



Highfield

Highfield Level 5 End-Point Assessment for ST0551 Early Years Lead Practitioner

End-Point Assessment Kit



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EPA Kit

Contents

Please click on the headings below to navigate to the associated section of the EPA Kit.

Introduction	4
The Highfield approach	8
Gateway	9
The Early Years Lead Practitioner apprenticeship standard	11
Assessment summary	43
Assessing the observation with questioning	46
Assessing the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence	51

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How to use this EPA Kit

Welcome to the Highfield End-Point Assessment Kit for the Early Years Lead Practitioner apprenticeship standard.

Highfield is an end-point assessment organisation that has been approved to offer and carry out end-point assessments for the Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner apprenticeship standard.

The EPA Kit is designed to outline all you need to know about the end-point assessments for this standard and will also provide an overview of the on-programme delivery requirements. In addition, advice and guidance for trainers on how to prepare apprentices for the end-point assessment is included. The approaches suggested are not the only way in which an apprentice may be prepared for their assessments, but trainers may find them helpful.

In this kit, you will find:

- an overview of the standard and any on-programme requirements
- a section focused on amplification
- guidance on how to prepare the apprentice for gateway
- detailed information on which part of the standard is assessed by which assessment method
- suggestions on how to prepare the apprentice for each part of the end-point assessment
- a section focused on the end-point assessment method where the assessment criteria are presented in a format suitable for carrying out 'mock' assessments

Introduction

Standard overview

An Early Years Lead Practitioner is 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 8 years, families, practitioners, other professionals and appropriate agencies. They are 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.

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.

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 level 3.

On-programme requirements

Although learning, development and on-programme assessment is flexible, and the process is not prescribed, the following is the recommended baseline expectation for an apprentice to achieve full competence in line with the Early Years Lead Practitioner apprenticeship standard.

The on-programme assessment approach will be agreed between the training provider and employer. The assessment will give an ongoing indication of an apprentice's performance against the final outcomes defined in the standard. The training provider will need to prepare the apprentice for the end-point assessment, including preparation for the professional discussion and collation of the portfolio of evidence (such as a provision of recordings of professional discussions or workplace evidence).

The training programme leading to end-point assessment should cover the breadth and depth of the standard using suggested on-programme assessment methods that integrate the knowledge, skills and behaviour components, and which ensure that the apprentice is sufficiently prepared to undertake the end-point assessment. Training, development and ongoing review activities should include:

- achievement of level 2 English and maths. If the apprentice began their apprenticeship training before their 19th birthday, they will still be subject to the mandatory requirement to study towards and achieve English and maths. The requirements for English and maths are optional for apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training.
- compile a portfolio of evidence.

Portfolio of evidence

The apprentice must compile a portfolio of evidence during their time on-programme that is mapped against the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) assessed in the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence.

It will typically contain **20 discrete pieces of evidence**. Evidence may be used to demonstrate more than **1 knowledge, skill or behaviour** as a qualitative approach is suggested as opposed to a quantitative approach.

For the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence, the apprentice will be required to submit a case study report as part of the portfolio. The case study report will be based on a case study that the apprentice has completed with an individual child or group of children. The case study report should include an analysis of observations the apprentice has made. The case study must be based on a real-life workplace situation, based on assessment, observation and planning documentation, which involves the apprentice completing a relevant and defined piece of work. The work must have a real benefit to the child or children or setting the apprentice is working in. Sufficient time must be allowed to enable the apprentice to observe the child or children over a period of typically 6 weeks and allow for situations where children may leave a setting for any reason. Parental consent for children participating in the case study must be gained prior to starting the case study.

Evidence sources for the portfolio may include:

- workplace policies and procedures
- witness statements
- anonymised annotated photographs
- anonymised learning journals
- anonymised risk assessments
- anonymised case notes
- anonymised referral forms

This is not a definitive list and other evidence sources are possible. Given the breadth of context and roles in which this occupation works, the apprentice will select the most appropriate evidence based on the context of their practice against the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours.

The portfolio should not include reflective accounts or any methods of self-assessment, except for **S24** or **B6**. Any employer contributions should focus on direct observation of performance (for example, witness statements) rather than opinions.

The portfolio must be accompanied by a Portfolio Matrix. This can be downloaded from our website. The Portfolio Matrix must be fully completed, including a declaration by the employer and the apprentice to confirm that the portfolio is valid and attributable to the apprentice.

The portfolio of evidence must be submitted to Highfield at gateway. It is not directly assessed but underpins the professional discussion.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the EPA

Assessments must be carried out in accordance with the published assessment plan and all work submitted must be the apprentice's own. AI tools must not be used to generate evidence in its entirety or to replace the apprentice's own judgement, performance or competence. Any use of AI must be transparent, limited and properly referenced.

Where AI has been used by the apprentice as part of normal work activity (for example, drafting a document, worksheet or PowerPoint) this may form part of the portfolio provided that:

The apprentice has materially authored, verified and taken responsibility for the content:

- AI use is clearly declared and referenced within the work (include tool name, purpose and how outputs were verified)
- Source prompts, system settings and the portions influenced by AI are retained and available for review
- AI outputs must not substitute for authentic demonstration of competence against the standard

If an AI tool is used at any stage of an assessment method (for example, to prepare a presentation outline or to organise notes), its use must be fully referenced in the submission or assessor records, and must not compromise authenticity, validity or security. Assessors must be satisfied that decisions remain rooted in the apprentice's knowledge, skills and behaviours, and in direct evidence gathered through observation, questioning and professional discussion.

AI tools must not be used to produce assessment evidence end-to-end, to fabricate logs/records or to simulate performance.

Readiness for end-point assessment

For an apprentice to be ready for the end-point assessments:

- the apprentice must have achieved level 2 English and maths. The requirements for English and maths are mandatory for all apprentices aged between 16-18 at the start of their apprenticeship training. The requirements for English and maths are optional for apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training.
- the apprentice must have gathered a **portfolio of evidence** against the required elements to be put forward to be used as the basis for the professional discussion.
- the apprentice must have gathered their organisation's policies and procedures as requested by Highfield. For guidance, a list of examples has been provided below.
 - Health and safety
 - Risk management
 - Safeguarding and protecting children
 - Security and confidentiality
 - Efficient and sustainable practices
 - Inclusion, equality and diversity

This list is not definitive. The policies and procedures may already be included as part of the portfolio of evidence.
- the line manager (employer) must be confident that the apprentice has developed all the knowledge, skills and behaviours defined in the apprenticeship standard and that the apprentice is competent in performing their role. To ensure this, the apprentice must attend a formal meeting with their employer to complete the Gateway Readiness Report.
- the apprentice and the employer should then engage with Highfield to agree a plan and schedule for each assessment activity to ensure all components can be completed within a **mandated** end-assessment window. Further information about the gateway process is covered later in this kit.

If you have any queries regarding the gateway requirements, please contact your EPA customer engagement manager at Highfield Assessment.

Order of end-point assessments

There is no stipulated order of assessment methods. This will be discussed with the apprentice, training provider and/or employer with our scheduling team when scheduling the assessments to ensure that the learner is provided with the best opportunity to attempt the assessment.

[Click here to return to contents](#)

The Highfield approach

This section describes the approach Highfield has adopted in the development of this end-point assessment in terms of its interpretation of the requirements of the end-point assessment plan and other relevant documents.

Specific considerations

Highfield's approach does not deviate from the assessment plan.

