

Changes to Development Matters

Top-level summary

- **The new guidance has almost exactly the same word-count as the early adopter 2020 version.** It's got more pages because of the redesign. Early Adopters asked for a more 'friendly' looking document.
- **Prime and Specific areas of learning:** there is one change to 'children will be learning to' in mathematics – so curriculum and other plans which are already in place will need only very minor changes to stay in line with the guidance. The maths change is on page 97: 'Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0–5 and some to 10.' Previously, it stated 'Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0–10.'
- **Characteristics of Effective Learning:** 2 items in 'children will be learning to' have been deleted. That's allowed some of the examples to be expanded, to improve clarity. There are also some changes which reflect expert advice, based on the most recent research.
- **There are 16 changes to 'examples of how to support this' in the Prime and Specific Areas** – these changes are mostly to make the exemplification clearer
- **Four items have moved from Physical Development to Personal, Social and Emotional Development** – this brings the organisation of the guidance into line with the organisation of the Early Learning Goals. Two items have been merged together, and the examples have been merged together too. The content is the same.
- **The introduction has mostly been rewritten.** It makes the rationale behind the new (2021) Early Years Foundation Stage clearer, and how Development Matters supports implementation of the new Statutory Framework.
- **Self-regulation and executive function:** 6 of the bullet points are different, to improve clarity and accuracy.

If you want to see a comprehensive list of changes, I've done my best to show everything in the tables below.

Seven Key Features of Effective Practice: Self-regulation and executive function

<p>5. Self-regulation and executive function (old)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive function includes the child's ability to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ hold information in mind○ focus their attention○ regulate their behaviour○ plan what to do next.• These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ focus their thinking○ monitor what they are doing and adapt○ regulate strong feelings○ be patient for what they want○ bounce back when things get difficult.	<p>5. Self-regulation and executive function (new)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive function includes the child's ability to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ hold information in mind○ focus their attention○ think flexibly○ inhibit impulsive behaviour.• These abilities contribute to the child's growing ability to self-regulate:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ concentrate their thinking○ plan what to do next○ monitor what they are doing and adapt○ regulate strong feelings○ be patient for what they want○ bounce back when things get difficult.
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Characteristics of Effective Learning

Two items under 'Children will be learning to' have been deleted.

Several 'Examples of how to support this' have been rewritten or expanded.

For ease, the whole of the predecessor section is shown next to the whole of the new section.

Playing and exploring

Children will be learning to:	Examples of how to support this:
Realise that their actions have an effect on the world, so they want to keep repeating them.	<p>Encourage babies' exploration of the world around them. Suggestions: investigating the feel of their key person's hair or reaching for a blanket in their cot.</p> <p>Offer open-ended resources like large smooth shells and pebbles, blocks and lengths of fabric for babies and toddlers to play freely with, outdoors and inside.</p> <p>Play games like 'Peepo'. As they get more familiar, the baby or toddler will increasingly lead the play and want the adult to respond.</p>
Reach for and accept objects. Make choices and explore different resources and materials.	Show and give babies interesting things, such as a rattle or a soft toy. Arrange for babies to take part in Treasure Basket play. Offer open-ended resources for babies and toddlers to play freely with, outdoors and inside.
Plan and think ahead about how they will explore or play with objects.	<p>When playing with blocks: encourage children to discuss what they will make before and while making it, or draw a picture before building.</p> <p>Provide different pebbles, shells and other natural materials for children to explore and arrange freely.</p>

<p>Guide their own thinking and actions by talking to themselves while playing. For example, a child doing a jigsaw might whisper under their breath: “Where does that one go? – I need to find the big horse next.”</p>	<p>Visual aids can help children to keep track of what they need to do next, for example counting on their fingers or referring to a series of pictures on the wall to remind them what they must do before lunch.</p> <p>Verbal mental aids include providing a sensitive commentary on what a child is doing.</p> <p>You might comment: “I see you are looking for the biggest pieces first” or ask “how well do you think that’s going?”</p> <p>Children may copy your commentary by talking out loud to themselves first. In time, this will develop into their ‘inner voice’.</p> <p>Help children to develop more control over their actions by giving them many opportunities to play freely and find their own ways of solving problems.</p> <p>When appropriate, sensitively provide a helpful commentary. You might suggest: “Why don’t you look for the biggest pieces first?”</p> <p>That will help a child who is trying to solve a jigsaw. Children may copy your commentary by talking out loud to themselves first. In time, this will develop into their ‘inner voice’.</p>
<p>Make independent choices.</p> <p>Do things independently that they have been previously taught.</p>	<p>Provide a well-organised environment so that children know where materials and tools are and can access them easily.</p> <p>Provide enough materials and arrange spaces so that children can collaborate and learn alongside peers.</p> <p>Give children enough time and space to engage in large-scale projects that may continue over several days.</p> <p>Explore the reasons behind children’s choices e.g. ‘I’m interested that you’re using a paintbrush rather than a pencil to make your picture.’</p> <p>Once children know how to use scissors, they can use this skill to achieve what they want to do. For example, they may want to make a mask or cut out material for a collage.</p>

