

Early Years Curricula (ECEY6010)

Content:

Page 2. AI Statement.

Page 3. Part 1

Page 9. Part 2

Page 12. Part 3

Page 18. Reference List.

AI statement:

I confirm that I have used Co-Pilot for research and proof-read purposes only. I confirm I have copies of my drafts, notes and other resources I used before and after the use of any AI tool which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Part 1

Curricula

A curriculum can be defined as the full range of processes through which an educational programme is designed, organised and planned (UNESCO, 2021).

Education Scotland (2017) similarly describes it as “the totality of all that is planned for children and young people from early learning and childcare, through school and beyond”.

A curriculum outlines the intended learning objectives, the content to be taught, the pedagogical methods to be used and the approaches to assessment. It also identifies the resources required and the arrangements for preparing teachers and practitioners to deliver the programme effectively (Welsh Government, 2022; Deng, 2022; Priestley *et al.*, 2021). Beyond this primary function, it also operates as a political and social agreement that reflects a balance between local, national and global priorities (UNESCO, 2021; Biesta, 2020; Deng, 2022).

A well-designed curriculum identifies the essential knowledge, skills and competencies learners need for lifelong learning, personal growth and participation in an increasingly complex society, rather than reflecting historically linear and standardised models that prioritised academic achievement alone (OECD, 2018). From a teacher or practitioner perspective, curriculum is not simply a prescribed list of content or objectives but something that is actively interpreted, shaped and enacted through professional judgement, values and relationships. In this sense, curriculum becomes a form of lived practice that can be adapted to the realities of each setting (Priestley & Biesta, 2013). In a rapidly changing world, the curriculum must remain dynamic and responsive, adapting to technological, economic and cultural shifts to maintain relevance and prepare learners for future challenges (UNESCO, 2021).

Play-Based Curriculum

To better understand the importance of curricula, it is important to consider how specific pedagogical approaches fit within this broader conceptualisation. One such

approach is the play-based curriculum, which has become central to many early years curricula internationally.

A play-based curriculum is an educational approach that positions play at the centre of learning. Its roots can be traced back to the 1850s, when Friedrich Froebel introduced a holistic, hands-on approach to early education through the invention of the kindergarten, an idea considered revolutionary at the time but now embedded in early years practice worldwide (Froebel Trust, n.d.). Skene *et al.* (2022) describe play-based learning as a pedagogical framework that integrates child-initiated exploration with varying degrees of adult guidance to support cognitive, social, emotional and creative development. Building on this, Wang and Oyam (2024) highlight that through play, children develop skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, imagination, collaboration, memory, attention, reasoning and language, reinforcing Skene *et al.*'s (2022) argument that play-based pedagogy is a powerful driver of meaningful learning.

This links to Piaget's cognitive theory which, although not directly related to education, was later used to transform the curriculum. It encouraged children to learn through active exploration, play and interaction with their environment. It supported educators to focus on the process of learning rather than the end result, allowing children to progress at their own pace (McLeod, 2018).

Research reviews highlight that play-based curricula emphasise key features such as choice, curiosity and active engagement, enabling children to learn through joyful, iterative and socially interactive experiences (Dean & Wenner, 2025). Evidence also shows that guided play or scaffolding can enhance early learning outcomes, particularly in areas such as mathematics, spatial reasoning and executive function (Skene *et al.*, 2022). These findings align with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which views development as emerging through interaction, exploration and co-constructed understanding. Within early childhood and primary settings, teachers therefore play a crucial role in planning, facilitating and extending play to ensure that learning remains purposeful and developmentally appropriate (Li & Kangas, 2024).

While play-based learning provides insight into how pedagogy can support holistic development, national curriculum frameworks such as the Curriculum for Wales and

Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence determine the extent to which such approaches can be embedded in practice.

Curriculum for Wales

The Curriculum for Wales is a national curriculum framework introduced in 2022 as part of a major reform agenda aimed at transforming Welsh education through a more flexible, learner-centred approach (Welsh Government, 2024). The Curriculum for Wales Framework is statutory guidance published under section 71 of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. It replaces the prescriptive 1988 National Curriculum with a system in which schools design their own curricula within a national framework, enabling them to respond to local perspectives and learner needs (Smith, 2024).

