



Skills England

Early years lead practitioner

Key information

Reference: ST0551

Version: 1.1

Level: 5

Typical duration: 24 months

Typical assessment period: 3 months

Minimum hours for compliance: 466

Route: Education and early years

Integration: None

Maximum funding: £9,000

Date updated: 01/08/2025

Approved for delivery: 10 August 2021

Lars code: 655

EQA provider: Ofqual

Review: this apprenticeship will be reviewed in accordance with our change request policy.

Apprenticeship summary

Occupational standard

EPA plan

Apprenticeship summary

Overview of the role

Working directly with children, skilfully leading day to day practice.

Occupation summary

This occupation is found in a range of educational settings which can include day nurseries, playgroups, nursery schools, pre-schools, kindergartens, primary schools, hospitals, social care educational settings, out of school environments and local authority provision. The broad purpose of the occupation is to be a proactive and influential practitioner, working directly with children, skilfully leading day to day practice at an operational level. As active practitioners they are effective role models of play based learning, supporting others to develop their own practice. They are highly skilled professionals who take an operational lead for the care, learning and development of all young children within their care, adapting to individual needs providing inclusive and holistic provision. They engage with sector developments both locally and nationally, with a commitment to developing their own professional and educational competencies. In their daily work, an employee in this occupation interacts with children aged birth to eight years, families, practitioners, other professionals and appropriate agencies. An employee in this occupation will be responsible for supporting the quality of learning and development in their educational setting. They lead on the operational aspects of this provision and are typically responsible for leading other practitioners, an aspect or environment such as; Communication and Language, Planning and Assessment, Forest School, Physical Activity and

Nutrition. They usually report directly to the head of the educational setting (The Manager, The Leader, The Director).

Typical job titles:

Room leader, Deputy manager, Assistant manager, Senior practitioner, Lead practitioner, Pre-school leader, Early years coordinator

Early years practitioner, Nursery officer, Early years officer, Key worker, Senior key worker, Baby room leader, Lead baby room practitioner, Play leader

Early years support worker, Higher level teaching and learning assistant, Early years foundation Stage lead or coordinator

Pastoral care manager, Pastoral assistant, Education welfare officer

Specialist practitioner in child development (health), Community nursery nurse, Health play specialist, Hospital play worker.

Typical job titles include:

Assistant manager

Baby room leader

Deputy manager

Early years coordinator

Early years foundation stage lead or coordinator

Early years officer

Early years practitioner

Early years support worker

Education welfare officer

Health play specialist

Higher level teaching and learning assistant

Hospital play worker

Key worker

Lead baby room practitioner

Lead practitioner

Nursery officer

Pastoral assistant

Pastoral care manager

Play leader

Pre-school leader

Room leader

Senior key worker

Senior practitioner

Specialist practitioner in child development (health), community nursery nurse

End-point assessment summary

ST0551, Early years lead practitioner level 5

This is a summary of the key things that you – the apprentice and your employer need to know about your end-point assessment (EPA). You and your employer should read the EPA plan for the full details. It has information on assessment method requirements, roles and responsibilities, and re-sits and re-takes.

What is an end-point assessment and why it happens

An EPA is an assessment at the end of your apprenticeship. It will assess you against the knowledge, skills, and behaviours (KSBs) in the occupational standard. Your training will cover the KSBs. The EPA is your opportunity to show an independent assessor how well you can carry out the occupation you have been trained for.

Your employer will choose an end-point assessment organisation (EPAO) to deliver the EPA. Your employer and training provider should tell you what to expect and how to prepare for your EPA.

The length of the training for this apprenticeship is typically 24 months. The EPA period is typically 3 months.

The overall grades available for this apprenticeship are:

- fail
- pass
- merit
- distinction

When you pass the EPA, you will be awarded your apprenticeship certificate.

EPA gateway

The EPA gateway is when the EPAO checks and confirms that you have met any requirements required before you start the EPA. You will only enter the gateway when your employer says you are ready.

The gateway requirements for your EPA are:

- achieved English and mathematics qualifications in line with the apprenticeship funding rules
- for the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence, you must submit a portfolio of evidence

Assessment methods

Observation with questions

You will be observed by an independent assessor completing your work. It will last at least 2 hours. They will ask you at least 7 questions.

Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

You will have a professional discussion with an independent assessor. It will last 90 minutes. They will ask you at least 8 questions. The questions will be about certain aspects of your occupation. You need to compile a portfolio of evidence before the EPA gateway. You can use it to help answer the questions.

Who to contact for help or more information

You should speak to your employer if you have a query that relates to your job.

You should speak to your training provider if you have any questions about your training or EPA before it starts.

You should receive detailed information and support from the EPAO before the EPA starts. You should speak to them if you have any questions about your EPA once it has started.

Reasonable adjustments

If you have a disability, a physical or mental health condition or other special considerations, you may be able to have a reasonable adjustment that takes this into account. You should speak to your employer, training provider and EPAO and ask them what support you can get. The EPAO will decide if an adjustment is appropriate.

Professional recognition

This apprenticeship aligns with This apprenticeship aligns with the criteria that early years qualifications must meet to be recognised by the Department for Education as full and relevant for L3. To count within the ratios at level 3, staff holding an Early Years Educator qualification must also have achieved a suitable level 2 qualification in English. Setting managers must hold a suitable level 2 qualification in maths or must achieve one within two years of starting in the position. These are additional EYFS requirements that are independent of the apprenticeship requirements.

Please contact the professional body for more details.

Version log

Version	Change detail	Earliest start date	Latest start date
1.1	Occupational standard, end-point assessment plan and funding band revised.	01/08/2025	Not set
1.0	Approved for delivery	10/08/2021	31/07/2025

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