<p>Bring their own interests and fascinations into early years settings. This helps them to develop their learning.</p>	<p>Extend children's interests by providing stimulating resources for them to play with, on their own and with peers, in response to their fascinations.</p> <p>Join in with children's play and investigations, without taking over. Talk with them about what they are doing and what they are noticing.</p> <p>Provide appropriate non-fiction books and links to information online to help them follow their interests.</p>
<p>Respond to new experiences that you bring to their attention.</p>	<p>Regularly provide new materials and interesting things for children to explore and investigate.</p> <p>Introduce children to different styles of music and art. Give them the opportunity to observe changes in living things in the setting, and around the local environment.</p> <p>Take children to new places, like a local theatre, a museum, a National Trust heritage site, a fire station, a farm or an elderly people's home.</p> <p>Involve children in making decisions about science experiments: what might we feed the plants to make them grow? Why do you think fizzy water might work? How will we know if one is growing faster than another?'.</p> <p>Take children to new places, like a local theatre or museum.</p>

Active learning

Children will be learning to:	Examples of how to support this:
<p>Participate in routines, such as going to their cot or mat when they want to sleep.</p> <p>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>Help babies, toddlers and young children feel safe, secure and treasured as individuals.</p> <p>The key person approach gives children a secure base of care and affection, together with supportive routines. That can help them to explore and play confidently.</p>
<p>Show goal-directed behaviour. For example, babies may pull themselves up by using the edges of a low table to reach for a toy on top of the table. Toddlers might turn a storage box upside down so they can stand on it and reach up for an object.</p>	<p>Provide furniture and boxes at the right height to encourage babies to pull themselves up and reach for objects.</p> <p>Opportunities to play and explore freely, indoors and outside, are fun. They also help babies, toddlers and young children to develop their self-regulation as they enjoy hands-on learning and sometimes talk about what they are doing.</p>
<p>Use a range of strategies to reach a goal they have set themselves.</p>	<p>Provide plenty of high quality, open ended resources for children to play with freely, inside and outdoors. Suggestion: children can use wooden blocks to make lots of different structures.</p>
<p>Begin to correct their mistakes themselves. For example, instead of using increasing force to push a puzzle piece into the slot, they try another piece to see if it will fit.</p>	<p>Help young children to develop by accepting the pace of their learning. Give them plenty of time to make connections and repeat activities.</p>

Keep on trying when things are difficult.

Help children to think about what will support them most, taking care not to offer help too soon.

The following strategies will help children at different times, depending on their confidence, how much previous experience they've had with an activity, and how motivated, or distracted, they are:

- repeating something hard on their own; learning through trial and error.
- asking a friend or an adult for help.
- watching an adult or another child, modelling what to do, or listening to their guidance.

At times, children respond well to open-ended activities which they choose. Other times, they benefit from a supportive structure established by an adult. It is important to provide both kinds of opportunities.

Adults can teach children to use self-calming to help them deal with intense emotions. For example, you could introduce a 'calming jar'. Or you could introduce 'zones of regulation'. These can help children to become more aware of their emotions and think about how to calm themselves.

~~Some children learn by repeating something hard on their own. They learn through trial and error. Others learn by asking a friend or an adult for help. Others learn by modelling. They watch what you do or what other children do.~~

