



Cumberland
Council

What does Reading look like in Early Years?

Guidance for subject leaders

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 Early Learning Goals should not be seen as your curriculum as this very narrow, merely a checkpoint for the end of the reception year. The EYFS 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 Reading. 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>Communication and Language</p> <p>Enjoy singing, music and toys that make sounds. Recognise and point to objects if asked about them. Develop pretend play: 'putting the baby to sleep' or 'driving the car to the shops'. Listen to simple stories and understand what is happening, with the help of the pictures.</p> <p>Literacy</p> <p>Enjoy songs and rhymes, tuning in and paying attention. Join in with songs and rhymes, copying sounds, rhythms, tunes and tempo. Say some of the words in songs and rhymes. Sing songs and say rhymes independently, for example, singing whilst playing. Enjoy sharing books with an adult. Pay attention and responds to the pictures or the words.</p>	Range 1	<p>Literacy</p> <p>Begins to notice and engage with sounds, symbols and pictures in the environment. Starts to touch and handle books and digital reading devices. Enjoys looking at books and other suitable printed or digital material with familiar people, and being read to.</p>
		Range 2	<p>Literacy</p> <p>Handles books, printed and digital reading material with interest. Responds to sounds in the environment such as cars, sirens and birds. Is interested in and explores the sounds made by banging and tapping familiar objects and simple instruments. Waves and taps arms, bounces or stamps to simple rhythms in songs and rhymes.</p>

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
	<p>Have favourite books and seeks them out, to share with an adult, with another child, or to look at alone.</p> <p>Repeat words and phrases from familiar stories.</p> <p>Ask questions about the book.</p> <p>Makes comments and shares their own ideas.</p> <p>Develop play around favourite stories using props.</p> <p>Notice some print, such as the first letter of their name, a bus or door number, or a familiar logo.</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design</p> <p>Show attention to sounds and music.</p> <p>Anticipate phrases and actions in rhymes and songs, like 'Peepo'.</p> <p>Join in with songs and rhymes, making some sounds.</p> <p>Enjoy and take part in action songs, such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star'.</p> <p>Start to develop pretend play, pretending that one object represents another.</p> <p>For example, a child holds a wooden block to her ear and pretends it's a phone.</p>		
3 and 4 year olds will be learning to:	<p>Communication and Language</p> <p>Enjoy listening to longer stories and can remember much of what happens.</p> <p>Use a wider range of vocabulary.</p> <p>Understand 'why' questions, like: "Why do you think the caterpillar got so fat?"</p> <p>Sing a large repertoire of songs.</p>	Range 3	<p>Communication and Language</p> <p>Listens to and enjoys rhythmic patterns in rhymes and stories</p> <p>Enjoys rhymes and demonstrates listening by trying to join in with actions or vocalisations.</p> <p>Copies familiar expressions, e.g. 'Oh dear', 'All gone'.</p>

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
	<p>Know many rhymes, be able to talk about familiar books, and be able to tell a long story.</p> <p>Literacy</p> <p>Understand the five key concepts about print:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print has meaning. • The names of different parts of a book. • Print can have different purposes. • Page sequencing. • We read English text from left to right and from top to bottom. <p>Develop their phonological awareness, so that they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot and suggest rhymes. • Count or clap syllables in words. • Recognise words with the same initial sound, such as money and mother. <p>Engage in extended conversations about stories, learning new vocabulary.</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design</p> <p>Take part in simple pretend play, using an object to represent something else even though they are not similar.</p> <p>Begin to develop complex stories using small world equipment like animal sets, dolls and dolls houses etc.</p> <p>Listen with increased attention to sounds.</p> <p>Remember and sing entire songs.</p>		<p>Literacy</p> <p>Literacy Is interested in and anticipates books and rhymes and may have favourites Begins to join in with actions and sounds in familiar song and book sharing experience.</p>
		Range 4	<p>Communication and Language</p> <p>Listens with interest to the noises adults make when they read stories.</p> <p>Literacy</p> <p>Has some favourite stories, rhymes, songs, poems or jingles.</p> <p>Repeats and uses words or phrases from familiar stories.</p> <p>Fills in the missing word or phrase in a known rhyme, story or game, e.g. 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a...'</p> <p>Begins to recognise familiar logos from children's popular culture, commercial print or icons for apps.</p> <p>Enjoys rhythmic and musical activity with percussion instruments, actions, rhymes and songs, clapping along with the beat and joining in with words of familiar songs and nursery rhymes.</p> <p>Physical Development</p> <p>Turns pages in a book, sometimes several at once</p>

