



Guidance

Changes to the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework

Updated 1 September 2021

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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

The framework changed on 1 September 2021 and you can find out more below about the changes and how they affect you.

Why the changes have been made

The changes to the EYFS statutory framework have been 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

Important documents

The new [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) framework](#) was published on the 31 March 2021 and should be used by all Ofsted registered early years providers in England from 1 September 2021.

[Development Matters](#) is the non-statutory curriculum guidance for the new EYFS framework that everyone can use from September 2021.

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 [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.

Changes to safeguarding and welfare

The changes

There have been 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 \(COVID-19\)](#).

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 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 republished [Development Matters](#). While it's not compulsory, we recommend that you use it with the new statutory framework.

The change

It's easier to navigate, and shorter in word length 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 do not 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

From 1 September 2021, all early years providers must follow the new [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) framework](#). Whatever your role and type of setting you work in, you'll need to be working to the new framework.

Take time to read the [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) framework](#) and [Development Matters](#) and discuss your setting's approach with colleagues.

[Access resources, advice and support](#) to help you apply the changes to the EYFS framework in nurseries, childminders and preschools.

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
- communicate with parents and carers about the changes and how your setting is approaching them

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:

- 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
- communicate with parents and carers about the changes and how you are approaching them

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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