

Response ID ANON-BKKB-H1AT-8

Submitted to **Early Years Foundation Stage reforms**

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Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name:

Alison Huneke

2 What is your email address?

Email:

hlmgr@afasic.org.uk

3 What local authority area are you based in?

Please select:

Tower Hamlets

4 What is your organisation?

Organisation:

Afasic

5 In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?

Please select one option from the list below:

Other

6 If you answered "Other" please specify in what capacity you are responding to this consultation.

Please specify in what capacity you are responding to this consultation.:

Voluntary organisation representing parents of children with SLCN

7 Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

No

Reason for confidentiality:

Setting the context

The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework

Background to the proposed changes

Educational programmes

8 Please give us your views on whether the activities described in each of the proposed educational programme summaries support children's learning and development throughout the EYFS.

Please provide your view below, being specific about which educational programme this applies to where appropriate.:

They do - up to a point. What is lacking, particularly in the prime areas of learning, is a clear developmental structure i.e. children first need to do (whatever) then build on that to reach the next stage. This would not only ensure secure progression in most children but would also highlight any gaps or other issues which could then be addressed before they become a real problem.

The section on communication and language does not acknowledge the relatively high proportion of children (around 11%) who have an innate difficulty with learning language. Were speech and language therapists involved in drawing up this particular programme? If not, this should be addressed as a matter of course.

It is barely credible that literacy is included at all in a curriculum for under fives. Many children of this age are simply not developmentally ready to start learning to read and write successfully. We would be wiser to follow the example of most other developed countries and delay the compulsory introduction of literacy until at least the age of six. This would do more than most other measures to avoid so many children struggling from the time they start school and going on to underachieve throughout their lives.

Mathematics seems an inappropriate term with reference to under fives. Wouldn't number, shape, pattern and measuring be a better and more accurate label?

The Early Learning Goals

9 Please give us your views on whether the proposed ELGs are clear, specific and easy to understand.

Please provide your views below, being specific about which ELGs they apply to where appropriate.:

They are clear and reasonably easy to understand. I am not, however, sure that many of them are specific enough to ensure that assessments will be objective and accurate.

Almost all the proposed ELGs rely on a good level of language. It would be good, though tricky, to draw up ELGs that do not depend on language to measure attainment. Indeed this would seem imperative under the Equality Act 2010.

10 Please give us your views on whether the proposed ELGs contribute to a well-rounded assessment of a child's development at the end of reception year.

Please provide your views below, being specific about which ELGs they apply to where appropriate.:

They are well-rounded. However, they are extremely ambitious for 5 year old children.

As a result a high number of children do not reach the expected level of development, meaning they will almost inevitably struggle to access the Year 1 curriculum, fall further and further behind and end up forming the long tail of underachievement that still characterises British society with all the social problems that entails.

We would like to see either of these measures (or elements of both) implemented as a matter of urgency:

- Mandatory remedial support for children entering Year 1 who fail to reach the expected level of development at the end of the EYFS. At the moment, most of them are given no extra help at all. Worried parents are often simply reassured that they 'will catch up'. These children should be closely monitored and given the support they need to enable them to progress.
- Reduce and ideally remove all reading and writing elements from the EYFS, along with anything else that requires formal teaching and learning. An alternative is to extend the EYFS to the end of Year 1 or even Year 2. This would give all children except those with an innate difficulty sufficient time to complete their early development and be 'school ready' i.e. able to access formal learning.

The EYFSP assessment process

11 What are your views on removing the LA statutory element of EYFSP moderation?

Please provide your views below.:

We do have concerns. It is surely essential to have some form of external moderation. to ensure a satisfactory level of uniformity across the sector. Otherwise there is a risk of schools and other settings diverging in their judgements and giving misleading information to parents, other professionals and statutory bodies.

12 What are your views on whether removing the LA statutory element of the EYFSP moderation will help to reduce teacher workload?

Please provide your views below.:

No comment

13 What alternatives to LA statutory moderation do you think could help to ensure consistency of EYFSP judgements across the ELGs?

Please provide your views below.:

Perhaps Ofsted? Some clearer guidance from the Department with helpful examples?
Peer review? Periodical moderation/review by staff from settings in other local authorities?

14 What are your views on the proposal to remove the 'exceeded' judgement from the EYFSP?

Please provide your views below.:

Meeting the expectations of the proposed ELGs is challenging enough anyway, so it is hard to see what purpose an 'exceeding' judgement would serve. The emphasis really needs to be on those children who are not meeting expectations and ensuring they are not left behind.

Safeguarding and Welfare

15 Should the requirement in the EYFS framework to 'promote the good health of children' also include oral health?

Please provide your views below.:

Probably yes, provided it makes clear that this should be implemented in a way that is appropriate to the setting.

Equalities Assessment

16 Please provide any representations and/or evidence on the potential impact of our proposals on people with protected characteristics for the purposes of the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

Please provide your response below.:

Afasic represents the interests of children and young people with DLD and other forms of SLCN, all of whom would meet the criteria for having a disability. Very

few of the children we represent would be able to meet more than a handful of the proposed ELGs. Our concerns are:

1. The impact on the child and family of feeling they have failed. As mentioned earlier, almost all the proposed ELGs seem designed to discriminate against children with language difficulties by requiring skills the children will almost certainly lack. Finding other ways to demonstrate what they can do would be welcomed. Children and families aren't stupid. They know when their children are behind, but they do want their children's capabilities and strengths to be recognised.

2. The appropriate support needs to be given to the child and family during both the EYFS and KS1 to enable the child to meet their potential. Services need to make more effort to meet their obligations to children and families and measures should be taken to ensure that they do.