



Department
for Education

Shaping the future of early years teaching

Government consultation

Launch date 18 June 2026

Respond by 24 September 2026

Contents

Ministerial foreword	3
Introduction	5
Who this is for	7
Issue date	7
Enquiries	7
Additional copies	7
Respond online	7
Other ways to respond	8
Deadline	8
The response	8
About you	9
Rationale for Change	12
Background	13
Section one: A core body of professional early years knowledge	15
EY ITT leading to QTS	16
Section two: proposals for where the framework should sit	18
Option 1: develop a separate EY core content framework (EY CCF) and training route following the Early Years Teacher Standards	19
Option 2: a combined regime: early years, primary and secondary content in the ITTECF leading to QTS	21
Overall	22
Section three: additional considerations	23
EYTS/EYPS conversion to QTS	23
Induction and ECTE	23
Mentoring	25
Placements	25
Annex A: Glossary of terms	27

Ministerial foreword

The early years are a unique and vital stage of life, shaping children's development and wellbeing and setting them up for school and beyond. Giving children the best possible start in life is one of the most powerful ways we can improve outcomes, tackle disadvantage and support opportunity for all. Evidence is clear that what happens in these formative years has a lasting impact on children's health, learning and life chances, and that high-quality early education can help narrow gaps before they widen.

The recent expansion of the working parent entitlement means that the Department is delivering more support to families than ever before. But we know there is more to do to create an effective, high quality early education and childcare system that meets the needs of all children and families, where children are supported by a stronger pipeline of highly skilled early years teachers, educators and leaders. That is why the Chancellor announced a cross-government review into early education and childcare support at the most recent Autumn Budget. Our review will set out a new vision for the early education and care system, one which improves children's outcomes and supports parents' work choices. One which is simpler and easier to use for both providers and parents, improving access and impact of the government's investment in children and families.

Highly skilled professionals are at the heart of quality in the early years. They combine deep knowledge of child development with expertise in teaching, care and relationships and their work lays the foundations for children's learning, confidence and long-term outcomes. This is why we have set out a long-term ambition to have an early years teacher in every early years setting.

This consultation sits within a wider programme of work to support and strengthen the early years profession. Alongside action to improve training and career pathways, we are taking forward work to support workforce wellbeing and system leadership, and to ensure children are safe, supported and able to thrive in all settings.

We are also prioritising safeguarding within early years settings and are taking action to support settings through a free online safeguarding training package, developed in collaboration with the NSPCC and due to launch later this year. We will be making Ofsted the prescribed body for whistleblowing in early years provision so that staff can report wrongdoing in their workplace with confidence. An expert advisory panel have concluded their work on the safeguarding review of digital devices and CCTV in early years settings with a report due to be published in the summer and guidance to be published in the autumn.

This document focuses on a specific and important question within that broader context: how we prepare, develop and recognise early years teachers.

We want to ensure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to become an early years teacher and join this rewarding and important profession. That means strengthening routes into early years teaching, improving recognition of its value, and creating clearer, more attractive career pathways. We are significantly increasing the

number of funded training places on early years initial teacher training, aiming to double places by 2028, and rolling out the early years teacher degree apprenticeship to widen access, supported by financial help for employers.

We must also do more to champion early years teachers for the vital role they play in shaping children's futures. Too often, their expertise and impact are undervalued, despite the evidence that high-quality teaching in the early years is critical to children's development and long-term outcomes. By raising the status of early years teaching, recognising the professionalism it requires, and ensuring those working in the sector are supported to develop and thrive, we can attract and retain the talented individuals needed to deliver the very best for our youngest children and deliver consistently high-quality provision.

This consultation sets out proposals to reform how early years teachers are prepared and supported, with the aim of raising the quality of training, strengthening professional status and ensuring children benefit from excellent teaching wherever they attend early education. We are committed to working closely with the sector as part of our wider reform programme, and we welcome your views on how these proposals can best support a confident, expert and high-quality early years workforce.

I look forward to hearing your views.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Olivia Bailey".

Rt Hon Olivia Bailey MP

Minister for Early Education

Introduction

Ensuring every child has the best start in life – the chance to achieve and thrive – is central to the Government’s Opportunity Mission. Early childhood is a critical period when the brain develops rapidly. Experiences at home, in early education, and in the community have lasting impacts, shaping children’s learning, growth, and emotional and physical development. Evidence shows that high-quality early education and care improves outcomes in school and beyond, with better-trained staff delivering greater benefits.¹

The recently announced review into early education and childcare support is a way to guarantee a high quality early years experience for all children, recognising the incredible work nurseries and childminders do across the country under significant pressure.