Creating and thinking critically

Children will be learning to	Examples of how to support this:
<p>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.</p> <p>Sort materials. For example, at tidy-up time, children know how to put different construction materials in separate baskets.</p>	<p>Help babies, toddlers and young children to find their own ideas by providing open-ended resources that can be used in many different ways.</p> <p>Encourage and enjoy children’s creative thinking as they find new ways to do things.</p> <p>Children need consistent routines and plenty of time so that play is not constantly interrupted. It is important to be reflective and flexible.</p>
<p>Review their progress as they try to achieve a goal. Check how well they are doing.</p> <p>Solve real problems: for example, to share nine strawberries between three friends, they might put one in front of each, then a second, and finally a third. Finally, they might check at the end that everyone has the same number of strawberries.</p>	<p>Help children to reflect on and talk about their learning through using photographs and learning journeys. Share in children’s pride about their achievements and their enjoyment of special memories.</p> <p>Suggestion: you could prompt a conversation with questions like: “Do you remember when...?”, “How would you do that now?” or “I wonder what you were thinking then?”</p>
<p>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.”</p>	<p>Help children to extend their ideas through sustained discussion that goes beyond what they, and you, have noticed. Consider ‘how’ and ‘why’ things happen, and ‘what might happen next.’</p> <p>Help children to extend their ideas through sustained discussion that goes beyond what they, and you, have noticed. Consider ‘how’ and ‘why’ things happen.</p>

<p>Know more, so feel confident about coming up with their own ideas.</p> <p>Make more links between those ideas.</p>	<p>Help children to look come up with their own ideas and explanations.</p> <p>Suggestion: you could look together at woodlice and caterpillars outdoors with the magnifying app on a tablet. You could ask: "What's similar about caterpillars and other insects?" You could use and explain terms like 'antennae' and 'thorax'.</p> <p>Suggestion: you could look together at woodlice outdoors with the magnifying app on a tablet. You could ask: "What's similar about woodlice and other insects?" You could use and explain terms like 'antennae' and 'thorax'.</p>
<p>Concentrate on achieving something that's important to them. They are increasingly able to control their attention and ignore distractions.</p>	<p>Offer children many different experiences and opportunities to play freely and to explore and investigate. Make time and space for children to become deeply involved in imaginative play, indoors and outside.</p>

The prime areas

Communication and language	
Old	New
<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>'Small world play based on 'Dear Zoo' will help children to learn the names of the different animals. Or they could shop for the different types of fruit in 'Handa's Surprise'. Pick them out and talk about how they look. This will help children to name the different types of fruit. Back in the setting, taste them and talk about their texture and smell.'</p> <p>Old document, page 19</p>	<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>'The BookTrust's 'Bookfinder' website can help you to pick high-quality books.'</p> <p>New document, page 32</p>
Personal, social and emotional development	
<p>Learn to use the toilet with help, and then independently.</p> <p>This statement and the examples are unchanged, but they've been moved from Physical Development in the old document (page 38) to Personal, Social and Emotional Development (page 49) in the new document.</p>	
<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>Invite trusted people into the setting to talk about and show the work they do. Some examples of this might be plumbers, artists or firefighters.</p> <p>Old document, page 31</p>	<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>Invite trusted people into the setting to talk about and show the work they do.</p> <p>New document, page 51</p>

<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>Further resource and enrich children's play, based on their interests. Suggestion: children often like to talk about their trips to hairdressers and barbers. You could provide wigs reflecting different ethnicities, combs and brushes etc. to stimulate pretend play around their interest.</p> <p>Old document, page 31</p>	<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>Further resource and enrich children's play, based on their interests. Suggestion: children often like to talk about their trips to hairdressers and barbers. You could provide items that reflect different ethnicities, such as combs and brushes etc. to stimulate pretend play around their interests.</p> <p>New document, page 52</p>
<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>Children with high levels of negative emotion need clear boundaries and routines. They also need practitioners to interact calmly and sensitively with them.</p> <p>Old document, page 31</p>	<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>Children who often express angry or destructive feelings need clear boundaries and routines. They also need practitioners to interact calmly and sensitively with them.</p> <p>New document, page 53</p>
<p>Be increasingly independent in meeting their own care needs, e.g., brushing teeth, using the toilet, washing and drying their hands thoroughly.</p> <p>Make healthy choices about food, drink, activity and toothbrushing.</p> <p>This statement and the examples are unchanged, but they've been moved from Physical Development in the old document (page 41) to Personal, Social and Emotional Development in the new document (page 55).</p>	
<p>Observational checkpoint</p> <p>Look out for children who appear to be overweight or to have poor dental health, where this has not been picked up and acted on at an earlier health check. Discuss this sensitively with parents and involve the child's health visitor. Adapt activities to suit their particular needs, so all children feel confident to move and take part in physical play.</p> <p>Most, but not all, children are reliably dry during the day by the age of 4. Support children who are struggling with toilet training, in partnership with their parents. Seek medical advice, if necessary, from a health visitor or GP.</p> <p>This checkpoint is unchanged, but it's been moved from Physical Development in the old document (page 36) to Personal, Social and Emotional Development in the new document (page 55)</p>	

Children will be learning to:

Manage their own needs.

