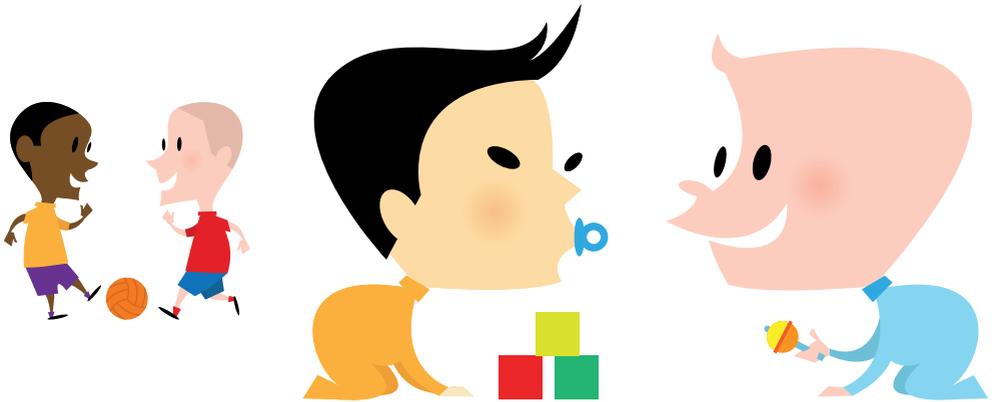


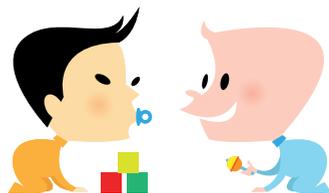


It's child's play

Early Years Foundation Stage



Early Years Foundation Stage



A new framework for learning, development and care for children from birth to five.

It's child's play

Play is vital for children. Quite literally. It's through play that babies and young children learn, grow and have fun. It helps them understand the world and to develop socially and emotionally. Singing songs, reading together, playing games with letters and numbers, and having fun with friends gives them a head start. And that means not just a happy childhood. It also helps their confidence, so they can handle what life brings them.

All children should be able to play and learn in a fun environment with adults who understand and care about them. And you should be able to feel confident about leaving your child with a nursery, playgroup, pre-school or childminder if you want to.

That's why from September, the early years foundation stage will be introduced.

“ In a different world, where I didn't have to work, I'd still choose to send Ethan to the nursery. He's so full of confidence. He makes friends so easily, even if they don't speak the same language, and he shares and cares for those around him. ”

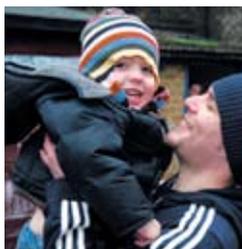
Nicki

Mum and NHS employee

“ It's extremely important that young children learn through play in a fun and creative way. High quality early childhood care is so important. When I was a primary school teacher, I could often recognise those children who had had really good early years input. It's important, though, that the emphasis is on fun! ”

Jacqueline

Mum and university tutor, specialising in primary education



What's going to change?

For most nurseries and playgroups, pre-schools and childminders, there won't be huge changes. After all, encouraging young children to learn through play is what the best early years providers have always done. It works well.

From September, though, every child who goes to a school or Ofsted-registered childcare provider will be able to take advantage of this approach, wherever they live.

It's not about introducing a curriculum for young children. Or making them read or write before they're ready. Quite the reverse.

It means being sure each individual child is learning through high quality play, that's tailored to them. So they develop at their own pace, having fun, making friends and learning as they play. Becoming confident, secure children who, when the time comes, are better prepared for school. Not pushed, not pressured. But ready to reach their potential.

“Nursery has been fantastic for our boy. He's really happy and has grown in confidence. He thinks he plays all day but he's learning at the same time.”

Joe
Dad, unemployed



How will it work?

The approach that all nurseries and childminders will be using from September is tried and tested over generations. It's been developed with parents, carers, early years and childcare providers and academics. It brings together their experience in a clear, straightforward way.

The child is at the centre of the early years foundation stage. The people working with your child will pick up on their interests and abilities, and build on them through play.

They'll think, for instance, about fun ways to help them develop their language skills. About what will encourage their creativity. About how they tackle small challenges. All the while, they'll make sure that each child in their care is getting the support they need, and above all is enjoying learning through play.

It's the sort of approach that's already second nature to most early years childcare providers.

“ The early years foundation stage is absolutely brilliant! It's building really well on a lot of what we were doing anyway, but has given us much more focus. Each child has a card in their own folder where we write down if something has worked particularly well with them – and equally if it hasn't. We've always tried to treat each child as unique and the EYFS allows us to do that much more effectively. We've put up information on the early years foundation stage on our notice boards for parents, together with lots of photos showing the different areas of learning. There are also information packs in each room if parents are interested and want to find out more. ”

Pauline
Asquith Day Nurseries



Keeping in touch

You'll always be the most important influence in your child's life. Getting involved and talking to your child's childminder - or 'key person' at nursery, pre-school or playgroup - makes a real difference.

It means they can pick up on what you've told them about your child and link it to what they do during their time together. And it works both ways – by finding out what's caught your child's imagination, you can build on that at home too.

“ The nursery has given my daughters skills through activities I'd never have been able to offer them at home. Most of all, at nursery, they let them play! We get copies of the work plans and things they're doing so we can do the same with the girls at home, continuing their learning by using the same games or songs or picking up a particular idea. It works really well. ”

Hayley
Mum

How do you know how your child's doing?

Childcare providers already put together information on how your child's doing. They might take photos and describe what they've been doing during the week, for instance. Or keep a folder showing you what they're learning, how they're developing, what they're interested in - and how they're going to build on that.

At the end of reception class, the school will also prepare a summary of how your child's progressing before they move on to Year 1 of primary. It'll give a picture of your child's overall development, showing how they've been getting on. And it'll help the Year 1 teacher to plan. All of this is based on observing what the child is doing – never testing.



Trusting they're safe

You can be confident your child will be safe because the early years foundation stage has safeguards to help ensure every child has a positive experience, surrounded by people who care for them.

Early years providers will need to meet welfare requirements, and make sure children develop at the right pace for them. And Ofsted will inspect them regularly, so you can rest assured you're getting the kind of quality care you want for your child.

Find out more

This leaflet is just an introduction to the new early years foundation stage.

To find out more, visit:
www.direct.gov.uk/eyfs

Or ask your early years childcare provider.

“ We've only been using the early years foundation stage for a month or so but have already noticed a difference. With EYFS you can see a clear progression for any child and you can easily map each child's development. It allows you to focus much more on each individual child rather than having to generalise. The approach is more relaxed. Instead of having to do a lot of paperwork – which takes us away from the children – we're spending more time with each child, and they're benefiting from more adult interaction. So it's great for both the staff and the children.”

Tracey
Bunny Run Childcare



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