The framework sets out expectations for the knowledge, skills and experiences learners should develop, structured around progression and the four purposes of education. However, throughout the Curriculum for Wales guidance, the word "should" is frequently used when referring to expectations. This indicates strong recommendations rather than mandatory requirements. As statutory guidance, schools must consider these recommendations but may, with good reason, decide to take a different approach (Welsh Government, 2024).

Smith (2024) argues that the Curriculum for Wales improves the quality of learning through a more holistic, multidisciplinary approach grounded in meaningful experiences and that it can empower teachers to design learning tailored to their pupils. However, Evans (2025) raises concerns about ensuring equity and consistency across a system that encourages local variation, as well as challenges relating to resources, professional learning and the capacity of schools to enact this effectively.

Curriculum for Excellence (Scotland)

Similarly to the Curriculum for Wales, Scotland's national curriculum, the Curriculum for Excellence, promotes a holistic and flexible approach aimed at supporting children

and young people to adapt, think critically and thrive in a changing world (OECD, 2021; Education Scotland, 2017). Curriculum for Excellence was designed to place children and young people at the centre of their education and seeks to develop the four capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2024). It aims to empower practitioners and individual settings to make decisions that provide a coherent, flexible and enriched curriculum that is adaptable and responsive to the diverse needs of learners (Education Scotland, 2017).

Following an external review of Curriculum for Excellence, Hulme (2025) argues that because the framework positions teachers as curriculum makers, its success depends on practitioners being given sufficient time, support, coherent policy and guidance, and sustained professional learning. In addition, national thematic inspections show that schools increasingly draw on local contexts and community involvement to design relevant and progressive curricula, although differences in practice continue to affect consistency and equity (HM Inspectorate of Education, 2024).

Comparison of ALN/ASN Approaches

A key similarity between the Curriculum for Wales and Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence is that both embed support for learners with additional needs within a rights-based, inclusive vision of the whole curriculum. In Wales, the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the ALN Code establish a unified statutory system for children with additional learning needs, underpinned by UNCRC principles and closely aligned with the emphasis on inclusive practice and the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales (Welsh Government, 2021; NDNA, 2023). This system prioritises early identification, person-centred planning and statutory Individual Development Plans (IDPs) for all learners requiring additional provision (Welsh Government, 2018; Welsh Government, 2021).

Similarly, Curriculum for Excellence is framed as a coherent curriculum in which all children are entitled to a "clear and connected curriculum" and support that removes barriers to learning, with universal and targeted support embedded within curriculum

design (Education Scotland, 2017). The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 underpins the Additional Support for Learning: Statutory Guidance 2017, placing a legal duty on schools to identify and address barriers to learning.

However, despite these shared values, the systems diverge structurally. Curriculum for Excellence retains a subject-based framework, which research suggests can constrain interdisciplinary learning and limit teachers' ability to act as genuine curriculum makers (Priestley & Minty, 2013; Priestley *et al.*, 2021). In contrast, the Curriculum for Wales replaces subjects with six Areas of Learning and Experience, enabling deeper innovation but requiring extensive professional learning and strong system coherence (Smith, 2024). These structural differences, although subtle, may make accessing all areas of the curriculum more challenging for some children with ALN.

Research on the Curriculum for Excellence shows that subject-based timetabling can create fragmentation, making it harder for teachers to plan coherent, personalised pathways for learners who require continuity, repetition or integrated support across learning areas (Hulme, 2025; Priestley & Minty, 2013). The persistence of traditional subject boundaries may also limit opportunities for interdisciplinary learning, which is often beneficial for children with ALN because it allows concepts to be revisited in multiple contexts and through varied modalities (Florian & Beaton, 2020).

In contrast, the Curriculum for Wales' framework of six Areas of Learning and Experience offers greater potential for holistic, connected learning. However, this flexibility places significant demands on practitioner expertise, collaborative planning and assessment literacy. The shift away from subjects also requires practitioners to design progression pathways that are both personalised and aligned with the four purposes. This can be challenging without sustained professional learning and clear guidance (Donaldson, 2015). Studies indicate that variability in practitioner confidence and system-level coherence can also lead to inconsistent provision, which may disproportionately affect learners who rely on stable, well-coordinated support (Smith, 2024; Welsh Government, 2023).

