

## NPQ in Early Years Leadership

### Programme Overview:

Our NPQ in Early Years Leadership programme supports early years leaders to improve the quality of their provision and support their children to make progress. This 18-month programme helps participants develop informed and intentional approaches to the most important components of early years leadership and deliver organisation-wide change.

**For:** For leaders qualified to at least Level 3 with a full and relevant qualification<sup>1</sup> who are, or are aspiring to be, managers of Private, Voluntary and Independent nurseries, headteachers of school-based or maintained nurseries, or childminders with leadership responsibilities.

**Length:** 18 Months

### Programme Components

Course	Input	Overview / Outcomes
<b>Conference 1</b>	Face-to-face conference	<p><b>Aim:</b> Introduces the programme and gives participants opportunity to experience the core components of each course.</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The importance of developing expertise as a leader of early years.</li> <li>&gt; Overview of the NPQ programme as a vehicle for developing expertise.</li> <li>&gt; Introduction to the simple model of memory and what it means for effective early years education.</li> <li>&gt; Module principles, study and application modules and clinics are all explained and modelled with opportunity for practice.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 1</b> Implementation	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of effective implementation in early years settings.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Explore; Prepare; Deliver and Sustain</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How early years leaders can diagnose the needs of their school and draw on evidence to identify solutions.</li> <li>&gt; How early years leaders can prepare their settings for change.</li> <li>&gt; How early years leaders can deliver and sustain change.</li> <li>&gt; Exemplification of the implementation cycle.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 2</b> Culture	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of the importance of culture and how early years leaders can create a strong culture.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Introduction to Culture; Effective Culture for Children; Effective Culture for Staff</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The definition of culture and its importance in creating positive outcomes for staff and children.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of a culture for children that combines high expectations with high support.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of trusting relationships to building an effective culture for children.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of a positive staff culture combining high expectations, high trust and high support, and how this can support retention and quality of provision.</li> </ul>

<b>Course 3</b>  Child Development	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of child development and how early years leaders can use this knowledge to improve outcomes.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Introduction to child development; How child development informs practice; Communication and language development.</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The range of factors affecting child development.</li> <li>&gt; The four guiding principles to help early years practitioners support children's development: unique child; positive relationships; enabling environments; learning and development.</li> <li>&gt; The three prime areas of learning and development (communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development) and the four specific areas (literacy; mathematics; understanding the world; expressive arts and design).</li> <li>&gt; The stages of early language development and the importance of providing a language-rich environment with high-quality interactions to developing children's language and communication.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 4</b>  Professional Development	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of effective professional development to improve early years practice.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Developing expertise; Leading behaviour change; enabling continual improvement</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The importance of behaviour change as the key indicator of successful professional development.</li> <li>&gt; The nature and importance of staff expertise, and how early years leaders can help develop this.</li> <li>&gt; How early years leaders can design and deliver professional development to create and sustain behaviour change.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of a supportive culture to enabling effective professional development, and how early years leaders can create this.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 5</b>  Effective Early Education	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of the importance of a supportive professional environment and how to develop a culture of improvement.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Play; Instruction; The learning environment</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The essential function of play in supporting children's learning and development.</li> <li>&gt; The different types of play and the way early years leaders can advocate for high-quality play.</li> <li>&gt; The role of instruction in supporting children to learn specific knowledge, such as the sounds and forms of letters (phonics).</li> <li>&gt; The role of early years leaders in bringing play and instruction together in an enabling learning environment.</li> </ul>

