



‘Embracing inclusivity in Early Years: enabling all children to flourish and thrive’

FRIDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2024

Bi-borough Early Education and Childcare Service would like to invite you to **the Early Years Conference** for all early years settings, schools, childminders and other professionals who work within early years, which is taking place on **FRIDAY 23 February 2024** from 9.15am to 1.05pm.

To book a place/s, please follow this link [here](#)

Cost: £35 per place (not available to purchase within the training membership)

We have brought together a range of Early Years experts and professionals to create an **EXCITING PROGRAMME** for you covering a number of key topics as reflected in the Conference agenda below:

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| 9.15 | Welcome/Introductions |
| 9.25 – 10.10am | Key note speaker 1: Cheryl Warren Enabling our Neurodivergent Children to Thrive |
| 10.10am | Break |
| 10.20 – 11.05am | Key note speaker 2: Dr Gill Francis The Role of Play in the Lives of Children with SEND |
| 11.05am | Break |

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| 11.25 – 12.10pm | Key note speaker 3: Kerry Murphy Developing Neurodiversity-Informed Practice in Early Childhood |
| 12.10pm | Break |
| 12.20 – 1.05pm | Key note speaker 4: Joanna Grace The Ingredients to a Super Sensory Story |
| 1.05pm | Final remarks/Plenary |

Please see below short bios of our presenters:

Enabling our Neurodivergent Children to Thrive by Cheryl Warren



Cheryl has over 28 years' experience within the early years sector and is now a consultant, key note speaker and an award winning trainer, working with nurseries and schools across the UK. Cheryl's passion and specialism for understanding and acceptance for neurodiversity within early years is impactful and comes from the heart, as a professional and also as parent of two neurodivergent children herself. She is an advocate for true inclusive practice, enabling ALL children to be heard, to be given the tools and connections to thrive and to be celebrated and accepted for their uniqueness.

All of our children of difference deserve to be understood and accepted for who they are, enabled to be their true self, in a world that doesn't seem to make sense, that can be overwhelming and where there is a narrative that suggests they need to change to fit in. In this session Cheryl will explore this paradigm and how we can shift our narrative, our practice and our mindset to ensure that our children can flourish in neuroaffirming early years settings. Will we explore our role in creating a truly enabling environment, positive affirming engagement and how through connection, consideration, consistency and a commitment to change, we can enable our children to thrive.

The Role of Play in the Lives of Children with SEND by Dr Gill Francis



Gill is a play researcher and developmental cognitive psychologist who is passionate about studying the role of children's play in early years development. She is a Research Fellow and Assistant Professor at the Department of Education, University of York and completed her graduate studies at the University of Cambridge at the Research Centre for Play Education Development Learning. She is passionate about disseminating evidence based research about children's play to practitioners including raising an awareness of the

limitations, challenges, and opportunities from the research. Gill has delivered talks to local, national, and international audiences working in early years education. This seminar will take a deep dive into play-based interventions previously undertaken with children with special needs and consider applicability to early years settings. Specifically, you are invited to discuss how early years providers and practitioners can use play to foster inclusive settings.

Developing Neurodiversity-Informed Practice in Early Childhood by Kerry Murphy



Kerry is an early childhood specialist with a background in neurodiversity, disability and behaviour. She is a lecturer in early years & SEND at Goldsmiths University and an author & she is currently completing my doctorate (EdD) in play and neurodivergence at The University of Sheffield. Her research aims to challenge the quality of play-based intervention so that there is a move away from teaching neurodivergent children to mimic neurotypical skills, also referred to as masking.

Kerry's aim in working in the early years is to challenge the deficit narratives about children whose development does not take a typical pathway. She adopts a neurodiversity-affirming stance and believe in strengths-based approaches to inclusion. Kerry offers training and guidance to help practitioners and settings become neuroinclusive, including understanding the role of neurodiversity & ableism and the harms of traditional behaviour management approaches.

The Ingredients to a Super Sensory Story by Joanna Grace



Sensory Stories have long been the hidden gem of the world of special education, but their ability to engage across barriers of language and cognition make them a wonderful addition to early years provisions. In this seminar you will be invited to explore the WHY behind the sensory engagement work, and how it applies, not just to the learners in your setting but to you and all the people in your life that you care for. Discover how sensory engagement can be used to promote cognition, communication, memory, mental health and engagement with learning. This session will end with a consideration of the ingredients to a truly super sensory

story and how they impact a person's experience of their learning and the world around them.

Joanna Grace is an Award Winning International Sensory Engagement and Inclusion Specialist, Globally Published Author, Trainer, TEDs Speaker and Founder of The Sensory Projects. Joanna has worked across education from the early years through to further education, in specialist and mainstream settings. She has also been a registered foster carer for children with complex needs, and consults within adult care and dementia care as well as in education. As a Patron for organisations such

as Concrete Youth and Jolly Josh, and an Ambassador for Parallel, Jo promotes cultural and physical inclusion for all. She lives in rural Cornwall with her two young sons and a dog and a cat and is currently studying for a doctorate in Identity and Belonging for People with Profound Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities funded by the ESRC. In all of her work Jo is seeking to contribute to a future where people are understood in spite of their differences.

For more information contact: Silvia Zeroual by emailing Bi-boroughChildCareTraining@rbkc.gov.uk

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The ZOOM link will be emailed to each participant booked on the conference on Thursday 22 February.