

Consultation on a Revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (Learning and Development Requirements) (Amendment) Order 2012

Consultation Response Form

The closing date is: 19 January 2012

Your comments must reach us by that date.

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education e-consultation website www.education.gov.uk/consultations

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Department on 0370 000 2288. If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

The consultation questions are in three sections:

1. The **areas of learning** which shape the educational programmes
2. The **early learning goals** which describe the level of progress children should normally have attained by the end of the EYFS
3. The **draft statutory instrument** - the EYFS (Learning and Development Requirements) Order 2012

Please tick one category that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Childminder	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Years Sector Representative
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-School/Playgroup	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained School	<input type="checkbox"/> Nursery
<input type="checkbox"/> Play Sector	<input type="checkbox"/> SEN Provision	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent School
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast/Afterschool Club	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

Please Specify:

TACTYC is the Association for the Professional Development of Early Years Educators. There are over 400 members, including academics, local authority officers and practitioners in both the maintained and non-maintained sectors. Our aims are:

- To promote the highest quality professional development for all practitioners in early childhood education and care;
- To pursue matters of current educational concern and to act as a voice for all those who work with young children;
- To facilitate effective communication and support for early years tutors, trainers, advisers and practitioners in schools and other settings;
- To further the educational well-being of all children.

Areas of learning and educational programmes

There are seven proposed areas of learning and educational programmes: personal, social and emotional development; physical development; communication and language; literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive art and design. The revised EYFS describes the broad areas of focus for educational programmes in each area of learning. The consultation document includes the relevant text for each area of learning.

Q1) Do you agree that the description of educational programmes and areas of learning summarises clearly what is involved?

Yes

No

Partly

Not Sure

Comments:

The confines of this narrow consultation do not offer scope to comment on further areas of the Government's response to the previous consultation; we believe, however, that as a statutory instrument governing all early years practice it is essential that further issues are dealt with satisfactorily. We will therefore make two other comments which are of fundamental importance before responding to these narrow questions.

- The Government response makes no reference to accurately re-instating the **Themes and Principles of the EYFS** in the statutory document. The draft document lists 'Overarching principles' which have been changed from those in the existing EYFS. The initial consultation showed overwhelming support for the Principles and the Commitments to good practice which derive from these. These are essential to the EYFS framework, showing the totality of practice centring on individual children in the context of relationships, families and communities. Without these, the EYFS framework becomes reduced to an imbalanced and inappropriate focus on learning outcomes alone. Early years development is not something to be imposed on children to reach certain standards in defined areas of learning, but must be nurtured in the rich, whole contexts represented in all the EYFS themes, principles and commitments taken together. We call for the existing themes and principles to be re-affirmed in the new document.
- A stronger, clearer explanation of the **role of play in learning** must be included in the new framework, and embedded in descriptions of the educational programmes. A large majority of respondents (62%) in the previous consultation did not agree that this was clear in the draft framework, and the Government response promises a 'clear and strong emphasis on play as an essential vehicle for children's

learning'. TACTYC welcomes this commitment, while cautioning that the nature of play and playful learning is not well understood. These ideas must be more carefully defined, and there is an urgent training need to support practitioners to successfully support playful learning and engage in playful teaching.

Q1)

The presentation of the educational programmes could be much improved with an introductory section which more clearly identifies key elements of effective early years provision which supports children's learning and development across all areas. Breaking the holistic nature of children's learning into separate 'programmes' is a top-down approach more suited to curricula for older children. **Instead, early years provision and practice (the 'educational programme') leading to learning and development across all areas is centred in:**

- **warm, contingent relationships, in contexts reflecting the individuality and cultures of each child;**
- **first-hand experiences which enable children to develop their understanding in meaningful contexts;**
- **play and playful approaches.**

These are reflected in the Principles of the EYFS which should be highlighted here.

The educational programmes should also be prefaced with an overarching requirement to foster the **characteristics of effective learning**. These are not an add-on which practitioners 'should' be aware of (draft Framework 1.11), but are central to learning and development across all areas. If these are not made part of the requirements, then aspects of the current EYFS have been lost including attitudes and dispositions for learning, problem-solving and creativity.

