

## About our contributors

*Read about our contributors from the last 3 years. All descriptions are accurate at the time of article publication:*



**Debbie Adams** is currently working at the London Borough of Camden as Head of the Integrated Early Years Service. She has been involved with children's centres since their inception and has worked in a number of different local authorities developing services and ensuring that resources are used to give all children the best possible start.



**Nathan Archer** has worked in early childhood education for twenty years across the public, private and voluntary sectors both in and with schools and settings, for a local authority, and with two national early years organisations. He is an associate tutor at the University of Sheffield and is currently studying for a doctorate.



Professor **Tony Bertram** is joint Director of the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) in Birmingham, and the current President of Early Education (BAECE). He was directly involved in the development of the Foundation Stage curriculum and is the coordinating editor of the European Early Childhood Education Research Journal (EECERJ).



**Sarah Bridge** is an Advisory Teacher for Hampshire County Council, supporting early years practice from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.



**Jacqui Burke** delivers training on Developing Change-Ability and has written about this in her book Building Your Early Years Business – for more information visit [www.flourishingpeople.co.uk](http://www.flourishingpeople.co.uk) or contact [jacqui@flourishingpeople.co.uk](mailto:jacqui@flourishingpeople.co.uk)



**Gordon Cameron** is a Policy and Research Officer at the Family and Childcare Trust. He has previously worked as a researcher for the Strategic Society Centre, a public policy research centre. He has a first in Sociology and an MSc with distinction in Science, Technology and Society from UCL.



**Dr Verity Campbell-Barr** is an Associate Professor in Early Childhood Studies at Plymouth University. Her research focusses on the quality of early childhood services, particularly the role of the workforce and the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for working in early childhood services. She is about to undertake a European project on concepts of child-centred practice.



**Jan Casson**, MBE, MA, BA (Hons) began work in early years education in 1975, from inner cities Liverpool, London and Hastings to the north east. She is passionate about working with communities, building networks and developing social capital, which can support the family unit, allowing children and young people to grow and thrive.



**Dr Tim Clark** is the Executive Head of Early Education for BS3 Community Development, a charity and community business in South Bristol. He has worked in the early years sector in Bristol for 19 years and alongside his role he completed an Ed.D with the University in Reading in 2017. Tim sits on Bristol City Council's 'Strategic Early Years Partnership Board' and is also employed as a Guest Lecturer by the University of the West of England. He has an interest in narrative research methodologies, and community business models.



**Sarah Cousins** is Director of Early Years Programmes in the Centre for Lifelong Learning at the University of Warwick. She has experience as an Early Years teacher trainer, teacher, leader, consultant, and inspector



**Jill Delaney** is a specialist health visitor. Trained in Solihull, she was a founder member of the Solihull Approach team developing resource manuals and designing and delivering training. Jill later worked in Solihull CAMHS as Parenting Facilitator, developing and implementing the parenting strategy across the borough. She co-wrote, developed and evaluated the Solihull Approach parenting programme 'Understanding your child' and took the lead in developing and rolling out restorative supervision across the country.

Jill set up Positive Steps UK promoting emotional health and well-being, working with professionals and families, children and young people aged 0-19 years. Providing restorative supervision to health, education and local authority staff, she helps improve mental well-being and improve effectiveness in the workplace and reduces stress and absence, managing the impact of change. Positive Steps UK also provides bespoke training and Jill provides workshops on Attachment, Baby and Adolescent brain development. She has delivered training and conferences in a range of locations: Australia, Iceland, Paris, Moscow, Belfast, Liverpool, Bournemouth, Scotland, the Department of Health and the House of Commons.



**Jane Evans** has worked with children and families for 25 years. She is an internationally renowned childhood anxiety and parenting coach, an inspirational speaker on early childhood trauma, bestselling author and an *in-demand* media expert.

Jane is most known for her ability to explain and provide solutions to what lies beyond children's complex behaviours and needs. She does this by offering insights into how the brain and body are shaped by the quality and quantity of a child's earliest interactions and experiences.

Jane makes neuroscience accessible to everyone, even children. As shown in her bestselling story book, *Little Meerkat's Big Panic*, where triune brain theory becomes a simple story about a meerkat getting in a panic. Also, in her TED Talk, [Taming and Tending Your Meerkat Brain](#).

Jane regularly appears on TV and radio exploring and explaining childhood trauma and anxiety. She offers solutions to parents, carers and professionals to what seem to be difficult behaviours whilst focusing on building solid, compassion filled relationships to enable children to fulfil their potential.