[Click here to return to contents](#)

Gateway

How to prepare for gateway

After apprentices have completed their on-programme learning, they should be ready to pass through 'gateway' to their end-point assessment.

Gateway is a meeting that should be arranged between the apprentice, their employer and training provider to determine that the apprentice is ready to undertake their end-point assessment. The apprentice should prepare for this meeting by bringing along work-based evidence, including:

- customer feedback
- recordings
- manager statements
- witness statements

As well as evidence from others, such as:

- mid and end-of-year performance reviews
- feedback to show how they have met the apprenticeship standards while on-programme

In advance of gateway, apprentices will need to have completed the following. The requirements for English and maths listed below are mandatory for all apprentices aged between 16-18 at the start of their apprenticeship training. The requirements for English and maths listed below are optional for apprentices aged 19+ at the start of their apprenticeship training.

- Achieved level 2 English
- Achieved level 2 maths
- Submitted a suitable portfolio of evidence to be used as the basis for the professional discussion (see the Portfolio Matrix)
- Submitted their organisation's policies and procedures as requested by Highfield

Therefore, apprentices should be advised by employers and providers to gather this evidence and undertake these qualifications during their on-programme training. It is recommended that employers and providers complete regular checks and reviews of this evidence to ensure the apprentice is progressing and achieving the standards before the formal gateway meeting is arranged.

The gateway meeting

The gateway meeting should be attended by the apprentice and a representative from the employer and training provider.

The **Gateway Readiness Report** should be used to log the outcomes of the meeting and agreed by all 3 parties. This report is available to download from the Highfield Assessment website.

The report should then be submitted to Highfield. If you require any support completing the Gateway Readiness Report, please contact your EPA customer engagement manager at Highfield Assessment.

Reasonable adjustments

Highfield Assessment has measures in place for apprentices who require additional support. Please refer to the Highfield Assessment Reasonable Adjustments policy for further information/guidance.

ID requirements

Highfield Assessment will complete an identification check before starting any assessment and will accept the following as proof of an apprentice's identity:

- a valid passport (any nationality)
- a signed UK photocard driving licence
- a valid warrant card issued by HM forces or the police
- another photographic ID card, such as an employee ID card or travel card

[Click here to return to contents](#)

The Early Years Lead Practitioner apprenticeship standard

Below are the knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) from the standard and related assessment criteria from the assessment plan. On-programme learning will be based upon the KSBs and the associated assessment criteria are used to assess and grade the apprentice within each assessment method.

The unique child		
Knowledge	Skills	Behaviours
K1 Ethical and rights-based approaches to support the child, listening to the child's authentic voice within their social and cultural context enabling advocacy for the child and their individual journey, developing high quality childcare environments that are continuously evaluated K5 Current and contemporary theories and approaches to enable respectful and nurturing personal care K9 Potential effects of transitions and theories and approaches on how to successfully support children and their families	S1 Advocate for children through their child centred approach, listening to the voice of the child; ensuring children's rights, views and wishes are heard, respected and acted upon at all times. Offer appropriate support and influence decisions in the best interests of the child S8 Ensure plans fully reflect the individual development needs and circumstances of children and actively participate in the provision of consistent care, responding quickly to the needs of the individual child S9 Plan, carry out and guide appropriate personal care routines for individual children S21 Promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice	B3 Person centred, friendly and approachable, demonstrating caring, empathetic and respectful qualities

	S23 Identify, action and competently challenge issues and undertake difficult conversations where appropriate	
Observation with questioning		
Pass criteria		Distinction criteria
TUC1 Advocates in the child's best interest to ensure the child's voice is always heard and respected, demonstrating an inclusive and ethical approach to practice which is responsive and respectful to the individual child and takes account of the social and cultural context. Continuously evaluates the quality of the childcare environment. (K1, S1, S21) TUC2 Applies current and contemporary theories and approaches when planning and undertaking appropriate personal care routines for individual children to ensure respectful and nurturing care. (K5, S9, B3) TUC3 Responds to a child's individual development needs and circumstances, through planning that reflects the child's need for consistent care, as well as adapting to the child's and families' needs during change, including transitions. (K9, S8) TUC4 Identifies, actions, addresses challenging issues and undertakes difficult conversations. (S23)		TUC5 <i>Demonstrates how their practice challenges both explicit and implicit discrimination, and actively supports children to advocate for themselves, by developing a sense of agency, autonomy, and the skills to impact their world. (K1, S1, S21)</i>
Amplification and guidance		
• Transitions refer to significant changes in a child's life or routine. This could include: ○ daily transitions: ▪ changes in activities ▪ transitioning from indoor activities to outdoor play		

- moving between rooms
 - leaving their primary care giver
- developmental transitions:
 - starting a new school
 - moving settings
- life transitions:
 - parental separation
 - bereavement
 - arrival of a new sibling
- **Individual development needs and circumstances** refers to recognising and planning for each child's unique characteristics. This could include:
 - age and stage of development
 - physical needs
 - emotional and social needs
 - intellectual needs
 - sensory needs
 - cognitive and learning needs
 - language and communication needs
 - family circumstances
 - trauma and adversity
 - preferences and interests
 - systems to support positive mental wellbeing
 - health conditions
 - life events
- **Appropriate personal care routines** could include:
 - nappy changing
 - potty or toilet use
 - washing hands and face
 - supporting dressing and undressing

- feeding and mealtimes
- teeth cleaning
- resting or sleeping routines
- **Inclusive and ethical approach** refers to treating all children fairly, supports participation regardless of ability or background and follows professional codes of conduct. This could include:
 - respect for diversity
 - all children should have access to high-quality care
 - empathy and understanding
 - building positive relationships
 - diverse representation (books, toys and learning materials)
 - anti-bias education (challenge stereotypes, promote empathy and celebrate diversity)
 - cultural awareness
 - effective communication
 - partnership approach
 - inclusive and diverse curriculum
 - promote emotional literacy
 - fair and equal treatment
 - advocacy
 - community engagement
 - ethical decision-making
 - continued professional development (CPD)
 - role-modelling positive behaviours
- **Social and cultural context** reflects an understanding of how a child's family, traditions, language and community influence their development and how practitioners should reflect and value these in their approach. This could include:
 - parenting styles
 - communication and language barriers
 - food and nutrition
 - family structure

- gender roles
- religious beliefs
- socioeconomic factors
- cultural traditions and practices
- **Quality of the childcare environment** refers to the practitioner's responsibility to regularly assess, reflect on and adapt the physical and emotional environment to meet children's changing needs. This could include:
 - provision
 - enabling environment
 - accessibility to all
 - rich learning experiences
 - clean and safe
 - warm and responsive relationships
 - consistency
 - play-based learning
 - individualised support
 - resources
 - outdoor play
- **Adapting to the child's and families' needs** reflects a flexible and responsive approach that takes into account the dynamics and preferences of the family, cultural context and any changing needs. This could include:
 - physical needs, such as housing, food, warmth and love
 - emotional needs, such as support, a sense of belonging and healthy relationships
 - educational needs
 - financial support
 - community
 - the voice of the child

