

# Student Conference

October 2025

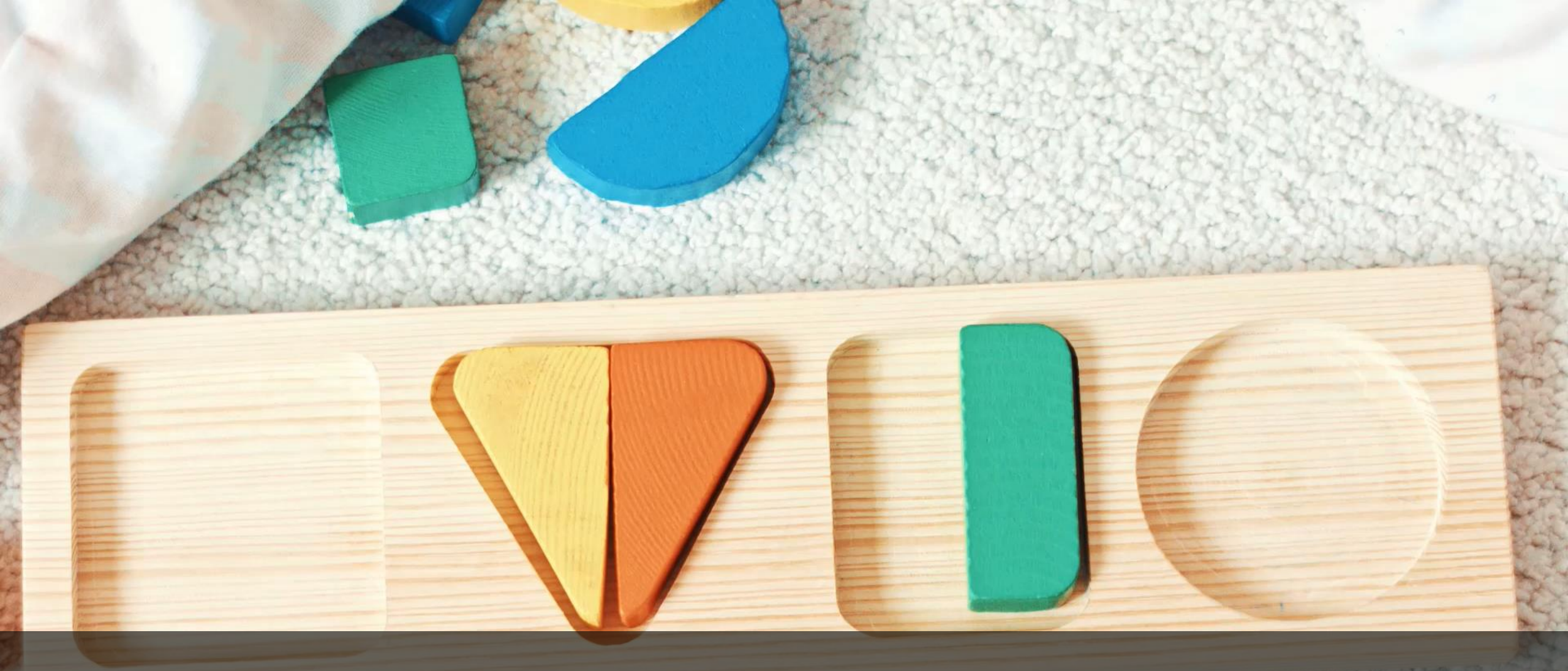


# **Welcome and Introductions**

# Agenda



10:05 – 10:25	Play Therapist
10:25 – 10:45	Infant and Family Mental Health Wellbeing
10:45 – 11:05	Early Years: Swift, Gender Inclusivity, Raising the Profile and Excellence
11:05 – 11:25	Montessori Education in Early Years
11:25 – 11:45	Tutor and Student Voice: City of Bristol College
11:45 – 12:00	Whiskers, Wags & Wellbeing: Supporting Children and their Families Through Animal Companionship
12:00 – 12:05	Plenary and Close



Certified Play Therapist

Breda Hyde







# My Journey

## Education history

- Level 3 Early Years qualification
- Diploma in Counselling Children and Young People
- Degree in Education
- Post Graduate course play therapy

## Employment history

Nursery, primary and secondary school work

Currently self-employed as a play therapist,  
working in schools and in private practice



# Influences



- I knew I wanted to work with children – I only knew in which role once I worked across the sector. I soon realised that I wanted to work with children who needed support.
- There is no typical day, but it will always be a privilege to work with children in a non-judgemental way, I learn so much from children.
- Don't rescue, nurture, help children by validating their feelings, share the feeling, do not disguise it or pretend it is not there.

