



National Day Nurseries Association

**★ Brighter thinking
for early years**

A photograph of a woman with curly hair, wearing a striped shirt, sitting inside a white tent. She is smiling and looking at two young children. One child is wearing a pink headband and a blue top, and the other is wearing a blue top and is holding an open book. The scene is warm and intimate, suggesting a reading time.

NDNA Quality Statement

NDNA's Quality Statement

National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) is the national charity representing private, voluntary and independent (PVI) children's nurseries across the UK. We are the voice of the 24,000-strong nursery sector, an integral part of the lives of more than a million young children and their families.

Charity Vision

For all children and families to flourish through excellent early years education and care

Charity Mission

To lead and empower the sector so that nurseries and the early years workforce deliver sustainable, high quality education and care

The ethos behind NDNA's charity vision and mission is to support excellence in the early years workforce, whilst driving quality and sustainability in early years enterprise. To achieve this, our approach is to ensure that the child is at the centre of all that we do and to develop and deliver services that help to support business and workforce improvement. Our quality standards are based on this.



This quality statement underpins all NDNA services and activities to support our members in the wider early years community to focus on delivering the highest quality provision for children, whilst remaining sustainable businesses.

What constitutes 'quality' in early years means different things to different people, such as children, parents, practitioners¹, regulators^{1a}, individual communities and governments; local and national. Furthermore, it can be defined at different levels, such as at structural and system levels, or at process or programme levels. We have used the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child², current research on best practice³, and the knowledge of our early years community to articulate the elements that underpin this in early years provision.

We passionately believe that children should be at the heart of all policy making and that quality can only be achieved when nurseries are sustainable businesses, with dedicated leadership and management. Leadership provides a vision for the nursery and supports practitioners to be reflective individuals with a commitment to continuous professional improvement. In turn, this helps to ensure that every child in the nursery community gets the best start in life. This includes children from all backgrounds and abilities where early assessment of their needs, capabilities and interests helps to secure any additional help they may need.

1 Practitioner means all adults who have access to children in their early years provision.

1a Scotland only. We take our child's rights approach based on the UNCRC taking into consideration the incorporating of the UNCRC into Scots Law

2 See Appendix 1 for a summary.

3 See Appendix 2 for a sample of these.

NDNA's Quality Statement

All children have a secure, safe and joyful experience in their early years provision, where they are helped by skilled and committed practitioners to gain the knowledge, skills and emotional well-being they need for their future life.

We have identified four interlinked areas to enable our work in supporting nurseries to achieve the NDNA Quality Statement.

These are:

- play and learning
- health, safety and well-being
- leadership and management
- the workforce.

Play and learning

Children play, explore and learn how to take risks in a safe, well-resourced and stimulating environment supported by knowledgeable practitioners who understand how to encourage playful learning.

This is demonstrated by:

- inclusive practice with the children's individual needs at the heart of everything nurseries do, where practitioners and children share and celebrate similarities and differences within their nursery, local communities and wider society
- effective observation, assessment and planning strategies that are purposeful, age/stage appropriate, reflect the journey each child has made and support each child's future development and learning
- a stimulating and playful environment indoors and outdoors where children feel safe and comfortable, can try out ideas, investigate, solve problems, take risks, have fun and develop an interest in the world around them
- a balance of manmade, natural, open-ended resources and technology to support all areas of children's learning and development, reflecting and valuing diversity
- a carefully planned day that allows children to make choices, follow their interests, have quiet reflective times and times when they are more active, supported by practitioners who are knowledgeable about each child's interests and needs
- practitioners who have high expectations for all children to develop to their full potential, providing interactions that encourage and extend children's ideas, thinking, communication and language development
- practitioners who work with parents and any fellow professionals to establish cohesive and complementary ways to support children's progress at home, in the nursery and in any other setting.

Health, safety and well-being

Children develop warm and trusting relationships with dedicated practitioners who help them feel secure, form relationships with others, develop independence and learn how to keep themselves healthy and safe.

