

Shaping Lives



Impact report

Shaping your tomorrow, today



2025

Building brighter futures through Early Years apprenticeships

At Shaping Lives, we're passionate about nurturing talent and shaping confident, skilled educators who give every child the very best start in life.

By working side by side with nursery employers, apprentices, and Early Years professionals, we create opportunities for growth, raise standards across the sector, and help transform lives, from the children in nurseries to the teams who support them.

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Welcome from our Managing Director

2025 has been an incredible year of growth, resilience, and positive change. At Shaping Lives, our mission is simple: to inspire success by delivering outstanding training and support for every apprentice, every time.

The Early Years sector plays a vital role in children's futures, but we all know the challenges nurseries face: high demand, staff shortages, and ever-changing requirements. Apprenticeships are one of the most powerful solutions. They don't just fill vacancies; they create confident, committed professionals who stay, grow, and lead.

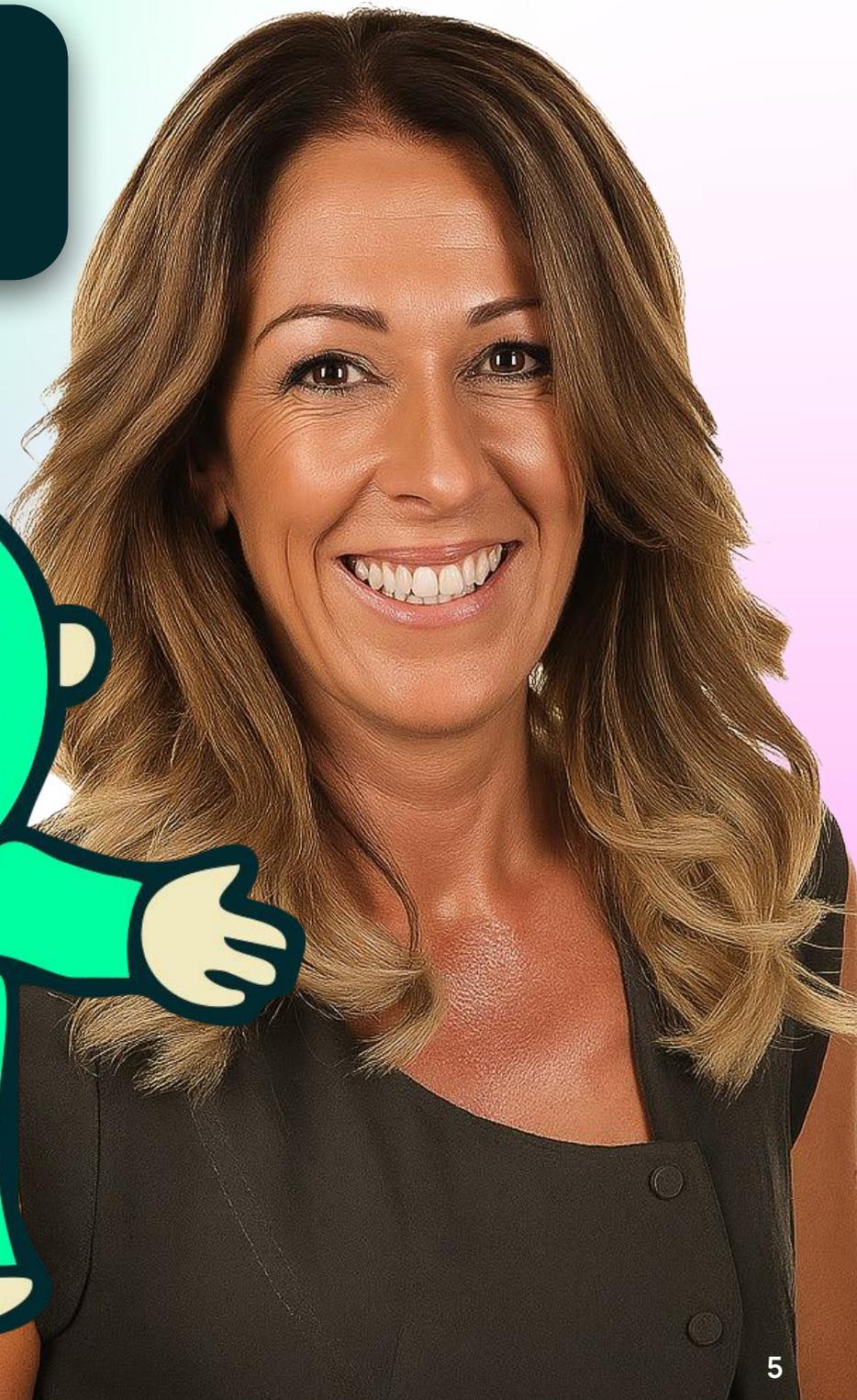
We've seen first-hand how investing in apprenticeships strengthens teams, boosts retention, and raises the quality of care and education children receive. That's why Shaping Lives is proud to be recognised as a trusted partner across the sector, delivering tailored training journeys that equip educators with the skills and confidence they need to thrive.

This report celebrates the impact of apprenticeships on learners, employers, and communities. Most importantly, it shows how together, we are shaping tomorrow's Early Years workforce today. Building stronger nurseries, inspiring passionate educators, and making sure every child has the best start in life.

Michelle Anstee
Managing Director

100%

employer
satisfaction in
2025



Shaping Lives: Who we are

Shaping Lives

For over two decades, Shaping Lives has been a specialist in delivering high-quality apprenticeship training for the Early Years sector. Our focus is on equipping educators with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to support children's development during their most formative years.

In 2024, we were rated 'Good' by Ofsted, recognising our commitment to quality, continuous improvement, and strong outcomes for both learners and employers



National apprenticeship provider specialising in Early Years education and childcare



Rated Good by Ofsted, with consistently positive feedback from employers and learners



4.8*

Trustpilot based on 90+ learner and employer reviews

Each year, we support over 200 apprentices and collaborate with nurseries across the UK to design and deliver programmes that meet real workforce needs. Our experience within Early Years education allows us to align training with the expectations of a modern, high-performing sector ensuring every apprenticeship contributes to professional growth and improved outcomes for children.



**employer
satisfaction
in 2025**



**learner
satisfaction
in 2025**



1928

nursery partnerships
across the UK



778

learners trained in the
past year

Why this matters:

Our apprenticeship programmes in Early Years education equip professionals with the skills, confidence, and knowledge to excel. We help learners provide high-quality Early Years experiences, support employers to grow and retain talent, and strengthen the sector. By developing capable and passionate practitioners, we're building a confident, skilled, and resilient workforce that helps every child thrive.

