

T-LEVELS

THE NEXT LEVEL QUALIFICATION



EDUCATION & EARLY YEARS

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EARLY YEARS EDUCATOR



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CORE Chapter 1:

Wider Context



In this chapter, we will be looking at the scope of provision in education and childcare, the features and functions of the services available for babies, children and young people and their families, and how these support them.

As well as exploring this vast and diverse range of service provision, you will be introduced to the different occupational roles that exist across the education and childcare sector, and learn about the responsibilities that staff working in these roles hold.

Learning outcomes

This chapter covers the following knowledge outcomes for Core Element 1:

- 1.1** Understand the differences between a range of childcare and education provision, 0–19 years
- 1.2** Understand the different responsibilities of a range of roles, the entry requirements and possible career progression routes in the sector

1.1 Childcare and education provision from birth to 19 years

As you learn about the service provision and the diverse roles and responsibilities held by staff, you will also increase your own knowledge and understanding of the diverse employment opportunities open to you. Before we start to explore the different types of setting it will be useful to introduce some terms.

Types of setting

- ▶ **Voluntary:** This means provision that has been set up and funded by donations and voluntary contributions. It may, for example, be run by a charity or church group in the local community, and parents may have to pay a donation to help cover costs. In some cases, parents or carers may stay and supervise their children so that they can socialise with others, but the ways in which these settings operate vary. If children are left with staff, the setting will need to be registered with and inspected by **Ofsted**.
- ▶ **Private:** This means that parents need to pay for the provision as it is run privately. This may include settings such as a crèche, a workplace nursery, private day nursery or a childminder's home. These settings will need to be registered with and inspected by Ofsted if they are providing regular care and education for children. For example, a childminder will need to be registered and inspected, but a crèche that may just provide care from time to time does not.
- ▶ **Statutory/maintained:** This term is used for settings that are government-funded as they have to be available by law, such as schools. They will be registered and inspected by Ofsted. They may also be known as 'maintained' settings.
- ▶ **Independent:** This term is usually used for independent schools that are not paid for by government or state funding, so in most cases, parents will be charged for them (some free or subsidised places are offered in line with schools' charitable status, and certain children may be placed in an independent school by local authorities – see page 7). Independent schools will still have to follow the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and are also inspected by Ofsted.
- ▶ **Homeschooling:** Parents have the right to educate their children at home (Education Act 1996). See page 6 for more information.

Key term

Ofsted: stands for the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills. Ofsted inspects and regulates services providing education and skills for learners of all ages, including those who care for babies, children and young people.

Early years provision

Let's begin by considering the range of early years and education provision that may be accessed by babies, children and young people, their features and how they operate so that similarities and differences can be identified.

In their early years, children may be cared for by a range of different services across early years provision, including:

- ▶ childminders
- ▶ nannies
- ▶ nurseries
- ▶ pre-schools.

Childminders

Childminders work in their own homes and look after other people's children, often combining this with caring for their own children. Lone working can be demanding and challenging as there will be no one else to lend a hand. However, childminders can choose the hours they work and the services they provide.

Childminders will care for children's welfare, learning and development, and develop trusting professional relationships with parents, carers and others as required. Childminders are professionals providing **holistic** care and educational learning experiences. They need to plan for and resource diverse play provision for babies and children, often across a range of ages, provide food and drinks (or prepare them if they are provided by parents/carers), and promote physical care routines such as nappy changing and toileting, rest and sleep provision, and outdoor experiences.

Key term

Holistic: overall or all round; the idea that the parts of something are interconnected so looking at the whole rather than each individual part. Here, it means all-round care needs, with an appreciation of the contribution of each care need to overall wellbeing.

Good to know

'Anyone who looks after one or more children under the age of eight years in England or under the age of 12 years in Wales, to whom they are not related, on domestic premises, for reward, and for a total of more than two hours in any day must register as a childminder.'

(Source: Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY))

www.pacey.org.uk

Childminders who do not register may receive a fine or even a prison sentence if they do not register with Ofsted.

Registered childminders are typically self-employed and run their own business from home, or they may register through a childminding agency. It is not unusual for childminders to employ childminding assistants as their business grows, and this allows them to care for more children at any given time.

In England, the **childminder ratios** identifying the number of children that a childminder can care for, and the safeguarding and welfare requirements that must be in place, are included within the **Early Years Statutory Framework**.

You will learn more about the areas of learning and how the Early Years Statutory Framework is arranged in other chapters, specifically on pages 16–18. If you take the Early Years occupational specialism you will spend more time exploring its requirements.

There is pre-registration training and guidance that childminders need to undertake, and continuing professional development (CPD) is always recommended.

A childminder may apply for different types of registration:

- ▶ The **Early Years Register** is for those caring for children from birth to the 31 August after their fifth birthday. All registered childminders in England on the Early Years Register are inspected against the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.
- ▶ The **Childcare Register**, which has two parts: compulsory registration for childminders that are caring for children aged from five up to eight years, and voluntary registration for childminders caring for children aged eight and over.

Many childminders are on both registers to enable them to care for a wide age range of children, but the appropriate ratios must be maintained for the age group (see Good to know).