Further research in both Wales and Scotland highlights workload pressures, uneven professional learning and inconsistent local authority support as significant barriers to

effective delivery (Evans, 2025; COSLA, 2024). In Scotland, gaps between policy aspirations and practice have resulted in inconsistent access to the full curriculum for some learners with additional support needs (Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, 2023). In Wales, despite a more integrated ALN system, resource constraints and staffing shortages continue to limit the effectiveness of IDPs and inclusive curriculum design (Conn, Hicks & Thomas, 2024).

Conclusion

To conclude, when taken together, these factors suggest that while both systems are underpinned by strong inclusive values, their structural differences may influence how easily children with additional learning needs can access the full curriculum.

Curriculum for Excellence's subject-based model may restrict flexibility, whereas the Curriculum for Wales' open-ended design risks inconsistency if not supported by robust professional learning and system alignment. Ultimately, achieving equitable access for learners with ALN depends not only on curriculum principles but on the wider system's capacity to provide coherent guidance, sufficient resources and the professional conditions necessary for meaningful enactment.

Part 2

Assessments and The Unique Child

The Curriculum for Wales states that the purpose of assessment is to support the progression of each individual learner, acknowledging that every child is unique and will progress at their own pace. Assessment is understood as an ongoing process with learners at the centre, who are encouraged to take an active role in their own learning. This process is supported by parents, carers and practitioners to ensure the best outcomes for the child (Welsh Government, 2022).

Recognising the uniqueness of every child and the rapid pace of early development, the Welsh Government emphasises the importance of placing children's developmental needs at the heart of pedagogical practice to ensure holistic development (Welsh Government, 2024). Within the Curriculum for Wales, the Unique Child is reflected in the emphasis on learner progression and the four purposes, which position children as ambitious, capable learners and ethical, informed citizens. Progression is viewed as a continuum rather than fixed age-related expectations, allowing practitioners to consider each child's developmental journey rather than measuring them against normative benchmarks (Welsh Government, 2022).

Assessment – Curriculum for Wales

This is reinforced by the emphasis that learning across all areas of the curriculum should draw on a wide range of assessment approaches in order to build a holistic picture of each learner's development (Welsh Government, 2024). One assessment tool used within the Curriculum for Wales is the Progression Code, a statutory document created under the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021. It sets out the mandatory principles that all schools and funded settings must follow to ensure meaningful learner progression. The Code establishes five overarching principles: developing increasing effectiveness as learners; broadening and deepening knowledge; deepening disciplinary understanding; refining and applying skills with growing

sophistication; and making connections across contexts, which must underpin curriculum design, teaching and assessment (Welsh Government, 2021).

The Code emphasises that progression is non-linear, varies between learners and requires revisiting concepts over time, which aligns with Bruner's theory of the spiral curriculum, where learners return to key ideas repeatedly to deepen understanding and move towards mastery (Bruner, 1960). It rejects the idea of judging learners against external standards by a certain age, making education fundamentally about the learning journey rather than fixed outcomes (Banjee, 2021). Banjee (2021) also highlights that the Progression Code enables practitioners to better understand learners' experiences and how learning takes place, reinforcing the central role of effective pedagogy and assessment in supporting progress.

A key strength of this approach is its flexibility. By avoiding rigid age-related expectations, the Curriculum for Wales supports practitioners to recognise diverse developmental trajectories and respond to the needs of the Unique Child. However, research highlights challenges in ensuring consistency across settings, particularly given the high level of professional judgement required (Evans, 2025; Welsh Government, 2022). Schools are required to design curricula that reflect these principles across all Areas of Learning and Experience, ensuring coherent progression aligned with the four purposes and responsive to individual learner needs, including those with additional learning needs (Welsh Government, 2021).

To support schools and practitioners to shift towards more holistic, developmental and learner-centred approaches to learning and assessment, a national project known as *Camau i'r Dyfodol – Steps to the Future* involves policymakers, teachers, leaders and researchers who recognise that progression is central to the Curriculum for Wales and that meaningful reform requires sense-making, knowledge-building and coherence across the system. Its work includes developing resources, facilitating national conversations and drawing on international evidence to help schools translate policy into effective practice (Welsh Government, 2023).