# Key features of the work of the Play Therapist



- Build relationships
- Establish and maintain connections
- Listen to children: hear them, see them, understand them
- Respect the uniqueness of every child
- Validate their feelings: don't try to disguise or extinguish, allow children to show their feelings
- Children borrow tools of regulation from the adult: regulate self before you can support and co-regulate others
- What is the behaviour telling us: beyond the behaviour



# The children accessing play therapy



- May exhibit behaviour that does not confirm to social norms
- Communication problems
- Anxiety: rise since COVID especially amongst teenage girls: not feeling safe at school
- Masking emotions at school, unable to express emotions
- Pathological Demand Avoidance
- Unable to self-regulate

# Challenges



- We can't help everyone
- Things don't always go to plan
- It takes time and collaborated ways of working to make a difference
- Therapy can be challenging for children, it is not a reward

# Highlights



- Privilege
- Restoring a sense of calm
- Focus on the feeling, validate this
- Building a relationship is key



# Reflective thoughts.....



- It's never too late to train, follow your passion

Know what you want to be remembered for-be that person who listened enough to care, and care enough to listen



**Any Questions?**

# The University of Northampton

Dr Helen Simmons





- Course Leader for the **Masters in Infant and Family Mental Health and Wellbeing**
- **Senior Lecturer in Education (Childhood, Youth and Families)**
- **Co-Lead** for the *Families and Communities Special Interest Group*
- **Co-Chair** of the *EDI Staff Network for Parents and Carers* at the **University of Northampton**
- Has **over 20 years' experience** in further and higher education, following earlier work in **early childhood settings** and as a **private nanny**
- **Vice Chair (Policy, Lobbying and Advocacy: National and International)** of the *Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network (ECSDN)*
- **Senior Fellow** of the *Higher Education Academy*
- **Trustee Board Member** of the *Association of Infant Mental Health and Wellbeing (AiMH)*

# Introduction to the Subject Area



The subject area portfolio includes a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and courses aimed at those who want to work, or are working, with children, young people, adults, families and communities.

## **Our Mission is to:**

Inspire a reflexive and self-directed community of learners that challenge inequity and empower change.

# Undergraduate Courses



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## Early Years, Childhood and Family Studies (Top-Up) BA (Hons)

Home > Courses by subject > Early Years Childhood and Family Studies Top...

### KEY FACTS

**Get In touch**

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## Working with Children, Young People and Families BA (Hons)

Home > Courses by subject > Working with Children Young People and Families...

### KEY FACTS

UCAS Code  
3 year: L590  
4 year: L591

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## Early Childhood Studies BA (Hons)

Home > Courses by subject > Early Childhood Studies BA (Hons)

### KEY FACTS

UCAS Code  
X310

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## Education Studies BA (Hons)

Home > Courses by subject > Education Studies BA (Hons)

### KEY FACTS

UCAS Code  
X001



# MA in Infant and Family Mental Health and Wellbeing



There is a growing awareness of the crucial role of early childhood internationally (Sustainable Development Goals; Nurturing Care Framework) and its growing recognition in policy developments, both nationally and internationally.

In England, this includes the Best Start for Life Offer, the Supporting Families Programme and the NHS's Perinatal Mental Health Care Pathways

Pathway 5 in this national framework, in particular echoes the need to “*have staff with specialist expertise to manage complex or severe perinatal mental health problems*”.

These International and the UK policy agendas align with the module overviews and indicative content.

# Course Overview



## Infant and Family Mental Health and Wellbeing (with Infant-Centred Specialism and Family-Centred Specialism) MA

Designed to meet the growing need for highly skilled and critically reflective professionals

Aligns with key international and national initiatives (Manifesto for Babies, The Best Start for Life) and organisations (The Association for Infant Mental Health).

