Education Endowment Foundation

How to use the Early Years Evidence Store

The early years lay the foundations for a child's future.

While high-quality education and care are positive for all children, the benefits for economically disadvantaged children are greater.

That's why developing quality practice is essential if we want every child to have a fair start in the early years.

Making changes to practice is hard when educators are so busy and have so many competing demands on their time. That's why the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) worked with educators and researchers to create the Early Years Evidence Store.

It's important to note that evidence can support you to reflect on your practice, but it can't tell you what to do. Use your knowledge of the children and the community you are working with. By combining your understanding of research evidence with your professional expertise, you can develop evidence-informed practice.



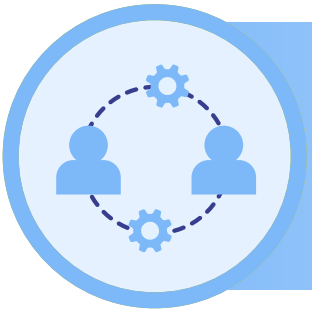
Themes

The Evidence Store includes six key themes for young children's learning and development. These are Communication and Language, Personal Social and Emotional Development, Early Literacy, Early Mathematics, Self-regulation and Executive Function and Physical Development



Approaches

Within each theme you will find a summary of evidence-informed approaches to help you to understand and reflect on your practice. You can use these to get up to speed with research evidence quickly. The Evidence Store also provides a technical summary of the evidence so you can dig a bit deeper.



Practices

Within each approach, we describe the everyday practices you might use to deliver the approach. The practices are illustrated by short video examples and they can help you put research evidence into action

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What the Evidence Store includes	**The Evidence Store focuses on:** • what educators can do to support children's learning and development • how they can put those approaches into action • why those approaches are important and what research evidence says about them
What's the Evidence Store doesn't include	**There are many other aspects of quality provision which are very important but are outside the scope of the Evidence Store.** **For example:** • Leadership • Funding, premises and space • Curriculum planning and assessment

To make the best use of the Store, it's important to take time to engage with the research evidence and use your professional experience and expertise to consider how you might put it into action in your setting.

The Store is most useful for reflection, professional learning and supporting the design of effective professional development.

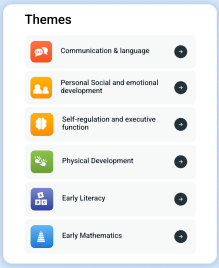
It is less effective to use it to search for activities to put into action.

Effective professional development, practical support and teamwork are crucial for making and sustaining changes to practice and developing quality practice.

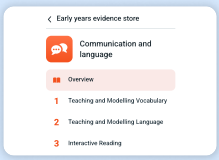
On the next page, we share some suggestions for putting the Evidence Store into action in your setting.

Putting the Evidence Store into action in your setting

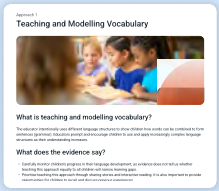
Using the Evidence Store to support the development of quality practice and help ensure that every child gets off to a strong start in the early years.



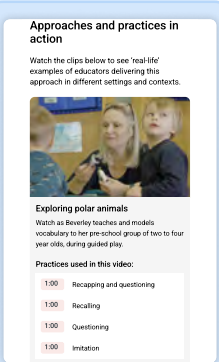
- **Theme:** select the Theme that is most important to develop in your setting. For example, you might choose Communication and Language, because your setting includes many children with delayed communication.
- **Overview:** begin by reading the theme Overview, which provides a top-level summary of the theme content, including the list of teaching approaches.
- **Download:** you might download our Two-page summary of the whole theme as a quick guide.



- **Approach:** select the Approach you think is the best fit for your setting to focus on and read the description at the top of the page.



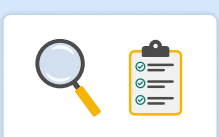
- **What does the evidence say?** – read this to deepen your understanding of the evidence behind the approach and to check it's relevant and feasible to implement. *For example, you might choose Interactive Reading because there is strong evidence that this can improve language and communication, and it's feasible in your setting to focus on developing quality practice in sharing books with children.*



- **Putting the approach into action:** read this for more in-depth and practical information about how to deliver this approach. This includes a list of practices used by educators in the evidence.
- **Approach in Action videos:** watch these clips to broaden your understanding of what the approach looks like in real life. These are fly on the wall clips from settings across England. They are intended to support professional discussion and reflection, not to 'exemplify best practice'.
- **Focus attention on what the educator does:** for example, which practices they use during their interactions with the children.
- **Reflective practice and staff discussions:** use the videos as a stimulus for reflective practice discussions.



- **Two-page summary poster:** share this with the team for a quick reference guide.
- **Detailed evidence summary:** read this to understand the evidence in more detail



- **Monitor and evaluate:** Whilst research evidence can point us to the 'best bets', it's important to check that the planned changes are making a positive difference in your unique context.
- **Check at child level:** are all children benefiting?