



Welcome to
Deborah Udakis
Early Years
Consultancy,
Inspiring Confidence, Delivering
Results

Telephone: 07983 231584



Changes to EYFS from September 2025

Deborah Udakis Consultancy Ltd – www.deborahudakis.co.uk

Summary of changes.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework will have changes to inspections starting on **September 1, 2025**. These changes include:

- **Staff recruitment:** Providers will need to get references for new staff in addition to criminal record checks
- **Child absences:** Providers will need to **follow up on child absences** and contact parents or carers if a child is absent for a long time
- **Safeguarding training:** There will be minimum requirements for safeguarding training for providers
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** The role of "lead practitioner" will be replaced with "DSL"
- **Emergency contacts:** Settings should have **more than two emergency contacts** for each child
- **Inspection guidance:** New guidance will be added on when to pause an inspection
- **Inspector-leader dialogue:** Guidance will be added on how to establish a constructive dialogue between the inspector and leaders
- **Inspector-staff well-being:** Guidance will be added on how to consider the well-being of staff during the inspection
- **Parent discussions:** Guidance will be added on how to conduct discussions with parents during the inspection
- **Inspection report sharing:** Guidance will be added on when and with whom to share inspection reports

Early years settings will no longer receive a single word Ofsted judgement, under new reforms confirmed by Ofsted.

The following changes will come into effect in September 2025:

- Remove the overall effectiveness grade and replace it with a new report card. The inspectorate will consult on what the report card looks like later this academic year.
- Introduce a new early years inspection framework which is 'more flexible to apply to different types of settings'.
- Introduce the Ofsted Academy to improve training for inspectors.
- Have a single point of (internal) contact for early years within Ofsted. This will be Jayne Coward – the new early years national lead working across regulation and inspection.
- Streamline its registration process to make sure options and processes are clear to all applicants.

Unlike schools, the move from a single judgement to a report card will not happen immediately for the early years sector.

Until this change is made, all registered early years settings, including childminder agencies, will continue to receive a single headline grade of overall effectiveness alongside the sub judgements. The inspectorate also wants the Government to review legislation relating to the Childcare Register so fraud in the childcare system can be tackled.

What remains a constant is that your safeguarding arrangements must be robust and ensure they help keep children as safe as possible.

New safeguarding proposals require you to:

- obtain references and a requirement for safeguarding policies to include procedures to help ensure that only suitable individuals are recruited
- to follow up if a child is absent for a prolonged period of time and amendments to ensure providers hold additional emergency contact details
- ensure **safer eating**
- create a **safeguarding training criteria annex** and for safeguarding policies to include details of how safeguarding training is delivered, including how practitioners are supported to put it into place
- ensure that early years students and trainees have paediatric first aid (PFA) training, in order for them to be included in ratios at the level below the level of study
- ensure that children's privacy during nappy changing and toileting is considered and balanced with safeguarding considerations.

There is a small number of other minor changes and wording of the safeguarding requirements to improve clarity.

There will be new **whistleblowing requirements**. The aim is to make it clearer when and how to escalate safeguarding concerns and support practitioner confidence with regards to whistleblowing in order to improve child safety.

There will be **new expectations to provide references**. The aim is to support with obtaining meaningful, timely references in the earliest sector to further enhance safer recruitment practices.

Requirements regarding **Suitable People and safer recruitment** have been tightened and clarified.

Providers/childminders who employ assistants, must obtain a reference before employment.

They should:

- Not accept open references for example 'to whom it may concern'.
- Not rely on applicants to obtain their references.
- Ensure any references from the candidates current employer, training provider or education setting have been completed by a senior person with appropriate authority.
- Not accept references from a family member.
- Obtain verification of the individuals most recent relevant period of employment where the applicant is not currently employed.
- Secure a reference from the relevant employer from the last time the applicant worked with children (if not currently working with children). If the applicant has never worked with children, then ensure a reference is from their current employer, training provider or education setting.
- Ensure electronic references originate from a legitimate source.
- Contact referees to clarify content where information is vague or insufficient information is provided.
- Compare the information on the application form with that in the reference and take up any discrepancies with the candidate
- Establish the reason for the candidate leaving their current or most recent post, and
- Ensure any concerns or resolved satisfactory before appointment is confirmed.

There is **new wording for Childminders** which states:

Childminders and any assistants must be suitable; they must have the relevant training and have passed any required checks to fulfil their roles. Childminder must obtain a reference for any child minding assistance they employ. Childminder must also show any person who may have regular contact with children (for example, someone living or working on the same premises where the child minding is being provided), is suitable.

Under **safeguarding policies and procedures**, it now states that safeguarding policies must include:

- Procedures to follow to check the suitability of new recruits.

The consultation showed that early years providers already have excellent practices in place to keep children safe and many are already carrying out the upcoming changes in their settings. The safeguarding reforms will formalise existing best practice in the sector and ensure that all educators have the knowledge and support they need to deliver the safest, highest quality early education and childcare provision possible.