Learning and development	
Skills	Behaviours
S3 Support and promote children's diverse speech, language and communication development and determining and adapting appropriate responses and interventions to support verbal, nonverbal interactions and engagement with written communication S5 Engage in effective strategies to develop and extend children's learning and thinking, including sustained shared thinking S12 Encourage all children's participation, ensuring a sensitive, respectful and effective balance within the adult and child dynamic to facilitate play opportunities S16 Provide a dynamic, evolving and enabling environment that reflects the current interests, motivations, and play of individual and groups of children S18 Observe, assess, plan, facilitate and participate in play opportunities which include current curriculum requirements	B4 Be authentic, playful, animated, responsive, creative, imaginative and curious
Observation with questioning	
Pass criteria	Distinction criteria
LD1 Applies a responsive approach that is influenced by a range of strategies, to develop and extend children's learning and thinking. (S5) LD2 Observes, assesses, plans, facilitates and participates in play opportunities with children that reflect current curriculum. (S18)	LD6 Leads and models practice within the environment to continually provoke, excite and extend children's current interests and motivations. (S12, S16)

LD3 Coordinates an exciting, dynamic, evolving and enabling environment, providing a range of fun, playful and engaging activities that reflect the interests, motivations, and play of individual and groups of children. (S16) LD4 Supports and promotes children's speech, language and communication, adapting their practice to engage in authentic and quality interactions with the child or children to support verbal, nonverbal interactions and engagement with written communication (S3, B4) LD5 Encourages all children's participation and ensures a sensitive, respectful and effective balance within the adult and child dynamic to facilitate play opportunities. (S12)	
Amplification and guidance	
• Support and promote children's diverse speech, language and communication development refers to the active role the practitioner plays in: ○ creating an environment rich in communication opportunities ○ modelling language appropriately ○ encouraging children's expression in all forms ○ building secure relationships that encourage communication ○ examples of supporting and promoting children's development could include: ▪ opportunities to learn new words ▪ children's council or children's voice opportunities ▪ buddy systems ▪ daily routines and interactions ▪ reading stories and sharing books ▪ play-based learning	

- **Engage in effective strategies to develop and extend children's learning and thinking** refers to using deliberate and thoughtful methods to encourage learning and exploration
 - strategies should be:
 - child-centred and responsive
 - interactive and engaging
 - based on observation and knowledge of child development
 - flexible and adapted in real time
 - developing and extending children's learning and thinking involves:
 - recognising teachable moments
 - encouraging problem-solving, reasoning and decision-making
 - building on children's current interests and knowledge
 - supporting progression in communication, creativity, numeracy and understanding of the world

- **Encourage all children's participation** refers to creating inclusive and enabling environments where every child feels confident to engage in play, regardless of developmental stage, communication style, cultural background and emotional or additional needs. This could involve:
 - actively inviting children into play
 - recognising and removing barriers to engagement
 - offering varied resources and role-modelling involvement

- **Coordinates an exciting, dynamic, evolving and enabling environment** refers to the lead practitioner's role in planning, organising and overseeing the learning environment and experiences, ensuring they are purposeful and child-centred, clearly linked to observations and assessment and developed in collaboration with the team. This could include:
 - providing environments for children to explore and learn that excites and motivates them
 - being flexible and regularly adapted in response to children's changing interests and developmental needs
 - promoting independence, creativity and choice
 - providing children with security, comfort, choices, engagement and opportunities
 - encouraging movement and activity
 - providing versatile resources that allow children to engage in and integrate various developmental and learning processes
 - welcoming spaces that are nurturing and supportive

Leaderful practice		
Knowledge	Skills	Behaviours
K18 Current and contemporary theoretical perspectives and approaches to leadership and how to support others through leaderful practice, supporting teams and guiding change	S13 Ensure staff are deployed effectively to suit and enhance the learning environment, prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all children S17 Use current and contemporary knowledge, research, theories and approaches to develop, enhance and articulate their own pedagogical approach and practice S20 Take responsibility for supporting the key person in articulating children's progress and planning future learning possibilities including the safe use of digital technology to communicate effectively in both oral and written English S22 Be a leaderful practitioner to support, mentor, coach, train and guide colleagues in a range of educational settings, providing inspiration and motivation to engage others to develop their practice, supporting teams and guiding change S26 Identify and act upon own responsibilities in relation to health and safety, prevention and control of infection, carrying out risk	B2 Leaderful and motivating through consistent modelling of innovative and aspirational practice to other colleagues B5 Positive and proactive member of the team, being assertive and exercising diplomacy

	assessments and risk management processes in line with policies and procedures	
Observation with questioning		
Pass criteria		Distinction criteria
LP1 Demonstrates a leaderful approach within practice influenced by current theoretical perspectives and approaches. Inspires, motivates and coaches colleagues by modelling innovative and aspirational practice to support and engage others to develop their practice. (K18, S22, B2) LP2 Deploys staff in a way that matches the learning environment, whilst prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all children. Acts as a positive and proactive member of the team, exercising assertiveness and diplomacy. (S13, B5) LP3 Demonstrates current and contemporary influences on their pedagogical approach and practice. (S17) LP4 Implements health and safety practices and carries out risk assessments and risk management processes in accordance with policies and procedures. (S26) LP5 Supports the key person in articulating children's progress and planning future learning opportunities. (S20)		<i>LP6 Confidently applies current and contemporary theoretical perspectives and approaches when taking responsibility for supporting the key person in applying future learning possibilities whilst modelling innovative and aspirational practice to colleagues. (K18, S20, B5)</i>
Amplification and guidance		
• Current and contemporary theoretical perspectives and approaches to leadership refers to the models, styles and research-based theories that influence leadership in early years settings. This could include: ○ distributed leadership (shared responsibility across teams)		

- transformational leadership (inspiring others toward shared goals)
- situational leadership (adapting approach based on team or context)
- servant leadership (prioritising the growth and wellbeing of others)

- **Guiding change** could include:
 - identifying a need for improvement, arising from audits, feedback and inspection outcomes
 - involving the team in planning and implementation
 - managing resistance sensitively and communicating the vision clearly
 - monitoring and reviewing the impact of the change

- **Leaderful approach** is collaborative, inclusive and distributed fairly. This could include:
 - shared leadership
 - inclusivity and participation
 - flexibility and adaptability
 - mutual trust and respect
 - continuous learning and development
 - ethical and reflective practice and continuous professional development of staff
 - enabling environments
 - clear expression or research-informed pedagogical objectives related to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework
 - teamwork and leading by example

- **Inspires, motivates and coaches** could include:
 - modelling best practice
 - ensuring team teaching
 - encouraging reflective practice
 - offering coaching or mentoring

- training and workshops
- communicating visions and setting goals
- celebrating success
- sharing resources
- encouraging risk-taking
- providing constructive feedback
- demonstrating passion and commitment
- supporting emotional wellbeing

- **Deploys staff in a way that matches the learning environment** could include:

- assessing skills, strengths and expertise
- adhering to child to staff ratios
- prioritising needs
- ensuring peer support and buddy systems are in place

- **Current and contemporary influences on their pedagogical approach and practice** could include:

- Reggio Emilia
- Forest schools or outdoor learning
- Maria Montessori
- Play-based learning
- Waldorf education
- Emergent Curriculum

- **Implements health and safety practices** refers to the practitioner's responsibility to actively follow and uphold health and safety requirements in all areas of the setting. This could include:

- performing daily safety checks of equipment, resources and outdoor space
- following hygiene procedures, for example, handwashing, food handling and cleaning routines

- ensuring safe supervision of children, for example, appropriate ratios and room layout visibility
- having awareness of children's allergies, medication and care plans
- completing risk assessments
- providing training and support
- working in partnership with other professionals