**Jan Dubiel** is the National Director and International of Early Excellence. He trained as an Early Years specialist, Jan worked as a Nursery, Reception and Y1 teacher, leading teams as an early years coordinator.

Following roles as an EY Consultant and Senior Adviser, he leads on the EYFSP for QCA, with national responsibility for its implementation and moderation. With Early Excellence he developed EExBA, used by 12,000 schools as a Baseline Assessment and EExAQ, an international qualification for Kindergarten teachers.

Jan is nationally and internationally renowned as a conference speaker, consultant and trainer. He has written widely on early years pedagogy and pursued a particular interest in assessment and ways to represent and demonstrate children's learning and development. His first book [Effective Assessment in the EYFS](#) was published by SAGE in 2014.



**Kate Freeman** is a qualified speech and language therapist with over 25 years' experience working directly with children and leading an education charity. She specialises in the early years and has provided expert guidance to create a large number of training programmes and activities for early years practitioners, teachers, SENDCos, managers and parents, including managing the national Early Language Development Programme.

Kate is currently working with Hemsall's and Children's Centre Leader, disseminating good practice with a focus on SEND and working with voluntary and statutory sector organisations.



**Sharon Freeman** has, for the last ten years, worked in a Primary School in Old Trafford where 74% of the children are learning through EAL. She is the EAL Lead and also runs a very successful ESOL class parents and the local community. Additionally, for the last year, Sharon has been working at the University on ESOL Stepping Stones and has loved designing and developing the course materials to make them as easy to use and engaging as possible.



**Julian Grenier** is the headteacher of Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre in Newham, East London and is a National Leader of Education. He has a doctorate in education from the Institute of Education and is the former National Chair of Early Education. He is an occasional blogger and tweets @juliangrenier.





**Mandy Grist** is a Speech and Language Advisor at I CAN, children's communication charity. She has been a speech and language therapist for the past 21 years and as part of her current role keeps abreast of the many developments in policy and legislation in the fields of speech and language therapy and education. She also provides advice and information to others, both within and externally to I CAN. Mandy has specific knowledge and keen interest in collaborative practice for professionals working with children and young people with SLCN, including children and young people with SLCN in educational settings.



**Claire Harding** leads Family and Childcare Trust's research projects, and supports the impact measurement and evaluation of our programmes. Her recent projects include researching school age childcare and parental employment in London, running the annual Childcare Survey, and co-authoring a report on looked after children's access to early education, funded by the Nuffield Trust and in partnership with the University of Oxford. Previously, Claire was the research lead for national mental health provider Big White Wall, and worked for a specialist consultancy delivering research programmes for local authorities and NHS organisations.



**Annamarie Hassall, MBE**, is a Director at the National Children's Bureau, leading a policy and practice agenda that spans early years, social care, education and health.

For over 35 years, Annamarie has worked to improve services for children, including roles in local government, the Department for Education, private and voluntary sectors. Annamarie was appointed MBE in 2011.



**James Hemsall, OBE**, chairs the board of trustees at Children's Centre Leader. He is also Director of Hemsall's, an executive coach, and a volunteer counsellor/psychotherapist. James acts as the National Support Director of the DfE's support contract for the implementation of 30 hours childcare across England (Childcare Works). James has worked in the sector for over 25 years. He is a former playworker, children's centre manager, further education lecturer, development worker and projects manager for a national childcare charity. Between 2012–2016 he was the National Support Director of the DfE's support contract for the implementation of 15 hours early learning for least advantaged two-year-olds (Achieving Two Year Olds) for which he was awarded the OBE for services to childcare.



**Pauline Hoare** leads the Integrated Early Years Service for the Education and Partnerships Department of Tower Hamlets. Ensuring children's outcomes are as high as possible by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, her teams work with schools, private, voluntary and independent settings — including childminders — and in children's centres. Pauline has worked in many different roles, including nationally, when she wrote Progress Matters to define appropriate assessment systems birth to five. She also led the Making a Difference Programme and developed the EYFS Profile. She has been head of early years, a head teacher and an early years teacher.



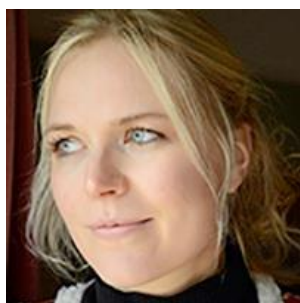
**Tracy Hopkins** has over twenty years of practical experience in early years, care and education, completing her degree in Early Years and Childhood studies with Early Years Professional Status. She lives and works across Craven, North Yorkshire, taking up the post of Parent Support Advisor in 2007. Since 2016, Tracey is Team Leader 0-19 Services (25 with SEND) for Ripon and Rural Harrogate. Her role involves identifying gaps within the service reach area, working with schools, settings, health services and partner agencies to deliver targeted activities, courses and events to meet local need. This is a challenging role which Tracy enjoys very much and is embracing the work with the older young people.