Purpose and principles

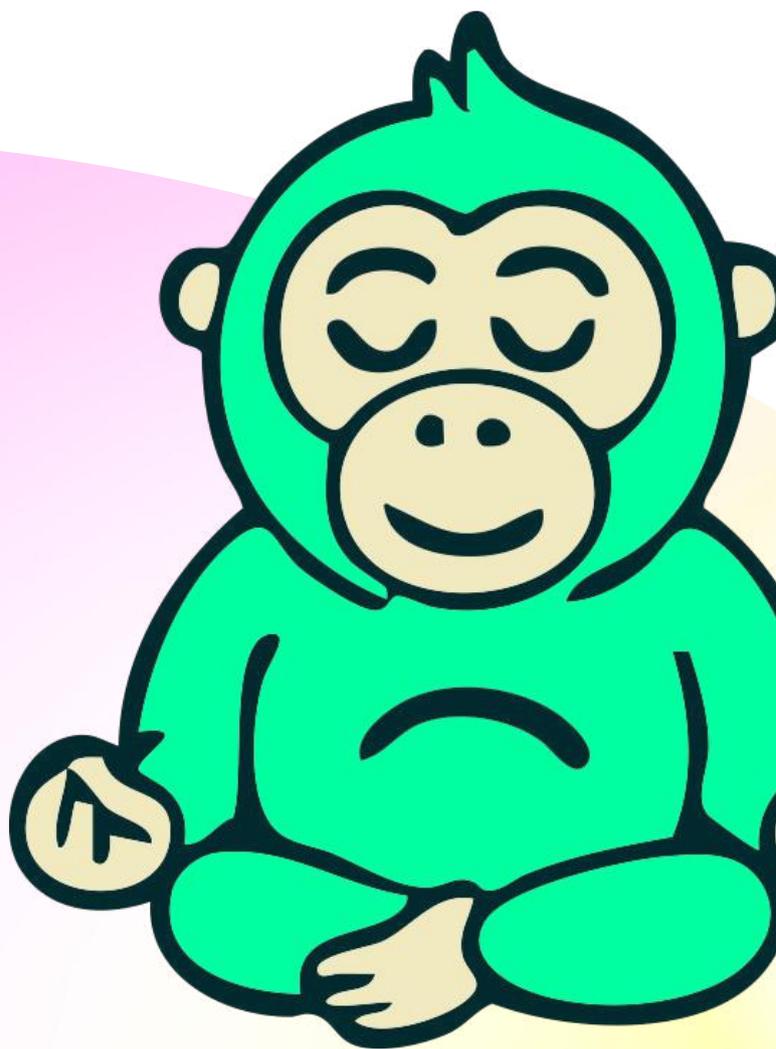
Our purpose

To deliver outstanding skills and growth programmes for apprentices, ensuring excellent outcomes for children aged 0-5.

Our principles

The values that define who we are:

- Distinction
- Know-how
- Edge
- Passion



What this means in practice:

Distinction



We excel in what we do, delivering the highest quality and professional standards.

Know-how



We demonstrate extensive expertise, sharing best practice in everything we do.

Edge



We are creative and bold, pushing boundaries with tailored, innovative delivery.

Passion



We bring energy to everything we do, inspiring learners, tutors, and nursery teams.

Why this matters:

Choosing Shaping Lives means partnering with a provider committed to developing confident, capable apprentices who deliver the very best outcomes for children.

Employer partners

Across England, more than 1,100 childcare organisations trust us to help them grow, develop, and support their teams.

Our employer partners play a vital role in shaping a stronger, more skilled childcare sector, one that delivers the quality and compassion people deserve. Here are just some of the incredible employers we're proud to work with.



The role of apprenticeships

Passion meets growth

Apprenticeships in Early Years Education

Apprenticeships are delivering tangible benefits across nurseries, for apprentices, and within the wider Early Years sector. They support recruitment, retention, workforce development, and long-term sustainability while equipping apprentices with the skills, confidence, and knowledge they need to thrive.

Key outcomes



99%

of employers agree apprenticeships are important



95%

report increased productivity and competence



95%

say apprenticeships help fill skills gaps



Impact on nurseries:

- Apprenticeships introduce new talent and create clear pathways for existing staff to progress.
- Fewer staffing gaps and lower reliance on agency staff contribute to continuity and stability.
- Staff are better prepared to meet regulatory and inspection requirements.



Impact on apprentices:

- Apprentices gain practical, hands-on experience while developing professional skills.
- Clear progression pathways help apprentices advance into higher roles, improving career prospects.
- Increased confidence and competence prepare apprentices to make a meaningful difference in children's early development.



Impact on the Early Years sector:

- Apprenticeships help close skills gaps and strengthen workforce capacity.
- By developing home-grown talent, nurseries contribute to sector-wide sustainability and quality standards.
- Knowledge sharing and collaboration through apprenticeships foster innovation and best practice.



Impact on communities and children:

- Stable, qualified teams provide consistent, high-quality care for children aged 0–5.
- Stronger relationships with families build trust and enhance community engagement.
- Local workforce development supports inclusion, diversity, and social mobility.

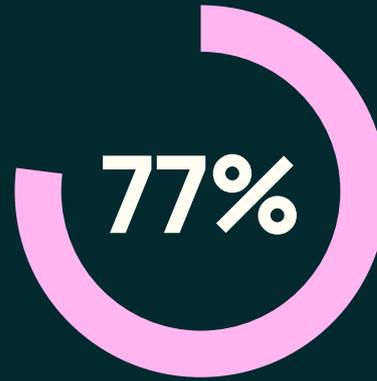
Why this matters:

Apprenticeships are more than a training programme, they are a catalyst for workforce growth, career development, sector improvement, and positive outcomes for children and communities.

Our year in numbers



This year, Shaping Lives has continued to make a real impact; supporting hundreds of learners to develop new skills and reach their full potential. We've worked closely with employers across sectors, helping them make the most of their levy funding and strengthen their workforce. Learner satisfaction remains exceptionally high, with the vast majority reporting improved confidence and job performance. Most importantly, our learners are moving on to positive destinations; advancing in their careers, gaining new qualifications, and shaping brighter futures for themselves and their communities.



made suggestions that improved business



went on to positive destinations



helped them perform their job better

1928

learners supported

778

employers supported

88%

learner satisfaction

100%

employer satisfaction

£16m

levy funds raised*

5830

learners supported through levy funding*

22%

of learners from ethnically
diverse backgrounds

412

learners recruited through free service

Our approach to apprenticeships

Training should make a difference from day one. That's why we created the Elevate Curriculum, designed specifically for Early Years education.



Learning that works in practice

Elevate blends online learning, interactive workshops, and hands-on experience guided by expert tutors. Apprentices apply what they learn directly in the nursery, embedding safeguarding, supporting school readiness, and improving interactions with children.



took on extra responsibilities

Impact for you: staff who quickly become confident, capable, and effective in your setting.

Building skills that last

Flipped Learning ensures apprentices practise, reflect, and build confidence step by step.



developed new skills

Change you'll see: practitioners who retain knowledge, adapt to challenges, and progress into higher roles.

Sharing ideas across the sector

Workshops connect apprentices with peers, fostering collaboration and sharing best practice.



improved communication skills

Growth you'll see: fresh ideas being brought back into your nursery.

Personalised journeys

Every apprentice has a dedicated tutor, tailoring the learning journey to their goals and your nursery's needs.



clear idea of future

Benefit for you: stronger engagement, higher completion rates, and a workforce built around your nursery's culture.

