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**Improving quality**

**for children**

A quality improvement tool   
for early years provision

**Guidance notes**

Supporting high quality early years provision for Achieving for Children

‘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 years’ practitioners to improve the quality of provision 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. You can use this information to update your focused improvement plan (FIP)or a 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. 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 (nurseries and childminders)

As a whole team, look at each section individually (1 to 7) to evaluate the quality of your practice. 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

# Using the document (out of schools)

As a whole team, look at each section individually to evaluate the quality of your practice. 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 Safeguarding and welfare requirements

Section 2 The play environment

Section 3 SEN provision and inclusive practice

Section 4 Partnership with parents

Section 5 Leadership and management

# 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? Put Y, P or N in the column on the right-hand side.

You should be able to evidence this through your practice (for example, through policies, observations or photos).

# Criteria for assessment

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

* leaders completing a draft from their viewpoint, distributing it to staff and asking for written, oral feedback and comments by a certain date
* all staff meeting to complete 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 meeting 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 years’ 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 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? For example, 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?

# 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) |
| **Applying to waive disqualification: early years and childcare** | [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ applying-to-waive-disqualification-early-years-and-childcare-providers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/applying-to-waive-disqualification-early-years-and-childcare-providers) |
| **British Values** | [www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/03/ Fundamental\_British\_Values.pdf](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** | www.gov.uk/government/publications/ disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/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)** | [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/ uploads/attachment\_data/file/596629/EYFS\_STATUTORY\_FRAMEWORK\_2017.pdf](http://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 [www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams#south-london-hpt](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/contacts-phe-health-protection-teams#south-london-hpt) |
| **Information Sharing (July 2018)** | www.gov.uk/government/publications/ safeguarding-practitioners-information-sharing-advice |
| **Inspecting safeguarding in early years (October 2018)** | [www.gov.uk/government/publications/ inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspecting-safeguarding-in-early-years-education-and-skills-from-september-2015) |
| **Early Years Inspector Handbook** | [www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015) |
| **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** | [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/439598/prevent-duty-departmental-advice-v6.pdf](http://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)** | [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\_data/file/398815/SEND\_Code\_of\_Practice\_January\_2015.pdf](http://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** | [www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Final%206836-Safeguard.Chd%20bkmk.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Final%206836-Safeguard.Chd%20bkmk.pdf) |
| **The Foundation Years** | [www.foundationyears.org.uk](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** | [www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-youre-worried-a-child-is-being-abused--2) |
| **What to expect, when?** | [www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/03/4Children\_ParentsGuide\_2015\_WEB.pdf](http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2015/03/4Children_ParentsGuide_2015_WEB.pdf) |
| **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018** | [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  DfE: Department for Education  DOB: Date of birth  EH: Environmental Health  EYFS: Early Years Foundation Stage  EYFSP: Early Years Foundation Stage Profile  HPA: Health Protection Agency  ICO: Information Commissioner’s Office  ITP: Individual target plan | INSET: In-service training  ISA: Independent Safeguarding Authority  LSCB: Local Safeguarding Children Board  PFA: Paediatric first aid  QTS: Qualified teacher status  RAG: Red, amber, green rating  SEF: Self-evaluation form  SEND: Special educational needs and disabilities  SENCo: Special educational needs  co-ordinator |

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