



Department
for Education



Teaching
Agency

Consultation Response Form

Consultation closing date: 30 April 2013
Your comments must reach us by that date

Consultation on Teachers Standards (Early Years)

Consultation Response Form

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 (<http://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.

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

Reason for confidentiality:

Name	Professor Janet Moyles
Organisation (if applicable)	On behalf of : TACTYC, the Association for the Professional Development of Early Years Educators
Address:	80 Carisbrooke Road, South Knighton, Leicester, LE2 3PB

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the Ministerial Public Communications Division by e-mail: consultation.unit@education.gsi.gov.uk

or by telephone: 0370 000 2288

or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

The Government's publication ['More great childcare'](#) (January 2013) sets out the vision for quality in early education and childcare and includes the Government's response to Professor Cathy Nutbrown's report ['Foundations for Quality'](#) published in June 2012.

The Government wants make sure there is more great childcare available for parents and children. The introduction of Early Years Teachers (Graduate) and Early Years Educators (Level 3) will support early years providers in ensuring that those they employ to work with babies and young children become increasingly skilled and professional.

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Education & Childcare) has asked the Teaching Agency (TA) to consult on the Teachers' Standards (Early Years) in order to start training the first Early Years Teachers from September 2013.

Please mark one box that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Childminder	<input type="checkbox"/> Nursery and other pre school provider
<input type="checkbox"/> Representative of childcare or early years intermediary organisation	<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained school
<input type="checkbox"/> Independent school	<input type="checkbox"/> Play activity provider	<input type="checkbox"/> SEN provider
<input type="checkbox"/> Training provider	<input type="checkbox"/> Academy/Free school	<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority
<input type="checkbox"/> Early Years professional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	

Please Specify:

TACTYC is a membership based organisation. Our activities include:

- **'advocacy and lobbying'** - providing a voice for all those engaged with the professional development of practitioners through responding to early years policy initiatives and contributing to the debate on the education and training of the UK early years workforce;
- **'informing'** – developing the knowledge-base of all those concerned with early years education and care by disseminating research findings through, for example, our international [Early Years Journal](#), annual conference, website and occasional publications;
- **'supporting'** – encouraging informed and constructive discussion and debate and supporting

practitioner reflection, the use of evidence-based practice and practitioner-research through, for example, our [newsletter](#) and website (www.tactyc.org.uk).

TACTYC currently has around 500+ members and this response has been prepared in consultation between TACTYC Executive and the wider membership via the TACTYC website.

Teachers' Standards (Early Years)

To enable you to answer questions 1 – 6 please read the draft Teachers' Standards (Early Years).

The Teachers' Standards (Early Years) will underpin the training and assessment of Early Years Teachers. Trainees must demonstrate that they meet the standards to achieve the award of Early Years Teacher Status.

1 Do the standards set appropriate expectations for what an Early Years Teacher must demonstrate? Please explain your answer in the comments box below using the relevant number(s) where referring to a particular part of the standards.

Yes

X No

Partly

Not Sure

Comments:

We feel strongly that the age range for Early Years Teachers should be birth-to-7 years to allow continuity for these young children, to bring young children's early educational experiences more in step with the rest of Europe. We also feel strongly that Early Years Teachers should have QTS otherwise they will continue to be second-class citizens in terms of education.

These draft standards show little understanding of how teachers should be assessed on their knowledge of how young children develop and learn and their skills in promoting this. The standards are simplistic, make assumptions that children and parents are deficient in some way and present a significantly impoverished version of the extant Early Years Professional standards. Some of the standards, and many of the sub-standards, are wholly inappropriate and will be counterproductive in terms of enhancing children's development, care and learning. Children are and must remain lifelong active agents of their own development and learning if they are to become fully functioning citizens.

