

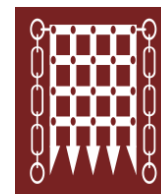
Westminster Education Forum policy conference:

Next steps for early child development and enhancing school readiness in England

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 3rd December 2026

Taking Place Online

Draft agenda subject to change



**WESTMINSTER
EDUCATION
FORUM**

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Assessing progress and priorities for early child development and improving school readiness**
Senior commentator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Implementation of best start reform, strengthening early support for children and families, and integrated family services**
giving every child the best start in life and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 / implications for local duties, commissioning and shared accountability / implementation of Best Start Family Hubs, Healthy Babies services and Families First Partnership programme / integrated support for families from pregnancy through early childhood / links with maternity, health visiting, early years and community-based provision / evidence-informed parenting and home-learning support / speech, language and communication development / coordination across health, education, social care and community services / progress towards the Government's 2028 Good Level of Development ambition / delivery capacity, longer-term resourcing and consistency across local areas
Kathryn Morris, Early Years Senior Manager, Blackpool Better Start
Dr Bidisha Lahoti, Consultant Paediatrician, Evelina London Children's Hospital
Senior representative, early years provider
Senior academic
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.15 **Accountability, inspection and measuring outcomes in the early years**
implications of the move to more frequent Early Years Register inspections / Ofsted's updated early years inspection toolkit, operating guide and information / practical implications for providers and inspectors / interpreting performance information, contextual indicators and outcomes data / use of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile / measuring progress consistently across diverse communities, provider types and local contexts / local reporting, accountability and improvement / understanding measured outcomes alongside the experiences of children and families / alignment with wider family-support reform
Senior representative, quality assurance
Senior representative, early years provider
Senior representative, research
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.50 **Chair's closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.55 Break
- 11.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.10 **Childcare expansion, provider sustainability and local sufficiency**
expanded funded childcare and implications for provider viability / affordability, accessibility and local sufficiency / demand, take-up and access for disadvantaged families / expanding nursery provision on school sites / funding pressures and financially sustainable delivery / regional disparities in capacity and availability / workforce availability and implications for expansion / practical challenges for providers, schools, trusts and local authorities / maintaining quality as provision expands
Senior representative, childcare provider
Senior representative, school
Senior representative, local authority
Senior representative, early years finance
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.55 **Supporting inclusion, workforce development and outcomes for children with SEND**
workforce capacity across early years, family support, health, education and specialist services / recruitment, retention, pay and professional status / initial training, professional development and local implementation support / strengthening early identification of SEND and additional needs / streamlining access to specialist advice and support / embedding inclusive practice consistently across early years settings / alignment of funding, workforce development, specialist services and family-facing provision / joint working between providers, schools, specialist services and families / supporting transitions into reception across local systems
Janet King, Sector Manager, Education and Childcare, NCFE
Dr Penelope Hannant, Developmental Psychologist and Assistant Professor, Educational Inclusion, University of Birmingham
Senior representative, early years provider
Senior representative, SEND
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.40 **Policy priorities and next steps for improving school readiness and early child development**
Sue Robb, Best Start in Life Champion, Department for Education
Questions and comments from the floor
- 13.05 **Chair's and Westminster Education Forum closing remarks**
Senior Parliamentarian
Sean Cudmore, Westminster Education Forum