Good to know

Childminders must be aware of ratios. The ratios will inform them how many children, and their age ranges, they can care for at any time. The Early Years Statutory Framework will guide childminders with regard to their role, including up-to-date information about ratios.

What do nannies do?

Nannies usually care for babies and children belonging to one family in the parents'/carers' own home. Sometimes, a nanny will be 'live in', but they can also live outside the home and travel to work. Nannies typically work alone to meet the needs of the babies and young children they care for. They may also be employed to work overseas. A professional nanny will carry out similar roles to a childminder, but typically for the children of one family in the family's home.

Nanny agencies may be able to support both the nanny and the family, and will be able to offer advice on important issues such as:

- ▶ **placement** – bringing the nanny and family together, and supporting both parties to maintain a positive relationship
- ▶ **contract** – nanny contracts can be essential in ensuring the nanny has a valid and reasonable job description and terms of employment
- ▶ **suitability checks** – the nanny agency may undertake recruitment safety checks such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (**DBS**) check, paediatric first aid, training and qualifications, as well as employment history; some nanny agencies may be able to support nannies with any training requirements
- ▶ **legal obligations** – the agency may be able to offer advice around contracts, pensions and taxation.

Key term

DBS: stands for Disclosure and Barring Service, part of the suitability checks that must be made on individuals in the UK involved in the care of children and young people under 18 years of age. These specifically look at any criminal convictions recorded against an individual and are an important feature of safeguarding. You will find out more about DBS processes as you prepare for placement, as it is likely you will be required to undertake a DBS check yourself.

For more on safeguarding, see Core Chapter 3.

The nanny agency may also be able to promote social networks for the nanny, which is very important, especially if he or she is living away from home.

Research

Visit <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/nanny> to find out more about what it is like to work as a professional nanny.

Nursery provision



▲ Can you think of different types of early years settings?

There are two main types of nursery provision: day nursery and statutory/maintained nursery school or class. The latter is usually attached to a primary school. Independent nursery settings are also available.

Day nursery provision caring for children from birth to five years of age

This is usually a private provision and parents/carers will pay for their child to have a place at the nursery. There are, however, government-funded free childcare places that certain children are entitled to if they meet particular criteria. The day nursery is usually open all year round and for most of the day, from early morning to early evening. The day nursery will be registered with and inspected by Ofsted. The day nursery must meet the requirements set within the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Staff working in a day nursery work in ratio according to their training and qualifications, and meet the holistic care needs of children, including physical, cognitive, speech, language and communication, social and emotional.

Qualifications that staff hold will vary from Level 2 to Level 7 (master's level), and the roles are equally

diverse, but everyone is likely to be involved in observing children and planning for their next steps in line with the statutory framework. Day nurseries are often accessed by students for practical work placements following an early years specialism.

Statutory/maintained nursery schools or classes

are local authority funded schools, with a head teacher and qualified teachers leading a team of specialist early years staff, providing education and care for three to four year olds (and increasingly for two year olds).

A **nursery class** is usually part of a primary school and will typically be led by a nursery teacher. Parents do not pay for their child/children to attend. Children are typically aged three to four when they attend, but some may be younger. The nursery will be open in term time only. Children will usually move on to the primary school and the head of the primary is the head teacher for the nursery class too. The nursery will be inspected by Ofsted and follow the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework.

A **nursery school** will function in the same way as a nursery class but statutory maintained nursery schools are not typically part of a primary school and will have their own head teacher. Nursery schools can be statutory/maintained or independent. Examples of independent nursery schools include Montessori nursery schools.

Research

- ▶ Look up independent Montessori nursery schools and statutory/maintained nursery schools to find out more about them.
- ▶ Summarise information regarding their approaches, and any similarities and differences in the services they offer.
- ▶ Present your findings as a chart or table.

Pre-schools

Pre-schools are classed as voluntary settings. This implies that there is no cost. In practice, though, costs usually do apply, however, these costs are low. Pre-schools often provide three hours of sessional care for children. Children attend pre-schools at around the age of two years, and provision is similar to the staffing and regulatory requirements of day care. Parents are often actively involved in pre-school settings.

Good to know

'[In England] Children must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday – whichever comes first.'

(Source: www.gov.uk/schools-admissions/school-starting-age)

Reflect

To help you to consolidate your knowledge and understanding:

- ▶ Compare and contrast the forms of early years sector provision listed above.
- ▶ What similarities can you find?
- ▶ What are the differences between the types of sector provision?

Read the following case study and reflect on the discussion points.

Case study

Anita is the mother of two children under five years of age: Shelley is 18 months and Lola is four. Anita is planning to return to full-time work in the next two months and is considering the childcare options available to her.

- ▶ Work in small groups to identify the range of provision Anita and her children could use.
- ▶ Compare and contrast the provision identified.
- ▶ In your group, discuss any advantages or disadvantages to different types of childcare available and share your thoughts with your peers.

School provision

There are many different types of school in the UK, educating children from age five up to age sixteen. Ofsted inspects services providing education and skills for pupils of all ages.

