

# Cambridge Standards for early years practitioners

Cambridge International is committed to supporting the continuing improvement of the quality of educational outcomes for all learners following Cambridge programmes in schools around the world.

We recognise that classroom teaching has the largest impact on the quality of educational outcomes. What practitioners know and do makes the difference in improving children's learning outcomes – their knowledge, pedagogical practices and relationships with children.

In support of this, we have developed the Cambridge Standards for early years practitioners to define key characteristics and practices of effective teaching.

The primary purpose of the Cambridge Standards for early years practitioners is to define the range of characteristics and practices needed to deliver the Cambridge Early Years programme effectively. They derive from and are consistent with contemporary international research into effective teaching.

Practitioners who use the standards to evaluate their own practice and guide their continuing professional development should be in a strong position to achieve the desired outcomes for children from the Cambridge Early Years programme.

The standards provide a benchmark of what we consider to be practitioner quality. They can be used by practitioners to confirm successful teaching practice and help determine areas and priorities for their own professional development.

This might include participating in an appropriate Cambridge Professional Development Qualification (PDQ) programme. Practitioners aspiring to develop their career prospects will find the standards a helpful guide to the scope of the teaching role and aspects they want to develop.



### The Cambridge Standards for early years practitioners in context

We have developed the Cambridge Standards for early years practitioners alongside:

- the Cambridge Standards for Schools, which help schools carry out self-evaluations
- the Cambridge Teacher and School Leader Standards, which define the range of characteristics and practices teachers and school leaders need to provide Cambridge programmes effectively.

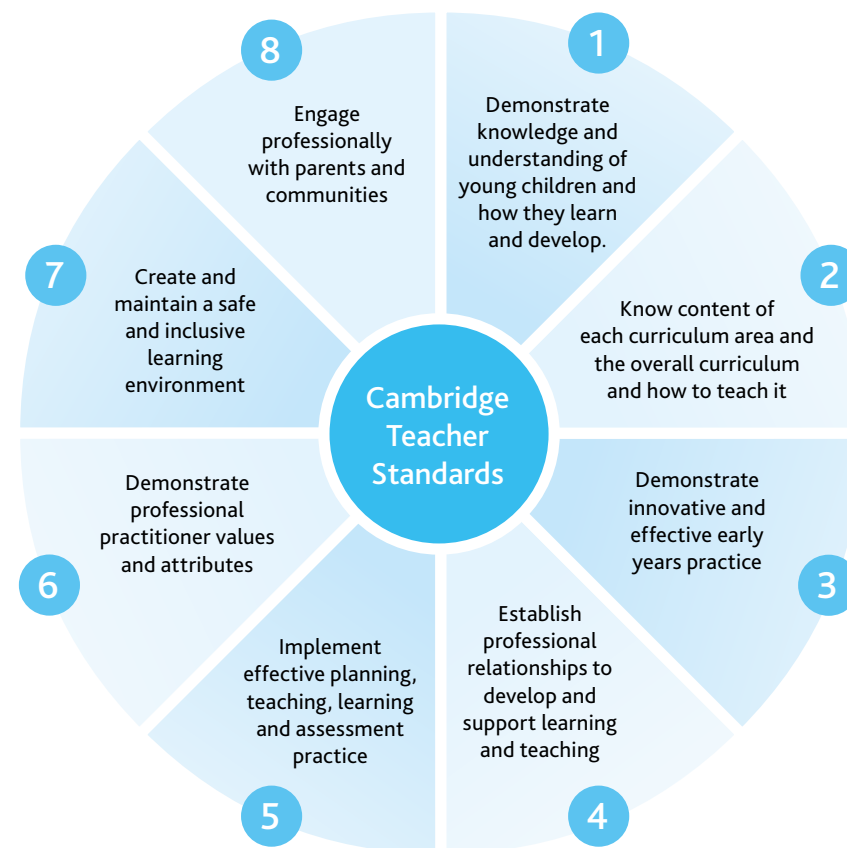
Our statements about the attributes of Cambridge learners and teachers are also relevant and these can be found [here](#). We have adapted the learner attributes to demonstrate what they look like in the early years, and these can be found on page 8 of our Cambridge Early Years Curriculum document. All these documents are intended to help schools provide high-quality Cambridge programmes, and are complementary to and consistent with each other.

You can find out more about becoming a Cambridge Early Years centre at [www.cambridgeinternational.org/early-years-expression-of-interest](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org/early-years-expression-of-interest)

We recognise that school teaching is dependent on context. This means that detailed recommendations will not be relevant or helpful. Effective practitioners will learn from educational research and their own experience, adapt ideas intelligently and apply them to their current context. We have designed the Cambridge Standards for Early Years Practitioners to be as open as possible so practitioners can apply them to their own contexts. They are based on the principle that effective teaching has many common practices, so they are relevant to all practitioners in early years settings.

### The structure and organisation of the Cambridge Standards for early years practitioners

There are eight Cambridge Standards for early years practitioners. Each standard contains a number of individual standard statements that are detailed and concrete. They outline what a practitioner should know and be able to do, or demonstrate, in terms of their professional knowledge, practice and engagement. This should allow practitioners to understand how to show they have met individual standards.



### 1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of young children and how they learn and develop

#### Teachers:

- 1.1 demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of early childhood development and how young children grow and learn
- 1.2 understand the developmental needs of young children from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds and know how to respond to those needs.
- 1.3 demonstrate an awareness of the physical, social and emotional, language and communication, and cognitive development of young children and know how to adapt provision to progress their learning
- 1.4 use appropriate teaching and learning approaches to engage and support the needs of all children, including those with disabilities and special educational needs, and high achievers
- 1.5 demonstrate awareness of the communication needs of young children and know how to listen and interact effectively with them
- 1.6 understand attachment theories and know how to establish positive and secure relationships.