Without sufficient professional learning and system-wide support, there is a risk that assessment becomes variable or overly reliant on practitioner interpretation, a concern

echoed in wider curriculum literature which emphasises that teacher-led assessment requires strong structural and professional scaffolding to be effective (Priestley & Biesta, 2013).

Assessment – Curriculum for Excellence

In Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence, the Unique Child is embedded in the entitlement to a "clear and connected curriculum" and the expectation that practitioners remove barriers to learning through universal and targeted support (Education Scotland, 2017). The Curriculum for Excellence's four capacities: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors, reflect a holistic view of the child, although the curriculum's subject-based structure can limit flexibility in practice.

Assessment in the Curriculum for Excellence is guided by the principles of Assessment is for Learning, which emphasise formative assessment, learner engagement and feedback. This system comprises three interweaving strands of activity: promoting excellence in professional assessment practice, emphasising the centrality of teachers' judgements; building arrangements for local quality assurance to ensure consistency and reliability of judgement; and national monitoring (University of Glasgow, 2021). The Curriculum for Excellence promotes a broad general education with assessment focusing on progress through curriculum levels rather than strict age-related expectations. In theory, this supports recognition of the Unique Child by allowing learners to progress at different rates.

However, Priestley and Biesta's (2013) analysis of the Curriculum for Excellence highlights that although the curriculum aspires to flexibility and teacher agency, the system remains constrained by its subject-based structures. The University of Glasgow (2021) also identifies several concerns in its research on the Assessment is for Learning programme. One of the most significant issues was the amount of time teachers needed to plan, reflect and embed formative assessment practices, with many reporting pressure, concerns about falling behind and increased accountability demands. Another challenge was the variability in teacher confidence and readiness:

while some practitioners embraced new strategies, others struggled to let go of traditional routines, manage noisier learner-led classrooms or adopt techniques such as extended wait-time. The report further highlights inconsistency in professional support, noting that teachers valued practical modelling, small-group workshops and local networks, but found large, generic training sessions far less effective (University of Glasgow, 2021).

Comparison of Assessment Systems

Both curriculum systems demonstrate strong rhetorical commitments to recognising the Unique Child, yet their assessment practices reveal important differences and limitations. A key strength shared by both the Curriculum for Wales and Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence is their emphasis on holistic, formative assessment, where observation, professional judgement and learner engagement are central (Skene *et al.*, 2022; Li & Kangas, 2024). Both Wales' progression steps and Scotland's curriculum levels also allow children to develop at different rates, supporting individual learning pathways (Welsh Government, 2021; Education Scotland, 2017). Furthermore, both systems are underpinned by inclusive policy frameworks: Wales' ALN reforms and Scotland's Additional Support for Learning legislation embed assessment within rights-based structures that prioritise individual needs (Welsh Government, 2021; Scottish Government, 2017).

However, significant limitations remain. Heavy reliance on practitioner judgement can lead to variability and inconsistency, particularly where professional learning is uneven (Evans, 2025; COSLA, 2024). Structural constraints also shape practice; for example, the Curriculum for Excellence's subject-based programme can restrict interdisciplinary, play-based assessment and limit recognition of the Unique Child (Priestley & Minty, 2013; OECD, 2021). Accountability pressures, especially in Scotland, can create tensions which impact practice and flexibility (University of Glasgow, 2021; HM Inspectorate of Education, 2024). Finally, as Priestley and Biesta argue, curricula that depend heavily on teacher agency require strong system-level support; without this,

assessment risks becoming superficial or tokenistic rather than genuinely transformative for learners (Priestley & Biesta, 2013).

Conclusion

In conclusion, both the Curriculum for Wales and Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence aim to recognise the Unique Child through holistic, formative assessment approaches that value individual progression. Their models - the Progression Code and Assessment is for Learning, support flexible pathways and rely on professional judgement to understand each learner's development. However, their effectiveness depends heavily on the conditions in which they are implemented. Research clearly shows that while both curricula are theoretically aligned with the principles of the Unique Child, meaningful realisation of these principles requires strong system-level support, consistent professional learning and coherent practice across settings.