As part of wider early years workforce reforms, we are seeking to strengthen early years teaching qualifications so that all children in all types of settings across the country consistently receive high-quality education and care. These changes aim to improve consistency in practice, raise the professional status of the workforce, and support recruitment, retention, career progression and pathways, while addressing longstanding system challenges.

Early Years Teachers (EYTs) contribute not only to children’s outcomes, but also to improvements across settings. They share expertise, support colleagues and lead curriculum planning and practice. Strong early years teaching creates inclusive environments where all children can participate, feel valued, and make progress regardless of background or need.

We want to support practitioners to help every child thrive. Evidence shows that early intervention, using evidence-based approaches, can help children with SEND achieve better outcomes and reduce the gap in attainment with their peers. Embedding inclusive practice as standard, alongside high-quality training, leadership, and evidence-based programmes, will support earlier identification of need and improve outcomes.

Evidence indicates that settings led by EYTs achieve better outcomes for children.² The [Best Start in Life Strategy](#) (July 2025) sets a long-term ambition for an EYT in every setting to ensure consistently high-quality provision.

To support this, the Department for Education is promoting EYTs as valued professionals. We are increasing funded Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) places over three years, aiming to more than double them by 2028. Funding for providers has risen from £7,000 to £9,535 per trainee, in line with Initial Teacher

¹ https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/education-at-a-glance-2012_eag-2012-en.html

² <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/about/publications/quality-and-inequality-do-three-and-four-year-olds-in-deprived-areas-experience-lower-quality-early-years-provision>

Training (ITT). We are introducing the Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship (EYTDA) with employer support, and a £4,500 annual recognition payment in priority areas to attract and retain EYTs.

However, further reform is needed. We want all early years educators to access high-quality training throughout their careers, supported by a clear, evidence-informed ‘golden thread’ of practice and a simpler qualifications system. The proposals in this consultation aim to strengthen training routes, clarify career pathways, and establish a shared core body of professional knowledge across all levels as well as strengthening the EYT qualification so it is widely recognised and respected, as is the case with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

We also want to build on strong practice across all setting types. Greater knowledge sharing across private, voluntary and independent settings, childminders and schools will improve consistency and quality. This complements wider initiatives, including expanding Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs from 18 to 36 to increase access to evidence-based support.

Overall, we aim to establish clear career and qualification pathways underpinned by a shared core of professional knowledge. This will support consistency, raise quality, and ensure children benefit from high-quality education and care from the start of their early years journey.

Working in early years is rewarding and meaningful. Studies show that early years workers have lower levels of anxiety, higher levels of life satisfaction, and a greater feeling that what they do in their life is worthwhile compared to similar workers in other sectors, and these differences are increasing over time³.

There will always be differences in being a teacher in different types of settings. These reforms represent an important first step to strengthening a career in early years, whichever type of setting someone may work in. The reforms are complemented by existing EY workforce policies such as financial recognition payments for eligible people teaching in group-based settings in deprived areas. Over time, we want these changes to contribute to a system where high-quality practice is valued consistently, and where early years professionals—whether working in schools or PVI settings—are better valued and supported to develop, progress and deliver excellent outcomes for children.

We welcome views from across the sector on these proposals, including how to ensure high-quality, evidence-based early years teaching and how to make early years teaching a rewarding and recognised career. We will continue to consider how childminders can access measures outlined in this consultation as part of ongoing policy development.

³ [early_years_workforce_in_england2026.pdf](#)

Who this is for

- Current and prospective EY teachers (those with EYTS/EYPS and those with QTS)
- Other members of the EY workforce, including PVI setting managers, PVI budget holders and SENCOs
- Childminders
- Current and prospective school teachers
- Other qualified members of the schools workforce, for example MAT leaders and headteachers
- Teacher training providers, their partners and teacher training mentors
- Relevant unions
- Pedagogy and education experts, including academic researchers
- Education charities, private organisations, and public bodies that commission and/or review education research
- SEND charities, private organisations, and public bodies that commission and/or review education research
- Local Authorities

Issue date

The consultation was issued on 18 June 2026.

Enquiries

If your enquiry is related to the policy content of the consultation you can contact the team via email:

Earlyyearsteachers.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

If your enquiry is related to the DfE e-consultation website or the consultation process in general, you can contact the DfE Ministerial and Public Communications Division by email: coordinator.consultations@education.gov.uk, telephone: 0370 000 2288 or via the [DfE Contact us page](#).

Additional copies

Additional copies are available electronically and can be downloaded from [GOV.UK DfE consultations](#).

Respond online

To help us analyse the responses please use the online system wherever possible. Visit [DfE consultations on GOV.UK](#) to submit your response.