Maintained schools

Maintained schools, providing both primary and secondary education, are a common category. They include:

- ▶ community schools
- ▶ voluntary controlled schools

- ▶ voluntary aided schools (usually church or faith schools)
- ▶ foundation schools
- ▶ trust schools
- ▶ special schools.

Good to know

Children may formally leave school on the last Friday in June if they are 16 by the end of the summer holidays. They must then do one of the following until the age of 18:

- ▶ stay in full-time education, for example, at a college
- ▶ start an apprenticeship or traineeship
- ▶ spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, statutory maintained schools are those funded by the local authority. Parents/carers do not need to pay for their child/children to attend. As you can see from the list below, there are different types of schools that fall into the maintained category.

- ▶ **Maintained community schools** are state funded, are not influenced by business or religious groups, and must follow the National Curriculum. Teaching and learning will be led by head teachers, teaching staff and teaching assistants/learning support mentors. The school staffing structure will include non-teaching staff and an active governing body.
- ▶ **Voluntary controlled schools** usually have foundation or trust status, for instance, connected to a Christian denomination, that has some influence in the running of the school but makes no financial contribution. The teaching and learning, as well as the regulatory body, remain the same as for community schools.
- ▶ **Voluntary aided schools** – as with voluntary controlled schools, there is influence from the foundation or the trust. However, in a voluntary aided school the foundation or trust will contribute financially to the upkeep of the school.
- ▶ **Foundation schools** function in the same way as a maintained school, with greater responsibility placed on the governing body, which is sometimes supported by representatives from religious groups in the running of the school.
- ▶ **Trust schools** function as foundation schools, supported by a charitable foundation (the charitable foundation is known as a trust).

► **Special schools** are attended by children who have an **education, health and care plan (EHCP)**. The admission of children with an EHCP to schools is a decision made by the local authority, which has statutory responsibility for arranging appropriate provision via the Statutory Special Educational Needs Panel. The admissions process for a special school admission involves either an EHCP or information and evidence gathered at an annual review meeting. Special schools with pupils aged 11 and older can specialise in one of the four areas of special educational needs:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and physical needs.

Schools can further specialise within these categories to reflect the special needs they help with, for example autistic spectrum disorders, visual impairment or speech, language and communication needs (SLCN).

Key term

Education, health and care plan (EHCP): an EHCP is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support; it is drawn up to outline provision for a child or young person following an assessment of special educational needs. EHCPs identify educational, health and social needs, and set out the additional support to meet those needs. Find out more here: www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help

For more on assessment of special educational needs, see Core Chapter 11, page 179.

Good to know

Maintained schools in England must follow the National Curriculum. They may focus on specific subjects (such as RE in a church school) but the curriculum must be followed appropriately at each key stage. Maintained schools must also follow the SEN Code of Practice.

Non-maintained schools

Just because maintained schools are funded by the local authority, this does not mean that all non-maintained schools are not (i.e. charge fees to attend). Non-maintained schools are divided into:

- academies

- free schools
- private schools (including independent special schools).

Academies

Academies are run by an academy trust and receive their funding directly from the government. They have more control over how they do things than community schools. Academies do not charge school fees. Academies are inspected by Ofsted and follow the same rules on admissions, special educational needs and exclusions as other state schools. They can decide upon the length of school terms and the school day and whether or not to follow the National Curriculum. Students attending academies sit the same exams as other state schools. If a school funded by the local authority is judged 'inadequate' by Ofsted then it *must* become an academy.

Free schools

Free schools are funded by the government but are not run by the local authority and therefore have more control over how they do things. Free schools are 'all-ability' schools and do not use academic selection processes like a grammar school. As with academies, free schools can decide upon the length of school terms and the school day and whether or not to follow the National Curriculum. They can also set their own pay and conditions for staff.

Private schools

Private schools (also known as independent schools) charge fees to attend and do not receive general government funding. Similar to academies and free schools, pupils do not have to follow the National Curriculum. All private schools must be registered with the government and are inspected regularly.

Under the Children and Families Act 2014, an **independent special school** is an independent school that is organised to make **special educational provision (SEP)** for pupils with special educational needs. There may be circumstances when the local authority must pay a pupil's fees – for example, if the independent school is named in the pupil's education, health and care plan (EHCP), which means the local authority then has a financial responsibility.

For more on pupils with special educational needs, see Core Chapter 11.

Home schooling

As mentioned on page 2, parents have the right to educate their children at home. In this case, children must have access to a full-time curriculum. They do not need to follow the National Curriculum, however, learning will be monitored by the local authority. Children with SEND or

a school attendance order must be given consent from the local authority for home schooling.

Research

Find out more about independent special schools on the government website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-special-schools-and-colleges

Find out more about alternative provision for children and young people.

Good to know

Students aged 16–25 can request a SEND assessment themselves. For example, an individual may request a diagnosis for dyslexia. Find more information here: www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help

Test yourself

Produce a table including the maintained and non-maintained school provision talked about in this section. In the table, identify as many features and functions for each provision as you can. Next, highlight the similarities and summarise any differences.