Embedding responsibility and sustainability

Elevate develops professional values and social responsibility, creating apprentices who contribute positively to your team and community.

Why Elevate matters for nurseries:

- Confident, qualified, inspection-ready staff
- Improved retention and clear progression pathways
- Reduced reliance on agency staff
- Teams who bring creativity, energy, and best practice into your nursery

Our way of working



A partner in growth

We work as an extension of your nursery team, supporting you to tackle immediate challenges while planning for long-term workforce needs.

Impact you'll see: faster responses, tailored solutions, and a partner who grows with your setting.

Our way of working delivers measurable impact for nurseries, their teams, and the wider Early Years sector.

By acting as an extension of your nursery, we provide responsive, tailored support that tackles immediate workforce challenges while planning for long-term growth. Our collaborative approach ensures apprenticeship programmes achieve real outcomes; improving retention, satisfaction, and performance. Built on transparency, trust, and partnership, our way of working drives sustainable development and lasting results across every setting we support.



Insight that delivers measurable change

Through collaborative planning, we ensure apprenticeship programmes deliver real outcomes that make a difference.

Change you'll see: improved retention, higher satisfaction, and a workforce ready to provide exceptional care and learning.



Relationships that last

Our approach is built on transparency, responsiveness, and trust.

Growth you'll see: long-term partnerships, sustainable workforce development, and stronger outcomes year after year.



reported improved job performance

“ I love watching the staff grow and develop just as much as the children. Given the right support, anyone can achieve amazing things. ”

Ragamuffins Day Nursery – Emily Williams (Manager)



Proven results

- Increased apprentice starts across key accounts
- Improved Customer Satisfaction scores
- Expanding partnerships reflecting trust and shared commitment



employer satisfaction in 2025

Why this matters:

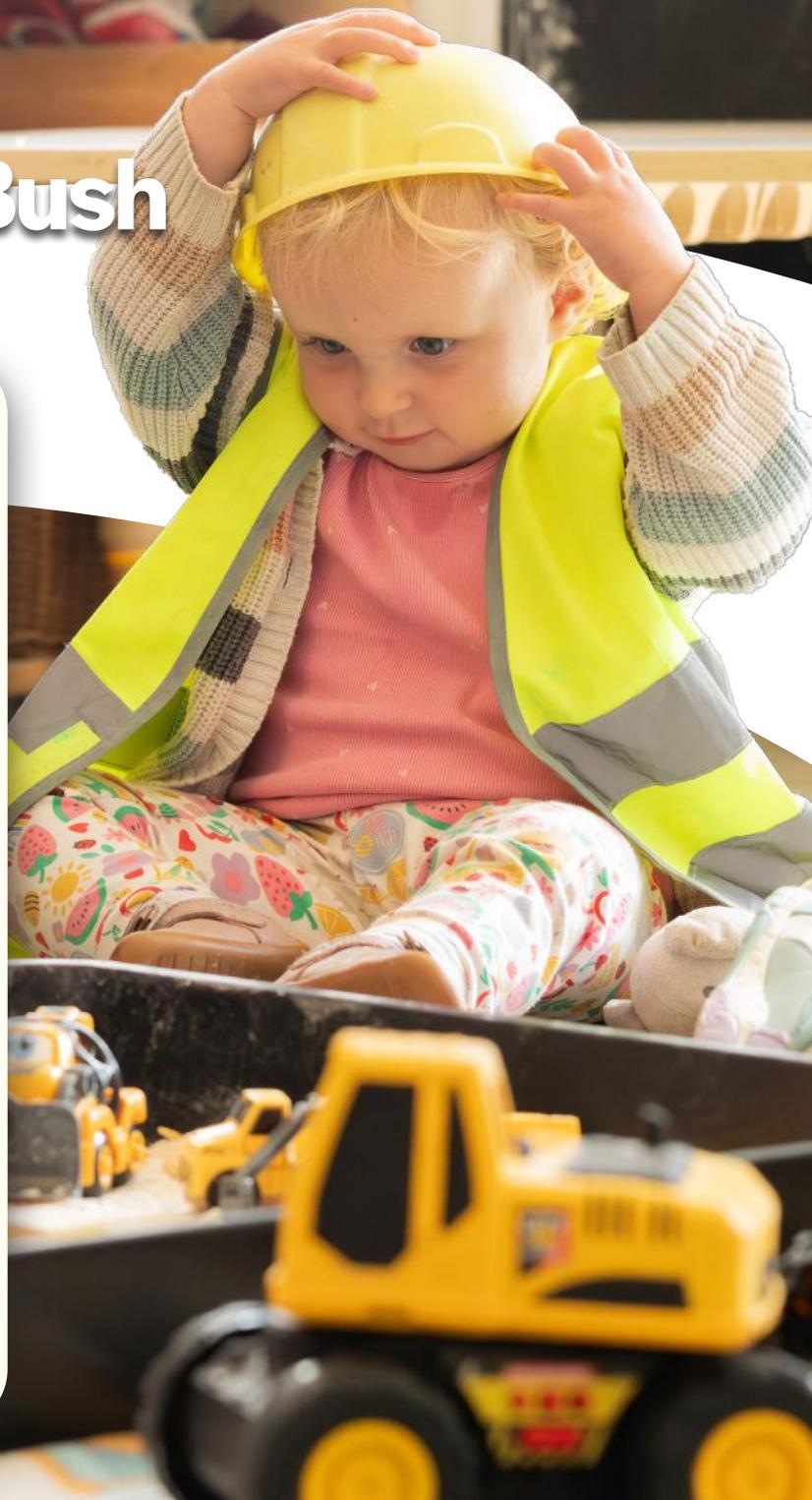
Shaping Lives drives growth in apprentice numbers, strengthens workforce retention, and delivers measurable outcomes, all while building lasting relationships founded on trust and value.

Case study: The Mulberry Bush



High-quality Early Years education across five Hampshire settings is at the heart of The Mulberry Bush's mission. Our team fosters inclusive, collaborative learning, blending professional growth with a strong connection to the natural world.

Apprentices contribute meaningfully across all settings, bringing eagerness to learn and enriching both children's experiences and team dynamics. Many progress into leadership roles, supporting new team members and leading classrooms.





We truly value our apprentices and the fresh perspectives they bring. It's a privilege to support their development and watch them grow into confident practitioners who make a real difference to our children and team.



Donna Hopper, Area Manager & Early Years Training Lead



Developing talent, building confidence

Apprentices bring fresh energy and ideas to every setting; enhancing children's learning and strengthening teams. With tailored mentoring, protected study time, and hands-on experience across five nurseries, they progress through clear pathways from Level 2–5, supported by ongoing CPD and strong partnerships with Shaping Lives.



Strong partnerships, real results

Regular progress reviews, dedicated support, and structured learning time help apprentices excel; many achieving merits, distinctions, and stepping into leadership roles. New school partnerships are building a strong pipeline of future educators.

Why this matters:

Apprenticeships grow loyal, skilled teams who know your setting inside out; reducing recruitment costs and creating confident future leaders who deliver lasting impact.

