**Improving quality**

**for children**

**Guidance notes**

**A quality improvement tool for**

**early years provision**

**Supporting high quality early years provision**

**for Achieving for Children**

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Updated August 2017

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child’s experiences between birth and age 5 have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe and happy childhood is important in its own right. Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2017 p.5

**How to use ‘Improving quality for children’ as a self-evaluation and reflective practice tool**

These materials will help early year’s practitioners to improve the quality of provision in order to offer the highest quality experiences for all young children. By evaluating your practice on a continuous basis, you secure the best possible outcomes for children in your care. As you assess the quality of your provision, you can use this information to update your Ofsted self-evaluation form (SEF).

**The ‘Improving quality for children’ self-evaluation process**

Improving quality for children (IQC) is a self-evaluation tool to support the development of high quality early years provision for Achieving for Children. This self-evaluation process should be carried out by each setting. It aims to promote reflective practice at both practitioner and management level. The audit process and outcome will enable settings to identify areas for improvement.

**Using the document**

Take each section individually. As a whole team, look at each section (1 – 7) in turn to evaluate the quality of your practice. There are some suggestions about how you can plan this in Appendix 1. Section 8 is for owners and senior management only. The aim is to have a whole team approach and to use it as an opportunity to review what is working well and what isn’t, to update procedures and policies if necessary and challenge practitioners’ understanding of high quality practice.

Section 1 Enabling Environments:

Securing high quality environments for play and learning

Section 2 Teaching, learning and development:

Supporting progress, learning and transition

Section 3 Safeguarding and welfare requirements

Section 4 Leadership and the learning environment:

Strengthening leadership for learning

Section 5 Leadership and management:

Developing practitioner learning

Section 6 Partnership with parents

Section 7 SEN provision and inclusive practice

Section 8 Leadership and management: Sustainability and continuous improvement

**Key Statements**

Use the key statements at the beginning of each section to self-evaluate your practice. They relate to high quality early years provision and are designed to focus on your capacity to support children’s play, learning and development. As a whole team, discuss how these key statements relate to the practice in your setting. Evaluate how effectively you are implementing each one.

Do you think that you are:

* fully meeting the statement – (Y)
* partially meeting the statement – (P)
* not meeting the statement – (N)

How do you know this? What is your evidence? Once you have agreed this as a team, you can record it by putting Y, P or N in the column on the right-hand side of the page.

You should be able to evidence this through your practice (for example, through policies, observations or photos). You do not need to produce any additional written documentation to support this process, but should use the centre column to indicate the reasons for your evaluation.

**Criteria for assessment**

To identify the quality of your provision, you, as managers and practitioners need to judge it against a set of criteria. When you have evaluated your practice against the key statements, use this information to assess your provision against the criteria at the end of each section to provide you with an indication of the quality of your provision. This will enable you to demonstrate to parents, colleagues and Ofsted inspectors how your setting supports high quality practice.

**Planning the process for self-evaluation**

To be effective, the self-evaluation should reflect the views of staff and all key partners in the setting. It is important that the process should be planned to fit the context of the setting.

Effective approaches tried by settings using the IQC self-evaluation include:

* Leaders complete a draft from their viewpoint, distribute it to staff and ask for written, oral feedback and comments by a certain date.
* All staff meet to complete either the whole or sections of the self-evaluation, either in groups or altogether. This could be undertaken in a specially arranged staff meeting or INSET day.
* Leaders meet with individual members of staff at different times to discuss particular sections.

**Focused improvement plan guidelines**

**Plan preparation**

Identify all stakeholders, for example, setting leaders, staff and early year’s members of staff or setting leaders, staff and management board or governing bodies.

We need to consider the following questions.

* Have we identified all the practical steps we need to take to achieve the objectives?
* Are the actions clear and specific?
* Do we know exactly what we intend to do and who will do it?
* How will the steps lead to the required outcomes?
* How will we know when we have got there?

**Monitoring and evaluating**

Focused improvement plans (FIPs) are living documents and progress needs to be monitored.

**Monitoring** is an on-going assessment of progress against the improvement plans’ priorities and success criteria. The manager must ensure that this takes place on a regular basis.

**Evaluation** is about measuring the effects of the actions against the criteria. This involves looking for measurable evidence that demonstrates how well we have done in terms of what we planned to achieve.

