

**Guidance for Pre-Course Study – Early Years 2023**

Understanding how children learn and develop in the Early Years is key to becoming a successful primary teacher, no matter which age group you end up teaching. One of the first modules you will undertake focuses specifically on child development and how young children learn. You may have had experience of working or spending time with young children as part of a course you have studied, through work or just through socialising with family or friends or you may have very little experience or knowledge. To ensure that everyone can engage together in a shared task to start off the course we would like you to complete the following tasks and come ready to share your thoughts and experiences.

If you are able to arrange some time in a school or an early years setting then this would be highly beneficial in broadening your understanding. Even spending a day or two will be really helpful and if you have not had any experience in schools, we strongly encourage you to do this so you are really sure about the choice of course. You can complete Tasks 3 and 4 in a school or setting instead, or in addition to, the online materials below.

Time spent in a school or setting will also help you to familiarise yourself with how learning and teaching environments operate and enable you to have conversations with teachers and other professionals about their roles. All this will help you to start the course in a more informed position.

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

A new statutory framework for the EYFS was introduced in 1st September 2021. This can be accessed here:

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Claptoppc%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CPackages%5Cmicrosoft.windowscommunicationsapps_8wekyb3d8bbwe%5CLocalState%5CFiles%5CS0%5C3%5CAttachments%5CStatutory%20framework%20for%20the%20early%20years%20foundation%20stage%20%28publishing.service.gov.uk%29)

The document states that there are 4 overarching principles which guide practice in early years settings. These are:

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

These principles are drawn from, and are evident in, effective practice in early years settings.

There are new non-statutory guidance materials which support practitioners in their planning and provision in the learning environment to meet the needs of the children in their care. It is practitioner choice as to which of the guidance materials they choose to use. The first of these is Development Matters, published by the Department for Education (see Task 1). The second of these is Birth to 5 Matters (see Task 2) which is published by a coalition of national early years organisations who have worked together to provide guidance ‘for the sector, by the sector’ and this is viewed by many practitioners as a more holistic, inclusive and child centred document than the Government authored guidance.

**Task 1 - Development Matters (2020)**

The non statutory guidance document published by the Department for Education can be accessed here [Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007446/6.7534_DfE_Development_Matters_Report_and_illustrations_web__2_.pdf)

**To develop your understanding of the ‘Seven key features of effective practice’** **in the Early Years, spend some time looking through this document, particularly pages 2 –8 , where these are explained.**

Make some notes on your reading and bring these along with you when you start. These will be used to support your work early in the Child Development module.

**Task 2 - Birth to 5 Matters (2021)**

**Take a look at the alternative non statutory guidance published by the Early Years coalition** [Birth To 5 Matters – Guidance by the sector, for the sector](https://birthto5matters.org.uk/) **(see last tab on the top right to download a copy)**

**Read through pages 7-11 to understand the key principles of early years education**

Make some notes on your reading and bring these along with you when you start. These will be used to support your work early in the Child Development module.

**Task 3 - The structure and organisation of the learning environment.**

Page 34 in Birth to 5 Matters outlines the importance of the learning environment for children. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers. The environment refers both to the physical learning environment inside and outside and also to the emotional environment created by practitioners so that children feel safe and nurtured.

**Enabling Environments:**

* value all people
* value all learning

**They offer:**

* stimulating resources, relevant to all the children’s cultures and communities
* rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching
* support for children to take risks and explore

**Watch the video of Developing provision in the EYFS in a primary school setting**

[Developing Provision in EYFS - Bing video](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=eyfs+video&&view=detail&mid=A4D82DD20CAFEE3C0357A4D82DD20CAFEE3C0357&&FORM=VDRVRV)

Observe carefully how the setting is arranged and how adults are used to support learning. Consider how the learning environment influences the children’s learning.

**Make notes on the following:**

* The layout of the setting, and whether this changes for different activities.
* Learning areas, both indoor and outdoor, that may be used in different ways or at different times.
* Range of resources in the setting.
* Where work is displayed, by whom and how displays are used.
* Ways in which the children move around the setting.

**Task 4 – Observing children playing**

**Watch this video of a child playing** [Khloe in the mud kitchen - Siren Films](https://www.sirenfilms.co.uk/library/khloe-in-the-mud-kitchen/)

**Click on the Before Watching tab- to see questions which will focus your attention. Afterwards click on the After the Video/Time to Reflect tab. Make some notes to share**

Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are identified in the statutory guidance:

**Playing and exploring – engagement**

* Finding out and exploring
* Playing with what they know
* Being willing to ‘have a go’

**Active learning – motivation**

* Being involved and concentrating
* Keeping trying
* Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

**Creating and thinking critically – thinking**

* Having their own ideas
* Making links
* Choosing ways to do things

More information on these can be found in Development Matters p 9-12 and in Birth to 5 Matter p 42

**Which Characteristics of Effective teaching and Learning did you observe in the video clip?**

**Collate all your notes and any other information on experiences in Early Years settings and bring these in induction week where one of the sessions will focus on this work. This will be later in the week and we will tell you when you need to bring this information.**