

EYFS – Progression of Skills



This document outlines the progression of skills across the Early Years Foundation Stage, from Nursery through to Reception. It is designed to support high-quality teaching, learning and assessment, ensuring clear development across all areas of learning.

The progression reflects the expectations of the EYFS Framework and is informed by Development Matters / Birth to Five Matters, supporting a clear journey from early development to the Early Learning Goals at the end of Reception.

Children are supported to develop skills through a balance of:

- Adult-led teaching
- Child-initiated learning
- Play-based experiences
- High-quality interactions

Learning opportunities are carefully planned to ensure progression over time, while remaining responsive to children's interests, needs and stages of development.

The document is organised by:

- Prime and Specific Areas of Learning
- Age phases (Younger Nursery (3yr olds), Older Nursery, Reception)
- Termly progression
- End of Reception Early Learning Goals

This ensures a clear overview of how knowledge, skills and understanding build over time, supporting children to become confident, independent and capable learners, ready for the next stage of their education.

Communication and Language			
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Younger Nursery	Understand single words in context (milk, cup, toy) General focus on an activity of their own choice	Understand simple instructions (e.g. 'tidy time', 'snack time') Begin to make themselves understood; say how they are feeling using words and actions	In pretend play, start to develop a level of conversation Begin to use clear speech to express their needs
Older Nursery	Use a wide range of vocabulary Pay attention to more than one thing at a time	Use longer sentences with increased accuracy Develop an understanding of 'why' questions and follow instructions with more parts	Express their point using words and actions Start a conversation to organise their play with peers
Reception	Listen to and talk about stories Learn and use new vocabulary, including asking purposeful questions	Predict what will happen in stories and events Articulate ideas and thoughts in well-formed sentences (using 'and', 'because')	Recount and retell stories and events in order, using new vocabulary (including non-fiction) Use talk to organise thinking, work out problems and offer explanations

Early Learning Goals (ELG) at the end of Reception

Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions during whole-class discussions, story time and small group interactions
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding
- Hold conversations when engaged in back-and-forth exchanges with adults and peers

Speaking

- Participate in small group, class and one-to-one discussions, offering their own ideas and using recently taught vocabulary
- Offer explanations for why things might happen, drawing on vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems

- Express their ideas and feelings using full sentences, including past, present and future tenses, and begin to use conjunctions, with adult modelling and support

Personal, Social and Emotional Development			
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Younger Nursery	Play with increasing confidence on their own and alongside other children, sometimes needing adult support Express a range of emotions (e.g. happy, sad)	Play with increasing confidence on their own and alongside other children, sometimes needing adult support Express a range of emotions (e.g. happy, sad)	Play with increasing confidence, collaborating with other children Talk about and explore their emotions in a more elaborate way (e.g. "I am sad because...")
Older Nursery	Play with one or more children to extend and elaborate their ideas Recognise that there are rules and routines Show more confidence in new situations and routines	Develop an understanding of turn-taking and begin to resolve conflicts Develop a sense of responsibility for following rules and routines Develop independence in meeting their own care needs (e.g. beginning to put on their coat and shoes)	Use a range of strategies to resolve conflicts by talking to others Follow, understand and remember the need for rules and routines Show increasing independence in care needs and making healthy choices (e.g. putting on their own coat and shoes)
Reception	Build positive relationships with others Follow, understand and remember the need for new rules and routines Begin to manage their own needs with support (e.g. changing for PE)	Develop respectful relationships and consider others' feelings Show resilience and perseverance in new situations Manage their own needs (e.g. toileting, belongings, changing for PE)	Build co-operative relationships, taking into account the perspectives of adults and peers Show confidence in working towards and achieving their goals Demonstrate increased independence in managing their own needs and understanding the importance of healthy choices

Early Learning Goals (ELG) at the end of Reception

Self-Regulation

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly
 - Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate
 - Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity and follow instructions involving several ideas or actions
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Managing Self

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge
 - Explain the reasons for rules, know right from wrong and try to behave accordingly
 - Manage their own basic hygiene and personal needs, including dressing, toileting and understanding the importance of healthy choices
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Building Relationships

- Work and play cooperatively and take turns with others
- Form positive attachments to adults and friendships with peers
- Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs

