

EYFS Reforms

Preparing for Implementation

April 2021



EYFS Reforms Preparing for September 2021

It is important to remember the reasons for reform and evaluating current practice with these in mind should be the starting point in preparing for the EYFS Reforms, as not everything has changed:

- Improve outcomes age 5, particularly in early language and especially for disadvantaged children
- Reduce workload- through cutting the amount of time spent gathering unnecessary evidence; spending less time on tracking and data collection to enable more time with children
- To promote good oral health as statutory expectation (also to make minor edits to update legislation/ clarify statements in document)

The **Statutory Framework for the EYFS September 2021** [Link](#) still sets out everything that you 'must' do and will be inspected on by Ofsted.

There remain four guiding overarching principles of the **Statutory EYFS** which should shape practice in early years settings:

- unique child
- positive relationships
- enabling environments
- learning and development.

The **Characteristics of effective learning** are still in place.

The **Statutory Educational Programmes** have changed. The redeveloped Educational programmes contain more depth and focus on early language and extending vocabulary.

The **Early Learning goals** have changed, to make them simpler and easier to understand. They should not be used to plan in a way that narrows the curriculum. Reception teachers will have exemplification guidance alongside the EYFSP handbook for support.

There are also a number of small amendments to **Section 3 safety and welfare requirements**. The main change is that it is now statutory to promote good oral health. There are also some minor changes to make existing requirements clearer and to provide updates

The new non statutory guidance **Development Matters** [Link](#) has been developed by Dr Julian Grenier, in consultation with a range of EY professionals. It is a top-level view of how children develop and learn, to support professional judgement. It should not be used as a checklist.

How to use this document

Not everything has changed. This document will help you look at the EY reforms with your staff team working through at your pace. It can form the basis for discussion and is not intended to generate lots of written documentation. You could do this at a leadership / staff meeting. From the discussion you will be able to celebrate what is already working well and identify some short and long term priorities and actions

First of all, look at the new Educational Programmes for each area of learning and the key points of change to note.

- What is already in place?
- What does this look like for the different age groups in the setting 0-3 / 3 &4 / reception? How is progression planned for?
- Is there anything you don't currently do in any of the 7 areas? What do you need to look at more deeply?
- Implications for Planning/ Provision and resources / staff CPD

Statutory Educational Programme EYFS 2021

Communication and Language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, story-telling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures.

Key points of change to note: quality of interactions, exposure to new vocabulary and enabling, language-rich environment; focus on reading with children

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives, and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life.

Key points of change to note: Elements of health and self-care now included within PSED rather than Physical Development i.e. healthy eating and managing personal needs independently; emphasis on executive function and self-regulation of behaviour.

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practise of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Key points of change to note: Clear focus on gross and fine motor development 0-5

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-uk-chief-medical-officers-report> link in footnote.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Key points to note: More emphasis on the link between language comprehension and early reading and writing; understand skill set needed to pave the way for children becoming readers and writers

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Key points to note: Greater detail on the importance of shapes, spatial reasoning and measure as part of early maths learning. Deep understanding of number and linked vocabulary to 10 to provide secure base; enjoy process and not worry about getting wrong answer

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Key points to note: More emphasis on local visits / visitors to support understanding; importance of quality texts/ planned use of specific vocabulary; technology in here though ELG removed

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children’s artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

Key points to note: includes wider range of experiences; does not reference music, dance & role play, emphasises need for quality and quantity of experiences.

Next, consider the wider picture. To support leaders we have compiled reflective questions (based on Dr Grenier’s toolkit for NAHT seminar) against each of the **Seven features of effective practice** in the revised Development Matters.

These are suggested starting points for discussion for your leadership and staff team. You can use some or all of them in any order.

Illustration from Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice 2020.

This publication is available to download free as a PDF <http://development-matters.org.uk/> by kind permission of Julian Grenier. This can be downloaded by clicking on the blue Download button on the development matters website or is available to purchase. Illustrations are by Juli Dosad.)