Legislation and guidance		
Knowledge	Skills	Behaviours
K6 Local and national child protection and safeguarding statutory and non-statutory frameworks, policies and procedures in practice, how to identify when a child is at risk, and how to challenge in order to protect them. This includes understanding the role of the designated lead for safeguarding and assimilating findings of reviews of serious cases K10 Strategies to effect collaborative approaches to working with parents, carers, colleagues, professional bodies and multi agencies K17 How to promote inclusion, equality and diversity in the sector and why it is essential K20 Ways to use, record and store data and information securely and in line with data protection legislation, confidentiality requirements and local and national policies, including the safe use of digital technology to communicate effectively in both oral and written English K21 The current and relevant policy, statutory and non-statutory guidance and legal requirements as appropriate to the sector within; local, national, historical and global	S10 Competently action and carry out safeguarding procedures, using their professional curiosity, knowledge, insight and understanding S11 Explore and understand, challenge and question; knowing when to act to safeguard and protect children S14 Cultivate professional partnerships with parents, carers, colleagues and other professionals, presenting their understanding of the child's journey within multidisciplinary teams to holistically support the child's individual needs S25 Ensure the security and confidentiality of data, records and information in line with current legislation S27 Apply the principles of sustainability and segregate used resources for reuse, recycling, and safe disposal	B1 Ethical, fair, consistent and impartial, valuing equality and diversity at all times within professional boundaries

contexts including SEND. The impact of these contexts on effective provision		
K22 Principles of sustainability and efficient use of resources , in line with recycling, reuse, and safe disposal of waste		
Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence		
Pass criteria		Distinction criteria
LG1 Explains the role of the designated lead for safeguarding and assimilating findings of reviews and assessments of significant incidents or cases. Explains current legislation and guidance and how this is implemented through policy and procedure. Outlines their own responsibilities, knowing when to question and challenge others, including their own professional curiosity, regarding safeguarding and protecting children. (K6, K21, S10, S11) LG2 Evaluates the strategies they apply when collaborating and cultivating partnerships with parents or carers stakeholders and multi agencies. (K10, S14) LG3 Explains the importance and impact of inclusion, equality, and diversity and how to promote and embed consistent and impartial strategies that value equality in leaderful practice, within professional boundaries. (K17, B1) LG4 Explains the current administration and records systems they use and how they share oral and written information in line with the security and confidentiality policy, and current legislation. (K20, S25)		LG6 <i>Justifies their rationale for decision making with regards to safeguarding and protecting children, drawing on policies and procedures and their professional insight and curiosity. (K6, S10, S11)</i> LG7 <i>Critically reflects on opportunities to recognise and challenge discriminatory processes, behaviours and attitudes and how these impact the child and family. (K17, B1)</i>

LG5 Explains how they manage efficient and sustainable practice when using resources, applying reuse, recycling and safe disposal principles. (K22, S27)	
Amplification and guidance	
• Designated lead for safeguarding is a designated individual within an organisation who takes primary responsibility for safeguarding, including child protection, within that organisation. This could include: ○ being the point of contact for safeguarding concerns ○ supporting staff to understand and apply safeguarding policy ○ developing and implementing policies ○ making referrals to external agencies and following reporting procedures, including referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)/police/social work services ○ maintaining confidential records and ensuring staff have up-to-date training ○ partnership working with multi-agency teams ○ complying with safe recruitment procedures • Collaborative approaches to working with parents, carers, colleagues, professional bodies and multi agencies could include: ○ effective collaboration with parents and carers is built on: ▪ having mutual respect ▪ ensuring two-way communication is upheld ▪ providing regular updates and involving them in planning ▪ being sensitive to family backgrounds, values and preferences ▪ supporting shared learning between home and the setting ○ working with colleagues: ▪ encouraging team planning and reflective practice ▪ coaching and mentoring staff ▪ delegating roles and responsibilities fairly ▪ modelling effective communication and professionalism ○ working with multi-agency teams: ▪ examples of multi-agency teams could include:	

- health visitors
 - speech and language therapists
 - social workers
 - early help co-ordinators
 - sharing information (with consent)
 - attending or leading team around the child (TAC) meetings
 - implementing joint plans for support and intervention
- **Ways to use, record and store data and information securely** refers to the safe and appropriate handling of children's personal data, staff data and visitor logs, observation notes, progress records and accident/incident reports. This could include:
 - locking paper records in a secure cabinet
 - using encrypted software or password-protected systems for digital records
 - ensuring only authorised personnel can access children's information
 - shredding confidential documents when no longer needed
 - sharing information only on a need-to-know basis
 - being aware of professional boundaries
 - protecting sensitive information, especially during safeguarding cases
 - using technology safely and responsibly
 - preventing unauthorised access or cyber risks
 - communicating professionally through email, secure platforms or learning journals
 - **Policy, statutory guidance and legal requirements** could include:
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education
 - Children Act
 - Disclosure and Barring Service
 - Whistleblowing Policy
 - The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework

- Prevent Duty
- Equality legislation
- Health and safety
- Staffing requirements
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Safeguarding
- Curriculum requirements and how they will be delivered
- Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) registration
- **Principles of sustainability and efficient use of resources** could include:
 - environmental responsibility:
 - reducing environmental impact through low-waste, energy-efficient and eco-friendly practices
 - protecting natural resources, for example, conserving water and reducing energy use
 - using sustainable materials, for example, wooden toys, natural or recycled resources
 - encouraging children to respect and care for the natural world
 - efficient use and conservation of resources:
 - planning to avoid overuse or waste, for example, managing food, craft and stationery supplies carefully
 - maintaining and reusing equipment to reduce environmental and financial costs
 - choosing reusable over disposable items where safe and practical
 - waste reduction and management:
 - reducing, reusing and recycling materials
 - managing waste safely and hygienically (especially nappies, food waste and cleaning chemicals)
 - promoting a 'make-do and mend' culture where appropriate
 - ethical and social responsibility:
 - making choices that are fair, inclusive and beneficial to society
 - supporting equality and fairness in how resources are shared among children
 - considering the impact of procurement and daily practice on the wider community
 - safe disposal of waste:
 - following procedures for the correct and safe disposal of hazardous waste, for example, nappies, cleaning chemicals and medical items

- using appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when handling waste
- ensuring bins are emptied regularly and stored correctly
- protecting the health of children and staff while maintaining a hygienic environment
- reusing resources:
 - saving packaging, for example, cardboard tubes or yoghurt pots for craft activities
 - reusing clothing and bedding through donation systems or resource swaps
 - encouraging a culture of rethinking waste as potential resources

Health & wellbeing	
Knowledge	Skills
K4 Theories of self-regulation, resilience and wellbeing and the impact of adverse early childhood experiences K14 The intent, implementation and impact of all provided experiences and opportunities for children informed by the setting's curriculum and pedagogy	S2 Develop, model and implement strategies to support the emotional, social, psychological, physical and cultural needs of all children within the educational setting S6 Promote, model and support children and families to develop a healthy approach to making choices relating to personal care including eating, sleeping and physical activity
Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence	
Pass criteria	Distinction criteria
HW1 Analyses theories of self-regulation, resilience and wellbeing and the importance for children's holistic development and life experiences. (K4) HW2 Explains the importance of considering pedagogy when evaluating the curriculum's intent, implementation and impact and how strategies are developed and modelled to ensure the emotional, psychological, physical and cultural needs of all children within the setting are met. (K14, S2) HW3 Analyses how they promote and support children and families to develop a healthy approach to making choices about activities and lifestyle. (S6)	HW4 <i>Compares and contrasts different pedagogies, justifying the choices made, by illustrating the impact of decisions made on emotional, psychological, physical and cultural development of children in the setting. (K14, S2)</i>
Amplification and guidance	
• Theories of self-regulation, resilience and wellbeing could include: ○ self-regulation:	