Post-16 provision

Of course, educational opportunities continue after the age of 16 and there is a diverse range of provision available for students in England once they have turned 16 years of age. There are different categories of qualifications and courses of study. This includes a more ‘academic’ path, studying for A-levels, Applied General Qualifications or the International Baccalaureate, or a wide range of more ‘vocational’ courses, including apprenticeships and traineeships for competence-based, work-related employment training, and technical education that allows students to prepare for specific occupational roles, as well as support with progression to higher education.

Let’s take a look at the different settings where students can undertake the variety of training options open to them:

- ▶ school sixth forms
- ▶ sixth-form colleges
- ▶ general further education and **tertiary colleges**

- ▶ private, independent and voluntary providers (publicly funded)
- ▶ employers
- ▶ special colleges (including agriculture and horticulture colleges)
- ▶ art, design and performing arts colleges
- ▶ higher education institutions (HEIs).

School sixth forms

School sixth forms are based in schools and cater for students aged 16–19. This period of study is also referred to as Key Stage 5, or Years 12 and 13. While studying in sixth form, students typically prepare for A-level, International Baccalaureate or technical qualifications. A student can be in sixth form in a maintained school or in a private school.

Sixth-form colleges

Sixth-form colleges are generally larger than a school sixth form, but smaller than a further education college. The range of courses offered is, therefore, likely to be more diverse than that of the school sixth form.

Further education colleges

Further education (FE) colleges generally offer a wider provision than sixth form. For example, as well as A-level, International Baccalaureate or technical qualifications at Key Stage 5, the student will be able to find a course that is set at various levels, often beginning at Level 1 and stretching to Level 5, including higher-level apprenticeships and foundation degrees. Some colleges work in partnership with HEIs (universities) to deliver degree programmes too. FE colleges prepare students for the world of work as well as for study at higher level. Students accessing FE colleges are diverse, including adult students and students with special educational needs.

Key terms

Tertiary college: an institution that provides general and vocational FE for students aged 16–19. Such colleges provide the next stage of education, after primary and secondary. They are distinct from general FE colleges in that they cater for a specific age group, and offer a less extensive and varied curriculum.

Further education colleges: include general FE and tertiary colleges, sixth-form colleges and specialist colleges, as well as adult education provision. You can find out more on the government’s website.

Private, independent and voluntary providers (publicly funded)

Students may train and work within the private, independent and voluntary sector. For example, you may complete your study with a private training company rather than in a school or college. Apprentices may complete their training under the supervision of private, independent and voluntary provision – for example, a private day nursery, an independent school, or within a charitable or not-for-profit organisation.

Employers

Certain employers have worked with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education in the production of apprenticeship standards. Employers have significantly influenced the standards for education and training due to their leadership in their sectors.

Special colleges (including agriculture and horticulture colleges)

Special colleges sometimes offer residential facilities and usually focus on a particular specialist area, such as music. They have a wealth of expertise to meet the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from secondary age and beyond.

Art, design and performing arts colleges

Art, design and performing arts are specialist areas of study where students can develop the skills needed to work in a range of roles relating to this sector.

Higher education institutions

These institutions (HEIs) offer university-level programmes. At university, students can study undergraduate and then postgraduate programmes after taking most Level 3 general or technical qualifications (such as this one). As an undergraduate, you will study towards a foundation or full degree (Level 5–6 qualification); as a postgraduate, you may study towards a master's (Level 7) or even a doctorate (Level 8).



- ▲ Can you think of any learning benefits from collaborating with peers?

Research

- Find out about three universities offering undergraduate programmes in education and early years provision. What entry requirements do they ask for? What sorts of study programmes are included?
- Find out more about traineeships and apprenticeships in education and early years provision by looking at the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education website: www.instituteforapprenticeships.org
- Identify the knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to roles within early years education and teaching assistant roles.

Reflect

Andreas is 16 years of age. He would like to be a primary school teacher. What options does Andreas have to reach his career goal?

Olivia is 16 years of age and would like to work as an early years educator for two years and then train to be a nursery teacher. What options does Olivia have to reach her career goal?

How and when education became compulsory in England and how this has changed over time

Educating children has not always been a legal requirement or open to all, and the law in England has evolved regarding at what age children must start and

finish their schooling. The table below shows the most significant dates in this process.

Year	Change in education law	
1870	Introduction of compulsory education	For the first time, the government mandates the provision of elementary education for children aged 5–13 years of age under the Elementary Education Act 1870. Attendance is compulsory for boys and girls aged 5–10 years of age until attainment of the 'educational standard'.
1893–1921	School leaving age raised	The school leaving age is raised to 11 in 1893, 12 in 1899 and to 14 in 1921.
1944	The Education Act 1944	State education is now free for all children. The act created separate primary schools (for children aged 5–11) and secondary schools (11–15). Local education authorities (LEAs) also had to ensure nursery provision, disability provision and boarding. The compulsory school age was raised to 15, then 16 in 1972.
1972	Compulsory education raised to age 16	Preparation for raising the school leaving age started in 1964 and was established in 1972 in preparation for school leavers the following June.
1988	The Education Reform Act 1988	This act introduced a compulsory National Curriculum consisting of 14 subjects. Teachers were no longer in charge of the curriculum but were accountable for it through the introduction of compulsory standardised assessments at ages 7, 11, 14 (SATs) and 16 (GCSE).
2008	The Education and Skills Act 2008	Government statistics showed that 11% of 16 to 18 year olds were neither continuing their education after completion of their GCSEs, nor in full-time employment or an apprenticeship. This led to increased unemployment rates. A child may leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. They must then do one of the following until they are 18: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stay in full-time education, for example, at an FE college • start an apprenticeship or traineeship • spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training.

