

REVISED

Opinion

From September, England's early years settings will implement the coalition government's reimagining of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Over the following four pages, *TN* looks both at the key changes facing managers and practitioners and a range of views on what they will mean for the nation's children...



With less than 100 days until the new Early Years Foundation Stage comes into effect, Stella Ziolkowski, director of quality and

workforce development at NDNA, has identified three key areas which have changed. Here she looks at what you need to do to make sure you are meeting the new requirements.

1 Welfare Requirements

In the new EYFS, the welfare requirements are grouped into eight rather than five key areas, but many of the requirements remain the same. Some of the requirements have been updated to 'must' rather than 'should', which means there is less room for misinterpretation.

There are some additional requirements, including that all providers must now work to the government strategy 'Working together to safeguard children'. Practitioners need to be alert to any issues for concern in the child's life at home or elsewhere, and nurseries must have a written policy which states how they will do this. It is also vital that there is a procedure for addressing any inappropriate behaviour displayed by anyone working with children in the setting; this could include making sexual comments or giving children excessive one-to-one attention. Nurseries are also legally required to have a policy on the use of mobile phones and cameras in the setting.

All providers must have a qualified designated member of staff for child protection, who offers ongoing support to other team members, including guidance on how to spot signs of abuse or neglect at the earliest opportunity. To maintain competence it is important for the designated team member to receive ongoing training.

Regular supervision and appraisal meetings with staff who have regular contact with children and families are now mandatory. Meetings should offer staff the opportunity to discuss any work related issues, set achievable goals and look at training and development needs.

Staff ratios have remained the same, but providers need to document and share with parents how the ratios meet the needs of the individual children in their care. Providers should keep parents and carers informed of staff deployment – a good way to do this is to display

a notice in the entrance that notifies parents and carers about which team members will be in which room.

What do I need to do?

- Plan child protection training for all staff.
- Develop new policies where applicable, for example, about mobile phone usage. Make sure staff and parents are aware and all relevant documents are updated (staff handbook, website, Ofsted self-evaluation form, etc.).
- Develop or make changes to current supervision and appraisal forms to make sure they reflect the EYFS requirements.
- Utilise NDNA's comparison table to check that all documentation now reflects the revised EYFS.

2 Revised Learning and Development Requirements

The new EYFS has restructured the learning and development requirements so there are now three prime areas of learning and four specific areas of learning, rather than the current six areas of learning. These are as follows:

Prime areas of learning:

Personal, social and emotional development
Communication and language
Physical development.

Specific areas of learning:

Literacy
Mathematics
Understanding the world
Expressive arts and design.

It is expected practitioners working with the youngest children will focus more on the three prime areas of learning; then, as the child grows in confidence and ability, the focus will shift to also include the specific areas of learning.

Most of the content of the learning goals in the new EYFS hasn't changed, so rather than looking to alter drastically your curriculum, you are more likely to need to adapt to using a new vocabulary to describe the work you do. A good example of this is in the previous EYFS 'Problem solving, Reasoning and Numeracy' – this was an early learning goal and is now referred to as 'Mathematics'.

The new EYFS has introduced three characteristics of learning: 'playing and exploring –

engagement', 'active learning – motivation' and 'creating and thinking critically – thinking'. These characteristics of learning must be applied to all the areas of learning, so you may wish to review your practice to make sure it incorporates these characteristics, for example, is there more you could be doing to encourage children to make their own choices or to explore more?

What do I need to do?

- Make sure staff and parents are aware of the new terminology. Look at areas where the six areas of learning are being used (e.g. planning templates, displays, etc.) and update these so they include the seven areas of learning in the new EYFS.
- Incorporate the three characteristics of learning into the curriculum.



Training and resources

Get a copy of the new EYFS

You can download the new EYFS, revised Development Matters and guidance for the two-year-old checks free from the Foundation Years website foundationyears.org.uk, or you can purchase a hard copy of the new EYFS and Development Matters from NDNA at www.ndna.org.uk/eyfs, priced at £9.50, including postage and packing.

Understand the changes to the EYFS

NDNA has produced a comparison table which is free for members to download from www.ndna.org.uk/eyfs-table

EYFS training for the early years workforce

NDNA is offering a series of regional training events where delegates will be updated on the statutory requirements of the EYFS, the learning and development requirements and progress checks for two-year-olds, NDNA also offers in-house training to meet your needs – to find out more, visit www.ndna.org.uk/eyfs-training or call 01484 40 70 70.

Practitioner view:



**Sandhya Godhania,
Training Depot Day
Nursery, Luton**

Having read the new EYFS, we're looking forward to implementing it. It appears to have an emphasis on reducing paperwork for practitioners in order for them to spend more time interacting with the children. However, it is difficult to say what the real impact will be without seeing it in practice.

We have booked a number of our

practitioners onto training courses and will be carrying out in-house training to ensure all staff have a good level of understanding of the ethos of the EYFS. We were pleased to see that three prime areas – Communication and language, Physical development and Personal, social and emotional development – were identified, and we believe the progress check at two is a good initiative; however, if a delay is detected it must be handled with care and the understanding that each child is an individual who learns at their own pace.