Our impact

Empowering learners

Apprenticeships play a vital role in developing a skilled, confident, and resilient workforce across the early years sector.

By providing structured learning and practical experience, they help nurseries close skills gaps, improve retention, and enhance the quality of education and care delivered to children.

Key outcomes



of learners said their apprenticeship helped them prepare for working life



felt supported in discovering their career goals and ambitions



reported a better understanding of the different pathways available to achieve their goals



Impact for learners

Apprenticeships provide clear, supported pathways into sustainable careers. Learners gain professional capability, confidence, and a strong sense of purpose, enabling them to make a meaningful contribution from the outset.



Impact for nurseries

For employers, apprenticeships build capacity and continuity within teams. Staff trained through apprenticeships are more likely to remain in the sector, take on additional responsibilities, and progress into leadership roles, strengthening the stability and quality of provision.



Personalised learning and support

Every apprentice benefits from dedicated tutor guidance, creating an inclusive learning environment where they can apply new knowledge effectively and grow in confidence. This personalised approach supports sustained professional development and better outcomes for both learners and the children they work with.

Why this matters:

In practice, this means apprentices complete their programmes ready to contribute immediately, remain longer within their settings, and continue to progress, helping to build a stronger, more sustainable Early Years workforce.

Apprenticeships: Pathways to opportunity and social impact

Building a resilient Early Years workforce

At Shaping Lives, we view apprenticeships as far more than training programmes. They are pathways to meaningful careers, stronger communities, and a more resilient Early Years workforce.

By offering accessible routes into employment, apprenticeships open doors for people from a wide range of backgrounds; including those who may not have thrived in traditional education settings. Combining practical experience with structured learning, they help individuals gain the skills, confidence, and professional identity needed to succeed in the Early Years sector.

We continue to measure and share this impact through data, learner outcomes, and stories that demonstrate the real social value created through our programmes.

Broader impact across the sector

- Apprenticeships promote social mobility, making skilled and rewarding careers accessible to everyone.
- They drive inclusion, welcoming candidates from underrepresented and diverse backgrounds.
- They enhance productivity and professional standards by addressing persistent skills shortages.
- They foster a culture of lifelong learning, helping the workforce adapt and grow with the evolving needs of the sector.

The benefits extend beyond individuals. For employers, apprenticeships develop capable, motivated teams who deliver high-quality early education and care. For society, they reduce inequality, strengthen local economies, and contribute to a more sustainable and equitable future.

Impact highlights



of apprentices progressed into positive destinations



reported improved job performance



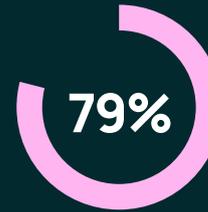
received a promotion



gained a pay rise



developed new professional skills



took on additional responsibilities



improved communication skills



had a clearer understanding of their career direction



felt better prepared for working life

Why this matters

Apprenticeships contribute directly to workforce stability and sector resilience. Employers that invest in apprenticeships are not only developing staff capability but also supporting diversity, inclusion, and social equity within their organisations and communities.

Through this investment, nurseries gain more than skilled employees, they nurture professionals who are committed to their own growth, to the children they care for, and to the future of the Early Years sector as a whole.

Rethinking the future of the Early Years workforce

The Early Years sector plays a vital role in shaping the lives of children, families, and communities, yet it is facing unprecedented challenges..

Persistent recruitment gaps, high turnover, and changing societal expectations are placing pressure on employers and deterring many potential entrants from joining this essential workforce.

We have undertaken research into the sector, which consisted of 100 Early Years Employers and 100 Apprenticeship considerers, along with 400 of those interested in following an apprenticeship education path (not Early Years).

Our goal is to surface not just the barriers, but the motivators. To understand what draws people to this profession, what keeps them there, and what pushes them away. By listening closely to the sector's voices, we aim to identify targeted solutions that can support a more stable, valued, and inspired workforce.

The strategic role is to be more than a training provider, it's to be a partner in building a sustainable workforce. That means working with employers to close supervision gaps, designing support for apprentices to stay, and helping shift the dial in childcare being seen as education.



nurseries report insufficient staffing to meet demand



of employers feel the government doesn't understand sector challenges



believe that recent policies have negatively impacted operations

Key challenges include low pay, rising operational costs, and the difficulty of replacing long-term staff. 82% of employers feel that government does not understand sector challenges, and 96% believe that recent policies have negatively impacted operations.

Employers are deeply uncertain about the future of the Early Years sector, citing high business costs, retention challenges, and shifting policy environments. However, they overwhelmingly view apprenticeships as a critical tool to strengthen staffing capacity and improve retention.



The same pressures pushing staff out are deterring new apprentices from coming in.



Why this matters

Apprentice considerers are positive and purpose-driven: 85% express strong interest in an Early Years career, and 70% believe apprenticeships are viewed positively in society. However, they face barriers such as low pay, heavy workloads, and uncertainty about post-qualification progression.



express a strong interest in an Early Years career



believe apprenticeships are viewed positively in society



have concerns about high workloads and stress levels in childcare settings

Both employers and apprentices recognise the value of apprenticeships but are constrained by similar challenges: low pay, workload, and lack of progression routes. This alignment presents a foundation for collaborative solutions. Apprenticeships can be reimagined as sustainable career pathways rather than short-term staffing fixes.

Customer satisfaction

At Shaping Lives, the success of our learners and partners is at the heart of everything we do. We measure our impact not only by the skills and confidence our learners develop, but also by the positive experiences of the individuals and organisations we support.



Having a tutor on the end of a phone call any time of the day. Having extended time to complete when life takes over. Being praised on good work and having pointers and advice in a positive approach when work needs adjusting and more information is needed rather than a negative and degrading way which will create thoughts of continuing the course as some training providers in the past have done. I'm enjoying learning new skills and look forward to my future career.

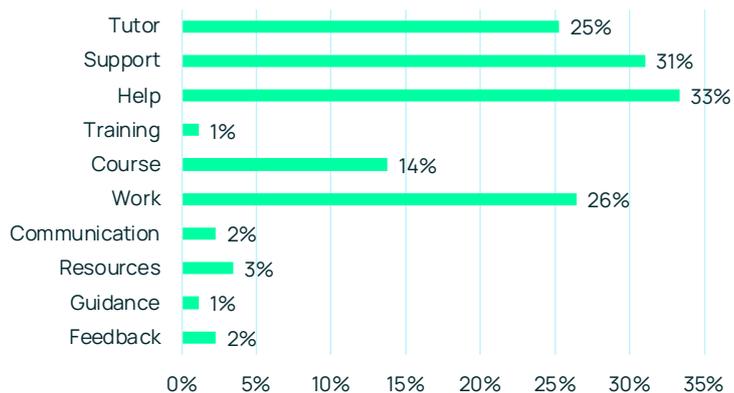
Sam, Apprentice

By providing personalised support and clear communication, we ensure learners and employers feel valued and supported throughout the apprenticeship journey; driving engagement, retention, and real impact across early years settings.

