

With reference to the Department for Education's proposed changes to the EYFS framework

January 2021

Keeping Early Years Unique represents almost 50,000 Early Years practitioners and is a member of the Early Years Coalition, a cross sector group of 16 major early years organisations, who support practitioners as they implement the statutory Early Years Foundation Stage.

We are extremely concerned at the proposed addition to the EYFS Statutory Framework which has recently been shared with Local Authorities to,

“Add a sentence about, and link to the new Development Matters guidance. To encourage practitioners to use the new guidance alongside the revised framework”.

This is an extraordinary move by the Department for Education to include and direct the early years sector to use the new *Development Matters Non-Statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage* document above any other non-statutory document such as the previous version of Development Matters or any other materials.

The implication is that the DfE and Ofsted will expect all providers, including schools and settings in the private sector to follow the new Development Matters document to shape their curriculum, when they actually have a choice, and can make their own informed decisions about what to use and to follow.

The DfE and Ofsted have been clear in the past that they will not ‘tell’ or ‘instruct’ settings/schools to use a particular teaching method and are free to shape their curriculum in ways that are relevant and appropriate for the children and community in which they live,

“Inspectors must not advocate a particular method of planning, teaching or assessment. They must not look for a preferred methodology but must record aspects of teaching and learning that they observe and identify what needs to improve.” (Ofsted EIF, May 2019, 61, p.16)

However, with OFSTED’s relentless focus on the curriculum it is crucial that leaders, teachers and practitioners have the autonomy and confidence to construct the curriculum their children need, and this may well not include the new Development Matters. It is one tool within a practitioner’s toolkit that they may wish to dip into, but other informed and valuable guidance materials are readily available to ensure a broad, balanced and informed curriculum in the EYFS.

We therefore, petition for the following,

1. That the new Development Matters non-statutory curriculum guidance is NOT included in the EYFS Statutory Framework
2. If it is included, then it MUST have its full title of *Development Matters Non-Statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage*. With a clear footnote that states other materials are available and can be used

KEYU as a member of the Coalition would be happy to discuss this with you in more depth, particularly from the perspective of the workforce and the implications this will have on the principles and practice of the EYFS.

With regards

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