

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY SCREENING FOR PROPOSED/REVISED POLICY

LEARNING TO LEARN - A FRAMEWORK FOR EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND LEARNING

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1. POLICY SCOPING

1.1 Title of policy

Learning to Learn - A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning

1.2 Type of Policy Development

This is a policy framework for Early Years Education and Learning aligned to the overall education priorities.

Description of policy

Learning to Learn – A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning provides a clear policy framework for all early years education and learning provision. It clarifies the scope of early years education and learning services which are under the remit of the Department of Education and makes the necessary links with the services under the remit of other departments and agencies, particularly DHSSPS.

The overall policy aim for Learning to Learn - A Framework for Early Years Education and Learning is: 'All children have opportunities to achieve their potential through high quality early learning and educational experiences'

In support of the policy aim, the policy objectives are to:

- provide equitable access to high quality early years education and learning and services;
- support personal, social and emotional development, promote positive learning dispositions and enhance language, cognitive and physical development in young children;
- provide a positive and nurturing early learning experience, as well as a foundation for improved educational attainment and life-long learning;
- identify and help address barriers to learning, and reduce the risk and impact of social exclusion and the need for later interventions; and
- encourage and support parents in their role as first and ongoing educators.

1.4 What factors could contribute to, or detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy?

None	
Legislative	X
Financial	X
Others (please specify)	X

Some of the proposed actions require changes to primary and subordinate legislation. Changes to primary and subordinate legislation require the approval of the NI Assembly.

The establishment of ESA will lead to major changes throughout the education sector, including early years. The five Education and Library Boards will be subsumed within the ESA and this has been taken into account in the draft policy. Any significant delay in the establishment of ESA may have a detrimental impact on the implementation of some areas of the policy.

The implementation of some of the proposed actions will require additional resources.

There is a Programme for Government commitment to ensure that at least one year of pre-school education is available for every family that wants it, the actions will contribute to achieving this.

1.5 Main stakeholders affected (Please tick ✓ relevant boxes)

Pupils (Actual or Potential)	~
Parents, families, carers	~
Teaching staff in statutory nursery schools and nursery units in primary schools	~
Trade Unions or Professional Organisations	~
Other Public Sector Organisations:	~
Education and Library Boards, CCMS, ESA (when established), other government Departments, HSCT	
Departmental Staff	
Others (please specify)	
Young children below compulsory school age	~
Staff in voluntary/private pre-school and early years Sure Start settings, including other relevant early years organisations	~
	-

The framework will provide clear policy direction for education and learning funded by the Department. It will impact on a range of stakeholders in early years settings including; young children and their families; teachers, leaders, managers, support staff and volunteers working with young children; staff in ELBs/ESA with responsibility for the early years. The implementation of the framework will involve cooperation with officials in DHSSPS and HCST.

1.6 Who is responsible for:

(a) Devising the policy

Department of Education

(b) Implementing it

The implementation of the framework will require action by a number of stakeholders within the early years education and learning sector, in particular:

- DE
- Education and Library Boards/ ESA when established
- Statutory, voluntary/private preschool settings
- HSCT

(c) Explain the relationship?

- DE is responsible for setting the policy direction for education and learning in DE funded early year's settings and allocating resources to the Education and Library Boards, and the HSCT.
- Education and Library Boards (ESA when established) are responsible for the allocation of places in the voluntary /private settings, and the allocation of resources to statutory, voluntary/private pre-school settings.
- Statutory, voluntary/private preschool settings provide a non compulsory stage of education through the delivery the DE funded Pre-school Education Programme
- HSCT is responsible for registering voluntary/private settings and allocating and managing DE funding to Sure Start settings for the delivery of a programme targeted at parents and children under the age of 4 living in the top 20% most disadvantaged wards

1.7 Other policies or objectives with a bearing on this policy

The context for DE funded early years provision has been considered in light of the wider policy environment within the Education sector and beyond. There are a number of policies that could impact on early years including:

Department of Education

- DE strategic priorities
- Every School a Good School
- Count, Read, Succeed
- Review of Irish-Medium Education
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Extended Schools
- Area Based Planning
- Community Relations Equality and Diversity
- Review of Special Educational Needs and Inclusion
- Review of Pre-school Admissions Arrangements
- Together Towards Improvement (pre-school and primary)
- Valuing Education Campaign 'Education Works'

