



National College for
Teaching & Leadership

Standards for early years teachers

**Government response to the
consultation on teachers' standards
(early years)**

July 2013

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Introduction

1. On 29 January 2013 the Department published 'More great childcare' which 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.
2. As well as the influence of parents and families, high quality early education and childcare, delivered with love and care, can have a powerful impact on young children. The evidence is clear that a good start in these early years can have a positive effect on children's development, preparing them for school and later life.
3. 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.
4. The National College for Teaching & Leadership (NCTL) has been asked to develop the Teachers' Standards (Early Years) so that training of the first Early Years Teachers can begin in September 2013. The Teachers' Standards (Early Years) will underpin the training and assessment of Early Years Teachers. In order to achieve Early Years Teacher Status a trainee will need to demonstrate that they have met the standards
5. The NCTL held a five week consultation to seek views on the Teachers' Standards (Early Years). The consultation closed on 30 April 2013. Two hundred and eighty two responses were received.
6. The consultation questionnaire requested yes/no answers, as well as free text to allow respondents to freely express their views on the proposed standards.
7. This summary includes the most substantive views received, those for which 10% or more of respondents commented. Respondents may have given a number of opinions for a single question; therefore percentages may exceed 100%.
8. Unless otherwise stated, the percentages reported are the number of people responding to the question, rather than the number of people responding to the consultation as a whole.
9. The consultation adheres to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office in July 2012.

10. The breakdown of respondents is as follows:

Please mark one box that best describes you as a respondent	Number of respondents
Early Years Professional	76
Other	48
Teacher	41
Training provider	32
Local authority	31
Nursery and other pre-school provider	27
Representative of childcare or early years intermediary organisation	7
Parent/carer	7
Maintained school	6
Childminder	6
Academy/free school	1
Total ¹	282

¹ Includes responses received from membership organisations and sector bodies on behalf of their members/sector.

The consultation process

11. The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Education & Childcare) asked the National College for Teaching & Leadership to consult on Teachers' Standards (Early Years).
12. An external reference group was established to provide advice, guidance and challenge to the National College for Teaching & Leadership on new standards to underpin the assessment of Early Years Teachers. Membership was diverse and drew upon academic, technical, employer and training provider expertise.
13. Development of the Teacher's Standards (Early Years) was undertaken in three stages:
14. **Stage one** - the production of a set of draft standards. The drafting process included a mapping exercise and gap analysis conducted against the Teachers' Standards and the Early Years Professional Status Standards (both introduced in September 2012) in order to ensure that their coverage was comprehensive.
15. **Stage two** - a five week online consultation undertaken via the DfE website, seeking views on the draft standards. This commenced on 21 March 2013 and closed on 30 April 2013. A summary of responses is provided.
16. **Stage three** - consideration and revision of the standards based on the consultation responses.
17. The standards were submitted for ministerial approval in June 2013.

Government response and next steps

18. There is nothing more important in early education and childcare than the quality of the staff who are delivering it. The workforce supporting our babies, young children and their parents should be well-qualified, well-respected and well-led.
19. We want to move decisively away from the idea that teaching young children is somehow less important or inferior to teaching school age children. In order to achieve this we will introduce Early Years Teachers from September 2013.
20. We have consulted on the development of the Teachers' Standards (Early Years) and are confident that the standards will support the concept of teaching in early years, help to spread leadership practice and have parity with the standards for classroom teachers.
21. From 21 March to 30 April 2013 the NCTL ran an on-line consultation. The key responses received to the consultation were:
22. Seventy five per cent of respondents felt that the standards set (34%) or partially set (41%) appropriate expectations for what an Early Years Teacher must demonstrate.
23. Seventy per cent of respondents felt there was no duplication across the standards.
24. Seventy three per cent of respondents felt that something vital was missing from the standards which an Early Years Teacher should demonstrate.
25. A number of key themes emerged from the consultation and these have been drawn from where 10% or more of respondents commented. No area prompted more than 34%.
26. The key themes are identified below along with the Government response.

i. Not enough focus on birth to 3s

A small number of respondents (10%) felt that the standards were aimed more at over 4s.

We have strengthened the preamble which sets the scope for the standards to reflect more clearly the age range and included more specific wording to specify working with children from birth to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

ii. Celebrating diversity, equality of opportunity, anti-discriminatory and inclusive practice

A quarter of respondents commented that greater emphasis was needed on valuing diversity and equality of opportunity. Linked to this there were also comments about the lack of reference to anti-discriminatory and inclusive practice.

