

The childcare and early years conference 2026 by **coram pacey**

Saturday 28 February 2026, LONDON

SPEAKER BIOS



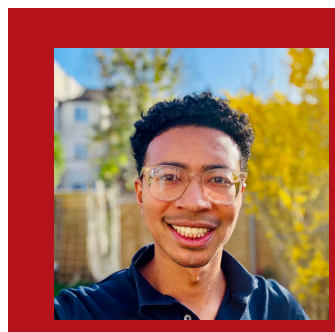
Penny Tassoni MBE

Penny Tassoni MBE is a well-known education consultant, author and trainer who specializes in the whole spectrum of learning and play within early years. Penny has written over 50 books, many of which are bestsellers in the sector.



Dr Shaddai Tembo

Dr Shaddai Tembo is a senior lecturer in early childhood studies at Bath Spa University, an associate lecturer at the Open University and an independent speaker and consultant with Critical Early Years. Shaddai is a trustee for the Fatherhood Institute, an expert advisor for the Bristol Early Years Forum for Anti-racist Practice and a thought leader for the Family Music Hub.



Lucy Lewin

Lucy Lewin is the founder and CEO of the Profitable Nursery Academy and Little Angels (Uppingham) Day Nursery Limited. She brings over two decades of expertise in early childhood education, driving strategic growth and operational excellence in the sector.

Lucy's innovative and child-centred approach has transformed educational settings, earning her recognition as a leading figure in the local and national education community.



Carol Payne

Carol is Deputy Chief Executive at Speech and Language UK (formerly I CAN). She leads the team of speech and language therapists and teachers who design innovative tools and training for nursery and school staff. They also provide essential advice for families with children facing challenges with talking and understanding words.

Carol oversaw Speech and Language UK's partnership with Education Development Trust on the delivery of the Early Years Professional Development Programme (Phase 3) which provided blended training for 6,500 early years practitioners on communication and language, early mathematics and personal, social and emotional development.



Professor Sam Wass

Prof Sam Wass is a child psychologist and neuroscientist who is an expert in child concentration, stress and learning. He has a degree in experimental psychology and completed his PhD at the centre for Brain and Cognitive Development. Sam was awarded a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship, based at the Medical Research Council Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit at Cambridge University. He was then awarded an Economic and Social Research Council Future Research Leaders Fellowship, for which he moved to the University of East London. In 2020 he was awarded a 5-year research fellowship from the European Research Council. Sam leads a research unit, the BabyDevLab based at the University of East London. East London is one of most demographically and socioeconomically mixed areas of the world, and a major focus of his research is understanding diversity and adversity and their effects on early development.



Dr Gemma Goldenberg

Dr Gemma Goldenberg is a psychologist and education expert with two decades of experience working in nursery and school settings. She has an MSc and a PhD in psychology. Her doctoral research explored how indoor and outdoor learning environments affect children's stress, attention and behaviour.

A regular writer for publications such as Nursery World magazine and Early Years Educator, Gemma also presents frequently at educational conferences and events. She co-authored a book with Professor Guy Claxton, 'Powering up your school' and is soon to publish a second book with Sam, about developing attention and focus in the Early Years and KS1.



Wendy Ratcliff

Wendy Ratcliff is one of His Majesty's Inspectors and Principal Officer for Early Education Policy at Ofsted.

Originally qualified as an early years practitioner, Wendy has extensive experience of inspection and regulation across a full range of early years provisions, including schools. Her role as Principal Officer for early education is focused on Ofsted's 'Best start in life' strategic priority and the inspection of early education curriculum, including through the education inspection framework (EIF) and any changes for the future.



Gary Harrison

Gary has worked at Morton Michel for over 15 years and is passionate about transforming the perception of early education. He works closely with early years professionals, gaining an understanding of their challenges and the importance of providing high-quality care and education to young children. He has also contributed to the development of insurance and risk management solutions that support providers in ensuring the safety and well-being of children and staff in their care.

His expertise in early education extends beyond his work at Morton Michel. He is committed to raising awareness about the critical role that early education plays in a child's development. He has given talks on the subject and is always seeking new ways to promote the importance of early education in society.



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