



in partnership with



An invitation to something different... The Early Years Inspiration Exchange

This gathering brings together a small number of nurseries and childminders from across the UK who are reimagining what early childhood can be for children, families, and educators. Through keynote talks, shared practice, visual provocations, and honest conversation, the event offers a glimpse into approaches rooted in creativity, community, play, nature, relationships, and lived values.

Rather than presenting a single “right way”, the day invites reflection, curiosity, and inspiration, encouraging educators to take away ideas that genuinely resonate with their own settings and practice.

A thoughtful and hopeful coming together for those who believe early years can be both richly human and transformational.

**Saturday 3rd
October 2026**

9.30am – 1pm

**Coventry Building
Society Arena**

only

£65 + vat

Sponsored by:

HOPE
is all you need

Alice Sharp

Leader in Future-Focused Early Years Education
Event Host

Alice Sharp is an internationally recognised early childhood consultant, speaker and trainer with more than 30 years' experience in the sector. Passionate about creativity, play and child development, she works across the UK and internationally to inspire transformational early years practice through innovative, thought-provoking training and advocacy for children.



Speakers

Mandy and Tom Richardson

Naturally Learning • Cornwall

Naturally Learning is a small group of nurseries based in Cornwall. Rooted in nature, our children spend their days exploring forests, beaches and wild spaces, building deep relationships with the natural world through play, freedom and adventure.

Sustainability is woven gently through everyday experiences, nurturing children who not only care for the planet, but who may one day become its future conservationists and protectors. We believe in preserving the magic of childhood, where storytelling, wonder, discovery risk, and joyful play are not extras, but essential.



Liz Ludden

Having successfully run an outstanding nursery setting in Liverpool City centre for 22 years, Liz fully embraced the notion *“it takes a village to raise a child”* with the nursery ethos being embedded in community, culture and togetherness.

Turning learning into something magical and joyful and so using that experience, Liz co-founded the charity Ready Generations and The Nursery in Belong. An intergenerational nursery that brings young children and older adults together in a shared space to learn, connect and thrive. Rooted in community, it creates meaningful opportunities for relationships to form across generations inclusive environment where everyone has something to give and something to gain. Always learning from others, Liz is also leading a nursery school improvement programme, Connect2Learn, in the Gunjur region of The Gambia.



Charlotte Worthington

Hello, I'm Charlotte, a nursery educator and intergenerational lead at Ready Generations Nursery in Belong, right in the heart of a care village in Chester.

I feel so fortunate to ignite intergenerational magic, which has truly transformed my experience. Being involved in building our children's life foundations and sharing meaningful moments with our older friends fills my heart with joy. It's a wonderful journey!

Jackie Warren

CEO of the charity Growing Places

Jackie became manager of the first Growing Places nursery in Havant, Hampshire, thirty years ago after moving from Liverpool to Portsmouth as a navy wife with her young family.

With no support network, she identified a need for a community-based nursery, she built a place where working and non working families could come together, raising aspirations for all. Her commitment to community empowerment has driven Growing Places' expansion to five nurseries, wrap around care and a community hub. Jackie's work continues to strengthen connections and opportunities in building sustainable communities.

Carlie Powell

Head of Nurseries at Growing Places

Carlie joined the charity after 15 years teaching in primary education.

She champions a holistic approach that values the entire family, not just the child, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment.

Through her leadership, Growing Places nurtures a strong community spirit, empowering families and promoting growth that benefits everyone involved.

Together, their work continues to strengthen connections and opportunities in building sustainable communities and the organisation's mission of lasting community impact.



Practice Posters and Conversations

Marie Richardson

Chief Operating Officer • Alice Sharp Training
Conversation Host

Marie has worked in many parts of the early years sector for over 25 years.

She develops and delivers alongside Alice, both nationally and internationally. She is currently raising the quality in fourteen projects across Scotland.



Diane Koplewsky

CEO • Sleepy Hollow • Northern Ireland

Early Years graduate, MBA graduate and TEDx speaker from Northern Ireland, recognised for her leadership and influence within the early years sector.

Through her leadership, Diane has championed innovative, child-centred approaches that place curiosity, wellbeing and development at the heart of practice. Her work spans early years and school age childcare, alongside the development of corporate childcare solutions, reflecting a broader vision for how childcare can support modern families.