Wider government

- Programme for Government 2011- 2015
- Families Matter: Supporting Families in Northern Ireland- Regional Family & Parenting Strategy (DHSSPS)
- Children and Young People's 10 Year Plan (OFMDFM)
- Play and Leisure Policy (OFMDFM)
- Child Poverty Strategy (OFMDFM)
- Delivering Social Change Framework (OFMDFM)
- UN Conventions e.g. The Rights of the Child The Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Building Safer, Shared and Confident Communities a Community Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland 2012-2017

2. EVIDENCE

2.1 What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy?

- The draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy was launched on 25 June 2010 for public consultation. The original deadline for responses was 30 November 2010; the deadline was later extended to 31 January 2011. The Department consulted widely on the draft strategy, using a range of methods including written consultation, public events, direct consultation with parents and children, and benefitted from an event organised by the Education Committee. A summary report of responses to the consultation on the Early Years Strategy was published July 2012
- Inspection evidence (Inspection reports, Chief Inspector's report).
- DE policy documents including the Review of Pre-school Admission Arrangements 2012
- The Department established a Early Years Stakeholder Group, comprising key stakeholders in the early years sector, to draw on their experience and involvement
- Statistical and research reports commenting on pre-school and early years provision.

Section 75 Category	Details of Evidence/Information ¹
	Pre-school settings are considered to be non-sectoral and open to all young children regardless of their religious belief.
	Education services below those of compulsory school age are non sectoral. There were 23,178 young children in funded pre-school provision in 2012/13.
Religious	The religious breakdown of young children in funded the pre-school education programme is 31% Protestant, 47% Roman Catholic and 22% other religion/no religion/not recorded.
Belief	An analysis of the management type of pre-school settings shows that there are 65 controlled and 32 Catholic maintained nursery schools and 109 controlled/voluntary, 87 Catholic/other maintained and 28 other management nursery classes/reception in primary schools. There are also 381 voluntary and private pre-school centres with funded places which are not classified by management type.
	Over 91% of those attending a Catholic/other maintained nursery school or nursery classes/reception in primary schools are Roman Catholic. In controlled/voluntary schools, approximately 53% are Protestant, 19% Roman Catholic and 29% other religion/no

	religion/not recorded.						
	There is no breakdown of the religion of children/families participating in Sure Start programmes.						
Political Opinion	Information on political opinion is not gathered on children of preschool age and their parents/guardians.						
	Ethnicity breakdown of children in pre-school settings						
		Nos	%				
	White	22,067	95.2				
	Chinese	80	0.3				
	Irish	60	0.3				
	Traveller	178	0.8	(1)			
	Indian / Sri						
	Lankan	34	ga 0.1				
	Pakistani Black	66	0.3				
	Other ethnic						
	group	422	1.8				
Desigl	Mixed ethnic						
Racial	group	271	1.2				
Group	Total	23,178	100.0				
	A number of Sure Start projects deliver a range of additional services and programmes for ethnic minority families incorporating outreach and home visiting services for traveller children and their families. Provision is available for travellers through an initiative with traveller children and parents which aims to reduce social and educational inequalities of traveller children aged 1 to 4. There is no racial breakdown of children/families participating on Sure Start programmes.						
Age	There were 22,229 target age children (aged 3 years and 2 months on 2 nd July 2011) in the pre-school programme for 2011/12. There were 500 two year olds in the pre-school programme and 449 reception children - this totals 23,178 children enrolled in funded pre-school education in 2011/12. The evidence illustrated that approximately 2% of enrolments on the						
	pre-school programme are those aged 2 i.e. not the target age for the						

	programme.
	There are currently 35 Sure Start projects across the north providing services to approximately 34,000 children aged 0-4 and their families in designated disadvantaged areas. While there is no breakdown of this information by age, the Sure Start Developmental Programme for 2-3 Year Olds has currently 142 programmes in place, offering a service for up 12 children per programme.
	Both the Review of Pre-school Education 2006 and the Review of Pre-school Admissions Arrangements 2012 acknowledged that many two year olds are not at a stage of development where they can benefit from the pre-school experience provided through the pre-school programme, which delivers a curriculum aimed at children in their final pre-school year.
	The Northern Ireland Audit Office 2009 report highlighted that some £10m has been invested in providing pre-school education for two year olds over the course of the programme, despite the primary focus of the programme being for children in their pre-school year (aged 3 years and 2 months).
	Information on marital status of pupils is not gathered on children of pre-school age.
Marital Status	Parenting programmes are run for single and married parents in some Sure Start and Pre-school settings. The Department does not collect information on these programmes.
Sexual Orientation	Information on sexual orientation is not relevant to children of preschool age.
Men And Women Generally	51% of young children in funded pre-school provision are male, and 49% female. This reflects the gender split of all children aged 2 and 3 ¹ . There is no breakdown by age of children participating on Sure Start programmes.