Part 3**Blog:****Potty Training Before Nursery: A Hidden Barrier to Early Years Access.****A milestone that should feel exciting - not stressful**

For many families in Wales, the transition into nursery is an exciting milestone. A chance for children to build relationships, explore new environments and begin their early learning journey. Yet for some, this transition is overshadowed by a quiet but persistent barrier: the expectation that children should be “toilet trained” by a certain age. Despite clear evidence that toileting is a highly individual developmental process, some early years settings continue to treat it as a readiness requirement rather than a developmental journey (ERIC, 2023; Kiddoo, 2020).

When toileting becomes a barrier to access

With toilet training in readiness for nursery already a hot topic on the playground as well as in the nursery classroom, recent news from Blaenau Gwent has intensified the conversation. The local authority reportedly issued a statement insisting that parents must come to school to change nappies and pull-ups. This has raised serious concerns about children being left wet or soiled while waiting for parents to arrive - a situation that demands urgent discussion.

The BBC reports that working parents are likely to struggle to leave their jobs during the day, leading in some cases to pupil withdrawal and ultimately, creating a barrier to accessing early education. The BBC also notes that ERIC - the UK’s national children’s continence charity, has urged that parents must not be shamed and instead local services should be properly resourced to support toilet training. ERIC reported that calls to their helpline have increased five-fold, demonstrating that families are actively seeking help (BBC, 2026).

This story as others like it, have caused understandable frustration among parents and practitioners and highlight a wider issue: toileting-based exclusion is developmentally inappropriate and inconsistent with Wales' rights-based early years framework (Welsh Government, 2022; Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2023). Research consistently shows that children develop toileting skills at widely varying rates, and pressure to "train" prematurely can increase stress, shame and behavioural difficulties (Joinson *et al.*, 2019; Schum *et al.*, 2021).

Toileting is a developmental journey

Toileting typically develops between 18 months and five years and is shaped by neurological maturation, social learning and emotional readiness (Burns & Matson, 2017; Joinson *et al.*, 2019). Children must acquire around 40 separate skills to use the toilet independently, from communication to memory to physical coordination (ERIC, 2023; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2023). Although, many two and three-year-olds begin using the potty with support, progress is not linear and influenced by temperament, neurodiversity and family routines (Kiddoo, 2020). In addition, night-time dryness may not develop until age seven (NHS, 2023; Largo *et al.*, 2019).

Understanding toileting as a journey highlights the need for sensitive, individualised support. A child-centred approach that recognises toileting as a milestone involving autonomy, body awareness and emotional security, helps ensure that learning remains positive and developmentally appropriate (Birth to 5 Matters, 2021; Welsh Government, 2022).

What Welsh policy says

Welsh policy strongly reinforces this developmental view. The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, requiring early years providers to uphold non-discrimination practice (Article 2), to put the child's best interests at centre (Article 3) and appropriately support developmental differences (Article 23) (Welsh Government,

2011). Creating barriers to learning for children who wear nappies conflicts directly with these duties and has been criticised by children's rights bodies (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2023).

The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 requires settings to identify needs early, remove barriers to participation and make reasonable adjustments - meaning "toilet-trained only" policies risk unlawful discrimination (Welsh Government, 2018; NDNA, 2023). Welsh Government guidance is clear that personal care, which would include toileting is a normal part of early years provision (Welsh Government, 2021; 2022). Estyn's inspection framework also expects providers to promote dignity, meet individual needs and support personal care (Estyn, 2022; 2023).

Equality vs equity — and who is most affected

Equality would mean expecting all children to be toilet trained before starting nursery. Equity means recognising that children develop at different rates and adapting provision accordingly (Children's Commissioner for Wales, 2023). Toileting expectations disproportionately affect:

- Summer-born children, who may be almost a year younger than peers (DfE, 2018)
- Neurodiverse children, including autistic and ADHD learners, many who may not have received a formal diagnosis. (Kiddoo, 2020)
- Children with developmental delays such as communication delay, or children with underlying bladder or bowel conditions (Joinson *et al.*, 2019)

These groups are most at risk when settings impose inappropriate toileting expectations.

What inclusive practice looks like

Under the Curriculum for Wales and the Progression Code, practitioners must recognise each child as a unique learner with an individual developmental pathway

(Welsh Government, 2021; 2022). Toileting is part of personal care learning - NOT a prerequisite for participation. Inclusive practice removes barriers, adapts routines and works collaboratively with families to ensure every child can access and thrive in early years provision.

