

The revised Early Years Foundation Stage. What does it mean?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is a document for early years providers, to help them support your children's learning and development from birth to five years old. This year the Government made changes to the original EYFS (first introduced in 2008). From 1 September 2012 all early years providers must follow this revised EYFS. There have been minor changes in 2014 and 2017.

Who makes sure that registered early years providers are following the EYFS?

All registered early years providers are inspected by Ofsted to make sure they meet the legal requirements of the EYFS. Surrey County Council's Early Years and Childcare Service offer support and information to early years providers too.

What are the main changes in the revised EYFS?

The revised EYFS builds on the good practice of the original 2008 EYFS and still has a play based approach to children's care, learning and development. The revised EYFS is designed to:

- have less paperwork
- give early years providers more time to plan around the needs of your child
- support your child through planned, challenging, enjoyable and playful experiences and opportunities.

The revised EYFS reminds your early years provider how important it is to have a good relationship with you. And it recognises that you need to be given more information about your child's learning and development. The requirements for your child's safeguarding and welfare have also been revised.

What do you mean by safeguarding and welfare requirements?

To explain, here are a few of the EYFS Safeguarding and Welfare statutory requirements (2012) that early years providers need to put in place to keep your child safe. Early years providers must update their policies and procedures to make sure that if your child is in their care, then they are protected.

These include:

- They must have a policy on the use of cameras and mobile phones.
- There must be training and supervision for all staff to make sure that they fully understand their roles and responsibilities.
- They must keep full records of how to keep and give medicines and who is trained to do this.
- They must have strict data protection and a system to protect confidential information.
- They should have a named person for the management of behaviour.

What else does the EYFS do?

The EYFS also sets out what all early years providers must do to make sure that your child learns and develops. It promotes teaching and learning to make sure all children have the skills to get them ready to progress through school and future life. Early years providers must make sure that their staff are fully aware of what they have to do, to make sure your child's individual needs are met through the EYFS.

Who will make sure my child's learning and care is tailored to them?

Your child will be assigned a key person when they start with an early years provider. You will be told the name of the key person and their role. The key person is there to make sure that your child's learning and care is tailored to meet their individual needs, through discussion with you. They will also support you in giving you ideas on what learning you can do at home with your child.

What will my early years provider be doing with my child?

Your early years providers must think about the individual needs, interests and stages of development of each child in their care. Early years providers working with children from birth to three years old, will be expected to focus on the following **three prime areas**, which support learning in all other areas.

Personal, social and emotional development:

- making relationships
- self-confidence and self-awareness
- managing feelings and behaviour.

Physical development:

- moving and handling
- health and self-care.

Communication and language:

- listening and attention
- understanding
- speaking.

These three prime areas help children to develop and learn, and become ready for school. As well as the three prime areas, early years providers will also plan activities in the following areas of learning and development, known as **specific areas**.

Literacy:

- reading
- writing.

Mathematics:

- numbers
- shape, space and measure.

Understanding the world:

- people and communities
- the world
- technology.

Expressive arts and design:

- exploring and using media and material
- being imaginative.

How will I know how my child is progressing within the EYFS requirements?

Assessment helps you find out about your child's progress, understand their needs and plan their activities. Your child will have two important assessments before the end of the EYFS. The first when they are between two and three years old and the second in the final term of the year in which your child reaches the age of five. Ongoing assessment is also an important part of this. Your child's early years provider will look, listen and note how your child plays and then build on this by planning a challenging environment to support your child's development. You can also share what you see your child doing with your child's key person.

What if I am worried about my child's development?

If you're worried about your child's progress, talk to your early years provider and together you can agree how to support your child. If your child's home language is not English, their early years provider must give them opportunities to develop and use their home language in play and learning to support their language development at home. Your early years provider must also make sure your child has enough opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS.

How can I find out more?

Talk to your child's key person who will be happy to answer any questions you have. You can also view a copy of the Statutory and non-statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage on the Department for Education website www.education.gov.uk