Other ways to respond

If for exceptional reasons, you are unable to use the online system, for example because you use specialist accessibility software that is not compatible with the system, you may request an alternative format of the form.

By email

- Earlyyearsteachers.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

Deadline

The consultation closes on 24 September 2026.

The response

The results of the consultation and the department's response is expected to be [published on GOV.UK](#) in Winter 2026.

About you

The following introductory questions will help us understand more about you, the nature of the business, organisation or setting you have experience of and the main ways in which you currently interact with early years teachers and teaching content, plus your experiences of ITT and EYITT.

Confidentiality

Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal data, may be subject to publication or disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018, or the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. If you want all, or any part, of a response to be treated as confidential please explain why you consider it to be confidential. If a request for disclosure of the information you have provided is received, your explanation about why you consider it confidential will be taken into account, but no assurance can be given that confidentiality can be maintained. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

Privacy Notice

The personal data (name and address and any other identifying material) that you provide in response to this consultation is processed by the Department for Education as a data controller in accordance with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018, and your personal information will only be used for the purposes of this consultation. The Department for Education relies upon the lawful basis of article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR to process this personal data as part of its public task, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary for conducting consultations as part of our function. Your information will not be shared with third parties unless the law allows or requires it. The personal information will be retained for a period of 12 months following the closure of the consultation period, after which it will be securely destroyed. You can read more about what the Department for Education does when we ask for and hold your personal information in our personal information charter, which can be found here: [Personal information charter - Department for Education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/674222/Personal-information-charter-Department-for-Education-2018.pdf)

1. Would you like us to keep your response confidential?

- Yes
- No

2. In what capacity are you responding to this consultation? As a... [please tick all that apply]

- Charity
- Teacher training provider
- Local Authority

- Childminder
- Private, voluntary or independent early years group setting – manager
- Private, voluntary or independent early years group setting – teacher (QTS)
- Private, voluntary or independent early years group setting – teacher (EYTS/EYPS)
- Private, voluntary or independent early years group setting – practitioner (non teacher)
- Maintained Nursery School – headteacher
- Maintained Nursery School – teacher (QTS)
- Maintained Nursery School – practitioner (non-teacher)
- Membership organisation
- Ofsted
- Representative organisation
- School-based early years setting – headteacher/manager
- School-based early years setting – teacher (QTS)
- School-based early years setting – teacher (EYTS/EYPS)
- School-based early years setting – practitioner (non-teacher)
- Primary school teacher
- Secondary school teacher
- Primary school headteacher
- Secondary school headteacher
- Union
- EY teacher trainee (QTS)
- EY teacher trainee (EYTS)
- Primary teacher trainee
- Secondary teacher trainee
- Prospective teacher- EY
- Prospective teacher- primary
- Prospective teacher- secondary
- SENCO – school based
- SENCO – PVI based
- Other (please specify)

3. Where in England are you based?

- East Midlands
- East of England
- London
- North East
- North West
- South East

- South West
- West Midlands
- Yorkshire and the Humber
- Not based in England

Rationale for Change

Early Years Teachers (EYTs) have either Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) or Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) and are considered expert pedagogical leaders in EY settings. It is known that having a graduate within EY settings has a positive impact on the quality of care and interactions children experience every day and children's outcomes, including their likelihood of achieving a 'Good Level of Development'⁴. Despite this, only 47% of private and voluntary settings and 16% of childminders have an EYT.⁵

EYTs play a crucial role at a formative stage of children's development, supporting language, confidence, self-regulation and early thinking skills that underpin later attainment. This role is especially important for disadvantaged children and those with SEND.

Prospective early years teachers can train to achieve either Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS) or Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), both of which are degree-level qualifications. While those with QTS can work across all early years and school settings, those with EYTS have more limited employment flexibility, being unable to teach in maintained schools. This creates a structural difference that can unintentionally lower the perceived status of early years teaching and prevents schools from accessing the EY expertise taught and developed during EYITT.

A lack of understanding about early years practice leads to it being further undervalued, not because the work is less complex or impactful but because its principles are less visible and less well understood. Strengthening awareness and understanding of early years pedagogy is therefore key to our reforms, ensuring the EY phase is fully recognised for its critical role in shaping children's long-term learning, development, and wellbeing.

Career routes are fragmented and unclear, making it difficult for practitioners to move from entry-level roles to specialist or leadership positions. This can limit retention and professional development, as practitioners may not see a long-term career in the sector, and contributes to inconsistency in skills and knowledge due to the absence of a structured pathway for building expertise over time. We will address these workforce challenges over time, starting with reforms focused on EYTs. Evidence shows that EYTs improve quality across settings by sharing knowledge and leading practice, and we expect this to continue as reforms are implemented.

