

May 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

Bonding with your baby



Responding to your baby's needs with warmth and love helps build the foundations for their future health and happiness. Everyday moments like nappy changes are chances to connect. Holding, cuddling, feeding, and soothing all support brain development and emotional learning. Find out more here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/best-start-in-life/baby/baby-basics/bonding-with-your-baby/>

Vaccinations for Children

One of the best ways to protect your child against diseases like measles, rubella, tetanus and meningitis is through immunisations.

As well as protecting your own child, you're also protecting others by preventing the spread of diseases. As your child grows, they'll be offered booster vaccinations to keep their protection strong. At certain ages, they'll also receive new vaccines to help protect against additional illnesses.

You can find out which vaccines are recommended and when by checking the NHS vaccination schedule.

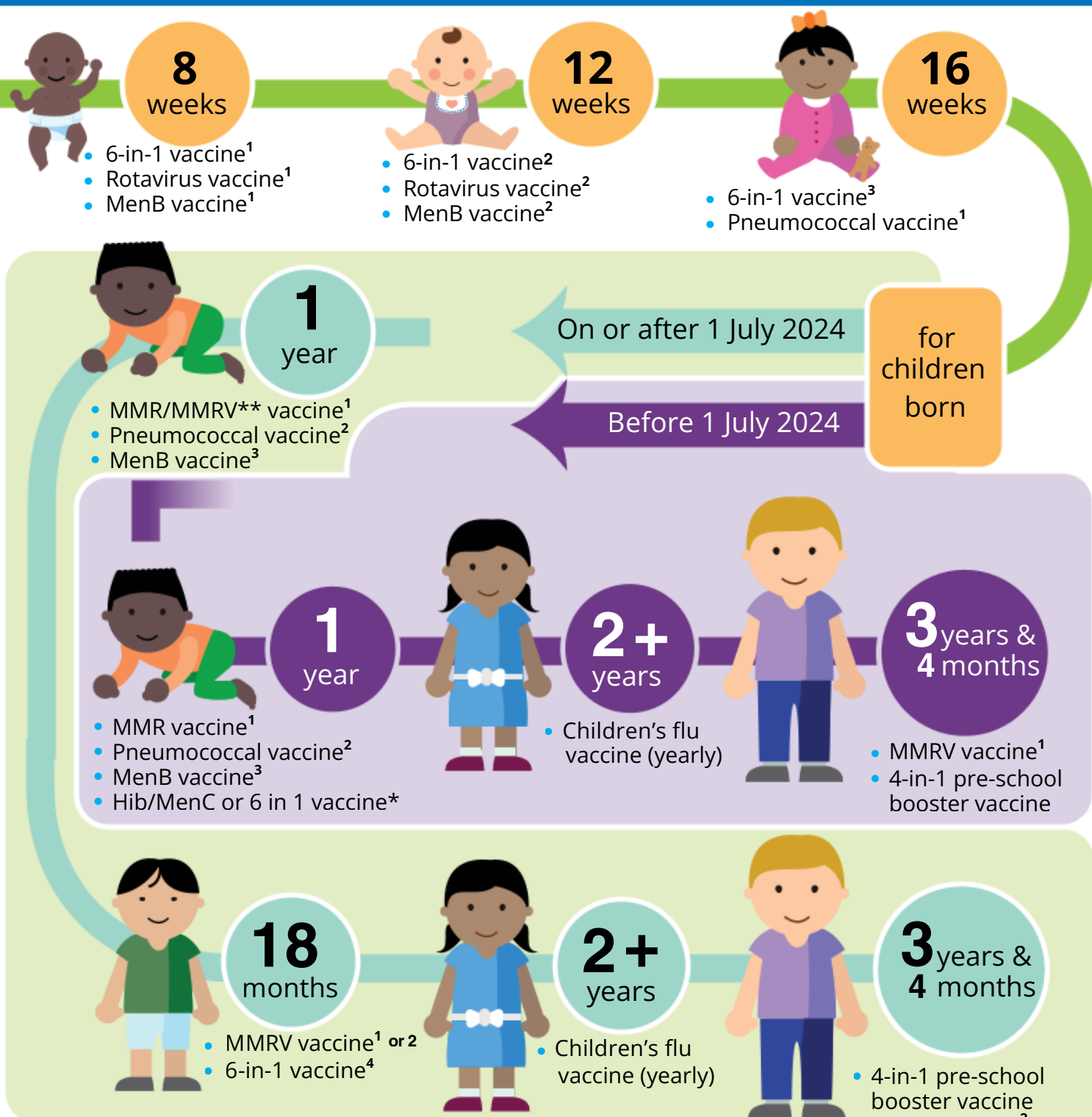
Vaccinations are offered free of charge in the UK. Book your appointments with your GP!



