



# Education Mile

March 2026



## Early Years news, advice and guidance for Square Mile families and settings

### Hello...

Welcome to our monthly newsletter. Our aim is to share regular local and national information for families in the City. If you would like to find out anything further on any items or would like more advice or information, please contact the Family Information Service.  
Email: [EEYService@cityoflondon.gov.uk](mailto:EEYService@cityoflondon.gov.uk)

### The Power of Early Library Experiences

Recently, Library Manager, Sona Kalenderian, received a card from one of their regular families that truly touched her heart.

She shared, "I wanted to share this lovely card with you. It honestly brought tears to my eyes. It's a beautiful reminder of the positive impact the team had on this family, and to see how our support has touched their lives."

The parent wrote, "Thank you so much for being a brilliant part of my child's early adventures. Since we joined when my child was 2 months old, you made us feel so welcome and the sessions became the highlight of our week. You and your awesome team create such a warm space. You bring energy and love to every session."

Moments like these are a powerful reminder of the difference a warm, welcoming library space can make to families in our community.

### Week-by-week guide to pregnancy



This week-by-week pregnancy guide is packed with lots of useful information. From what's happening inside your body, to how your baby is developing, and tips and advice on having a healthy pregnancy

<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/pregnancy/week-by-week-guide-to-pregnancy/>



Join the library here!

<https://col.ent.sirsiidynix.net.uk/custom/web/registration/>

# Early Years Education: Why it matters

A **charity event** recently took place at the Guildhall Art Gallery focussing on Early Years and the importance of building strong foundations for children and families across the City of London.

Felicity Gillespie, Chief Executive of Kindred Squared, introduced the key themes of the event. With over 20 years' experience advising public and private sector organisations, Felicity highlighted the critical importance of school readiness, child development, and accessible parenting support. Her insights reinforced the need for coordinated approaches to ensure every child has the best possible start in life. Lead Early Years Adviser Isabelle Denniee highlighted the impactful work taking place across the City of London.



**Felicity Gillespie** - Chief Executive, Kindred Squared



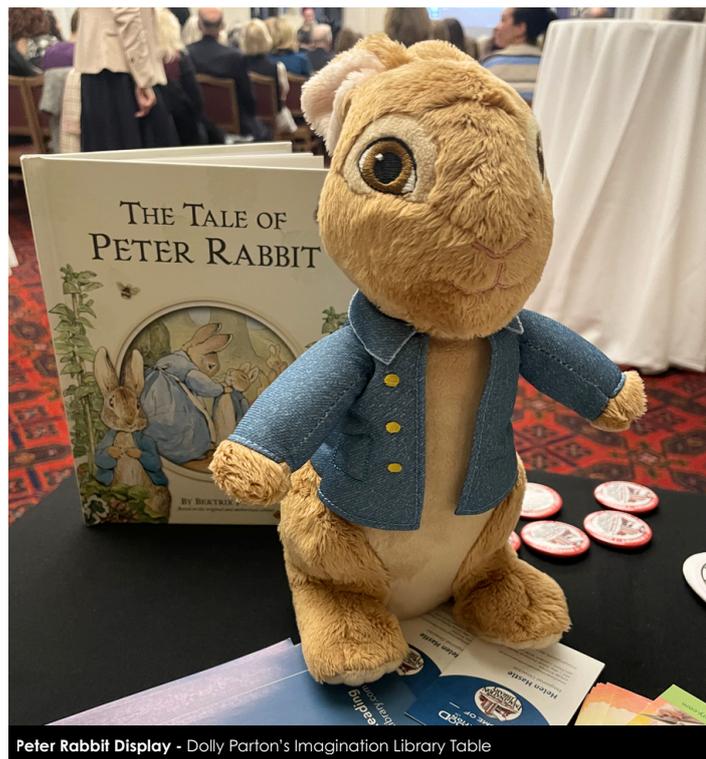
**Isabelle Denniee** - City of London, Lead Early Years Advisor



**Zak Darwood** - City of London, Workforce Development Co-ordinator



**Kirstie Hilton** - City of London, Head of Service Education & Early Years



**Peter Rabbit Display** - Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Table

She praised the dedication and collaboration of local settings, libraries, family support services, and early years practitioners, as well as the contribution of the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in promoting early literacy. Isabelle emphasised the importance of early language and literacy, sharing research on how young children learn and why the early years are such a crucial window for a child's development.

