



Parents' guide to Early learning goals and achieving 'Good level of development'

An **Early Learning Goal (ELG)** is a specific statement that describes what most children are expected to know, understand and do by the end of Reception. There are goals across all seven areas of learning.

A **Good Level of Development (GLD)** is a judgement made at the end of Reception. A child achieves a GLD when they meet the expected standard in the key areas: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; Communication and Language; Literacy; and Mathematics.

In short, ELGs are individual goals, whereas GLD reflects overall readiness for Year 1.

Understanding the Early Learning Goals (ELGs)

The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) are part of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum. They describe the key skills, knowledge and understanding that most children are expected to develop by the end of Reception (age 4–5).

The purpose of the ELGs is to give teachers and parents a clear picture of a child's development across a broad range of areas, not just academic skills. They focus on building strong foundations so children are confident, independent learners who are ready for Year 1. Children learn best through play, exploration, and active engagement. The ELGs recognise this and are not about formal testing, but about observing children in their everyday learning.

Communication and Language

Children develop listening and attention skills, understanding, and speaking. They learn to follow instructions, answer questions, and express their ideas clearly. This supports all other learning.

Physical Development

Children improve coordination, movement, and fine motor skills such as holding a pencil. They also learn about healthy choices and independence, such as dressing themselves.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children learn to form positive relationships, manage their feelings, and develop confidence. They begin to understand rules, routines, and how to work with others.

Literacy

Children begin to read by recognising sounds (phonics) and blending them into words. They also start writing simple words and sentences to communicate ideas.

Mathematics

Children learn to count, recognise numbers, and understand basic concepts such as addition, subtraction, shape, and measure through practical activities.

Understanding the World

Children explore their environment, learn about people and communities, and begin to understand similarities and differences. They also explore nature and technology.

Expressive Arts and Design

Children use imagination and creativity through art, music, movement, and role play. This helps develop their ability to express ideas and feelings.

What does achieving the ELGs mean?

By the end of Reception, teachers assess children against these goals. If they reach the expected level in most areas, they are considered ready to move on to the next stage of learning in Year 1.

How parents can support

Parents play a vital role. Talking, reading, playing, and exploring together all help children develop the skills they need. Everyday activities make the biggest difference.