Offers two specialisms:

Infant-Centred and Family-Centred (*with 6 modules in total*)

Taught from a multi-disciplinary and multi-theoretical perspective

**You will develop expertise in the field of  
Infant & Family Mental Health and Wellbeing.**

**You will undertake a journey of self-reflection and critical  
exploration with professionals from a range of different  
background.**

# Key Facts



1. Part Time- and Full-Time
2. Two specialism options
3. Aimed at Practitioners (Ideally)
4. Part-Time and Full-Time route options
5. Available to study 100% online (Distance Learning)
6. Taught by and alongside professionals from health, education and social care.
7. Aligned to The Association for Infant Mental Health and Wellbeing (AiMH)

*“AiMH is an interdisciplinary, not for profit, organisation, promoting understanding about Infant Mental Health”.*



# Thank you for listening



My contact details: [Helen.Simmons@Northampton.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.Simmons@Northampton.ac.uk)

Course website: <https://www.northampton.ac.uk/courses/ma-infant-and-family-mental-health-and-wellbeing-with-infant-centred-specialism-and-family-centred-specialism/>

Webinar recording: [https://youtu.be/T3aYxZld-\\_A](https://youtu.be/T3aYxZld-_A)

Join us on one of our open days:

<https://www.northampton.ac.uk/about-us/contact-us/open-days/>



# Jack Edwards, Operations Director at Swift ACI



- **Jack Edwards** is the **Operations Director at Swift ACI**, overseeing the organisation's **educational strategy** and ensuring **high-quality apprenticeship and training programmes**.
- Actively engages in **professional development** and **industry advocacy** to enhance the quality and visibility of Swift's educational initiatives.
- Plays a key role in promoting **early childhood education** and the **professional growth of apprentices** at Swift ACI.
- A strong advocate for **apprenticeships** and **increasing male representation** in the early years sector.
- Works to **challenge stereotypes** and highlight the value of a **diverse workforce** in supporting children's development.
- Dedicated to creating **high-quality, supportive training programmes** that equip apprentices with the **knowledge, skills, and practical experience** needed for career success.



# Early Years: Swift, Gender Inclusivity, Raising the Profile and Excellence

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Jack Edwards – Operations Director

# Swift Childcare Introduction

## HERE'S A LITTLE GET TO KNOW US!

At Swift Childcare, we've been supporting future childcare professionals since 2012.

We're proud to be an award-winning training provider, offering trusted apprenticeships in childcare.

Right now, we're working with learners across London, the West Midlands, and the East Midlands and we'd love to welcome you too!

Our training is led by experienced childcare practitioners who know the job inside out. Everything is delivered remotely, giving you the flexibility to learn at work or online, whatever works best for you.

With Swift, you'll gain real skills, real experience, and a real qualification, all while doing something that truly makes a difference.







# WHAT DO WE OFFER?



## **Qualification:**

**Level 3 - Early Years Educator**

## **What is it?...**

The level 3 course is a combination of learning on the job, gaining experience while studying and getting paid!

## **Course Duration:**

**13 month practical, 1 month EPA**

## **Price:**

**Free for all apprentices**

## **Who it is for?...**

Anybody who's looking to develop their knowledge and skills within the Early Years sector, from school leavers to University graduates, those who are employed and looking to re-skill, and everyone in between.

# Benefits of a Swift Apprenticeship

Here are a few ways you can benefit from doing an apprenticeship with us:



**1**

Provide a fresh pair of eyes to your setting by bringing new ideas and concepts

**4**

Receive 1-2-1 support and guidance to help with your personal and professional development

**2**

Gain a qualification and knowledge on a specific sector to support your future career

**5**

Areas such as personal development, health and safety, safeguarding are developed

**3**

Hands-on experience at a good nursery setting

**6**

Create connections in the nursery sector

**Above All - Saving on costs involved for education**



# What to expect as a childcare nursery practitioner:

Being a childcare practitioner is a rewarding job where you make a real difference. You'll support children during some of the most important years of their lives, helping them grow, learn, and feel safe.

As you gain confidence in the nursery, you might become a Key Worker, looking after a small group of children. This helps you build strong bonds and understand their learning and development even better.

It's a role full of purpose - and no two days are the same!



**What hours will I work in a nursery?**

Most apprentices work 30 to 40 hours a week. Nurseries are usually open Monday to Friday, 7am to 7pm, so flexibility is key.



**How much will I get paid?**

The National Apprenticeship Wage is currently £6.40 an hour (this doesn't change with age). It's set by the government and may go up each April.