Physical Development			
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Younger Nursery	Begin to move to music, showing control of their body Begin to use cutlery with modelled support and are encouraged to sit at the table to eat Begin to explore a range of tools (scissors, paint brushes, tweezers)	Develop their bodies to move in different ways (e.g. kicking, rolling and catching a ball) Develop use of cutlery with modelled support and are encouraged to sit at the table to eat Develop skills using a range of tools (scissors, paint brushes, tweezers)	Use large and small motor skills to develop their coordination, including using large wheeled toys With increased confidence, independently use cutlery most of the time whilst sitting at the table Confidently use a range of tools (paint brushes, cutting tools, pencils, tweezers)
Older Nursery	Continue to develop movement, balance and riding skills With increased confidence, begin to use a knife and fork and sit at the table to eat for longer periods Begin to use tools and equipment for mark making, including scissors	Develop the ability to create team games and physical activities with peers Develop the use of a knife and fork and sit at the table to eat Develop use of tools with a more comfortable grip and increased control	Confidently collaborate with others in team challenges, selecting their own equipment Confidently use a knife and fork and sit at the table to eat Use their dominant hand with increasing accuracy when using a range of tools
Reception	Build on earlier movement skills to develop greater control Develop fine motor skills to use a range of tools competently and safely	Develop core muscle strength to achieve good posture for fine motor development Build the foundations for writing through a range of fine motor activities	Confidently use a range of movements to develop overall body strength and coordination Confidently use tools for writing, creating, cutting and eating

Early Learning Goals (ELG) at the end of Reception

Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others
 - Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination when playing
 - Move energetically, such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing
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Fine Motor Skills

- Hold a pencil effectively in preparation for fluent writing, using the tripod grip in most cases
- Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes and cutlery
- Show increasing accuracy and care when drawing

Literacy			
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Younger Nursery	Begin to listen carefully to different sounds and identify them (environmental, animal, instrument sounds) Begin to notice print in the environment Begin to listen to stories and develop favourite books to share with adults Begin to use marks in different areas and sometimes give meaning to them	Develop the ability to listen to different sounds and recognise what is creating them Develop the ability to create different sounds using their voice, body and instruments Develop understanding of print (e.g. recognising logos and familiar signs) Develop the ability to listen and respond to stories, joining in with repeated phrases Begin to make marks and link meaning to them	Confidently listen and respond to stories, retelling some parts Confidently listen to and name sounds they hear in the environment and in adult-led activities Confidently recognise some print, including their name (at least initial letter) and familiar signs/logos Confidently use their voice and body to create sounds Confidently use marks to represent meaning
Older Nursery	Begin to discriminate between some individual sounds	Develop discrimination and production of individual sounds (e.g. recognising words that begin with the same sound)	Begin to link letters to sounds (e.g. through phonics teaching such as RWI)

	Begin to recognise that print in books has meaning Begin to use marks to represent writing Begin to recognise the different parts of a book Begin to tell simple stories, including real-life events and imaginative ideas	Develop recognition of rhyme and syllables Develop oral blending of sounds Begin early writing using letters from their name Develop storytelling using imagination, fantasy and familiar story themes	Confidently write some letters from their name and other taught letters Confidently orally blend sounds and begin blending letters when reading Confidently tell stories involving real and imaginary events Begin to write parts of their own stories
Reception	Begin to read and blend initial phonics sounds Begin to segment and blend sounds to read simple words Begin to read some common exception (tricky) words Write some letters using correct formation Begin to write simple words with support	Develop fluency with initial phonics sounds and begin to learn further sounds Develop the ability to blend and segment to read words and simple sentences Continue to learn and recognise more tricky words by sight	Confidently read a range of phonics sounds Confidently segment and blend to read sentences Increase the number of tricky words they can read by sight Form most letters correctly and begin using capital letters Write simple sentences, captions and labels Begin to independently compose writing (e.g. think, say, write, check) Retell and create stories using story maps

Early Learning Goals (ELG) at the end of Reception

Comprehension

- Demonstrate understanding of what has been read by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary
- Anticipate key events in stories
- Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and during role play

Word Reading

- Say a sound for each letter in the alphabet and at least 10 digraphs
- Read words consistent with their phonic knowledge by sound-blending

- Read aloud simple sentences and books that match their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words

Writing

- Write recognisable letters, most of which are correctly formed
- Spell words by identifying sounds and representing them with letters
- Write simple phrases and sentences that can be read by others

