

Employing a Level 3 Early Years Educator (EYE) apprentice can bring tremendous benefits to your early years setting. With the continually evolving demands of childcare, ensuring that your apprenticeship provision aligns with high standards not only reinforces quality care but also builds long-term staff capacity within your setting. If you're exploring options or evaluating your existing apprenticeship offer, this guide highlights the key factors to consider, framed around early years employer questions, and includes input from industry-leading organisations such as *Teach Early Years*, *Teachwire*, and *The Childcare Company*. We'll also explore how tools like progress reviews and development coaching support successful apprenticeship delivery, ensuring apprentice progress is linked to daily practice and EYFS principles.

Why a Level 3 Early Years Educator Apprenticeship Matters

The teachearlyyears.com Level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship builds on foundational childcare skills, aiming to develop confident, qualified professionals who can support children's learning, development, and wellbeing effectively. It entwines workplace learning with formal training aligned to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework and the Early Years Educator occupational standard. But simply ticking the boxes isn't enough; employers must ensure the apprenticeship translates into practical, positive outcomes in their setting.

Before recruiting or renewing apprenticeship contracts, managers and leaders should ask the following early years employer questions:

- Does the apprenticeship provider integrate workplace learning into everyday practice?
- How do they support safeguarding, health and safety, and wellbeing within the apprenticeship?
- What access will apprentices have to child development knowledge and practical application in the room?
- Are progress reviews and development coaching actively used to support apprentice growth?
- Does the apprenticeship approach complement and reinforce EYFS principles and professional practice?

Workplace Learning Linked to Daily Practice

One of the most critical aspects employers should look for is how the apprenticeship provider connects learning to the day-to-day running of the setting. Apprenticeship delivery is not just an off-the-job training event; it must be woven into the fabric of children's interactions and staff teamwork.

Teach Early Years emphasises that effective apprenticeships are those where apprentices regularly reflect on their experiences, applying theoretical knowledge of child development directly in their rooms. This means lesson plans, child observations, and environment adaptations align with apprentices' learning goals.



Progress reviews become instrumental in this process, as they provide a formal opportunity to assess how well apprentices are implementing their training into their work roles, strengthening their skills and confidence.

How to Spot Providers Focused on Work-Integrated Learning

- Apprentices regularly contribute to planning and evaluating learning activities within the setting.
- There is structured support from mentors and line managers to embed theory into practice.
- The provider encourages apprentices to engage with the wider team to share learning insights.
- Use of genuine workplace scenarios during training sessions.

Safeguarding, Wellbeing, Health and Safety, and Risk Management

Every early years setting must maintain rigorous safeguarding standards to protect children and staff alike. Apprentices should receive comprehensive training on safeguarding policies, procedures, and statutory responsibilities.

The Childcare Company

Employers should seek evidence of how apprenticeship providers embed these vital areas:

- 1. Regular sessions dedicated to safeguarding legislation and scenarios.**
- 2. Health and safety briefings aligned with the setting's policies.**
- 3. Risk management training tailored to infants and early years environments.**
- 4. Discussion on mental health and wellbeing strategies—for children and practitioners.**

Applying Child Development Knowledge in the Room

Understanding and applying child development principles underpin the role of any effective Early Years Educator. Apprenticeship providers must convey this knowledge clearly and insist on its practical usage.

You ever wonder why employers should confirm that apprentices complete child observations, contribute to formative and summative assessments, and adapt environments and activities supporting individual learning journeys.

Key Child Development Milestones and Concepts Apprentices Should Demonstrate

Developmental Area	Expected Apprentice Knowledge	Practical Application Examples
Communication & Language	Stages of speech and language acquisition	Facilitating storytime, responsive questioning
Physical Development	Gross and fine motor skills progression	Setting up obstacle courses, encouraging hand-eye coordination
Personal, Social & Emotional Development	Attachment theory, emotional regulation strategies	Supporting sharing activities, emotional literacy discussions
Literacy and Numeracy Foundations	Early phonics and number sense principles	Introducing letters and numbers through play

Embedding EYFS Principles and Professional Practice

Central to delivering a Level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship is ensuring that apprentices understand and uphold EYFS principles: a child-centered approach, a focus on learning through play, and respect for each child's unique development trajectory.

Professionalism extends beyond caring for children; it includes collaboration with families, working within a multi-disciplinary team, reflective practice, and commitment to continuous professional development.

Utilising *development coaching* as a part of apprenticeship delivery supports apprentices to adopt a reflective mindset, identifying strengths and areas for growth while fostering resilience and professional confidence.

Apprenticeship Provider Checklist: What Employers Should Expect

Checkpoint	What to Look For	Why It Matters
Integrated Workplace Learning	Apprentices apply learning in daily routines and reflect regularly	Promotes real skill development and benefit to the setting
Safeguarding & Health & Safety Training	Comprehensive, up-to-date knowledge embedded throughout training	Protects children and staff; meets statutory requirements
Child Development Application	Use of observations and assessments aligned to EYFS and occupational standards	Ensures holistic child development and tailored learning support
Progress Reviews & Development Coaching	Regular, supportive feedback with clear development goals	Enhances apprentice confidence and professional growth
Professional Practice & EYFS Understanding	Apprentices demonstrate respect, collaboration, and reflective practice	Builds a well-rounded, effective practitioner workforce

Conclusion

Choosing the right Level 3 Early Years Educator apprenticeship is a strategic decision for any early years employer. To ensure the apprenticeship drives quality improvement, employers must look beyond qualifications alone and seek apprenticeship providers that embed workplace learning, safeguard children effectively, and integrate child development theory into everyday practice.

Taking inspiration from organisations like *Teach Early Years*, *Teachwire*, and *The Childcare Company* can help employers ask the right questions, demand a thorough apprenticeship provider checklist, and implement tools such as progress reviews and development coaching to encourage apprentice success.



By prioritising these areas, you will cultivate confident and skilled Early Years Educators ready to make a meaningful difference in children's lives and support your setting's long-term success.