In addition, the description of the relationships between the prime and specific areas is unclear and unhelpful – appearing to break learning into arbitrary 'subject' units. It should be clearly stated that all the areas are inter-related, and that the prime areas are present in all children's experiences through which they develop skills and knowledge in the specific areas. It is wrong to say that the prime areas 'are particularly important for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning'. This appears to make children passive recipients of adult stimulation, when in fact children are active and highly effective agents of their own learning from birth – this is not related to the Prime areas, but is described in the Characteristics of Effective Learning.

The order of the areas of learning should be altered, to reflect the centrality of PSED in children's development. Children cannot learn to communicate if they are not first in relationships, and the fundamental importance of early attachment and emotional wellbeing should place PSED first in the order in which they are presented.

We have considered the wording of the educational programmes, and suggest the following improvements (the alterations have been highlighted):

- **Personal, social and emotional development** involves helping children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and gain awareness of their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

(The notion that all children – irrespective of their level of development – can be directed to “manage their feelings” is inconsistent with both received wisdom and established theories of psychological development. It also fails to recognise the interactional, socially-mediated nature of ‘behaviour’ in schools.)

- **Communication and language** development involves giving children opportunities to speak and listen in a range of situations. These should support the development of children’s confidence and skills in expressing themselves by providing opportunities to interact verbally and non-verbally.

An emphasis on communication, not just speaking, enables children to explore and use a range of ways to communicate ideas and meanings.

(It is important that the wider meaning of communication is included here, not just speaking and listening – and particularly for children with SEN.)

- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive, to enjoy the potentials of their bodies, and to develop their coordination, control, and movement. Children are supported in beginning to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.

Specific Areas

- **Literacy** development involves enabling children to read and to communicate through writing. They do this both through listening to others reading, and being encouraged to begin to read and write themselves. Children must be given access to a wide range of reading materials – books, poems, and other written materials, signs and media, enabling them to build on their interest and enjoyment of books and writing.

(A distinction should be made between writing and handwriting, by highlighting that writing is communicative. ‘Igniting’ children’s interest shows disregard to the interest that children already bring. It should also reflect the idea that there are many forms of literacy with new and emerging media.)

- **Mathematics** involves providing children with encouragement and support as they explore, communicate and develop their mathematical thinking, skills and understanding, establishing confidence and positive dispositions to mathematics. They must have opportunities in play and everyday contexts to use and apply numbers, use informal calculations to

solve meaningful problems, explore and investigate shapes, spaces, and measures, and communicate their understanding of mathematics through their own graphics.

- **Understanding the world** involves building on children's existing knowledge and understanding, guiding children as they make sense of their physical world and their communities through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment. *(It should be acknowledged that children are not blank slates, but bring knowledge and understanding, and are already actively thinking to make sense of the world, which practitioners build upon and support.)*
- **Expressive arts and design** involves supporting children as they explore and play with a wide range of media and materials and in a variety of ways. Adults provide opportunities and encouragement for children to share their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of ways in art, music, movement, stories and writing, dance, role-play, and design and technology.

Early learning goals

The *early learning goals* describe what most children should be able to do by the end of the **academic** year in which they turn 5. The revised EYFS reduced the number of early learning goals from 69 to 17. The responses to the consultation on the revised draft EYFS, between July and September 2011, indicated broad support for most of the goals. We are proposing to make minor revisions to some of the goals on which we consulted over the summer. These are in the areas of: Communication and Language, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design. We are proposing more substantive changes to the goals relating to Literacy and Mathematics reflecting consultation feedback and further discussion with subject experts teachers and parents. In reworking the text of the goals, we have sought as far as possible to clarify requirements and simplify language. In particular, for literacy we have sought to address comments that the goals were potentially too stretching - for example, the requirement to be able to write simple stories. In mathematics, there were calls for inclusion of more on problem solving and applying numbers in practical situations.