▲ How the law in England has evolved regarding the age at which children must start and finish schooling

Regulation

In this section, we are going to find out a little bit more about regulation and how regulation contributes to education and childcare specifically, including:

- ▶ Department for Education (DfE)
- ▶ Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)
- ▶ Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

Department for Education (DfE)

The **Department for Education** is the part of government responsible, in England, for Children's Services and education, including early years, schools, higher and further education policy, apprenticeships and wider skills.

The DfE has key responsibilities for teaching and learning in education. It also produces statutory guidance around legislation to influence how we work within education and childcare. This guidance

is produced through the development of policies and procedures intended to keep babies, children and young people safe, healthy and well.

Many key publications, such as *The Early Years Statutory Framework* and *The National Curriculum*, are published by the Department for Education.

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

We have already discussed **Ofsted** in this chapter (page 2), including a key term and examples of the role of Ofsted. Ofsted works to keep babies, children and young people safe, and to promote high standards in education and childcare.

Ofsted inspects and regulates registered settings in education and childcare to raise standards, and ensure that babies, children, young people and adults who are accessing education receive the best possible teaching and learning. Inspections are carried out regularly to maintain standards, set action plans and

support quality in practice (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)

The **Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)** regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

Regulated qualifications include general education, such as GCSEs and A-levels, Technical qualifications and others that have been submitted by awarding organisations (exam boards) for regulation. This means that Ofqual has a responsibility to check that the qualifications meet appropriate standards, that they prepare the students taking them for work or further study, and that teachers and students have all the information they need to deliver the qualification successfully. Ofqual will also consider how well the qualifications prepare students for the next stage; this is sometimes referred to as how 'fit for purpose' the qualifications are. Regulation by Ofqual reassures everyone involved that qualifications have been thoroughly considered for validity and reliability (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual).

1.2 Occupational roles in education and childcare

This section looks in more detail at the different responsibilities of the diverse roles that exist in education and childcare, to help you consider the specific entry requirements for particular occupations and understand possible career progression routes in the sector.

To help us to categorise the occupational roles, let's consider them as general roles and specialist roles. Bear in mind, however, that it is possible that an individual identified as working in a general role will also be responsible for a specialist role – for example, a teacher may also be a designated safeguarding officer/lead person.

General roles in education and childcare

These can be categorised as follows:

- ▶ early years practitioner
- ▶ early years educator
- ▶ room leader
- ▶ teaching assistant
- ▶ teacher/lecturer
- ▶ head teacher.

Early years practitioner

This is a designated occupational role within the early years workforce. The **early years practitioner** will be qualified at Level 2 in early years care and education, and will work alongside the Level 3 early years educator.

The qualification that the early years practitioner holds means they meet the criteria required to work within this occupational role. The responsibilities they hold are diverse, and they will be involved in all aspects of caring for babies and young children from birth to five, as identified in the Early Years Statutory Framework.

Their daily routine is likely to include most or all of the following duties:

- ▶ meeting the individual physical care routines of children
- ▶ observing and planning
- ▶ working with others, including parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals
- ▶ record keeping and reporting
- ▶ promoting effective playful interactions with babies and young children.



- ▲ How is this adult enhancing the children's experiences?

Early years educator

The **early years educator** is a designated occupational role within the early years workforce. They will be qualified at Level 3 and will work within the ratios specified in the Early Years Statutory Framework. A Level 3 early years educator, once qualified, will be able to progress within the early years workforce to take a position such as room leader, and may also take up leadership, deputy management and management roles. The early years educator will undertake all the duties of the early years practitioner, but will hold greater responsibility and accountability for intervention and quality, as appropriate. The early years educator will take an active role as a key person, observing and

planning for next steps effectively, liaising with parents/carers and other professionals to ensure the best outcome for children in their care, while maintaining the requirements of the Early Years Statutory Framework to keep children safe, healthy and well.

Room leader

The **room leader** will be an experienced early years educator and, as such, all of those responsibilities will apply to this occupational role too. The room leader will be responsible for the running of a room – for example, a pre-school room with children aged three to four, or a baby room with children under two years. Although each setting will decide on the age ranges of its different rooms, children usually tend to be cared for in age ranges with time to come together as larger groups, particularly at quieter times of the day or at mealtimes. The room leader's responsibility may extend to managing budgets and ordering resources/equipment, as well as making sure that child ratios and other legislative requirements within the Early Years Statutory Framework are met. The room leader may have responsibility for undertaking peer observations, appraisals and performance management of colleagues, such as early years practitioners or students.



- ▲ Some teaching assistants may work one-to-one with pupils

Reflect

Nannies and childminders make a valuable contribution to the early years workforce; there is information about these significant roles earlier in this section. Take the opportunity to look back at the role of the professional nanny and childminder to give you a broader insight into the occupational roles that exist within the early years workforce.