Central to our approach is a 'golden thread' of high-quality, evidence-based practice to underpin training, support and career development across the workforce. This will

⁴ <https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/about/publications/quality-and-inequality-do-three-and-four-year-olds-in-deprived-areas-experience-lower-quality-early-years-provision>

⁵ [Funded early education and childcare, Reporting year 2025 - Explore education statistics - GOV.UK](#)

establish a clear career pathway, supported by a shared core body of professional knowledge that aligns early years qualifications.

Bringing these elements together will strengthen consistency in practice, support earlier identification of need, and improve outcomes for children, including those with SEND. A shared foundation for observing, assessing and responding to development will enable more timely and effective support, while better equipping leaders and practitioners to deliver high-quality, inclusive provision that is consistently understood, valued and implemented across all types of settings.

Background

Currently there are disparities between the two different graduate statuses an early years teacher can have:

- EYTS is a professional status designed for those who wish to specialise in care and education of babies and young children, aged 0-5 years old. Successful completion of an Early Years Initial Teacher Training course leads to Early Years Teacher Status. Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) is its predecessor.
- QTS is the professional status for primary and secondary teachers in England. There are various routes to QTS available, including completing a regulated ITT course and assessment against the Teachers' Standards by an accredited ITT provider.

Despite having an accredited graduate-level status, EYTS holders cannot teach in maintained schools and are not covered by national teachers' pay and conditions in the way that QTS holders employed in schools are. While EYTS reflects a high level of expertise in child development and early years pedagogy, it does not carry the same recognition or mobility as QTS. This can lead to early years roles being seen as separate from, or less prestigious than QTS school teaching, even where the knowledge and skills required are equally complex.

Within the school system, teacher development is supported by the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF), which is widely regarded as a strong, evidence-informed model for building consistent, high-quality practice. This approach is often described as the start of a 'golden thread', linking initial teacher training with early career support and ongoing professional development, including National Professional Qualifications (NPQs) for more experienced teachers. Across these stages, there is a clear emphasis on helping teachers build their knowledge and skills progressively over time. This model provides a useful point of reference when considering how similar levels of coherence and support might be developed for the early years workforce.

For those completing Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) and gaining EYTS, there is currently less consistency in the content and expectations of training than in other parts of the education system. In particular, there is no shared core content framework to set out the evidence-based knowledge and practice that all trainees

should develop. This can lead to variation in training experiences and less clarity around progression pathways. In addition, there is not yet an equivalent early career framework or a clearly defined “golden thread” to support ongoing development beyond initial training. This can create wider inconsistency across the early years workforce, as the absence of a clear, shared framework at graduate level limits the development of aligned knowledge, expectations, and progression routes for practitioners at all qualification levels.

The proposed reforms look to address these issues by strengthening and aligning the early years training and development offer. They will bring greater coherence, consistency, and support across the career journey, and help to ensure that early years professionals are equipped, recognised, and developed in line with their critical role.

Section one: A core body of professional early years knowledge

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework provides a strong foundation for early years practice, setting out core principles and characteristics of effective teaching and learning. There is a well-established evidence base on what drives high-quality early years provision, including the Education Endowment Foundation's (EEF) Early Years Toolkit, though there are gaps. This evidence base sets out clearly which approaches are most likely to have a positive impact on child development, and we want to ensure that this evidence-informed practice is consistently understood and applied. This is further supported by a substantial body of academic literature on early years pedagogy, alongside the practical insights and dissemination of evidence-based practice provided through Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs. We want this impactful practice to be implemented consistently so that all children in any type of early years setting, can benefit from high quality EY provision.

We are proposing to build on the existing evidence base and work with the sector to develop a core body of professional EY knowledge, covering what all new EY teachers need to know and be able to do whether they are teaching in a private, voluntary, independent or school setting. By compiling evidence-based practice into a framework which is straightforward for providers to use to develop their courses, we can strengthen EY qualifications and training at all levels, starting with teachers.

Within schools, teacher development follows the Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework (ITTECF). This framework sets out two types of content: 'Learn that...' and 'Learn how to...' statements. 'Learn that...' statements are informed by the best available educational research. This evidence includes practice guides, rigorous individual studies, high quality reviews and syntheses, including meta-analyses. 'Learn how to...' statements are drawn from the wider evidence base, including both academic research and guidance from expert practitioners.

The ITTECF is a minimum entitlement to training and not a full curriculum. It remains for accredited ITT providers and ECT training lead providers to integrate additional analysis and critique of theory, research, and expert practice as they deem appropriate for their curriculum. The framework is designed to cover the content required by trainee teachers and ECTs irrespective of subject and phase. Therefore, it is for providers to ensure that they craft coherent, sequenced curricula that enable trainees and ECTs to apply evidence effectively in their phase, setting, and subject. We propose that early years content would follow a similar structure and be implemented in a similar way, either in a separate framework or integrated with the school teacher framework.