<https://www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/nhs-vaccinations-and-when-to-have-them/>



Your child's vaccine schedule



¹ first dose, ² second dose, ³ third dose, ⁴ fourth dose

6-in-1 protects against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, Hib and hepatitis B

4-in-1 protects against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough and polio

First dose of rotavirus vaccine must be given before 15 weeks of age and second dose must be given before 24 weeks of age

^{*}Vaccine given will depend on vaccine availability. ^{**} Vaccine given will depend on child's date of birth.

Follow your child's vaccine schedule to protect them against illnesses

Stick this timeline up as a useful reminder



EMPLOYING A CHILD? CHECK THE LAW!



Children aged 13–16 can work part-time, subject to strict limits on working hours and permitted job roles. A work permit is required which is free and easy to obtain.

The rules apply in all workplaces, including large organisations, charity shops, and family businesses.

Contact Us

Find out more detailed information about child employment and how to apply.

Visit: www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/childemployment

A Proud Moment: Janet MacGregor Receives British Empire Medal

One of our City's Early Years Nursery Managers, Janet MacGregor, has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) for her outstanding service to children, families, and the wider community. She received her medal this month. We pleased to share photos from the special occasion.

As manager of Smithfield House Nursery, Janet creates a warm and inclusive environment, greeting every child by name and championing high-quality early learning.

Alongside her work at the nursery, Janet has led remarkable fundraising efforts, including completing a tandem parachute jump and a 126-mile trek along the Great Wall of China, raising more than £9,000 for charity. Janet recently received her medal at the Tower of London — a truly well-deserved honour. The Early Years team and Family Information Service extend their heartfelt congratulations.

Janet said: "I had a wonderful day at the Tower of London on Friday and have attached a photo. I feel honoured to finally receive my medal."



Pictured is Janet with her daughter Gail.

Ready to learn! Starting School



Starting school is a big, exciting milestone for your child and for you. There are key skills that schools expect children to be learning before their first day. Practising these will make your child's journey to Reception as positive as possible.

You will find helpful transition cards you can download in the link below. You will also find our PDF copy of Ready to learn with Coltale with lots of practical tips for both you and your child.

<https://www.fis.cityoflondon.gov.uk/ey-send-portal/get-ready-for-school-with-coltale>

It's completely normal to wonder if your child is ready. But here's the good news: You are probably already doing more than enough without even realising it.

All those everyday moments such as talking about random things, building towers that immediately fall over, reading the same book again, and encouraging your child to do things "all by myself" all count.

These interactions quietly build confidence, communication skills, and independence. You can boost your child's school readiness with everyday activities. Find out more here:

<https://beststartinlife.gov.uk/preparing-for-school/>

MC Grammar has partnered with Best Start in Life to create a 'Steps for School' song, for you to watch and practise everyday skills with your child.

From getting dressed and using the toilet, to sharing, listening and asking for help, these are the little things that make a big difference.

Click the link at the bottom of the page to watch the video.



[Steps For School Song | @BestStartinLife + @MCGrammarTV](#)
[| Educational Rap Songs for Kids - YouTube](#)

Families first Quality Award to FIS!



Congratulations to the City of London Family Information Service on successfully achieving the Families First Quality Award (FFQA). This is a nationally recognised mark of excellence for family information and support services.

The accreditation reflects the team's dedication to delivering accessible support and information for children, young people and families living and working in the Square Mile.

The FFQA provides a practical framework to help services demonstrate quality, strengthen governance and partnerships, evidence impact, and embed a culture of continuous improvement. Achieving the award involves a rigorous assessment process, requiring clear evidence of effective systems, and outcomes for families.

The FFQA's recognition of the FIS Team's hard work means families and professionals can feel confident in the quality, consistency, and reliability of the information on the FIS website, social media channels and overall service.



Pictured (left to right):
Verity Welch – Early Years Advisor,
Zahida Hussain – Best Start in Life Manager,
Paul Ricketts – FIS Officer,
Isabelle Denniee – Lead Early Years Advisor
Hasna Rahman - Early Years Assistant

The team is seen here celebrating and already planning for the year ahead! Check out their acclaimed work on the City of London FIS website:

<https://www.fis.cityoflondon.gov.uk>

Help with food costs



Charities, community groups, and schemes like Healthy Start offer low-cost or free food, milk, and fruits. Access free school meals and food programmes in the City.

Find out more here:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/getting-help-with-the-cost-of-living/help-with-food-costs>



City of London Best Start in Life/Best Start Family Hub Timetable April to July 2026

Education and Early Years Service, Department of Community and Children's Services 020 7332 1002 | EEYService@cityoflondon.gov.uk
Follow us on X, Facebook and Instagram @SquareMileFamilies
For the latest information about services, activities and events, visit: <https://www.fis.cityoflondon.gov.uk/>



Venue
Colour/
Pattern
Key:

Arizon Street Library,
1 Arizon Street E1 7AF
T: 020 7332 3810
E: arizonlib@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Smithfield House
Children's Nursery
14 West Smithfield EC1A 9HY
T: 020 7236 1000
E: office@smithfieldnursery.co.uk