¹ Source: NISRA midyear population data 2011

	There is some evidence ² that with regard to disabled people, that they are less likely than people without a disability to achieve well academically.
	Approximately 30 young children in nursery units and reception classes have been identified as having a disability.
Disability	Information on disability is not collected from nursery schools or voluntary/private settings.
·	There is no information on children with disabilities on Sure Start programmes.
	Approximately 7.7% of children in voluntary and private pre-school settings have special educational needs. In nursery schools there were 21% with special educational needs and in nursery classes just under 4%
	Information on dependants is not gathered on children of pre-school age.
Dependants	There were 25 looked after children in nursery schools and 20 in nursery classes in primary schools. This represents about 0.3% of total children in these settings. There were approximately 0.3% of looked after children in all schools/settings.
	Details are not collected for looked after children in voluntary, private and Sure Starts setting.

1. Source: Unless otherwise indicated, the data in this table has been obtained from the DE annual school census 2011/12

 $^{^2\} http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/ECkeyinequalities.pdf$

2.2 Taking into account the evidence gathered at 2.1 what are the needs, experiences and priorities of each of the categories in relation to this particular policy? (Relevant details should be given for each of the categories.)

Section 75 category	Needs/Experiences/Uptake/Priorities
Religious Belief	DE funded early years provision is a non compulsory phase of education and therefore participation in programmes is voluntary. All pre-school and Sure Start settings are considered to be non-sectoral and open to all young children regardless of their religious belief.
Political Opinion	Not relevant to children of pre-school age
	DE funded early years provision is a non compulsory phase of education and therefore participation in programmes is voluntary. All pre-school and Sure Start settings are open to all young children regardless of their racial group.
Racial Group	There is no evidence to suggest that individual or groups' needs, experiences or priorities in relation to the framework are affected by racial group.
	To increase the numbers of ethnic minority families (including Traveller families) registering with Sure Start and availing of its services, some Sure Start settings deliver a range of additional services and programmes for ethnic minority families incorporating outreach and home visiting services for traveller children and their families.
	Provision is also available for travellers through an initiative with traveller children and parents which aims to reduce social and educational inequalities of traveller children aged 1 to 4.
Age	DE funded early years provision is a non compulsory phase of education and therefore participation in programmes is voluntary.
99	Many two year olds are not at a stage of development where they benefit from the pre-school programme which delivers a curriculum aimed at children in their final pre-school year. 2% of

	pre-school programme places are filled by to year olds
	The current arrangements for admission to the pre-school education programme may also result in some 2 years olds obtaining a place on the pre-school programme and displacing target age children.
	Not relevant to children of pre-school age
Marital Status	Parenting programmes are run for single and married parents in a range of Sure Start and Pre-school settings.
Sexual Orientation	Not relevant to children of pre-school age
Men And Women Generally	DE funded early years provision is a non compulsory phase of education and participation in programmes is voluntary. All preschool and Sure Start settings are open to all young children regardless of their gender. There is no evidence to suggest that there are gender specific needs for pre-school provision
Dischility	DE funded early years provision is a non compulsory phase of education and participation in programmes is voluntary All pre-school and Sure Start settings are open to all young children
Disability	Support is currently available in early years settings for children with additional support needs because of a disability and/or special educational needs.
Dependants	Not relevant to children of pre-school age

3. SCREENING QUESTIONS

3.1 What is the likely impact of this policy on equality of opportunity for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

(* Please tick ✓ relevant boxes)

(FIEdSI	e tick 🗸	relevant b	oxes)	
Section 75 category	None*	Minor *	Major *	Details of policy impact Level of impact?
Religious belief	~			The framework is not considered to have an adverse impact on the equality of opportunity of an individual or group based on their religious belief.
Political opinion	~			Not relevant to the pre-school age group
Racial group	•		7 2	The framework is not considered to have an adverse impact on the equality of opportunity of an individual or group based on their racial group.
Age		Positive		The framework has a positive impact on the equality of opportunity of children below compulsory school age. The pre-school education programme is not appropriate for many 2 year olds. The framework is recommending the development of potential options for the expansion of a "two year old" programme appropriate to their age and development. Freeing up the places currently occupied by 2 year olds on the preschool program will also improve the opportunity for children in their preschool year to find a suitable place in the pre-school program which will increase the number of targeted children participating in the programme having a positive impact on their

