

Choosing the right apprenticeship provider is crucial for early years settings looking to develop their workforce effectively. An ideal provider doesn't just deliver training—they become a true partner, supporting your team in line with your day-to-day practice and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. This blog post will guide you through how to ensure an apprenticeship provider will work well with your setting, covering key themes such as safeguarding, wellbeing, risk management, and applying child development knowledge in the rooms.

Why the Provider-Employer Relationship Matters

The success of an apprenticeship largely depends on the **provider-employer relationship**. A strong partnership means your provider understands your setting's unique needs and aligns learning with everyday practice, supporting staff development in a practical, meaningful way.

Apprenticeship providers such as Teach Early Years, Teachwire, and The Childcare Company have solid reputations precisely because they work closely with settings to deliver relevant, high-quality training.

Key Indicators of a Strong Provider-Employer Relationship

- Regular and timely **setting visits** by trainers or assessors to observe apprentices in their working environment
- A clear and transparent **communication plan** detailing how updates on progress, challenges, and next steps will be shared
- Use of practical tools like **progress reviews** and **development coaching** to support continuous improvement
- Commitment to embedding training within the reality of your setting's routines and child development needs

How to Check If a Provider Fits Your Setting

1. Ask About the Provider's Approach to Workplace Learning

Apprenticeship learning should be tied to everyday practice in your setting. Ask your provider how they ensure learning is relevant and applied directly to the apprentice's role. For example:

- Do they schedule regular visits to observe apprentices alongside your team?
- Are off-the-job training sessions contextualised with EYFS principles and aligned with the needs of your specific children?
- How do they support apprentices in embedding new knowledge, such as child development theories, into their room practice?

Teach Early Years often provides bespoke mentoring and practical coaching that aligns tightly with EYFS standards, ensuring apprentices can translate theory into their daily interactions with children.

2. Inquire About Safeguarding and Wellbeing Integration

Safeguarding is non-negotiable in early years settings. Your provider must prioritise this in their curriculum and practice support. Ask:

- How does the provider ensure apprentices understand safeguarding statutory requirements, including recognising signs of abuse?
- What ongoing training or refreshers are available to keep safeguarding knowledge current?

- How does the provider promote staff wellbeing and resilience, given the pressures faced in early years work?

A trustworthy provider like **The Childcare Company** embeds safeguarding and wellbeing throughout their programmes, not just as standalone topics but as cross-cutting themes.

3. Evaluate Health and Safety and Risk Management Focus

Your provider should reinforce health and safety and risk management to protect children and staff. Important questions include:

- Do they incorporate health and safety compliance audits into progress reviews?
- How are apprentices taught to assess and minimise risks within their rooms?
- Is there support for settings to ensure risk management procedures are understood and followed consistently?

Providers like **Teachwire** offer resources and tools designed to support risk assessment practicalities and integrate them into apprentices' learning journeys.

4. Confirm Child Development Knowledge is Applied in the Rooms

A key outcome for apprenticeship training is that apprentices not only understand child development theories but can apply them meaningfully in their practice. Check for:

- Observational assessments conducted during setting visits that review apprentices' application of learning
- Integration of EYFS principles into off-the-job training
- Guidance on planning activities and interactions that promote children's development effectively

Good providers work closely with settings to confirm the relevance of their training content. For instance, **Teach Early Years** works with managers and nursery leaders to ensure training links directly with what children need in individual rooms.



Tools That Demonstrate Effective Partnership

Progress Reviews

Effective providers schedule progress reviews regularly throughout the apprenticeship. These reviews:

- Measure how well apprentices are meeting their development goals
- Provide an opportunity for managers, apprentices, and trainers to discuss progress and challenges
- Include feedback on how apprentices are embedding skills in the workplace

A strong communication plan will specify how often these reviews happen and how outcomes are captured and acted upon.

Development Coaching

Beyond formal training, coaching supports apprentices to develop soft skills, confidence, and critical reflection essential for professional practice. Ask if the provider offers development coaching that:

- Is customised to apprentices' individual learning needs and setting circumstances
- Supports apprentices in problem-solving everyday challenges
- Encourages reflective practice linked to EYFS and safeguarding principles

Providers like **The Childcare Company** emphasise coaching as a core part of their delivery to ensure practical improvement, not just knowledge acquisition.

Checklist: Key Questions to Ask Potential Providers

Area Questions to Ask Workplace Learning How often do your trainers visit our setting? How is training linked to our daily practices and EYFS? Safeguarding & Wellbeing How do you keep safeguarding knowledge up to date? What support is offered for staff wellbeing? Health & Safety How do you incorporate health & safety and risk management into the apprenticeship? Child Development Application How do you ensure apprentices apply child development theory to room practice? Progress Tracking What progress review process do you use? How do you communicate progress to us? Development Coaching Is individual coaching available? How is it delivered and tailored? Communication Can you provide a clear communication plan detailing updates, visits, and points of contact?

Final Thoughts: Building a Partnership That Works

Remember that an apprenticeship provider's role is to be your partner in workforce development, not just a distant trainer. Providers like **Teach Early Years**, **Teachwire**, and **The Childcare Company** understand this well and prioritise working closely with settings through setting visits, regular progress reviews, and development coaching.

When selecting a provider, look for clear [off-the-job training planning](#) evidence of their commitment to safeguarding, staff wellbeing, health and safety, and applying child development knowledge aligned with EYFS principles. Most importantly, ensure you have a transparent communication plan that keeps you informed and involved every step of the way.

By following these steps and asking the right questions, you can confidently choose an apprenticeship provider who will genuinely support your setting's goals, enhancing both your team's skills and the quality of care delivered to children.