Learner satisfaction breakdown



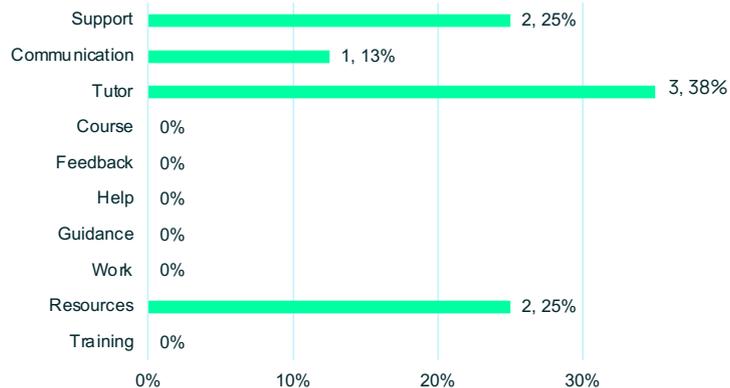
learner satisfaction in 2025



Employer satisfaction breakdown



employer satisfaction in 2025



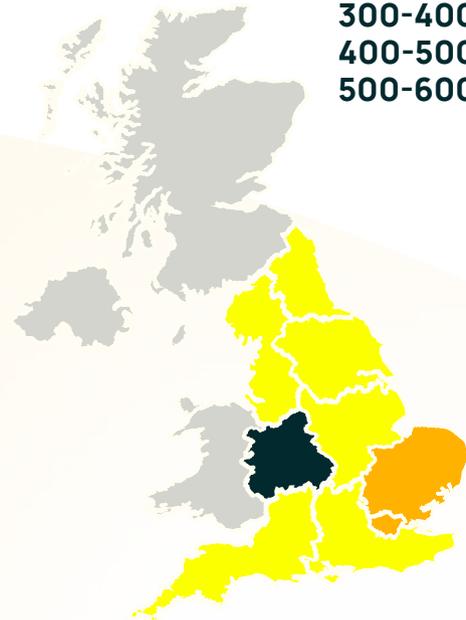
Our reach

Shaping Lives works in partnership with employers across England, delivering apprenticeship training in every region of the country. Our national reach ensures that Early Years settings, regardless of size or location, can access consistently high-quality training, guidance, and support.

By connecting employers and learners nationwide, we help bridge geographical gaps and promote shared standards of excellence across the Early Years sector. This collective approach strengthens local provision while contributing to a more skilled, confident, and resilient workforce nationally.

The map illustrates the breadth of our delivery and the locations of the nurseries and Early Years settings we have supported over the past year.

Number of learners



Why this matters:

Partner with a trusted training provider delivering consistent quality and strong learner outcomes across England. Join a growing network of employers committed to developing skilled, motivated professionals; and gain confidence that your investment in apprenticeships is making a real impact locally and nationally.

Diversity and ethnic representation in the labour market

The UK labour market has become increasingly diverse over recent decades. According to the latest census data, around **19.3% of the working-age population** in England and Wales are from Asian, Black, Mixed, or Other (non-White British) ethnic groups.

22%

of learners from ethnically diverse backgrounds

At Shaping Lives, we champion diversity and inclusion, encouraging more people from under-represented and minority backgrounds to consider apprenticeships. Diverse perspectives strengthen workplaces, foster innovation, and ensure services reflect the communities they support.

Across all the regions we work in, our apprenticeship programmes are reaching learners from ethnically diverse backgrounds. In the past 12 months, **22.13% of our learners have been from a minority background.**

Why this matters:

Diversity and inclusion drive innovation, better decision-making, and stronger outcomes. A workforce that reflects its community builds trust, supports recruitment and retention, and delivers improved performance and resilience.

Learner quotes



Learner feedback is at the heart of everything we do at Shaping Lives. It offers genuine, first-hand insight into the difference our training makes; helping us continually improve and celebrate success. These authentic voices build trust, transparency, and a true sense of community, while also guiding future learners and employers to make confident, informed choices about joining Shaping Lives.



Corrine is an amazing tutor who never let me give up and supported me through everything.

N.C. Apprentice



Miranda helped me get back on track and gave me the motivation I needed.

Courtney Collie Apprentice



My assessor Sharon was so reassuring and really helped me build my confidence.

Nieve Apprentice



My tutor Sharon guided me every step of the way and helped me achieve a distinction.

Kate Apprentice



Corinne and Sam were fantastic—always supportive and full of knowledge.

Jessica Wild Apprentice



Sharon was amazing, always listened and supported me through every hurdle..

Abbie Steele Apprentice



Sarah Ashton completely turned my experience around and helped me succeed.

Jenni Churton Apprentice



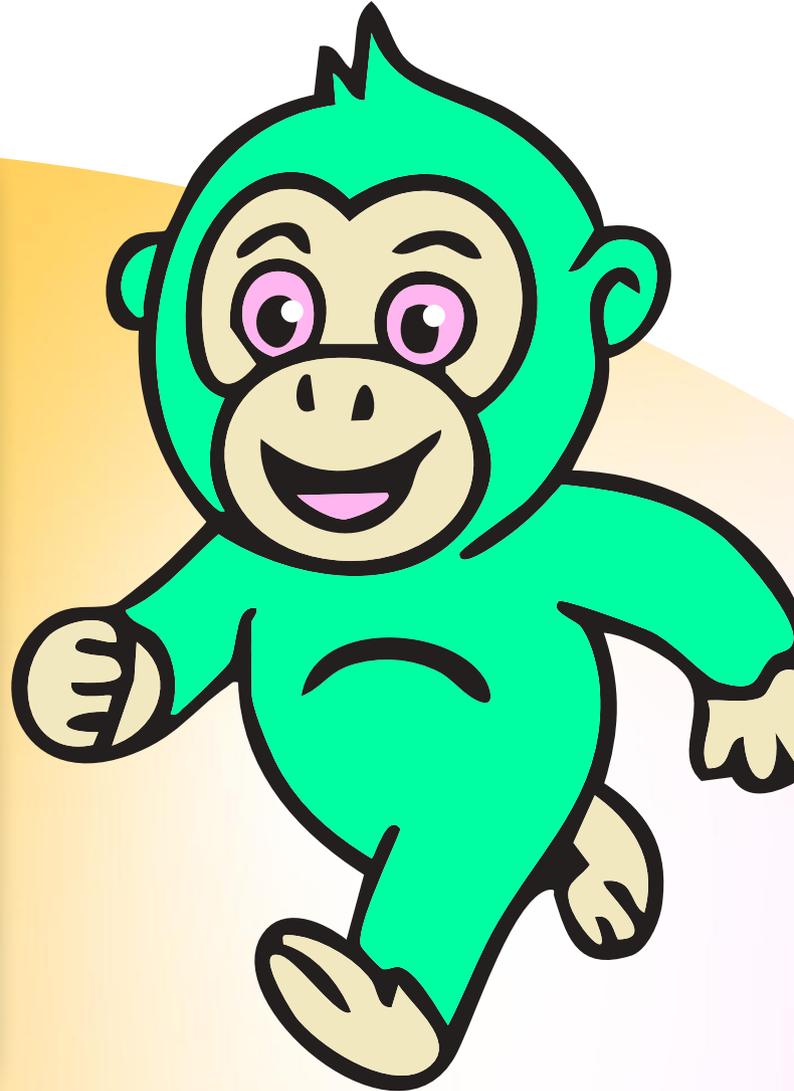
A big thank you to Sharon for helping me make my dreams a reality.