There is an over-emphasis on school-level, group education and far too little focus on a wider view of early years education from birth, the whole child, diversity and culture, family work, multi-agency work, leadership and change agency. Children's learning is predicated upon teachers demonstrating a critical understanding of play and its role in children's development and learning, yet this is not covered at all in the standards (Hirsh-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R., Berk, L. and Singer D. (2008) *A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool: Presenting the Evidence*. New York: Oxford University Press).

Similarly, we would expect teachers to be able to lead on provision for babies and young children based on high quality play and child-initiated experiences as a key element of practice and pedagogy (Bodrova, E. and Leong D. (2005), The importance of play, why children need to play. *Early Childhood Today*, 20 (3): 6-7; Brooker, L. Learning to play or playing to learn?. In *Engaging play*, ed. L. Brooker and S. Edwards, 152-165. Maidenhead: Open University Press). This leads us to suggest that these draft standards show a clear lack of understanding of the ways that young children best develop and learn and the pedagogy which is crucial in children's early years.

A review of the research evidence on early years learning and development by Oxford University (Evangelou, M., Sylva, K., Wild, M. and Glenny, G. (2009) *Early Years Learning and Development. Literature review*. London: DCSF) concluded that key factors in young children's development include play, conversation, warm positive relationships with adults who respond to the child's initiations, and developing a sense of self through interaction with others and with their culture. However, it is important to emphasise that it is the *quality* of play that matters and that not all play is successful just because it is 'play'. Moreover babies and young children need extended period of uninterrupted time for play. In particular, free, child-initiated and spontaneous pretend play (role-play) can be of significant value for learning, but should be open for the children and without adult-planned targets (Worthington and van Oers, *forthcoming*). Pretend play also offers valuable contexts for cultural understandings and for children to freely communicate within meaningful contexts, through writing and other symbolic languages such as mathematics: this will underpin knowledge of the purposes and contexts of these symbolic languages.

Children develop in the context of home and environment as well as settings: the document fails to mention anything about the significance of children's cultures of home (Evangelou *et al.*, 2009) and the cultural nature of learning (e.g. Moll, L., C. Amanti, D. Neff, and N. Gonzales. 1992. Funds of knowledge for teaching. *Theory into Practice* 31, no. 2: 132-141; Göncü, A. and S. Gaskins. 2007. *Play and development: evolutionary, sociocultural and functional perspectives*. Abingdon: Taylor and Francis; Rogoff, B. 2008. Observing sociocultural activity on three planes. *Pedagogy and Practice: Culture and Identities*, ed. P. Murphy, K. Hall and J. Soler. 58-74. London. Sage Publications; Rogers, S. 2010; Brooker, L. 2011. Taking play seriously. In *Rethinking play and pedagogy in early childhood education*. S. Rogers (ed.) 152-164. Maidenhead: Open University Press, or, indeed, of anything to do with a good and effective childhood experiences (Children's Society (2012) *The Good Childhood Report*. London: Children's Society).

Preamble: Why are 'work and conduct' the main issues here? These are babies and very young children with whom we are concerned and they need a suitable environment for learning and developing (Dalli, C., White, E.J., Rockel, J., Duhn, I., with Buchanan, E., Davidson, S., Ganly, S., Kus, L., and Wang, B. (2011) *Quality early childhood education for under-two-year-olds: What should it look like?* New Zealand, Ministry of Education. www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ece/quality-early-childhood-education-for-undertwo-year-olds-what-should-it-look-like-a-literature-review/)

1. It would be sufficient here to state: 'Have high expectations for all children'.

1.2 'Setting goals' is not appropriate language for babies and young children. Having high expectations and a commitment to achieving the full potential of every child is much more appropriate and should replace the existing statement.

2. The whole notion of 'outcomes' and whether teachers can 'promote' these in babies and young children is very questionable. Surely we are aiming for high quality provision that serves each individual and unique child's needs effectively? (see Mathers, S., Sylva, K. and Joshi, H. (2007) *Quality of Childcare Settings in the Millennium Cohort Study*. DfES Research Report SSU/2007/FR/025: <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/SSU2007FR025.pdf>).