1. To what extent do you agree that further developing a common understanding of what works well for teaching young children and babies would improve the quality of early years teaching?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

2. Over time, the content would feed into other EY qualifications. To what extent do you agree that having a common understanding of what works well for teaching young children and babies would improve the quality of early years practice for all levels of EY qualifications?
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neutral
 - Disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

3. To what extent do you favour or oppose the introduction of an evidence backed core body of early years professional knowledge that, in future, all early years training must follow?
- Strongly favour
 - Somewhat favour
 - Neither favour nor oppose
 - Somewhat oppose
 - Strongly oppose
 - Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

EY ITT leading to QTS

QTS is a nationally recognised qualification that is portable across all types of schools and age groups in England and widely recognised internationally, although it may require additional certification in other countries. All QTS teachers are expected to maintain high standards of safeguarding, professional conduct and fitness to practise throughout their careers. QTS is a clear foundation for career progression, enabling access to leadership roles, specialist roles and further professional development.

EY ITT leading to QTS would mean that EYTs could work as qualified teachers in any setting where QTS is required. This would eradicate the existing inconsistency where EYTS teachers cannot work as qualified teachers in nursery schools and school nursery and reception classes. This change would enable those with an EY teaching specialism to benefit from the opportunity of being employed as a teacher and receiving teaching pay and conditions, whilst the school system can benefit from the rich EY expertise EY ITT brings. In addition, they could access the Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE) offer when employed in schools, with a statutory induction period including a reduced teaching timetable and structured support from a dedicated mentor. Whilst this would give head teachers in schools the discretion to recruit teachers who have done EY ITT, school leaders will always look for teachers with suitable qualifications, skills and experience needed for the specific teaching role.

An EY ITT leading to QTS route would encourage parity of esteem between EY teachers and teachers in the rest of the system, signalling prestige and helping to position early years teaching as a high-impact, respected and desirable career choice. In addition it would help raise the status and influence of early years pedagogy across the whole education system, embedding a stronger understanding of child development, inclusion, belonging and care, with the knowledge sharing across setting types leading to stronger EY provision overall.

4. Do you think that early years teachers should have the same teaching status as school teachers?
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

5. To what extent do you favour or oppose early years initial teacher training leading to QTS?
- Strongly favour
 - Somewhat favour
 - Neither favour nor oppose
 - Somewhat oppose
 - Strongly oppose
 - Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

Section two: proposals for where the framework should sit

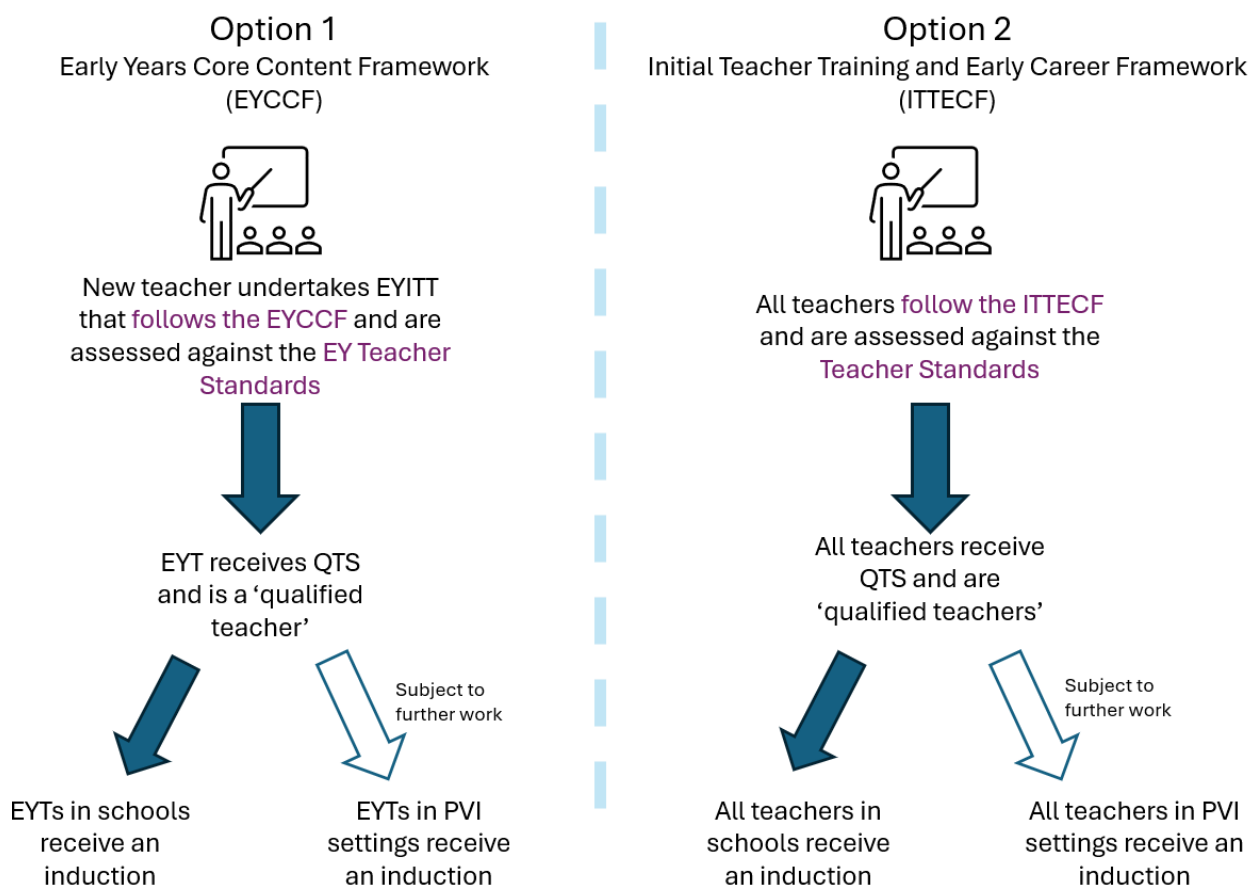
To support our aims we have developed 2 options to reform early years teaching. Both of our proposed options result in EY teacher training leading to QTS and the phasing out of early years teacher status (EYTS). The difference in the options is around the content framework and the Teaching Standards which EY teachers will need to meet.