- Vygotsky's Sociocultural theory
- Bandura's Social Learning theory
- Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory
- resilience:
 - Bowlby's and Ainsworth's Attachment theory
 - Rutter's Model of Resilience
 - Cicchetti and Lynch's Ecological-Transactional Model
- wellbeing:
 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
 - Erikson's Psychosocial Development theory
 - Seligman's positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning and accomplishment (PERMA) model
- **Intent, implementation and impact** could include:
 - intent reflects the vision, values and aims behind the learning experiences and opportunities offered in the setting. It is influenced by:
 - children's interests and developmental needs
 - cultural and community context
 - the setting's ethos and curriculum design
 - national frameworks such as the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework
 - implementation is about how the curriculum and planned learning experiences are delivered. It includes:
 - how adults interact with children
 - the structure of routines and environments
 - the balance between adult-led and child-initiated learning
 - the use of resources and teaching strategies
 - impact refers to the outcomes of learning and development. It is measured by observing:
 - children's progress and achievements
 - engagement, wellbeing and confidence
 - readiness for the next stage of learning
 - the quality of interactions and relationships

- **Healthy approach to making choices** could include:
 - modelling and reinforcing healthy decisions
 - using visual aids and routine charts
 - providing education and resources
 - involving families
 - teaching decision-making skills
 - involving children in planning and decision-making
 - promoting balanced routines
 - creating partnerships with health professionals
 - implementing educational activities
 - building a supportive community
 - encouraging reflective thinking
 - respecting individual needs and preferences

Continual professional development		
Knowledge	Skills	Behaviours
K13 A wide range of underpinning theories from physiological, neurological, developmental and education and how these can be incorporated to develop own pedagogy K19 Principles of reflection in influencing early years practice with a commitment to life-long learning including continual professional development and action research	S24 Use reflection to develop themselves both professionally and personally to enhance their practice	B6 Reflective practitioner, receptive and open to challenge and constructive criticism
Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence		
Pass criteria	Distinction criteria	
CPD1 Evaluates how reflection influences their early years practice and drives their commitment to continuing professional development and action research. (K19) CPD2 Explains how they use opportunities to reflect on their development both professionally and personally and evaluates how they respond to challenge and constructive criticism. (S24, B6) CPD3 Explains how they incorporate theories from physiological, neurological, developmental and education into their development and practice. (K13)	CPD4 <i>Analyses the impact reflective practice has on their effectiveness as a lead practitioner, and evaluates how reflective experiences involving challenge and constructive criticism enhance their professional competence. (K19, S24, B6)</i>	
Amplification and guidance		
• Theories from physiological, neurological, developmental and education could include: ○ Evolutionary Theory ○ Neuroconstructivism Theory ○ Cognitive Development Theory		

- Psychosocial Theory
- Behaviourism
- Constructivism
- **Reflection** is the process of thinking critically about practice to identify what is working well, what can be improved and how changes can benefit children and colleagues. Principles could include:
 - honesty and openness
 - self-awareness
 - critical thinking
 - continuous improvement
 - child-centred focus
 - collaboration and communication
 - ethical practice
 - evidence-based practice
 - holistic perspective
 - flexibility and responsiveness
 - peer reviews
- **Constructive criticism** is feedback that aims to help someone improve by offering specific, actionable suggestions, rather than being negative or unhelpful. Being open to constructive criticism means:
 - accepting feedback not as personal, but as a tool for growth
 - reflecting on critical feedback and using it to adapt or improve practice
 - providing constructive feedback to others in a respectful and professional manner
- **Impact reflective practice** has could include:
 - identifying own learning needs
 - enhancing teaching practice
 - improving outcomes for children

- fostering a growth mindset
- collaborative learning
- ethical and inclusive practice
- documentation and evaluation
- professional confidence
- integration of theory and practice
- sustaining motivation and engagement
- feedback and improvement
- ongoing continuous professional development (CPD)

Child development	
Knowledge	Skills
K2 How individual children learn and develop from conception to 8 years in relation to typical and atypical neurological, cognitive, social, emotional, behavioural, communication and physical development within the social, cultural context and the impact of this on their future K3 Factors that have an impact upon health, well-being and early learning that can affect children from conception to 8 years and how children and families can make healthy and effective life choices K7 Current and emerging theories of attachment and how these relate to promoting relationships effectively such as the key person approach K8 The importance of the social cultural context on the learning and development of the child and the influence parents, families and carers have within the home learning environment and the complexities of the family situation	S7 Analyse and articulate how all children's individual learning can be affected by their current developmental capabilities, characteristics and individual circumstances taking into account all factors contributing to typical and atypical development S15 Demonstrate the importance of the home learning environment, developing an effective and collaborative partnership to enhance opportunities for the child
Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence	
Pass criteria	Distinction criteria
CD1 Analyses how children learn and develop from conception to 8 years within the social, and cultural context and how this impacts their future. (K2) CD2 Analyses factors that can impact upon health, well-being and early learning of children from conception to 8 and how children and families can make healthy and effective life choices. (K3, S7) CD3 Explains theories of attachment they use to promote effective relationships between staff and children. (K7)	CD5 <i>Evaluates approaches to children's development they use in their practice, and articulates how they reach decisions in complex situations. (K2, K3, S7)</i>

CD4 Explains how they develop effective and collaborative partnerships with parents and carers considering social and cultural context and influence, and the importance of home learning, and how that partnership enables a greater understanding of the child/children leading to enhanced opportunities. (K8, S15)	
Amplification and guidance	
• How individual children learn and develop from conception to 8 years could include: ○ children’s development is unique, shaped by their biology, temperament, environment and experiences ○ from conception to 8 years emphasises the continuum of development from prenatal growth through to the end of Key Stage 1 ○ practitioners must understand what is considered typical development and be able to recognise atypical patterns, including: ▪ developmental delay ▪ neurodivergence ▪ disabilities or conditions affecting learning or development ○ early experiences shape long-term outcomes in learning, behaviour, health and wellbeing. Practitioners must understand that: ▪ the early years are critical for brain development ▪ responsive, inclusive practice can positively impact life chances ▪ early identification and intervention are essential • Factors that have an impact upon health, well-being and early learning could include: ○ prenatal ○ postnatal ○ environmental ○ psychosocial ○ cultural ○ religious • Theories of attachment explain how early relationships with caregivers influence a child’s emotional and social development. Theories of attachment could include:	

- John Bowlby's Attachment Theory
- Mary Ainsworth's The Attachment Theory
- Erik Erikson's Theory of Psychosocial Development
- Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory

- **Effective and collaborative partnership to enhance opportunities for the child** could include:
 - opportunities to share information
 - support and reassurance
 - communication methods
 - home learning

