

What does DT look like in Early Years?

Guidance for subject leaders

The EYFS statutory framework has been updated and the revised document will need to be used in all early years' settings and schools from September 2021. It is important that subject leaders understand what their specialist subject looks like in early years; how key knowledge and skills are taught and what progression through these may look like. There is no requirement for schools to adopt a particular teaching style or method and the school curriculum as a whole needs to be considered, so it meets the needs of your children, families and community. The ELG should not be seen as your curriculum as this very narrow, merely a checkpoint for the end of the reception year. The revised EYFS still has seven areas of learning, rather than the individual subjects used within the National Curriculum but this document will highlight the main links between the two. Communication and Language development is key and is a 'golden thread' which runs through and underpins all other areas of learning, as does Personal, Social and Emotional Development. The statutory framework is supported by two non-statutory documents which schools can choose to use ('Development Matters' and 'Birth to 5 Matters'). The table below shows where learning in early years links to the NC programme of study in DT. These statements are basics upon which to build your full curriculum.



Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
Birth to Three – Babies and young toddlers will be learning to:	<p>Physical development Reach out for objects as co-ordination develops. Pass things from one hand to the other. Let go of things and hands them to another person, or drops them. Build independently with a range of appropriate resources.</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design Explore different materials, using all their senses to investigate them. Manipulate and play with different materials. Use their imagination as they consider what they can do with different materials. Make simple models which express their ideas.</p>	Range 1	<p>Expressive arts and design Reaches out for, touches and begins to hold objects, developing later on into being able to release grasp.</p> <p>Expressive arts and design Babies explore media and materials as part of their exploration of the world around them. See Characteristics of Effective Learning.</p>
		Range 2	<p>Physical Development Picks up objects in palmer grip and shakes, waves, bangs, pulls and tugs them between two hands while looking at them Enjoys the sensory experience of making marks in food, damp sand, water, mud, paste or paint Manipulates objects using hands singly and together, such as squeezing water out of a sponge</p> <p>Understanding the World Knows things are used in different ways, e.g. a ball for rolling or throwing, a toy car for pushing</p>

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
3 and 4 year olds will be learning to:	<p>Personal, Social and Emotional Development Select and use activities and resources, with help when needed. This helps them to achieve a goal they have chosen or one which is suggested to them.</p> <p>Physical Development Use large-muscle movements to wave flags and streamers, paint and make marks. Choose the right resources to carry out their own plan. Use one-handed tools and equipment, for example, making snips in paper with scissors.</p> <p>Understanding the world Explore how things work.</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design Make imaginative and complex 'small worlds' with blocks and construction kits, such as a city with different buildings and a park. Explore different materials freely, in order to develop their ideas about how to use them and what to make. Develop their own ideas and then decide which materials to use to express them. Create closed shapes with continuous lines and begin to use these shapes to represent objects. Join different materials and explore different textures.</p>	Range 3	<p>Personal, Social and Emotional Development Asserts their own ideas and preferences and takes notice of other people's responses Notices and becomes interested in the transformative effect of their action on materials and resources</p> <p>Physical Development Hands start to operate independently during a task that uses both, with each hand doing something different at the same time (e.g. holding a block in one hand and steadying the other block with the other hand).</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design Explores and experiments with a range of media (tools and materials including sound) and whole body movement, through multi-sensorial exploration Notices and becomes interested in the transformative effect of their action on materials and resources</p> <p>Understanding the World Explores objects by linking together different approaches: shaking, hitting, looking, feeling, tasting, mouthing, pulling, turning and poking Remembers where objects belong. • Matches parts of objects that fit together, e.g. puts lid on teapot</p>
		Range 4	<p>Physical Development May be beginning to show preference for dominant hand. and /or leg/foot Shows increasing control in holding, using and manipulating a range of tools and objects such as tambourines, jugs, hammers, and mark making tools</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design Experiments with ways to enclose a space, create shapes and represent actions, sounds and objects Uses 3D and 2D structures to explore materials and/or to express ideas</p> <p>Understanding the World Explores objects by linking together different approaches: shaking, hitting, looking, feeling, tasting, mouthing, pulling, turning and poking Remembers where objects belong. • Matches parts of objects that fit together, e.g. puts lid on teapot</p>