Early years teaching reform options:

1) develop a separate EY core content framework (EYCCF) and training route following the Early Years Teacher Standards

2) a combined regime: incorporate early years, primary and secondary content in the ITTECF leading to QTS and following the Teacher Standards

Figure 1



Option 1: develop a separate EY core content framework (EY CCF) and training route following the Early Years Teacher Standards

As pictured in figure 1, under this option Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT) would follow a bespoke Early Years Core Content Framework (EYCCF) during which prospective teachers would ensure they demonstrate how they meet the EY teacher standards.

The EYCCF would be tailored to evidence-based impactful practice for young children and babies.

Similarly to schools, we would aim to develop an EY specific 'golden thread' of teacher development in future, creating a clear career pathway for EY practitioners at all qualification levels through to leadership CPD.

To give those with EYTS QTS equivalency, secondary legislation would be needed to recognise EYT training as one of the routes to becoming a 'qualified teacher'. Thus, early years teachers would have QTS.

This option would ensure that EYTs are early years pedagogical experts and they can be fully utilised within early primary education and other relevant EY classrooms and settings.

Both proposed options would equip EYTs to support children with SEND.

As an EYCCF would be bespoke to EY, it could be entirely tailored to the needs of early years pedagogy, with no need to be trained specifically to teach in later key stages. An EY CCF could be used as a reference point for developing other EY qualifications course content, thus resulting in strong, evidence-based effective practice across all of the EY workforce through qualifications and CPD.

However, it would not resolve issues around the lack of EY training for school teachers, especially in lower primary and school-based nursery settings. There may be advantages in setting up bespoke delivery tailored to EYs, but there may also be missed opportunities to build on the established school teacher training system with an existing sector presence. Two routes to becoming an EY teacher (EYCCF and ITTECF) could perpetuate a two-tiered system and EYCCF risks still being seen as lacking recognition in schools.

6. To what extent do you favour or oppose early years teachers demonstrating how they meet the [Early years teachers' standards - GOV.UK](#) rather than the [Teachers' standards - GOV.UK](#) in order to gain QTS?

· Strongly favour

- Somewhat favour
- Neither favour nor oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

7. To what extent do you agree that an early years core content framework should include early years evidence-based practice only?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

8. To what extent do you agree that an early years core content framework should include early years and key stage one evidence-based practice?

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

Option 2: a combined regime: early years, primary and secondary content in the ITTECF leading to QTS

As pictured in figure 1, under this option Early Years Initial Teacher Training would follow a revised Initial Teacher Training Early Career Framework (ITTECF) which included EY content and was assessed against the Teachers' Standards, thus those completing the training would have QTS.

This option would create one simplified qualification system to becoming an EY teacher, in which all new teachers may have a level of understanding of early childhood development and pedagogy, sending a clear signal that EY teaching carries equivalent status.