Mathematics			
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Younger Nursery	Begin to use number names Start to notice numerals in the environment Explore grouping objects and changes in quantity (more/less) Begin to explore shapes and sort objects by simple features (e.g. colour, shape)	Begin to say numbers Create small groups and notice when quantities change Recognise some numerals (e.g. 1–2) Explore shapes, size and measure using everyday language (big, small, long, heavy) Begin to use simple time language (e.g. now, next, lunchtime)	Count numbers up to 3 Begin to subitise small quantities Recognise changes in quantity and compare small groups Explore shape and position through play Begin to use language related to time and compare size and weight
Older Nursery	Count up to 3 and recognise numerals to 3 Say how many objects they can see (up to 3) Explore shapes and patterns Use positional language (e.g. behind, on top) Begin to compare size and use simple time language	Count up to 5 Begin to subitise up to 3 Compare quantities using 'more' and 'fewer' Recognise and name common 2D shapes Begin solving simple problems through play (sorting, grouping, patterns)	Count up to 10 Match quantities to numerals (up to 5) Solve simple real-life maths problems (e.g. sharing, combining) Explore patterns, shape and measure in greater detail Use mathematical language to compare number, size and position
Reception	Subitise and recognise numbers up to 5 Count reliably and match numbers to quantities (to 10)	Count forwards and backwards within 20 Develop understanding of number bonds within 10 Solve simple addition and subtraction problems	Secure understanding of numbers to 10 Recall number bonds within 5 and some to 10 Solve addition and subtraction problems confidently Explore doubling, sharing and grouping

	Begin to understand composition of numbers Compare quantities and explore patterns	Explore shape, measure and patterns with increasing accuracy	Apply maths skills in practical, real-life contexts
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Early Learning Goals (ELG) at the end of Reception

Number

- Have a secure understanding of numbers to 10, including how numbers are made and composed
- Subitise (recognise quantities without counting) up to 5
- Recall number bonds within 5 and some to 10, including simple doubling facts

Numerical Patterns

- Count confidently beyond 20, recognising patterns in the number system
- Compare quantities up to 10, identifying when one is more, less or equal
- Explore and recognise patterns within numbers, including doubles, odd/even and equal sharing

Understanding the World			
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Younger Nursery	Begin to talk about who is in their family	Develop connections between their own family and others	Talk about similarities and differences between their family and others (e.g. "I have a brother and you have a sister")
Older Nursery	Begin to develop a sense of self as an individual Begin to understand that living things (e.g. plants) need care	Develop positive attitudes towards differences between people Begin to grow and care for plants	Understand that everyone is unique and different Confidently talk about what plants need to grow and how to care for living things

Reception	Talk about their immediate family and familiar people Begin to understand the concepts of past, present and future (e.g. birthdays, events) Begin to explore where they live and compare it with other places	Describe familiar people and their roles Develop understanding of past events in their own lives Begin to use simple maps with adult support	Talk confidently about similarities and differences between families and communities Understand that people and communities are unique Talk about past and future events that are important to them Draw simple maps of familiar environments Begin to understand how to care for their local environment
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Early Learning Goals (ELG) at the end of Reception

Past and Present

- Talk about the lives of people around them and their roles in society
- Know some similarities and differences between the past and now, drawing on their own experiences and what has been read to them
- Understand the past through stories, characters and events

People, Culture and Communities

- Describe their immediate environment using knowledge from observation, discussion, stories and non-fiction texts
- Know some similarities and differences between different communities, including cultural and religious groups
- Talk about similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries

The Natural World

- Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing what they see
- Know some similarities and differences between the natural world and contrasting environments
- Understand key processes and changes in the natural world, including seasons and changes over time

Expressive Arts and Design			
	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Younger Nursery	Begin to make marks intentionally using a range of materials Enjoy listening to music and begin to join in with action songs	Explore and investigate a range of different materials Develop a love of familiar nursery rhymes and action songs	Create models and pictures that express their ideas Confidently join in with nursery rhymes and action songs
Older Nursery	Create models and pictures that express their ideas Confidently join in with nursery rhymes and action songs	Develop role play using small world resources (e.g. animals, dolls) Select and use materials for a purpose Develop a sense of rhythm when singing Add more detail to drawings (e.g. facial features)	Create more complex small world play and models using construction Join materials together for a specific purpose Confidently sing a range of familiar songs Begin to add expression to drawings (e.g. happy/sad faces)
Reception	Use construction equipment to create with a purpose Listen attentively and respond to music through singing and movement	Develop ideas in small world play and begin to share them with others Develop storylines and creativity through pretend play	Work collaboratively to create models and develop imaginative play Perform songs with increasing confidence, control and rhythm

Early Learning Goals (ELG) at the end of Reception

Creating with Materials

- Safely use and explore a range of materials, tools and techniques
 - Experiment with colour, design, texture and form to create purposeful outcomes
 - Share their creations and talk about the process they have used
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Being Imaginative and Expressive

- Invent, adapt and retell stories with peers and adults
- Take part in imaginative and role play, using props and materials
- Sing a range of familiar songs and rhymes
- Perform songs, rhymes, poems and stories with increasing confidence and expression