**What do I wear?**

It depends on the nursery. Some give you a uniform, others let you wear your own clothes. You might need slippers, socks, or closed-toe shoes. It's a good question to ask during your interview!



**Do I get school holidays off?**

No, most nurseries are open all year. Instead of term-time breaks, you'll get holiday days to book off throughout the year, like in most jobs.



# A Day in The Life...

## THE MORNING ROUTINE

- Children usually arrive between 7am and 9am, with breakfast offered to those who haven't eaten at home.
- Practitioners chat with caregivers to share any important updates about the child.
- The day starts with a welcome, songs, and self-registration, followed by gentle activities like puzzles, books, or building blocks to help children settle in.
- Once everyone is comfortable, adult-led activities begin, things like painting, colour mixing, or printing with different textures.
- Around mid-morning, children are offered a healthy snack. Younger ones might also need a nap or quiet time.
- After that, activities continue, and if the morning has been indoors, children will head outside for fresh air and play, as outdoor time is an important part of the day under the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage).



## THE LUNCH-TIME ROUTINE

Mealtimes are a social part of the day where children eat, chat, and explore food with their peers and carers.

- Children learn by watching, so adults are role models for things like:
  - Using good table manners
  - Eating correctly
- After lunch:
  - Some children nap or have quiet time
  - Others take part in calm activities like story time or circle time
- As an apprentice, you'll help with:
  - Preparing and serving food
  - Feeding younger children if needed
  - Tidying up including cleaning and washing up



## AFTERNOON ROUTINE

Children are gently eased back into routines after naps or quiet time

- The afternoon includes a mix of:
  - Child-led play
  - Adult-led, structured activities
  - A healthy mid-afternoon snack is provided
- At the end of the day, practitioners:
  - Share updates with each child's caregiver
  - Talk about the child's development, progress, and any challenges
  - Help maintain good communication and best practice

# MORE MEN IN EARLY YEARS

- WHY IT'S IMPORTANT
- HOW SWIFT ARE HELPING



# WE ARE AWARE

**At Swift, we are aware of the new government incentive to encourage more men to work in teaching.**

This is a change we are pleased to see.

We have been working closely with Male Childcare & Teaching Jobs (MCTJ) and we were one of the very first to join their movement.

We believe it's important for children to see diversity in the people who teach and guide them and we continue to strive for a more gender-diverse workforce in the early years sector.





# WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

**Across the UK, men account for only around 3% of the early years workforce, yet 9 in 10 parents believe it's important for children to be cared for by both men and women.**

Children benefit massively from a diverse workforce. We need to remove the stigma that childcare is 'women's work' as it's damaging for the profession and society.

When children see both men and women in childcare, it expands their understanding of what is possible. They learn the qualities of childcare professionals are not human qualities and not just assigned to one gender.





# HOW WE CAN SUPPORT

**If you're a man considering a career in early  
years - get in touch!**

Don't let the stigma hold you back! Be part of  
something special and something meaningful.  
We want you to have a positive impact on the  
future generation.

Get in touch through our website!

[swiftcc.co.uk](http://swiftcc.co.uk)



# The Swift Way



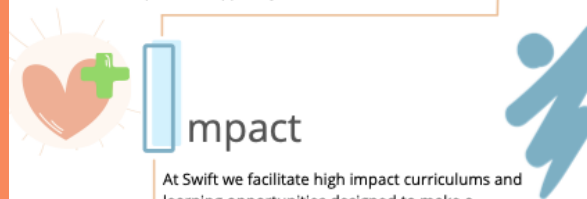
## Supportive

At Swift we embrace teamwork, which allows us to create a holistic, supportive network for apprentices and ourselves.



## Welfare

At Swift we practice a whole approach to each individual's health, wellbeing and we support them to make a positive contribution to society. We maintain a duty of care for all by promoting a safe environment with an underpinning pastoral support system.



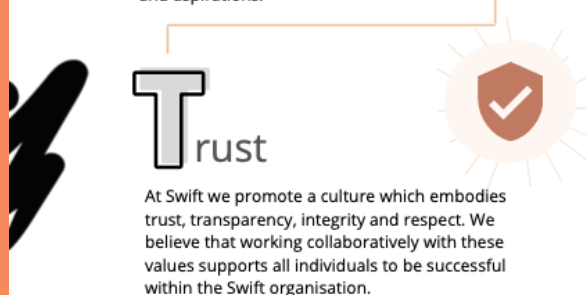
## Impact

At Swift we facilitate high impact curriculums and learning opportunities designed to make a difference to each individual.