Seven Features of Effective Practice

- 1 The best for every child**
 - All children deserve to have an equal chance of success.
 - High-quality early education is good for all children. It is especially important for children from disadvantaged backgrounds.
 - When they start school, children from disadvantaged backgrounds are, on average, 4 months behind their peers. We need to do more to narrow that gap.
 - Children who have lived through difficult experiences can begin to grow stronger when they experience high quality early education and care.
 - High-quality early education and care is inclusive. Children’s special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. All children promptly receive any extra help they need, so they can progress well in their learning.
- 2 High-quality care**
 - The child’s experience must always be central to the thinking of every practitioner.
 - Babies, toddlers and young children thrive when they are loved and well cared for.
 - High-quality care is consistent. Every practitioner needs to enjoy spending time with young children.
 - Effective practitioners are responsive to children and babies. They notice when a baby looks towards them and gurgles and respond with pleasure.
 - Practitioners understand that toddlers are learning to be independent, so they will sometimes get frustrated.
 - Practitioners know that starting school, and all the other transitions in the early years, are big steps for small children.
- 3 The curriculum: what we want children to learn**
 - The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn.
 - Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.
 - The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.
 - Young children’s learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible.
 - Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider’s web with many strands, not a straight line.
 - Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.
- 4 Pedagogy: helping children to learn**
 - Children are powerful learners. Every child can make progress in their learning, with the right help.
 - Effective pedagogy is a mix of different approaches. Children learn through play, by adults modelling, by observing each other, and through guided learning and direct teaching.
 - Practitioners carefully organise enabling environments for high-quality play. Sometimes, they make time and space available for children to invent their own play. Sometimes, they join in to sensitively support and extend children’s learning.
 - Children in the early years also learn through group work, when practitioners guide their learning.
 - Older children need more of this guided learning.
 - A well-planned learning environment, indoors and outside, is an important aspect of pedagogy.
- 5 Assessment: checking what children have learnt**
 - Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence.
 - Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Practitioners also need to be clear about what they want children to know and be able to do.
 - Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help.
 - Before assessing children, it’s a good idea to think about whether the assessments will be useful.
 - Assessment should not take practitioners away from the children for long periods of time.
- 6 Self-regulation and executive function**
 - Executive function includes the child’s ability to:
 - hold information in mind
 - focus their attention
 - regulate their behaviour
 - plan what to do next.
 - These abilities contribute to the child’s growing ability to self-regulate:
 - focus their thinking
 - monitor what they are doing and adapt
 - regulate strong feelings
 - be patient for what they want
 - bounce back when things get difficult.
 - Language development is central to self-regulation: children use language to guide their actions and plans. Pretend play gives many opportunities for children to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead.
- 7 Partnership with parents**
 - It is important for parents and early years settings to have a strong and respectful partnership. This sets the scene for children to thrive in the early years.
 - This includes listening regularly to parents and giving parents clear information about their children’s progress.
 - The help that parents give their children at home has a very significant impact on their learning.
 - Some children get much less support for their learning at home than others. By knowing and understanding all the children and their families, settings can offer extra help to those who need it most.
 - It is important to encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children.

1. The best for every child

Reflective questions/ discussion

What are the different starting points of children? How do you find this information out, in partnership with parents and early years settings?

What do you do with transition/ baseline information? How do you use this information to support narrowing the gap?

Where children are learning English as an additional language, how do you liaise with parents to support the child's development in their first language as well as English?

How do you distinguish between children whose communication in English is at an early stage and children who have a language delay or disorder?

How do you make sure every child can access the curriculum that you offer? Can you give examples of the extra scaffolding, support or help you have given children and how that's enabled them to access the curriculum?

The revised Development Matters puts a greater emphasis on supporting children's communication. What changes do you need to make?

- What is the role of our Communication Champion?
- How are you using Bolton's Integrated pathway?
- How is Wellcomm being used to screen children and provide an effective intervention?
- Is your SENCO well supported and trained?
- How do all children promptly receive any extra help they need?
- How are you using developmental journals and other resources to break learning down into small steps?