Chanelle Apprentice



Recruitment

Recruiting the right people in the early years sector is never easy. With high demand, staffing pressures, and limited time, finding the right fit can feel overwhelming. Shaping Lives offers a free apprenticeship recruitment service that makes the process simple; connecting you with motivated candidates who not only fill vacancies but grow and thrive within your organisation.



50%

Over 50% of childcare providers report difficulty recruiting

412

learners placed in the last 12 months

325

adverts placed in the last 12 months

A service built for impact

How It works in four steps:

1

Promotion

We promote your vacancy across national job boards, reaching a wide audience.

2

Interview

We shortlist candidates and coordinate interviews

3

Feedback

You provide feedback; we support your decision.

4

Enrolment

Once chosen, we manage enrolment onto the apprenticeship programme.

Why this matters:

Recruiting through apprenticeships is a powerful way to plan for the future, strengthen retention, and boost productivity – all at no cost to employers. With Shaping Lives' national reach, you'll enhance your organisation's reputation while championing social mobility and diversity across the childcare sector.

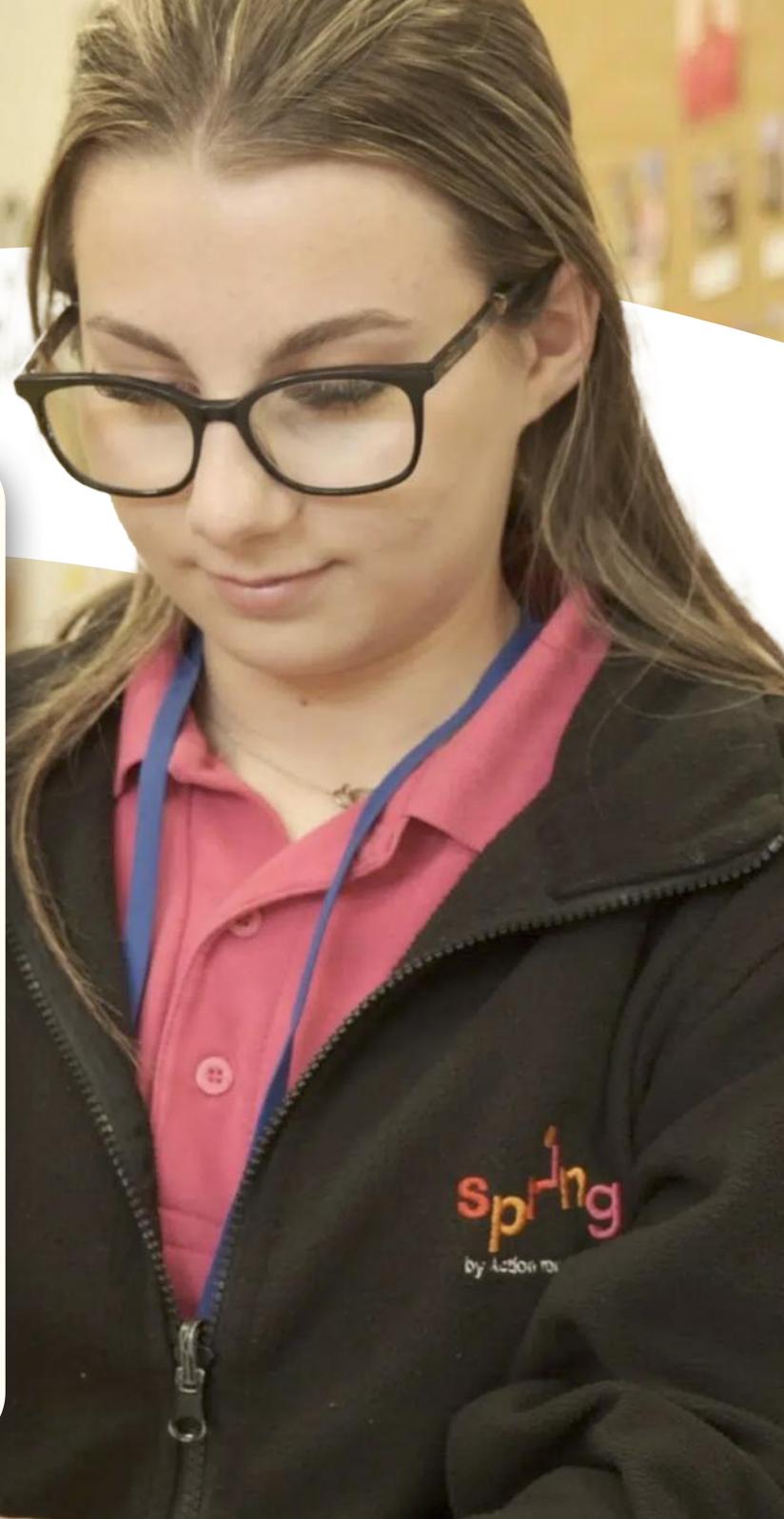
Case study: Rubie-Grace Lamb



by Action for Children

**Role: Level 3 Early Years Educator
Apprentice, Spring by Action for
Children**

From her first day as an Early Years Educator with Spring by Action for Children, Rubie-Grace Lamb brought passion and creativity to the classroom. Aiming to make a real impact, she chose Shaping Lives' Level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship to dive deep into hands-on experience with young learners.





This apprenticeship has been life-changing for me. It's not just about gaining qualifications; it's about making a difference in children's lives. I've learned how to be a supportive figure and an effective educator.



Rubie-Grace Lamb



Sparking curiosity and shaping futures

Rubie-Grace quickly became a core part of her nursery team, always ready to explore new ways to spark curiosity in young minds. Her knack for creating imaginative, engaging activities turned everyday moments into learning adventures, and her skills in communicating with children and parents alike made her an invaluable support in the nursery community.



A journey of growth and gratitude

Rubie-Grace credits her mentors and peers at Shaping Lives for shaping her into the educator she is today. With her Level 3 qualification complete, she's pursuing Level 4 in child development, aiming to become a Nursery Manager and create a space where both children and educators can thrive.

Why this matters:

Rubie-Grace Lamb is an inspiring example of the transformative power of apprenticeships in Early Years education, showing just how impactful one dedicated educator can be in shaping bright futures.

The impact of reinvesting levy funding

Many large employers do not fully use their apprenticeship levy, and up to 25% of unspent funds can be transferred to support apprenticeships in other organisations. Levy transfers help smaller businesses access quality training while enabling larger employers to invest in developing skills across their sector and community.





Learners access high-quality training that transforms careers



Employers in critical sectors strengthen their workforce without financial barriers



£16m

levy funds raised*



5830

learners supported through levy funding*

Why this matters:

For large employers, unused levy funds can become a powerful CSR tool that strengthens reputation and social impact. For SMEs, funded apprenticeships remove barriers to building skilled, sustainable teams. For learners, they open access to training that supports long-term career success and growth.

