

**Are you
ready for
your Four
Year
Olds?**



This document is intended to be used as a reflective tool to support reception class teachers and support staff to ensure that an appropriate environment and curriculum is provided for the very youngest children as they start school.

The term 'parents' is used to mean parents, carers, and guardians.

Unique Child

Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured

Good practice	Things to consider for the child	Reflections and what I need to do next
<i>I know about each child's interests and motivations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you asked me what I enjoy playing with? • Have you gathered information about what makes me unique, what motivates and excites me from the significant grown-ups in my life? i.e parent / preschool / childminder • How will you use this information to ensure I feel safe, secure, and welcome in the classroom and in the rest of school? i.e communal areas, dinner halls, playgrounds etc. 	
<i>I have reflected on the different rates at which children are developing and can adjust my practice appropriately.</i>	<p>Does your provision enable me to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • play and explore – I will need opportunities to investigate and experience things, and 'have a go' 	

<p>EYFS Framework 1.15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be an active learner – I will need opportunities to concentrate and keep on trying if I encounter difficulties, and so I can enjoy achievements • create and think critically - I will need opportunities to develop my own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things 	
<p><i>I know the what each child is good at and where they might require additional support</i></p> <p>EYFS Framework 2.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you used information about my development to inform your planning for practice and provision? • Have you found out about my home life and experiences? • Have you found out whether there are any other languages spoken at home? And whether I speak those languages? 	
<p><i>I know what additional support children with SEND might need</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you sought precise additional information during transition regarding my special educational needs and/or disabilities? • Have you found out which agencies are working together to ensure I have a smooth transition? • Have you found out whether I need support from my current key person in forming attachments to my new key person? 	

Where to find more information

- [Transition Passport](#)
- [All about me - Home Language Profile](#)
- [Development Matters](#)
- [Birth to Five Matters](#)
- [Right to Go' – guidance on helping schools manage continence issues](#)
- [Quality Matters in Essex](#)
- [Essex Early Years Website](#)

Positive Relationships

children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships

Good practice	Things to consider for the child	Reflections and what I need to do next
<p><i>I understand the importance of the key person approach and how attachment underpins children's learning and development</i></p> <p>EYFS Framework 1.16 & 3.27</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is the key person approach implemented in your classroom?• Do the adults that teach me have equal understanding of the importance of the key person approach?• How do you ensure my parents and I know who my key person is?• How does my key person support me to develop trusting, warm relationships that help me feel secure and ensure my emotional needs are met?	
<p><i>I ensure that every child's learning and care is tailored to their needs by having consistent adults that can form strong relationships in their role as key person</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you ensure there are consistent adults in class that can be my key person?• As my key person do you invest the time to get to know me well?• How do you establish routines that enable me to feel safe? Are these routines still flexible enough to respond to my individual needs, interests, fascinations?	

<p><i>I know how to fulfil my role as a key person in relation to children's learning and development</i></p>	<p>As my key person do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play alongside me, engaging in my play • Support me to develop my independence and make choices • Respect my choices and use these to help me learn and develop further • Work with me to develop my ideas • Show an interest in my play and motivate and inspire me • Scaffold and extend my learning 	
<p><i>I know that positive relationships with parents are vital to supporting children's well-being and learning and development</i></p> <p><i>I seek to engage and support parents to guide and promote their child's development at home</i></p> <p>EYFS Framework 1.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you build positive relationships with my parents? • How are my parents' views sought and reflected in your provision and practice? In particular if my parents need support to engage with you. • How are you using information gathered from my parents about my learning and development to ensure appropriate and engaging activities are provided from the start of term? • What messages are you giving my parents about how best to support my learning and development? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you communicate with my parents about my ongoing progress? 	
<p><i>I can help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you got an in-depth understanding of the support available to help me access your provision and to make progress from my starting points? 	

Where to find more information

- **Effective Practice: Key Person**
- **The key person in reception classes and small nurseries**
- **Parents as partners**
- **Working with parents**
- **All about developing positive relationships (Extract) – Julien Grenier**
- **Positive Relationships Audit**
- **Care Routines – Penny Tassoni**
- **Routines & behaviour – Sue Cowley**
- **Role of the adult**
- **Learning, Playing and Interacting**

- **Understanding Sustained Shared Thinking**

Quality Matters Materials:

- **Interaction - Word, 200KB**

- **Personal development, behaviour and welfare - Word, 199KB**

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service:

- **<https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/family-hubs/>**

- **Children and Families hub – Early Help directory of services**

Enabling Environments

children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers. (See “the characteristics of effective teaching and learning” at paragraph 1.15)