We have amended the standards to reflect this and included the promotion of equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice at 8.1 and inclusive practice is embedded throughout in considering all children.

iii. Importance of parental relationships

A small number of respondents (13%) commented that the importance of parental relationships was not emphasised enough in the standards and the recognition of the parent/carer being the child's first educator. A number of respondents commented about the lack of reference to the importance of working in partnership with parents.

We have amended the standards to reflect this. Working in partnership with parents has been specifically included in the preamble to the standards and at standards 2.7, 5.5, 6.2 and 8.3.

iv. How play supports early years learning

A third of respondents were concerned about the lack of requirement for play-based learning in the standards and stated it was an essential component for birth to 5's learning and development and of fundamental importance in children's early development.

We have not amended the standards to specifically include play. The standards are designed to allow for a range of pedagogical approaches, thus giving these highly qualified professionals the freedom and flexibility to deploy a range of methods and to decide how best to structure children's activities throughout the day. We know that play is essential for children's development, and is an integral part of how children learn to explore, think about problems and relate to others. As specified in the standards Early Years Teachers are required to understand and deliver the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

The EYFS² is clear that practitioners must deliver activities for children through planned, purposeful play. We also know about the value of stories and music in building early vocabulary, of numbers and counting in supporting early numeracy, and of games in helping children to learn how to relate to one another. Having a well-qualified adult leading children's learning delivers the best outcomes for children.

v. Child-initiated learning

A small number of respondents (12%) felt there was a lack of reference regarding the importance of child-initiated play/learning for birth to 5s and that this was a vital component to a child's learning and development.

We have not amended the standards to explicitly reference child initiated learning as we do not want to prescribe how teachers teach but allow a more flexible approach. Good teachers will draw from a range of approaches to help children learn.

vi. Focus on phonics is too narrow and needs broader focus on early literacy strategies for birth to 5s

Almost one fifth of respondents commented on the nature of the phonics and maths standards and that they are too narrow for the age range within early years. A number of respondents commented that the inclusion of synthetic phonics is inappropriate for birth to 3s and there should be a broader approach to early literacy and a number of strategies used, not just synthetic phonics.

We have not amended the standards specifically to reflect these comments as the use of systematic synthetic phonics has been demonstrated to make a significant improvement in children's reading. For this reason we require practitioners to demonstrate an understanding of this key strategy. However practitioners should exercise professional judgement according to the child's stage and needs.

² 1.9 Each area of learning and development must be implemented through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activity. Play is essential for children's development, building their confidence as they learn to explore, to think about problems, and relate to others. Children learn by leading their own play, and by taking part in play which is guided by adults. There is an on-going judgement to be made by practitioners about the balance between activities led by children, and activities led or guided by adults. Practitioners must respond to each child's emerging needs and interests, guiding their development through warm, positive interaction. As children grow older, and as their development allows, it is expected that the balance will gradually shift towards more activities led by adults, to help children prepare for more formal learning, ready for Year 1.

vii. Too much emphasis on group learning and not enough on individual learning

A small number of respondents (13%) felt that there was too much emphasis on group learning and that this was inappropriate for the age range, in particular birth to 3s. Respondents felt that there needed to be a greater emphasis on individual learning and its importance.

We have not amended the standards specifically to reflect these comments as we believe that practitioners should exercise professional judgement according to the children's stage of development and to determine when group structures are appropriate and when a child may need something different.

viii. Too education/schools focussed

A small number of respondents (12%) commented that the standards were too education/schools focussed for birth to 5s and there needed to be a much greater emphasis on care and nurture and the importance of this in early years.

We have not amended the standards specifically to reflect these comments as we recognise that both education and care are intrinsically valuable in children's development and as such they underpin the standards as outlined in the preamble.

ix. Lack of reference to leadership skills in the standards

A small number of respondents (12%) felt that more emphasis should be placed on the importance of the leadership skills required to carry out the role and to lead others effectively.

We have not amended the standards specifically to reflect these comments as we believe that leadership is adequately reflected throughout the standards within the preamble and particularly within 2.4, 6.1 and 8.

27. The new Early Years Initial Teacher Training programme will commence in September 2013. Trainees will have to meet the same entry requirements as primary classroom trainee teachers – a standard equivalent to GCSE grade C in English, mathematics and science.
28. From September 2014, trainees will be required to pass the same skills tests as classroom teacher trainees before they start their courses.
29. Existing Early Years Professionals will be recognised as the equivalent of Early Years Teachers.

Summary of responses

Question (Q)1: Do the revised standards set appropriate expectations for what an Early Years Teacher must demonstrate?