2.1 Teachers cannot be responsible in this way because each child's starting point, through their prior experiences, will be different. The original standard 24 emphasised a much broader remit whereas this very much echoes the 'work and conduct' of the preamble. The 'accountability' assumed here sounds as if it is entirely concerned with delivering policy rather than the somewhat wider implications of accountability to children and their families. This may be better worded on the lines of 'Consistently provide opportunities that promote every child's progress'.

2.3 Working with a child's key person is also a vital feature of early years practice: this should be included in this element at least. Why would you need to 'promote attachment theory'? This wording is nonsense. Rather than assumptions being made that all settings use a 'Key Person' system, 'it is vital that a section on 'key persons' is included, emphasising that this important practice should extend to all reception classes.

2.4 Sustained shared thinking is also about children sustaining verbal interactions with each other as well as with adults. This should be reflected in this statement.

2.6 Why group learning? This is totally inappropriate for very young children, the youngest will inevitably not be able to do this so what happens to the children whose needs don't enable them to engage in group learning and for whom this could actually be detrimental to their confidence and self-esteem? Communication skills can also be promoted through one-to-one interaction between children and between child and adult. Communication should be a separate section and include gestures, talk, early marks, writing, symbols and mathematical graphics (Carruthers, E. and Worthington, M. 2006. *Children's mathematics: Making marks, making meanings*. London: Sage Publications.), and acknowledge the multi-modal nature of communication in our increasingly complex and technological world (e.g. Kress, G. 1997. *Before Writing*. Routledge: London).

2.7 This statement should emphasise working in a partnership approach with parents/carers, taking into account cultural and diverse experiences and environments. Parents should have the opportunity to feed into the paperwork and not just be 'told' by teachers about their children. Parents are an integral part of children growing up and all interaction between teachers and parents needs to be sensitively handled.

3.1 The sub-standards here present far too narrow a view of the EYFS. It also emphasises the 'future' for children rather than where they are now. Some of the children these teachers will be working with will be only a few weeks old and should be entitled to provision appropriate for the age and experience rather than working towards being a school-child. A knowledge of how children learn through play is vital (and insufficiently stressed in the EYFS). The promotion of positive learning dispositions for the here and now is not only vitally important but carries with it all that is necessary for later 'success at school'. Children learn in many environments and not just in school so this narrow emphasis on learning in school is inappropriate, as is the emphasis on phonics. The stress on phonics is at the expense of highlighting the importance of supporting children to develop a love and enjoyment of books, language and reading, and take delight in pictures and words. There needs to be a separate statement on writing, under a heading 'Communication' (see section 2.6 above).

3.2 How can one raise a very young child's aspirations or knowledge? What kinds of aspirations are young children likely to have? Why is knowledge of the world a specific focus here? It should be made

clear if this statement means knowledge of the world in more general terms, in which case this is open to misinterpretation. We should be endeavouring to have teachers who widen children's experiences and promote high aspirations

3.3 We appreciate this standard and agree that teachers should have a critical understanding of their work and working practices. 'It is also of vital importance that they have firm understanding of babies' and young children's development, and continue to build on this understanding through professional development.'

3.4 This statement is far too narrow: children need far more than a knowledge of phonics. Perhaps 3.4 and 3.5 should be conflated to read: 'Promote young children's early and emergent literacy and mathematical understanding through active, play-based experiences.' Or 'Demonstrate a clear understanding of the many ways in which young children learn to read.'

3.5 The focus for young children should always be on their *learning* rather than on 'teaching': perhaps 'a clear understanding of how to support early mathematical understand through active and meaningful experiences including play' would be a more appropriate standard. Learning mathematics is much more than developing a narrow range of skills (Moyle, J. and Worthington, M. 2011. The Early Years Foundation Stage through the daily experiences of children. *TACTYC Occasional Paper* no. 1.) and should include an understanding of the relationship between children's early marks, their early writing and other symbol-use and their mathematical graphics. Emphasis also needs to be given to the importance of talk for mathematical understandings, and learning through pretend play, allowing children to bridge home and 'schooled' concepts to develop understanding of the cultural foundations of mathematics (e.g. Munn, P. and Schaffer, R. 1993. Literacy and numeracy events in social interactive contexts, *International Journal of Early Years Education*. Vol. 1, No. 3: 81-80; Munn, P., and S. Kleinberg. 2003. Describing good practice in the early years – a response to the 'third way'. *Education 3-13* June 2003: 50-53).

