

Early Years Learn, Explore, Debate November 2021

Department for Education



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Introduction and thank you

From Minister for Children and
Families, Will Quince MP



- The EYFS reforms became statutory for all providers on 1st September this year, bringing with them a strengthened early years curriculum and clearer approach to assessment.
- The key aims of the EYFS reforms are to improve child outcomes at age 5 – particularly in early language and literacy.
- The reforms also aim to reduce the amount of time that practitioners spend completing unnecessary paperwork.

Over 3,000 early adopter schools implemented the new EYFS during the academic year 2020/21. They said:

“We have spent more time sharing practice as a team, putting aside time to discuss each child and this has helped to inform high quality planning rather than spending time focussing on collecting observations for moderation”

“We have welcomed the chance to use teacher judgements rather than lots of unnecessary evidence to make assessments and end of year judgements. It is good to be valued and trusted as EYFS professionals.”

Help for Early Years Providers (online service)

Help for early years providers

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) has changed. Find guidance and practical support to help you with the changes.

These resources are for childminders, nursery leaders and pre-school practitioners.

Areas of learning

Find information about each area of learning in the EYFS and get ideas for activities you can do with early years children.

Communication and language >	Physical development >
Personal, social and emotional development >	Literacy >
Mathematics >	Understanding the world >
Expressive arts and design >	

Expressive arts and design

Imagination and creativity

Self-expression

Communicating through arts

Get help to improve your practice

Curriculum planning

Reducing paperwork

Working in partnership with parents and carers

English as an additional language (EAL)

Meeting the needs of all children

Safeguarding and welfare

Oral health

Food safety

Video

In this video, an early years expert explains the importance of exploring language in the early years foundation stage framework. There are also some tips on how to support children in this area.



What the EYFS framework says

Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, page 8.](#)

Development Matters (non-statutory curriculum guidance)



Development Matters

Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage

First published September 2020
Revised July 2021



Birth to three – babies, toddlers and young children will be learning to:

Listen to simple stories and understand what is happening, with the help of the pictures.

Identify familiar objects and properties for practitioners when they are described: for example: 'Katie's coat', 'blue car', 'shiny apple'. Understand and act on longer sentences like 'make teddy jump' or 'find your coat'.

Understand simple questions about 'who', 'what' and 'where' (but generally not 'why').

Examples of how to support this:

Share picture books every day with children. Encourage them to talk about the pictures and the story. Comment on the pictures – for example: "It looks like the boy is a bit worried..." and wait for their response. You might also ask them about the pictures: "I wonder what the caterpillar is doing now?"

Books with just pictures and no words can especially encourage conversations.

Tell children the names of things they do not know and choose books that introduce interesting new vocabulary to them.

When appropriate, you can check children's understanding by asking them to point to particular pictures. Or ask them to point to particular objects in a picture. For example: "Can you show me the big boat?"

When talking with young children, give them plenty of processing time (at least 10 seconds). This gives them time to understand what you have said and think of their reply.

What to Expect in the EYFS: A Guide for Parents



A Celebratory Approach to Working with Children with SEND



Early years educational recovery from Covid-19



So far, Government has committed £180m to education recovery in the Early Years, this includes £153m of funding for high quality professional development for early years practitioners.



More information has been published on the wider COVID-19 recovery package and this can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-schools-and-colleges-to-receive-extra-funding-for-catch-up> The procurement processes for various strands have now commenced.



We are also continuing to deliver existing programmes and interventions that will directly support children's recovery from Covid-19.

Useful Links



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[Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#)

[Help for early years providers](#)

[Development Matters](#)

[What to Expect in the EYFS: A Guide for Parents](#)

[A Celebratory Approach to Working with Children with SEND](#)

[Early Years Professional Development Programme](#)

[Nuffield Early Language Intervention](#)

We have secured £180m for investment in Early Years recovery. This will seek to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the youngest children in the most disadvantaged areas.

The earliest years are the most crucial stage of child development.

- We know that the earliest years are the most crucial stage of child development, that early education supports children's social and emotional development and lays the foundation for lifelong learning.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the outcomes gap and set back children's learning and development - particularly in language and maths - hitting those from disadvantaged backgrounds the hardest.
- We are determined to build back fairer from the pandemic by recognising the impact on the youngest children's social and personal skills, as well as their early literacy and numeracy.
- Improving training for early years practitioners is one of the key levers for driving up quality in early education settings.
- Our £153m investment in early years education will build a stronger, more expert workforce, enabling settings to deliver high quality teaching and help address the impact of the pandemic on the youngest children, particularly those in the most disadvantaged areas.
- This £153m package, together with the previously announced £17m **Nuffield Early Language Programme** and £10m additional investment in the **Professional Development Programme**, represents an investment of up to £180m of recovery support in the early years sector.

Our investment in Early Years Education Recovery will build a stronger, more expert workforce.

- We will enable settings to deliver high quality teaching and address the impact of the pandemic on the youngest children with a focus on the most disadvantaged areas by:
 - Delivering a **universal training offer together with targeted support to both leaders and practitioners** to create a more sustainable, self-supporting system;
 - **Strengthening specialist expertise in the sector** by boosting practitioners' skills to develop children's early language and maths, personal and social development, and to better support children with special educational needs;
 - Boosting the quality of leadership by delivering a **National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership** which will strengthen pedagogical leadership of settings based on the best evidence of quality early education and care*; and
 - Training EY practitioners to **support parents with home learning**, which is one of the biggest drivers of early outcomes and also influences future school attainment.
- These proposals build on our reforms to the **Early Years Foundation Stage** (EYFS) to accelerate and embed real change for young children, which is more important than ever in light of the impact of the pandemic.
- *Separate funding for the whole suite of National Professional Qualifications was announced in June 2021 as part of the education recovery package.