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
Children in reception will be learning to:	<p>Physical Development Progress towards a more fluent style of moving, with developing control and grace. Develop their small motor skills so that they can use a range of tools competently, safely and confidently. Use their core muscle strength to achieve a good posture when sitting at a table or sitting on the floor.</p> <p>Expressive arts and design Explore, use and refine a variety of artistic effects to express their ideas and feelings. Return to and build on their previous learning, refining ideas and developing their ability to represent them. Create collaboratively, sharing ideas, resources and skills.</p>	Range 5	<p>Physical Development Creates lines and circles pivoting from the shoulder and elbow Manipulates a range of tools and equipment in one hand, tools include paintbrushes, scissors, hairbrushes, toothbrush, scarves or ribbons</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design Uses various construction materials, e.g. joining pieces, stacking vertically and horizontally, balancing, making enclosures and creating spaces Uses tools for a purpose</p> <p>Understanding the World Talks about why things happen and how things work Shows an interest in technological toys with knobs or pulleys Shows skill in making toys work by pressing parts or lifting flaps to achieve effects such as sound, movements or new images</p>
		Range 6	<p>Personal, Social and Emotional Development Is proactive in seeking adult support and able to articulate their wants and needs. Can describe their competencies, what they can do well and are getting better at; describing themselves in positive but realistic terms Has a clear idea about what they want to do in their play and how they want to go about it Shows confidence in choosing resources and perseverance in carrying out a chosen activity</p> <p>Physical Development Uses simple tools to effect changes to materials. Handles tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control and intention. Shows a preference for a dominant hand</p>

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
			<p>Expressive Arts and Design Uses their increasing knowledge and understanding of tools and materials to explore their interests and enquiries and develop their thinking Develops their own ideas through experimentation with diverse materials, e.g. light, projected image, loose parts, watercolours, powder paint, to express and communicate their discoveries and understanding. Expresses and communicates working theories, feelings and understandings using a range of art forms, e.g. movement, dance, drama, music and the visual arts.</p> <p>Understanding the World Knows about similarities and differences in relation to places, objects, materials and living things</p>
<p>Early Learning Goal Physical Development- Fine Motor skills Children at the expected level of development will: - Use a range of small tools, including scissors, paintbrushes, and cutlery.</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design: Creating with Materials Children at the expected level of development will: - Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function. - Share their creations, explaining the process they have used.</p>			

Characteristics of Effective Learning

In planning and guiding what children learn, practitioners must reflect on the different rates at which children are developing and adjust their practice appropriately. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Characteristics children may display which will support future learning in DT

Playing and Exploring	Active Learning	Creating and thinking critically
<p>Development Matters Reach for and accept objects. Make choices and explore different resources and materials. Plan and think ahead about how they will explore or play with objects. Guide their own thinking by talking to themselves whilst playing. Make independent choices. Do things Independently that have been previously taught. Bring their own interests and fascinations into early years settings. This helps them to develop their learning Respond to new experiences that you bring to their attention.</p> <p>Birth to 5 Matters Showing curiosity about objects. Engage in open ended activity Showing particular interests Initiating activities Seeking challenge Showing a 'can do' attitude Taking a risk, engaging in new experiences, and learning by trial and error</p>	<p>Development Matters Use a range of strategies to reach a goal they have set themselves. Begin to correct their mistakes themselves. Keep on trying when things are difficult.</p> <p>Birth to 5 Matters Maintaining focus on their activity for a period of time Showing high levels of involvement, energy, fascination Not easily distracted Paying attention to details Persisting with an activity or toward their goal when challenges occur Showing a belief that more effort or a different approach will pay off, and that their skills can grow and develop (growth mindset) Bouncing back after difficulties Showing satisfaction in meeting their own goals (I can!) Being proud of how they accomplished something – not just the end result Enjoying meeting challenges for their own sake rather than external rewards or praise (intrinsic motivation)</p>	<p>Development Matters Review their progress as they try to achieve a goal. Check how well they are doing. Solve real problems. Know more, so feel confident about coming up with their own ideas. Concentrate on achieving something that's important to them. They are increasingly able to control their attention and ignore distractions.</p> <p>Birth to 5 Matters Thinking of ideas that are new and meaningful to the child Playing with possibilities (what if? what else?) Visualising and imagining options Finding new ways to do things Making links and noticing patterns in their experience Making predictions Testing their ideas Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect Planning, making decisions about how to approach a task, solve a problem and reach a goal Checking how well their activities are going Flexibly changing strategy as needed Reviewing how well the approach worked</p>

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Children in Early Years will learn DT through first-hand experiences. They are encouraged to explore, observe, solve problems, think critically, make decisions and talk about why they have made those decisions.

'This development requires regular and direct contact with the natural, built and virtual environments around the child and engaging children in collaborative activities which promote inquiry, problem-solving, shared decision-making and scientific approaches to understanding the world.' Birth to 5 Matters.

