

Consultation on a Revised Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (Learning and Development Requirements) (Amendment) Order 2012

Consultation Response Form

The closing date is: 19 January 2012

Your comments must reach us by that date.

THIS FORM IS NOT INTERACTIVE. If you wish to respond electronically please use the online response facility available on the Department for Education e-consultation website www.education.gov.uk/consultations

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with the access to information regimes, primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998.

If you want all, or any part, of your response to be treated as confidential, please explain why you consider it to be confidential.

If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it to be confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Department will process your personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Please tick if you want us to keep your response confidential.

Reason for confidentiality:

Name	Cherri Moseley
Organisation (if applicable)	Mathematical Association & Association of Teachers of Mathematics Joint Primary Group
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If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the Department on 0370 000 2288.

If you have a query relating to the consultation process you can contact the Consultation Unit by telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the Department's ['Contact Us'](#) page.

The consultation questions are in three sections:

1. The **areas of learning** which shape the educational programmes
2. The **early learning goals** which describe the level of progress children should normally have attained by the end of the EYFS
3. The **draft statutory instrument** - the EYFS (Learning and Development Requirements) Order 2012

Please tick one category that best describes you as a respondent.

<input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Carer	<input type="checkbox"/> Childminder	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Years Sector Representative
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-School/Playgroup	<input type="checkbox"/> Maintained School	<input type="checkbox"/> Nursery
<input type="checkbox"/> Play Sector	<input type="checkbox"/> SEN Provision	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent School
<input type="checkbox"/> Local Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast/After-school Club	X Other

Please Specify:

I am responding on behalf of the Joint Primary Group of the Mathematical Association <http://www.m-a.org.uk/jsp/index.jsp?lnk=000> and the Association of Teachers of Mathematics <http://www.atm.org.uk/>. Members of both organisations believe that learning experiences in the Early Years are fundamental to life-long learning. Both provide a range of resources to support teachers, teaching assistants, parents and others. These include regular journal articles dealing with the teaching and learning of mathematics in the Early Years.

Areas of learning and educational programmes

There are seven proposed areas of learning and educational programmes: personal, social and emotional development; physical development; communication and language; literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; and expressive art and design. The revised EYFS describes the broad areas of focus for educational programmes in each area of learning. The consultation document includes the relevant text for each area of learning.

Q1) Do you agree that the description of educational programmes and areas of learning summarises clearly what is involved?

Yes

No

Partly

Not Sure

Comments:

We are concerned about the wording under the Mathematics heading in the **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND AREAS OF LEARNING:**

Mathematics involves providing children with opportunities to practise and improve their skills in counting numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems, and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.

This crucially needs to include developing children's interest and confidence as well as their mathematical skills, and lacks parity with the statements for the other areas of learning.

These mention encouraging children and igniting their interest; guiding children to make sense; giving children opportunities to explore, observe and find out; supporting children to explore and play, providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

All of these expressions are just as relevant in mathematics. We therefore suggest:

Mathematics involves providing children with a variety of playful opportunities to explore, observe and experiment with patterns, quantities, shapes, space and measures. Children should be supported and encouraged to share their experiences and ideas to ignite their interest, make sense of their experiences and build confidence.

Early learning goals

The *early learning goals* describe what most children should be able to do by the end of the year in which they turn 5. The revised EYFS reduced the number of early learning goals from 69 to 17. The responses

to the consultation on the revised draft EYFS, between July and September 2011, indicated broad support for most of the goals. We are proposing to make minor revisions to some of the goals on which we consulted over the summer. These are in the areas of: Communication and Language, Understanding the World, and Expressive Arts and Design. We are proposing more substantive changes to the goals relating to Literacy and Mathematics reflecting consultation feedback and further discussion with subject experts teachers and parents. In reworking the text of the goals, we have sought as far as possible to clarify requirements and simplify language. In particular, for literacy we have sought to address comments that the goals were potentially too stretching - for example, the requirement to be able to write simple stories. In mathematics, there were calls for inclusion of more on problem solving and applying numbers in practical situations.

For all the early learning goals, we have sought to ensure they are clear and are set at a level of development which the majority of children would be expected to achieve by the summer term in their reception year at school. The consultation document includes the relevant text for each goal.

Q2) Are there any early learning goals where you think the wording is **not** clear, or where you think the level of development described is not pitched correctly? Please tick the goals to which you think these apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> Self-confidence and self-awareness	<input type="checkbox"/> Managing feelings and behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Making relationships
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving and handling	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and self-care	<input type="checkbox"/> Listening and attention
<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/> Reading
<input type="checkbox"/> Writing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Numbers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shape, space and measures
<input type="checkbox"/> People and communities	<input type="checkbox"/> The world	<input type="checkbox"/> Technology
<input type="checkbox"/> Exploring and using media and materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Being imaginative	

Comments:

The proposed early learning goals for **Numbers** and **Shape, space and measures** do not seem to draw on research, either in terms of evidence that children can typically achieve these objectives at age five, or of these aspects being beneficial to later mathematical competence and development.

The important predictors of children's mathematical success have been shown to be related to a combination of number skill and understanding, or number sense, by researchers such as Gersten et al (2005). They found key predictors at kindergarten were:

- number size comparison eg which is larger, 5 or 8?
- counting
- numeral recognition

The other main predictor of achievement found in New Zealand is the ability to count out a number from a larger group. This goes further than *counting reliably* and indicates an appreciation of both the cardinal value of numbers and of the counting process, that the last number counted gives the number of the group (Young-Loveridge 1991). Therefore, there should be more emphasis on understanding the values of numbers and of relative number size.