She leads services operating across social economy and community interest settings, with a strong emphasis on accessibility, inclusion and community connection.

Diane is a passionate advocate for the role of early years provision not only in supporting children and families, but as essential infrastructure for thriving communities and a productive economy.



Libby Leyshon

North Cornelly Playgroup • Wales

Libby is the leader & registered person of North Cornelly Playgroup, based in Bridgend in South Wales.

North Cornelly Playgroup, affectionately known as NCP is a small but mighty pre-school setting that provides learning through play for children aged two to four years.

NCP is a multi-award-winning setting, that has wellbeing at the heart of all we do.

Our philosophy is based on creating an enabling environment where children's voice is paramount and enabling, innovative opportunities are endless and full of awe and wonder.

A sense of cynefin is deep rooted throughout our pedagogy not just to the setting, but to our local community as we utilise community assets to enhance the children's learning and opportunities, including intergenerational and physical enterprises.

Sarah Sharpe

Poppins Daycare • Wales

A registered childminder who fosters a “nature and nurture” ethos, championing outdoor learning with an allotment for growing and building both community connection and children's development.

Sarah is *Hygge in the Early Years* accredited and has spent time in both Norway and Denmark learning first hand how the hygge approach works. Offering a calm, inclusive, child led, welcoming environment where curiosity, wellbeing and belonging are at the heart of every child's experience.



Ally Hobbs

Kids Planet • England, Wales and Ireland

My name is Ally, I am the Director of Quality and Innovation at Kids Planet.

At Kids Planet we believe every child deserves a nurturing, inspiring start to their learning journey. Our commitment to excellence in early years is rooted in the relationships we build with children and families every day, creating environments where children feel safe, valued, curious, and confident to be themselves.

Through passionate educators, meaningful experiences, and a genuine love for learning, we strive to help every child flourish and reach their full potential.

Karen Flynn

Kirktonholme Childcare • Scotland

I'm Karen Flynn, Director and Area Manager at Kirktonholme Childcare and also an evening lecturer at Glasgow Clyde College teaching and supporting the sector's leaders. I've worked in early learning and childcare for 42 years and still genuinely love what I do.

A huge part of my role is supporting our children, teams and students to grow in confidence and realise their individual potential.

I'm passionate about creating warm, nurturing environments where children feel safe, valued, and ready to flourish, while also helping staff and students develop professionally and believe in themselves.

I strongly believe that children do best when we take time to understand their individual needs, build strong relationships, and put wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.



Hayley Peacock • England

Hayley Peacock Education supports educators, schools and nurseries to think differently about learning, leadership and the future of childhood through the global **Playoneering®** movement. Blending research, creativity and real-world innovation, Hayley's work encourages children and adults to become curious thinkers, collaborators and changemakers.

Through international projects, professional learning and the first 5 year UK partnership with Fondazione Reggio Children, Hayley Peacock champions bold, future-focused practice that values imagination, playful rigour, oracy and meaningful human connection at the heart of education.

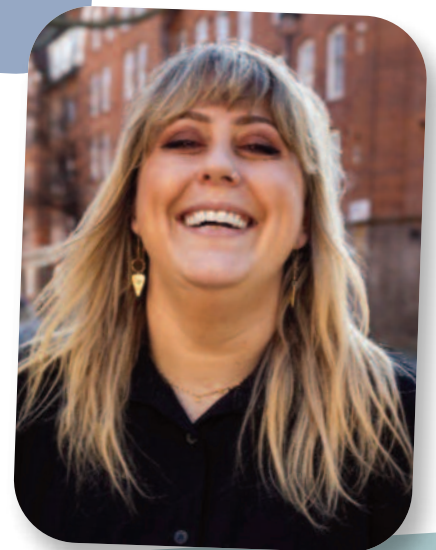


LEYF and London Institute

London Early Years Foundation is a pioneering social enterprise (the largest in Europe) that runs a network of nurseries across London, focused on high-quality early education and care that supports children, families, and communities.

World renowned for their Social Justice Pedagogy.

London Institute of Early Years is an organisation dedicated to professional development and training in early childhood education, supporting teachers to deepen practice and improve outcomes for young children.



Sophie Pallash

Pedagogy Coach • LEYF
Researcher • London
Institute of Early years

Saudaa Nadat

Area Operations Manager • LEYF
Researcher • London Institute
of Early years



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