This option could have a positive impact on primary teachers' professional practice, specifically in supporting the transition to reception and early identification of need. However, for some ITT courses this could mean that content on early childhood development and pedagogy would replace parts of the current curriculum that may be more relevant for the phase and subject that the trainee will teach. Similarly, EYTs may need to cover course content that would prepare them to teach wider age ranges.

This option provides opportunities to build on existing, robust delivery and quality assurance mechanisms through the established gold standard ITTECF and ECTE.

EY teachers would complete an EY specific ITT course and be assessed against the Teachers' Standards. The inclusion of early years content within the ITTECF may prompt a review of the Teachers' Standards.

The 'golden thread' approach has been transformative for teaching practice quality in schools, extending it to EY ensures children are benefitting even earlier on in their education. The EYFS establishes the observation-led approach needed for early identification of SEND and other pedagogical strengths, such as the importance of care and belonging, which could support the QTS system. However, more change in this space could challenge the ITT market which has already been subject to a lot of change in recent years.

9. To what extent do you favour or oppose early years teachers having to demonstrate how they meet the [Teachers' standards - GOV.UK](#) rather than the [Early years teachers' standards - GOV.UK](#) in order to gain QTS?
- Strongly favour
 - Somewhat favour
 - Neither favour nor oppose
 - Somewhat oppose
 - Strongly oppose
 - Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

10. To what extent do you favour or oppose more early years teaching content in the ITTECF?

- Strongly favour
- Somewhat favour
- Neither favour nor oppose
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

Overall

As the benefits and limitations to both options are finely balanced, we would like your view on where the potential new core body of early years professional knowledge would be most beneficial.

10. Do you think the core body of early years professional knowledge would be more beneficial as:

- a) option 1: a stand alone early years core content framework and a separate EY system
- b) option 2: a part of the ITTECF with a combined teacher development landscape
- c) an alternative option, please explain: (Qualitative)

11. Are there any particular equality implications associated with these proposals?

[free text] (Qualitative)

Section three: additional considerations

EYTS/EYPS conversion to QTS

In both proposed options, newly trained EYTs would gain QTS. Current teachers with EYTS, and its predecessor EYPS, will need a route to gaining QTS. We would like your thoughts on how to facilitate this so that all teachers in all early years settings feel confident in their roles.

11. Do you think those who currently hold EYTS/EYPS require further support to effectively teach different key stages in schools?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Please provide further details: Qualitative

12. What do you think conversion from EYTS/EYPS to QTS should look like?

Please provide further details: Qualitative

Induction and ECTE

Currently those who complete teacher training, receive QTS and are employed in a school setting, will follow the Early Career Teacher Entitlement (ECTE) as part of their statutory induction. This is a 2 year programme designed to support early career teachers (ECTs) as they start their teaching careers. It aims to provide a comprehensive package of training and support to help develop ECTs' professional skills and provide them with the knowledge and skills to meet the teachers' standards. The programme includes a dedicated mentor, progress reviews, formal assessments against the Teachers' Standards, a training programme for ECTs, and time off timetable for ECTs and mentors. The ECTE is not an assessment framework but provides ECTs with the knowledge and skills to meet the teachers' standards at the end of their statutory induction period.

EY teachers without QTS do not currently access ECTE and there is no current PVI equivalent of ECTE. Under the proposed reforms, if EYTs with QTS take up a position in a relevant school⁶ they would be required to undertake statutory induction.

⁶ this includes: a maintained school; a non- maintained special school; a maintained nursery school; a nursery school that forms part of a maintained school; a local authority-maintained children's centre; a pupil referral unit (PRU); and from 1 September 2027: Specified Primary and Secondary academies

Evaluation evidence consistently shows that high-quality induction has a positive impact on teaching practice, particularly for ECTs. Evaluation evidence suggests that ECF-based induction is associated with positive perceived impacts on ECTs' confidence and practice. Mentoring plays a central role, with structured programmes and supportive relationships contributing to these experiences⁷. With this in mind, we are considering whether to develop an EY induction package which is deliverable in PVI settings to support new EY teachers in their early career. Initially, completion of an induction will not be mandatory for early years teachers unless their teaching post is in a school setting which offers induction.

13. To what extent do you agree that early years teachers working in PVIs should follow a similar induction programme to those in schools?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

14. Which elements of ECF school induction do you think would be the most beneficial to supporting EY teachers practice in PVIs? Select the 3 most beneficial, with 1 rating highest.

- mentor support for ECTs
- induction tutor support for ECTs
- a training programme for new mentors (if the school/setting uses a Department for Education (DfE) funded provider)
- time out of room for ECTs and mentors
- regular progress reviews and 2 formal assessments for ECTs against the teachers' standards

15. We invite respondents to share their views and experiences of the specific barriers or constraints that may affect the provision of high-quality induction in PVIs, as well as any considerations that should inform future policy or support.

