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Guidance

Early years qualifications and ratios

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Qualifications and ratios

All early years providers working with children from birth to 5 years old must follow the regulations on early years foundation stage (EYFS) staff:child ratios. This is the number of qualified staff, at different qualification levels, an early years setting needs to have in order to meet the needs of all children at different stages of development and ensure their safety. These regulations are set out in the [early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#).

Providers must make sure staff have the appropriate qualifications to count in the ratios, including the need to have at least one staff member trained in [paediatric first aid](#).

The Department for Education (DfE) defines the qualifications that staff must hold to count in EYFS staff:child ratios. Providers can use our [early years qualifications lists](#) to:

- check if a person's qualification meets the approved 'full and relevant' criteria for early years qualifications
- confirm if a person counts in the EYFS staff:child ratios

If a person holds a level 2 qualification achieved from 1 September 2019 that meets the level 2 full and relevant criteria, you can count them towards the EYFS staff:child ratios at level 2.

If a person holds a level 3 qualification from September 2014 that meets the level 3 full and relevant criteria, you can count them towards the EYFS staff:child ratios at level 3.

If a person holds a qualification at level 4 or 5 (completed as part of a level 6 course), unless the level 4 or level 5 qualification is listed as meeting the full and relevant criteria, they cannot be counted in the EYFS staff:child ratios at level 3.

Lists of qualifications which meet DfE's criteria can be counted as full and relevant, and enable the holder to count within the staff:child ratios according to the EYFS. Please use the [early years qualifications list](#) to check if your qualification is suitable to work in an early years setting.

Paediatric first aid (PFA)

Newly qualified staff with a level 2 or level 3 early years qualification, awarded after 30 June 2016, must also have either a full paediatric first aid (PFA) or an emergency PFA certificate within 3 months of starting work. If they do not have this you cannot count them in the EYFS staff:child ratios at level 2 or level 3.

You may also wish to encourage new staff to complete PFA training so that your early years setting can apply for [Millie's Mark](#). This is a voluntary quality mark awarded to settings where all staff have an appropriate PFA qualification.

Contact the department and disputes

Please only contact the department if you have a query or question.

If your qualification is shown on the [early qualifications list](#) then it is considered full and relevant. If it is not shown on this list, then the qualification is not considered full and relevant. In both cases there is no need to contact the department to check.

Qualifications achieved in England

For qualifications achieved in England please supply:

- photos of the final certificate
- confirmation of the date on which you registered for this qualification, and the date it was awarded to you

Please send this documentation to us via the [contact the DfE form](#), noting it for the attention of the early years workforce team.

Qualifications achieved outside of England

For qualifications achieved outside of England please supply:

- confirmation of either the early years educator or early years practitioner criteria that you want the qualification to be compared to
- photos of the final qualification certificate
- your transcript, including a full breakdown of the content of the modules studied, including as much detail as you can
- a Statement of Comparability (SoC) from UK ENIC (European Network of Information Centres)

You can start an [application for a UK ENIC Statement of Comparability](#) on their website. The SoC will also need to include details of any English and maths qualifications obtained overseas to fulfil the literacy and numeracy requirements for level 3 early years educators.

If any of the documents are not in English, we will need certified translations. The translations need to show the qualification title.

We are unable to assess your request without the required evidence.

Email all your evidence to the early years workforce team at: earlyyearsoverseas.qualifications@education.gov.uk.

There are literacy and numeracy requirements for all candidates holding overseas qualifications.

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