



## **Parents' guide to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.**

### **What is the Early Years Foundation Stage?**

Welcome to the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**, which is how the Government and early year's professionals describe the time in your child's life between birth and age 5.

This is a very important stage as it helps your child get ready for school as well as preparing them for their future learning and successes. From when your child is born up to the age of 5, their early years' experience should be happy, active, exciting, fun and secure; and support their development, care and learning needs.

Nurseries, pre-schools, reception classes and child-minders registered to deliver the EYFS must follow a legal document called the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

### **What is the EYFS Framework – why do we have one?**

The EYFS Framework exists to support all professionals working with in the EYFS to help your child, and was developed with a number of early years experts and parents.

In 2021 the framework was revised to make it clearer and easier to use, with more focus on the things that matter most. This new framework also has a greater emphasis on your role in helping your child develop.

It sets out:

- The legal welfare requirements that everyone registered to look after children must follow to keep your child **safe** and promote their welfare
- The 7 areas of **learning and development** which guide professionals' engagement with your child's play and activities as they learn new skills and knowledge
- Assessments that will tell you about **your child's progress** through the EYFS
- Expected levels that your child should reach at age 5, usually the end of reception year; these expectations are called the "**Early Learning Goals (ELGs)**"

There is also guidance for the professionals supporting your child on planning the learning activities, and observing and assessing what and how your child is learning and developing.

### **What does it mean for me as a parent?**

#### Ensuring my child's safety

Much thought has been given to making sure that your child is as safe as possible. Within the EYFS there is a set of welfare standards that everyone must follow. These include the numbers of staff required in a nursery, how many children a child-minder can look after, and things like administering medicines and carrying out risk assessments.

#### Quality

You can find out about the quality of your child's nursery and other early years providers in relation to the EYFS Framework by checking what the Government's information at [www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspection-reports/find-inspection-report).

### **How my child will be learning**

The EYFS Framework explains how and what your child will be learning to support their healthy development.

Your child will be learning through skills, acquiring new knowledge and demonstrating their understanding through **7 areas of learning and development**.

Children should mostly develop the **3 prime areas** first, these are:

- Communication and language;
- Physical development; and
- Personal, social and emotional development.

These prime areas are most essential for your child's healthy development and future learning.

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As children grow, the prime areas will help them to develop skills in **4 specific areas**. These are:

- Literacy;

- Mathematics;
- Understanding the world; and
- Expressive arts and design.

These 7 areas are used to plan your child's learning and activities. The professionals teaching and supporting your child will make sure that the activities are suited to your child's unique needs. This is a bit like a curriculum in primary and secondary schools, but it is suitable for very young children, and it is designed to be really flexible so that staff can follow your child's unique needs and interests.

Children in the EYFS learn by playing and exploring, being active, and through creative and critical thinking which takes place both indoors and outside.

### **As a mum or dad, how can I help with my child's learning?**

All the fun activities that you do with your child at home are important in supporting their learning and development and have a really long lasting effect on your child's learning as they progress through school.

Even when your child is very young and is not yet able to talk, talking to them helps them to learn and understand new words and ideas.

### **How can I find out how my child is getting on?**

It is important that you and the professionals caring for your child work together. You need to feel comfortable about exchanging information and discussing things that will benefit your child. These conversations will need to be with your child's "key person". This is the person who:

- Is your main point of contact within the setting
- Helps your child to become settled, happy and safe
- Is responsible for your child's care, development and learning
- Takes a careful note of your child's progress sharing this with you.

You should be able to get information about your child's development at any time and there are 2 stages (at age 2, and again at age 5) when the professionals caring for your child must give you written information about how he or she is doing.

### **When your child is 2**

At some point after your child turns 2, the professionals working with your child must give you a written summary of how your child is progressing against the 3 prime areas of learning:

- Communications and language;
- Physical development; and
- Personal, social and emotional development.

This is called **the progress check at age 2**.

This check will highlight areas where your child is progressing well and anywhere they might need some extra help or support – and how mums and dads and other family members or carers can work with the keyperson to help. You might find it useful to share the information from the check with other professionals such as health visitors (who can use it as part of the health and development review).

### **When your child is 5**

At the end of the EYFS – in the summer term of the reception year in school – teachers complete an assessment which is known as the **EYFS profile**. This assessment is carried out by the reception teacher and is based on what they, and other staff caring for your child, have observed over a period of time.

### **Where can I go for further information?**

The most important place to find out more is **your child's playgroup or child-minder** – do ask as many questions as you need to. Providers really do welcome speaking with you.

You can find the **Early Years Foundation Stage** which includes the early learning goals at [www.foundationyears.org.uk](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk). The foundation years website also includes a range of resources and contacts.