- Personal hygiene

Examples of how to support this:

Model practices that support good hygiene, such as insisting on washing hands before snack time.

Narrate your own decisions about healthy foods, highlighting the importance of eating plenty of fruits and vegetables.

Help individual children to develop good personal hygiene. Acknowledge and praise their efforts. Provide regular reminders about thorough handwashing and toileting.

Work with parents and health visitors or the school nurse to help children who are not usually clean and dry through the day.

Know and talk about the different factors that support their overall health and wellbeing:

- regular physical activity
- healthy eating
- toothbrushing
- sensible amounts of 'screen time'
- having a good sleep routine
- being a safe pedestrian

2 statements and examples have been merged together and moved from Physical Development in the old document (pages 45 and 55) to Personal, Social and Emotional Development in the new document (pages 58).

Physical development

Children will be learning to:

Start to eat independently and learning how to use a knife and fork.

The statement is unchanged. It has been moved from page 40 in the old document to page 64 in the new document. Now, it's with the statements about dressing and undressing in Physical Development.

Observation checkpoint

Look out for children who find it difficult to sit comfortably on chairs.

They may need help to develop their core muscles. You can help them by encouraging them to scoot on sit-down trikes without pedals and jump on soft-play equipment.

This checkpoint is unchanged. It was in Physical Development in the old document (page 38). It's been moved to the end of the Birth to Three section of Physical Development in the new document (page 65).

The specific areas

Literacy	Examples of how to support this: Teach formation as they learn the sounds for each letter using a memorable phrase. (old document, page 50)	Examples of how to support this: Teach formation as they learn the sounds for each letter using a memorable phrase, encouraging an effective pen grip. When forming letters, the starting point and direction are more important at this stage than the size or position of the letter on a line. (new document, page 82)
Mathematics	Children will be learning to: Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0–10 (old document, page 58)	Children will be learning to: Automatically recall number bonds for numbers 0–5 and some to 10 (new document, page 97)
	Examples of how to support this: Have a sustained focus on each number to 10. Make visual and practical displays in the classroom showing the different ways of making numbers to 10 so that children can refer to these. Play hiding games with a number of objects in a box, under a cloth, in a tent, in a cave, etc.: “Seven went in the tent and 2 came out. I wonder how many are still in there?”	Examples of how to support this: Have a sustained focus on each number to and within 5. Make visual and practical displays in the classroom showing the different ways of making numbers to 5 so that children can refer to these. Help children to learn number bonds through lots of hands-on experiences of partitioning and combining numbers in different contexts, and seeing subitising patterns.

<p>Intentionally give children the wrong number of things. For example: ask each child to plant 4 seeds then give them 1, 2 or 3. “I’ve only got 1 seed, I need 3 more.”</p> <p>Spot and use opportunities for children to apply number bonds: “There are 6 of us but only 2 clipboards. How many more do we need?”</p> <p>Place objects into a five frame and talk about how many spaces are filled and unfilled.</p> <p>(old document, page 58)</p>	<p>Play hiding games with a number of objects in a box, under a cloth, in a tent, in a cave, etc.: “6 went in the tent and 3 came out. I wonder how many are still in there?”</p> <p>Intentionally give children the wrong number of things. For example: ask each child to plant 4 seeds then give them 1, 2 or 3. “I’ve only got 1 seed, I need 3 more.”</p> <p>Spot and use opportunities for children to apply number bonds: “There are 5 of us but only 2 clipboards. How many more do we need?”</p> <p>Place objects into a five frame and talk about how many spaces are filled and unfilled.</p> <p>(new document, page 97)</p>
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Understanding the world

<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>books and play materials that reflect the diversity of life in modern Britain</p> <p>(old document, page 61)</p>	<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>books and play materials that reflect the diversity of life in modern Britain including racial and religious diversity</p> <p>(new document, page 103)</p>
<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>Plan and introduce new vocabulary related to the occupation, and encourage children to use it in their talks and play.</p> <p>(old document, page 62)</p>	<p>Examples of how to support this:</p> <p>Plan and introduce new vocabulary related to the occupation and encourage children to use it in their speech and play. Consider opportunities to challenge gender and other stereotypes.</p> <p>(new document, page 105)</p>