				educational outcomes.
Marital status	~			Parenting programmes are available in a range of pre-school settings.
Sexual Orientation	>			Not relevant to the pre-school age children
Men and women generally	~			The framework is not considered to have an adverse impact on the equality of opportunity of a child based on their gender.
Disability		Positive		The revised framework will align with the outcome of the Review of SEN and Inclusion. The framework is recommending expanding the current pilots initiated by the Review of SEN and Inclusion to help improve access to specialist support and build capacity across preschool settings.
Dependants	~		,	Not relevant to the pre-school age group

3.2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

(* Please tick ✓ relevant boxes)

Section 75 category	NO*	Yes*	Provide Details
Religious belief		✓	All pre-school and Sure Start settings are open to all young children regardless of their religious belief. The framework has the potential to improve good relations between people of different religious beliefs. The framework recommends extending the Foundation Stage curriculum to include preschool. One aim of the Foundation Stage is to help children become aware of the world beyond their immediate environment and to learn about others from a basis of tolerance, respect and open-mindedness. It also encourages children to understand similarities and respect differences in people in the local and wider community.
Political opinion	~		Not relevant to the pre-school age group
Racial group		•	All pre-school and Sure Start settings are open to all young children regardless of their racial group. The framework has the potential to improve good relations between people of racial groups. The framework recommends extending the Foundation Stage curriculum to include preschool. One aim of foundation stage curriculum is to help children to become aware of the world beyond their immediate environment and to learn about others from a basis of tolerance, respect and open-

			mindedness. It also encourages children to understand similarities and respect differences in people in the local and wider community.
	-		The framework is recommending the development of potential options for the expansion of a two year old programme
Age		•	Freeing up the places currently occupied by 2 year olds on the pre-school program will also improve the opportunity for children in their pre-school year to find a suitable place in the pre-school program which will increase the number of targeted children participating in the programme
Marital status	~		Not relevant to the pre-school age group
Sexual Orientation	¥		Not relevant to the pre-school age group
Men and women generally	¥		All pre-school and Sure Start settings are open to all young children regardless of their gender.
Disability		•	The framework recommends expanding the current pilots initiated by the Review of SEN and Inclusion, to help improve access to specialist support and build capacity across pre-school settings. The framework will align with the outcome of the Review of SEN and Inclusion.
Dependants	•		Not relevant to the pre-school age group

3.3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between: people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (* Please tick ✔ relevant boxes)

Good relations category	No impact*	Minor impact*	Major impact*	Details of policy impact
Religious belief		positive	W	The framework has the potential to improve good relations between people of different religious beliefs through the framework extending the foundation stage curriculum themes into the pre-school year.
Political opinion	•			Not relevant to the pre-school age group
Racial group		✓ positive		The framework has the potential to improve good relations between people from different racial groups through the framework extending the foundation stage themes of the curriculum into the pre-school year.

3.4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (* Please tick ✓ relevant boxes)

Good relations category	NO*	YES*	Provide Details			
Religious belief		•	The framework has the potential to improve good relations between people of different religious beliefs. The framework is recommending extending the Foundation Stage curriculum to include pre-school. An aim of Foundation stage is to help children to become aware of the world beyond their immediate environment and to learn about others from a basis of tolerance, respect and open-			

			mindedness. It also encourages children to understand similarities and respect differences in people in the local and wider community.
Political opinion	· •		n(
Racial group		•	The framework has the potential to improve good relations between people of racial groups. The framework is recommending extending the Foundation Stage curriculum to include a pre-school. An aim of foundation stage curriculum is to help children to become aware of the world beyond their immediate environment and to learn about others from a basis of tolerance, respect and openmindedness. It also encourages children to understand similarities and respect differences in people in the local and wider community.

3.5 Additional considerations - Multiple identities

Please provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities and specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

The new policy framework is not considered to have an adverse differential impact or effect on an individual or group with multiple identities.

While support is currently available in the pre-school education sector for young children additional support needs, the framework is recommending expanding the current pilots initiated by the Review of SEN and Inclusion to help improve access to specialist support and build capacity across pre-school settings.

There is a strong correlation between areas of high disadvantage and on those most in need of additional support, those at greater risk of social exclusion, marginalised or isolated, and at risk of achieving poor educational outcomes because of a combination of barriers to learning. The framework is recommending a review of the Sure Start Programme to assess the extent to which the investment is helping to secure improved well being and development outcomes for children and families in the most disadvantaged areas.