The following questions need to be considered as the FIP is evaluated and monitored.

* Are we doing what we said we would do?
* If not, why not? E.g. are we using resources efficiently and effectively to achieve objectives?
* Are we achieving outcomes within the set time frames?
* Are we taking corrective action to refocus in order to achieve our objectives?
* Are we making progress?

In developing a FIP it is useful to consider the ‘SMARTER’ criteria:

**S**PECIFIC,

**M**EASURABLE,

**A**CHIEVALBE,

**R**EALISTIC,

**T**IME SPECIFIC,

**E**XTENDING

**R**EWARDING

**Reference materials and resources**

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| **A Know How Guide: The EYFS progress check at age 2** | [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk) |
| **All of Us: Inclusion Checklist for Settings** | KIDS Phone: 020 7359 3073 [www.kids.org.uk](http://www.kids.org.uk) |
| **Applying to waive disqualification: early years and childcare** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-to-waive-disqualification-early-years-and-childcare-providers> |
| **Assessing Quality in Early Years**  Family Child Care Environmental Scale  ISBN 978-0-8077-4725-4  Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale  ISBN 13 978-0-8077-4549-9  Infant/Toddler Environmental rating Scale  ISBN-13: 978-0-8077-4640-0 | <http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/> |
| **British Values** | <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/03/Fundamental_British_Values.pdf> |
| **Child accident prevention website** | [www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk) |
| **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health** (**COSHH)** | [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) |
| **Community Playthings** | [www.communityplaythings.co.uk](http://www.communityplaythings.co.uk) |
| **Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage (2012)** | [www.early-education.org.uk](http://www.early-education.org.uk) |
| **Disqualification by Association Guidance (June 2016)** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006> |
| **Equality Act 2010** | [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) |
| **Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (2017) UK** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf> |
| **Guidelines for the Control of Infections and Communicable Disease in Nurseries and Other Institutional Early Years Settings** | South London Health Protection Team <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams#south-london-hpt> |
| **Information Sharing March 2015** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf> |
| **Inspecting safeguarding in early years** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/434930/Inspecting_safeguarding_in_early_years_education_and_skills_settings.pdf> |
| **Early Years Inspector Handbook** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015> |
| **Ofsted self-evaluation form and guidance** | [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk) |
| **Play Work Principles** | [www.skillsactive.com/skillsactive/item/3298](http://www.skillsactive.com/skillsactive/item/3298)  [www.playlondon.org.uk](http://www.playlondon.org.uk) |
| **Prevent Duty** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf> |
| Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (1995) – RIDDOR | [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk) |
| **Special Educational Needs Code of Practice (2015)** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398815/SEND_Code_of_Practice_January_2015.pdf> |
| **Safeguarding children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education settings – guidance organisation and management** | <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Final%206836-Safeguard.Chd%20bkmk.pdf> |
| **The Foundation Years** | <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk> |
| **The Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF)** | [www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/Our-mission/UN-Convention/](http://www.unicef.org.uk/UNICEFs-Work/Our-mission/UN-Convention/) |
| **What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused 2015** | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2> |
| **What to expect, when?** | <http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/03/4Children_ParentsGuide_2015_WEB.pdf> |
| **Working Together to Safeguard Children** | [www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk](http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk) |

**Glossary of acronyms**

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| AFC: Achieving for Children  CM: Childminder  CP: Child protection  CPD: Continual professional development development  DfE: Department for Education  DOB: Date of birth  ECERS: Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales  ECM: Every Child Matters  EH: Environmental health  EYC: Early years consultant  EYFS: Early Years Foundation Stage  EYFSP: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile  FCCERS Family Childcare Environmental  Rating Scales  FIP: Focused Improvement Plan  FITERS: Family Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale | HPA: Health Protection Agency  ICO: Information Commissioner’s Office  ITP: Individual target plan  INSET: In-service training  IQC: Improving quality for children  I&I Inclusion and Improvement Advisor  ISA: Independent Safeguarding Authority  ITERS: Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales  LSCB: Local Safeguarding Children Board  PFA: Paediatric first aid  QTS: Qualified teacher status  RAG: Red, amber, green rating  SEF: Self-evaluation form (Ofsted)  SEND: Special educational needs and disabilities  SENCo: Special educational needs  co-ordinator |