



Department  
for Education

# Early years practitioner (level 2) qualifications criteria

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## Context

These criteria set out the minimum requirements for high quality level 2 early years practitioner qualifications.

## Summary

This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to help appropriate bodies and/or individuals understand the criteria for level 2 early years practitioner qualifications from 1 September 2019.

## Expiry or review date

This guidance will be reviewed before December 2020

## Who is this publication for?

This is for:

- early years practitioners
- early years employers
- settings offering early years education
- local authorities
- childminders
- awarding organisations
- further education college/training provider staff

It sets out the minimum knowledge, understanding and skills that a level 2 early years practitioner needs to demonstrate to be considered qualified to support young children from birth to 5 years old.

The level 2 qualifications will be available from 1 September 2019.

The 'Early years educator (level 3): qualifications criteria' are also available.

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn, develop, and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children have the skills they need to start school and a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

## Main points

It is the role of the Department for Education to define the content of the level 2 and 3 qualifications that practitioners must hold to be included in the ratios specified in the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework.

The Department for Education does this by setting criteria that qualifications must meet to enable practitioners to demonstrate their competence.

The Early Years Foundation Stage sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children a broad range of knowledge and skills that provide a foundation for good future progress through school and life.

The qualification criteria set out the skills, knowledge and understanding that a practitioner must demonstrate to achieve an early years practitioner (level 2) qualification and be considered qualified to support young children age birth to five in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It is divided into two sections:

**Section i:** Summary of qualification content and assessment criteria

**Section ii:** Minimum content requirements for level 2 early years practitioner qualifications.

# **Section i: Summary of content and assessment criteria for level 2 Early Years Practitioner qualifications**

## **A: Qualification content**

All level 2 early years practitioner qualifications will require candidates to demonstrate skills, knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

- 1. Knowledge of child development**
- 2. Safeguarding**
- 3. Health and safety**
- 4. Wellbeing**
- 5. Communication**
- 6. Support the planning of and deliver activities, purposeful play opportunities and educational programmes**
- 7. Support children with special educational needs and disabilities**
- 8. Own role and development**
- 9. Working with others – parents, colleagues, other professionals**

*Full details of required qualification content are shown in Section ii on the following pages.*

## **B: Accreditation**

From 1 September 2019 all level 2 early years practitioner qualifications must meet the criteria set down in this document. They must also be regulated by Ofqual onto the current national qualifications framework.

## Section ii: Minimum qualification content requirements for level 2 Early Years Practitioner

### 1. Knowledge of child development

1.1. Describe how children learn and the expected pattern of babies and children's development from birth to 5 years and their further development from age 5 to 7.

Areas of development to include:

- cognitive
- speech, language and communication
- physical
- emotional
- social
- brain development
- literacy and numeracy

1.2. Understand the importance to children's holistic development of:

- speech, language and communication
- personal, social and emotional development
- physical development
- literacy and numeracy

1.3. Explain how babies' and young children's learning and development can be affected by their stage of development, wellbeing and individual circumstances.

1.4. Describe the significance of attachment, the key person's role and how transitions and other significant events impact children.

1.5. Demonstrate how to support babies and young children through a range of transitions.

## 2. Safeguarding

2.

- 2.1. Know the legal requirements and guidance on safeguarding, security, confidentiality of information and promoting the welfare of children.
- 2.2. Understand safeguarding policies and procedures, including child protection and online safety.
- 2.3. Explain own role and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and security, including child protection, reporting and confidentiality of information.
- 2.4. Recognise when a child is in danger, at risk of serious harm or abuse and explain the procedures to be followed to protect them. Types of abuse including:
  - domestic
  - neglect
  - physical
  - emotional
  - sexual abuse

### 3. Health and safety

- 3.1. Outline the legal requirements and guidance for:
  - health and safety
  - security
- 3.2. Identify risks and hazards in the work setting and during off site visits.
- 3.3. Describe own role and responsibilities, including reporting, in the event of:
  - a baby or young child requiring urgent medical/dental attention
  - a non-medical incident or emergency
  - identifying risks and hazards
- 3.4. Demonstrate skills and understanding for the prevention and control of infection, including:
  - hand washing
  - food preparation and hygiene
  - dealing with spillages safely
  - safe disposal of waste
  - using correct personal protective equipment
- 3.5. Explain the work setting's procedures for receiving, storing, recording, administering and the safe disposal of medicines.
- 3.6. Use equipment, furniture and materials safely, following the manufacturers' instructions and setting's requirements.
- 3.7. Identify the signs and symptoms which may indicate that a child is injured, unwell (including common childhood illnesses and allergies) or in need of urgent medical/dental attention.
- 3.8. Demonstrate how to encourage children to:
  - be aware of personal safety and the safety of others
  - develop personal hygiene practices (including oral hygiene)