HMCI Sir Martyn said that early years is his 'number one priority'. On the reforms, he added, 'I promised the Big Listen would be followed by real change. This is the beginning of a new chapter for Ofsted as we reset our priorities, refine our practices and rebuild our relationships. We want to retain the confidence of the children, parents and carers we work for, and regain the respect of the committed professionals we work with. We don't want to add to this pressure. Many of the changes we are introducing are aimed at reducing the pressure on those we inspect. We will always strive for higher standards for children, particularly the most vulnerable children. We share that aim with thousands of brilliant people working in education and social care. We are determined to win back their trust and work together in the interests of children and learners.'

You can read the full response to the consultation and key changes by clicking on the link below.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6705184530536cb927482dd6/Early_years_foundation_stage_safeguarding_reforms_-_response.pdf

Safeguarding requirements 2025

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Every childcare setting must have a Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL); this will be the lead practitioner in a childminding setting.

It is the responsibility of the DSL to lead safeguarding and child protection practices and to oversee the safety and welfare of all children attending the setting.

Their role is also to ensure that all staff members (including themselves):

- have relevant and up-to-date safeguarding training and knowledge;
- fully understand and follow the setting's safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures;
- know how to identify and respond appropriately to potential signs of abuse and neglect;
- accurately complete relevant safeguarding paperwork, in a timely manner, and understand that this must be kept private and confidential;
- know who the DSL is and that they should report any concerns directly to them, immediately (unless they have a concern regarding the DSL and/or their conduct);

- know how to contact the Local Safeguarding Partner should the DSL not be available or there is a need to raise concerns directly;
- know how to contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should they have concerns about another childcare professional.

Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

"Childminders must have and implement policies and procedures to keep children safe and meet EYFS requirements. They must be able to explain their policies and procedures to parents, carers, and others (for example Ofsted inspectors or the childminder agency with which they are registered). Childminders must ensure any assistants follow these policies and procedures. Policies and procedures should be in line with the guidance and procedures of the relevant LSP."

[Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Childminders](#)

Although written policies are not mandatory for childminding settings, having them can greatly enhance clarity and communication with staff, parents and inspectors. These policies should be up-to-date, comprehensive and tailored to your specific setting. We recommend using up-to-date templates from reputable sources, customised to fit your setting or to create your own following official documents. This ensures your policies are thorough and meet all required standards.

Safeguarding policies must include:

- *The action to be taken when there are safeguarding concerns about a child.*
- *The action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against the childminder or an assistant.*
- *How mobile phones, cameras and other electronic devices with imaging and sharing capabilities are used in the setting."*

[Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework for Childminders](#)

Raising Safeguarding Concerns

In order to raise concerns effectively, comprehensive safeguarding and child protection procedures should be documented in advance and followed carefully in the event of a concern, allegation or disclosure.

Safeguarding procedures must include details of:

- how to identify signs of abuse and/or neglect
- what to do if concerns arise or allegations are made
- how to record concerns, disclosures and/or allegations
- which concerns will be referred to another agency for investigation
- when a situation is considered to be an emergency, requiring immediate police involvement
- how to contact the Local Safeguarding Partners (LSP) and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- what other actions should be taken following a concern, allegation or disclosure

If childminders have concerns about children's safety or welfare, they must immediately notify their local authority children's social care team, in line with local reporting procedures, and, in emergencies, the police... childminders must inform Ofsted or their CMA of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by anyone living, working, or looking after children at the premises. This must happen whether the allegations of harm or abuse are alleged to have been committed on the premises or elsewhere, for example, on a visit. Childminders must also notify Ofsted or their CMA of the action they have taken in response to the allegations. Ofsted/the CMA must be notified as soon as is reasonably practicable, but, in any event, within 14 days of allegations being made. A childminder who, without a reasonable excuse, fails to do this commits an offence."

Statutory Requirements

Childminders must be aware of and follow all statutory requirements for safeguarding children. This includes, but is not limited to:

- suitable people
- disqualification
- staff training and qualifications
- staff taking medication/other substances
- smoking and vaping
- administration and storage of medicines
- food and drink
- first aid, accidents and injuries
- safety of the premises
- indoor floor space requirements and ratios
- outdoor access
- sleeping arrangements
- toilets and intimate hygiene
- vulnerable children
- confidentiality
- insurance
- safety on outings
- risk assessments
- record-keeping

Safeguarding During Inspection

If, during a childminder inspection, safeguarding is judged as ineffective, the inspector will have no other choice but to judge the setting as 'inadequate', regardless of how amazing any other aspects of the provision may be. It is therefore, vital that childminders meet all of the safeguarding and welfare requirements stated in the EYFS Statutory Framework and in other supporting documents.