This is demonstrated by:

- effective safeguarding procedures understood and implemented by all practitioners to help ensure all children are safe from harm
- positive relationships between practitioners and children that provide secure attachments resulting in happy, healthy and motivated children who feel safe and are listened to
- robust policies to ensure high standards of care, safety and hygiene and promote children's growing independence in their personal care
- practitioners who have a clear understanding of their role in supporting children and families to make healthy and safe choices in life, and who work with families and fellow professionals to help achieve this
- a nursery ethos and environment that promotes positive behaviour and all children's well-being, tackling any bullying or discrimination
- children who make relationships with adults and other children and who are learning to cooperate and be sensitive to others
- provision of a balanced diet for children following appropriate nutritional guidelines
- a commitment to promoting children's physical development in every sense, minimising sedentary behaviour/time.

Leadership and management

Leaders and managers use business acumen, research, reflection and evaluation to develop a sustainable business underpinned by sound policies, procedures and practices to help children have the best start in life.

This is demonstrated by:

- an on-going drive for quality improvement, underpinned by a good sense of self-awareness, which arises from robust self-evaluation and reflection involving all those with an interest in the nursery; such as practitioners, parents, children and fellow professionals
- a clear vision for the future, underpinned by aims and objectives where leaders and managers successfully initiate and implement plans to achieve these and monitor progress towards them
- robust, long-term business and financial planning to support a sustainable business based on analysis of local need, use of data and other evidence and reporting on impact to inform change and/or growth
- up-to-date, comprehensive and well-deployed policies and procedures that are regularly reviewed and monitored
- clearly designated lines of authority with appropriate delegation of responsibility
- supervision and performance management arrangements that involve regular monitoring of practitioners, to ensure they are deployed appropriately with the children's best interests at heart, and practitioners are given the support they might need to develop their skills or to help their own well-being
- a strong commitment to sharing information and partnership working with parents, fellow professionals and key agencies to ensure every child has the best possible start in life and is kept healthy, safe and free from harm

- regular monitoring of outcomes for children to make sure that individual children and cohorts of children - taking into account their age, gender, background or abilities - are making the best possible progress.
- leaders and managers take into account UNCRC embedding these principles into every day practice including the development of policies, procedures and training.

The workforce

Committed practitioners enjoy their work, reflect on the impact of their engagement with children and take responsibility for improving on what they do through regular participation in professional development.

This is demonstrated by:

- support for practitioners to develop reflective practice and good self-awareness through supervision and performance monitoring strategies
- commitment by everyone (leaders, managers and practitioners) to engage in relevant continued professional development that is evaluated and demonstrates a positive impact on outcomes for children
- recruitment and retention processes that ensure that people with the right qualifications, training, skills, positive attitudes and attributes are selected and retained
- practitioners who are able to demonstrate well-embedded knowledge of children's development and use this to observe and assess children's progress and plan for children's next steps
- practitioners who enjoy working with children, are nurturing, caring and have a genuine interest in each child's well-being, development and play and who take a pride in children's achievements
- practitioners who support children's progress through effective partnerships with parents, fellow professionals and key agencies helping parents access any help they need
- practitioners who help children to become confident, communicative and curious individuals who look forward to life beyond nursery because they nurture, celebrate and enhance children's differing individual capabilities.

Appendix 1: A summary of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 1 (definition of the child)

Everyone under the age of 18 has all the rights in the Convention.

Article 2 (non-discrimination)

The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.

Article 3 (best interests of the child)

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 4 (implementation of the Convention)

Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights by creating systems and passing laws that promote and protect children's rights.

Article 5 (parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities)

Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents and carers to provide guidance and direction to their child as they grow up, so that they fully enjoy their rights. This must be done in a way that recognises the child's increasing capacity to make their own choices.

Article 6 (life, survival and development)

Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential.

Article 7 (birth registration, name, nationality, care)

Every child has the right to be registered at birth, to have a name and nationality, and, as far as possible, to know and be cared for by their parents.

