

# Healthy Early Years London



Healthy Early Years London (HEYL) is an awards scheme funded by the Mayor of London which supports and recognises achievements in child health, wellbeing and development in early years settings.

Building on the success of [Healthy Schools London](#), HEYL will help to reduce health inequalities by supporting a healthy start to life across themes that include healthy eating, oral and physical health and early cognitive development.

HEYL complements and enhances the statutory [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) framework, adding to the focus on children, families and staff health and wellbeing.

The 4 levels of Awards - HEYL First Steps, Bronze, Silver and Gold - can be used to improve and support practice in all Early Years settings:

- private, voluntary and independent nurseries
- children's centres
- childminders
- Early Years in schools including schools with two-year old provision
- nursery schools
- crèches and playgroups

## Why we need Healthy Early Years London

Getting a good start in life, building emotional resilience and getting maximum benefit from education are the most important markers for good health and wellbeing throughout life. Early Years settings can lay the foundations for lifelong health and wellbeing as they help children prepare for school.

A significant proportion of London's children have health problems that may affect their wellbeing and future education. For example:

- almost 1 in 5 children in reception year are overweight or obese
- 1 in 4 five year olds in London have tooth decay
- Children eligible for FSM are almost 20% less likely to have a Good level of development at age 5 than those not eligible
- Babies born in Tower Hamlets are 2.5x more likely to be born with a low birth weight than those born in Richmond upon Thames

Considerable inequalities also exist between areas - in some parts of London figures are much higher. HEYL will support the Mayor's upcoming [Health Inequalities Strategy](#) and

help every London child to have a healthy start to life, with improvements in healthy life expectancy, child obesity and wellbeing.

## Benefits

The most effective way of improving health in this age group is to take a whole-setting approach, engaging children, staff, parents, carers and the wider community.

In Healthy Early Years settings and at home, children will be supported to:

- eat a healthy lunch and healthy snacks
- drink plenty of water, not fizzy drinks
- wheel, walk, scoot, cycle to the setting with their parents/carers
- wheel, play, run, skip and jump outdoors and in the park
- have plenty of tummy time
- have plenty of sleep
- sing songs and read stories together
- learn how to brush their teeth and visit the dentist
- learn about their own feelings and how to express and manage them
- live in a smoke-free home

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