Observation and assessment planning

Knowledge	Skills
K11 The importance of play and the theoretical perspectives of play and its impact on a child's learning and development K12 How to stimulate children's creativity and curiosity and why and how this enables enquiry based active learning K15 The importance and impact of design, resources and engagement within indoor and outdoor environments to enable learning and development K16 How planning cycles inform and improve practice and the principles of individual needs-based assessment for effective early intervention for all children responsive to typical and atypical needs and development	S4 Support children to engage in a range of learning contexts such as individual, small groups and larger groups as appropriate for their play and support confidence within social experiences S19 Make use of formative and summative assessment, tracking children's progress to plan for future learning possibilities including early interventions based on individual developmental needs
Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence	
Pass criteria	Distinction criteria
OA1 Uses theoretical knowledge of the importance of play, demonstrating how they support children to engage in a range of learning contexts, supporting confidence within social experiences, including how they stimulate children's creativity and curiosity and how this benefits learning. (K11, K12, S4) OA2 Evaluates how planning cycles and formative and summative assessments for child or children inform and improve practice in relation to needs-based assessment and early intervention. (K16, S19) OA3 Analyses the impact of design, resources and engagement within indoor and outdoor environments to enable learning and development. (K15)	OA4 <i>Critically analyses their choice of intervention strategies to create play, learning and development and social experiences for the child or children, including how these enable enquiry based active learning. (K11, K12, S4)</i>

Amplification and guidance

- **Importance of play** - play is central to early childhood development and is recognised in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework as the primary way that young children explore, learn and develop. It supports:
 - cognitive development - problem-solving, memory and attention
 - physical development - fine and gross motor skills
 - language development - communication, vocabulary and listening
 - social and emotional development - turn-taking, empathy and confidence
 - creative thinking - imagination and self-expression
- **Theoretical perspectives of play** - practitioners must understand and apply key theorists who have shaped current thinking on the value of play in early years education. These could include:
 - Maria Montessori
 - Susan Isaacs
 - Friedrich Froebel
 - Lev Vygotsky
 - Jean Piaget
 - Jerome Bruner
- **Stimulate children's creativity and curiosity:**
 - creativity involves expressing original ideas, exploring materials and using imagination. It is not limited to art, it extends to problem-solving, storytelling, role play and construction. This could include:
 - encouraging open-ended play
 - supporting imaginative play
 - promoting artistic expression
 - reading and telling stories
 - providing open-ended resources
 - freedom to make mistakes
 - curiosity is the drive to explore, question and understand. It underpins enquiry and motivates active engagement with the world. This could include:

- fostering enquiry-based learning
 - encouraging outdoor exploration
 - setting up provocations
 - asking open-ended questions
 - responding positively to children's questions and interest
 - providing investigative tools and resources
- **Planning cycles** is a continuous process of observing, assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing learning and development. It ensures that provision is:
 - intentional and responsive
 - based on ongoing observations and assessment
 - adapted to meet each child's stage of development
 - **Formative and summative assessments:**
 - formative assessment is ongoing and informal. It happens daily through observation, interaction and reflection. It helps practitioners respond in the moment and plan next steps. This could include:
 - spontaneous observations
 - learning stories or snapshots
 - daily dialogue with children
 - adult-led activity notes
 - post-activity reflection
 - summative assessment is periodic and more formal. It provides a summary of a child's progress at a particular point in time. It is used to evaluate development against expected milestones. This could include:
 - termly development summary
 - progress checks
 - transition reports
 - end-of-year reports
 - summative tracking data
 - baselines assessments

- **Intervention strategies** are intentional actions or approaches used by the practitioner to support or extend a child's development.
 - These may be:
 - planned or responsive
 - universal or targeted
 - environmental, relational or resource-based
 - Examples of intervention strategies could include:
 - home visiting programmes
 - school-based programmes
 - mentoring schemes
 - speech and language therapy
 - parent and child interaction therapy
 - social skills
 - inclusive practice
 - behavioural

[Click here to return to contents](#)

Assessment summary

The end-point assessment for the Early Years Lead Practitioner apprenticeship standard is made up of 2 assessment methods:

1. A 90-minute observation with questioning
2. A 90-minute professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

As an employer/training provider, you should agree a plan and schedule with the apprentice to ensure all assessment components can be completed effectively.

Each component of the end-point assessment will be assessed against the appropriate criteria laid out in this kit, which will be used to determine a grade for each individual. The grade will be determined using the combined grades.

Observation with questioning

Apprentices will be marked against the pass and distinction criteria outlined in this kit.

- To achieve a **pass**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria
- To achieve a **distinction**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria **and** all of the distinction criteria
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will not have achieved all of the pass criteria

The observation will be conducted in the apprentice's normal place of work.

Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

Apprentices will be marked against the pass and distinction criteria outlined in this kit.

- To achieve a **pass**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria
- To achieve a **distinction**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria **and** all of the distinction criteria
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will not have achieved all of the pass criteria

The professional discussion must be conducted in a suitable location but may be conducted using technology such as video conferencing, as long as fair assessment conditions can be maintained.

Grading

The apprenticeship includes pass and distinction grades, with the final grade based on the apprentice's combined performance in each assessment method.

To achieve a pass, the apprentice must achieve at least a pass in both assessment methods.

To achieve a merit, the apprentice must achieve a distinction in the observation with questioning and a pass in the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence.

To achieve a distinction, the apprentice must achieve a distinction in both assessment methods.

The overall grade for the apprentice is determined using the matrix below:

Observation with questioning	Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence	Overall grade awarded
Fail any of the 2 assessment methods		Fail
Pass	Pass	Pass
Pass	Distinction	Pass
Distinction	Pass	Merit
Distinction	Distinction	Distinction

Retake and resit information

If an apprentice fails 1 assessment method or more, they can take a resit or retake at their employer's discretion. The apprentice's employer needs to agree that a resit or retake is appropriate. If a resit is chosen, please call the Highfield scheduling team to arrange the resit. If a retake is chosen, the apprentice will require a period of further learning and will need to complete a retake checklist. Once this is completed, please call the Highfield scheduling team to arrange the retake.

A resit is typically taken within 2 months of the EPA outcome notification. The timescale for a retake will be dependent on how much retraining is required but is typically taken within 4 months of the EPA outcome notification.

When undertaking a resit or retake, the assessment method(s) will need to be reattempted in full, regardless of any individual assessment criteria that were passed on any prior attempt. The EPA Report will contain feedback on areas for development and resit or retake guidance.

Any EPA component resit/retake must be taken within a 6-month period from the EPA outcome notification, otherwise, the entire EPA must be retaken in full. Apprentices should have a supportive action plan to prepare for the resit/retake.

Apprentices who achieve a pass grade cannot resit or retake the EPA to achieve a higher grade.

The apprentice will get a maximum EPA grade of a pass if they need to resit or retake 1 or more assessment methods, unless there are exceptional circumstances that are beyond the control of the apprentice as determined by Highfield.

[Click here to return to contents](#)

Assessing the observation with questioning

In the observation with questioning, an independent assessor observes the apprentice in their workplace and asks questions. The apprentice completes their day-to-day duties under normal working conditions. Simulation is not allowed. Highfield must give the apprentice 2 weeks' notice of the observation with questions.

The observation with questioning must take **90 minutes**. The total time for the observation element is **60 minutes**. The time allocated for questioning is **30 minutes**. The independent assessor can increase the time by up to 10%. This time is to allow the apprentice to complete a task or respond to a question if necessary.

The observation may be split into discrete sections held on the same working day. This includes breaks and moving between locations. The independent assessor must explain to the apprentice the format and timescales of the observation with questions before it starts. This does not count towards the assessment time.

