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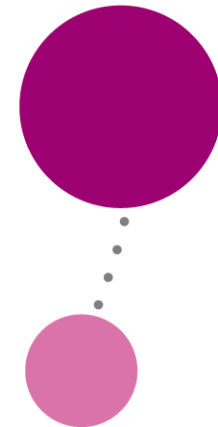
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The People behind Early years:

*Understanding the roles that
shape children's first learning*

13th April 2026



Welcome



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We are here today to celebrate, recognise and share...



Why early years matters

The workforce behind the sector

Progression and professional journeys

Pathways to EYITT

Who is this session for?



- Those interested in working with young children
- Practitioners working in Early Years settings
- Graduates in education or Early Years-related fields
- Childminders
- Anyone curious about the Early Years profession



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Early Years Attributes



Empathy



Adaptability



Creativity



Strong communication
skills



Commitment to
continuous learning



Team focussed



Early Years Matters: The Evidence

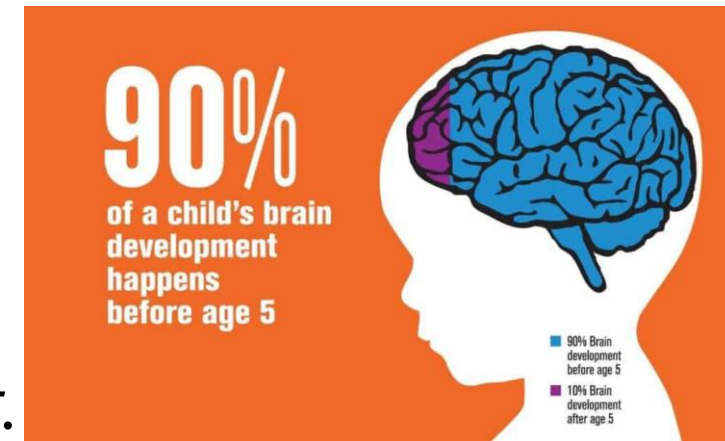
Birth to five is a crucial period for brain development.

High-quality early education supports cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes.

Early childhood experiences influence later life outcomes.

Benefits are particularly strong for disadvantaged children.

Centre for Early Childhood (2022) *Early Childhood: The Role of Public Research*
Department for Education (2021) *Study of Early Education and Development (SEED)*
National Children's Bureau (2025) *Building Brighter Futures: Early Years Strategy*



Quality Matters More Than Quantity

- Quality of interaction > time spent
- Pedagogy, not supervision
- Skilled adults = better outcomes



*When we recognise that quality depends on skilled interactions and pedagogy, it becomes clear why the **people behind early years matter so much** — and why clear progression routes, including EYITT, are vital for the future of the sector*



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Early Years and Social Mobility

- Closing development gaps
- Best Start in Life (2025) ambition
- Long-term impact on education and wellbeing



*When we understand early years as a lever for social mobility and wellbeing, it becomes clear why **skilled practitioners and strong progression routes** are so important.*



Government Focus on Early Years

- Expansion of funded childcare
- Increased demand for places
- Workforce central to delivery



*When the workforce is central to delivery, it becomes clear why **investing in people, progression and leadership** in the early years is vital for the future of the sector*



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Investment Brings Expectation

- Increased funding
- Stronger accountability
- Higher expectations of quality



*As expectations grow, the need for **strong professional pathways** and **pedagogical leadership** becomes clearer — and that's where early years progression plays a vital role.*



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Celebrating the Early Years Workforce

- Apprentices and practitioners
- Room leaders and SEND specialists
- Managers, childminders and EY teachers



*When we recognise the **diversity and skill** within the workforce, the importance of clear progression routes and leadership pathways becomes even clearer.*



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Early Years is Skilled Professional Work

- Research informed
- Reflective Practice
- Observation and assessment
- Pedagogical decision-making
- Inclusion, SEND and safeguarding
- Partnership with families



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Progression Matters

- Clear career pathways
- Opportunities for leadership
- Continuous professional growth
- Deepening impact
- Protect and strengthen early years practice



