

Evaluation of the Early Years Professional Development Programme (EYPDP)

Local Authority Information Sheet

The Department for Education (DfE) is inviting local authorities (LAs) to participate in an independent evaluation of the [Early Years Professional Development Programme \(EYPDP\)](#). The EYPDP is a DfE-funded professional development programme for early years practitioners delivered by [Education Development Trust \(EDT\)](#) in partnership with [Elklan](#).

The evaluation aims to understand the impact of the EYPDP on children's language and communication skills and the quality of provision in participating early years settings. It also seeks to provide insights into how the programme could be improved. By participating in the evaluation LAs, EYPDP Champions (tutor and mentor) and early years settings will have the opportunity to share their experiences of the programme and provide evidence to inform government investment in the early years in future.

What is the evaluation of the EYPDP?

To assess the impact of the EYPDP, the DfE has commissioned a randomised controlled trial (RCT) of the programme. DfE will fund a cohort of **additional early years settings to receive the EYPDP between autumn 2022 and summer 2023**. Within participating LAs, the evaluators will randomly allocate the early years settings signed up to the evaluation, to one of two groups: in one group, settings will receive the EYPDP (the 'intervention group'); in the other group, settings will continue with their usual practice and *not* receive EYPDP at this time (the 'control group'). In summer 2024, the NFER will complete child assessments in all settings participating in the evaluation (those in both the intervention and control groups) to capture children's outcomes.

Who is conducting the evaluation?

The DfE has commissioned independent research organisations to conduct the evaluation. The team is led by [Ecorys](#) and includes the National Foundation for Educational Research ([NFER](#)), [Inquisitive Minds](#) and [Professor Kathy Sylva](#) from the University of Oxford. The evaluation team has a wealth of knowledge and expertise in early years research and RCTs.

Why should we take part/what are the benefits of taking part?

The evaluation will gather evidence on how EYPDP is working and its impact on early years settings, practitioners and children. Participation in the evaluation will provide more early years settings with fully-funded professional development support for their practitioners in localities of greatest need.

In 2024, on completion of the child-assessments, all settings will receive a 'thank you' payment of £500 for their time and contribution to the evaluation activities¹. The intention is that this money is spent on activities that will help to improve the quality of provision at the setting.

¹ LAs will receive this funding via S.31 grant payments.

Which LAs and settings can take part?

All LAs taking part in the *current* Phase 1 of the EYPDP (autumn 2019 – spring 2022) are eligible to take part in the evaluation provided they meet the following criteria:

- Ideally, the LA is able to retain 4 Champions (including both tutor and mentor Champions) to deliver another cascade of EYPDP in 2022-23.
- The LA has enough additional settings that have *not* previously taken part in EYPDP and that are eligible for the programme (see next section on eligibility criteria). An individual LA will need around 25 additional early years settings to facilitate the establishment of a CPD partnership. Half of these new settings will be randomly allocated by the evaluator to form a CPD partnership to receive the EYPDP cascade in 2022-23, while the other half will be randomly allocated to a 'control group' and asked to carry on with business as usual.

However, it is important to note that LA participation in the study is dependent on the LA engaging enough settings and champions to deliver the EYPDP.

What will the LAs need to do if they sign up to the evaluation?

LAs interested in joining the evaluation will need to register their interest with NFER (details below). Once NFER has confirmed eligibility, LAs will need to approach current EYPDP Champions to confirm that they are able to continue in the role as Champion for a second cohort between September 2022 and July 2023.

With support from DfE and the evaluators (and once Champion involvement is secured), participating LAs will then need to recruit additional early years settings (that have not already been involved in EYPDP) to receive the programme from autumn 2022 to summer 2023. Early years settings can include private, voluntary and independent settings (PVI) and school nurseries that meet the programme criteria (outlined below).

To keep burden to a minimum, we will provide LAs with correspondence and supporting information to share with Champions and early years settings. LAs will then pass the contact details of a key contact from interested settings to the evaluator who will contact the setting and recruit them to the evaluation.

To be eligible to participate in the evaluation and programme, early years settings must meet one or more of the below:

- Settings rated **Requires Improvement (RI) or inadequate** between 2017 and 2021
- Settings with high numbers of children taking up the **disadvantaged 2 year old offer**
- Settings with high numbers of children in receipt of **Early Years Pupil Premium**
- Settings with high numbers of children with **special educational needs**
- Settings where **local intelligence** suggests disadvantaged children would benefit from their practitioners receiving additional CPD support.

From September 2022, the EYPDP will be delivered to intervention settings and the LA will have a similar role to its current one (e.g., during the current cohort of EYPDP). This involves working with early years partnerships and facilitating the cascaded training (see page 15 of EDT's EYPDP LA guidance – September 2020). Please note that the study will only proceed if sufficient numbers of Champions are retained, and enough settings are recruited by June 2022. Further, if too many settings drop out of the evaluation before summer 2024, the evaluation may stop at that point.