2. High-quality care

Reflective questions/ discussion

- The child's experience is central to the thinking of every practitioner.
- Babies, toddlers and young children thrive when they are loved and well cared for.
- High-quality care is consistent.
- Effective practitioners are responsive to children and babies.

What does this look like in practice in our EYFS provision? Can you give some examples?

How are emotions and behaviour supported in a positive, age- appropriate way?

What are your transition arrangements for all children? How are these enhanced for children with additional needs

3. The curriculum: what you want children to learn

Reflective questions/ discussion

We use the statutory educational programmes from the basis of 'What' you want children to learn. We use the non- statutory guidance to help guide us.

Do our Long / Medium term plans for the different age ranges in our provision:

- Build on your community strengths and needs?
- Show what you want children to have learned and experienced over a period of time?
- Provide opportunities to revisit, repeat and practice?
- Identify the 'must have' experiences?
- Show what books, songs, stories and rhymes you want children to know?
- Support 'habits' and behaviours you want children to form?

Does the curriculum build on what children know and can do?

Is it carefully sequenced so that children make progress?

How is learning planned for children with SEND?

How does planning for the development of language takes place?

Do our plans remain flexible and not too fixed so you can follow children's interests?

In school have you identified what joint work is needed with other leaders e.g. subject leads, Key Stage One lead?

4. Pedagogy: helping children to learn

Reflective questions/ discussion

How does our approach to teaching, learning and care (including the enabling environment indoor and outdoor) take account of the strengths and the needs of the children?

How are you using the Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning to help children become even more powerful learners over time?

Some of the ways that children in the early years learn are:

- through their self-chosen play
- through the careful structuring of the environment
- through interactions with adults
- through playful guided learning
- through direct teaching (especially towards the end of the EYFS phase)

Can you see these in your provision?

5. Assessment: checking what children have learnt

Reflective questions/ discussion

The new Development Matters guidance says

'That it is not a tick list for generating lots of data. You can use your professional knowledge to help children make progress without needing to record lots of next steps. Settings can help children to make progress without generating unnecessary paperwork.'

- What does this mean in practice for your team?
- How useful are your current assessments? How do they help you to take effective action?
- Are all written/electronic observations helpful and used?
- How can you free up time to focus more on children who are at risk of falling behind?
- How do you make sure children's learning is secure, before moving them onto learning new skills or concepts?
- How do you involve parents and other professionals?

The 'checkpoints' can help identify children who may have difficulties in their development. What additional assessment tools do you use to check more thoroughly (e.g. Wellcomm, ASQ, other non-statutory guidance including Bolton Journey documents)?

How do you ensure assessments are precise enough to identify possible barriers to learning, so you can put in the right support to enable every child to access your early years curriculum?

What additional assessments that may be needed to pinpoint need and plan for small steps of progress for those children with SEND?

Are all children's strengths and needs noticed? E.G:

- Those who like to learn outdoors
- Children learning EAL?

Are all practitioners confident in their understanding of child development to recognise when children are 'on track'? How will you support your team?

How might you use the new Development Matters or other non- statutory guidance to help you?

6. Self-regulation and executive function

Reflective questions/ discussion

When you talk with children, what do they say about their play and learning?

Where age appropriate do you hear children use their language to focus their thinking, persist and plan ahead?

Do all practitioners engage in:

- sustained shared thinking
- to and from communication with all children? Can you give examples?

Do all practitioners use language effectively to support children in a developmentally appropriate way (5 Golden Rules of Communication)?

Do they use questions appropriately to clarify understanding (e.g. hand rule, blank level questions)?

How does the enabling environment support self- regulation and executive function?

7. Partnership with parents

Reflective questions/ discussion

How does the curriculum build on the strengths of children and families in your community?

- How do you work in partnership with parents to support children's learning?
- How do you sensitively share progress and learning?
- Can you give examples of when you have offered extra help to parents who needed it?
- How do you involve parents at different points of transition?
- How do you encourage all parents to chat, play and read with their children and develop the home learning environment?
- How do we work with parents to promote good oral health?

Make a note of the key points from your discussions.

What do we need to do/ find out more about first?

What do we need to put on our development plan?