Shoe Lane Library,
1 Little New Street EC4A 3UR
T: 0207 583 7178
E: shoelanelib@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Barbican Library,
Barbican Centre EC2Y 8DS
T: 0207 628 9447
E: barbicanlib@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Golden Lane
Leisure Centre,
Farn Street EC1Y 0SH
T: 020 7250 1464
E: SCD-Col@fusion-lifestyle.com

Guildhall Art Gallery
Guildhall Yard, EC2V 5AE
T: 020 7332 3700
E: tanya.dean@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Guildhall West Wing
71 Basinghall St, EC2V 7HH
T: 0207 608 2753/0207 332 1231
E: adult.education@cityoflondon.gov.uk

Monday

Baby Clinic - Appointment Only
With City Health Visitor (020 76834151)
4th Monday of the month
1 - 3 pm

Pick and Play Puzzles
Ages 0 - 11
3 - 6.30 pm

Care To Dance
Ages 7-15,
5.15pm - 6.15pm
E: amelia@caretodance.co.uk

Baby Massage
9.45 - 11.15 am
To book call 020 7236 1000

Calm Colouring
Ages 5+
3 - 5 pm

Rhyme Time
Ages 0 - 5
10.45 - 11.15 am

Story Time
Ages 3+
4 - 4.30 pm

City Sports
Swimming
Ages 8 - 18
6.30 - 7.30 pm

Tuesday

Stay & Play
Ages 0 - 5
9 - 11 am

Adult Meditation Classes
Ages 18+
Fortnightly, call 020 7332 3810
12 - 12.45 pm

Stay & Play
Ages 0 - 5
1 - 3.15 pm

Rhyme Time
Ages 0 - 5
10.30 - 11.30 am

Pick and Play Puzzles
All welcome
2 - 6 pm

IT Help Drop-in
All welcome
5.30 - 7pm

City Sports
Gym
Ages 8 - 18
5 - 7 pm

Adult Skills & Education:
English - ESOL entry 3
(Enrolment required)
10 am - 2 pm

Wednesday

Breast & Infant Feeding Group
1st Wednesday of the month
10 - 11.30 am

Calm Colouring
All welcome
3.30 - 5 pm

Stay and Play
Ages 0 - 5
1.30 - 2.30 pm

Rhythm & Wiggles
Ages 0 - 5
2.30 - 3 pm

Rhyme Time
Ages 0 - 5
10.30 - 11.30 am

Breast & Infant Feeding Group
3rd Wednesday of the month
10 am - 12 pm

Toy Time
Ages 0 - 5
12 - 2 pm

Adult Skills & Education:
Essential Digital Skills Level 1
(Enrolment required)
10 am - 1 pm

Thursday

Rhyme Time
Ages 0 - 5
10 - 10.30 am

Stay & Play
Ages 0 - 5
10.30 - 11.30 am

Aldgate Food Club
All welcome
1 - 30 pm

Messy Play for under 5s
Ages 0 - 5
Last Thursday of the month
10.30 - 11.30 am

Games Club
All welcome
5.30 - 7 pm

Bumps And Babies
3rd Thursday of the month
Ages Pre-birth - 5
10 - 11.30 am

Digital Skills & Computing:
Essential Digital Skills for
Beginners
(Enrolment required) 2 - 4 pm

Adult Skills & Education:
English - ESOL entry 2
(Enrolment required)
10 am - 1 pm

Friday

Stay & Play
Ages 0 - 5
9 - 11 am

Sensory Room
To book a morning 30 mins slot
call 020 7236 1000

Rhyme Time
0 - 5 years old
10.45 - 11.15 am

Friday Monster Art Club
All welcome
4 - 5 pm

SEND Activity Programme
Football (Ages 7 - 14) 4.15 - 5.15 pm
Gym (Ages 15 - 21) 5.15 - 6.15 pm
E: SCD-Col@fusion-lifestyle.com

Adult Skills & Education:
Functional Skills Level 2 English
(Enrolment required)
9.30 am - 3.30 pm

Saturday

Rhyme Time
0 - 5 years old
10.45 - 11.15 am

Adult Skills & Education:
English - ESOL entry 2
(Enrolment required)
10 am - 2 pm

Family Activities
Stories, arts and craft sessions
Ages 3 - 13
2nd Saturday of month 11 am - 4 pm

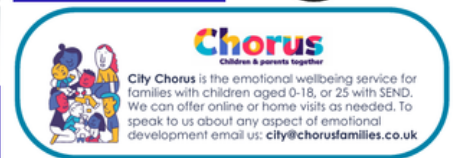


Chorus

Children & parents together



City Chorus is the emotional wellbeing service for families with children aged 0-18, or 25 with SEND. We can offer online or home visits as needed. To speak to us about any aspect of emotional development email us: city@chorusfamilies.co.uk



Toynbee City Advice Surgeries are on local estates. For more information please go to: <https://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/whats-on/>

DISCLAIMER: Please note that times and locations of sessions may change due to unforeseen circumstances. The City of London Corporation and providers cannot accept responsibility for such changes.

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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