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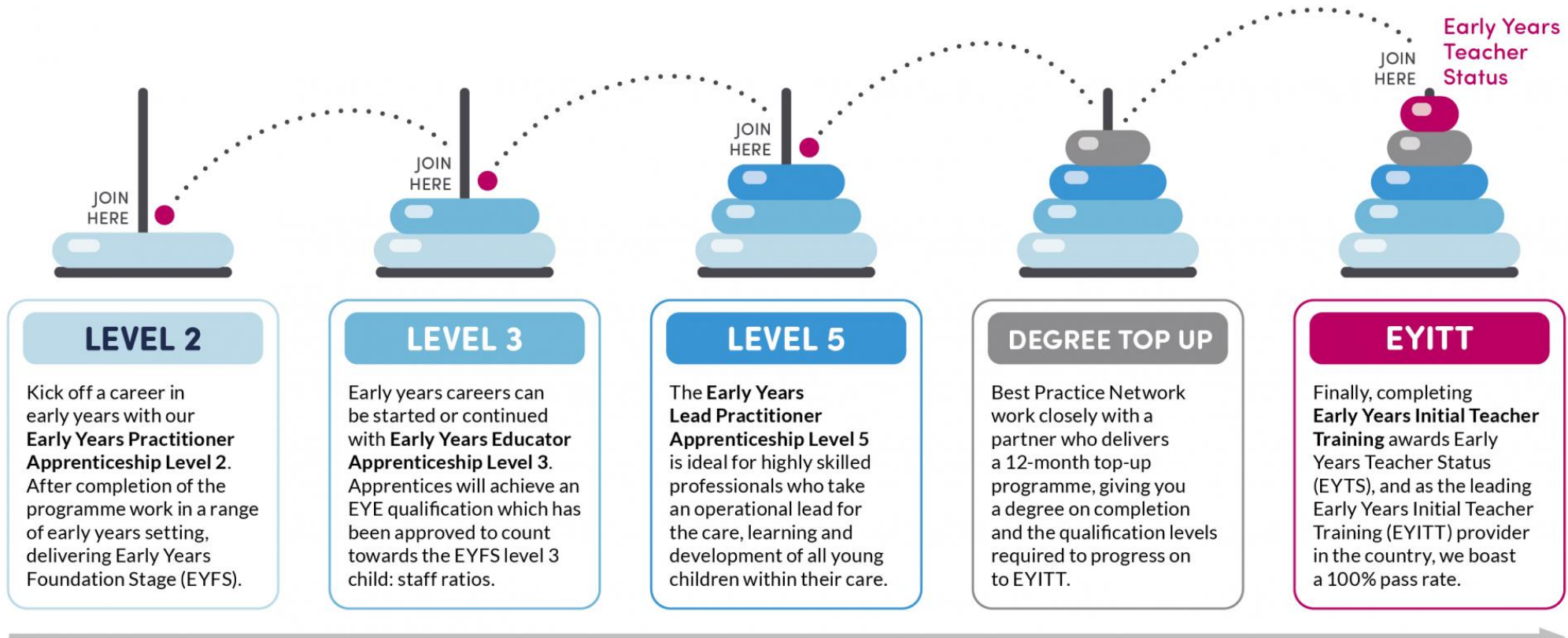
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Career Pathways in Early Years

Early years teaching career pathway



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Early Years Initial Teacher Training (EYITT)

EYITT is a graduate-level pathway designed specifically for the early years phase.

- Graduates with a background or interest in early education
- Practitioners who want to lead learning and pedagogy
- Leaders who want to mentor, guide and support others
- Interest in improving and influencing provision for all children



February 2025 Cohort EYITT Graduate

"Completion of the EYITT programme has improved my practice in regard to the strategies and approaches that I apply to support children's learning and development. I have shared this knowledge with my colleagues as we are all working towards the same goal of supporting children's learning. Having positive relationships with the parents and sharing the activities of learning sequences has led to progression of children's learning and development."



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A New Progression Route: EYTDA



Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship

- Earn while you learn
- Level 6 degree plus an apprenticeship and Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS)
- Work based route into early years
- Designed for existing practitioners and school leavers



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DfE Webinar 15th April at 12pm



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WEBINAR

**Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship:
Key information & what to expect from the programme**

NATIONAL EY TEACHER DAY

WEDNESDAY APRIL 15 12-1PM

Department for Education



Best Practice Network **Department for Education**

WEBINAR

**Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship:
Key information & what to expect from the programme**

NATIONAL EY TEACHER DAY



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Reflection

- Where are you now?
- Where could your journey lead?
- What support might you need?



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Any questions?



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Final Thoughts and Call to Action

- Early years matters
- The workforce matters
- Progression matters
- You matter



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