Conclusion: Toileting should never be a gatekeeper to early education

When nurseries expect children to be toilet trained before entry, they place unnecessary pressure on families and risk excluding those who need support the most. Toileting is a developmental journey, not a deadline and Wales' rights-based early years system is clear that no child should be denied access because of their stage of continence. Truly inclusive practice means meeting children where they are, not where adults think they "should" be.

For Parents

If a nursery or childcare setting refuses a place because your child is not yet toilet trained:

- Ask to see their admissions policy - toileting must not be used as a criterion.
- Refer to Welsh Government guidance confirming that personal care is part of normal provision.
- Contact your local Family Information Service for advice.
- Seek support from the Children's Commissioner for Wales if you believe your child is being unfairly excluded.
- Keep written records of conversations and decisions.

Your child has a right to access early education — nappies should never stand in the way.

Reference list

- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018* (anaw 2).
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2018/2/contents/enacted> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Banerjee, R. (2023) *National Network Progression Conversation*. YouTube video, 1 December. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=djWuXJ3VDzk> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Biesta, G. (2020) *Educational Research: An Unorthodox Introduction*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC
- Burns, C.O., Matson, J.L. (2017). 'Normal developmental milestones of toileting: Clinical guide to toilet training children'. *Autism and Child Psychopathology Series*, pp.49-62. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62725-0_4 (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (2023) *Additional Support for Learning in Scotland: Submission to the Scottish Parliament Education, Children and Young People Committee*. Available at: https://www.cypcs.org.uk/news-and-stories/?_sf_s=additional%20support (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Children's Commissioner for Wales (2023) *Annual Report 2023*. Available at: https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/CCfW_ARA23-24_290924.pdf (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Conn, C., Hicks, M. & Thomas, D. V., (2024) "Developments in inclusive education and additional learning needs in Wales", *Wales Journal of Education* 26(2), 91–103. doi: <https://doi.org/10.16922/wje.26.2.7>
- COSLA (2024) *Additional Support for Learning Action Plan: 3rd Progress Report*. Available at: <https://www.cosla.gov.uk/search?query=Additional+Support+for+Learning+Action+Plan> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Dean, S.N. & Wenner, J.A. (2025) 'Patterns and representation in play-based learning: a systematic meta-synthesis of empirical studies', *Frontiers in Education*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2025.1557001> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Deng, Z. (2022) *Knowledge, Content, Curriculum: International Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Early Education (2021) *Birth to 5 Matters: Guidance for the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Available at: <https://birthto5matters.org.uk> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).

Education Scotland (2017) *Curriculum for Excellence: A Statement for Practitioners*.

Available at: <https://education.gov.scot/curriculum-for-excellence/about-curriculum-for-excellence/what-is-curriculum-for-excellence/> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).

ERIC (2023) *Toilet Training and Continence Support*. Available at:

<https://eric.org.uk/training-for-early-years-practitioners/> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).

Estyn (2022) *Guidance handbook for inspecting care and education in regulated non-school settings eligible for funding for part-time education*. Available at:

<https://estyn.gov.wales/app/uploads/2021/11/Guidance-handbook-for-inspecting-care-and-education-in-regulated-non-school-settings-eligible-for-funding-for-part-time-education.pdf> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).

Estyn (2023) *Working in partnership to promote learning experiences and children's wellbeing*. Available at:

<https://estyn.gov.wales/improvement-resources/working-in-partnership-to-promote-learning-experiences-and-childrens-wellbeing/> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).

Evans, G. (2025) 'A new dawn or false hope? Exploring the early implementation of Curriculum for Wales', *Education Inquiry*, 16(4), pp. 761–775. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/20004508.2023.2297506>

Froebel Trust (n.d.) *Principles and Practice*. Available at:

<https://www.froebel.org.uk/about-us/froebelian-principles> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

HM Inspectorate of Education (2024) *Evaluation of Curriculum Design in Scotland*.

Available at: <https://educationinspectorate.gov.scot/inspection-reports/national-thematic-inspections/evaluation-of-curriculum-design-in-scotland/> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).