For all the early learning goals, we have sought to ensure they are clear and are set at a level of development which the majority of children would be expected to achieve by the summer term in their reception year at school. The consultation document includes the relevant text for each goal.

Q2) Are there any early learning goals where you think the wording is **not** clear, or where you think the level of development described is not pitched correctly? Please tick the goals to which you think these apply.

Self-confidence and self-awareness	Managing feelings and behaviour	Making relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving and handling	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and self-care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Listening and attention
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understanding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Speaking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Numbers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shape, space and measures
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People and communities	<input type="checkbox"/> The world	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Exploring and using media and materials	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being imaginative	

Comments:

We are concerned that these generalised statements appear to make no allowance for inherent differences amongst children, not least those who are still four years old at the end of the reception year. Generally the document seems to view all children as more or less the same in terms of their maturational profile or other dimensions of their status. If normalised 'measurement' is also included as part of the revised EYFS, many children, particularly younger children, boys, those who are learning English as an additional language, and those experiencing SEN will begin their school lives marginalised and labelled as failing.

The original presentation of the 'emerging' and 'exceeding' bands made some recognition of the fact that that a range of development is to be expected, and these should be re-instated. However, it is not sufficient to assess any child who has not yet reached the 'expected' ELG as 'emerging'. This provides no information on the individual child's learning and development, and gives no scope for showing the learning and progress of children with SEN, simply labelling them as failing to meet an inappropriate standard and reinforcing a deficit model of development. Across all areas, identifying earlier steps is crucial.

Again, in our view the order of these is wrongly presented, and PSED should come first in the list. We have re-ordered the statements below.

We have considered the draft ELG statements carefully, and suggest improvements below (with highlighted changes).

Personal, social and emotional development

Self-confidence and self-awareness: Children are confident to try new

activities, and say why they like some activities more than others. They are confident to **communicate** in a familiar group, will **share** their ideas, and will choose the resources they need for their chosen activities. They say when they do or do **not** need help.

References to speaking should be changed since children with communication difficulties can communicate in other ways.

Managing feelings and behaviour: Children **show understanding** of how they and others **feel and how they express feelings**. They talk about their own and others' behaviour and the **effects of their actions**, and know that some behaviour is unacceptable. They **interact** as part of a group or class, and **usually behave appropriately in a range of situations**. They **understand that** changes of routine **might sometimes occur**.

Talking about feelings and behaviour is not the same as managing them. This needs to be phrased in a more positive way – e.g. 'effects of actions' is more neutral than 'consequences' which may be interpreted as punishment, and is more important to managing behaviour than compliance with rules. Confidence with changes of routine fits more comfortably in self-confidence than in this aspect.

Communication and language

Listening and attention: Children **listen attentively in a range of situations**. They listen to stories, **anticipating key events and responding to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions**. They **give their attention to what others say and respond appropriately, even if they are engaged in another activity**.

'Listening' does not apply to children with hearing impairment, and guidance will be needed to explain how this can be interpreted for those children. There should also be reference to the appropriateness of situations in which children listen attentively. The final statement, while intended to express in simple language the element of integrated attention, will be confusing for practitioners who are largely unfamiliar with the development of attention. This is a training need, and explanation and exemplification will be required.

Understanding: Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions. They **raise questions** and answer 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences and in response to stories, **new ideas or events**. They **show their developing understanding by contributing to conversations with peers and adults in a range of contexts**.

Speaking: Children express **their thoughts and experiences effectively using verbal and non-verbal forms of expression, showing awareness of listeners' needs**. They **initiate and engage in conversations, talking about events and experiences in the past, present and future, and about ideas**. They develop their own narratives and explanations by connecting ideas or events.
It is an inappropriate expectation for children to use tenses in 'correct forms'.

Literacy

Reading: Children enjoy reading a range of books and look at books for pleasure. They show understanding when talking with others about what they have read and are able to show their comprehension of stories. Children use textual cues (pictures, symbols, letters, words) to make plausible attempts to read and understand simple sentences. Together with whole word recognition and context cues, they use phonic knowledge to decode regular words and read them aloud accurately. They also read some common irregular words.