Good to know

Occupational maps can be found on the NCFE website. The link below leads to a career progression map, which will give you the opportunity to think about different career pathways in education and childcare. The NCFE website also has case studies to read through that may inspire your own career aspirations.

www.ncfe.org.uk/media/1hgff14ie/children-and-young-people-progression-map.pdf

Teaching assistant

The **teaching assistant** will support teaching and learning for individuals or for groups of pupils, working closely with the class teacher. The teaching assistant may work one-to-one with a single pupil or with a small group of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to carry out the teacher's lessons in a **differentiated** way to meet their needs (see Core Chapter 2).

For more about SEND, see Core Chapter 11.

Teaching assistants will also update, record and monitor progress, and undertake activities such as guided reading. They will be expected to support planning and attend meetings as appropriate. There are opportunities for the teaching assistant to progress to higher level teaching assistant (HLTA) status, and in this role they will be able to undertake more responsibilities working with pupils, such as leading some lessons. A teaching assistant may also choose to undertake a graduate programme to train as a teacher.

Good to know

More information about the role of the teaching assistant and the qualifications that can support this pathway can be found on the NCFE website: www.ncfe.org.uk/sector-specialisms/education-and-training/

You can find out more about higher level teaching assistant standards at the HLTA website: www.hlta.org.uk



- ▲ What does this photo tell you about the level of engagement between the teacher and the children?

Teacher/lecturer

Teachers and lecturers usually have similar responsibilities. For example, both are involved in advancing teaching and learning through planning, team collaboration and significantly raising students' knowledge, understanding and skills through effective strategies. The qualifications and the journey the teacher and lecturer may take may vary, however.

- ▶ The **teacher** is likely to work in school environments and will be a qualified teacher (QTS). Their training will have included study at higher education level in order to achieve QTS.
- ▶ The **lecturer** is likely to work in further or higher education and, as well as academic qualifications, may also have significant industry experience. For example, a lecturer in early years may have worked extensively in the early years workforce. To teach in higher education, universities often require postgraduate qualifications and a commitment to ongoing research.

Head teacher

The head teacher will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the school. Being a head teacher is a challenging and responsible position. Some of the responsibilities required of this role are:

- ▶ liaise with the governing body
- ▶ engage with the school ethos and values/mission in partnership with pupils, staff, parents and carers
- ▶ lead teaching and learning
- ▶ staff recruitment, appraisal and disciplinary procedures.

Good to know

Various pathways to head teaching are outlined on the National Careers website: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/job-profiles/headteacher>

Specialist roles

Some of the specialist roles that exist within education and childcare include:

- ▶ special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo)
- ▶ designated safeguarding lead (DSL)
- ▶ mental health lead
- ▶ mentor/pastoral support
- ▶ physical activity and nutrition coordinator (PANCo)
- ▶ counsellor
- ▶ careers advisor.

Individuals holding a general role within education and childcare may also be responsible for some of the specialist roles that are listed here.

Special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo)

Each setting, whether an early years setting or a school, will have a **SENDCo** in place. The SENDCo will be responsible for liaising with parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals to ensure that individual children's needs are met, and resources and equipment provided in line with organisational policy and procedures, and in adherence with the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice.

In an early years setting, an experienced early years educator usually takes this role. There are qualifications that can be taken at Level 2, Level 3 and Level 4 to support the SENDCo to manage their responsibilities efficiently. In a school, a class teacher will undertake the role of SENDCo and formal training will be required to hold this responsibility.

Designated safeguarding lead (DSL)

Safeguarding babies, children and young people is everyone's responsibility. However, in education and childcare, a named member of staff will hold the position of **designated safeguarding officer** or **designated safeguarding lead**, in line with the Children Act 2004. Having a named member of staff

holding responsibility for safeguarding means there can be clear leadership, guidance and professional partnerships.

The designated safeguarding lead will undergo relevant training to be able to support staff in recognising signs and symptoms of need in babies, children and young people, and will advise staff, ensuring that processes for raising concerns are clear and straightforward. The designated safeguarding lead will take a role in recording and reporting to ensure best practice.

Research

Statutory guidance is updated regularly to ensure the best possible outcomes for babies, children and young people.

Visit www.gov.uk to see the latest information and guidance around the role of the designated safeguarding officer/lead and summarise your findings.

Mental health lead

The emotional health and mental wellbeing of children and young people is significant to holistic health, development and learning. Working in education and childcare, mental health lead practitioners will support children, young people and their families, as well as supporting staff with appropriate strategies and approaches to promote positive wellbeing.

Research

The Mental Health Foundation Association has produced useful documents to support an understanding of the importance of recognising mental health in children and young people, and the significance of intervention for a child's holistic health and wellbeing.

Find out more about the important specialist role of the mental health first aider in education and childcare here: <https://mhfaengland.org>

Mentor/pastoral support

Mentoring supports staff to develop confidence and competence in education and childcare. A mentor is more experienced or more knowledgeable in a particular aspect of the occupational role and helps by guiding and supporting a less experienced or

less knowledgeable person. This is often seen at the beginning of someone's career, where an experienced colleague mentors a new member of staff.