Article 8 (protection and preservation of identity)

Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child's name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.

Article 9 (separation from parents)

Children must not be separated from their parents against their will unless it is in their best interests (for example, if a parent is hurting or neglecting a child). Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this could cause them harm.

Article 10 (family reunification)

Governments must respond quickly and sympathetically if a child or their parents apply to live together in the same country. If a child's parents live apart in different countries, the child has the right to visit and keep in contact with both of them.

Article 11 (abduction and non-return of children)

Governments must do everything they can to stop children being taken out of their own country illegally by their parents or other relatives, or being prevented from returning home.

Article 12 (respect for the views of the child)

Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life.

Article 13 (freedom of expression)

Every child must be free to express their thoughts and opinions and to access all kinds of information, as long as it is within the law.

Article 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion)

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

Article 15 (freedom of association)

Every child has the right to meet with other children and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights.

Article 16 (right to privacy)

Every child has the right to privacy. The law should protect the child's private, family and home life, including protecting children from unlawful attacks that harm their reputation.

Article 17 (access to information from the media)

Every child has the right to reliable information from a variety of sources, and governments should encourage the media to provide information that children can understand. Governments must help protect children from materials that could harm them.

Article 18 (parental responsibilities and state assistance)

Both parents share responsibility for bringing up their child and should always consider what is best for the child. Governments must support parents by creating support services for children and giving parents the help they need to raise their children.

Article 19 (protection from violence, abuse and neglect)

Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20 (children unable to live with their family)

If a child cannot be looked after by their immediate family, the government must give them special protection and assistance. This includes making sure the child is provided with alternative care that is continuous and respects the child's culture, language and religion.

Article 21 (adoption)

Governments must oversee the process of adoption to make sure it is safe, lawful and that it prioritises children's best interests. Children should only be adopted outside of their country if they cannot be placed with a family in their own country.

Article 22 (refugee children)

If a child is seeking refuge or has refugee status, governments must provide them with appropriate protection and assistance to help them enjoy all the rights in the Convention. Governments must help refugee children who are separated from their parents to be reunited with them.

Article 23 (children with a disability)

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.

Article 24 (health and health services)

Every child has the right to the best possible health. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 25 (review of treatment in care)

If a child has been placed away from home for the purpose of care or protection (for example, with a foster family or in hospital), they have the right to a regular review of their treatment, the way they are cared for and their wider circumstances.

Article 26 (social security)

Every child has the right to benefit from social security. Governments must provide social security, including financial support and other benefits, to families in need of assistance.

Article 27 (adequate standard of living)

Every child has the right to a standard of living that is good enough to meet their physical and social needs and support their development. Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.

Article 28 (right to education)

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education

must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children's dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Article 29 (goals of education)

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 30 (children from minority or indigenous groups)

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

Article 31 (leisure, play and culture)

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Article 32 (child labour)

Governments must protect children from economic exploitation and work that is dangerous or might harm their health, development or education. Governments must set a minimum age for children to work and ensure that work conditions are safe and appropriate.

Article 33 (drug abuse)

Governments must protect children from the illegal use of drugs and from being involved in the production or distribution of drugs.

Article 34 (sexual exploitation)

Governments must protect children from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation.

Article 35 (abduction, sale and trafficking)

Governments must protect children from being abducted, sold or moved illegally to a different place in or outside their country for the purpose of exploitation.

Article 36 (other forms of exploitation)

Governments must protect children from all other forms of exploitation, for example the exploitation of children for political activities, by the media or for medical research.

Article 37 (inhumane treatment and detention)

Children must not be tortured, sentenced to the death penalty or suffer other cruel or degrading treatment or punishment. Children should be arrested, detained or imprisoned only as a last resort and for the shortest time possible. They must be treated with respect and care, and be able to keep in contact with their family. Children must not be put in prison with adults.

Article 38 (war and armed conflicts)

Governments must not allow children under the age of 15 to take part in war or join the armed forces. Governments must do everything they can to protect and care for children affected by war and armed conflicts.

