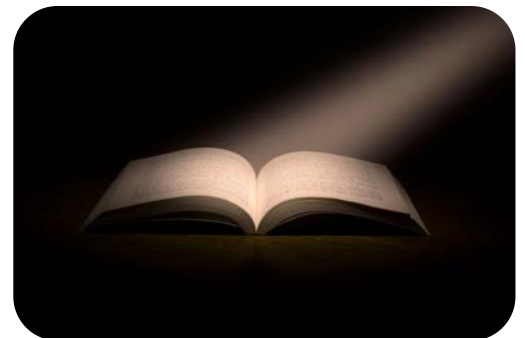
Alumni Advocates

We are very fortunate to retain close links with our wonderful Alumni who often return to campus to share their sector wide impact. We thank them for their time and expertise shared with our current students. If you would like to return to KU and offer a specialist lecture, please do let us know.

Thank you to this our specialist contributors this year so far: Tracey Watson, Sarah Sanderson-Fisher and Richard Davis.



Congratulations to Navdeep Mann and Louise Stafford (2023 graduates) who have had chapters accepted for an upcoming book, **Being with Babies: Establishing a Sense of Belonging in Early Childhood Settings** which will be published by Routledge in early 2026. We are incredibly proud of our graduates becoming published authors!



Professional Resources



High quality interactions in the Early Years

The ShREC approach

Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing in the early years

What do we mean by mental health and wellbeing?

Wellbeing is about how we are doing, emotionally, cognitively, and as a nation. Focusing on wellbeing supports children to develop and flourish. This also has the foundation for their long-term mental health. Should being mentally healthy enable young children to understand and begin to manage emotions, to experience joy, meaning, relationships and to explore play and learn. This may be experienced differently from one child to the next.

Factors in society can affect young children's mental health and wellbeing. Parental poverty, single parent households, and other adverse childhood experiences can affect the risk of poor mental health for young children. Putting attention to children's mental health and wellbeing can help to identify concerns about their experience, their health, development and safety. Educators are not mental health experts, however, they play an important role in creating opportunities when engaging, talking, or making referrals to other professionals, might be appropriate.

'Being' and 'becoming' mentally healthier

Mental health and wellbeing for young children involve two connected stages: 'being' mentally healthy and 'becoming' mentally healthier. Both stages are influenced by consistent and responsive engagement with the child, and wellbeing and opportunity to engage in meaningful early learning.

'Being' refers to children's current state of wellbeing, which includes social, emotional and behavioural elements. Educators play a role in supporting children's wellbeing, for example, by developing secure, supportive relationships with them. This helps children to feel comfort, safe and able to explore themselves. Educators may also support children's resilience with their parents as they form early relationships. This can engage children in meaningful and stimulating play and learning experiences.

'Becoming' mentally healthier involves children developing social, emotional and behavioural capacities to give towards better mental health in the future. Education can play a role in supporting children to develop these capacities. For example, by helping children to understand different feelings and to form trusting and secure relationships. Educators can also support children's developing independence and cooperation with others.

By building warm, trusting and supportive relationships with children, educators can engage them in observations and reflections that support their 'being' and 'becoming' mentally healthier. This can be supported through the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFSE). Children from diverse families may experience more difficulties developing self-regulation and emotional resilience. This is also of greater risk if not teaching essential aspects of EYFSE by the end of education that their care workers provide. Integrating EYFSE and EYFSE strategies into early care for all can provide children's mental health and wellbeing. Young children with more developmental and regulatory skills are more likely to have better health outcomes in later life, including a lower risk of anxiety and depression.

What does the evidence say?

The following is based on a systematic review of research evidence.

Education Endowment Foundation

The Education Endowment Foundation have released a range of FREE resources for educators. Supporting Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing: Supporting children's mental health and wellbeing in the early years | Education Endowment Foundation
Improving Early Education through High Quality Interactions: Improving early education through high-quality interactions | EEF

The Froebel Trust have recently released some new pamphlets to support practice in Early Years. These are free to access and download on their website.

A Froebelian approach

Supporting children with additional needs

by Eve Mawby Whistler with Lizzie Montgomery

Playing with power

A guide for educators supporting anti-racist and decolonial childhoods

By Simon Bateson and Dr Shaddai Tembo

External CPD Opportunities

Dates for your diary



Online Autumn Lecture 2024

Prof. Alison Clark and Donna Green
Time for children

Tuesday 19 November 2024 at 7pm
Book your free ticket at froebel.org.uk

Slow pedagogy is an approach where time is prioritised for play, listening and relationships.

Prof. Alison Clark

Froebel Trust

Registration for the Froebel Trust Autumn Lecture 'Time for children' with Prof. Alison Clark and Donna Green Survey ([surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com))

Tuesday, 26 November

In conversation with Stephen Morgan, Minister for Early Education

Tuesday 26th November at 18:00

Stephen Morgan, Minister for Early Education is hosting 'a conversation with' event. Open to all in the sector, register here for your free ticket - In conversation with Stephen Morgan, Minister for Early Education Tickets, Tue 26 Nov 2024 at 18:00 | Eventbrite



There are several upcoming events hosted online by TACTYC, please check out their website to register for any that take your interest.

[Our events | Tactyc](#)



**SUPPORTING
EARLY MINDS**
Research Network

Exploring the Lost Mothers Project in the Context of Supporting Early Minds Research on Newborn-Mother Separation
Dr Laura Abbott (University of Hertfordshire)
Friday 13th December at 1-2pm

Watch Me Play! Approach
Dr Jenifer Wakelyn and Dr Vaso Totsika (Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust)
Friday 14th February at 1-2pm

STUDENT REFLECTIONS



Do you have something you want to write about?

Do you have any reflections about your practice or a burning desire to share your thoughts on something Early Years?

Send in your reflections for the next newsletter!

Charity in the spotlight

The Makaton Charity

The Makaton Charity exists to ensure that everyone living with learning or communication difficulties has the tools and resources they need to understand and be understood. The Charity aims to ensure that as many people as possible have access to Makaton, to achieve our goal of a truly inclusive society. Their website offers a range of free resources for professionals and families to access.

