

Update from Ofsted

Wendy Ratcliff, HMI, Principal Officer, Early Education
Caroline Hearn, Specialist Adviser, Early Years Regulatory Policy

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Sir Martyn Oliver, HMCI



'Children only get one childhood, and getting those precious early years right is absolutely crucial. Without the building blocks laid in the first few years of a child's life, they may fall behind in language and communication, struggle in school, need additional help later in life, and find it difficult to form meaningful relationships. Ultimately, they may not be able to reach their full potential.'

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Research and analysis

Best start in life part 1: setting the scene

Updated 8 September 2023

Applies to England

Contents

- Introduction
- The early years context from birth to age 4
- Staff in the early years sector
- The principles behind our early years research review
- Early years curriculum and pedagogy
- Curriculum
- Teaching in the early years
- Based on this research review, high-quality curriculum and pedagogy may have the following features

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Introduction

A high-quality early years education is vitally important. Children attend early years provision at a crucial developmental point in their lives. The education and care that they receive affects not only future educational attainment but also their future health and happiness.

This report is part of our series of subject-based curriculum research reviews. [\[footnote 1\]](#) Our 2017 report 'Bold beginnings' and the more recent schools research reviews covered the Reception Year of the early years foundation stage (EYFS), whereas this review focuses on the pre-school age range, from birth to 4 years. [\[footnote 2\]](#) Its purpose is to support early years practitioners to raise the quality of early years education.

This review examines the factors that contribute to a high-quality early education. We explore literature relating to early years education, drawing on a range of sources, including academic and policy literature.

This review considers:

- the early years context for children aged from birth to 4 years
- staffing in the early years sector
- the principles behind the early years research review series
- early years curriculum and pedagogy

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Best start in life part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning

Updated 8 September 2023

Applies to England

Contents

- Introduction
- Summary of findings
- Summary of findings from part 2
- Communication and language
- Key messages for practitioners
- Physical development
- Key messages for practitioners
- Personal, social and emotional development
- Key messages for practitioners
- Conclusion

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Introduction

This report is part of our series of subject-based curriculum research reviews. Its purpose is to support early years practitioners in raising the quality of early years education. The report has [3 parts](#):

- part 1: setting the scene
- part 2: the 3 prime areas of learning
- part 3: the 4 specific areas of learning

[Part 1](#) examined the factors that contribute to a high-quality education in the early years. It considered:

- the early years context
- staffing
- curriculum and pedagogy

Updates to our handbooks

Our inspection methodology remains the same and we continue to inspect in line with the principles and requirements of the EYFS.

