

Early years teacher

Nursery teachers

Early years teachers, also known as nursery teachers, are specialists in early childhood development.

Salary: £18,000 to £30,000 average per year

Hours: Variable per week

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1. Entry requirements

You'll need to gain early years teacher status (EYTS) by completing an early years initial teacher training (EYITT) course. There are several routes available:

- graduate entry – for degree holders with limited experience with children and who aren't currently working with them
- graduate employment – for degree holders currently working in an early years setting
- undergraduate entry – for those taking an early childhood degree, who may or may not be currently working in an early years setting
- assessment only – for graduates with substantial experience across the 0 to 5 age range who also have knowledge of key stage 1 and 2 in schools

For all routes you'll need:

- GCSEs at grades 9 to 4 (A* to C) in English, maths and a science subject or equivalent qualifications
- passes in numeracy and literacy [skills tests](#)
- enhanced background checks by the [Disclosure and Barring Service \(DBS\)](#).

You'll also need some experience of working with young children through paid work or volunteering, for example at a local school, nursery or on a holiday play scheme.

The [Department for Education](#) has more details about EYTS and EYITT routes.

2. Skills required

You'll need:

- the ability to work well with children, parents, carers, colleagues and other professionals
- excellent organisational and time management skills
- creative ideas for designing learning and play activities
- the ability to manage classes and deal with challenging behaviour
- excellent communication skills
- patience and a good sense of humour

3. What you'll do

You'll work with children from birth to 5 years old, to standards set out in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) framework.

Your day-to-day tasks may include:

- supporting children's development and learning through planned play, activities and tasks to build up their language, literacy and numeracy skills
- encouraging co-operation and good behaviour
- making sure the children are safe at all times

As well as working with the children, you'll:

- plan and prepare activities and materials
- set out activities before classes and tidy up afterwards
- speak to parents and carers about their children's development
- monitor children's progress, and identify and deal with any issues
- attend meetings and training courses

You'll also work with and supervise nursery workers (also known as early years educators), teaching assistants and volunteer helpers.

Early years teachers can also work in maintained settings (state-funded nursery or primary schools) where classes are led by a member of staff with qualified teacher status.

4. Salary

Starter: £18,000 to £22,000

Experienced: £23,000 to £26,000

Highly Experienced: Up to £30,000

These figures are a guide.

5. Working hours, patterns and environment

Your working hours will vary depending on where you work. State funded maintained settings are usually open during school hours, while private nurseries will often offer extended hours. Maintained settings are also likely to be closed during the school holidays.

Nursery age children often go to school or nursery for just part of the week and sometimes only for a morning or an afternoon, so you may teach more than one group in a day.

Nurseries can be open from around 7am to 6pm. You'll normally work up to 8 hours a day within

these times. Some settings are also open on Saturdays.

You'll also spend time outside of these hours planning, preparing and assessing activities, and attending parents' evenings and training sessions.

6. Career path and progression

Once qualified, you could move into management of a nursery or group of nurseries, or work overseas, for example with charities.

You could also work as a supply (temporary) teacher.

Related careers

You may be interested in:

- [Nursery worker](#)
- [Primary school teacher](#)
- [Headteacher](#)
- [Nursery manager](#)