On placement, you may be mentored by an experienced colleague. Their specialist knowledge and skills can be invaluable in helping you to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that are required in this type of work.

Pastoral support for children and young people in education and childcare is concerned with the child's or young person's overall health, welfare and wellbeing. This is a whole-school approach that is concerned with how children and young people are settling in to their environment. Mentoring programmes, such as 'buddy systems' that connect younger and more experienced pupils/students with one another, can make a positive difference during transition or when learning new skills.

Physical activity and nutrition coordinator (PANCo)

Many early years settings are striving to have a member of staff responsible for promoting physical exercise and nutrition in the setting. The **physical activity and nutrition coordinator (PANCo)** will have undertaken specific training at Level 4 in order to lead in this specialist role. They will advise staff and liaise with parents to improve the setting's approach in this area.

Counsellor

If staff in education and childcare are concerned about the welfare and wellbeing of children and young people they may consider specialist intervention. There are different professionals that can support in times of need – for example, an **educational psychologist** can carry out assessments to support individuals with possible learning difficulties, and may also support children with emotional problems that may impact self-esteem and behaviour. **Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS)** offers specialist support, including counselling. A **social worker** may be able to provide counselling services, especially where safeguarding and welfare concerns have been raised.

Careers advisor

Careers advisors in education are able to inform students about a diverse range of occupational roles, training and qualifications, study programmes and career journeys, such as opportunities for promotion.

Careers advisors will also be able to support with administration issues such as writing a CV, applying for a job or for further study, and are skilled in using assessment tools such as psychometric testing.



- ▲ It is important for young people to be included in discussions involving them to help them reach informed decisions about their futures

Case study

Jayden is three years of age. He lives with his mum and younger sister, who is aged 14 months. Nursery staff are concerned about Jayden's emotional wellbeing. During their observations, they have noticed how Jayden, usually a friendly and sociable young boy, has become withdrawn, even shying away from interaction with his **key person**. Jayden's key person met with his mum at nursery. Jayden's mum became very upset as she explained that Jayden's dad was seriously ill and being cared for in a hospice.

- ▶ Summarise the situation and the potential impact on Jayden, his sister and their mum.
- ▶ How could the setting support Jayden and his family?
- ▶ What other professionals may be able to offer support to Jayden and his family at this very sad time?

Key term

Key person: a member of staff in an early years setting who works closely with a designated group of children and their parents, carers and family.

See Core Chapter 5 for more information.

Assessment practice

- 1 Identify **two** features of maintained schools.
- 2 List **one** similarity and **one** difference between academy schools and maintained schools.
- 3 List **three** responsibilities held by an early years educator.
- 4 Summarise the role of Ofqual in education and childcare.
- 5 A local authority primary school is an example of:
 - a) a private service
 - b) a statutory service
 - c) a voluntary service.
- 6 Which of the following do **not** need to follow the National Curriculum?
 - a) academy schools
 - b) voluntary aided schools
 - c) state primary schools
 - d) state secondary schools
- 7 Describe the role of the designated safeguarding lead in education and childcare.
- 8 Explain the role of Ofsted in education and childcare.
- 9 Compare the role of the childminder with that of the professional nanny.
- 10 Analyse the role of the physical activity and nutrition coordinator for children's holistic health and wellbeing.

CORE Chapter 2:

Supporting Education



Supporting children's and young people's education is complex. In this chapter, we look at the education frameworks in England and also the skills that adults need to work effectively with children and young people, which include providing feedback. We consider different theories of how children and young people learn and also the factors that might affect their development, including the role of metacognition skills. This chapter looks at the role of technology in learning, and we also consider why some children and young people may find literacy and mathematics challenging.

Learning outcomes

This chapter covers the following knowledge outcomes for Core Element 2:

- 2.1** The origin and purpose of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4
- 2.2** The skills and attributes that support children's and young people's education
- 2.3** Current theoretical and pedagogical approaches applied in education and the evidence that underpins them
- 2.4** How metacognition supports children and young people to manage their own learning
- 2.5** How practitioners provide effective feedback and why it is important in supporting children's/young people's educational development
- 2.6** Why up-to-date and appropriate technology is important to effectively support children's/young people's educational development
- 2.7** How personal, educational and environmental factors may affect engagement and development in reading, literacy and mathematics

2.1 The origin and purpose of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4

The Early Years Foundation Stage

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage is usually referred to as the EYFS. It was introduced in 2008 to improve opportunities for children aged from birth to five years (including the reception year) and also to ensure minimum safety and welfare standards were in place. There were revisions to it in 2012 and 2017, and most recently in 2021. The EYFS built upon previous governments' curricula and requirements dating back to 1996, when funding for free or subsidised nursery places for specific age groups was first introduced for parents.

Early Learning Goals and Assessment

The EYFS has **Early Learning Goals**, which are outcomes that most children are expected to achieve by the end of their reception year. These outcomes are measured by teachers carrying out observations and then assessing children's progress. This measurement is known as the **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)**. Results of the profile are passed on to the government via local authorities. At the time of writing, children will also have a communication and language assessment from 2021 when they first start in the reception class. This measurement is known as the **Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA)**.

