

# Best Start in Life Summary

2026–2029



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## **Accessibility statement**

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# Summary

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This plan outlines Hackney's approach to helping young children succeed and ensuring children start school ready to learn. Our goal is to meet the government's national objective for 75% of children to achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by 2028. The strategy focuses on improving support for children and families from pregnancy, through the first 1,001 days of life, and into early childhood.

Hackney will achieve this by building on its strengths and using its strong existing network. This includes the Children and Family Hubs, high-quality settings, joined-up health services and partnerships with the voluntary and community sector. Our main focus is to improve and expand proven services to ensure families receive quality support, particularly those who face the biggest challenges.



# Vision and aspiration

Our vision is to improve the opportunities and well-being of every child and young person in Hackney, aiming to be ambitious, anti-racist, and inclusive across our diverse communities so that children feel a sense of belonging and are able to thrive and achieve.

## We want every child to have:

- the best start in life.
- a child-friendly borough to grow up in.
- families who can access the support they need, when they need it.
- a happy and healthy start, ready for learning.



# Four core principles

## This plan is based on four key ideas:

1. Parents and caregivers are the most important teachers for their children.
2. We will improve our services for everyone while giving extra, targeted help to families facing disadvantage. This is called proportionate universalism.
3. We will provide joined-up support across health, education, and parenting services.
4. We will make sure services are easy to access, welcoming to everyone, and sensitive to different cultures and backgrounds.



# Our six main goals (2026–2028)

The plan will improve and expand existing services that we know work, rather than starting new programmes. Our six main goals focus on improving health, early education, and parenting support:

1. Improving speech, language, and communication skills.
2. Increasing access to early education and care for 2-year-olds who need extra support.
3. Improving the standard and sustainability of early years education and care.
4. Spotting needs early and supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), working with partners to create plans to support children with SEND.
5. Connecting early help and support through partnerships between the Children and Family Hubs, Parenting Plus Teams, and the Families First Teams, which provide targeted family support and intervention to children and families who need help.
6. Working to close the gaps in children's achievements.



# Key focus areas and targets

The plan sets high targets to help all children succeed, focusing specifically on communities facing challenges such as child poverty and unstable housing.

## The objective is for children to achieve:

- A Good Level of Development (GLD) by 2028. GLD is the measure of school readiness at the end of the foundation stage for children 5-years-olds to reach expected levels across three prime areas of learning; communication and language, physical development, personal, social and emotional development. It also covers five specific areas of learning; literacy, mathematics, understanding of the world, expressive arts and design. These expected levels help prepare children for school and future learning.
- National target: 75 %, with Hackney expected to achieve 78 % in order for the national target to be achieved. In 2025, 74.5 % of children in Hackney's maintained schools achieved a Good Level of Development.



# Closing attainment gaps



The plan includes a specific focus on groups of children who are currently performing below the Hackney average. These groups include:

- Black Caribbean boys.
- Turkish, Kurdish, and Cypriot children.
- Bangladeshi children.
- Children in Charedi independent settings.

# How we will deliver services

The Children and Family Hubs network is key to delivering this plan. These Hubs act as 'one stop shops' offering connected support from the time a child is conceived up to age 19 (or 25 for young people with SEND).

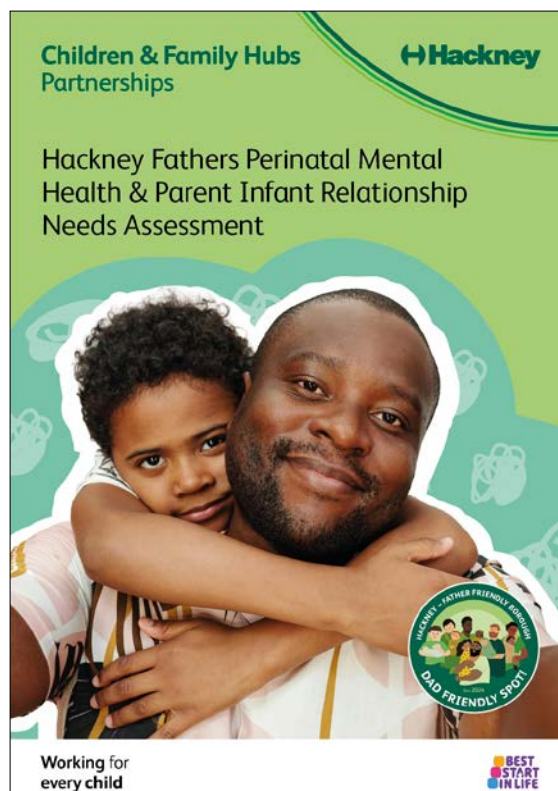
We will expand proven programmes such as Togetherness, Reducing Parental Conflict, Incredible Years, REAL, and Peep.



# Successes from 2022–2025

- Breastfeeding initiation increased from 91 % to 98 %.
- Waiting times for essential parent-infant relationship support through 'Baby Steps' were cut by over 95 %.
- Parents' confidence in helping their child learn rose from 35 % to 99 % after attending PEEP groups.
- We reached 813 men through 'Father Friendly Borough' work, which led to dedicated wellbeing checks for fathers.

In addition to the Children and Family Hubs' success, 92.5 % of early years settings including children's centres, private and independent settings, and 98 % of childminders were judged good or better by Ofsted.



# Implementation timeline