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
Children in reception will be learning to:	<p>Communication and Language</p> <p>Understand how to listen carefully and why listening is important.</p> <p>Learn new vocabulary.</p> <p>Use new vocabulary through the day.</p> <p>Ask questions to find out more and to check they understand what has been said to them.</p> <p>Describe events in some detail. Engage in story times.</p> <p>Listen to and talk about stories to build familiarity and understanding.</p> <p>Retell the story, once they have developed a deep familiarity with the text; some as exact repetition and some in their own words.</p> <p>Use new vocabulary in different contexts.</p> <p>Listen carefully to rhymes and songs, paying attention to how they sound.</p> <p>Learn rhymes, poems and songs.</p> <p>Engage in non-fiction books.</p> <p>Listen to and talk about selected non-fiction to develop a deep familiarity with new knowledge and vocabulary.</p> <p>Literacy</p> <p>Read individual letters by saying the sounds for them.</p> <p>Blend sounds into words, so that they can read short words made up of letter-sound correspondences..</p>	Range 5	<p>Communication and Language</p> <p>Listens to familiar stories with increasing attention and recall Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories.</p> <p>Able to use language in recalling past experiences.</p> <p>Can retell a simple past event in correct order (e.g. went down slide, hurt finger.</p> <p>Uses talk to explain what is happening and anticipate what might happen next.</p> <p>Questions why things happen and gives explanations. Asks e.g. who, what, when, how.</p> <p>Literacy</p> <p>Listens to and joins in with stories and poems, when reading one-to-one and in small groups.</p> <p>Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories.</p> <p>Begins to be aware of the way stories are structured, and to tell own stories.</p> <p>Talks about events and principal characters in stories and suggests how the story might end.</p> <p>Shows interest in illustrations and words in print and digital books and words in the environment.</p> <p>Recognises familiar words and signs such as own name, advertising logos and screen icons.</p> <p>Looks at and enjoys print and digital books independently.</p> <p>Knows that print carries meaning and, in English, is read from left to right and top to bottom.</p>

Development Matters		Birth to 5 Matters	
	<p>Read some letter groups that each represent one sound and say sounds for them.</p> <p>Read a few common exception words matched to the school's phonic programme.</p> <p>Read simple phrases and sentences made up of words with known letter-sound correspondences and, where necessary, a few exception words.</p> <p>Re-read books to build up their confidence in word reading, their fluency and their understanding and enjoyment.</p> <p>Blend sounds into words, so that they can read short words made up of letter-sound correspondences.</p> <p>Understanding the World</p> <p>Compare and contrast characters from stories, including figures from the past.</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design</p> <p>Develop storylines in their pretend play.</p>		<p>Knows information can be relayed through signs and symbols in various forms (e.g. printed materials, digital screens and environmental print).</p> <p>Handles books and touch screen technology carefully and the correct way up with growing competence.</p> <p>Begins to navigate apps and websites on digital media using drop down menu to select websites and icons to select apps Shows awareness of rhyme and alliteration.</p> <p>Recognises rhythm in spoken words, songs, poems and rhymes.</p> <p>Claps or taps the syllables in words during sound play.</p> <p>Expressive Arts and Design</p> <p>Creates sounds, movements, drawings to accompany stories.</p> <p>Uses available resources to create props or creates imaginary ones to support play.</p>
		Range 6	<p>Communication and Language</p> <p>Able to follow a story without pictures or props.</p> <p>Uses language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences in play situations Introduces a storyline or narrative into their play.</p> <p>Literacy</p> <p>Enjoys an increasing range of print and digital books, both fiction and non-fiction.</p> <p>Uses vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by their experiences of reading.</p>

Development Matters	Birth to 5 Matters
	<p>Describes main story settings, events and principal characters in increasing detail.</p> <p>Re-enacts and reinvents stories they have heard in their play.</p> <p>Knows that information can be retrieved from books, computers and mobile digital devices.</p> <p>Is able to recall and discuss stories or information that has been read to them, or they have read themselves.</p> <p>Begins to recognise some written names of peers, siblings or 'Mummy' / 'Daddy' for example.</p> <p>Begins to develop phonological and phonemic awareness.</p> <p>Continues a rhyming string and identifies alliteration</p> <p>Hears and says the initial sound in words.</p> <p>Begins to segment the sounds in simple words and blend them together and knows which letters represent some of them.</p> <p>Starts to link sounds to letters, naming and sounding the letters of the alphabet o Begins to link sounds to some frequently used digraphs, e.g. ph, th, ey.</p> <p>Begins to read some high frequency words, and to use developing knowledge of letters and sounds to read simple phonically decodable words and simple sentences.</p> <p>Engages with books and other reading materials at an increasingly deeper level, sometimes drawing on their phonic knowledge to decode words, and their knowledge of language structure, subject knowledge and illustrations to interpret the text.</p>

Early Learning Goal

Communication and Language: Listening, attention and understanding

Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to and during whole class discussions and small group interactions.

Communication and Language: Speaking

Offer explanations for why things might happen, making use of recently introduced vocabulary from stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems when appropriate.

Literacy: 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 are consistent with their phonic knowledge, including some common exception words.

Literacy: Comprehension

Demonstrate understanding of what has been read to them by retelling stories and narratives using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.

Use and understand recently introduced vocabulary during discussions about stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems and during role play.

Anticipate (where appropriate) key events in stories.

