



Guidance

Changes to the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework

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What the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework is

The EYFS framework sets the standards to make sure that children aged from birth to 5 learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe.

The framework is for all Ofsted registered early years providers in all settings, including:

- nurseries
- childminders
- pre-schools
- reception

You may have already heard that the framework is changing from September 2021 and want to know what the changes are and how they affect you.

[What you need to do before September 2021](#) will depend on your role and the type of setting you work in. For example, if you're a practitioner in a nursery, your manager should already be aware of the changes for September 2021 and be preparing for them already.

Why the changes are happening

The changes to the EYFS statutory framework are being made to:

- improve outcomes at age 5, particularly in early language and literacy
- reduce workload such as unnecessary paperwork, so you can spend more time with the children in your care

Timeline of changes

Academic year 2020 to 2021

Some schools, known as early adopter schools, are already using a new [early adopter](#) framework as part of the EYFS reforms early adopter year from September 2020 to August 2021.

All other schools and early years providers should continue to follow the [existing early years foundation stage framework](#) until the end of August 2021.

Academic year 2021 to 2022 onwards

All schools and early years providers must follow the new early years foundation stage framework from September 2021.

Important documents

The early years foundation stage [early adopter](#) framework is mandatory for early adopter schools only in England from 1 September 2020.

A new framework, very similar to the early adopter version, will be published later this academic year, to be used by everyone from September 2021. If you're not from an early adopter school, you may find some elements of the early adopter framework useful, but you'll still need to follow the [existing early years foundation stage framework](#) until the end of August 2021.

'Development matters' is the new non-statutory curriculum guidance for the new EYFS framework that everyone can use from September 2021. Early adopter schools can use this now. It gives you an overall view of how children develop and learn. It guides but does not replace your professional judgement. You can find the new 'development matters' on the [early adopter](#) page.

What the changes are

Changes to the educational programmes

Educational programmes, referred to by some people as the 'early years curriculum', are the areas of learning and development which must shape the activities and experiences that children have in your early years setting, at all ages. Your setting should use the educational programmes to decide the approach to curriculum that is right for you.

The 7 areas of learning and development remain the same.

The 3 prime areas:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development

The 4 specific areas:

- literacy
- maths
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

The changes

Changes have been made to the wording in the educational programmes. Specifically, this means:

- they are longer, there is more depth, and they contain examples of things that you can do with children
- there is a new focus on early language and extending vocabulary, with more examples on how to embed and develop vocabulary skills across all 7 areas, because this improves child development in a broad curriculum

What this means in practice

The new 'development matters', non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage can help inform your approach to curriculum, putting the educational programmes into practice. It is available on the [early adopter](#) page.

Changes to safeguarding and welfare

The changes

There will be some minor changes to the safeguarding and welfare section, including a new requirement to promote the good oral health of children.

What this means in practice

This could include things like talking to children about the effects of eating too many sweet things, or the importance of brushing your teeth.

Adding this requirement does not mean that you must carry out supervised toothbrushing. You will not be required to assess children's oral health.

However, you can decide how this requirement is met, for example, there are various schemes around the country that support supervised toothbrushing. You may want to speak to your local authority about this.

If supervised toothbrushing is something you decide to introduce, you should also read the [guidance on supervised toothbrushing during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Early adopters of the new EYFS do not have to follow this change.

Assessment arrangements

Age 2 progress check

No changes have been made to the progress check at age 2. This is the only statutory assessment that people working with pre-reception children will need to carry out.

The purpose of the 2 year check is to help identify strengths and any areas where progress is less than expected. It is not a requirement to identify a child as exceeding, emerging or expected for the 2 year check.

Changes to the early learning goals (ELGs)

The early learning goals summarise the knowledge, skills and understanding that all young children should have gained by the end of the academic year in which they turn 5, the reception year.

Pre-reception providers do not need to use the early learning goals, but the changes are included here so you can see a child's expected level of development by the time they turn 5.

The early learning goals should not be used as a curriculum. They should be used as an assessment during the summer term of the reception year.

The changes

The early learning goals have been changed to make them clearer and more specific. They are more focused on the main factors that support child development at age 5. The 7 areas of learning and development are:

- communication and language
- personal, social and emotional development
- physical development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

The goals are there to be used to assess children at the end of reception year, rather than for pre-school children.

Changes to 'development matters': non-statutory curriculum guidance

We have published a new version of 'development matters' on the [early adopter](#) page.

It's not compulsory but we recommend that you use it with the new statutory framework.

The change

It's shorter, about two-thirds of the length of the previous version, to allow for more freedom to develop the right broad curriculum for the children you work with.

The age bands have been simplified to avoid tracking activities that don't support child development. There are now 3 instead of 6:

- birth to 3
- 3 and 4 year olds
- children in reception

There's more room for professional judgement. You can make more judgements based on your knowledge and experience, instead of using the early learning goals or age bands in the framework to track children's progress.

What you need to do before September 2021

You do not need to make the changes now. But you should make plans to implement them from September 2021.

Take time to read the early years foundation stage early adopter framework and new 'development matters' on the [early adopter](#) page.

Nursery leaders and managers

If you are a nursery leader or manager design your curriculum around the new educational programmes, not the early learning goals.

You may also find it helpful to:

- brief your staff about the changes
- contact [your local authority](#) or support groups to find out what advice they can offer

Nursery practitioners

If you are a practitioner in a nursery you may find it helpful to speak to your manager about how your work needs to adapt to the changes.

Childminders

You may find it helpful to:

- start planning for the changes coming in September 2021
- contact [your local authority](#) who may be able to offer advice and support about implementing the changes to the EYFS
- seek advice from an association you're a member of
- consider contacting other childminders in your area, for example by joining a childminder support group to share experiences

What you need to do from September 2021

From September 2021, all early years providers must follow the new statutory framework. Whatever your role and type of setting you work in, you'll need to be working to the new framework.

Ofsted inspections from September 2021

How and when you'll be inspected by [Ofsted](#) depends on whether you're on the childcare register or the early years register.

You can read [Ofsted's inspection framework](#) to be aware of the processes and procedures under the education inspection framework (EIF).

Feedback

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