The independent assessor should observe the following during the observation:

- the apprentice interacting with a group of children through an opportunity or experience for learning, based on the session plan, which will be shared with the independent assessor on the day of the assessment, before the observation begins
- the apprentice leading or supervising colleagues during this session
- the apprentice communicating with parents, carers or guardians of the children under their supervision

The location, number of children and age range varies from employer to employer. Depending on the nature of the setting some examples of an observation could be as follows:

- session in a woodland area
- session working within messy play
- session working with pre-school children

This is not an exhaustive list. These activities provide the apprentice with the opportunity to demonstrate the KSBs mapped to this assessment method.

Questions must be asked after the observation. The independent assessor must ask at least **7 questions**. Follow-up questions are allowed where clarification is required. The independent assessor must ask questions about KSBs that were not observed to gather assessment evidence. These questions are in addition to the set number of questions for the observation with questions and should be kept to a minimum.

The observation must take place in person and not remotely.

Before the assessment

Employers/training providers should:

- ensure the apprentice knows the date, time and location of the assessment
- ensure the apprentice knows which early years lead practitioner criteria will be assessed (outlined on the following pages)
- encourage the apprentice to reflect on their experience and learning on-programme to understand what is required to meet the standard and identify real-life examples
- be prepared to provide clarification to the apprentice, and signpost them to relevant parts of their on-programme experience as preparation for this assessment

Grading the observation with questioning

Apprentices will be marked against the pass and distinction criteria included in the tables on the following pages (under 'Observation with questioning criteria').

- To achieve a **pass**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria
- To achieve a **distinction**, apprentices must meet all of the pass **and** distinction criteria
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will have not achieved all of the pass criteria

Observation with questioning mock assessment

It is the employer/training provider's responsibility to prepare apprentices for their end-point assessment. Highfield recommends that the apprentice experiences a mock observation with questioning in advance of the end-point assessment, with the training provider/employer giving feedback on any areas for improvement.

In designing a mock assessment, the employer/training provider should include the following elements in its planning:

- the mock observation with questioning should take place in a suitable location.
- a **90-minute** time slot should be available for the observation with questioning, if it is intended to be a complete mock observation with questioning covering all relevant standards (outlined in the following pages). However, this time may be split up to allow for progressive learning.
- consider a video or audio recording of the mock observation with questioning and allow it to be available to other apprentices, especially if it is not practicable for the employer/training provider to carry out a separate mock observation with questions with each apprentice.
- ensure that the apprentice's performance is assessed by a competent trainer/assessor, and that feedback is shared with the apprentice to complete the learning experience. Mock assessment sheets are available to download from the Highfield Assessment website and may be used for this purpose.
- use a minimum of **7 structured, 'open' questions** that do not lead the apprentice but allows them to give examples for how they have met each area in the standard. For example:
 - the unique child
 - How do you regularly evaluate and adapt the childcare environment to meet the needs and interests of all children?
 - Can you explain how you ensure personal care is respectful, nurturing and tailored to each child's individual needs?
 - learning and development
 - Can you give an example of how you adapted your approach to extend a child's learning during an interaction?
 - How do you encourage children's engagement with written communication in a way that is developmentally appropriate and responsive to their needs?
 - leadership practice
 - What strategies do you use to inspire and motivate others through the way you model your own practice?
 - Can you describe a situation where you needed to be assertive or diplomatic as part of your role within the team?

- How do you respond to identified risks, and what actions do you take to manage them effectively?

Observation with questioning criteria

Throughout the **90-minute** observation with questioning, the assessor will review the apprentice's competence in the criteria outlined below.

Apprentices should prepare for the observation with questions by considering how the criteria can be met.

The unique child
To pass, the following must be evidenced.
TUC1 Advocates in the child's best interest to ensure the child's voice is always heard and respected, demonstrating an inclusive and ethical approach to practice which is responsive and respectful to the individual child and takes account of the social and cultural context. Continuously evaluates the quality of the childcare environment. (K1, S1, S21)
TUC2 Applies current and contemporary theories and approaches when planning and undertaking appropriate personal care routines for individual children to ensure respectful and nurturing care. (K5, S9, B3)
TUC3 Responds to a child's individual development needs and circumstances, through planning that reflects the child's need for consistent care, as well as adapting to the child's and families' needs during change, including transitions. (K9, S8)
TUC4 Identifies, actions, addresses challenging issues and undertakes difficult conversations. (S23)
To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced
TUC5 <i>Demonstrates how their practice challenges both explicit and implicit discrimination, and actively supports children to advocate for themselves, by developing a sense of agency, autonomy, and the skills to impact their world. (K1, S1, S21)</i>

Learning and development
To pass, the following must be evidenced.
LD1 Applies a responsive approach that is influenced by a range of strategies, to develop and extend children's learning and thinking. (S5)
LD2 Observes, assesses, plans, facilitates and participates in play opportunities with children that reflect current curriculum. (S18)
LD3 Coordinates an exciting, dynamic, evolving and enabling environment, providing a range of fun, playful and engaging activities that reflect the interests, motivations, and play of individual and groups of children. (S16)
LD4 Supports and promotes children's speech, language and communication, adapting their practice to engage in authentic and quality interactions with the child or children to support verbal, nonverbal interactions and engagement with written communication (S3, B4)
LD5 Encourages all children's participation and ensures a sensitive, respectful and effective balance within the adult and child dynamic to facilitate play opportunities. (S12)
<i>To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced</i>
LD6 <i>Leads and models practice within the environment to continually provoke, excite and extend children's current interests and motivations. (S12, S16)</i>

Leadership practice
To pass, the following must be evidenced.
LP1 Demonstrates a leaderful approach within practice influenced by current theoretical perspectives and approaches. Inspires, motivates and coaches colleagues by modelling innovative and aspirational practice to support and engage others to develop their practice. (K18, S22, B2)
LP2 Deploys staff in a way that matches the learning environment, whilst prioritising the safety and wellbeing of all children. Acts as a positive and proactive member of the team, exercising assertiveness and diplomacy. (S13, B5)
LP3 Demonstrates current and contemporary influences on their pedagogical approach and practice. (S17)
LP4 Implements health and safety practices and carries out risk assessments and risk management processes in accordance with policies and procedures. (S26)
LP5 Supports the key person in articulating children's progress and planning future learning opportunities. (S20)
<i>To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced</i>
LP6 <i>Confidently applies current and contemporary theoretical perspectives and approaches when taking responsibility for supporting the key person in applying future learning possibilities whilst modelling innovative and aspirational practice to colleagues. (K18, S20, B5)</i>

[Click here to return to contents](#)

Assessing the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

In the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence, the independent assessor and apprentice will have a formal two-way conversation.

The purpose of the independent assessor's questions will be to assess the apprentice's competence against the following themes:

- legislation and guidance
- health and wellbeing
- continual professional development
- child development
- observation and assessment planning

Highfield must give the apprentice 2 weeks' notice of the professional discussion.

The apprentice must have access to their portfolio of evidence during the professional discussion. The apprentice can refer to and illustrate their answers with evidence from their portfolio of evidence. However, the portfolio of evidence is not directly assessed.

The professional discussion must last for **90 minutes**. The independent assessor can increase the time of the professional discussion by up to 10%. This time is to allow the apprentice to respond to a question if necessary.

The independent assessor must explain to the apprentice the format and timescales of the professional discussion before it starts. This does not count towards the assessment time.

The independent assessor must ask at least **8 questions**. Follow-up questions are allowed where clarification is required.