Thank you to Alison and Charlie Laing from the Worshipful Company of Paviers, charity donors, Zak Darwood and City of London staff who helped organise the event as well as everyone working tirelessly to support families across the City of London. To learn more about services offered to Families with young children in the City of London, please go to the City's Best Start in Life page:

<https://www.fis.cityoflondon.gov.uk/best-start-family-hub/start-for-life>



**Isabelle Denniee** - City of London, Lead Early Years Advisor



**Zahida Hussain** - City of London, Manager, Best Start in Life  
**Janef MacGregor** - Manager, Smithfield House Nursery



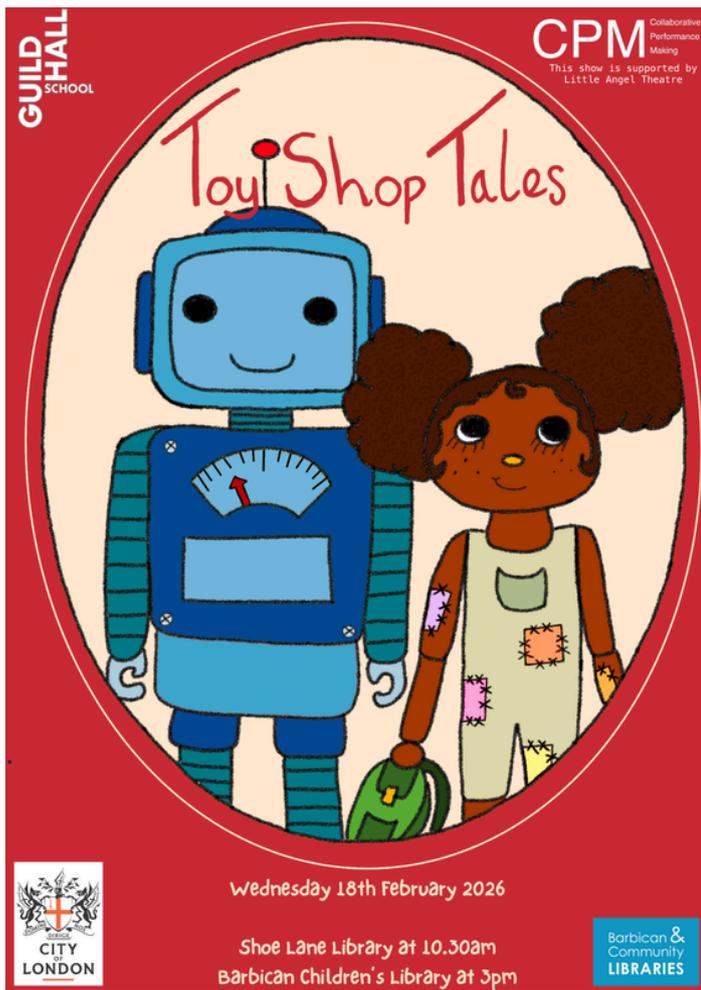
**Charlie and Alison Laing** - Worshipful Company of Paviers

# Amazing performance at Shoe Lane Library

We were delighted to watch the talented students from the Guildhall School of Drama perform a truly magical puppet show at Shoe Lane Library last month.

Their five-star performance told the heart warming story of a toy maker and a bear who longed for friendship. With beautiful puppetry, engaging storytelling, and wonderful performances, the audience was completely captivated from start to finish perfectly suited to our early years children. You can find out more about supporting early development by clicking here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/early-learning-development>





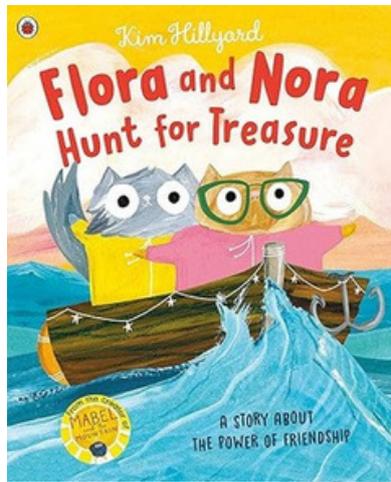
# Coltale's

## SPRING 2026



## Book for the Spring

**Flora and Nora Hunt for Treasure** by Kim Hillyard is about two best-friend cats who set sail in search of a legendary treasure. When a storm destroys their boat and separates them, Flora and Nora must face adventure alone. Tempted by jewels and discoveries, they learn that the greatest treasure of all is their friendship. This story is a lovely way to talk to your child about friendship, teamwork, and kindness.