Awards

Shaping Lives is proud to be recognised for excellence in early years sector training through multiple industry awards. Each nomination reflects the strength of our partnerships, the commitment of our team, and the remarkable achievements of our learners. Every win is more than a celebration; it's a testament to the lasting difference we make for early years employers, learners, and communities across the UK.





The Perfumery Art School UK Ltd
East Dulwich Perfumery School - Waltham Seaport



Why this matters:

Each award reflects our commitment to quality, innovation, and meaningful impact. For our partners, this recognition reinforces that investing in apprenticeships with Shaping Lives builds stronger teams, improves retention, and develops a workforce ready to meet the evolving needs of the childcare sector.

Social impact

At Shaping Lives, our commitment to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles underpins everything we do. These priorities guide how we operate, how we support our learners and employers, and how we contribute to the strength and sustainability of the Early Years sector.

Our ESG approach is designed to create meaningful, measurable impact for apprentices, nursery employers, and the communities they serve.

398

volunteering hours were completed by our colleagues



Empowering people

We provide inclusive apprenticeship opportunities that promote social mobility and open pathways into Early Years education for people from all backgrounds. By nurturing a diverse and engaged workforce, we help shape a sector that better reflects and supports the communities it serves.

Strengthening communities

Our training programmes contribute to both local and national impact. By equipping Early Years professionals with essential knowledge and skills, we enhance the quality of provision, strengthen workforce pipelines, and support improved outcomes for children and families.

Protecting the environment

We are committed to operating sustainably and to encouraging environmental awareness throughout our organisation and programmes. By embedding sustainability within our training, we help future educators understand their role in fostering environmentally responsible practices within Early Years settings.

Championing good governance

Strong governance and accountability are central to our work. We maintain rigorous compliance standards, transparent reporting, and a culture of integrity across all partnerships and programmes.

Why this matters:

At Shaping Lives, our ESG approach delivers real impact across the childcare sector. We empower diverse learners, strengthen communities through exceptional training, champion sustainability, and uphold the highest standards of governance. Together, these values help us build a skilled, compassionate, and resilient childcare workforce for the future.

Meet Arti



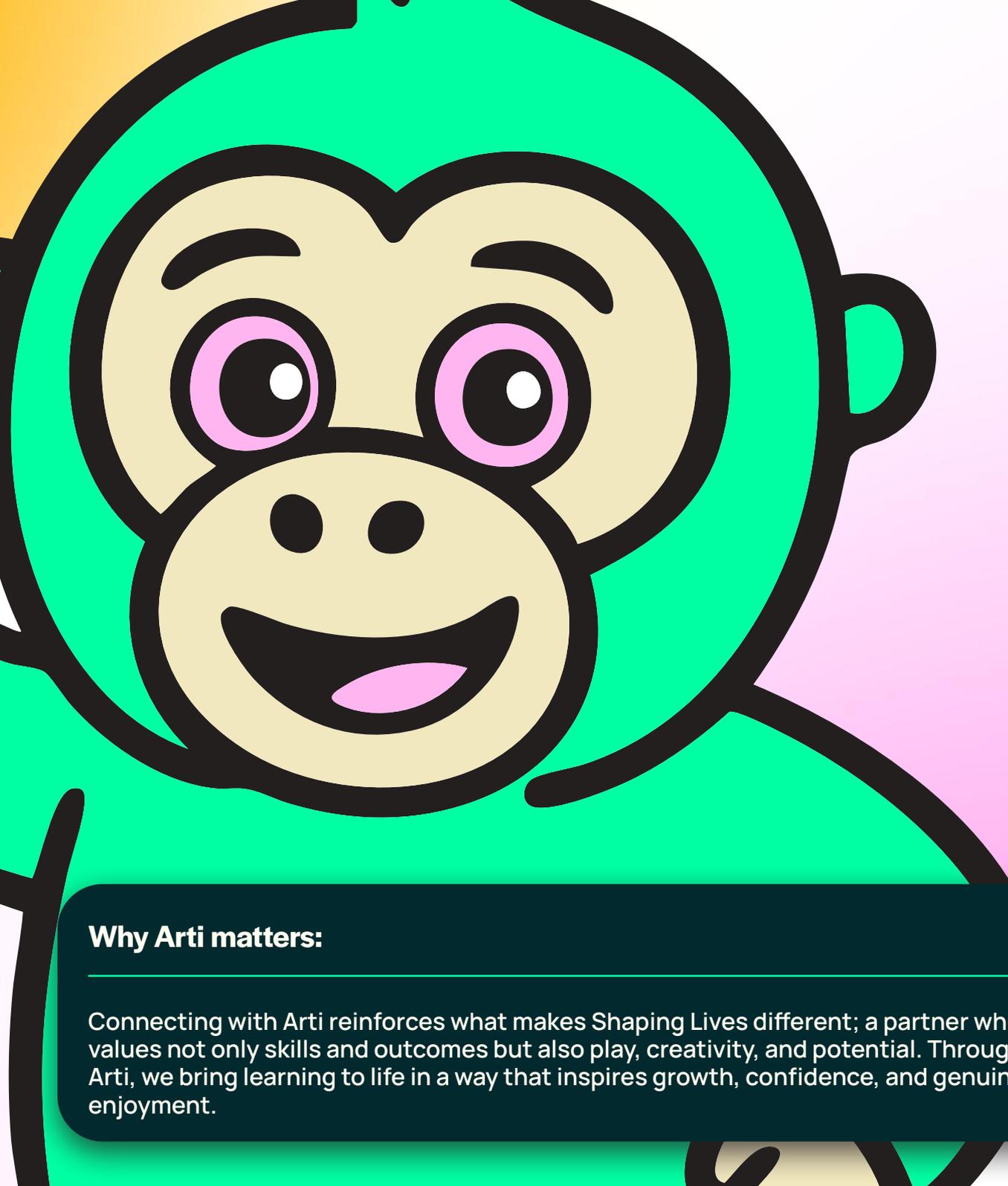
Arti the Orangutan represents the values at the heart of Shaping Lives. Curious, nurturing, and full of energy, he embodies our commitment to joyful, meaningful learning.

Why an orangutan?

Orangutans are natural teachers, guiding their young with patience, empathy, and are the only animals besides humans who care for their young from ages 0–5, just like Early Years professionals.

Arti's role:

- Inspire learners and educators to embrace growth
- Bring fun and creativity into training
- Promote values of nurturing, engaging, and inspiring education
- Celebrate the difference education and childcare make in young lives



Why Arti matters:

Connecting with Arti reinforces what makes Shaping Lives different; a partner who values not only skills and outcomes but also play, creativity, and potential. Through Arti, we bring learning to life in a way that inspires growth, confidence, and genuine enjoyment.

Arti's Adventures

Our recent marketing campaign, Arti's Adventures, was a storytelling and engagement campaign run by Shaping Lives with the aim of bringing a playful, meaningful touch to Early Years settings, reinforcing our mission and raising brand awareness among nurseries, educators, and families.