4. This statement should take account of children's starting points and not assume that they know nothing before they enter a setting. It would be better worded as: 'Plan and implement education and care taking account of the needs of all children and their individual starting points.'

4.1 This statement would be more effective if it read: 'Plan and implement broad and balanced play and learning experiences that take into account the stages of development, circumstances and interests of all children'.

4.2 It is hard to see how this standard is compatible with 3.4 and 3.5. This statement would be better saying 'All babies and young children come to their educational setting with a natural love of learning and curiosity about their worlds, and it is important to nurture and build on this'.

4.3 We believe that this statement is too narrow, focusing as it does only on 'activities and educational programmes': the continuous improvement of provision is much more than this. It is also extremely difficult to ascertain, for instance, would IEPs and ECAT be classed as 'activities' and 'educational programmes'? If so, how could a practitioner measure their effectiveness in supporting provision? Better – 'Reflect on the quality of babies and young children's play and experiences, continually developing relationships, interactions and provision to build challenging and effective learning environments.'

4.4 As we said earlier, group activities are not often the best way to engage the youngest children

especially babies and toddlers. What needs to be stressed is the individual interaction with children which is required if teachers are to learn about the skills, capabilities and understanding of such young children. Additionally, there seems to be confusion between age and stage between statements 4.1 and 4.4.

5.1 We are not clear how you extend young children's development which is partly driven at least by age and maturity. This statement would be more appropriate if it read, 'to extend and build on their current interests, understandings and development'.

5.5 This statement would be more appropriate if it read: 'Support children and their families through a range of transitions.'

5.6 This substandard is insufficient. There should be one complete standard focused on multi-agency work with its own set of sub-standards

6 We believe that teachers need to understand the wide range of modalities that young children adopt for learning and communication (see section 2.6). This statement is too narrow.

6.1 This statement needs to include how observation informs planning and could read: 'Observe and assess children's development and learning from a positive perspective, using this to inform and plan next steps to support children's interests and strengths.'

6.3 We believe that appropriate provision for each child comes before assessment: one can only assess young children in a context that engages them in meaningful learning. Assessment should be in order to ensure provision is appropriate. Again, we believe that children bring a wealth of cultural knowledge and understanding from the home to the setting and this must be included in this statement.

6.4 This standard makes no mention of children's own assessment of their learning which is vital if children are to gain independence and agency. Goal-orientation is inappropriate for young children who are notoriously diverse in their understanding and skills. For example, how could one set goals for a baby? The 'old' standard 22 included constructive and sensitive feedback rather than goal-orientation. Given that Annex 1 treats the child as a passive object to be assessed, this needs further development so as to ensure the child's voice is acknowledged. The statement is also ambiguous in that it could be construed as relating to wider feedback, e.g. to parents (in order to do 6.3), and to the wider team who cannot fully support a child if they don't understand their starting points. We also believe that this statement should also include the sharing of regular feedback with children to help them progress in their learning and encourage and enable children to reflect on what they have achieved.

7 We believe this should be replaced to read: '... safe environment for children's development, care and learning'.

8.2 We would suggest that there should be separate full standards for (i) working with parents and families and (ii) working with colleagues and other agencies. Teachers work with 'a wide range of professionals' (rather than 'wider professionals').

