

EYFS Learning and Development Exemptions

Consultation response from Daycare Trust

The learning and development requirements of the EYFS can be delivered using a variety of approaches depending on the individual needs of the child and the environment in which care is provided. The Practice Guidance and resource materials that support EYFS will illustrate its flexibility and provide ideas for practitioners.

However in order to provide a route through which requests for exemptions can be assessed and to allow for exceptional cases to secure exemption, we have identified the following circumstances where exemptions may need to be considered:

- A) Providers who lack the capacity to meet the full requirements, but should be able to do so within a specified time period, given access to the necessary support and/or training, or*
- B) Providers who base their provision on alternative approaches which conflict with the statutory requirements with respect to learning and development, and*
- C) To meet the needs of individual children in provision which otherwise provides the full EYFS to all other children*

Exemptions from the assessment arrangements will not be allowed in any circumstances.

1 Do you agree that the circumstances listed in paragraph 3.2 A, B and C should be considered as grounds for exemption?

No

Daycare Trust's general view is that ALL children will be able to benefit from EYFS. We welcome the stance in the consultation that all children should have access to EYFS.

Daycare Trust does not believe that all the exemptions are appropriate. We are particularly concerned about exemption A, as while we welcome the provision of support and training, we believe that the lead-in time for EYFS is sufficient to enable all providers to meet the learning and development requirements. Furthermore, we believe that new providers should only be allowed to register if they are able to deliver the EYFS. Therefore there should be no reason why providers would lack the capacity to meet the full requirements.

With regard to exemption B, we would welcome more information about which providers may be exempted from the learning and development requirements. Quality of provision will need to be ensured if providers do not meet all the requirements. We understand that Steiner Waldorf may be one group

affected by the learning and development requirements, as they do not teach reading until age six. However, given the EYFS is not based on a strict assessment and 'teaching' basis, we do not think this need be a barrier. Indeed, children will certainly recognise words and begin to 'read' before the age of six, even if they are not formally 'taught' to read.

With regard to exemption C, while we welcome the insistence in the EYFS that children with disabilities and with English as a Second Language will be able to join in with the learning and development requirements alongside other children, we would welcome a statement to this effect in the exemption guidance. We would not want children with learning difficulties, disabilities or recent migrants to be excluded from the EYFS. We also believe that parents will need good information about the EYFS so that they can judge the standard of childcare, don't get fretful about their child's development, and don't think that their child 'can't' be included in the standards, particularly if they have additional needs.

Furthermore, we have some concerns about the status of holiday clubs, open-access schemes and out of school clubs which mainly cater for 5-16 year olds, but will also have some four- and five-year olds within their provision. We would welcome clarification on how play-based provision will be included in the EYFS without over-burdening play workers mainly working with older children.

It is the Government's view that the EYFS is sufficiently flexible to accommodate a range of early years approaches and is responsive to the needs of individual children. The full EYFS should be a fundamental entitlement in any childcare setting, particularly as it forms the basis of the free early years offer. Every step should be taken to accommodate particular requirements within the flexibilities of the EYFS before the formal procedure to seek an exemption is started.

2 Do you agree that the process set out for providers in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.14 provide a workable procedure for exemptions

Yes

Daycare Trust is pleased to see that there are a number of steps before providers can be exempted. We particularly welcome consultation with parents and involvement of trained professionals, eg the local authority and Foundation Stage adviser. These professionals, along with childcare providers, will also need training in how to explain the EYFS appropriately to parents who are unsure or concerned about the EYFS. Furthermore, as we state above, we believe that parents will need good and accessible information about the EYFS to help them judge the standard of childcare and make choices about the childcare they want.

Daycare Trust also welcomes the time-limitation of the exemptions. We believe that six months is appropriate for most exemptions. However, we

recommend that the exemption for 'alternative provision' be for one year rather than two.

Daycare Trust
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