

Dear Early Years and Childcare Providers

Please see below this week's Government updates for you, your staff and families. Also included below is a message from the Early Years and Entitlements Team about the update to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Disapplications Guidance and a link to information on the Government's Kickstart scheme.

Updates for Sector

[Early years inspection handbook](#) 28 June 2021

Change made: See 'Summary of changes' document for full details of the changes.

June 2021 for the September 2021 Handbook

Major Changes:

Paragraphs 6 to 24: Changes to the inspection and the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic section. The changes mostly concern the changes to the EYFS disapplications. All updates in relation to COVID-19 are made in this section unless specified.

Paragraphs 25 to 28: New section on revisions to the EYFS from 1 September 2021 has been included to reflect the reforms to the EYFS (and who it applies to) and Development Matters to provide clarity.

Paragraphs 52 to 55: New section providing clarification on our requirements for inspection to dispel myths about inspection that can result in unnecessary workload for providers.

Implementation grade descriptor: Addition of the word 'including' in Implementation (2nd bullet) to clarify that leaders should provide effective support to all staff, including those with less experience and knowledge of teaching.

Outstanding grade descriptor: Amendments to 'outstanding' grade descriptors for personal development.

Good grade descriptor: Amendments to 'good' grade descriptors for personal development.

Good grade descriptor: Amendments to 'good' grade descriptors for leadership and management: 2nd and 5th bullet.

Minor Changes:

Paragraph 36 to 37 (and 71 and 79): Update to provide clarity and reflect the changes to inspections we prioritise.

Paragraph 42: Clarification that where a provider has no children on roll (NCOR), an inspector may reference within reports what a setting needs to do better, even when the outcome is 'met'.

Paragraph 64: Clarification that inspectors will ask about any additional support and/or arrangements for children who need special educational provision, including responses to any emerging needs or difficulties.

Paragraphs 65 to 66: Updated to reflect the documentation an inspector must see on inspection and what they may need access to.

Paragraphs 71, 79 (and 36 to 37): Update to provide clarity and reflect the changes to inspections we prioritise.

Paragraphs 81 to 82: Clarification on activities for gathering evidence, children with SEND and the most disadvantaged children.

Annex A, Paragraph 14: Clarification that even when the outcome is 'met', an inspector may reference within reports what the setting needs to do better.

[Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework](#) 28 June 2021

Change made: Updated 'Early years foundation stage: coronavirus disapplication' with link to the current version of Ofsted's early years inspection handbook, and clarification of dates disapplication can be used.

[Download a template if you're claiming for 16 or more employees through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) 24 June 2021

Change made: The templates to use when claiming for 16 or more employees have been updated. The guidance for uploading these templates has been updated.

[Claim for wages through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme](#) 24 June 2021

Change made: Information updated on what to do if you're putting 16 or more employees on furlough.

[Self-Employment Income Support Scheme fifth grant](#) 25 June 2021

Change made: Guidance about claiming the fifth grant will be available from early July.

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) local restrictions in education and childcare settings](#) 25 June 2021

Change made: We have converted the guidance to HTML to make it easier to read.

Updates for Families

[\(COVID-19\) Coronavirus restrictions: what you can and cannot do](#) 30 June 2021

Change made: Updated to clarify that a PCR test should be taken even if symptoms are mild.

Message from the Early Years Entitlements Team – EYFS Disapplications

We wanted to draw your attention to an update that has been made this week to the [EYFS disapplications guidance](#). This update is to:

- *link to the current version of Ofsted’s early years inspection handbook, published on 28 June 2021, for inspections taking place from 1 September 2021*
- *clarify that the period in which the EYFS disapplications can be used ends on 31 August 2021*
- *clarify that if government restrictions and requirements are lifted before 31 August 2021 the disapplications can no longer be used as the necessary conditions for using them will no longer be met*

We are aware that some sector bodies and providers are raising concerns about ongoing challenges with recruitment in the sector, particularly around level 3 qualified staff. Due to the limited legal scope of the current disapplications and the very specific circumstances in which they can legally be used, we do not think that they are the right policy response to the current recruitment challenges and they were not intended or designed to be used in this way. However, we are committed to working with the sector and LAs to fully understand the scale of the challenge over the coming weeks and months and ensure that the right response and messaging is in place.

In the meantime, we thought it would be helpful to draw your attention to the following section of our [Covid-19 guidance for early years providers](#), which covers existing flexibilities within the EYFS with regard to staffing ratios. There are no plans to change this guidance when the disapplications end in September:

Varying Staff to Child Ratios and Qualifications

Paragraph 3.30 of the EYFS states ‘Exceptionally, and where the quality of care and safety and security of children is maintained, changes to the ratios may be made.’

We consider the extent of COVID-19 to be an exceptional temporary circumstance in which the staff to child ratios set out in the EYFS can be changed if necessary. Early years settings and schools, however, remain responsible for ensuring the safety and security of children in their care.

Kickstart Scheme

The Government’s [Kickstart](#) scheme provides funding to create new six-month jobs for 16 to 24 year olds on Universal Credit who are at risk of long term unemployment. Employers can apply for this funding themselves or get help through a gateway. There is no longer the requirement of providing a minimum of 30 job placements to apply for this funding.