Hulme, M. (2025) 'Building teacher capacity for curriculum renewal: insights from Scotland', *Education 3–13*, 53(7), pp. 1204–1219. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2025.2505661>

Hulme, M., Beauchamp, G., Wood, J. and Bignell, C. (2024). *Teacher Workload Report 2024: Executive Summary*. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.25134.32321>

Joinson, C., Heron, J. & von Gontard, A. (2019) 'Developmental trajectories of daytime bladder control', *Journal of Pediatric Urology*, 15(3), pp. 250.e1–250.e7. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-024-02471-1> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).

- Kiddoo, D. (2020) 'Toileting and continence in early childhood: Supporting neurodiverse learners', *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 25(7), pp. 430–436.
- Largo, R. H., Molinari, L., von Siebenthal, K. & Wolfensberger, U. (2019) 'Night-time bladder control and developmental variation', *European Journal of Pediatrics*, 178(4), pp. 567–575. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s004310051030> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Li, X. & Kangas, M. (2024) 'A systematic literature review of playful learning in primary education: teachers' pedagogical activities', *Education 3–13*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004279.2024.2416954>
- National Day Nurseries Association (2023) *Inclusion in Early Years Settings*. Available at: <https://www.ndna.org.uk> (Accessed: 15 June 2026).
- NDNA (2023) *Curriculum for Wales Guidance for Early Years Providers*. National Day Nurseries Association. Available at: <https://ndna.org.uk/ecplc-curriculum-for-wales-guidance-documents> (Accessed: 13 June 2026).
- OECD (2018) *The Future of Education and Skills: Education 2030*. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).
- OECD (2021) *Scotland's Curriculum for Excellence: Into the Future*. OECD Publishing. Available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/scotland-s-curriculum-for-excellence_bf624417-en.html (Accessed: 11 June 2026).
- Priestley, M. & Biesta, G. (2013) *Reinventing the Curriculum: New Trends in Curriculum Policy and Practice*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Priestley, M. & Minty, S. (2013) 'Curriculum for Excellence: "A brilliant idea, but..."', *Scottish Educational Review*, 45(1), pp. 39–52. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1163/27730840-04501005> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).
- Priestley, M., Alvunger, D., Philippou, S. and Soini, T. (eds) (2021) *Curriculum Making in Europe: Policy and Practice Within and Across Diverse Contexts*. Bingley: Emerald Publishing. Available at: <https://books.emeraldinsight.com/page/detail/Curriculum-Making-in-Europe/?k=9781839822494> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).
- Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011*. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).
- Schum, T. et al. (2021) 'Skill acquisition in toilet training: A developmental model', *Clinical Pediatrics*, 60(2), pp. 123–132. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.109.3.e48> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).

Scottish Government (2017) *Additional Support for Learning: Statutory Guidance*.

Available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/supporting-childrens-learning-statutory-guidance-education-additional-support-learning-scotland> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).

Skene, K. et al. (2022) 'Can guidance during play enhance children's learning and development in educational contexts? A systematic review and meta-analysis', *Child Development*, 93(4), pp. 1162–1180. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.13730> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).

Smith, A. (2024) *Implementing the Curriculum for Wales: Challenges and Opportunities*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.

UNESCO (2021) *Reimagining Our Futures Together: A New Social Contract for Education*. Paris: UNESCO. Available at: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).

United Nations (1989) Convention on the rights of the child. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-child> (Accessed: 14 June 2026).

University of Glasgow (2021) *Assessment is for Learning: Exploring Programme Success*. Available at: https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_774058_smxx.pdf (Accessed: 15 June 2026).

Wang, H. & Oyam, D.M.A. (2024) 'The role of play-based learning in early childhood cognitive development', *Research Publish Journals*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13143653> (Accessed: 11 June 2026).

Welsh Government (2021). Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021. Available at: https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2025-01/250124_the-additional-learning-needs-code-for-wales-2021.pdf (Accessed: 11 June 2026).

Welsh Government (2023) *Evolving Understandings of Progression in Learning*. Welsh Government. Available at: <https://educationwales.blog.gov.wales/2023/07/17/camau-ir-dyfodol-steps-to-the-future-co-constructing-learning-progression-in-wales/> (Accessed: 12 June 2026).