Free text box (qualitative)

⁷ [Evaluation of the national roll-out of the early career framework induction programmes: summary report](#)

Mentoring

In schools, mentoring is typically a structured, formalised process designed to support the development of early career teachers and trainees. Mentors are usually experienced teachers who have received specific training for the role. They provide regular, timetabled support through a combination of instructional coaching, observation, feedback, and professional dialogue.

Mentoring often includes scheduled one-to-one meetings, where mentors review progress against agreed standards or frameworks (such as the Early Career Framework), set targets, and discuss practice. This is complemented by lesson observations—both observing the mentee teaching and modelling effective practice themselves. Mentors also help mentees engage with evidence-based approaches, reflect on their teaching, and plan next steps for improvement.

Importantly, mentoring in schools is usually protected within the timetable, with allocated time for both mentors and mentees. It is supported by wider school leadership and often sits within a broader programme of induction or professional development, ensuring consistency, accountability, and alignment with school priorities.

We recognise that PVI settings operate within a diverse range of structures and contexts that differ in significant ways from maintained schools. These differences may present distinct challenges when designing and delivering effective mentoring for early years practitioners, including variations in staffing models, resources, leadership capacity, and opportunities for collaboration. We are keen to understand these challenges in greater depth.

16. We invite respondents to share their views and experiences of the specific barriers or constraints that may affect the provision of high-quality mentoring in PVIs, as well as any considerations that should inform future policy or support.

Free text box (qualitative)

Placements

It is essential that early years teacher training provides meaningful experience across all setting types which EYTs may go on to work in once qualified. Experience in both PVIs and EY school classrooms would support trainees to develop a well-rounded, expert understanding of the different pedagogical approaches, operational structures, and child development practices that characterise each context. This breadth of experience may better prepare early years teachers to work effectively across the sector, facilitate stronger knowledge exchange between schools and PVIs, and support greater continuity for children as they transition into Reception.

17. We welcome views on the value and the challenges of mandating cross-setting training and how it might best be implemented to strengthen practice and collaboration across the early years system.

Free text box (qualitative)

Annex A: Glossary of terms

Consultation

The process of obtaining comments, views and responses from relevant sources for the purpose of reaching a well-informed and fair decision.

CPD

Continuing Professional Development refers to the ongoing learning and development activities that professionals undertake to improve their skills, knowledge and practice throughout their careers.

ECTE

The Early Career Teacher Entitlement is a two-year programme designed to support teachers at the start of their careers by developing their professional skills and helping them meet the Teachers' Standards.

EYFS framework

The Early Years Foundation Stage framework is the legal framework that sets out how young children in England should be cared for, taught, and supported in their development from birth to age 5.

EYITT

Early Years Initial Teacher Training.

EYT

An early years teacher is someone who teaches young children and babies. Early years teachers have either Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS), Early Years Professional Status (EYPS) or Qualified Teacher Status (QTS).

EYPS

Early Years Professional Status is EYTS' predecessor.

EYTDA

The Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship (EYTDA) is a new program designed to build a highly skilled early years workforce. Launching in September 2026, this apprenticeship enables trainees to earn while they learn, culminating in a Level 6 qualification and Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS).

EYTS

Early Years Teacher Status is a specialist professional status for graduates who want to work with young children from birth to age 5 in early years settings.

Golden thread

A joined-up, evidence-based pathway into teaching and across teaching careers. It starts with Initial Teacher Training (ITT), through to the Early Career Framework (ECF) in the first 2 years of teaching and then into National Professional Qualifications (NPQs).

ITT

Initial Teacher Training.

ITTECF

The Initial Teacher Training and Early Career Framework sets out the core knowledge, skills, and behaviours that teachers in England should develop during both initial teacher training (ITT), before gaining QTS, and their early career teacher (ECT) induction in the first two years of teaching. It is structured around the Teachers' Standards and provides evidence-based guidance.

NPQs

National Professional Qualifications are recognised professional development programmes for teachers and school leaders in England.

PVIs

Private, Voluntary and Independent providers.

TDA

Teaching degree apprenticeship.

TRA

Teaching Regulation Agency.

QTS

Qualified Teacher Status is the professional qualification required to teach in local authority maintained schools and special schools in England. From September 2027 it will also be a requirement for teachers in most primary and secondary academies.



Department
for Education

© Crown copyright 2026

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information, you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

About this publication:

enquiries www.gov.uk/contact-dfe

download www.gov.uk/government/publications

Follow us on X: [@educationgovuk](https://twitter.com/educationgovuk)

Connect with us on Facebook: facebook.com/educationgovuk