## 4. Wellbeing

- 4.1. Understand the impact of health and wellbeing on children's development.
- 4.2. Understand the current dietary guidance for early years and explain why it is important for babies and young children to have a healthy balanced diet and be physically active.
- 4.3. Promote health and wellbeing in settings by encouraging babies and young children to:
  - consume healthy and balanced meals, snacks and drinks appropriate for their age
  - be physically active through planned and spontaneous activity throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors
- 4.4. Demonstrate how to share information with parents/carers about the importance of healthy balanced diets, looking after teeth and being physically active.
- 4.5. Carry out respectful care routines appropriate to the development, stage, dignity and needs of the child, including:
  - Eating (feeding and weaning/complimentary feeding)
  - nappy changing procedures
  - potty/toilet training
  - care of skin, teeth and hair
  - rest and sleep provision

## 5. Communication

5.

- 5.1. Demonstrate how to communicate with all children in ways that will be understood, including verbal and non-verbal communication.
- 5.2. Demonstrate how to extend children's development and learning through verbal and non-verbal communication.
- 5.3. Explain ways to communicate with all children appropriate for all their stages of development, including those for whom English is an additional language (**EAL**) or who have delayed speech.
- 5.4. Encourage babies and young children to use a range of communication methods.
- 5.5. Demonstrate a range of communication methods to exchange information with children and adults.

## **6. Support the planning of and deliver activities, purposeful play opportunities and educational programmes**

6.

6.1. Describe the statutory framework, including the learning and development requirements for babies and young children that must be implemented by your setting.

6.2. Demonstrate inclusive practice ensuring that every child is included and supported.

6.3. Explain the terms:

- Adult led activities
- Child initiated activities
- Spontaneous experiences

6.4. Work with colleagues to identify and plan enabling environments, activities (both indoors and outdoors), play opportunities and educational programmes (both adult led and child initiated) to support children's holistic development through a range of play, creativity, social development and learning.

6.5. Implement and review activities to support children's play, creativity, social development and learning and clear up after activities.

6.6. Describe the key stages in the observation, assessment and planning cycle and explain the value of observation for:

- the child
- the parents/carers
- the early years setting in planning the next steps

6.7. Observe children, assess, plan and record the outcomes, sharing results accurately and confidentially in line with expected statutory framework and setting's requirements.

6.8. Describe how to refer concerns you may have about a baby's or child's development.

6.9. Demonstrate how to use learning activities to support early language development.

- 6.10. Support children's early interest and development in mark making, writing, reading and being read to.
- 6.11. Support children's interest and development in mathematical learning including numbers, number patterns, counting, sorting and matching.

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## **7. Support children with special educational needs and disabilities**

7.

- 7.1. Describe statutory guidance in relation to the care and education of children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 7.2. Explain partnership working (including parents/carers) in relation to working effectively with children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 7.3. Support the assessment, planning, implementation and reviewing (the graduated approach) of each baby's and young child's individual plan for their care and participation.
- 7.4. Work in ways that value and respect the developmental needs and stages of babies and children.
- 7.5. Describe what specialist aids, resources and equipment are available for the children you work with and how to use these safely.

## 8. Own role and development

8.

- 8.1. Explain own role and expected behaviours and the roles of colleagues and the team.
- 8.2. Explain how to access work place policies and procedures and your own responsibilities and accountabilities relating to these.
- 8.3. Explain, with examples, how your behaviour can impact on babies and children and influence them.
- 8.4. Identify own responsibilities when following procedures in the work setting for:
  - reporting
  - whistleblowing
  - protecting and promoting the welfare of children
  - safeguarding
  - confidentiality
  - information sharing
  - use of technology
- 8.5. Explain the importance of reflective practice and continued professional development to improve own skills and early years practice.
- 8.6. Engage in continuing professional development and reflective practice to improve own skills, practice, and subject knowledge.
- 8.7. Use feedback, mentoring and/or supervision to identify and support areas for development, goals and career opportunities.

## **9. Working with others – parents, colleagues, other professionals**

9.

- 9.1. Understand the roles and responsibilities of other agencies and professionals that work with and support your setting, both statutory and non-statutory.
- 9.2. Explain the importance of the voice of the child, parental/carer engagement, the home learning environment and their roles in early learning.
- 9.3. Work co-operatively with colleagues, other professionals and agencies to meet the needs of babies and young children and enable them to progress.
- 9.4. Work alongside parents and/or carers and recognise their role in the baby's/child's health, well-being, learning and development.
- 9.5. Encourage parents and/or carers to take an active role in the baby's/child's care, play, learning and development.



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