



Early Years Alliance Draft response to the DfE consultation on Early Years Foundation Stage Reforms

DfE is seeking responses from the early years sector on its proposed reforms to the Early Years Foundation Stage. The consultation is open until 31 January 2020. Submissions can be made on line via www.education.gov.uk/consultations Emails submissions can be made via eyfs.consultation@education.gov.uk

Submissions by post should be sent to
EYFS consultation
Early Years and Schools Group
Department for Education
2nd Floor, Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BT

The Early Years Alliance's draft response to the proposed changes to the Educational Programmes, Early Learning Goals and other elements of the EYFS is outlined below.

Q6. Please give us your views on whether the activities described in each of the proposed educational programme summaries support children's learning and development throughout the EYFS. Please provide your view below, being specific about which educational programme this applies to where appropriate.

The Early Years Alliance welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the revised EYFS. This response is informed by comments received from our 14,000 members across England via local and national meetings and online webinars and forums. The Alliance has also been actively engaged with a coalition of 12 early years organisations and stakeholders which produced:

- a) academic research which found no evidence to support extensive changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework [\(September 2019\)](#) and;

an approach would undermine the very essence, values and principles on which the EYFS is based.

This concern is reinforced by the fact that the educational programme have been separated into each learning and development area. While the consultation document states that “

programme could exclude those children who are preverbal (note our previous comments about the EYFS covering ages 5) and those who may never acquire speech

There is also no mention of support for bilingual/EALs outlined in the current EYFS para 1.7

Literacy

The current educational programme neatly outlines that the aim in the early years is to 'ensure all children's

'Children's enjoyment and curiosity about number, shape, space and measures should be fostered through their interactions with people and the world around them. Developing a strong grounding in number and spatial reasoning is essential for all children to develop life-long confidence and competence in mathematics. Children should be able to count confidently, developing deep understanding of numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns therein, through the use of a range of manipulatives. Children should begin to make comparisons about size, length, weight, capacity and time. They should engage in construction and pattern-making activities and learn about position and direction.'

Q7. Please give us your views on whether the proposed ELGs are clear, specific and easy to understand. Please provide your views below, being specific about which ELGs they apply to where appropriate.

A stated aim of the EYFS review is to make the ELGs clearer, more specific and easier for teachers to make accurate judgements. However, it is the Alliance's view that the proposed changes will fail to achieve this

We are concerned that in revising the presentation of the goals into a series of bullet point statements, DfE will inadvertently promote a 'tick box' approach to EYFSP assessment. Reception teachers who

Listening, attention and understanding

Understanding develops earliest in young children through reading facial expressions and non-verbal communication. Building on this underpinning knowledge, children link sound meanings to communication – this is the basis for language development. Treating ‘understanding’ as a separate goal shows a lack of appreciation of this essential skill. As such, we believe that the understanding ELG should be retained as a separate goal within the Prime Areas rather than being transformed into ‘comprehension’ within the literacy ELG.

In addition, the final bullet point under this ELG ‘Hold conversation when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges’ – is not clear, and is likely to cause unnecessary confusion for practitioners as it is difficult to perceive of a conversation that is not a back-and-forth exchange. We recommend either revising this point to make its intention clear, or reconsidering if it is worth including at all.

Speaking

The requirement for children to make use of ‘recently introduced vocabulary’ is likely to be burdensome to practitioners and difficult for EYFSP assessors to evidence.

While the current ELG states: ‘children express themselves effectively showing awareness of listeners’ needs’, the proposed

development in this area.

We disagree with the decision to try to bring together elements from three existing ELGs into one (managing self). This ELG fails to articulate the appropriate expectations of children by age five clearly as the current ones for self-confidence and managing feelings,

As outlined above we also believe that health and elements of basic hygiene, personal needs and healthy food choices should be included as part of the physical development ELG rather than here.

The inclusion of 'work' within the building relationships ELG is unhelpful, for children aged 5, play is work so this term is either tautological or an interpretation for young children that is inappropriate.

Physical development

The removal of health and self-care means this ELG focuses solely on fine and gross motor skills. This is a limited and limiting consideration of young children's physical development. As one of the prime areas of learning and development, the focus needs to be broader than acquisition of muscle development and control.

discrete ELG under communication and language.

current ELG was vague. However, the proposed ELG bullet points on a range of topics fails to capture the current requirement that children reflect upon and are sensitive to differences in the world, cultures, and peoples around them.

The repeated references to 'what is read in class' in these statements is sending a message to teachers that their focus should be on acquisition of content and knowledge, rather than experience and reflection.

Expressive arts and design

In this area of learning, the value of process over product is particularly important. However, as with the other ELGs, the reduction of holistic narrative into bullet points undermines the creative and expressive aspects of learning outlined by the current ELGs and turns them into a mere series of functions to be undertaken.

We are particularly disappointed that 'exploring' materials and media has been replaced by the removal of using materials in mTT7i.3 (ia d01 Tc 0.n)224 d01 Tc 0.n

The stated aims of the EYFS review include the desire to strengthen literacy and numeracy outcomes to ensure all children have a good grasp of these areas of learning in preparation for year 1. However, the Coalition analysis concluded that the latest evidence did not support the proposed changes to the literacy areas of learning. It found

"The wider reviews of evidence, such as The 100 Review (Pascal, Bertram et al., 2017), and the DfE Review (Pascal et al, 2017) support the case that children need to acquire basic phonology, syntax, and vocabulary as a fundamental basis in the process of becoming literate.

(Dockrell et al, 2010; Payler et al, 2017; Pascal, Bertram et al, 2017; Pascal et al, 2018).

"The evidence indicates that

(op.cit., p22, emphasis added)."

Similarly for mathematics the research indicates that while the proposed

The key points identified by the research are as follows

“When educational attainment through primary school and beyond are prioritised as goals for the Foundation years, securing good child outcomes which are identified under Characteristics of Effective Learning, Communication and Language Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Physical Development should be prioritised.

“Focusing too soon on Literacy outcomes during the Foundation years may be detrimental to the longer-term attainment of those children who are not yet secure in oral Language outcomes, including an understanding of how language works in the wider social and cultural context.”. (op cit. p28).

Q9. What are your views on removing the LA statutory element of EYFSP moderation? Please provide your views below.

The Alliance does not support the removal of the statutory element of EYFSP moderation. Moderation of any assessment carried out by a range of assessors is vital to secure integrity and standardisation. For the process of moderation to be a success it needs to be adequately resourced and all involved suitably and regularly trained.

Q10. What are your views on whether removing the LA statutory element of the EYFSP moderation will help to reduce tea

Q11. What alternatives to LA statutory moderation do you think could help to ensure consistency of EYFSP judgements across the ELGs? Please provide your v

assessment process should control for this.

The full draft of the EYFS should be informed and reviewed by SEND experts to avoid any unintended exclusion of particular groups of children