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 Reading		
Playing and Exploring	Active Learning	Creating and thinking critically
<p>Development Matters Make independent choices. Do things independently that they 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 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. Initiating activities. Seeking challenge. Showing a 'can do' attitude.</p>	<p>Development Matters 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!).</p>	<p>Development Matters Take part in simple pretend play. For example, they might use an object like a brush to pretend to brush their hair, or 'drink' from a pretend cup. Use pretend play to think beyond the 'here and now' and to understand another perspective. For example, a child role-playing the billy goats gruff might suggest that "Maybe the troll is lonely and hungry? That's why he is fierce." Know more, so feel confident about coming up with their own ideas. Make more links between those ideas.</p> <p>Birth to 5 Matters Making links and noticing patterns in their experience. Making predictions.</p>

What does Reading look like in Early Years?

'Making sure that children become engaged with reading from the beginning is therefore one of the most important ways to make a difference to their life chances, whatever their socio-economic background. For this to happen, however, children need to learn to read as fluently as possible and be motivated to continue reading'. (Taken from the Reading Framework)

'It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words'. (Taken from Development Matters)

'Young children need to be listened to by attentive adults who recognise and value children's choices. They need enjoyable, playful opportunities of being included and involved in the literacy practices of their home, early years setting, and community environments. They need experiences of creating and sharing a range of texts in a variety of ways, with different media and materials, with adults and peers, both indoors and outdoors, as well as learning about using different signs and symbols, exploring sound and developing alphabetic and phonetic skills'. (Taken from Birth to 5 Matters)

"Don't confuse learning to read with learning to enjoy books said someone.... In fact, it's a brilliant idea to confuse learning to read with learning to enjoy books, because children who enjoy books will want to learn to read, go on reading, will understand books, will love books, will do unbelievably well at school". (Michael Rosen Oct 2010)

What Reading 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"> • Re-reading books to practise and improve their fluency. • Sharing and discussing pictures in non-fiction books. • Looking at non-fiction books linked to their experiences. • Talking to a partner and giving feedback. • Retelling/role playing favourite books. • Engaging in adult led well-paced, appropriate phonics sessions each day. • Sharing books in the book area/ across provision and outdoors. • Being enthralled by stories being read to the whole class, a group and to individual children. • Taking books home to share with their parents. • Learning and revisiting poems and songs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting a love of reading and books. • Providing a range of high quality, core texts. • Choosing books which are relevant to children's lives and which represent diversity/local communities. • Giving children time needed to process information and to formulate a reply. • Teaching children what good listening looks like. • Explaining new words to the children to increase their vocabulary and modelling these words in context. • Capturing children's imaginations. • Promoting reading to support learning across other areas. • Rephrasing and extending what the children say.

What you might see children doing	What you should see practitioners doing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading aloud books which match their level of phonic knowledge. • Being excited when a new book is introduced. • Including previous learning from books in their play. • Recognising logos, signs and print in the wider environment. • Reading simple texts as provocation for other learning. • Watching adults model the nuances of good story telling. • Listening to recorded electronic stories (in moderation). • Pretending to be a favourite storybook character. • Talking about favourite books. • Selecting their own name to self-register. • Requesting favourite songs and rhymes. • Experimenting with rhythm and rhyme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answering children’s questions. • Sharing how to find information in non-fiction books. • Teaching phonics following an agreed synthetic phonics programme. • Helping children to articulate their ideas. • Introducing children to a wide range of reading materials, not just books. • Teaching children to recall by connecting present and past events. • Rereading known stories. • Teaching vocabulary associated with thinking and knowledge. • Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs. • Displaying books so they are easy to find. • Arranging for visitors, other children and authors to read to the children. • Using key books as starting points for cross-curricular learning.







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

		Non-fiction books	Phonics	Role-play	Story Books	Story time	Rhymes/ Singing
2-year room		Starts to show interest in pictures, logos and signs.	Increasingly joins in with singing/ rhyming and basic phonological awareness activities.	May start to show interest in dressing up as a known character.	Engages with individual repeated reading of age-appropriate books, especially those with flaps/ texture.	Enjoys stories read to them individually or if appropriate as part of a small group.	Starts to join in with actions and some words to a small range of repeated songs.
Nursery/ Pre-school							
Reception Class		Enjoys finding information from age-appropriate texts.	Participates in daily discrete phonics sessions and applies knowledge in various contexts.	Actively engages in role play linked to familiar stories they have heard.	Can retell/ role play and talk about a range of high- quality key texts.	Requests favourite stories from an adult as well as engaging in group and class story time.	Can recite a range of songs/ rhymes and poems from memory.

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

[Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000986/Statutory_framework_for_the_early_years_foundation_stage.pdf)

Development Matters

[Development Matters - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000986/Development_matters.pdf)

Birth to Five Matters

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

Reading Framework

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1000986/Reading_framework_Teaching_the_foundations_of_literacy_-_July-2021.pdf

Cumbria's English Hub

<https://www.orgill.cumbria.sch.uk/english-hub/>

Cumberland Council Early Years Reading guidance documents available at:

[Early years advice and guidance | Cumberland Council](#)

Open a book – Support for reading in the Early Years

Roots to Reading – A guide to reading for 0 to 4s

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 – Cumberland Council Early Years Team.