

Mr Brett Wigdortz
CEO Teach First,
4 More London Riverside,
London SE1 2AU

5th July, 2013

Dear Mr Wigdortz,

We are writing to ask for your reassurance that high level graduates of early childhood studies degrees and similar early years degrees will be considered for entry to the Teach First Programme where students want to work with children in the early years, which your website said included children aged three and four years¹. Such degrees give students very significant study and a deep understanding of developmental psychology, child development, pedagogy, policy, parent partnership and practice with regard to factors influencing the lives of young children, including those in disadvantaged families, and provide a strong foundation for successful careers in early years teaching. Given its prestige and aim to develop inspirational teachers in low income communities, the Teach First route provides a very attractive option to early years graduates who meet your criteria beyond the teaching subject requirements.

Our concern arises from the lack of stated teaching subject requirements for those wishing to teach in the early years. On your website, it appears that the teaching subject requirements specified relate only to requirements for primary and secondary teaching, rather than for those wishing to teach in the early years, which is a distinct stage in its own right. We firmly believe that the subject criteria to become an excellent early years teacher should reflect the different needs of the age group, the distinctive pedagogy and the knowledge and understanding needed. We would be grateful if urgent and careful consideration could be given to amending the stated requirements to include the eligibility of applicants with such degrees at 2:1 or above, particularly for early years / primary school teaching.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you and look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Jane Payler
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¹ The Early Years Foundation Stage covers children aged from birth to five years and 'early years' internationally has a broader definition that stretches from birth to seven years. It is unclear which age range is referred to in the Teach First programme, but we suggest it should at least align to the EYFS.