There were 268 responses to this question		
Options	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Yes:	90	34
No:	62	23
Partly:	111	41
Not sure:	5	2

Key Indicators	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Phonics and Maths too narrow for 0-5's - need broader approach to early literacy	50	19
Too much emphasis on group learning	34	13
Too education/schools focussed	32	12
Distinct lack of play-based learning	32	12
Not enough focus on 0-3's	26	10
Lack of reference to leadership skills	26	10

30. The majority of the respondents (75%) said that the standards set or partly set appropriate expectations for what a candidate must achieve in order to be awarded Early Years Teacher Status.

31. The highest numbers of comments received (19%) were from respondents highlighting concerns on the nature of the phonics and maths standards. They felt that the standards were too narrow for the age range within early years with a number of respondents commenting that the inclusion of synthetic phonics is inappropriate for birth to three's. Respondents felt there should be a much broader approach to early literacy with a number of strategies included, not just synthetic phonics.
32. Respondents (13%) felt that there was too much emphasis on group learning and that this was inappropriate for the age range, in particular birth to threes. Respondents felt that there needed to be a greater emphasis on individual learning.
33. Respondents (12%) noted that the standards were too education and schools focussed for birth to fives and that there needed to be a much greater emphasis on care and nurture. Furthermore respondents (12%) felt there was lack of reference to play-based learning and its fundamental importance in children's early development.

Q2: Is there anything missing from the standards which you feel is vital for an Early Years Teacher to demonstrate?

There were 266 responses to this question		
Options	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Yes:	194	73
No:	50	19
Not sure:	22	8

Key Indicators	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Distinct lack of play-based learning / lack of emphasis on understanding how play supports early years learning.	88	34
Greater emphasis needed on celebrating diversity and equality of opportunity	66	25
Needs greater emphasis on parental relationships	34	13
Needs more on child-initiated learning	32	12

34. The majority of the respondents (73%) felt that there were elements missing from the standards that are vital for an Early Years Teacher to demonstrate.
35. The highest number of comments received (34%) was regarding the lack of play-based learning and the need for greater emphasis placed on the importance of understanding how play supports early years learning. The respondents stated that play is an essential component for learning and development from birth to the age of five.
36. Respondents (25%) commented that there was a lack of reference or emphasis on equal opportunities, celebrating diversity, anti-discriminatory practice and inclusion in the standards and that these elements needed to feature more strongly.
37. Respondents (13%) commented that the importance of parental relationships was not emphasised enough, nor was their recognition of the parent and/or carer being the child's first educator. A number of respondents also commented about the lack of reference to the importance of working in partnership with parents.
38. Respondents (12%) felt that there was a lack of reference to the importance of child-initiated play/learning from birth to the age of five stating that this is a vital component to a child's learning and development.

Q3: Are any of the standards unclear?

There were 241 responses to this question		
Options	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Yes:	119	50
No:	101	41
Not sure:	21	9

Key Indicators	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
In general the standards need more definition/detail/clarity	24	10

39. There was a mixed response to this question and there was little consensus with no evident trends. The highest number of respondents (10%) felt that the standards needed more definition/detail/clarity in general.

Q4: Within the standards, is there any duplication in your opinion?

There were 215 responses to this question		
Options	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
No:	150	70
Yes:	39	18
Not sure:	26	12

40. The majority of respondents (70%) felt there was no duplication in the standards. There was little consensus with no evident trends as to where the standards were duplicated.

Q5: Would the requirements of the standards disadvantage any particular group or groups?

There were 238 responses to this question		
Options	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Yes:	103	43
No:	84	35
Partly:	27	11
Not sure:	24	11

Key indicators	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Babies or under twos	38	16
Children rights and diversity	25	10

41. The highest number of respondents' comments (16%) related to babies or under twos being disadvantaged due to the perceived focus on teaching and learning. Respondents (10%) commented that there was no explicit mention of celebrating diversity and children's rights had not been addressed.

Q6: 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.

Key indicators	Number of respondents	Percentage of responses
Issues around QTS	68	40
Equality of Pay Scales	37	22
Use of the word Teacher	28	17
Concern about existing qualifications	27	16

42. We received 172 responses to this question in total. The responses reveal a wide range of views, which either repeated comments made elsewhere in the consultation response or were out of scope.
43. Responses received which were out of scope included reference to issues around Qualified Teacher Status (40%), equality of pay scales and conditions (22%), and use of the word ‘teacher’ (17%).
44. Sixteen per cent of respondents raised concerns over existing qualifications, notably Early Years Professional Status and its equivalency with Early Years Teachers. It should be noted that existing Early Years Professionals will be recognised as the equivalent of Early Years Teachers.

