

Best Start in Life: Good level of development

The Critical Six for 2026

- Reduce Infant Mortality
- Increase Good Level of Development at Reception Age
- Reduce Smoking Prevalence
- Reduce Preventable Cardiovascular Disease
- Address the Mental Health Needs of Young People
- Reduce Tuberculosis Incidence

Department for Education

Giving every child the best start in life

Herefordshire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 - 2033

CP 1362

Herefordshire Council

healthwatch Herefordshire

NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Police

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

The **Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)** is a statutory assessment completed for all children at the end of the **Reception year** (usually aged 5). It provides a national picture of each child's development and learning, drawing together practitioner judgements based on ongoing observation and assessment throughout the EYFS.

- The EYFSP assesses children against **17 Early Learning Goals (ELGs)** across seven areas of learning.

These judgements are used to:

- Support transition into Key Stage 1
- Inform parents and carers about their child's development
- Provide local and national data about children's outcomes at the end of the EYFS

Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) - completed within the **first 6 weeks of Reception**

Good Level of Development (GLD)

A child is said to have achieved a **Good Level of Development (GLD)** if they meet the expected standard in **all of the following areas**:

- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Communication and Language
- Literacy
- Mathematics

GLD is a key national indicator used to understand how well children are prepared for learning at Key Stage 1. While GLD is not a statutory expectation for individual children, it is an important measure for evaluating the effectiveness of early years provision at local and national level.

Good Level of Development (GLD)



- By 2028, the Government want **75%** (a record proportion) of children to reach a good level of development by the end of reception.
- That's up from around **68%** today, meaning **40,000 to 45,000 more children each year will be better prepared for school and life**
- Only **51.5%** of children who qualify for free school meals reach a good level of development at age five, compared to **72%** of children not eligible for free school meals.
- And only **19.7%** of children with any special educational needs (SEN) reach this benchmark, compared to **75.6%** of children without SEN.



Good Level of Development (GLD)

In the academic year 2024-2025, **Herefordshire** had **72%** of children, overall, achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception. **England** had **68.3%** of children reach a good level of development by the end of Reception

Our Statutory target is 80% by 2028.

Herefordshire had **51.7%** of children eligible for free school meals achieve a good level of development.

England had **51.3%** of children eligible for free school meals achieve a good level of development by the end of Reception

Our Statutory target is 57.2% by 2028.

Academic year	Actual percentage GLD
2022/23	70.4%
2023/24	71.0%
2024/25	72.0%

How The 2.5yr and 3yr Child Readiness Review Supports GLD

The 2.5yr Integrated Review

- Assess speech, language and communication development
 - Monitor Physical growth & development
- Early Identification social, emotional & behavioral concerns
 - Promote healthy eating, physical activity & oral health
 - Sign post families to early support service where needed



The 3yr Child/School Readiness Review

- On going monitoring of development before school entry
- Review of pre identified Early Identification social, emotional & behavioral concerns
 - Preparation for nursery/school transitions
 - Targeted support to improve school readiness
 - Reinforcement of key health messages



GLD Can have a significant impact on adult life

Children who do well at school are more to..



- Gain qualifications & skilled valued by employers & Access a wider range of career opportunities
- Have higher earning potential over their lifetime & Experience lower rates if unemployment
- Better physical & mental health
- Greater health literacy & Healthier lifestyle choices
- Greater financial stability & Improved self confidence & self esteem
- Resilience & adaptability



Nationally, approximately 10% of children and young people have long term speech, language and communication needs which cause them significant difficulties with communication or learning in everyday life.

Increased risk.

Those with poor speech and language at age 5 have increased risks:

- 4 x** Risk of reading difficulties in adulthood
- 3 x** Risk of poor mental health in later life
- 2 x** Risk of unemployment at age 34

Return on investment²



£1 invested in quality early care and education saves taxpayers up to £13 in future costs.



For every £1 spent on early years education, £7 has to be spent to have the same impact in adolescence.



Targeted parenting programmes to prevent conduct disorders pay back £8 over six years for every £1 invested with savings to the NHS, education and criminal justice system.



One additional home learning activity per day has the cost benefit of £1,434 per child. Two additional home learning activities per day has the cost benefit of £2,868 per child.

Estimated lifetime cost of poor speech and language is £3,379 per person.³

Herefordshire Case Study: Solihull Approach – Supporting Parents and Strengthening Inclusion



- Implemented a county-wide **Solihull Approach** to create consistent support and guidance for parents, practitioners and families.
- Trained a multi-agency workforce and expanded access to parenting programmes, **with 2,700+ courses completed** and over **90% positive feedback**.
- Introduced a whole-system SEND approach focused on **early identification, practitioner development and improved inclusion support**.
- Increased the proportion of children with EHCPs known to services before starting school from **under 50% (2020) to 100% (2022/23)**.
- Established a multi-agency **'While You Wait'** offer, providing advice and reassurance to families awaiting specialist support.
- Strengthened transitions into mainstream school, with **significantly more children with EHCPs successfully moving into mainstream provision**.
- **Impact: improved outcomes for children, greater parental confidence, stronger practitioner collaboration, and a more joined-up system response.**

Disadvantaged Gap



- Introduction of **Early Years/Key Stage 1 Improvement Adviser for SEND** supporting schools.
- Delivery of the Neuroinclusive Education Network (NEN) **training programme**, including bespoke Early Years packages. **90** delegates already trained across early years in schools. **61% leadership/SENCo participation**, supporting whole-school implementation and receiving outstanding feedback so far.
- **EYFSP assessment support sessions** with a focus on building practitioner confidence and securing consistent, fair and inclusive EYFSP judgements through structured professional dialogue
- Delivery of the **Child Readiness Project**.
- Enhanced **transition support offer**.
- Regular **Early Years School Network Meetings** with strong engagement from schools.
- Only 1 of 170 settings across Herefordshire falls below expected.
- Universal Portage worker.

Good level of development: Call to action

Interventions to reduce inequalities in speech and language in children. and reduce need for one-to- one speech and language therapy

Improve Home Learning Environment

Parents with education up to 16: Doing two of these activities a day: reading, playing with letters or singing songs. 6-9 books in home at 6 months



Enough to lift at risk 3 year olds out of the vulnerable language skills group ⁽¹⁾.

45% improvement in school readiness ⁽²⁾

Increase use of quality childcare in families with parents educated below degree level

Parents with education up to 16: Three years of good quality childcare for more than 10 -20 hours a week



50 percent improvement in pre reading. ⁽³⁾ Pre reading is closely associated with development of SLC skills. Other studies show quality preschool attendance is associated with children's language and literacy outcomes ⁽⁴⁾

Intervene with group programme once issue has been identified

Group intervention with parents of 2-3 year olds with expressive language delays.



By age 3, 75% of the children in the intervention group showed normal expressive language abilities in contrast to 44% in the waiting group. Halved numbers needing individual therapy. ⁽⁵⁾

Your Role

- Support Employees Who Are Parents and Carers
- Invest in Early Years Workforce Development
- Partner with Early Years Providers and Schools
- Provide Financial and In-Kind Support
- Champion Family Hubs and Community Services
- Promote Inclusive Recruitment and Local Employment
- Advocate for the Early Years Agenda
- Improve Workplace Equality and Reduce Poverty
- Encourage Volunteering and Mentoring

A dark blue rectangular graphic with the text 'What can YOU do?' in white. 'What can' is in a smaller font, 'YOU' is in a large, bold font, and 'do?' is in a smaller font. The question mark is large and stylized, extending above the 'do'.