What DT might look like in Early Years, including in Indoor and Outdoor Provision






What you might see children doing	What you should see practitioners doing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being actively involved in creative projects linked to their interests. • Exploring/developing skills which have previously been taught by an adult. • Talking about what themselves and others have created. • Exploring a wide range of age appropriate resources which they can select themselves. • Having opportunities to work alongside adults to learn new skills and consolidate learning. • Having time to return to unfinished projects. • Developing independence in preparing and clearing away resources. • Creating both permanent and temporary creations. • Requesting (or accepting) additional resources from an adult in order to develop their ideas. • Having opportunity to display their creations for others to see. • Making choices about which materials and techniques to use to achieve their end goal. • Having frequent opportunities to explore various construction kits. • Dismantling things and learning about how everyday objects work. • Exploring existing products • Having opportunities to use a range of tools. • Children talking about planning and adapting their ideas. • Being active outdoors, constructing with loose parts, crates, planks, cardboard boxes, large wooden blocks. • Exploring, designing and making at the woodwork bench. • Exploring different textures and fabrics. • Exploring and engaging with cooking and baking activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering prior learning when planning opportunities. • Thinking about a logical sequence of skills development (not expecting children to use a skill they haven't been taught). • Considering children's interests. • Supporting children to solve problems and think critically. • Modelling different ways of being expressive through DT, but not expecting children to 'copy' what they have produced. • Providing opportunities for children to be inspired by and to respond to the work of others. • Instigating opportunities to consolidate and develop skills. • Valuing the process rather than just the product and not focusing on a pre-determined outcome. • Supporting children to develop their fine and gross motor skills to improve outcomes. • Challenging children who show well-developed skills and interest. • Providing a wide range of high quality, well organised resources linked to children's levels of development and prior learning. • Providing space and time for children to experiment and create with self-chosen resources. • Valuing all children's creations and giving specific feedback. • Modelling observational skills and the language to describe what they see. • Creating alongside children, following their lead and engaging in age appropriate conversations about the creative process. • Enhancing provision and providing provocation to stimulate interest in creative opportunities. • Teaching children how to prepare, transport and clear away resources. • Providing opportunities to discuss safety e.g. about hygiene or teaching hoe to use tools safely. • Using the language of designing and making e.g. join, build, heavier, lighter. • Looking for opportunities to notice and discuss materials around them – utensils in the kitchen, fabrics etc.

The Curriculum – What we want children to learn (Taken from Development Matters)

The curriculum is a top-level plan of everything the early years setting wants the children to learn.

- Planning to help every child to develop their language is vital.
- The curriculum needs to be ambitious. Careful sequencing will help children to build their learning over time.
- Young children's learning is often driven by their interests. Plans need to be flexible.
- Babies and young children do not develop in a fixed way. Their development is like a spider's web with many strands, not a straight line.
- Depth in early learning is much more important than covering lots of things in a superficial way.

Progression

		Cooking techniques	Joining techniques	Construction	Communication	Collaboration
2-year room		Stirring, mashing with a fork or potato masher	Using glue to join flat materials together	Transporting blocks, early building in rows, horizontally or stacked vertically. Lots of repetition at this stage Exploration of age appropriate construction kits	Gesture or simple verbal reply given in response to a simple question or comment about creations	Focused on own task with lots of adult input
Nursery/ Pre-school						
Reception Class		Chopping, grating ingredients, beating cake mixture and folding in egg	Developing the skills to use a varied range of joining techniques e.g. gluing, sewing/stitching, stapling, weaving, hole punching. Children develop more complex tearing and folding	More complex structures with understanding of pattern, shape and balance. More complex construction kits available to explore. Opportunities to build on large scale outdoors with loose parts. Den building from variety of resources	Own and others' creations discussed and evaluated using linked vocabulary Opportunities to talk about what makes activities safe or unsafe e.g. hygiene or when using tools	Collaboration with peers on shared projects in addition to individual creations.

Assessment in Early Years

As in the previous version of the EYFS the ELGS are not to be used or envisaged as a curriculum. The EYFS clearly states 'The ELGS are there to support teachers to make a holistic, best-fit judgement about a child's development and their readiness for Year One'. Observation checkpoints are included in Development Matters to support practitioners when considering whether children are on track or if additional support is needed.

'Assessment should not entail prolonged breaks from interaction with children, nor require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement and should not be required to prove this through collection of physical evidence- Statutory Framework for EYFS 2.2' (See document for more information about assessment, including the three statutory assessments in EY).

Useful links

Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf

Development Matters

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971620/Development_Matters.pdf

Birth to Five Matters

<https://www.birthto5matters.org.uk/#:~:text=%20Birth%20to%205%20Matters%3A%20non-statutory%20guidance%20for%20the,years%20Coalition%2C%20composed%20of%20the%20following...%20More%20>

Cumbria County Council- Loose Parts Document

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/537/1459/7037/17995/440969184.pdf?timestamp=44320142731>

Irresistible Learning – Early Years Woodwork

<https://irresistible-learning.co.uk/woodwork/>

Please note: This document is not to be used as a tick list for assessment or planning purposes. Its aim is to support with understanding the revised Statutory Framework and accompanying non-statutory guidance documents. These documents may also be useful for mixed age teachers, new to EY teachers, senior leaders and governors – Cumbria County Council Early Years Team.