**Improving quality**

**for children**

**Section 1**

**A quality improvement tool for**

**early years provision**

**Supporting high quality early years provision**

**for Achieving for Children**

Updated August 2017

**Improving quality for children**

**Section 1**

**Enabling Environments:**

**Securing high quality environments for play and learning**

* Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.   
  (**Development Matters)**
* The evidence is clear that children’s experiences in their early years strongly influence their outcomes in later life, across a range of areas from health and social behaviour to their employment and educational attainment   
  (**The Early Years: Foundations for life, health and learning. Dame Tickell 2011)**
* The ways in which the child engages with other people and their environment - playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically – underpins learning and development across all areas and supports the child to remain an effective and motivated learner.   
  (**The Characteristics Of Effective Learning)**
* The role of the practitioner or play worker is to support all children and young people in the creation of a space in which they can play.   
  (**Play work principles)**
* Whereas play may sometimes be enriched by the practitioner or play worker’s participation, adults should always be sensitive to children’s needs and never try to control a child’s play as long as the play remains within safe and acceptable boundaries.   
  (**Assumptions and values of play work)**

**When assessing these key statements consider to what extent they are embedded in your settings practice.**

**Is it practised by ALL staff, for ALL children across ALL areas?**

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| 1. **Enabling environments:**   **Securing high quality environments for play and learning**   * + **Meeting and supporting each unique child**   + **Supporting all areas of learning and development** | | | | | | |
|  | **Key statements:** | | ***How do you know?***  ***What is your evidence?*** | | **Met**  **Y/P/N** | |
| 1 | All areas of the relevant legislation for early years are appropriately supported through the play and learning environment, inside, and outside for children from birth to 3 years old. | |  | |  | |
| 2 | All areas of the relevant legislation for early years are appropriately supported through the play and learning environment, inside and outside, for children from 3 to 5 years old. | |  | |  | |
| 3 | There are inviting spaces for quiet reflection, where children can be alone when they wish. These areas are zoned to ensure quiet and active areas are positioned separately. | |  | |  | |
| 4 | Provision is zoned to enable children to be actively involved - by having an area for books, art and creative activities, sand and water, physical activities, malleable activities, construction, sensory play and role play. | |  | |  | |
| 5 | Variety of resources including fine motor, art/craft, music and movement, blocks, construction, books, dramatic/role play, problem solving, number, puzzles, nature/science, sand and water, ICT, active physical play and reflect equal opportunities. | |  | |  | |
| 6 | Materials and resources are organised to promote independence and incorporated to challenge and inspire the children’s learning. | |  | |  | |
| 7 | Experiences are promoted to actively involve and extend children, and focused on the individual interests and emerging needs of the child. | |  | |  | |
| 8 | Adults are modelling language and conversation appropriately, and developing the children’s ability to express their ideas and extend their language skills by using new words. | |  | |  | |
| 9 | The adult interactions demonstrate how they motivate children and engage them in activities based on their individual needs and next steps in learning. | |  | |  | |
| 10 | Within the routine, there is a balance of activities including those led by adults and those freely chosen or self-initiated by the children. | |  | |  | |
| 11 | Equality of opportunity and recognition of diversity are promoted through teaching and learning. | |  | |  | |
| 12 | All areas of provision are regularly maintained, organised, well resourced, labelled, easily accessible and inviting. | |  | |  | |
| 13 | A self-registration system is in place to support children’s sense of belonging. | |  | |  | |
|  | Key statements: | | How do you?  What is your evidence | | Met  Y/P/N | |
| 14 | Practitioners reflect on the different ways in which children learn and these are reflected in the environment and their practice. The provision is changed regularly to respond to the needs and interests of the children. | |  | |  | |
| 15 | The different ways that children learn are reflected with a secure knowledge of characteristics of effective teaching and learning | |  | |  | |
| 17 | Children are encouraged to contribute to creating the environment, and are able to extend their own learning in an enabling environment that offers free flow play indoors and outdoors. |  | |  | |
| 18 | All adults provide opportunities for children to play with ideas in different situations and with a variety of resources to help them be creative and to make connections in learning. |  | |  | |
| 19 | Children are engaged in challenging experiences to practise and extend their skills and ideas, to reach their full potential and feel good about themselves. |  | |  | |
| 20 | Children are able to use their home language in play and learning. The provision supports opportunities for all children to develop English. |  | |  | |
| 21 | Nursery takes adequate steps to support EAL children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, as well as supporting children to gain a good standard of English |  | |  | |
| 22 | A display approach or policy is in place. Practitioners have time to reflect what they use displays for. Children and adults engage with a variety of displays (3D, walls and table displays). |  | |  | |
| 23 | High quality, real, natural and recycled resources are used and presented in unique and creative ways to stimulate children’s imagination and problem solving. |  | |  | |
| 24 | Children are able to work on a large scale with open-ended materials (large pieces of paper, modelling with recyclable materials, den making). |  | |  | |
| 25 | Children learn to develop curiosity to explore their environment and the natural world (plants, pets, insects, weather, and seasons). |  | |  | |
| 26 | Children are able to respond to, explore and communicate ideas, feelings and preferences through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. |  | |  | |