The core idea:

Invite nurseries to host Arti the mascot, help children log his travels via drawings, stories, photos or notes, and submit a passport of adventures.

Each participating nursery received an Arti Pack:

- A plushie Arti mascot
- Stickers
- An Arti passport for children to fill in with creative entries
- The pack enabled the nurseries to embed Arti into everyday play, drawing connections between our brand values and real Early Years practice.



The pack enabled the nurseries to embed Arti into everyday play, drawing connections between our brand values and real Early Years practice.





Direct nursery engagement

35

nurseries
nominated

The campaign drove active participation from 16 nurseries, with 35 nominated to take part; creating real-world excitement and hands-on involvement.

Emotional connection & brand presence

4/5

most-viewed
and most-
engaged
Facebook
posts

By activating Arti within nursery settings, the campaign deepened the emotional bond between children, practitioners, and the Shaping Lives brand.

Child-centred creativity

16

nurseries
took part in
story-led,
creative
sessions

Nurseries used Arti's story as a structured, story-led activity; encouraging imagination, teamwork, and learning through play.

Positive word-of-mouth

64%

of all social
post views
came from
non-followers

The adventures sparked organic storytelling beyond social media; from scrapbook entries to blog features; amplifying awareness and reinforcing Shaping Lives as a brand that inspires creativity and community.



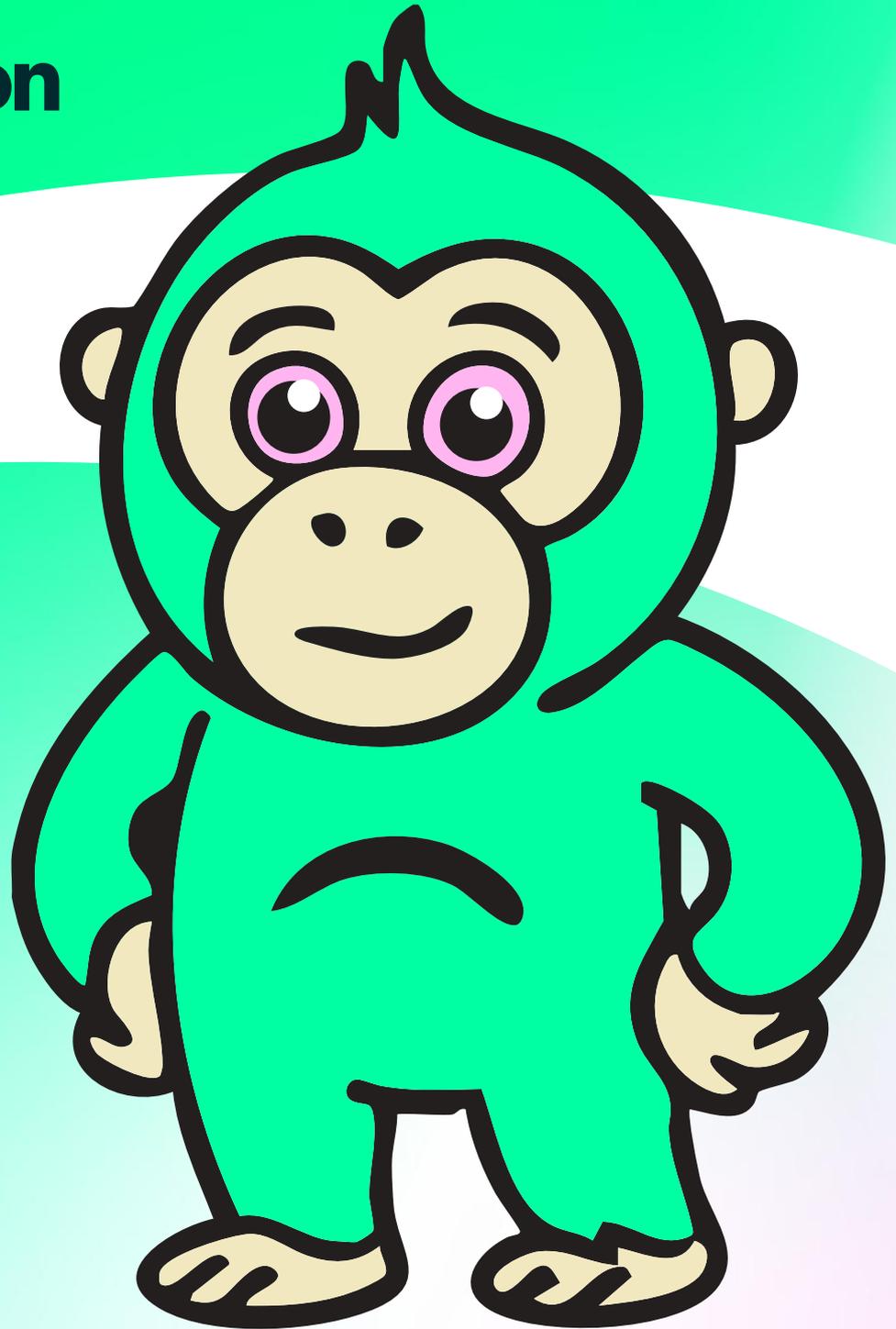
Arti has helped a few shy children become more involved and creative, which is lovely to see



Why this matters:

At one setting, Arti specifically helped a young boy with his behavioural and emotional difficulties. Arti helped regulate his feelings and communicate with the staff members; something which he has not been able to do previously. Arti helped all the children learn the lesson of 'sharing' and enabled them to gain skills in responsibility and teamwork.

Conclusion



Apprenticeships are more than a training pathway, they are a transformative force within Early Years education. By developing skilled, confident, and resilient educators, they strengthen nursery teams, enhance workforce stability, and improve experiences for children.

The impact extends beyond individual settings, influencing sector-wide standards, professional practice, and community outcomes.

At Shaping Lives, our approach combines expert-led learning, practical application, and strategic partnerships to maximise this impact. Through programmes like the Elevate Curriculum, apprentices are supported to develop not only technical skills but also the professional values and adaptability needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving sector. The results are evident: stronger, more capable teams, increased retention, and a growing pipeline of home-grown leaders shaping the future of early childhood education.

Across nurseries, apprentices, and communities, this investment creates a ripple effect, building workforce capacity, driving innovation, and raising quality standards for children and families. By taking a holistic, evidence-based approach to workforce development, Shaping Lives demonstrates how apprenticeships can deliver measurable outcomes while shaping the wider Early Years sector for the better.

Shaping Lives is a trusted Early Years partner, dedicated to supporting nurseries, practitioners, and families through creative learning resources and story-led initiatives that inspire growth and imagination.

Since our beginning, we've been passionate about helping Early Years settings bring learning to life. Our engaging campaigns and educational tools, like Arti's Adventures; are designed to nurture curiosity, creativity, and connection in every child.

Through meaningful partnerships and hands-on support, we work alongside nurseries to create environments where both children and practitioners can thrive.

We're passionate about learning and are committed to providing an outstanding experience for all our learners and employers.

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