In association with  
Dolly Parton's  
Imagination  
Library!

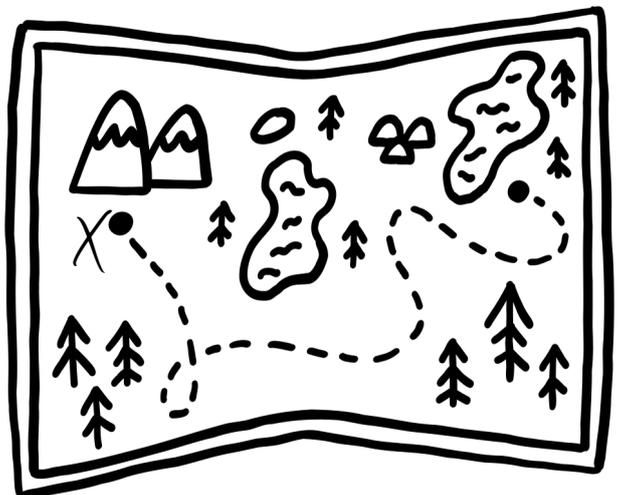


### Make a boat for Flora and Nora

- Fold the paper in half, Fold the corners.
- Tuck in the flaps, Open it into a boat!
- Try floating the boat in water.
- What happens when you blow the boat?
- Can you make the boat sink?



### Draw a treasure map and put an X where you want the the treasure to be.





# Cost of living

Find information about benefits, grants and discounts you can get if you're in financial difficulty, from Greater London Authority, the government, your local council, charities and advice centres.

For information visit:

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/communities-and-social-justice/help-cost-living>

**Better Health** Start for life

**NHS**

## When should my baby start solid foods?

It's best to wait until your baby is around six months old before you introduce solid foods alongside breast milk or infant formula. This gives your baby time to develop properly so they can cope with solid food.

Breast milk is the best food your baby can have during the first six months. Babies who are not breastfed are more likely to get infections.



## How do I know when it's time to wean?

There are three clear signs, which when they appear together from around six months, show that your baby is ready for their first solid foods:

- ✓ Sit up and hold their head steady
- ✓ Use their eyes, hands and mouth so they can look at food, pick it up and put it in their mouth
- ✓ Swallow food rather than push it back out

3 signs mistaken for a baby being ready

- ✗ Chewing fists
- ✗ Waking in the night (more than usual)
- ✗ Wanting extra milk feeds

## How much food does my baby need?

In the beginning, your baby will only need a small amount of food each day – so don't worry about how much they eat. The most important thing is trying new foods and flavours and learning to swallow solid food.

They will still be getting most of their energy and nutrients from breast milk or infant formula.



## Does my baby still need milk?

Breast milk or infant formula should be your baby's main drink until they are 12 months old, and you can carry on with breast milk for as long as you both want.

**TIP**  
"Follow-on" formula isn't suitable for babies under six months, and you don't need to introduce it after six months.

As time goes on and your baby eats more solids, they may naturally want less breast milk or infant formula. Remember your baby's tummy is tiny and fills up quickly – so offer milk feeds after solids.

## What if my baby doesn't want to eat?

It may take 10 tries or even more for your baby to get used to new foods, flavours and textures. There will be days when they eat more, some when they eat less, and then days when they reject everything. Don't worry – it's perfectly normal.

**TIP**  
They might make funny faces, but that doesn't mean they don't like it; they're just getting used to new tastes and textures.

Just keep offering a variety of foods – even the ones they don't seem to like – and let them get used to it in their own time.

## How much sugar should my baby eat?

Babies don't need sweet or salty snacks or treats. Even baby versions are not necessary. Many shop-bought packaged snacks can be high in sugar and salt.

Avoid things like biscuits, chocolate, sweets and pastries as they have lots of sugar and babies don't need them.

Sweet drinks like squash, fizzy drinks, milkshakes and fruit juice can have lots of sugar too, so avoid these to help prevent tooth decay. Even baby and toddler drinks can be sugary. Your baby doesn't need these.

Offer sips of water from a cup with meals instead.

## Time to start solid foods?

Weaning doesn't have to be confusing. We have the answers to all your questions, plus top tips and tasty recipes to try.

Search **Start for Life**

We're on Facebook and Instagram too and want to hear your weaning tips and stories!

#BetterHealthStartForLife  
#StartForLifeWeaning

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If you would like to find out anything further on any items or you would like more advice or information, please contact the City of London Family Information Service.

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