As you may be aware, as part of the Early Years Recovery Programme, DfE confirmed that a national rollout of a third phase of the PDP (PDP 3) would form part of a £153 million investment to address the impact of the pandemic on the youngest children. DfE is currently finalising the details of this third phase, however, should PDP 3 be rolled out to LAs that have been involved in EYPDP1, the LAs participating in this evaluation would **not** be able to receive PDP 3 before 2024. DfE will communicate further information about PDP 3 shortly.

What does taking part involve for early years settings?

For early years settings that participate in the evaluation, the following will need to be completed:

- **Joining the evaluation:** Each setting manager/EY lead will nominate a member of staff as the key point of contact for the evaluation. They will liaise with the evaluators to coordinate completion of evaluation activities in their setting (e.g., child and setting quality assessments). The setting manager/EY lead will also sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NFER.
- **Setting quality assessments:** Selected settings will take part in setting quality assessments. A trained professional will visit these settings in summer 2022 and again in summer 2024 to carry out the [ECERS](#) assessments.
- **Allocating settings to intervention or control group:** In July 2022, the evaluators will randomly allocate participating settings to be in the intervention or the control group. For intervention group settings (those receiving EYPDP), the nominated key contact will need to identify early years practitioners who will attend the training and embed the training in their setting. Control settings will continue their usual practice.
- **Identifying children:** In spring 2024, all participating settings will provide NFER with a list of all 3 and 4 year olds in their settings who have been at the setting since at least autumn 2023. We will use this list to randomly allocate the children for the assessments.
- **Child assessments:** A trained NFER administrator will visit each setting in summer 2024 and undertake the [BAS3 assessment](#) to around 8 children per setting. All administrators are qualified teachers, have experience of working with young children and are DBS checked.
- **Surveys:** In summer 2024, all Champions and early years practitioners in participating settings will be asked to complete a short survey to either share their views about EYPDP (intervention settings) or their usual activities throughout the course of the two years (control settings).

- **‘Business as usual’ approach in control group settings:** Settings in the control group will continue with their usual CPD activity. During the study, settings will be asked to complete a proforma (‘business as usual’ log), which will ask a few questions about plans for CPD, and specifically CPD in language and communication for practitioners in the setting. This information will help us to understand usual practice across all settings. The content of CPD activity is completely up to the control group settings but it **cannot** be Eiklan-led training.

When will LAs and settings need to get involved?

Date	Activity
By 19 January 2022	LAs express interest in the evaluation by completing a short online form.
January – May 2022	LAs identify possible settings for the evaluation cohort and distribute materials supplied by NFER. NFER works closely with LAs to recruit early years settings to the evaluation.
June 2022	Setting quality assessments (first baseline/pre-assessment).
July 2022	NFER informs settings whether they have been randomly allocated to the intervention or control group.
September 2022	EYPDP training begins for the settings in the intervention group.
Spring 2024	Settings share information about the evaluation with parents/carers including how they can withdraw their child from the study. Settings share lists of children in their setting who are eligible for the assessments.
Summer 2024	Setting quality assessments (final endpoint/post-assessment). Child assessments with around 8 children per setting.
Summer 2024	LAs issue ‘thank you’ payments to settings on completion of the child assessments.

How will the findings be used?

Findings from the evaluation will be used by the DfE to inform decisions about the funding of professional development for early years practitioners. All settings and LAs involved will receive a summary of the evaluation findings and this will also be freely available on the DfE, Ecorys and NFER websites.

What happens if a setting, practitioner or parent/carer wants to withdraw from the evaluation?

A setting or practitioner can withdraw from the evaluation at any time and/or choose that their data not be used. In addition, parents/carers will be fully informed of the data that we will be collecting and may withdraw their child’s data from the study. They can do this by returning an opt-out withdrawal form to their setting.

Further information on the rights of participants is provided in the Privacy Notices which can be found here: www.nfer.ac.uk/EYPDP.

How will the evaluators use and protect the data collected?

All data gathered during evaluation will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act, 2018 (including GDPR) and will be treated in the strictest confidence by the evaluators. The settings' key contact details and practitioners' contact details for the evaluation will be shared securely between the NFER, Ecorys and Inquisitive Minds.

For settings involved in the setting quality assessments, key contact details will be shared securely with those leading this strand to allow for arranging and conducting the assessments.

NFER will set up a secure online portal for settings to share Champions', early year practitioners' and child-level data. NFER will not share individual child-level data with Ecorys, DfE, EDT or Elkan. No early years settings or individuals will be identified in any reports.

Privacy Notices for the evaluation can be found at: www.nfer.ac.uk/EYPDP.

What you need to do next

If your LA is interested in taking part, please complete the online reply form by 19 January 2022 and we will be in contact about next steps. If you wish to find out more about the evaluation, your primary contact is Kinnery Korja (NFER EYPDP Recruitment Manager) at EYPDP@nfer.ac.uk. For your records, the overall evaluation lead is Emily Mottram at Ecorys (Emily.Mottram@Ecorys.com). The DfE's evaluation lead is Sophie Aisbitt at Sophie.Aisbitt@education.gov.uk.