Intervention	Description
New £153m early years education recovery package	
Early years online child development training	A new, universal online child development training offer to upskill practitioners and improve knowledge of child development so they will be better able to support children in their care, particularly those whose development may have been impeded due to the covid pandemic.
Pedagogical and whole setting leadership support (experts and mentors)	Access to support from sector experts and mentors for those settings in need of most support to help strengthen children's learning and development.
Early Years Innovation Programme	Promoting innovation by providing opportunities for settings to explore innovative practice, help grow the evidence base and facilitate cross-sector sharing.
Phase 3 of the Professional Development Programme rollout (PDP3)	Build on PDP1 and PDP2.
SENCO training	Invest in specialist SEND expertise by increasing the number of staff with an accredited Level 3 EY SENCO qualification, leading to better identification of SEND and better support for those children.
Level 3 qualifications review	Provide a reformed, evidence-based Level 3 qualification.
More funding for EY Initial Teacher Training (EYITT)	Substantially expand the initial teacher training for EY to increase the amount of qualified trained graduates in the sector.
Training EY practitioners to support parents with home learning (HLE)	Train EY practitioners to support parents with home learning with priority given to the most disadvantaged families.
PDP2 and NELI	
Phase 2 of PDP (PDP2)	Expand the offer of the PDP for frontline practitioners to 50 new local authorities to help boost early language, maths and personal social and emotional development (PSED).
Nuffield Early Language Intervention (NELI)	Improve the language skills of reception age children who need it most during the pandemic.
National Professional Qualification (NPQ)	
National Professional Qualification for Early Years Leadership (NPQEYL) (available from autumn 2022)	The NPQEYL is a high quality CPD programme which is designed to the strengthen pedagogical leadership of early years settings based on the best evidence of quality early education and care. It is aimed at staff qualified to at least Level 3 who are, or are aspiring to be setting managers or headteachers of school-based settings.

Early Years Recovery

Experts and Mentors Programme



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Experts and Mentors Programme

- One of the ways we are supporting early years practitioners, leaders and whole-settings is through a package of bespoke support to be delivered both in the setting, **face-to-face and virtually**. The offer to settings will include leadership support, coaching for leaders, mentoring for practitioners and whole-setting support depending on individual settings' priorities and needs.
- Eligible early years settings will be able to request the support of an early years **Expert and Mentor** in their region.
- Currently, eligible settings include those who have:
 - been judged as Requires Improvement (RI) or inadequate in the last 3 years
 - high numbers of children in receipt of EY Pupil Premium
 - high numbers of children with SEND needs
 - high numbers of children taking up the disadvantaged 2-year-old offer
- We are mindful, however, that by setting a strict eligibility criteria, we may be excluding settings in need of this support. We are aiming to support around 10 settings per local authority, of whom up to 20% do not need to meet the standard eligibility criteria.
- Initially, we will be piloting the programme in two Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC) regions, **Lancashire and West Yorkshire and the North of England** (expected to begin in April 2022). The project will be available nationally next academic year (2022/23).
- **The detail of the programme may change as we move to full roll out, following the learnings from the pilot**

Experts and Mentors Programme

- The role of the **‘Expert’** will be to provide support to the setting leader with the main focus of supporting children to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, including narrowing the gap between disadvantaged children and others. This may include specific leadership support, whole setting support or a combination of both.
 - Experts must be available for 6 days per term, to support 2 settings (3 days per setting of face-to-face support).
- The role of the **‘Mentor’** will be to provide remote support to practitioners, as they complete a new online child development training package, as well as providing more general support focusing on improving practice and curriculum to support children following the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Mentors must be able to provide 6 hours of support, per early years settings (mentoring will be virtual or over the phone). Each mentor is expected to support 4 Early Years settings, each term. This equates to around 4 hours per fortnight per term.
- The role of the **‘Area lead’** will be to act as a first point of contact to around 10 mentors and/or experts, in their region. Experts and mentors may require this support for various reasons, for example where mentors and experts are experiencing blockers in delivering their support
 - Area leads must be available for 3 days per term, to support allocated mentors and/or experts, and for a further 3 days per term to support 1 setting.
- **Expressions of interest (EOIs) for these roles will be live** on Foundation Years website very soon. Please see the EOIs for detail on responsibilities and experience required for each role.

Questions to discuss in breakout rooms

- How do you think the programme can best help early years practitioners, leaders and whole-settings? Do you have suggestions for how it should be delivered or what type/size/make-up of settings may benefit most?
- How do you think we could encourage individuals to sign up to become an Expert/Mentor/Area lead?
- How do you think we could encourage settings to get involved with the programme?
- Do you have any advice for our new Experts and Mentors?

Thank you!

Please direct any queries you may have about the pilot programme, to the relevant mailbox for your region:

North.eyrecovery@education.gov.uk

LWY.eyrecovery@education.gov.uk