Information Sharing Guidance

*This guidance has been shaped through feedback from childcare providers*

Early years providers may find themselves involved in the shared care of children with other early years settings, this will become particularly apparent with the introduction of the 30 hours initiative. Providers must consider how they will develop their information sharing practices with other providers that they will be working (informally) in partnership with.

It is imperative that you gain the consent of parents to be able to engage in information sharing with other settings involved with the children in your shared care. You may also want to refer to the government’s information sharing guidance: [Information sharing Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers, March 2015.](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419628/Information_sharing_advice_safeguarding_practitioners.pdf)

*3.68. Providers must enable a regular two-way flow of information with parents and/or carers, and between providers, if a child is attending more than one setting.*

-Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage, April 2017.

**Importance of information sharing**

* Information sharing about the learning, development and well-being of children allows early years professionals to ensure the best outcomes for the children in their shared care.
* In more serious cases, information sharing between early years professionals is essential for the protection of children from harm.

**Information sharing tool**

The information sharing tool has been developed to help build communication, trust and understanding between settings and parents, with the joint aim of ensuring the best outcome for the child. It is advisable that the tool is completed together jointly to initiate discussions about the child and how each setting and the parent(s) can meet the child’s needs together.

* Providers should complete the information about their setting and identify the child’s key person to be involved in the joint discussions
* Parents should complete the information about their child and discuss this with the settings (key persons) involved
* Parents and key persons in their initial joint meeting should sign an agreement on how they will proceed with sharing information between one another
* Parents and settings should ensure that all essential and important information about the child is communicated in a timely manner through the communication log

**Involving Parents**

*A2.13 Encourage providers to work with parents to ensure continuity of care for children and effective transitional arrangements to support children’s learning and wellbeing when enabling children to take up their free place at more than one provider or on**more than one site.*

-Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance, March 2017

Involvement of parents with all settings involved in the care of the child is key to ensuring the best outcomes for the child. Below are examples of good practice in a mixed provider approach.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Best practice** | **Practical solutions** |
| Settings to coordinate and set joint periodic meetings with parents so that all can share information and share feedback | Meetings can be held:   * at one of the setting * via skype * via phone conference |
| Joint home visits | If joint home visits cannot be coordinated you can:   * share notes from home visits * discuss findings from home visits   *(must have parental consent to do this)* |
| Parents and settings should be involved in completing the information sharing tool | You can:   * set up a joint meeting to bring all settings involved and parents together to complete the tool together * set up a skype meeting to complete the tool together * set up an online conversation for each party (settings and parents) to share the completed tool |
| Parents and settings should maintain regular communication with one another via a communication diary/log | This can be done by using a:   * communication book * week view diary book (can help you recognise patterns in occurrences) |

**Safeguarding**

Information sharing and communication is key to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. Having good practices in place will help you as settings working in partnership to respond to safeguarding issues in a timely and purposeful way. Settings should ensure they are carrying out the following actions for children in their shared care:

* Follow your safeguarding policy and procedures
* Work in partnership with parents and other settings that the child attends
* Meet with other settings to discuss policies and their approach to safeguarding, develop good practices together, such as a process for how you will keep each other informed if you have any concerns about a child
* Share essential information with parents and settings, for example ensuring you have up to date emergency contact details
* Ensure you discuss transfers to and from each setting, devising a joint procedure to mitigate any risks
* Be aware of any allergies or medication the child is taking and understand the role of the parents and each setting in managing this

**Planning and observation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Best practice** | **Practical solutions** |
| Planning: Take account of the other setting’s planned activities and theme/concept | Settings can share planning in the following ways:   * routine meetings * routine emails * phone conversation |
| Systems of observations and assessments: understanding what systems are used to record and track observationsand assessments | Shared access to assessment and observation systems. Such as through IT programmes designed to capture data from observations, eg. Tapestry (ensure you have parental consent to do this). |
| Share good practice and understand child’s learning environment | * Hold period meetings to share practice * Visit each other’s settings * Take photos of settings and share with one another |

It is good practice for the key persons and parent(s) to hold joint termly meetings to discuss observations and the child’s next steps. These meetings:

* provide a good opportunity for all to discuss their observations of the child and to plan the child’s learning together
* allow for a holistic approach in planning appropriate provision and support for continuity and the best outcomes for the child
* provide opportunities for extending learning, at home and at the early years settings, through joint discussions about child’s learning interests