The needs of young children with multiple identities in DE funded places in pre-
schools should be identified by individual settings, and appropriate support
provided.

4. SCREENING DECISION

Not to conduct an equality impact assessment

Please provide details which support the decision

The new policy framework is not considered to have an adverse differential impact or effect on any Section 75 group.

The framework for Early Years Education and Learning, aligned to the overall education priorities, will provide a clear framework for all early years' education and learning provision.

It clarifies the scope of early years education and learning services which are under the remit of the Department of Education and makes the necessary links with the services under the remit of other departments and agencies, particularly DHSSPS.

If the Decision was:

- 1 Proceed to Section 5.
- 2 Proceed to Section 6.
- 3 Proceed to Section 7

5. TIMETABLING AND PRIORITISING

5.1 If the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Criterion	Priority Rating
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to a public authority's functions	
Total	

Details of the Department's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable will be included in a Quarterly Screening Report.

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6. MITIGATION

If you conclude that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, you should consider: mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Why and how will the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

The 2 minor impacts identified are both positive impacts and therefore require no mitigation.							

7. MONITORING

Effective monitoring will help identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy on any of Section 75 equality categories.

Data used for management information and accountability purposes will assist in evaluating the effect the new policy framework is having on the relevant groups and sub-groups within the equality categories.

DE/ELBs/ESA will monitor the impact of the changes included in the policy. If this monitoring and analysis of results shows an adverse impact, or if opportunities arise which would allow for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the proposals will be reviewed to determine whether better outcomes for the relevant equality groups may be achieved.

The framework has a specific action requiring the Department to monitor the uptake and completion of early years education and learning opportunities by children at risk of exclusion, including children with a disability, special education needs, looked after children, traveller children and newcomer families.

8. DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

8.1 Please state if the policy/decision in any way discourages persons with disabilities from participating in public life or fails to promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities.

The policy does not discourage persons with disabilities from participating in public life or fail to promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities. The revised framework will align with the outcome of the Review of SEN and Inclusion

8.2 Please state if there is an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities or encourage participation in public life by making changes to the policy/decision or introducing additional measures.

The policy includes actions which aim to enhance support for young children with disabilities in DE funded early years provision. If monitoring of the policy post implementation demonstrates the potential for greater equality of opportunity to be promoted, the proposals will be reviewed to determine whether better outcomes may be achieved.

8.3 Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy with reference to the disability duties.

Information is collected through the DE annual school census. Should additional data on settings in the pre-school education programme be required to monitor the effect of policy, the Department will work with its NISRA statisticians to assess this need.

A database is currently being developed by the HSCT in regard to young children and families accessing the Sure Start programme. The Department will review the data collected to ensure it meets its needs.

9. CONSIDERATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

Negative Impact (human right interfered with

or restricted)

Neutral Impact

9.1	How does the policy/decision affect anyone'	s Human	Rights?
	The Human Rights Act (1998)		
	The United Nations Convention on the Rights o	f the Child	(UNCRC)
	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of		
	(UNCRPD)		•
	The United Nations Convention on the Eliminati	ion of All H	Forms of
	Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)		
	(* Please tick ♥ as appropriate)		
	Positive Impact	~	

9.2	If y	ou have	identified	a	negative	impact	who	is	affecte	d	and	how	v?

	60	

At this stage you should determine whether to seek legal advice and to refer to the issue to the Equality Team to consider:

- whether there is a law which allows you to interfere with or restrict rights
- whether this interference or restriction is necessary and proportionate
- what action would be required to reduce the level of interference or restriction).

legislation in relation to the policy/decision. ELBs and settings will be responsible for compliance with the legislation. It will be the responsibility of DE/ELBs/ESA to monitor compliance.

9.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise

awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the

10. APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION

Screened By:	Position	Date
Oliver McKearney	DP Early Years	Nov
	•	2012
Approved By:	Position	Date
Cathy Galway	Grade 7 Early Years	Nov
<u>-</u>	-	2012

Note: A copy of the Screening Form must be approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

The TRIM version of the completed Screening Form must be sent to the Equality Team (equality@deni.gov.uk), for quality assurance.

FOR COMPLETION BY EQUALITY TEAM									
Quality Assured by:	Richard Magowan	Date:	29/11/12						
Screening Decision	Agreed								
Comments:									
Date Directorate/Team Informed: 29/11/12									