

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

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“All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability should have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.”

EYFS Summary  
Sara Makepeace-Taylor, June 2008

From DfES Publication: ISBN 978-1-84478-886-6

## EYFS materials

The EYFS package is a pack of resources which contains the regulatory and legal framework for early childhood education and care together with wider guidance. It comprises:

- ***Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*** booklet which sets out both the welfare requirements and the learning and development requirements which must be followed by all providers in delivering the EYFS. The welfare requirements cover safeguarding and promoting children's welfare, suitable people, premises, environment and equipment and the documents and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of settings. The learning and development requirements set out providers' duties under each of the six areas of Learning and Development and include the early learning goals.
- ***Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage*** booklet which provides some further guidance on the legal requirements, details of the areas of Learning and Development and on key areas such as the EYFS principles and assessment.
- **A1 poster** which sets out the four guiding Principles of the EYFS and gives an overview of sixteen Commitments that providers need to follow in order to put the Principles into practice. This will be helpful to use with parents and professionals to introduce the EYFS.
- **24 cards** which give practitioners the Principles and Commitments at a glance as well as introductory guidance on putting the principles into practice. They also provide details of the requirements for the areas of Learning and Development as well as an overview of child development.
- **CD-ROM** which contains all the information from the booklets as well as more in-depth information on all the Principles and Commitments covered on the cards. It allows practitioners to access information and video clips on effective practice, research and resources and to tailor their route to meet their own needs.

## Daycare and childminding

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) brings together: *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (2000), the *Birth to Three Matters* (2002) framework and the *National Standards for Under 8s Daycare and Childminding* (2003), building a coherent and flexible approach to care and learning. All providers are required to use the EYFS to ensure that whatever setting parents choose, they can be confident that their child will receive a quality experience that supports their development and learning.

## Children, families and child development

The EYFS is based on principles of inclusion which means that early years' providers oppose discrimination and prejudice and welcome all families and children. They provide care and education for a wide range of children in environments that enable children to feel safe and supported and which extend their learning and development.

Throughout the EYFS stress is placed upon understanding each child and their family as unique, with different needs and concerns. Children's development is presented under six overlapping phases. This overlap is intended to emphasise the fact that there can be big differences between the development of children of similar ages. At the same time age can be a cue, when taken with all other factors, to indicate that development may be atypical and that a child may need extra support.

## Every Child Matters

*Every Child Matters* is the government agenda which focuses on bringing together services to support children and families. It sets out five major outcomes for children:

- being healthy;
- staying safe;
- enjoying and achieving;
- making a positive contribution;
- economic well-being.

**Each Principle into Practice card highlights a link to one of the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes. Using the EYFS effectively will enable settings to support children in meeting the outcomes. For further information visit [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)**

## Key Elements of Effective Practice (KEEP)

Effective practice in the early years requires committed, enthusiastic and reflective practitioners with a breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and understanding. Effective practitioners use their own learning to improve their work with young children and their families in ways which are sensitive, positive and non-judgemental.

Therefore through initial and on-going training and development practitioners need to develop, demonstrate and continuously improve their:

- relationships with both children and adults;
- understanding of the individual and diverse ways that children learn and develop;
- knowledge and understanding in order to actively support and extend children's learning in and across all areas and aspects of Learning and Development;
- practice in meeting all children's needs, learning styles and interests;
- work with parents, carers and the wider community;
- work with other professionals within and beyond the setting.

The Principles into Practice cards carry links to this document, which is an evaluation tool for local authorities, illustrating the key elements of early years expertise required to implement the Principles for early years care and education.

[KEEP, Key Elements of Effective Practice](#) (DfES ref 1201-2005G).

