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Which route
to becoming
a **Thrive Early
Years Setting** is
right for you?



Which route to becoming a Thrive Early Years Setting is right for you?

Compare PSED provision and the Level 5 apprenticeship

Many early years settings are seeing children need more support with big feelings, settling, routines, transitions, communication and relationships.

If your setting wants to strengthen personal, social and emotional development, there are two Thrive options to consider.

Both can support your journey towards becoming a Thrive Early Years Setting.

Both include:

- ✓ Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner training
- ✓ access to Thrive-Online

The difference is how your setting gets there.

At a glance

1

PSED provision

The quickest, most direct way to introduce Thrive in your setting.

2

Level 5 apprenticeship

A longer development route for an eligible member of staff, including a Level 5 qualification.

3

Both routes

Eligible schools may choose both.

Good to know: Thrive apprenticeships are only available to eligible learners who are based in England, working in a relevant employed role and supported by their employer. If this does not apply to your setting or member of staff, PSED provision may be the option to explore.



Compare your options

	PSED provision	Level 5 apprenticeship
Best for	Introducing Thrive quickly and directly.	Developing an eligible early years practitioner through a longer route.
Timeframe	Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner training completed in 3 months.	Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner training included within a longer programme, usually around 18 to 21 months.
How it works	Purchased as PSED provision.	Applied for as an apprenticeship.
Eligibility	Available whether or not apprenticeship eligibility applies.	Only available to eligible learners based in England, in a relevant employed role and supported by their employer.
What's included	Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner training, Thrive-Online access and implementation support.	Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner training, Thrive-Online for the duration of the programme, and a nationally recognised Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner qualification.
Funding	Setting budget, or relevant grants/funding streams such as Inclusive Early Years Funding where appropriate.	Apprenticeship funding, via the Growth & Skills Levy.



Worth knowing: The Level 5 apprenticeship includes Thrive-Online for the duration of the programme. To continue your Thrive Early Years Setting journey after the apprenticeship, your setting will need to take on a Thrive-Online subscription.

Which option sounds like your setting?

PSED provision may be right if...

- ✓ You want the quickest, most direct way to bring Thrive into your setting.
- ✓ You want to train a Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner in 3 months.
- ✓ You want to access Thrive directly, rather than apply through an apprenticeship.
- ✓ You are exploring whether Inclusive Early Years Funding could support your inclusion priorities.
- ✓ Apprenticeship eligibility does not apply to your setting or member of staff.

Both may be right if...

- ✓ You want to introduce Thrive quickly and develop a key member of staff over time.
- ✓ You want an option that is available whether or not apprenticeship eligibility applies.

The Level 5 apprenticeship may be right if...

- ✓ You have an eligible early years practitioner working with children aged 0 to 5.
- ✓ You want them to gain Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner status alongside a Level 5 qualification.
- ✓ You want to use apprenticeship funding to support staff development.
- ✓ You want to develop someone who can lead practice, support colleagues and help create a more consistent approach across your setting.



Compare what each route includes and how it could work for your setting.

Thrive PSED provision for early years settings

Completed in 3 months

Best for: Early years settings that want the quickest, most direct way to introduce Thrive and train a Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner.

This may include nurseries, pre-schools, childminders and school-based early years provision.

A good fit if your setting wants to:

- ✓ introduce Thrive without going through an apprenticeship route
- ✓ train a Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner in 3 months
- ✓ use Thrive-Online to assess, plan and track support for children's PSED needs
- ✓ explore whether Inclusive Early Years Funding could support your inclusion priorities
- ✓ access dedicated implementation support to help embed Thrive in practice

Includes: Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner training + Thrive-Online access + implementation support.

[Explore Thrive PSED provision for early years settings](#)

Thrive Early Years Lead Practitioner Level 5 Apprenticeship

Usually around 18 to 21 months

Best for: Early years practitioners who are ready to lead practice, or who already support others in the setting.

This may include practitioners working in nurseries, pre-schools, school-based early years provision or other early years settings with children aged 0 to 5.

A good fit if your setting wants to:

- ✓ develop a practitioner who can lead or model high-quality early years practice
- ✓ build leadership capacity and more consistent practice across your setting
- ✓ strengthen confidence around behaviour as communication of need
- ✓ support stronger relationships with children, parents, carers and colleagues
- ✓ combine Thrive Licensed Practitioner training with a nationally recognised Level 5 qualification

Qualification: Level 5 Early Years Lead Practitioner Apprenticeship + Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner status.

Please note: This programme is not suitable for existing Thrive Licensed Practitioners.

Worth knowing: To maintain as a Thrive Early Years Setting after the apprenticeship, the setting will need to take on a Thrive-Online subscription.

[Explore the Thrive Early Years Lead Practitioner Level 5 Apprenticeship](#)

A note on the Level 3 Early Years Educator Apprenticeship



Thrive also offers an Early Years Educator Level 3 Apprenticeship, delivered by Best Practice Network in collaboration with Thrive.

This can be useful if your setting wants to develop early years practitioners, support career progression and strengthen your qualified workforce.

On successful completion, the learner gains a Level 3 Early Years Educator qualification, becomes a Thrive Early Years Educator, and can count towards staff-to-child ratios in your setting.

Important: The Level 3 apprenticeship is not a route to becoming a Thrive Early Years Setting. It does not include Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner training or Thrive-Online.

[Explore the Thrive Early Years Educator Level 3 Apprenticeship](#)



Funding, eligibility and next steps

PSED provision and apprenticeships are paid for in different ways.

Paying for PSED provision

PSED provision can be paid for from setting budget, or through relevant grants and funding streams where they align with your priorities and the funding guidance.

For eligible early years settings in England, Inclusive Early Years Funding may be a useful opportunity to review inclusion priorities and consider whether PSED provision fits your plans.

[Explore Inclusive Early Years Funding](#)

Paying for an apprenticeship route

Apprenticeships are only available to eligible learners based in England, in a relevant employed role and supported by their employer.

They are funded through apprenticeship funding, via the Growth & Skills Levy.

Funding rules and eligibility can vary, so settings should check the relevant guidance before deciding what is right for them.

For more detail on apprenticeship funding and eligibility, read the Early Years Apprenticeship Guide.

[Read the Early Years Apprenticeship Guide](#)

Next steps

Ready to explore PSED provision?

Find out how your setting can train a Thrive Early Years Licensed Practitioner, use Thrive-Online and strengthen support for children's PSED needs.

→ [Explore Thrive PSED provision for early years settings](#)

Interested in the Level 5 apprenticeship?

Explore the Level 5 route if you have an eligible practitioner you want to develop into a stronger lead-practice role.

→ [Explore the Thrive Early Years Lead Practitioner Level 5 Apprenticeship](#)

Not sure which route fits best?

Speak to Thrive about your setting's priorities, team and context, and we can help you choose what works best for you.

[Talk to us about the right route](#)



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