Good practice	Things to consider for the child	Reflections and what I need to do next
<i>I know that my learning environment reflects the developmental needs and the ways that children in my class learn</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you used the information you have gathered during the transition process to inform the planning of the environment to ensure it meets my needs?• Have you given the same level of consideration in planning both my indoor and outdoor learning environments?• How does the learning environment support development of my cultural capital?• Do you have quiet and cosy corners?• Is there enough space for me to move freely?• Do you have too many tables?• Is there a range of readily accessible open-ended resources curated to help me move on my learning?• Is the outdoor environment set up to be exciting, engaging, <i>and is it accessed</i> all year round?	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the outdoor learning environment distinct from indoors? • How do you help me connect with nature? 	
<p><i>I know that the routines and structure of my day reflect the developmental and emotional needs of the children in my class</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the structure of the day meet my needs? <p>Have you considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is an appropriate length of carpet time for me? • Is it beneficial for me to attend assembly? • Are there extended periods of time where I can become engaged in exploring activities that interest me thereby demonstrating deep involvement and high-level learning? • Is there free flow movement between indoors and outdoors? • Does my play need to be interrupted to stop for snack or can I choose when to have my snack (E.g. rolling snack) 	
<p><i>I ensure that I empower parents to maximise the opportunities presented within the home learning environment</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you supporting my parents in the first days and weeks to understand the importance of the home learning environment? E.g. Workshops, seminars, digital resources. 	

EYFS Statutory Framework 1.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you work with my parents all year round to support my learning both at school and at home?• How do you encourage my parents to utilise everyday experiences to support my learning at home?	
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Where to find more information

- **Creating and Environment to promote learning - Alistair Bryce Clegg**
- **Quality Matters – Learning Environment for Schools**
- **Loose parts (how to use open ended resources)**
- **Enabling Environments Audit**
- **The Irresistible Classroom- Community Playthings**
- **Boys and Mark Making**
- **HOME MATTERS: making the most of the home learning environment**
- **Guidance and resources from ECC on creating enabling indoor and outdoor environments**
- **Emotional environment**

Learning and Development

Children develop and learn at different rates. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Good practice	Things to consider for the child	Reflections and what I need to do next
<p><i>I am confident in using my knowledge and information from parents and previous settings to identify the starting points and next steps for each child.</i></p>	<p>Now you have talked to my parents and previous setting how do you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plan a curriculum that meets my needs? • Know my starting points? • Plan my next steps? 	
<p><i>I understand the importance of the characteristics of effective learning when planning my curriculum</i></p> <p>EYFS Statutory Framework 1.15</p>	<p>How does your curriculum planning provide me with opportunities for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playing and exploring – engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Finding out and exploring ✓ Playing with what they know ✓ Being willing to 'have a go'. • Active learning - motivation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Being involved and concentrating ✓ Keep trying ✓ Enjoying achieving what they set out to do. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and thinking critically - thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Having their own ideas ✓ Making links ✓ Choosing ways to do things 	
<p><i>I ensure my curriculum covers all Areas of Learning and I understand they are all equally important</i></p> <p>EYFS Statutory Framework 1.5</p>	<p>When planning your curriculum do you</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure I have access to all Areas of Learning throughout the provision? • Recognise that all Areas of Learning are equally important to me? • Allow space and time for me to explore and investigate my surroundings/environment 	
<p><i>I understand the importance of teaching children to become independent learners</i></p>	<p>Do you support me to be an independent learner by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing readily accessible resources that are appropriate to my needs and stage of development • Investing time in showing me how to make the most of these resources to support me in my learning 	
<p><i>I ensure all adults are clear about their roles and responsibilities and how best to support the learning and development of each</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to me that you understand the significance of playing alongside & with me. • It is important to me that you recognise that there is always purpose to my play even though at times this might not be clear to you 	

<p><i>child.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you use your knowledge of child development to maximise the teachable moments in my play as they arise? • Are you confident in when to interact with me and when not during my play? • How do you encourage me with genuine excitement & enthusiasm? • Are you using the classroom routines as teachable moments e.g. snack time to develop my language etc? 	
<p><i>I am confident in using the observation, assessment and planning cycle to continually reflect upon and adapt my curriculum.</i></p> <p>EYFS Statutory Framework 2:1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you are interacting with me are you reflecting on what I can do well and where I need more help? • Do you provide me with sufficient opportunities for reflecting on and celebrating my learning? • How do you expand my horizons taking my interests as a starting point? • How do you know I am developing as I should be? • Does your planning, provision and practice enable me to make the progress that is right for me? 	

Where to find more information

- Quality Matters Audits
- HOME MATTERS: making the most of the home learning environment
- Learning, Playing and Interacting – National Strategies-Page 14 ‘Strategies to Join in Play’
- Starting Points Analysis Document
- Development Matters in the EYFS pages 9,10,11,12 (Characteristics of Effective Learning)
- Interacting with Children- the Role of the Adult

General further support:

Please, contact the relevant EYEP team for your Quadrant

North East: eyanortheast@essex.gov.uk

Mid: EYAdvisers.Mid@Essex.gov.uk

South: EYadviser.South@essex.gov.uk

West: EYFS.West@essex.gov.uk

Provider Website Transition page –
<https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/the-early-years-foundation-stage/how-do-i-become-an-outstanding-practitioner/transition/>

Schools Infolink –
<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/Pages/EssexSchoolsInfolink.aspx>

TPP overview & link to where to find out more:
<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/SEND/Pages/SEMH---Trauma-Perceptive-Practice.aspx>