Annex A: Online consultation respondents

List of respondents (excluding those who have confidential responses):

Aspect Group of Prospect, The
Atherton, Sara
Atkins, Gail (WGPS)
Bannon, Rita
Barber Jenny
Barnett, Marisa
Bedworth Heath Nursery School and Children's Centre
Beech, Katy (Richard Newman Primary. School)
Berry, Lucy
Best Practice Network
Birth to Five Service
Blackmore, Elaine (Red Room Pre-school)
Blackpool Council
Borough of Poole Local Authority
Bowden-Clissold, Nicola
Bowles, Julie (Practitioner with EYPS)
Bradford MD Council
Brent LA
Bright Horizons Family Solutions
Brodie, Kathy
Brooks, Shirley (University of Winchester)
Buckinghamshire County Council, Children & Young People Services
Butcher, Sylvia (Sylvia's House of Children)
Button, Laura (Thorncombe Jumping Beans playgroup)
Canavan, Julie (Brighton University)
Carver, Julie
Cayley Primary School
Champion, Luke (Manchester Metropolitan University)
Cheeseman, Vicky (Rotherfield Village Preschool)
Cheshire, Christine (Coton Green Pre School Nursery)
Childcare Corporation
City & Guilds

Clark, Naomi (Child Dynamix)
Clark, Juliet
Clarkson, John (Montessori Assessment & Education Ltd)
Clifford, Lisa (Child-minder)
Coates, Elizabeth (University of Warwick)
Commander, Harriet
Communication Trust, The
Cotton, Lizzie
Court, Carly
Cowley, Anneka (Al- ashraf Primary School)
Cox, Emma
Curtis, Kirsty
Curzons, Tracey
Davis, Helen (Jelly Tots Pre-school Playgroup)
Dawson, Judith (Freshfield Nursery School)
Devon County Council
Dobson, Andrew
Dooley, Emma
Durrant, Sam
Dyckes, Victoria
Dyer, Brenda (Carisbrooke Clever Cloggs Day Care)
Early Childhood Studies Degrees Network
Early Childhood Studies Team, University of Roehampton
Early Years and Extended Services, Bath and North East Somerset Council
Early Years Creative Arts Roundtable
Easting, Karen (Bookworms)
Edgington, Margaret
Eggleston, Amelia
Elmarakbi, Nesrin
Esdale, Helen (Margaret Mcmillan nursery)
Essex County Council
Evans, Erica
Fairchild, Nikki
Fakenham Children's Daycare Centre Ltd
Faulkner, Jane (Sunnybrow at Castle Park)

Felstead, Susan
Finn, Katherine (Stramongate Nursery)
Fisher, Kay (Child-minder)
FitzGibbons, Hannah (Margaret McMillan Nursery School)
Fletcher, Deborah
Fogg, Lucy
Ford, Susan (Scalchemy Training and Development)
Formation Training & Development Ltd
Foster, Pauline (Islington Council)
Fry, Hayley
Fyffe, Lisa (Supply teacher)
Galhenege, Charmarie (Happy Stars Preschool)
Galvin, Sue
Garey, Saffron (Hardmoor Early Years' Centre)
Garner, Andrew
Garrick, Ros (Sheffield Hallam University)
Gash, Alison
George, Rachel (St Edmund's School)
Giwa, Rasheedah (Children's centre)
Godfrey, Julia
Goode, Joanne (Bath and North East Somerset Council)
Gordon, Sarah (Early Years Specialist and SENCO)
Gray, Susan (Children's Centre)
Guy, Frances
Haines, Lindsay (Stepping Stones Nursery School Ltd)
Hanratty, Andrea
Hargest, Moyna (CETAD parto MMU EYP consortium)
Harris, Joanna (Gingerbread Day Nursery)
Hart, Mary (Margaret McMillan Nursery School)
Hatherleigh Preschool
Hatton, Pat (Independent)
Haworth, Karen (Huggetts Day Nursery and pre-school)
Henry, Kathryn (IAPS)
Hogan, Sharon (Nursery School and Children's Centre)
Holland, Ruth