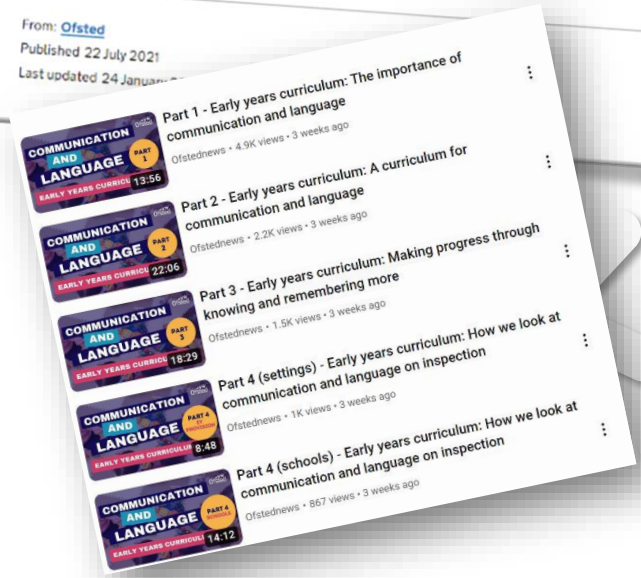
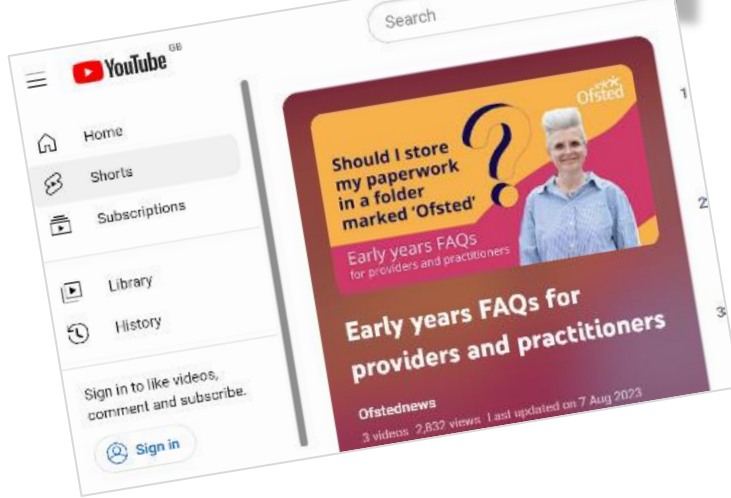
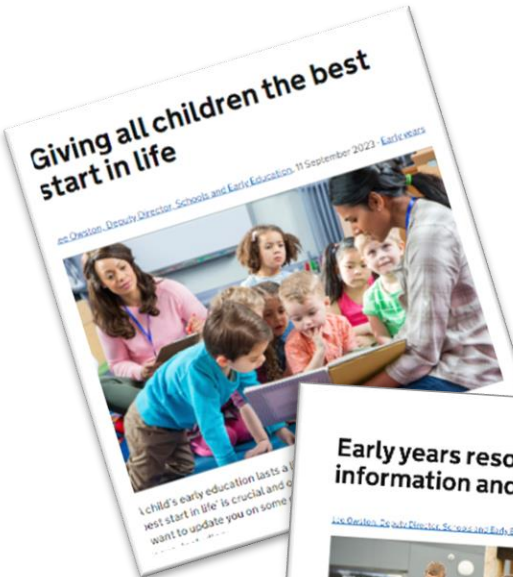
We have:

- made clear our expectations for inspector conduct during an inspection
- updated our complaints policies. Next month the handbook will include all policy changes following the consultation held over summer 2023
- clarified what our inspectors will do to ensure leaders' and staff's well-being during inspections.





Resources for providers and practitioners



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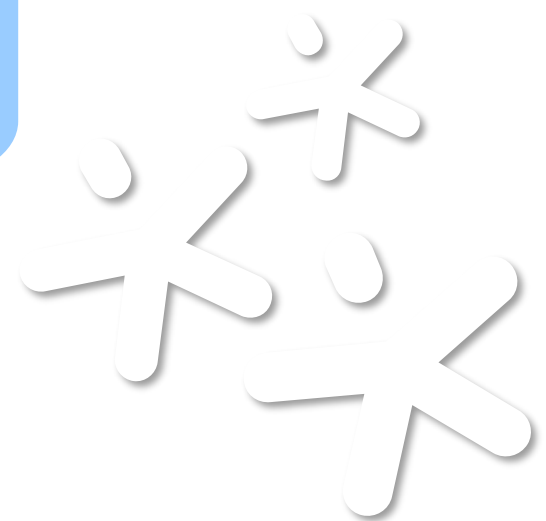


Big Listen





The Big Listen is a wide-reaching and comprehensive effort to hear from the full range of professionals and providers Ofsted works with, as well as the parents, carers, children and learners Ofsted works for.





What is the Big Listen

- ➔ We want to see high standards and positive outcomes for all children
- ➔ We will listen to feedback, criticism and ideas for small changes or big reforms
- ➔ If your work, your children, your decisions, your education or your care are impacted by what we do, we want to hear from you
- ➔ Ofsted will carefully analyse all the responses to the Big Listen consultation and publish its conclusions and plans later this year.



What is the Big Listen



A wide-ranging consultation focusing on four themes:

- 1 How we report our findings
- 2 How we carry out inspections
- 3 How we can have a positive impact on the sectors we inspect
- 4 What we need to do to be a world-class inspectorate and regulator, trusted by parents, children and the sectors we work with



Independently led surveys and focus groups



Events like this





To take part in the Big Listen



gov.uk/ofstedbiglisten

The consultation closes 31 May 2024



Q&A