<b>Course 6</b> Curriculum and Assessment	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Understand how to develop an effective curriculum and how to assess children's learning and development, including in literacy.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Curriculum design; Assessment; Literacy</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How early years leaders can develop a curriculum to support children's learning in the prime and specific areas (see above), develop children as lifelong learners and give children frequent opportunities to play.</li> <li>&gt; The link between curriculum and assessment, and how early years leaders can use assessment to improve provision and practice.</li> <li>&gt; The role of observation in assessing children's learning.</li> <li>&gt; The development of children's early reading skills, along with composition and handwriting.</li> </ul>
<b>Conference 2</b> Decision-making	Face-to-face conference	<p><b>Aims:</b> Develop understanding of the importance of and approach to good decision-making in early years leadership.</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; How to gather useful information to inform decision-making.</li> <li>&gt; Different sources of information, such as quantitative and qualitative data.</li> <li>&gt; How to accurately interpret information.</li> <li>&gt; How to identify effective solutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 7</b> Additional and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of how to deliver excellent care and education for all children, including those with SEND.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Securing success; Adaptive teaching and care; Identifying needs and working in partnership</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Identification and response to individual needs, and the statutory response of early years leaders regarding SEND.</li> <li>&gt; Adapting teaching and practice to support children who are learning at different rates</li> <li>&gt; The importance of high expectations in supporting children with SEND.</li> <li>&gt; The policies and processes which need to be in place to support SEND, and how leaders can work in partnership with parents and carers as well as specialists in health and education.</li> </ul>
<b>Course 8</b> Organisational Management	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop understanding of the critical conditions needed for an organisation to run effectively.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Safeguarding; Resource management; Recruitment and retention</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The importance of safeguarding and the duty of care all staff working in early years have to children.</li> <li>&gt; How to develop collective understanding of safeguarding, effective policies and processes, and a culture that supports safeguarding.</li> <li>&gt; How to analyse finances, manage resources and generate income.</li> <li>&gt; How to recruit, retain and develop effective staff.</li> </ul>

<b>Course 9</b>  Working in Partnership	3 x asynchronous modules (study then application)	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop understanding of the importance of working beyond the setting, including with families and with other organisations.</p> <p><b>Modules:</b> Partnership working; Parents and carers; Building capacity</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The importance of aligning partnership working to the setting's strategic direction and vision.</li> <li>&gt; The importance of building strong relationships with parents and carers.</li> <li>&gt; How to develop and use robust processes for parental communication, including following up on any complaints.</li> <li>&gt; How early years leaders might leverage partnerships with other providers, schools, communities and external organisations, including to support professional development and children's transition to school.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment Preparation Package</b>	1 x asynchronous webinars (in two parts)  1 x synchronous clinic	<p><b>Aim:</b> Develop an understanding of the NPQEYL assessment process.</p> <p><b>Key content:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; The format of the NPQ assessment.</li> <li>&gt; Applying knowledge and understanding to an example scenario.</li> <li>&gt; Understanding what makes an effective assessment response.</li> </ul>

## Curriculum Sequence

Our National Professional Qualification in Early Years Leadership is an 18-month programme, broken down into nine courses. Each course corresponds to a section of the NPQEYL framework. The order in which participants experience each course has been designed in such a way that previous knowledge is built upon logically. Below is an explanation of the curriculum decisions we have made, why we have made them and how we believe that these decisions will support your leaders to keep getting better.

The first course that participants will encounter is implementation. Implementation is the process of putting into practice a policy or some other evidence-informed idea. We have placed this course at the beginning of the programme because we believe that it is the foundation upon which every other course builds. We know that a core role for our leaders involves making improvements to their setting. Therefore, knowing how to introduce changes so that they can be both effective and sustained is critical. Once participants have gained a firm understanding of how to put different strategies into practice, they will be better prepared to learn about the strategies themselves.

Of course, good implementation cannot be driven by our leaders alone; a policy or strategy is only as effective or consistent as the people actually putting it into practice. Without an effective culture, one where all staff feel valued, respected, trusted and supported, even the most carefully devised implementation plans are unlikely to bear fruit. Getting a setting's culture right is the second foundational element to making improvements, which is why culture is the second course that participants will experience.

Once these two foundational courses have been covered, participants will move onto the third course within the programme: child development. A nursery without a firm understanding in how children develop

cannot be successful. This content is necessary to know before participants move onto courses four and five.

Having proceeded through a third of the programme, we anticipate that participants will have begun to want to put some of the ideas they will have learnt about into practice. As a result, course four focuses on professional development. Professional development is a critical part of the implementation process, and it attends to how leaders can influence beliefs and behaviours. Additionally, professional development is one of the most effective ways to improve children's outcomes.

With a clearer understanding of how children develop and how to support staff to make changes in their setting, courses five, six and seven attend to some of the strategies that can influence improvement, particularly in relation to instruction, curriculum and assessment. One of these courses – course seven – is focuses on how to support children with special educational needs.

The final two courses focus on the other aspects of running a setting. From how to keep children and staff safe, and how to manage resources, in course eight, to how to work well with parents and other organisations, in course nine.

By designing our curriculum in this way, we hope that participants will see the links between former and future courses. We hope that their knowledge of implementation and culture will help them to see how to adequately prepare the foundations for change. And we hope that their programme will provide a coherent learning journey for them.

We acknowledge that there is no one way to sequence this material. The above is merely an explanation of our thinking. We hope you have found it useful.