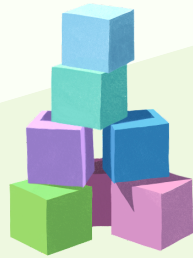


# Early Years words and phrases explained; a guide for parents and carers - Part 1

We use lots of words and phrases when we talk about early years education.  
Here is a collection of some of them with explanations.

## Early Years

The period of time your child spends developing and learning from birth to when they are five years old at the end of Reception year is called 'Early Years'.



## The Early Years Foundation Stage

While your child is at an Early Years setting – nursery, childminder, Reception class – they will be assessed against the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework. This is a statutory document that all early years providers must follow, and includes learning and development as well as safeguarding and welfare requirements. The updated version of the EYFS Framework has been effective since September 2021.

## Areas of Learning

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is divided into 7 Areas of Learning. These shape activities and experiences for all children in early years settings. They are divided into two sections:

### **Prime Areas of Learning**

These are Communication and Language, Physical Development, Personal, Social and Emotional Development. They are important for building foundations in your child's development.

### **Specific Areas of Learning**

These are Literacy, Mathematics, Understanding the World, Expressive Arts and Design. They are where the prime areas are used, developed and applied.

## Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning

These are about how a child learns and the ways in which educators adapt their provision to support them. There are 3 Characteristics of Effective Teaching and Learning:

**Playing and Exploring** – finding out, experiencing, trying things.

**Active Learning** – keeping on trying when things get tricky and recognising their achievements.

**Creating and Thinking Critically** – having ideas, making links between ideas and developing strategies.

## Learning through play

Throughout their early years, young children do much of their learning through play. A play-based approach allows children to make choices and have ideas, follow their interests, have a go and find things out. All the Areas of Learning can be supported through play and it is particularly important for communication and language and social skills. Play can happen inside or outdoors. It helps children to make sense of their world, and to be imaginative. Adults support children's play and provide interesting resources.