Horton, Marian (Seashells Children and families Centre)
Hughes, Julie (Wildground Pre-School)
Hughes, Sally (local authority officer)
Hunt, Dyan (Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust)
Hunter, Jo
Hussey, Rebecca (Portsmouth Local Authority)
Hutchings, Lydia (Laycock Centre)
Hutchinson, Emma (Music House for Children, The)
Irvine, Kate
Islington Council (Fran Guy)
Izzies Neighbourhood Nursery (Jayne Pratt)
Jackson, Bernice (Nursery and Pre-School)
Johnson, Jessica
Jones, Hannah (school)
KCC (Tracie Butterfill)
Keightley, Nicola (Pre-school)
Kendal Nursery School
Kenway, Penny (London Borough of Islington)
Khan, Nirupama (Deanery Road Children centre)
Kidsunlimited Ltd
Kilburn, Catherine
King, Karen
Kingsway Children's Centre
Kinsella, Jacki (Peterborough City Council Early Years)
Kirresh, Ahlam
Lambert, Chloe
Larkin, Claire
Lerwill, Emma (Berryarbor Preschool)
Lister, Katherine (Children's Centre)
Local Authority (Julie Page)
Mackle, Katie (Babcock International)
Manchester Metropolitan University Early Years Professional / Teacher Northern Alliance
Marrs-Gant, Kate (Early Years' Service, Islington Council)
Marsden, Amanda (American International School of Johannesburg)
Martland, Rebecca

Matheson, Joanna
Maurice, Claire
McAuley, Josslyn (Leicester City Council)
Mcgaff, Frances
Mellor, Joan
Mitchell, Philippa (Kirklees College)
Moore, Ruth (Lancaster University)
Mukadam, Yasmin (Kingston University)
Murray, Janet (Children's Centre)
NAHT
National Union of Teachers
NDNA
New River Green Children's Centre
O'Donnell, Cara
O'Raw, Joanne (Lark Hill Nursery School)
Ofsted
Orton, Sarah (Walsall College)
Pawlett, Stephanie (Stephenson Memorial Primary)
Pearson Education Ltd.
Pen Green Centre
Percival, Hilary (Alverstoke Pre-school)
Perry, Rosemary
Perry-Taylor, Samantha
Pinkney, Pauline (Ark, The)
Pitman, Tracy (Silverton Pre-School)
Pitts, Lorna (Early years and childcare service)
Plummer, Sally (Wimborne First Kindergarten)
Powell, Nicola (Grove Children and Family centre, The)
Pre-school Learning Alliance
Preschoo
Preschool
Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years, The
Puffins of Exeter Ltd
Raafaty, Carol
Ramirez, Patty

Rawlinson, J
Richards, Helen
Richardson, Annie
Richardson, Tanya (A Touch of Eden Ltd)
Rogers, Susan (London Borough of Southwark)
Rose, Karen
Rotherham MBC
Rowley, Pauline
Ryder, Gemma
Scholfield, Margaret (Edexcel SV)
School Improvement, Nottingham City Council
SEFDEY Network
Selbie, Philip (Plymouth University)
Seymour, Jacqueline (Children's House Montessori, The)
Shah, Tara
Shew, Julie
Shield, Christina (Teesside High School)
Side by Side Training Centre
Simpson, Joanna (St Bernadette Catholic Primary School)
Skills for Care and Development
Skvortsov, Alexandra (Greetland Private Day Nursery LLP)
Smith, David
Smith , Ruth (Woodland Grange Primary School)
Smith, Nicola
Smith, Tracy
Soave, Paula (N/A. Recently made redundant)
Solihull MBC
Sound Connections
St Andrews Pre School
Standage, Abigail (Bright Beginnings Childcare Centre)
Staniforth, Lucy (Leicester City Council)
Stevenson, Michelle (University of Portsmouth)
Stone, Tunja
Suleyman, Sue (Roundabout Nursery)
Sutherland, Helen

Sykes, Gillian
TACTYC, the Association for the Professional Development of Early Years Educators
Tallon, Maria (Islington LA- EYFST)
Taplin, Jill Tina (NESWEC/SWSF)
TAW
Thatta Youth Development Organisation
Thomas's Kindergarten Pimlico
Thorburn, Alyson
Tomoum, Sarah
Topley, Judy (SCIL)
Trefgarne, Camilla
Tribal Education Limited
Trotter, Lucy (Surrey County Council)
University Campus Suffolk
University of Northampton, The (The Early Years Division)
University of Worcester
Voice the Union
Walter, Lorna
Warburton, Sara (Primary school)
Ward, Ute (University of Hertfordshire)
Warrington Borough Council
Webley, Andrea (Stepping Stones Preschool)
Wells (Hale at time of achieving EYPS), Zoe (LBWF EARLY YEARS)
White, Joanne (Walsall College)
Wilson, Denise (Tameside MBC)
Wilson, Suzanne (Early Learning and Childcare Service, Leicestershire County Council)
Woodward, Marie (Entrust)
Wright, Caroline
Wright, Amy (Service Children's Education)
Wright, Laura (Bolton Council)
Yates, Penny (Isle of Wight College)

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