## Focused

At Swift we are committed to a person-centred approach, where each individual can achieve their goals and aspirations.



## Trust

At Swift we promote a culture which embodies trust, transparency, integrity and respect. We believe that working collaboratively with these values supports all individuals to be successful within the Swift organisation.



# Lets Talk...

## CONTACT AMY TODAY!

telephone: 0121 594 0453

email: [al@swiftcc.co.uk](mailto:al@swiftcc.co.uk)

## HELPFUL LINKS:

info for apprentices

<https://www.swiftcc.co.uk/childcare-apprentices>

<https://www.swiftcc.co.uk>

## CONTACT US ON SOCIALS!



swiftcc\_



swift - education apprenticeships



swifteducationapprenticeships

# Karen Chetwynd

CEO, Montessori Global Education



- **Karen** has over **20 years of experience** in the education sector, supporting **charitable, NGO, and commercial initiatives** both in the UK and internationally.
- Focused on achieving **high-quality, sustainable educational outcomes** across diverse learning environments.
- Passionate about promoting **Montessori education** as an **accessible and inclusive pedagogy** that benefits all learners.
- Advocates for **Montessori principles** that enhance **children's thinking capacity, self-confidence, and resilience** in facing challenges.
- Remains **actively involved in programme delivery and assessment**, valuing **hands-on, practical experience** to stay aligned with learners' evolving needs.



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**GLOBAL EDUCATION**





# #WeAreMontessori



- A global organisation championing **equitable access to the empowering opportunities of education.**
- A long-standing professional champion of Montessori for **75yrs+**.
- We have **trained over 9,500 graduates** and helped provide learning opportunities for over **750,000 children worldwide**; by 2030, we expect that number to be over **930,000 children.**



# Why?

***"This is education,** understood as a help to life; an education from birth, which feeds a peaceful revolution and unites all in a common aim, attracting them as to a single centre.*

*Mothers, fathers, politicians: **all must combine** in their respect and help for this delicate **work of formation**, which the little child carries on in the depth of a profound psychological mystery, under the tutelage of an inner guide.*

***This is the bright new hope for mankind."***

Dr. Maria Montessori,  
The Absorbent Mind, p15





# Our mission

*To make Montessori available  
wherever it is needed,  
anywhere in the world.*

# Our vision

*A world where the power of  
Montessori education is  
available to everyone.*



# Why is this our vision?

Learning is for life...  
*Life is for learning*

## LED BY THE CHILD

by KAREN CHETWYND

SCAN TO  
GRAB A COPY



Leaders Brands



# There is opportunity in every moment

## *#OpportunityEmpowers*

**Karen Chetwynd, Chief Executive Officer**

**My career journey**

- Creative Arts and Performance
- Teaching
- Tutoring others
- Assuring quality
- Qualifications development
- Leading learning opportunities
- Uncovering ways to provide education for all – to all, inclusive and accessible





# What we do...

## Promote accessible Montessori

Dr Maria Montessori developed an educational **method** that places **the child at the centre of the learning process**.



By allowing children to take the lead and **providing an environment that addresses their holistic needs**, the Montessori approach naturally **fosters learning, creativity, independence, and problem-solving**.

***What we do... we champion excellence***

**We offer a professional  
recognition framework called...**



- Promote on-going professional and personal development
- Monitor and support education providers of all shapes and sizes worldwide
- Offer Accreditation, Endorsement, Approval, Affiliation & Certification services
- Provide Montessori Training opportunities and Montessori Mindset Mentoring to our Montessori Global Network

***All of these opportunities are open to everyone, trained Montessori or not – we welcome all educators!***



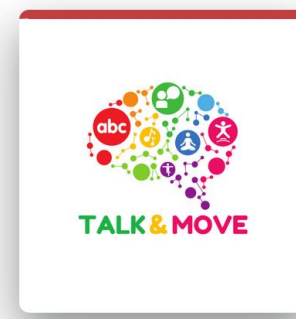
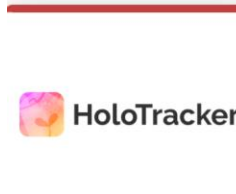
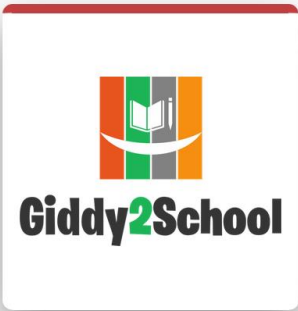
# *What we do... we collaborate with partners*



