



Department  
for Education

# **Strengthening level 2 qualifications for the early education and childcare workforce**

**Government consultation on the early  
years assistant criteria**

**Launch date 07 December 2017**

**Respond by 28 February 2018**

## Ministerial foreword by Robert Goodwill Minister of State for Children and Families



The early years workforce is our sector's biggest asset, and critical to ensuring that all children are given the best start in life. I am very pleased to be consulting on strengthening the criteria for new level 2 qualifications for the early education and childcare workforce. This provides a real opportunity for us to work with the sector to develop a high quality early years workforce to support our youngest children in their early development and learning. I am determined to reduce the development gap between disadvantaged children and their peers at age 5. Having clearly defined criteria for level 2 early years qualifications will help us to achieve this. It will also provide a progression route for those who wish to move on to a level 3 Early Years Educator qualification. We have drawn on the expertise within the sector to develop the proposed criteria and I look forward to hearing your views.

# Contents

Ministerial foreword	2
Introduction	4
Who this is for	5
Issue date	5
Enquiries	5
Additional copies	5
The response	6
Consultation process	7
Respond online	8
Other ways to respond	8
Deadline	8
Consultation questions	9

## Introduction

On 3 March 2017, the Department for Education (DfE) published the [early years workforce strategy](#) that set out our intention to work with the sector and awarding organisations to develop criteria for the content of level 2 childcare qualifications. These criteria will support level 2 workers to gain the knowledge and skills they need to progress in their career in early years. The criteria will also enable employers to recognise suitable training and qualifications more easily. The criteria will be developed to support progression to level 3 study and with a new level 2 apprenticeship standard in mind. We expect new qualifications to be available for delivery from September 2019.

High quality early education and childcare can have a powerful impact on young children. The evidence is clear that a good start in the early years can have a positive effect on children's development, preparing them for school and later life.

Following the introduction of early years teachers (graduate/level 6) and early years educators (level 3), the development of criteria for level 2 (early years assistant) qualifications will support early years providers in ensuring that those they employ to work with babies and young children are equipped with the right skills and knowledge. The resulting qualifications will also support staff development and progression to level 3 and beyond.

The statutory framework for the [early years foundation stage](#) (EYFS) sets out the requirements for staff: child ratios in early years settings and for childminders delivering the early years foundation stage, and the qualification levels practitioners must hold.

It is the role of the DfE to define the level 2 'full and relevant' qualifications that practitioners included in the EYFS staff: child ratios must hold. We do this by setting the criteria that underpin qualifications developed by awarding organisations.

We are launching a 12 week consultation exercise to seek views on the proposed early years assistant (level 2) criteria and their suitability for qualifications in early education and childcare.

The consultation questions request yes/no answers, as well as free text, allowing respondents to express views on the proposed criteria.

This consultation adheres to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office in January 2016.

## Who this is for

This consultation is for anyone with an interest in early years qualifications. This includes:

- Early years employers
- Early years practitioners
- Childminders
- Early years teachers
- Awarding organisations
- Early years membership/sector associations/organisations
- Nurseries and other pre-school providers
- Local authorities
- Play/activity providers
- Maintained schools
- Independent schools
- Academy/free schools
- Parents/carers
- Teachers/headteachers
- Training providers
- Further education tutors/teachers
- Higher education lecturers

## Issue date

The consultation was issued on 07 December 2017.

## Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team on: [EYlevel2quals.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk](mailto:EYlevel2quals.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk)

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: [Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk](mailto:Consultations.Coordinator@education.gov.uk) or by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

## Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

## The response

The results of the consultation and the Department's response will be [published on GOV.UK](#) once the consultation responses have been analysed.

## Consultation process

An expert reference group has been established to provide advice, guidance and challenge to the DfE. Membership is diverse and includes academic, technical, employer and training provider expertise.

Meetings are also being held with the awarding organisations who will develop the qualifications using the new criteria.