**Criteria for assessment**

Use the criteria below to assess the quality of your provision.

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| **Inadequate**  **Urgent actions for development** | | **Requires Improvement**  **Some actions for development** | | **Good**  **Few actions for development** | | **Outstanding**  **Continued development** |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** |
| Not enough space for children to play | | Adequate space with some uncrowded areas | | Ample indoor space allowing children to self-select and play comfortably | | Materials placed for easy access, promotes independent use of materials. Well organised storage for extra toys/ resources |
| Not enough equipment/ furniture, or in poor repair | | Enough equipment/ furniture in reasonable condition | | Equipment/furniture is suitable for each child’s age/stage/size and kept in a good, clean condition | | Equipment/furniture is adapted for individual children, convenient and comfortable and in excellent condition |
| Few materials/ experiences available to suit each age group or area of learning indoors. E.g. Books in poor condition, no music, maths or role play experiences, multicultural toys show negative stereotypes, outdoor area not used regularly. | | Some appropriate materials for each age group covering most areas of learning are accessible for daily use. Materials are generally in good condition. | | Many and varied appropriate materials for each child and age group, art and craft offered daily, (2 different types), sand and water weekly, individual expression encouraged. Wide selection of books, inc multicultural. Children are allowed to mix resources. Resources are non stereotypical. Provider sings, talks about maths and nature/science. | | Several different drawing materials accessible daily. Independent access of age appropriate resources. 3D art done regularly. Materials well organised and rotated. Various types of music are used. Materials represent diversity. Activities needing practitioner input are offered. Practitioner teaches children about maths/ nature/science. Sand and water offered daily with different resources. Provider talks to children about their play, extending their learning. |
| Children have very infrequent outdoor experiences | | Daily outdoor experiences available but are of limited value and quality | | Daily outdoor experiences include a range of activities | | Planned daily outdoor activities cover all areas of learning |
| Children are not given opportunity to play alone or away from adult | | Children can create spaces for privacy | | Space set aside accessible most of the day | | More than one area set up with activities, children can play alone |
| Limited opportunities for child-initiated play and learning | | More opportunities needed for child-initiated play and learning | | Child-initiated play and adult led learning are appropriate to the children’s needs | | The practitioner is led by the child and knows when child- initiated play and adult led learning are appropriate and changes plans in response |
| Inappropriate material seen by children on TV/IT, unrestricted access to internet. TV on constantly. | | TV/IT use appropriate for the age of the children e.g. 30 mins for toddlers, and alternative activity available | | TV/IT is educational – music, exercise – childminder is actively involved with children in the use of TV/IT. | | TV/IT only used to support children’s current interests and to encourage active involvement |
| Little or no talking to children. Loud noise interferes with listening.  Limited vocabulary used. Talking only used to control behaviour. | | Moderate amount of talking, neutral tone of voice, content of talk generally positive. Some response to children’s communication | | Practitioner talks to children frequently, responding to attempts to communicate, personalising talk that is meaningful to children. Descriptive words used. | | Wide range of exact words, different topics discussed, inc feelings. Complexity adjusted to match child. Extending language and thinking, asking questions. Using sign/symbols. |
| Practitioner is not responsive to children and interactions are unpleasant | | Practitioner is usually responsive and involved with children. Some physical affection shown. | | Practitioner uses positive interaction and shows children respect. Responds sympathetically to children who are upset. | | Practitioner is sensitive to all children’s needs, asks about their feelings, encourages mutual support between children and adults |

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| **Areas for development:** |