It is crucial to include children enjoying and making meaning through a wide range of early literacy experiences. English children performed poorly in regard to reading dispositions in the 2006 PIRLS study – if we do not emphasise enjoyment in early literacy experiences, England will continue its downward trajectory in international comparative literacy studies.

*This current draft has removed the statement about showing understanding of what they have read – this **must** be included since reading is about communicating meaning, and comprehension is the weakest element in later reading. It is not the same as comprehension of what has been said or read aloud to children.*

Phonics alone is not sufficient for reading, and should not be listed as the sole approach children will use.

Writing: Children enjoy using their understanding of written signs and communications to write within their play and everyday contexts. They use their phonic knowledge to write words in ways that match their spoken sounds. They also write some irregular common words. They write phrases or simple sentences that can be read by themselves and others, spelling some words correctly and others in phonetically plausible ways. *Writing sentences is too demanding at this stage – a sentence is a complete grammatical structure punctuated with a capital letter and full stop.*

Mathematics

Numbers: Children use a range of numbers, counting from 1 to 20 in order and using them in meaningful contexts, and show an interest in larger quantities and numbers. They use their developing understanding to calculate and solve personally meaningful problems in a variety of ways, using quantities of objects, and using their own graphics for informal calculations.

Children's interest in larger quantities and numbers needs to be acknowledged, since it will encourage teachers to recognise and value children's explorations beyond 20. Emphasising adding and subtracting 'simple two digit numbers' will only lead to direct teaching of written calculations in columns, and conflicts with all the advice from Ofsted on children's informal calculations in this phase and in Key Stage 1. The importance of graphicacy needs to be acknowledged, since mathematics is an abstract symbolic language. The Individual Scale Point Percentage Achievement Distribution: Attainment in the Foundation Stage (Early

Learning Goals) published by the DFE, (2010), highlighted the fact that attainment in both writing and calculations was the lowest of all areas. It is significant that writing and 'written' mathematics (including calculations) are both abstract symbolic languages, and that without developing and building on children's early understanding, limitations to both aspects can severely challenge their understanding in these areas

Shape, space and measures: Children use everyday language to talk about size, weight, capacity, position, distance, time and money, **comparing quantities and objects and solving meaningful problems.** They recognise, create and describe patterns. They explore characteristics of everyday objects and shapes **and measures, using mathematical language and their own graphical representations to explore, explain and communicate their mathematical thinking.**

Rather than de-contextualised problems, these aspects of mathematics need to have personal meaning for the children. The role of communication in mathematics needs to include children's own representations and complements the reference here to 'using mathematical language.'

Understanding the world

People and communities: Children talk about past and present events in their own lives and in the lives of family members. They know that other children **sometimes have different tastes and interests,** and are sensitive to this. They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

Technology: Children recognise that a range of technology is used in places such as homes and schools. They select and use technology for particular purposes, **including exploring, communicating, making things, and to control and effect changes.**

Expressive arts and design

Being imaginative: Children use media and materials **in ways of their choosing, sometimes applying prior knowledge and skills, to express, communicate, and meet their purposes.** They represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through **play, stories,** art, music, dance, and design and technology.

'thinking about users and purposes' is too rigid, and does not reflect the nature of imaginative activity for young children, and the fact that purposes often change as the imaginative activity develops.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (Learning and Development Requirements) (Amendment) Order 2012 will give legal effect to the EYFS and specifies the learning and development requirements that early years providers must meet in providing early years provision

Q3) If you have any comments on the draft Order please note these below.

X Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

We note in Paragraph 5 the substitution of the Secretary of State for the former QCDA. We believe this is an unfortunate development, in further centralising political power in an area where professional independence should be respected and protected.

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply X

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

XYes

 No

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 738060 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 19 January 2012

Send by post to: EYFS Team, Department for Education, Level 1, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1 3BT.

Send by e-mail to:

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