



Foundations First

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BSP Early Years PLD: A year-long professional learning programme for Early Years leaders and practitioners

Foundations First is a sustained early years PLD offer designed to shift practice, not just deliver training.

Each half term, schools can access three short online sessions: one to introduce key practice, one to support implementation, and one to review impact. Schools may send as many leaders and practitioners as they wish, creating a shared language and stronger consistency.

The first half term begins where children begin: with their developmental starting points. Practitioners will focus on on-entry baseline assessment, pre-writing foundations and adaptive provision, ensuring children secure the physical, language, independence and self-regulation skills they need before moving into formal writing.

Across the year, the programme will build from the foundations up: communication and language, physical development, self-regulation, independence, adaptive teaching, curriculum progression and transition.

This is Early Years professional learning with momentum: assess, adapt, implement, review to ultimately improve practice over time.

Autumn 1

PLD 1: On-Entry Developmental Baseline

Date: Tuesday 8 September 2026

Time: 3:45pm – 5pm

Area of focus: Establishing children's developmental starting points across the prime areas.

This session will introduce the on-entry developmental baseline, with a particular focus on children's physical development, communication and language, independence, self-regulation and readiness to learn.

The session will support practitioners to understand why children may struggle with writing if the necessary developmental foundations are not secure. The focus will be on identifying what children can currently do and what needs to be strengthened before moving towards formal writing expectations.

PLD 2: Adaptive Practice in Action

Date: Tuesday 22 September 2026

Time: 3:45pm

Area of focus: Analysing baseline findings and adapting practice, provision and environments.

This session will support practitioners to move from assessment to action. Practitioners will use their baseline findings to identify common needs, plan adaptive provision and design environments that build the physical, language and self-regulation skills children need.

The focus will be on practical strategies, including movement, outdoor learning, creative play, mark-making, talk routines, puppets, fine motor development and purposeful adult interaction.

PLD 3: the Writing Journey

Date: Tuesday 13 October 2026

Time: 3:45pm

Area of focus: Reviewing impact and linking foundational development to the writing framework.

This session will review the impact of the adaptations and interventions put in place following the baseline assessment. Practitioners will consider what has changed, where children still need support and how this links to the wider writing journey.

The session will make explicit links between pre-writing foundations, mark-making, handwriting readiness, composition and early writing confidence.

PLD 4: Challenge and fostering independence

Date: Tuesday 10th November

Time: 3.45

Area of focus: Implementing challenge and developing self-management, regulation, executive functioning and the language of learning

This session will focus on how environments and routines develop the Characteristics of Effective Learning to foster greater autonomy and independence through detailed knowledge of the Unique Child.

The session will focus on developing meaningful challenge in the learning environment based upon discrete teaching as a means of knowing what children can do independently and act as a reflection and planning tool

The session will make explicit links between teaching and assessment. How to use assessment to adapt input and challenge to ensure gaps and misconceptions are addressed.

PLD 5: Mathematical development – stages, sequences and meaningful application

Date: Tuesday 24th November

Time: 3.45 p.m.

Area of focus: Mathematics, how children acquire mathematical fluency. The role of the environment and routines in embedding mathematical concepts and language.

This session will support practitioners in understanding how children acquire complex mathematical knowledge and skills. The stages of mathematical development as children move from the perceptual to the figurative stage. The session will assist practitioners to identify and sequence small steps of learning and common misconceptions in the Reception Year. The session is designed to ensure that all children have abundant opportunities to practise and consolidate new learning through well designed activities and challenges, including sequences of problem-solving

PLD 6: Reflecting on learning

Date: Tuesday 19th January 2027

Time: 3.45 p.m.

Area of focus: Growing independence and children talking about learning

This session will focus upon children's growing autonomy as independent learners, knowing what they are doing, why, and what they might be learning about. A strong emphasis on language and reflection. Building confidence in speaking and using appropriate aspirational language in front of others. The concept of Learning Detectives and growing responsibilities and awareness of others.

PLD 7: Physical and cognitive development

Date: Tuesday 9th February 2027

Time: 3.45.p.m

Area of focus: Joining brain and body the complex links between physical and cognitive development

This session will concentrate on developing greater awareness of the link between cognitive and physical development. Balance, co-ordination, proprioception and vestibular awareness are all barriers to learning and development. This session will look at these vital development points and offer suggestions around approaches and

environments that ensure that these vital overlooked areas of development sit at the centre of provision and practice

PLD 8: How Boys learn

Date: Tuesday 16th March 2027

Time: 3.45.pm

Area of focus: How boys learn best – the nature of a young male learner. Physiological and chemical make ups – building up the brain, Active Learning - Are boys underachieving? Confidence and self-esteem. The physical environment. Role of the adult and the development of language

This session will focus on the similarities and differences of young learners. Ensuring that practitioners are fully aware of learning styles, how the body and brain develops. Enabling environments and physicality of learning so that the attainment gap is significantly narrowed.

PLD 8: Final Assessment and transitions

Date: Tuesday June 15th, 2027

Time:

Area of focus: Understanding the Early Learning Goals and a Good Level of Development

This session focuses on final assessment and transition into the next stage in learning. How the ELGs are intrinsically linked and how assessment should be across the board, incorporating the Characteristics of Effective Learning. The ELGs are a 'best fit' so children will not all be at the same level – how we use this information to inform teaching and learning in children's new classes, so teaching starts from where the children are and any dysfluency is quickly addressed – a keen focus on the key barriers to learning.