### 2 Know content of each curriculum area and the overall curriculum and how to teach it

#### Teachers:

- 2.1 understand the essential role of learning through play in the early years
- 2.2 understand the curriculum areas in the Early Years Programme as a holistic curriculum and know how to support progression of knowledge and skills
- 2.3 demonstrate early years pedagogical knowledge of how to teach curriculum content using teaching strategies and learning activities that motivate and engage young children to learn
- 2.4 know when and how to differentiate learning to meet individual needs of young children
- 2.5 know how to use digital technologies to support learning and teaching
- 2.6 understand how to promote a smooth transition from early years to the next stage of education



### 3 Demonstrate professional practitioner values and attributes

#### Teachers:

- 3.1 have high expectations of all children and demonstrate a commitment to their well-being, learning and personal growth
- 3.2 adopt high standards of professional behaviour and maintain up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the professional duties of early years practitioners and the statutory frameworks they work within
- 3.3 contribute to the development, implementation and evaluation of policies and practice of the workplace, including those designed to promote equality of opportunity and continuous improvement
- 3.4 demonstrate ethical conduct, marked by personal integrity, respect for others and fairness in interactions with children, colleagues, parents and those in the wider community.
- 3.5 implement effective observation and monitoring systems to create a holistic learning record for all children

### 4 Establish professional relationships to develop and support learning and teaching

#### Teachers:

- 4.1 establish fair, trusting and supportive working relationships with young children to progress their learning and development
- 4.2 work effectively with colleagues, in the setting and beyond, to develop the curriculum and enhance the learning and well-being of young children
- 4.3 collaborate with colleagues to share new ideas about learning and teaching to improve content and professional knowledge and understanding, and develop shared team practice
- 4.4 establish professional relationships with colleagues in other institutions, professional bodies and educational organisations (including Cambridge International), to develop professional practice.



## 5 Implement effective planning, teaching, learning and assessment practice

### Teachers:

- 5.1 make decisions that demonstrate understanding of the relationship between planning, teaching, learning and assessment practices to ensure progression in development and learning for all children
- 5.2 provide irresistible and age-appropriate learning opportunities through challenging and achievable learning goals for all children
- 5.3 establish a rich and continuous provision, with open-ended resources that promote curiosity, exploration and high levels of engagement
- 5.4 use inclusive play-based learning and teaching approaches, including child-initiated and adult-led activities, and understand the balance and shift in emphasis as children progress
- 5.5 build on children's own experiences and interests to motivate and engage, and respond to learning opportunities 'in the moment'
- 5.6 promote effective communication skills by providing opportunities for children's talk in conversation with peers and adults and by modelling ideas and concepts using clear explanations and questions
- 5.7 demonstrate the effective use of digital resources to enhance learning and teaching
- 5.8 use a mixture of individual, pair and group activities to meet the needs of all children that support them in the development of confidence and social skills
- 5.9 make effective use of a range of continuous and systematic observation strategies to support and assess children's learning and development
- 5.10 evaluate assessment evidence to make judgements to inform progress, feedback and next steps for future learning and teaching
- 5.11 document observations using a range of methods to create a holistic learning record for children, other adults in the team and parents/carers, to inform ongoing progress in learning and development.
- 5.12 understand the value of baseline methods and associated tools to evaluate where children are in their learning and development and plan for their next steps



### 6 Demonstrate innovative and effective early years practice

#### Teachers:

- 6.1 work with colleagues to develop sequences of learning and learning programmes that result in a coherent, holistic and progressive curriculum
- 6.2 critically engage with recent developments in subject knowledge, learning and international good practice, and apply new ideas and approaches to improve the quality of teaching and the children's learning
- 6.3 use active and play-based learning approaches and multi-sensory activities that encourage children to 'think hard' for themselves so they are challenged and their learning extended
- 6.4 create a classroom culture where children are encouraged to: voice their ideas; work cooperatively and collaboratively; be prepared to take risks and ownership of their own learning; be open to new ideas and welcome new challenges
- 6.5 select learning and teaching strategies that encourage development of the children's problem solving, metacognition, critical and creative thinking skills
- 6.6 evaluate learning and teaching activities using reflective practice and evidence from different sources, to inform planning and to improve future learning and teaching.

### 7 Create and maintain a safe and inclusive learning environment

#### Teachers:

- 7.1 establish a safe and stimulating learning environment for all children that is rooted in mutual respect
- 7.2 support children to understand risk, and to keep themselves and others safe
- 7.3 implement routines and expectations that promote positive and courteous behaviour for well-being and learning throughout the setting
- 7.4 nurture children's self-regulation skills through building their involvement, confidence, agency, identity, belonging and sense of self-worth
- 7.5 use a variety of strategies to support the safe, responsible and ethical use of digital technologies in learning and teaching.



### **8** Engage professionally with parents and communities

#### Teachers:

- 8.1** value and promote the importance of home experiences, and work in partnership with parents/carers to extend children's learning and development
- 8.2** report clearly, accurately and respectfully to parents/carers about children's achievement, well-being and next steps using accurate and reliable records
- 8.3** participate in community networks and forums, including those of Cambridge International, to develop knowledge and improve professional practice, access additional professional support for specialist needs, and enhance the educational outcomes for children
- 8.4** make a positive contribution to wider school activities and the ethos of the school
- 8.5** involve the wider local community in the life of the early years setting
- 8.6** support children through a range of transitions, including progression to primary school.