NurseryWorld



Babbu





# But there is more to Montessori...

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*At Montessori Global Education  
we have committed to ensuring  
the benefits of a previously  
'exclusive', educational  
experience become easily  
accessible to families and parents  
that might need it most.*



## #OpportunityEmpowers

Sir Martyn Oliver, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, spoke at the March 2025 Nursery World Business Summit in London, stating: *"Choosing a nursery is often the first educational choice families make".*

***We believe families can make educational choices from the very beginning of their child's life.***

**We need to make that happen** through commitment and support for families to:

- Build confidence
- Offer opportunity
- Encourage exploration and
- Break down barriers to educational engagement consistency and efficiently, at the earliest chance.

## Building our experience - Making this work in West Somerset, UK

Training for local family support staff

Interactive study programme

More child-focussed approach to work with babies and their families.

Their enhanced Baby-Start programme helps parents to be confident as their new child's first educator, builds peer-to-peer relationships and helps young families thrive.



**Baby-Start**

A Montessori Inspired Programme for Families with Babies 0-12 months

Have fun with your baby while making friends too!

- Sing Family Songs and Rhymes
- Share Books and Stories
- Learn about your Baby's Development Journey
- Make a Lasting Memory with Baby Footprints on Canvas
- Share Ideas for Making Discovery Treasure Baskets
- Learn about Preparing Baby Friendly Spaces

**HOME START**  
West Somerset

Get in touch to book a place  
Local Baby-Start Coordinator Hayley Williams  
E: [hayley@homestart-westsomerset.org.uk](mailto:hayley@homestart-westsomerset.org.uk)  
T: 01643 707304 M: 07483 123653

 **STAR**  **MONTESORI**  
GLOBAL EDUCATION





# And now we have.....

- A programme for parents and babies 0-12 months, available globally
- Focus on engaging in interactive play, promoting baby development opportunities, creating strong family attachments, and building peer friendships among families.
- Opportunity for protected time within a planned, favourable environment – time for reflection on the holistic wellbeing of the family and their journey
- On-going support for parents and carers to gain confidence in the role as first educator for their baby.

# Programmes of support can change lives...

## Outcomes for parents - improved wellbeing and confidence

- *"I have been struggling with Postnatal Depression. This has helped me massively with regaining confidence and making me feel more myself. The group is friendly and welcoming and has bought back some lovely childhood memories with nursery rhymes to books. Highly recommend!"*
- *Enhances connections between families, communities and neighbours*
- *Strengthens recognition and awareness of the important positioning for parents as baby's first educator*
- *"Before this group I didn't sing nursery rhymes – after our first session I saw how much joy singing them gave my daughter and now we sing every day."*
- *100% of families reported more confidence in their parenting skills after this programme*
- *"This has given me more confidence in teaching my baby and understanding where they are developmentally – I have confidence now, and this has really impacted my baby's growth and confidence too!"*





***“The future generation must not only know how to do what we can teach them, they must be able to go a step further”.***

***(Dr. Maria Montessori, The 1946 London Lectures, p140)***





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# Let's connect!



*[connect@montessori.org.uk](mailto:connect@montessori.org.uk)*

[www.montessori-globaleducation.org](http://www.montessori-globaleducation.org)



@Montessori\_GEd



company/montessoriglobaleducation/



@montessori.global.education



/montessoriglobaleducation

# Charlotte Condon

## Assessor, City of Bristol College



- Primary School Teacher 3 years
- Preschool Deputy Manager and SENCo 3 years
- Assessor at City of Bristol College 11 years
- Programme Manager for adult courses with Health, Ed, Care, Counselling 5 years

# Jenny Philips

## Whiskers, Wags & Wellbeing: Supporting Children and their Families Through Animal Companionship



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nc7\\_\\_bv9boU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nc7__bv9boU)



George & T21



Captain & PLMD



Dave & Hearing  
loss



# Plenary and close