Practitioner view:

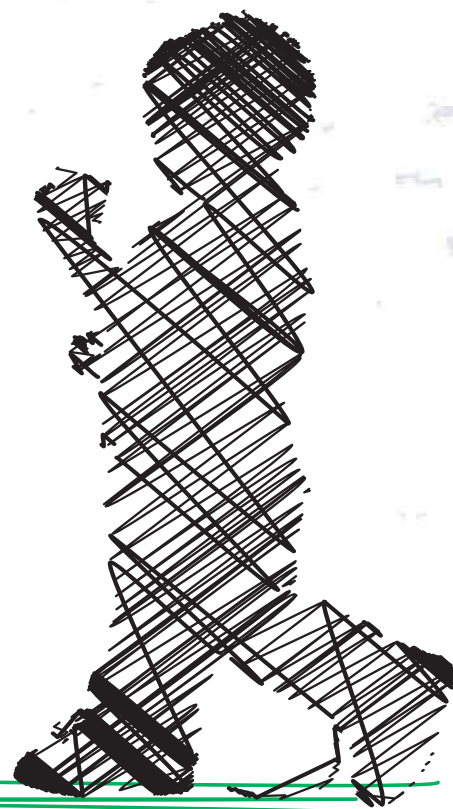
Marie Privett, Butterflies Nursery, Broadstairs

Having read the new statutory framework and development matters and attended a briefing I am encouraged by the sensible changes. The reducing of learning goals from 69 to 17 and the expected reduction in paperwork is very welcome. The changes from 'should' to 'must' will make it

clearer for management to put it into place.

Having a definite two-year-old check across the EYFS is excellent as it will highlight early problems and enable interventions. It is meant to work in conjunction with local area professionals, but it may prove difficult to fine tune the information sharing.

I feel positive about the new EYFS, but only time will tell how much of a difference it will make in practice.



The Two-year-old Progress Check

The two-year-old progress check has been introduced to ensure intervention at the earliest stages, with the aim of identifying developmental delay early and increasing dialogue between practitioners and parents. It must take place between the ages of two- and three-years-old, and is a written summary of the child's progress against the three prime areas of learning. The report should identify the child's strengths and any areas where the child's progress is less than

expected. The manager should decide who is best to carry out these checks, but ideally it should be the child's key person who has a positive relationship with the child and family and who the child feels the most comfortable with. Once the report has been drafted the practitioner must organise a meeting with parents where the observations will be discussed and input from the parents added. If possible providers should look to coordinate the timing of the two-year-old progress check with the Healthy Child: Health and Development Review and share the report with health visitors where possible or encourage the parents to do this.

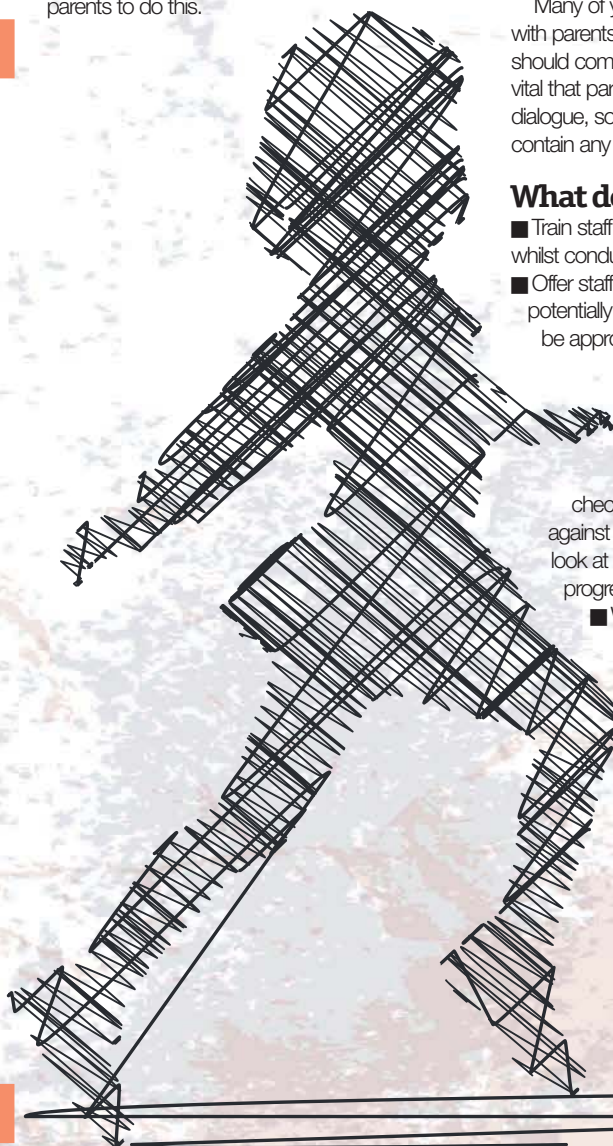
I CAN, the children's communication charity

We welcome the fact that communication and language has been placed so centrally in the new Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

Communication is the 21st century life skill, so how do so many children reach primary school without these skills (more than 50 per cent in some areas of the country)? Recent alarming research evidences up to 83 per cent of secondary students, in areas of disadvantage, having 'undetected language difficulties'.

It's important to have the earliest possible support with language and communication development. The EYFS recommended progress check at two years will help identify speech, language and communication needs early, and we have introduced an easy to use pad of forms that will help practitioners to complete this check (www.ican.org.uk/bookshop).

Many practitioners already have plenty of experience supporting early communication and language skills, but for those who would like further information and training, the Early Language Development Programme offers free training and resources to develop greater skills and confidence (<http://eldp.talkingpoint.org.uk>).



Many of you will already have regular meetings with parents and the two-year-old progress check should complement but not replace these. It is vital that parents and practitioners have a frequent dialogue, so the Progress Review should not contain any surprises.

What do I need to do?

- Train staff so they are aware of what to look for whilst conducting the progress check.
- Offer staff training about how to broach potentially difficult subjects with parents. It may be appropriate for more junior members of staff to be accompanied to meetings with parents by a more senior member of the team.
- Make sure you are using the right paperwork – the progress check must review a child's development against the three prime areas of learning and look at strengths and areas where the child's progress is less than expected.
- Where possible, liaise with health visitors to establish when the Healthy Child: Health and Development Review is taking place, and encourage parents to share the reviews with health visitors.