The professional discussion must take place in a suitable venue selected by Highfield for example, Highfield's or the employer's premises. The professional discussion can be conducted by video conferencing. The professional discussion should take place in a quiet room, free from distractions and influence.

Before the assessment

Employers/training providers should:

- ensure the apprentice knows the date, time and location of the assessment
- ensure the apprentice knows which criteria will be assessed (outlined on the following pages)
- encourage the apprentice to reflect on their experience and learning on-programme to understand what is required to meet the standard

- be prepared to provide clarification to the apprentice, and signpost them to relevant parts of their on-programme experience as preparation for this assessment

Grading the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence

Apprentices will be marked against the pass and distinction criteria included in the tables on the following pages (under 'Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence criteria').

- To achieve a **pass**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria
- To achieve a **distinction**, apprentices must achieve all of the pass criteria **and** all of the distinction criteria
- **Unsuccessful** apprentices will have not achieved all of the pass criteria

Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence mock assessment

It is the employer/training provider's responsibility to prepare apprentices for their end-point assessment. Highfield recommends that the apprentice experiences a mock professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence in preparation for the real thing. The most appropriate form of mock professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence will depend on the apprentice's setting and the resources available at the time.

In designing a mock assessment, the employer/training provider should include the following elements in its planning:

- the mock professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence should take place in a suitable location.
- a **90-minute** time slot should be available to complete the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence, if it is intended to be a complete professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence covering all relevant standards. However, this time may be split up to allow for progressive learning.
- consider a video or audio recording of the mock professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence and allow it to be available to other apprentices, especially if it is not practicable for the employer/training provider to carry out a separate mock assessment with each apprentice.
- ensure that the apprentice's performance is assessed by a competent trainer/assessor, and that feedback is shared with the apprentice to complete the learning experience. Mock assessment sheets are available to download from the Highfield Assessment website and may be used for this purpose.
- use a minimum of **8 structured, 'open' questions** that do not lead the apprentice but allows them to express their knowledge and experience in a calm and comfortable manner. For example:
 - legislation and guidance
 - What is the role of the designated safeguarding lead, and how do serious case reviews inform your practice?
 - Can you give an example of how you've demonstrated leaderful practice that values equality while maintaining professional boundaries?
 - health & wellbeing
 - Why is wellbeing important for children's holistic development, and how do you promote this in practice?
 - How do your curriculum decisions reflect a balance between pedagogy and the individual needs of all children in your setting?

- continual professional development
 - How has your involvement in action research supported your reflective practice and professional growth?
 - Can you describe a time when you received constructive criticism and how you responded to it?
- child development
 - What factors can affect a child's health, wellbeing and learning from conception to age 8, and how do you respond to these in practice?
 - How do you build effective and collaborative partnerships with parents and carers, and what approaches do you use to respect their social and cultural backgrounds?
- observation and assessment planning
 - How do you use theory to support the value of play in children's learning and development?
 - Can you explain how formative and summative assessments inform your decisions about early intervention?

Professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence criteria

Throughout the **90-minute** professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence, the assessor will review the apprentice's competence in the criteria outlined below.

Apprentices should prepare for the professional discussion underpinned by a portfolio of evidence by considering how the criteria can be met.

Legislation and guidance
To pass, the following must be evidenced.
LG1 Explains the role of the designated lead for safeguarding and assimilating findings of serious case reviews. Explains current legislation and guidance and how this is implemented through policy and procedure. Outlines their own responsibilities, knowing when to question and challenge others, including their own professional curiosity, regarding safeguarding and protecting children. (K6, K21, S10, S11)
LG2 Evaluates the strategies they apply when collaborating and cultivating partnerships with parents or carers stakeholders and multi agencies. (K10, S14)
LG3 Explains the importance and impact of inclusion, equality, and diversity and how to promote and embed consistent and impartial strategies that value equality in leaderful practice, within professional boundaries. (K17, B1)
LG4 Explains the current administration and records systems they use and how they share oral and written information in line with the security and confidentiality policy, and current legislation. (K20, S25)
LG5 Explains how they manage efficient and sustainable practice when using resources, applying reuse, recycling and safe disposal principles. (K22, S27)
To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced.
LG6 <i>Justifies their rationale for decision making with regards to safeguarding and protecting children, drawing on policies and procedures and their professional insight and curiosity. (K6, S10, S11)</i>
LG7 <i>Critically reflects on opportunities to recognise and challenge discriminatory processes, behaviours and attitudes and how these impact the child and family. (K17, B1)</i>

Health & wellbeing
To pass, the following must be evidenced.
HW1 Analyses theories of self-regulation, resilience and wellbeing and the importance for children's holistic development and life experiences. (K4)
HW2 Explains the importance of considering pedagogy when evaluating the curriculum's intent, implementation and impact and how strategies are developed and modelled to ensure the emotional, psychological, physical and cultural needs of all children within the setting are met. (K14, S2)
HW3 Analyses how they promote and support children and families to develop a healthy approach to making choices about activities and lifestyle. (S6)
To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced.
HW4 <i>Compares and contrasts different pedagogies, justifying the choices made, by illustrating the impact of decisions made on emotional, psychological, physical and cultural development of children in the setting. (K14, S2)</i>

Continual professional development
To pass, the following must be evidenced.
CPD1 Evaluates how reflection influences their early years practice and drives their commitment to continuing professional development and action research. (K19)
CPD2 Explains how they use opportunities to reflect on their development both professionally and personally and evaluates how they respond to challenge and constructive criticism. (S24, B6)
CPD3 Explains how they incorporate theories from physiological, neurological, developmental and education into their development and practice. (K13)
To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced.
CPD4 <i>Analyses the impact reflective practice has on their effectiveness as a lead practitioner, and evaluates how reflective experiences involving challenge and constructive criticism enhance their professional competence. (K19, S24, B6)</i>

Child development
To pass, the following must be evidenced.
CD1 Analyses how children learn and develop from conception to 8 years within the social, and cultural context and how this impacts their future. (K2)
CD2 Analyses factors that can impact upon health, well-being and early learning of children from conception to 8 and how children and families can make healthy and effective life choices. (K3, S7)
CD3 Explains theories of attachment they use to promote effective relationships between staff and children. (K7)
CD4 Explains how they develop effective and collaborative partnerships with parents and carers considering social and cultural context and influence, and the importance of home learning, and how that partnership enables a greater understanding of the child/children leading to enhanced opportunities. (K8, S15)
To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced.
CD5 <i>Evaluates approaches to children's development they use in their practice, and articulates how they reach decisions in complex situations. (K2, K3, S7)</i>

Observation and assessment planning
To pass, the following must be evidenced.
OAP1 Uses theoretical knowledge of the importance of play, demonstrating how they support children to engage in a range of learning contexts, supporting confidence within social experiences, including how they stimulate children's creativity and curiosity and how this benefits learning. (K11, K12, S4)
OAP2 Evaluates how planning cycles and formative and summative assessments for child or children inform and improve practice in relation to needs-based assessment and early intervention. (K16, S19)
OAP3 Analyses the impact of design, resources and engagement within indoor and outdoor environments to enable learning and development. (K15)
To gain a distinction, the following must be evidenced.
OAP4 <i>Critically analyses their choice of intervention strategies to create play, learning and development and social experiences for the child or children, including how these enable enquiry based active learning. (K11, K12, S4)</i>

[Click here to return to contents](#)