8.4 This sub-standard lacks coherence.

8.5 How is this statement different to 4.3? Needs clearer differentiation if it isn't going to merge into one

2 Is there anything missing from the standards which you feel is vital for an Early Years Teacher to demonstrate? Please explain your answer in the comments box below using the relevant number(s) where referring to a particular part of the standards.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

As we have indicated above, there is a need for an emphasis on teachers understanding play-based learning, young children's dispositions and attitudes to learning and listening to children's voices. Young children are not passive recipients of learning but active participants in their own learning and should be recognised as such.

(See section 2.6 on 'Communication').

Acknowledgement needs to be given to the multi-modal nature of play and learning.

Emphasis needs to be given for reception class teachers, that the nature of the early years curriculum is based on play and children's understanding, and that this should be continued throughout at least the full year of the reception class.

There needs to be a statement relating to teachers keeping up-to-date with current knowledge and evidence-based research in practice through professional development courses, professional reading and research.

Additionally, practitioners should engage in equal dialogue with parents to discuss children's development and learning.

3 Are any of the standards unclear? Please explain your answer in the comments box below using the relevant number(s) where referring to a particular part of the standards.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Please see comments above.

4 Within the standards, is there any duplication in your opinion? Please explain your answer in the comments box below using the relevant number(s) where referring to a particular part of the standards.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Comments:

Please see above comments. Additionally, there appears to be little different between 3.1 and 2.2 (other than the focus on school readiness). It is hard to see how an assessor – or the candidate – would differentiate between these two.

5 Would the requirements of the standards disadvantage any particular group or groups? Please explain your answer in the comments box below using the relevant number(s) where referring to a particular part of the standards.

Yes

No

Partly

Not Sure

Comments:

All children, but in particular babies and toddlers, would be disadvantaged by an approach that focuses narrowly on structured, directive approaches to play and learning experiences, skills and an emphasis on 'school readiness'. Greater importance should be given to supporting children's innate play capabilities, natural curiosity, exploration, intellectual challenge, creativity and problem-solving to enhance their learning and development. Further, warm, close, interactive and consistent relationships with individual babies and toddlers form the basis for successful learning and development. These should be more strongly represented in these criteria.

6 If the questions we have asked here have not given you opportunity to make all your views known please add any further comments you would like to draw to our attention.

Comments:

The overall impression of this whole document is of children as passive recipients to be 'done to' – there is nothing about child-initiated experiences or teachers working from the child's own interests (except of course shared sustained thinking but this depends on teachers understand that they are not just sustaining the child's thinking on what the teacher wants them to learn e.g. phonics: that it is a truly shared experience. There seems to be an assumption that all children can be lumped together with no recognition of the diversity of children's backgrounds, culture and experiences nor any mention of their 'voice', agency or of children's rights.

Early years teachers must be able to support children's learning through self-initiated and child-led play and be able to plan and implement playful activities to extend children's learning and development.

Understanding how children learn is essential in developing appropriate pedagogy, and practitioners need to understand their own role in supporting or hindering children's development as confident, curious, motivated, self-regulated learners.

7 Please let us have your views on responding to this consultation (e.g. the number and type of questions, was it easy to find, understand, complete etc.)

Comments:

The 'Yes', 'No', 'Partly' and 'Unsure' categorisations are not helpful and should be removed. They do not give a picture of the response in the same way that that written comments do, and any reported numerical presentation of the results of the consultation in this way could not capture the content of responses.

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

E-mail address for acknowledgement: Jan.moyles@virginmedia.com

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?

X
Yes

No

All DfE public consultations are required to meet the Cabinet Office [Principles on Consultation](#)

The key Consultation Principles are:

- departments will follow a range of timescales rather than defaulting to a 12-week period, particularly where extensive engagement has occurred before
- departments will need to give more thought to how they engage with and consult with those who are affected

- consultation should be 'digital by default', but other forms should be used where these are needed to reach the groups affected by a policy; and
- the principles of the Compact between government and the voluntary and community sector will continue to be respected.

Responses should be completed on-line or emailed to the relevant consultation email box. However, if you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Coordinator, tel: 0370 000 2288 / 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 30 April 2013

Send by post to:
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