

MARSHFIELDS HUB STRATEGY PROGRAMME

AIM: To identify the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework for students with Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

What does EYFS say?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) sets the standards that all early years providers must meet to ensure that children learn and develop well and are kept healthy and safe. It promotes teaching and learning to ensure children's 'school readiness' and gives children the broad range of knowledge and skills that provide the right foundation for good future progress through school and life.

What is an MLD learner?

Within the code of practice, MLD is described as a student who is working at or below the second percentile on an Educational Psychologist's assessment. This will mean a student is likely to be working at least four years behind their peers.

Guiding Principles that should shape early years settings, and which should be considered for SEND learners.

1. Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident, and self-assured.
2. Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.
3. Children learn and develop well in enabling environments with teaching and support from adults, who respond to their individual interests and needs and help them to build their learning over time. Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
4. The importance of learning and development. Children develop and learn at different rates.

The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Areas of learning and development:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social, and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

A child who has not yet met the Early Learning goals as specified in the EYFS framework at age 5 are likely to have a moderate learning delay. Children who have not met these goals are also likely to be the first measure for education staff to make a referral for an EHCP.

In all cases the information gathered should be used to plan a challenging and enjoyable experience for each child.

It is recommended that learning is through:

- playing and exploring
- active learning
- creating and thinking critically

In an early years setting this can be visualized with the various learning and activities set out for children to explore.



A child who has not yet met these milestone as they enter school will be disadvantaged. To close the gap Quality First teaching (QTF) must be employed. High-quality teaching is always the first step in all learning environments. Interventions can be exceptional however they do not compensate for the lack of good quality teaching.

What might 'teaching and learning' look like for a child older than age 5 that has been recognized as having MLD? Its likely they have not these the milestones.

Some examples:

Milestone expected by age 5	Being able to	What can an adult do to support an older MLD child reaching EYFS milestones?
Listening, Attention and understanding	Listen attentively, respond to relevant questions, make comments, hold back and forth conversations.	Talk opportunities to promote listening and time to respond. Modelling of speech.
Speaking	Participate in small groups, offering their own ideas, offer explanations, use full sentences including correct tense	Promote real life conversation, gently model and correct incorrect use of tense. No matter the activity 'engage the child in a conversation'.

Self-Regulation	Show understanding of own feelings and those of others, able to give focused attention to what the teacher says responding appropriately	A child who has missed this milestone needs support to understand feelings. Zones of Regulation and Connected communities are two packages that could be used.
Managing self	Confident to try new activities, show independence, resilience, and perseverance in the face of challenge. Manage own toileting, basic hygiene, and personal needs	This comes with careful, safe, and supportive learning environment. Its far easier to say 'I can't do it' this will have saved the child over prior years. Careful planning to break this negative cycle is required.
Building relationships	Work and play cooperatively. Form positive attachments	Unstructured times require an attentive adult to support the natural development of play, structured lessons require a calm, clutter free consistent and safe learning environment. One where its ok to make learning mistakes. Think therapeutic. Every moment of learning times needs to be planned effectively.
Word reading and Writing	Say each sound for all letters of alphabet and at least 10 digraphs, write correctly formed letters, spell words that can be sounded out, write simple phrases that can be read by others	Emphasises the importance of the adult role model at all times. Giving lesson time over to revisiting these early milestones in a fun and interactive way.
Mathematics and Number Patterns	Deep understanding of number to 10. Subitise up to 5, Number bonds to 5 and some number bonds to 10.	Think about what you say as the supporting adult, provide concrete resources. A really good way to promote pro social behaviours is by giving students a task they can do.

Consider:

A child whose needs are met will aspire to all that the teacher has planned for them.

Useful Links

- Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974907/EYFS_framework_-_March_2021.pdf What legislation does this framework refer to?
 - 1) The learning and development requirements are given legal force by an Order² made under section 39(1)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006
 - 2) The safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulations³ made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006

- Assess, Plan, Do, Review
<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/05/21/assess-plan-do-review/>

Milestones

<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/milestones/index.html>

<https://www.4children.org.uk/>

<https://www.cambscommunityservices.nhs.uk/advice/staying-safe/childhood-development/milestones>

How can you assess impact: Follow an Assess, Plan, Do and Review

<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/05/21/assess-plan-do-review/>

Quality First Teaching

<https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/curriculum-and-learning/curriculum-guidance-all-phases/structuring-curriculum/quality-first-teaching-definition-and-guidance/>