## Key Stage 1 and the Primary Framework

Links are made to Key Stage 1 (KS1) in the *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* booklet. [The Primary Framework for Literacy and Mathematics \[899Kb\]](#) and the EYFS have been developed alongside each other. The Primary Framework provides an overview of EYFS outcomes for school-age children and therefore contains some of the information that practitioners in schools need to work with children from birth to five. It matches the EYFS; however practitioners in schools need to access the full EYFS. Some children will not meet all the early learning goals in the EYFS, and Year 1 teachers need to know how to support and extend their learning to help them meet the early learning goals from the EYFS in Year 1 of primary school. The Primary Framework and the EYFS help nursery, Reception and KS1 teachers see how the six areas of the EYFS link to literacy and mathematics in KS1.

## Child development overview

These summaries highlight the more important aspects of child development in each of the six stages of the EYFS. Further information can be found in the Principles into Practice cards, in the Learning and Development sections on the CD-ROM and in the linked Early Support materials which give more detail on the areas of Learning and Development.

### **Broad phases of development**

All children are different and to reflect this age ranges have been overlapped in the EYFS to create broad developmental phases. This emphasises that each child's progress is individual to them and that different children develop at different rates. A child does not suddenly move from one phase to another, and they do not make progress in all areas at the same time. However, there are some important 'steps' for each child to take along their own developmental pathway. These are shown on the areas of Learning and Development in the sections *Look, listen and note* and *Development matters*.

There are six broad developmental phases: **Birth–11 months; 8–20 months; 16–26 months; 22–36 months; 30–50 months; 40–60+ months.**

### **30–50 months (APS Nursery)**

An increased interest in joint play such as make-believe, construction and games helps children to learn the important social skills of sharing and cooperating. Children also learn more about helping adults in everyday activities and finding a balance between independence and complying with the wishes of others. Children still need the comfort and security of special people. Close, warm relationships with carers form the basis for much learning, such as encouraging children to make healthy choices in food and exercise. At this stage children are becoming more aware of their place in a community. Literacy and numeracy can develop rapidly with the support of a wide range of interesting materials and activities. Children's language is now much more complex, as many become adept at using longer sentences. Conversations with adults become a more important source of information, guidance and reassurance.

### **40–60+ months (APS Nursery/Reception)**

During this period children are now building a stronger sense of their own identity and their place in a wider world. Children are learning to recognise the importance of social rules and customs, to show understanding and tolerance of others, and to learn how to be more controlled in their own behaviour. Learning and playing in small groups helps to foster the development of social skills. Children now become better able to plan and undertake more challenging activities with a wider range of materials for making and doing. In this phase children learn effectively in shared activities with more able peers and adults. Literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy skills continue to develop. Children's developing understanding of cause and effect is encouraged by the introduction of a wider variety of equipment, media and technologies.

## Overview of the learning and development requirements

This section sets out the learning and development requirements that all early years providers must by law deliver, regardless of type, size or funding of the setting.

**The EYFS sets standards to enable early years' providers to reflect the rich and personalised experience that many parents give their children at home. Like parents, providers should deliver individualised learning.**

The *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* and supporting resources provide information and advice designed to help practitioners meet these **legal requirements** in a way which reflects the needs of the individual children in their care and is appropriate to their setting.

**Children need to be stretched, but not pushed beyond their capabilities, so that they enjoy learning. The keys to achieving this are: on-going observational assessment; a flexible approach; coherence of learning and development.**

Children are competent learners from birth and develop and learn in a wide variety of ways. All practitioners should, therefore, look carefully at the children in their care, consider their needs, their interests, and their stages of development and use all of this information to help plan a challenging and enjoyable experience across all the areas of Learning and Development.

The Childcare Act 2006 provides for the EYFS learning and development requirements to comprise three elements:

- the early learning goals - the knowledge, skills and understanding which young children should have acquired by the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of five;
- the educational programmes - the matters, skills and processes which are required to be taught to young children;
- the assessment arrangements - the arrangements for assessing young children to ascertain their achievements.

There are six areas covered by the early learning goals and educational programmes:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development;
- Communication, Language and Literacy;
- Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy;
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World;
- Physical Development;
- Creative Development.