"All early years providers should have an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first. This means they:

- *protect children from serious harm, both online and offline*
- *are vigilant, maintaining an attitude of 'it could happen here'*
- *are open and transparent, sharing information with others and actively seeking expert advice, when required*
- *ensure that all those who work with children are trained well so that they understand their responsibilities and the systems and processes that the provision operates and are empowered to 'speak out' where there may be concerns*
- *actively seek and listen to the views and experiences of children, staff and parents, taking prompt but proportionate action to address any concerns, where needed*
- *have appropriate child protection arrangements, which:*
 - *identify children who may need early help, and who are at risk of harm or have been harmed. This can include, but is not limited to, neglect, abuse, grooming, exploitation, sexual abuse and online harm*
 - *secure the help that children need and, if required, refer children in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help*
 - *manage safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to children*

- *are receptive to challenge and reflective of their own practices to ensure that safeguarding policies, systems and processes are kept under continuous review”*

In order to satisfy safeguarding and child protection requirements during inspection, it is essential that you (and any staff working in the setting):

- have up to date safeguarding and child protection training (renewed at least every three years);
- understand and follow safeguarding and child protection policies and procedures in daily practice, actively listening to children and keeping them safe from harm;
- have good safeguarding knowledge and understanding, enabling you to answer questions about safeguarding terms and scenarios;
- have evidence of any safeguarding concerns that have been logged and can locate where blank proformas are kept;
- have a good working knowledge of the safeguarding and welfare requirements set out in the EYFS Statutory Framework for Childminders and understands their responsibilities in meeting them.

In addition, the Designated Safeguarding Lead must also:

- be able to explain how you meet safeguarding and welfare requirements - answering questions relating to your policies, procedures and practices;
- be able to explain how your policies and procedures are shared with staff (where applicable) and parents/carers;
- be familiar with and take account of other statutory documents that relate to safeguarding, incorporating these into policies, procedures and practice in the setting (e.g. The Prevent Duty, Working Together to Safeguard Children and Keeping Children Safe in Education);
- provide evidence of any safeguarding concerns that have been logged in the setting, including those that have been referred to the Local Safeguarding Partners (if applicable), justifying the actions taken and giving details of the outcomes.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Reforms from 1st September 2025

A DfE (Department for Education) consultation was held between April and June 2024, in which a number of changes to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework were proposed. Following a review of the consultation responses, statutory safeguarding reforms are scheduled to be implemented from 1st September 2025.

The changes to be made, focus on the following aspects of safeguarding:

Safer Recruitment

Stricter recruitment procedures are to be introduced, including:

- the requirement to collect references before employment,
- to ensure more details are requested from referees, if required,
- to ensure references come from legitimate and relevant sources,
- childminders must ensure that assistants and people living/working in the setting are 'suitable' (e.g. checking qualifications, background checks and references),
- references being provided for staff members contain facts, not opinions and only disclose safeguarding concerns if they meet the threshold of harm and are substantiated.

Child Absences

Tighter procedures will be introduced for safeguarding children who are absent, including:

- introducing an attendance policy which includes detailed procedures for absent children,
- contacting parents/carers for any unexpected absences (in a timely manner),
- getting in touch with emergency contacts if parents/carers are unreachable,
- following up any 'prolonged' absences,

- contacting local safeguarding teams and/or requesting police welfare checks where appropriate,
- collecting more than two emergency contact numbers (where possible).

Safeguarding and Child Protection Training

New wording will be used for safeguarding training requirements for childminders and childminding staff, including:

- all staff requiring secure knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and how to implement it in the EYFS,
- DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads) in childminding settings must attend suitable safeguarding training that meets published requirements,
- childminders must ensure that all staff have up to date safeguarding knowledge and understanding, and that the setting's safeguarding policies and procedures are followed effectively,
- safeguarding policies must include details of how training is delivered and how staff are supported to implement procedures,
- safeguarding training must be renewed every two years, but annual refreshers could be undertaken as required, particularly if there is a concern.

First-Aid Training

Details of how to select a competent first-aid training provider will be added.

Safer Eating

Requirements for safer eating will be enhanced to include:

- a trained first-aider must be present when children are eating,
- dietary requirements and health information, including details of allergies and intolerances, must be shared with all staff involved in preparing and/or handling food,
- clear arrangements must be made to ensure that staff know who is responsible for checking that food meets each child's requirements,
- allergy action plans must be introduced for children with allergies and/or intolerances, which must be shared with all staff and kept up to date,
- staff must be made aware of any symptoms to look out for and the treatments required in the event of anaphylaxis,
- staff must understand the differences between allergies and intolerances, and that children can develop new ones at any time,
- childminders must liaise with parents/carers to prepare the kinds of foods and textures that reflect what the child eats at home,
- staff must prepare food in recommended ways to reduce the risk of choking,
- babies and children should be sat in suitable seats and in a suitable area,
- children should always be within sight AND hearing when eating, and staff should ideally face the children to ensure they are feeding themselves safely, not sharing food and so that any issues can be identified quickly,
- any choking or food-related incidents should be recorded in detail and the procedures reviewed to introduce additional safety measures where necessary.

Toileting and Privacy

Children's privacy should be respected as much as possible during nappy changes and toileting, without compromising on hygiene, care or safeguarding.

Whistleblowing

The need for a robust whistleblowing policy will also be clarified:

- a whistleblowing policy must be in place that has detailed steps to follow to report concerns and for following up on reports,
- staff should know that their concerns will be taken seriously by leadership and know what steps to follow if they wish to take the matter further.

Information courtesy of Kathy Scott - Twinkl

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/blog/author/kathy-scott>