

# What does History 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 Five Matters'). The table below shows where learning in early years links to the NC programme of study in History. Whilst there are not links in each age range, these statements are just basic bones upon which to build your full curriculum.



Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
Birth to Three – Babies and young toddlers will be learning to:	<b>Communication and Language</b> Show attention to sounds and music. Listen to simple stories and understand what is happening, with the help of the pictures. Understand simple questions about 'who', 'what' and 'where' (but generally not 'why').	Range 1	
		Range 2	<b>Mathematics</b> Gets to know and enjoys daily routines.

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
3 and 4 year olds will be learning to:	<p><b>Communication and language</b> Enjoy listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens.</p> <p><b>Understanding the World</b> Begin to make sense of their own life-story and family's history. Show interest in different occupations.</p>	Range 3	<p><b>Communication and language</b> Beginning to talk about people and things that are not present.</p> <p><b>Understanding the World</b> Is interested in photographs of themselves and other familiar people and objects.</p> <p><b>Mathematics</b> Associates a sequence of actions with daily routines. Beginning to understand that things might happen now or at another time.</p>
		Range 4	<p><b>Communication and language</b> Understands 'who', 'what', 'where' in simple questions (e.g. Who's that/can? What's that? Where is?). Uses a variety of questions (e.g. what, where, who).</p> <p><b>Understanding the World</b> Has a sense of own immediate family and relations.</p> <p><b>Mathematics</b> Beginning to understand some talk about immediate past and future.</p>
Children in reception will be learning to:	<p><b>Communication and language</b> Describe events in some detail. Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text; some as exact repetition and some in their own words. Engage in non-fiction books.</p> <p><b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b> Think about the perspectives of others.</p> <p><b>Mathematics</b> Begin to describe a sequence of events, real or fictional, using words such as 'first', 'then...'</p> <p><b>Understanding the World</b> Name and describe people who are familiar to them Comment on images of familiar situations in the past. Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.</p>	Range 5	<p><b>Communication and Language</b> Listens to familiar stories with increasing attention and recall. Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories. Able to use language in recalling past experiences. Can retell a simple past event in correct order (e.g. went down slide, hurt finger).</p> <p><b>Understanding the World</b> Remembers and talks about significant events in their own experience. Shows interest in the lives of people who are familiar to them.</p> <p><b>Mathematics</b> Sequences a small number of familiar events and beginning to respond to and use words such as 'before', 'after', 'soon' or 'later'.</p>

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
		Range 6	<p><b>Communication and Language</b> Understands questions such as 'who; why; when; where and how'. Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations Links statements and sticks to a main theme or intention</p> <p><b>Understanding the World</b> Talks about past and present events in their own life and in the lives of family members.</p> <p><b>Literacy</b> Enjoys an increasing range of print and digital books, both fiction and non-fiction. Re-enacts and reinvents stories they have heard in their play. Knows that information can be retrieved from books, computers and mobile digital devices.</p> <p><b>Mathematics</b> Orders and sequences events using everyday language related to time. Beginning to experience measuring time with timers and calendars.</p>
<p><b>Early Learning Goal – Past and Present</b> Children at the expected level of development will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society;</li> <li>- Know some similarities and differences between things in the past and now, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;</li> <li>- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.</li> </ul>			

## Characteristics which may support future learning in History

Playing and Exploring	Active Learning	Creating and thinking critically
<p><b>Development Matters</b> Respond to new experiences that you bring to their attention.</p> <p><b>Birth to 5 Matters</b> Showing curiosity about objects, events and people. Engaging in open-ended activity. Showing particular interests Pretending objects are things from their experience. Representing their experiences in play. Taking on a role in their play. Acting out experiences with other people.</p>	<p><b>Development Matters</b> Begin to predict sequences because they know routines. For example, they may anticipate lunch when they see the table being set, or get their coat when the door to the outdoor area opens.</p> <p><b>Birth to 5 Matters</b> Showing a deep drive to know more about people and their world. Showing high levels of involvement, energy, fascination. Paying attention to details.</p>	<p><b>Birth to 5 Matters</b> Making links and noticing patterns in their experience Developing ideas of grouping, sequences, cause and effect.</p>







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*'Early years history should provide opportunities to expand the children's knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past and develop children's investigative and interpretive skills. Children should focus on: Questioning; observation; Generating thoughts and ideas; Planning; Carrying out investigations; Recording findings; Checking and questioning findings; Presenting explanations'* (Taken from: [www.History.org.uk](http://www.History.org.uk))

## What History 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"> <li>• Talking about their daily and weekly routine.</li> <li>• Sequencing events from stories.</li> <li>• Using language connected with sequencing and the passing of time.</li> <li>• Talking about the lives of other members of their family.</li> <li>• Recounting memories of special celebrations.</li> <li>• Showing an interest in the passing of time and how things change.</li> <li>• Noticing changes in the seasons.</li> <li>• Exploring objects or photographs from the past.</li> <li>• Finding information about the past in books and use technology.</li> <li>• Showing interest and talking about how they have changed and grown since they were a baby.</li> <li>• Looking at objects or books to find out about the past.</li> <li>• Role-playing special events they have enjoyed and participated in.</li> <li>• Drawing and writing about recent or past events.</li> <li>• Exploring their own interests which have a historical links, for example finding out about dinosaurs.</li> <li>• Acting out historical events with small world play figures.</li> <li>• Asking questions about past events.</li> <li>• Exploring their local area through the eyes of a 'historian'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching and modelling language associated with the passing of time, future, past and present.</li> <li>• Talking to children about past events in their lives and that of the children.</li> <li>• Providing opportunities to explore the local area and talk about past events and historical features.</li> <li>• Instigating opportunities for role play linked to past events in the children's lives and the lives of others.</li> <li>• Providing opportunities for sequencing activities in relation to stories.</li> <li>• Scaffolding conversations to recall prior learning.</li> <li>• Teaching children the days of the week and months of the year in sequence.</li> <li>• Stimulating curiosity through providing interesting resources and artefacts.</li> <li>• Considering prior learning when planning opportunities.</li> <li>• Considering children's interests.</li> <li>• Showing interest in the children as individuals.</li> <li>• Providing books and artefacts which promote discussion about how things change or what it was like in the past.</li> </ul>

## Progression

	Progression of Skills	Events	Sequencing	Interest	Resources	Language	Routines
2-year room		Shows interest in a photograph of a past event.	Can turn pages in a book.	Shows interest in themselves and their own life.	Will explore objects at a sensory level.	Uses simple language connected to the 'here and now'.	Will need adult support to follow a sequential daily routine.
Nursery/Pre-school							
Reception Class		Can talk about when something happened using language associated with the passage of time.	Can sequence events from a known story by ordering pictures and/or retelling the story in their own words.	Is interested in people around them and the lives of others. Can talk about their own family.	Can think about and give opinions in relation to how artefacts may have been used in the past.	Can switch between talking about the present, past and future whilst using appropriate language.	Will independently follow some aspects of a familiar routine.

## 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](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](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>