There is no evidence that adding by counting on is typically achieved by five year olds: only 25% of six year olds in New Zealand could do this (Young-Loveridge 2011). Counting back differences larger than two or three is also not recommended as an efficient strategy, as it results in errors - using number facts learned from visual images would be a more appropriate strategy to develop (Gray 2008 p88 82-93).

There is also no evidence that doubling and halving is achievable by most five year olds and some members would like to see this removed. Five year olds can share, but they may not be aware that this results in equal amounts.

Most practitioners have become skilled at seeing mathematics in the everyday activities within their setting and reducing the ELGs to statements such as those suggested may well close down mathematical opportunities. It is essential that children's early experiences are meaningful to them and that premature formalisation does not lead to children being identified as failures before they are even of statutory school age. This could seriously affect their attitude to and confidence in their future mathematics learning.

The **Numbers** ELG should provide a strong foundation for mathematical development in school. Currently the statements are beyond what is expected at NC level 1. It may be worth noting that in Wales and Scotland a play based curriculum has been introduced up to the age of 7.

As with all curriculum expectations, there is a danger of 'teaching to the test' and losing the richness and joy of discovering mathematical connections and ideas. While we are pleased to see that the scope of the mathematics goals

has been broadened, we still have some concerns about the expectations. We therefore make the following comments:

- While some children will be able to *count reliably with numbers from one to 20*, many will not. The numbers from eleven to twenty are the most difficult parts of our number system for children to learn, because they are children's first experience of place value and the names are inconsistent. It is easier to count in hundreds or thousands than it is to count 11 to 20 or to count in tens. The wording suggested implies that the full range from 1 to 20 is expected of all children. This should be amended to acknowledge the likely spread, e.g. *count reliably forwards and backwards with numbers from one to 10 and beyond, as appropriate*.
- Children should be able to compare and order quantities, but formal addition and subtraction is not appropriate at this stage. Wording such as *Working with quantities, objects and language such as more, less, the same as, too many etc, children solve practical addition and subtraction problems and begin to develop an understanding of using numbers appropriately in a range of meaningful contexts*.
- We feel it is important to provide opportunities for children to talk about their mathematics and therefore suggest *Children show curiosity and work confidently. They begin to explore doubling, halving, grouping and sharing in contexts relevant to themselves. They show an interest in exploring and creating patterns, recognising similarities and differences*.

To summarize:

Numbers: *Children count reliably forwards and backwards with numbers from one to 10 and beyond, as appropriate. Working with quantities, objects and language such as more, less, the same as and too many, children solve practical addition and subtraction problems and begin to develop an understanding of using numbers appropriately in a range of meaningful contexts. Children show curiosity and work confidently. They begin to explore doubling, halving, grouping and sharing in contexts relevant to themselves. They show an interest in exploring and creating patterns, recognising similarities and differences.*

The **Shape, space and measures** ELG is broadly age appropriate, though we would suggest changing distance to length.

References:

Gersten, N., C. Jordan & J. R. Flojo (2005). 'Early Identification and interventions for students with mathematics difficulties', *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 38(4): 293-304.

Gray, E. (2008) 'Compressing the counting process: strength from the flexible interpretation of symbols' in Thompson, I. (ed) *Teaching and learning early number* Open University Press: Maidenhead pp 82-93

Young-Loveridge, J. (1991) *The development of children's number concepts from ages five to nine* Hamilton, New Zealand University of Waikato

Young-Loveridge, J. (2011) 'Assessing the mathematical thinking of young children in New Zealand: the initial school years' *Early Child Development and Care* 181:2, 267-276
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2011.536645>

The Early Years Foundation Stage (Learning and Development Requirements) (Amendment) Order 2012 will give legal effect to the EYFS and specifies the learning and development requirements that early years providers must meet in providing early years provision

Q3) If you have any comments on the draft Order please note these below.

Yes

No

Not sure

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time to let us have your views. We do not intend to acknowledge individual responses unless you place an 'X' in the box below.

Please acknowledge this reply ✓

Here at the Department for Education we carry out our research on many different topics and consultations. As your views are valuable to us, would it be alright if we were to contact you again from time to time either for research or to send through consultation documents?

✓Yes No

All DfE public consultations are required to conform to the following criteria within the Government Code of Practice on Consultation:

Criterion 1: Formal consultation should take place at a stage when there is scope to influence the policy outcome.

Criterion 2: Consultations should normally last for at least 12 weeks with consideration given to longer timescales where feasible and sensible.

Criterion 3: Consultation documents should be clear about the consultation process, what is being proposed, the scope to influence and the expected costs and benefits of the proposals.

Criterion 4: Consultation exercises should be designed to be accessible to, and clearly targeted at, those people the exercise is intended to reach.

Criterion 5: Keeping the burden of consultation to a minimum is essential if consultations are to be effective and if consultees' buy-in to the process is to be obtained.

Criterion 6: Consultation responses should be analysed carefully and clear feedback should be provided to participants following the consultation.

Criterion 7: Officials running consultations should seek guidance in how to run an effective consultation exercise and share what they have learned from the experience.

If you have any comments on how DfE consultations are conducted, please contact Carole Edge, DfE Consultation Co-ordinator, tel: 01928 738060 / email: carole.edge@education.gsi.gov.uk

Thank you for taking time to respond to this consultation.

Completed questionnaires and other responses should be sent to the address shown below by 19 January 2012

Send by post to: EYFS Team, Department for Education, Level 1, Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1 3BT.

Send by e-mail to:

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