Article 39 (recovery from trauma and reintegration)

Children who have experienced neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture or who are victims of war must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

Article 40 (juvenile justice)

A child accused or guilty of breaking the law must be treated with dignity and respect. They have the right to legal assistance and a fair trial that takes account of their age. Governments must set a minimum age for children to be tried in a criminal court and manage a justice system that enables children who have been in conflict with the law to reintegrate into society.

Article 41 (respect for higher national standards)

If a country has laws and standards that go further than the present Convention, then the country must keep these laws.

Article 42 (knowledge of rights)

Governments must actively work to make sure children and adults know about the Convention.

The Convention has 54 articles in total. Articles 43–54 are about how adults and governments must work together to make sure all children can enjoy all their rights, including:

Article 45

Unicef can provide expert advice and assistance on children's rights.

Optional protocols

There are three agreements called Optional Protocols that strengthen the Convention and add further unique rights for children. They are optional because governments that ratify the Convention can decide whether or not to sign up to these Optional Protocols. They are: the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on a complaints mechanism for children (called Communications Procedure).

For more information go to unicef.org.uk

Appendix 2: Research and other publications

- Brooker L, Rogers S, Ellis D, Hallet E and Robert-Holmes G (2010) *Practitioners' experiences of the EYFS*, Department for Education
- Department for Education (2011) *Early years evidence pack*
- Ellyatt W (2015) *Towards an Integrated Understanding of the Child*, Save Childhood Movement
- Garrick R, Bath C, Dunn K, Maconochie H, Willis B and Wolstenholme C (2010) *Children's Experiences of the Early Years Foundation Stage*, Department for Education
- Mathers S, Singler R and Karemaker A (2012) *Improving Quality in the Early Years: a comparison of perspectives and measures*
- Nutbrown C (2012) *Foundations for Quality. The independent review of early education and childcare qualifications*, Department for Education
- OECD (2010) *Overview of Country Approaches to Standards, Curriculum and Pedagogy for Quality early education and care*
- Ofsted 2015 *Teaching and play in the early years- a balancing act?*
- Ofsted 2014 *Are you ready? Good practice in school readiness Rights*
- Save Childhood Movement (2016) *Children's Charter of Development Rights*
- School Food Trust (2011) *Laying the Table. Recommendations for National Food and Nutrition Guidance for Early Years Settings in England. Volume 1: Main report*, School Food Trust
- Siraj I, Kingston D (2015) *An Independent Review of the Scottish Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) Workforce and Out of School Care (OSC) Workforce*
- Siraj I, Kingston,D (2014) *An Independent Stocktake of the Foundation Phase in Wales Final Report*
- Siraj I, Kingston D and Melhuish E (2015) *Assessing Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care. Sustained Shared Thinking and Emotional Well-being (SSTEW) Scale for 2–5 year-olds provision*
- Sylva K, Melhuish E, Sammons P, Siraj-Blatchford I and Taggart B (2004) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Findings from Pre-school to end of Key Stage 1*
- Sylva K, Melhuish E, Sammons P, Siraj-Blatchford I and Taggart B (2008) *The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Final report from the primary phase: pre-school, school, and family influences on children's development during Key Stage 2 (age 7–11)*
- Sylva K, Melhuish E, Sammons P, Siraj-Blatchford I and Taggart B (2012) *Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education 3-14 Project (EPPSE 3-14) Report from the Key Stage 3 Phase: Influences on Students' Development from Age 11*
- Sylva K, Melhuish E, Sammons P, Siraj I and Taggart B with Smees R, Toth K, Welcomme W and Hollingworth K (2014) *Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education EPPSE 3-16 project Students' Educational and Developmental Outcomes at age 16*
- Tickell C (2011) *The Early Years Foundation Stage Review: report on the evidence*
- Tickell C (2011) *The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning*
- World Health Organization (2015) *Physical Activity Strategy for the WHO European Regions 2016 - 2025*
- United Nations (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child*