



Department
for Education

Early Years Stronger Practice Advisers (EYSPA) Programme

Childminder Application Support Pack

September 2026

Introduction

The Early Years Stronger Practice Adviser (EYSPA) programme is a new iteration of the Experts and Mentors programme, which focused on developing the skills of early years professionals to reduce the effects of Covid-19 on children's development.

The EYSPA programme will deliver targeted support to leaders in eligible settings to boost children's development, improve outcomes, and narrow the disadvantage gap. Delivered via the [Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs](#) (EYSPH), support will be open to childminders and group-based settings. EYSPAs will support selected settings, coaching childminders in how to make improvements to their setting, with one specific EYSPA for childminder settings assigned to each EYSPH.

If your childminder setting meets the eligibility criteria, please complete the attached application form. Please also inform your local authority you are applying for this support. If selected, you will be asked for more specific information via a diagnostic form which will support the adviser in understanding the areas of support needed.

EYSPA's are experienced early years leaders who work in either a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Ofsted rated setting and have experience of coaching other early years professionals and improving practice.

Selected settings will collaborate closely with their EYSPH, EYSPA and the DfE. EYSPAs will commit to supporting childminder settings for four days over a term, offering either in person or online support to a cluster of four childminders. Childminders will receive a maximum of one term of support from an EYSPA, unless their local Hub sees it appropriate for a setting to be supported more than once.

As support will be offered in a cluster of four childminders, it is important applicants are flexible with the days they can receive EYSPA support as the days selected will need to cater to the needs of all childminders in the cluster.

Eligibility Criteria

The programme's eligibility criteria ensure support is offered to the most appropriate settings. Childminders will need to meet at least one of the below eligibility criteria:

Ofsted Inspection Grading:

A Childminder setting is eligible for support if they have received:

- A 'Needs attention' or 'Urgent improvement' grading in any area of its most recent Ofsted inspection under the [post-November 'report card' 2025 inspection framework](#)

- An overall grading of 'Inadequate' or 'Requires improvement' on the [pre-November 2025 Ofsted inspection framework](#).

The EYSPA will offer targeted support to improve areas for development highlighted in their most recent Ofsted inspection report.

Additional Eligibility Criteria:

Childminder settings will also be eligible if they have children on roll:

- Eligible for Early Years Pupil Premium
- Eligible for the Early Learning for 2 Year Olds Offer
- With SEND needs and who qualify for support

Settings may meet more than one of the above criteria; hubs will collaborate with Local Authorities to agree on which childminders would be best supported by an EYSPA.

Please be aware that the aim of the programme is to improve and strengthen settings practice and leadership, therefore applications which meet the **Ofsted eligibility requirements will be prioritised** for support over those who only meet the additional eligibility criteria.

Please be clear in your application which eligibility criteria(s) your setting meets; further details will be requested in the pre-support diagnostic form.

Completing the Application Form:

The childminder application form is a Microsoft Form that will be sent to you by your local EY Stronger Practice Hub. Section one of the form consists of short form questions designed to get essential information about you and your setting e.g. Name, URN, contact details, address etc.

Please be aware information will only be reviewed by the hub, the assigned EYSPA (if successful) and the Department for Education and no information will be made publicly available.

Section two of the form focuses on understanding the programme eligibility criteria that your setting meets and the areas of your practice you'd like EYSPA support with. The form is designed to be quick and easy to complete, with more specific information being provided in the diagnostic form that will be sent to childminders chosen for EYSPA support.

If you have any questions about the form when completing it, please contact your local EY Stronger Practice Hub in the first instance. For further support you can contact EYSPA.programme@education.gov.uk.

We look forward to receiving your application.