**None of these areas of Learning and Development can be delivered in isolation from the others. They are equally important and depend on each other to support a rounded approach to child development. All the areas must be delivered through planned, purposeful play, with a balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities.**

**A high quality early years experience provides a firm foundation on which to build future academic, social and emotional success.**

## Assessment during the EYFS

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Providers must ensure that practitioners are observing children and responding appropriately to help them make progress from birth towards the early learning goals. Where practitioners require additional training in order to assess capably and objectively, it is the responsibility of the provider to ensure practitioners receive the support that they need.

Assessments should be based on practitioners' observation of what children are doing in their day-to-day activities. As judgements are based on observational evidence gathered from a wide range of learning and teaching contexts, it is expected that all adults who interact with the child should contribute to the process, and that account will be taken of information provided by parents.

An essential feature of parental involvement is an ongoing dialogue, building on the partnership begun by any previous practitioner(s). Settings should report progress and achievements to parents throughout the EYFS.

Parents and families are central to a child's well-being and practitioners should support this important relationship by sharing information and offering support to learning in the home.

The *Practice Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage* sets out detailed formative assessment suggestions in the 'Look, listen and note' sections of the areas of Learning and Development. Practitioners should:

- make systematic observations and assessments of each child's achievements, interests and learning styles;
- use these observations and assessments to identify learning priorities and plan relevant and motivating learning experiences for each child;
- match their observations to the expectations of the early learning goals.

## Assessment at the end of the EYFS – the EYFS Profile

The EYFS Profile is a way of summing up each child's development and learning achievements at the end of the EYFS. It is based on practitioners' ongoing observation and assessments in all six areas of Learning and Development. Each child's level of development must be recorded against the 13 assessment scales derived from the early learning goals. Judgements against these scales, which are set out in Appendix 1 of the *Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*, should be made from observation of consistent and independent behaviour, predominantly children's self-initiated activities.

**N.B. Point 9 in each scale describes a child who has achieved all the points from 1-8 on that scale, has developed further both in breadth and depth, and is working consistently beyond the level of the early learning goals.**

At the end of the EYFS providers must ensure that children are assessed against the 13 scales in the EYFS Profile. Providers may use the EYFS optional scales booklet (published by the QCA), the e-Profile (available from local authorities) **or their own record keeping systems**. Regulations made under Section 99 of the Childcare Act 2006 require early years' providers to provide information about the assessments they carry out to local authorities. Local authorities are under a duty to return this data to the DfES.

## Overview of the welfare requirements

Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. The welfare requirements are designed to support providers in creating settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning through play, to grow in confidence and to fulfil their potential.

### **Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare**

- The provider must take necessary steps to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- The provider must promote the good health of the children, take necessary steps to prevent the spread of infection, and take appropriate action when they are ill.
- Children's behaviour must be managed effectively and in a manner appropriate for their stage of development and particular individual needs.

### **Suitable people**

- Providers must ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.
- Adults looking after children must have appropriate qualifications, training, skills and knowledge.
- Staffing arrangements must be organised to ensure safety and to meet the needs of the children.

### **Suitable premises, environment and equipment**

- Outdoor and indoor spaces, furniture, equipment and toys must be safe and suitable for their purpose.
- Indoor: Children aged three to five years: 2.3 m sq per child.
- There should be at least one toilet and one hand basin for every ten children.
- Wherever possible there should be access to an outdoor play area, and this is the expected norm for providers.

### **Organisation**

- Providers must plan and organise their systems to ensure that every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience.
- Providers must ensure that there is a balance of adult-led and freely chosen or child-initiated activities, delivered through indoor and outdoor play.
- Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Play underpins the delivery of all the EYFS.
- Children must have opportunities to play indoors and outdoors. All early years providers must have access to an outdoor play area which can benefit the children.

### **Documentation**

- Providers must maintain records, policies and procedures required for the safe and efficient management of the settings and to meet the needs of the children.