Development of the early years assistant (level 2) criteria is being undertaken in four stages:

- **Stage one** - development of draft criteria for consultation taking into account feedback from the expert reference group and the statutory framework for the early years foundation stage.
- **Stage two** – this 12 week online public consultation (undertaken via the DfE website) and meetings with employer groups supported by the expert reference group members, seeking views on the draft criteria. This commences on 07 December 2017 and closes on 28 February 2018.
- **Stage three** - consideration and revision of the criteria based on the consultation responses.
- **Stage four** - a Government response to the consultation will be published with the new criteria on GOV.UK. The new early years assistant (level 2) qualifications are expected to be available for delivery from September 2019.

The DfE will work with Ofqual (the qualifications regulator) and awarding organisations to agree titling and badging arrangements for qualifications that meet the criteria. This will ensure learners and employers are clear about which qualifications enable individuals to be counted within the EYFS staffing ratios.

A date from which the new qualifications will be required will be confirmed in the Government response. In order to minimise disruption to the workforce, the new early years assistant (level 2) criteria will not be applied retrospectively. Qualifications will be assessed against the criteria in place when they were awarded.

Training providers will develop training courses to prepare practitioners for the qualifications which meet the new criteria. The criteria do not control the content or requirements of training courses.

Please read the draft criteria before answering the consultation questions. To assist with analysis, please include the relevant criterion or sub-criterion labels (e.g. 2.8) in your answers, as appropriate.

We would like to hear your views on the proposed early years assistant level 2 qualification criteria.

## **Respond online**

To help us collate and analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [www.education.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations) to submit your response.

## **Other ways to respond**

If, for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may request a word document version of the form via the email below. The word document can be emailed or posted.

### **By email**

[EYlevel2quals.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk](mailto:EYlevel2quals.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk)

### **By post**

Early Years Team  
Education Standards Directorate  
Department for Education  
53-55 Butts Road  
Earlsdon Park  
Coventry  
CV1 3BH

## **Deadline**

**The consultation closes on 28 February 2018.**



## Consultation questions

### What is your name?

Name

### What is your email address?

If you enter your email address then you will automatically receive an acknowledgement email when you submit your response.

Email

### What is your organisation?

Organisation

**We would like to include your name and organisation in a list of respondents in our government response to the consultation. Are you happy for us to do this?**

Yes:
No:

**Please select one of the following options that best describes you as a respondent.**

Nursery or other pre-school provider	
Local authority	
Play/activity provider	
Maintained school	
Independent school	
Academy/free school	
Early years/nursery worker	
Childminder	
Teacher (early years teacher status/early years professional status)	
Teacher (qualified teacher status)	
Parent/carer	
Headteacher	
Early years setting (nursery manager)	
Early years setting (nursery owner)	
Training provider (further education)	
Training provider (higher education)	
Further education tutor/teacher	
Higher education lecturer	
Awarding organisation	
Early years or sector organisation/association	
Other (please specify)	

**To what extent do you agree or disagree that the criteria set appropriate expectations for the skills and knowledge an early years assistant must demonstrate to be fully qualified at level 2?**

<b>Options</b>
Strongly agree
Agree
Neither agree nor disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
Not Sure:
Please explain your answer (Required)

**Is there anything missing from the criteria which you feel is vital for an early years assistant (level 2) to demonstrate?**

<b>Options</b>
Yes:
No:
Not Sure:
If Yes or Not Sure, please explain your answer. (Required)

**Within the criteria, is there any duplication or anything that could be removed?**

<b>Options</b>
Yes:
No:
Not Sure:
If Yes or Not Sure, please explain why. (Required)

## Are any of the criteria unclear?

Options
Yes:
No:
Not Sure:
If Yes or Not Sure, please explain why. (Required)

## Would the requirements of the criteria disadvantage any particular group or groups?

Options
Yes:
No:
Not Sure:
If Yes or Not Sure, please explain why. (Required)

## If you have any further comments relevant to the level 2 criteria please use the space below to provide them.

Free Text

## Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

Options
Yes:
No:

Reason for confidentiality

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write to Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London, TW9 4DU

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