**Dr Caroline Jones** is an Associate Fellow and Consultant at the University of Warwick. She has worked for the Open University and is a guest lecturer on a variety of Early Years Programmes in England and abroad. Caroline, a former primary teacher and nursery inspector, works as a freelance consultant and owns a small group of nurseries in the West Midlands.



**Janet King** is the Senior Subject Specialist at CACHE and plays a part in developing their qualifications. Previous work has involved management in both further and higher education across care provision and within social services and education.



**Dr Natalia Kucirkova** is a Senior Research Fellow at the University College London Institute of Education. Her research concerns innovative ways of supporting children's book reading, digital literacy and exploring the role of personalisation in early years. She developed an award-winning children's app 'Our Story' and has widely published on early literacy and children's technology. She has been commended for her engagement with teachers and parents at a national and international level. Natalia currently leads an ESRC-funded project focused on children's personalised books at UCL, Institute of Education.



**Dr Marie Lavelle** is Joint Programme Lead and Lecturer on the BA Early Childhood Studies degree at the University of Plymouth. Her research interests reflect her professional heritage (midwife) and academic background (sociologist).



After gaining her NNEB in 1977, **Deborah Lawson** worked with children with special needs and disabilities, as a Registration and Inspection Officer (daycare), as an Ofsted nursery education inspector, and as External Funding and Business Manager and Childcare Commissioning Manager in Gloucestershire. A member of Voice (previously PAT and PANN) since 1987, Deborah became a Council member in 1989 and, in 2006-2007, the first non-teacher National Chairman. She was elected General Secretary in 2012 and re-elected unopposed in 2017.



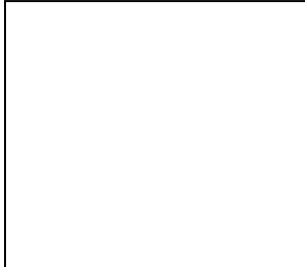
**Eva Lloyd OBE** is professor of Early Childhood in the University of East London's Cass School of Education and Communities and co-founder and Director of its International Centre for the Study of the Mixed Economy of Childcare (ICMEC). Her research and academic publications focus on (inter)national early education and childcare policies, particularly for disadvantaged children.



**Alana Miles**, Early Years Policy and Development Officer has a background in Early Years and has been working in the sector for twenty three years. She lives in Ripon and has worked across most districts within North Yorkshire. She achieved my BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Studies in 2010 and completed her PGCE in 2017.

Alana has worked as an Early Years Practitioner and Manager, Bookstart Development Officer and a Childcare Sufficiency Support Officer and came

into her current role in 2015. She is also a Training and Learning Officer for the County Council and delivers a wide variety of Health and Safety and Children's Safeguarding Courses. As the Early Years Development Officer, Alana oversees the childcare sufficiency for the County and is the Lead for the Extended Entitlement Initiative. This can be very challenging at times but as her role is so varied, no 2 days are the same which she enjoys.



**Michael Newman** is a Children's Centre Support Officer for Hampshire County Council working directly with commissioned third-party providers and leads on the integrated two year review project.



**Professor Christine Pascal OBE** is joint Director of the Centre for Research in Early Childhood (CREC) in Birmingham, an independent Early Years Research Centre. She has written extensively on early childhood development and the quality of early education services and has done extensive work at government level to support the development of Early Years policy.



**Tracey Podger**, Team Manager for Merton's Group of Children's Centres, delivers a range of Early Learning Together programmes for families with 0 – 36 month-old children. Tracey has worked in the London early years sector for 37 years in both the public and voluntary sectors. She is committed to enabling young children to achieve the very best outcomes, by working collaboratively with parents/carers and wider family, and partners such as health visitors, midwives, schools, adult education providers and children's social care services.



**Chrispina Omoniruvbe** is a lead health visitor in Hackney, working in partnership with health providers and children's centres in her locality and leading a large team of area health visitors. With over 30 years' experience in health visiting, Chrispina has also lectured in further education. For the past four years, Chrispina has been leading on Hackney's integrated developmental review, coordinating a multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the needs of young children and their families.