Schools providing EYFS and National Curriculum

Some primary schools have a nursery as well as a reception class. When this is the case, they will be working with both curricula. They are required to provide the EYFS for nursery and reception, but then the National Curriculum for children once they start in Year 1.

Inspection of education settings

The inspection of most education settings, including childminders' and early years settings in England, is carried out by Ofsted. In private or independent schools, this work is done by a separate inspection body called the Independent Schools Inspectorate,

whose work is monitored by Ofsted. Ofsted reports its findings to the Department for Education. It also publishes reports each year about overall trends in standards in education.

See Core Chapter 1 for more on the inspection of education settings.

The scope of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS does not just look at early education, but also sets legal requirements for the safeguarding and wellbeing of children aged from birth to five years in early years settings and in the reception year. These requirements cover staffing ratios, outings and the administration of medicines. Inspections of early years settings look at both the quality of education and whether settings are meeting safeguarding and welfare requirements.

Research

Download the latest copy of the Statutory Early Years Foundation Stage Framework from the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

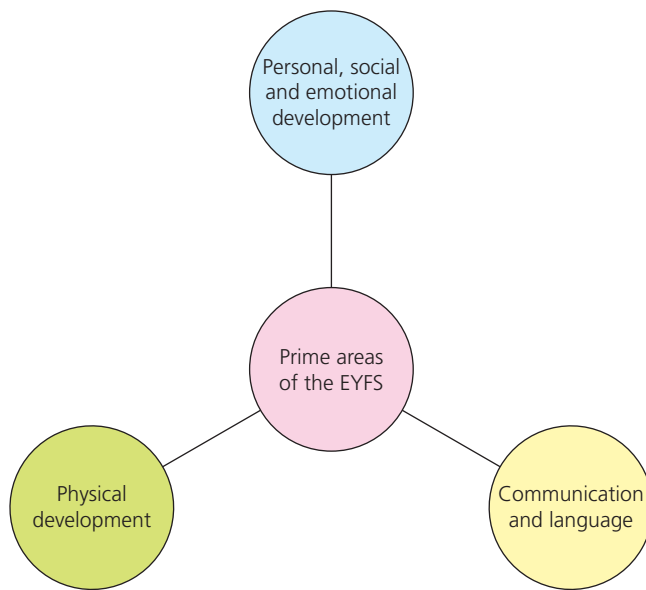
Work out how many adults are needed to work in a day care setting without a qualified teacher for each of the following:

- ▶ eight babies aged from birth to ten months
- ▶ seven children aged two years
- ▶ 12 children aged three to four years.

Learning and development requirements

There are seven areas of learning and development set out in the EYFS. Since 2012, they have been split into two sections: prime and specific. The prime areas of the EYFS are seen as the foundation for later learning and so are the focus for working with babies and toddlers.

There are three prime areas, as shown in the diagram and described opposite.



▲ The prime areas of the EYFS

- 1 **Personal, social and emotional development (PSED):** this area of learning and development is about children's emotional and social skills as well as their behaviour and attitudes.
- 2 **Physical development:** this area of learning and development is about children's physical skills. At the time of writing, it also includes learning about being healthy, but this may change with the revisions proposed for 2021.
- 3 **Communication and language:** this is about developing children's ability to talk, listen and understand. Learning new vocabulary is part of this.

The progress check at age two

When children are two years old, early years settings are required to do a check that looks at the progress children are making in the prime areas. This is often referred to by practitioners as the **progress check** or the 'two-year-old check'. This check was introduced in 2012 and the aim was that it would link to a health check of two year olds carried out by health visitors.

For more on the role of health visitors, see Core Chapter 6.

Specific areas of learning and development

In addition to the prime areas, there are four specific areas of learning and development. These link to later curriculum areas within the National Curriculum.

- 1 **Mathematics:** this area of learning and development looks at several aspects of mathematics including number, shape, size and measurement.

Research

- ▶ Look at a copy of the EYFS and read the section that outlines mathematics as an area of learning and development.
- ▶ Read the Early Learning Goals for mathematics.
- ▶ To what extent do the Early Learning Goals assess the entirety of the area of learning and development?

- 2 **Literacy:** this area of learning and development looks at children learning to read, write and understand texts. In the early years, this includes helping children to develop a love of books, poems and rhymes.



- ▲ How might sharing books with young children encourage a love of books later?
- 3 **Understanding of the world:** this area of learning and development focuses on children learning about their local community, nature, and also their personal history and that of others. In the current EYFS, this area also includes technology.
- 4 **Expressive arts and design:** this is a wide-ranging area that includes music, painting and modelling, but also role play and drama.

Characteristics of effective teaching and learning

To help early years settings understand how best to provide activities and opportunities for the areas of learning development, the EYFS gives three characteristics of how babies and young children learn:

- 1 Playing and exploring
- 2 Active learning
- 3 Creating and thinking.

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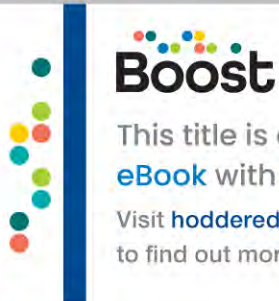
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