



Department  
for Education



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

Guidance

# Early years educator level 3: qualifications criteria

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## Context

The criteria lay out the minimum requirements for a high quality Early Years Educator qualification.

It is the role of the Department for Education (DfE) to define the content of the Level 3 qualifications that practitioners must hold to be included in the ratios specified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

DfE does this by defining criteria that qualifications must meet to enable practitioners to demonstrate their competence.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness'

and gives children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide a foundation for good future progress through school and life.

## **Qualification Criteria**

The qualification criteria lay out the minimum requirements for what an Early Years Educator should know, understand and be able to do to be considered qualified to support young children age birth to 5 in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is divided into 2 sections:

- Section i: Summary of qualification content and assessment criteria
- Section ii: Minimum qualification content requirements for Level 3 Early Years Educator

The term 'children' is used as an all-encompassing term to include babies, toddlers and young children from birth to age 5.

## **Section i: Summary of qualifications content and assessment criteria for level 3 Early Years Educator**

### **A: Qualification content**

All Level 3 Early Years Educator qualifications will require candidates to demonstrate an in-depth understanding of early years education and care, including that they can:

1. Support and promote children's early education and development
2. Plan and provide effective care, teaching and learning that enables children to progress and prepares them for school
3. Make accurate and productive use of assessment
4. Develop effective and informed practice
5. Safeguard and promote the health, safety and welfare of children
6. Work in partnership with the key person, colleagues, parents and carers or other professionals

Full details of required qualification content are shown in Section ii.

## **B: Accreditation**

All Level 3 Early Years Educator qualifications must meet the national requirements set by Ofqual for valid, reliable assessment and awarding procedures. They must also be regulated by Ofqual onto the Qualifications and Credit Framework or National Qualifications Framework.

## **Section ii: Minimum qualification content requirements for Level 3 Early Years Educator**

### **1. Support and promote children's early education and development**

1.1 Understand the expected patterns of children's development from birth to 5 years, and have an understanding of further development from age 5 to 7.

Children's development patterns to include:

- cognitive
- speech, language and communication development
- literacy and numeracy
- physical
- emotional
- social
- neurological and brain development

1.2 Understand the significance of attachment and how to promote it effectively.

1.3 Understand a range of underpinning theories and philosophical approaches to how children learn and develop, and their influence on practice.

1.4 Analyse and explain how children's learning and development can be affected by their stage of development and individual circumstances.

1.5 Understand the importance of promoting diversity, equality and inclusion, fully reflecting cultural differences and family circumstances.

1.6 Understand the importance to children's holistic development of:

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

- physical development

1.7 Understand systematic synthetic phonics in the teaching of reading, and a range of strategies for developing early literacy and mathematics.

1.8 Understand the potential effects of, and how to prepare and support children through, transitions and significant events in their lives.

Transitions and significant events include:

- moving to school
- starting and moving through day care
- birth of a sibling
- moving home
- living outside of the home
- family breakdown
- loss of significant people
- moving between settings and carers

1.9 Understand the current early education curriculum requirements.

1.10 Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice.

## **2. Plan and provide effective care, teaching and learning that enables children to progress and prepares them for school**

2.1 Plan and lead activities, purposeful play opportunities and educational programmes which include the learning and development areas of current early education curriculum requirements.

To include:

- communication and language (extending vocabulary, language structure, and dialogue, for example)
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

2.2 Ensure plans fully reflect the stage of development, individual needs and circumstances of children.

2.3 Provide learning experiences, environments and opportunities appropriate to the age, stage and needs of individual and groups of children.

2.4 Encourage children's participation, ensuring a balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities.

2.5 Engage in effective strategies to develop and extend children's learning and thinking, including sustained shared thinking.

2.6 Support and promote children's speech, language and communication development.

2.7 Support children's group learning and socialisation.

2.8 Model and promote positive behaviours expected of children.

2.9 Support children to manage their own behaviour in relation to others.

2.10 Understand when a child is in need of additional support.

2.11 Plan and provide activities to meet additional needs, working in partnership with parents and/or carers and other professionals, where appropriate.

### **3. Make accurate and productive use of assessment**

3.1 Understand how to assess within the current early education curriculum framework using a range of assessment techniques.

3.2 Carry out and record observational assessment accurately.

3.3 Identify the needs, interests and stages of development of individual children.

3.4 Make use of formative and summative assessment, tracking children's progress to plan next steps and shape learning opportunities.

3.5 Discuss children's progress and plan the next stages in their learning with the key person, colleagues, parents and/or carers.

### **4. Develop effective and informed practice**

4.1 Demonstrate a good command of the English language in spoken and written form.

4.2 Explain the importance of continued professional development to improve own skills and early years practice.

4.3 Engage in continuing professional development and reflective practice to

improve own skills, practice, and subject knowledge (for example, in English, mathematics, music, history or modern foreign languages).

## **5. Safeguard and promote the health, safety and welfare of children**

5.1 Know the legal requirements and guidance on health and safety, security, confidentiality of information, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

5.2 Identify and act upon own responsibilities in relation to health and safety, security, confidentiality of information, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

5.3 Plan and carry out physical care routines suitable to the age, stage and needs of the child.

5.4 Understand why health and well-being is important for babies and children and promote healthy lifestyles.

5.5 Understand how to respond to accidents and emergency situations.

5.6 Demonstrate skills and knowledge for the prevention and control of infection.

Prevention and control of infection including:

- hand washing
- food hygiene
- dealing with spillages safely
- safe disposal of waste
- using correct personal protective equipment
- knowledge of common childhood illnesses and immunisation
- exclusion periods for infectious diseases

5.7 Carry out risk assessment and risk management in line with policies and procedures.

5.8 Understand safeguarding policies and procedures, including child protection, recognise when a child is in danger or at risk of abuse, and know how to act to protect them.

Types of abuse including:

- domestic
- neglect
- physical
- emotional

- sexual abuse

5.9 Maintain accurate and coherent records and reports and share information, only when appropriate, to ensure the needs of all children are met.

Records and reports include:

- medication requirements
- special dietary needs
- planning
- observation and assessment,
- health, safety and security
- accidents
- daily registers

## **6. Work in partnership with the key person, colleagues, parents and/or carers or other professionals**

6.1 Work co-operatively with colleagues and other professionals to meet the needs of babies and children and enable them to progress.

6.2 Work in partnership with parents and/or carers to help them recognise and value the significant contributions they make to the child's health, well-being, learning and development.

6.3 Encourage parents and/or carers to take an active role in the child's play, learning and development.

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