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**Improving quality**

**for children**

A quality improvement tool
for early years provision

**Section 1**

**Enabling environments:**

Securing high quality environments for play and learning

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| **Name of setting** |  |
| **Date:** |  |

The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children’s learning and development.

Enabling environments encourage babies and young children to play and explore because they feel relaxed, comfortable and safe.

When children feel emotionally safe and secure they are able to explore and find out about the place they are in and the things they can see, touch, manoeuvre or manipulate.

In the EYFS the environment is described by three features: The emotional environment, the outdoor environment and the indoor environment. These three aspects of the environment together make up the environment for play and learning in the EYFS.

# 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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| **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, outside for children from birth to 5 years.  |  |  |
| 2 | All practitioners understand and plan for the indoors, outdoors and emotional aspects of enabling environments.  |  |  |
| 3 | There are inviting spaces for quiet reflection, where children can be alone when they wish ensuring quiet and active areas are positioned separately. Practitioners monitor the effectiveness of these areas and adapt when necessary.  |  |  |
| 4 | Provision is planned to enable children to be actively involved with a variety of learning opportunities including: books, art and creative activities, sand and water, physical activities, malleable activities, construction, sensory play and role play.  |  |  |
| 5 | Ensure all children have equal access to opportunities within the learning environment eg, activities are adapted to meet children’s individual learning needs.  |  |  |
| 6 | Materials and resources are organised to promote independence, challenge and inspire the children’s learning.  |  |  |
| 7 | Children are encouraged to have opportunities to self-select activities and extend their own learning both indoors and outdoors. |  |  |
| 8 | Adults model language and conversation appropriately, encouraging children to express their ideas and extend their language skills by using new words.  |  |  |

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| 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 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.  |  |  |
| 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 able to extend their own learning in an enabling environment offering free flow play indoors and outdoors.  |  |  |
| 18 | Children are engaged in challenging experiences to practise and extend their skills and ideas, to reach their full potential and promote self-esteem.  |  |  |
| 19 | Children are able to use their home language in play and learning. The provision supports opportunities for all children to develop English.  |  |  |
| 20 | A display approach or policy is in place. Children and adults engage with a variety of displays at children’s level (photographs, children’s own artwork, 3D, walls and table displays) including links to EYFS.  |  |  |
| 21 | High quality, real, natural and recycled resources are used and presented in unique and creative ways to stimulate children’s imagination and problem solving.  |  |  |
| 22 | Children are able to work on a large scale with open-ended materials (large pieces of paper, modelling recyclable materials, den making).  |  |  |
| 23 | Children learn to develop curiosity to explore their environment and the natural world (plants, pets, insects and seasons). |  |  |
| 24 | Children are able to respond to, explore and communicate ideas, feelings and preferences through art, music, dance, role play and imaginative play. |  |  |
| 25 | Do practitioners regularly read to children in a way that excites and engages them, introducing new ideas, concepts and vocabulary? |  |  |
| 26 | Do practitioners actively plan activities and routines to support children’s understanding of what is needed to keep physically and mentally healthy |  |  |
| 27 | Do practitioners actively plan activities and routines to support children develop their resilience, confidence and independence? |  |  |
| 28 | Will resources and routines provide children with a clear pathway to cumulatively develop the skills and knowledge required for their next stage of learning? |  |  |

## 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. Well organised storage for extra toys/ resources |
| Not enough equipment or furniture, or in poor repair | Enough equipment or furniture in reasonable condition | Equipment or furniture is suitable for each child’s age, stage or size and kept in a good, clean condition | Equipment or furniture is adapted for individual children, convenient and comfortable and in excellent condition |
| Few materials or experiences available to suit each age group or area of learning indoors. For example, 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, (two 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, nature and science | Several different drawing materials accessible daily. Independent age appropriate resources. 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 and science. Sand and water offered daily with different resources. Provider talks to children about their play, extending learning |
| Children have very infrequent outdoor experiences  | Daily outdoor experiences available but 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 |
| 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 or 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:**  |