**Dr Gillian Paull** is a Senior Associate at Frontier Economics where she undertakes research on the labour market, childcare and early education, and social policy. Recent projects include the evaluation of early implementation of the 30 hours free childcare and the Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) and work on mothers' employment and family poverty. She recently served as a Specialist Advisor in the House of Lords and previously held research positions at the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the London School of Economics.



**Louisa Reeves** is a Speech and Language Advisor and Regional Manager at the children's communication charity I CAN. A speech and language therapist with 30 years of experience of working to support children and young people with speech, language and communication needs, she has been involved in a number of large scale projects developing evidenced solutions for speech, language and communication needs. Her work for I CAN includes I CAN's Early Talk and Primary Talk programmes and project lead for the A Chance to Talk Reception and KS1 project as well as the Early Talk Boost and Talk Boost KS2 language interventions. Currently she is working on the co-production and evaluation of an intervention for parents of two-year olds and is part of the team developing I CAN's new regional approach.



**Andrew Russo** is the Co-Founder & Director of the National Family Support Network. He has worked and volunteered in the nonprofit social service sector at the direct service, management, and network levels for more than 20 years in Washington DC, Boston, New York, Chicago, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Taiwan. He earned his B.A. from Columbia University and his M.A. from Loyola University Chicago.



**Rachel Sharman** has been working for Surestart Children's Centre's since 2000. She has over 30 years' experience teaching & working in the early years/ early intervention arena. Investment in the team is equally important to Rachel, as is investment in families. Reducing inequalities & raising aspirations drives her focus.



**Nick Skinner** is Head of the Enfield Music Service in Enfield Council. The service is part of Children Services and Leads the Community Music Hub, providing high quality opportunities in music to young people of the borough. Previous posts have included Head of Performing Arts at the Hackney Learning Trust and Director of Music at St. Christopher School, Letchworth Garden City.



**Helen Stephenson** is Director of Early Years, Child Poverty, and Children's Services Strategy at the Department for Education (DfE) where her team is working to improving quality, affordability and choice for parents in early years provision. She joined DfE from the Cabinet office where she was Director of the Office for Civil Society and Government Innovation Group (which aims to mobilise people finance and data to tackle social problems in innovative ways). She led the team setting up Big Society Capital and was responsible for running several of the OCS investment programmes. On joining the Cabinet Office, Helen ran the Charities and Sector Support Team (Charities law and regulation, cutting red tape, infrastructure, strategic partners, business support and skills). Helen joined the Civil Service from the Big Lottery Fund where she was Head of Strategic Policy and Partnerships. She has worked for a large national charity as a development manager and as a researcher and consultant in the statutory and voluntary sector. Helen has a PhD from Bristol University.



**Dr Kaz Stuart** is principal lecturer in the Department of Health, Psychology and Social Science at the University of Cumbria where she leads undergraduate and postgraduate work in youth and community work, mental health, cognitive behaviour therapy and work with children, young people and families. Kaz's professional background includes primary, secondary and higher education teaching, youth work, social care, outdoor education, and research all as a practitioner, manager and leader. This experience led to her nexus of research interests: how to support children and young people, how to support practitioners, and how to evidence what we all do.



**Caroline Swindells** is the Strategy Manager for children's centres for Hertfordshire County Council within the Childhood Support Services Team. She has worked for the local authority for 14 years, leading on the development of children's centres since 2006.



**Helen Tebbit** is the 0-19 Locality Lead in Merton for Central London Community Healthcare (CLCH). She is service manager for the Health Visiting and School Nursing services in Merton, manages the health navigator in Merton multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH), and is a children's nurse and health visitor by background. She is committed to supporting families to be empowered to meet their children's needs and working in partnership with other providers in the community to best meet the needs of children and their families.



**Philippa Youlden** has worked freelance for over 18 years. Specialising in physical activity, PE & education, she has a real passion for the early years. Philippa's early years work includes authoring creative resources, writing and delivering training and supporting local and national organisations and charities. She has recently launched the MOVE with Zip Active resource to support EYFS practitioners to maximise communication & language development through physical activity, using themes, imagery, sounds, vocabulary, rhymes and fundamental movement skill activity ideas [www.philippayoulden.co.uk](http://www.philippayoulden.co.uk).



**Sue Webster**, Senior Teaching Fellow, Centre for Lifelong Learning, University of Warwick, co-founder of Children's Centre Leader, now teaches on the BA Early Years Professional Studies and Sector Endorsed Foundation Degree. Formerly a Lead Professional for the delivery of the NPQICL programme and independent Leadership and Research Consultant. Sue's background is in Early Excellence Centres and Sure Start Local programmes.