



**Early Years
Quality
Improvement
Support
Programme
(EYQISP)**



Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme

(EYQISP)

**Guidance Tools and Materials to support local authority
Early Years Consultants and leaders of early years
settings in quality improvement**

Disclaimer

The Department for Children, Schools and Families wishes to make it clear that the Department and its agents accept no responsibility for the actual content of any materials suggested as information sources in this publication, whether these are in the form of printed publications or on a website.

In these materials icons, logos, software products and websites are used for contextual and practical reasons. Their use should not be interpreted as an endorsement of particular companies or their products.

The websites referred to in these materials existed at the time of going to print.

Please check all website references carefully to see if they have changed and substitute other references where appropriate.

Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme

(EYQISP)

Contents

Section 1	Introduction and rationale for the Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme
Section 2	Using the tools
Section 3	Planning for quality improvement
Section 4	Quality Improvement Cycles
Section 5	Categorising settings and targeting support
Section 6	Self Evaluation Audit materials of non-negotiables
Section 7	Focused Improvement Plan (FIP) – action planning for quality improvement
Section 8	Professional Development Meetings (PDMs) – themes and outlines
Appendices	
Appendix 1	Self Evaluation Audit Format 1
Appendix 2	Self Evaluation Audit Format 2
Appendix 3	Focused Improvement Plan
Appendix 4	Feedback Form

Section 1

1.1 Introduction and rationale for the Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme

The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities and their partners to improve outcomes for all young children and reduce inequalities between them. Fulfilling this duty requires a broad and inclusive strategy, part of which should focus on the provision of high quality early learning and care.

Children who experience high quality early years provision are well placed to achieve better outcomes in school and beyond, and develop better social, emotional and cognitive abilities necessary for life-long learning. Poor quality provision, however, adds no value in the long term.

The purpose of the guidance materials in this booklet is to provide local authority Early Years Consultants (EYCs) and leaders of early years settings¹ with tools to support continuous quality improvement in line with the principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Framework and *Every Child Matters*. They also draw on the Quality Improvement Programme outlined by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Ofsted self evaluation form (SEF) and the National Quality Improvement Network's principles.

These materials form part of the range of information and support for local authorities to use as part of their focus on raising and sustaining the quality of early years experiences for children and families.

This document provides tools which can be used by EYCs in partnership with settings or independently by settings' leaders. These tools are seen as complementary and/or supplementary to existing local authority quality improvement processes and systems to support and highlight evidence of self evaluation. In producing these tools the Early Years National Strategies have worked closely with local authorities and early years agencies and acknowledge their support.

The tools are built on four key principles:

- the role of effective leadership in securing and improving quality
- a continuous cycle of self evaluation, improvement and reflection, thus empowering practitioners to see themselves as learners, seeking improvements in their practice, reducing inequality and narrowing the achievement gap
- a system of support and challenge which is transparent and agreed by all
- strong partnerships between the local authority, settings and each setting's community.

These key principles are explored through the following five elements:

- **strengthening leadership for learning** – focusing on the key role of leaders in building capacity and ensuring high quality learning development and provision
- **developing practitioner learning** – focusing on the needs and highlighting /developing strengths of practitioners who support and extend children's learning and development
- **facilitating partnerships for learning and development** – focusing on working in partnership with parents/carers, children, other settings and partner professionals to support children's learning and development

¹ Throughout this document settings refer to any out-of-home provider of early years provision for children from birth to five, such as childminders, local authority nurseries, nursery or early years centres, children's centres, play-groups, pre-schools, or schools in the independent, private or voluntary sectors and maintained schools.

- **supporting progress, learning and development** – focusing on using observations to assess and understand children’s learning and development, both in the home and the setting, and translating observations of children at play into an assessment of each child’s progress to help and support them further
- **securing high quality environments for learning and development** – focusing on the enabling environment (including the physical and emotional environment), which promotes children’s well-being, nurtures children, and fosters positive relationships between children, parents and adults, and where children are valued for their uniqueness and individuality.

Further details of these elements can be found in the *Early Years Consultant's Handbook* (Reference 00127-2008BKT-EN)

Quality is the key to securing improved outcomes for children and giving them a better start in the early years. It is important that all early years settings and providers work in partnership with the local authority, parents and the setting’s community to consider how best to create, maintain and improve continuously their offer to secure better experiences for all young children and their families.

The guidance in this booklet builds on the premise that local authorities work transparently with all settings in agreeing a differentiated package of support delivered in inverse proportion to success.

It is the intention that the tools in this document give a menu of choice to settings and local authorities to strengthen existing self evaluation and quality improvement processes.

The tools include:

- Categorisation Exemplification
- Self Evaluation Audits linked to the Ofsted SEF headings
- Focused Improvement Plans
- Professional Development Meetings (PDMs), themes and examples
- Case studies.

The National Strategy’s Early Years Consultant's Handbook refers to the importance of local authorities and children’s trusts planning for continuous quality improvement in the early years. The National Strategies’ Early Years field force has a remit to work alongside local authorities in planning for quality improvement, thus impacting on children’s outcomes and gap narrowing. It is hoped that this document will be helpful in this process.



Section 2

Using the tools

The following tools have been designed to be used by:

- EYCs with targeted settings
- setting leaders with staff teams
- childminders – individually or in networks/association
- local authority/children’s trust early years teams.

2.1 Categorisation tools

Tools for the categorisation of settings are primarily aimed at supporting local authority early years teams to share and discuss the levels of support and the deployment of EYCs. They are essential to ensuring better targeting of support at settings which need it most, and follow the principle of offering support in inverse proportion to success. These tools are based on local authorities having an open and transparent process which involves settings.

2.2 Self Evaluation Audits

The Self Evaluation Audit tools can be used in partnership settings and the LA’s EYC. In those settings where there is limited support from the local authority they can be used equally effectively by the setting’s own team.

These Self Evaluation Audits extend the Ofsted SEF headings to a further level of actionable activities which a setting can work through to secure improvement.

2.3 Focused Improvement Plans

This section outlines the action planning cycle and gives tools to support the process as well as criteria to measure the impact of the actions in raising quality.

2.4 Professional Development Meetings

The Professional Development Meeting themes are examples of possible topics for staff development and follow-up activities with an individual setting, clusters of settings or a local network.

2.5 Working with schools

Local authorities may wish to consider incorporating the tools in this document into their use of the School Improvement Programme. This could be as part of their targeted work with identified schools or through the wider use of the school improvement cycle and core elements. It could be used to support the leadership of learning and developing practitioner learning. This will offer a complementary approach to securing sustained improvement in the EYFS.

This guidance material builds on the pilots and next steps referred to in *Improving outcomes for children in the Foundation Stage in maintained schools* (Reference 03960-2006BKT-EN).

Section 3

3.1 Planning for Quality Improvement

The primary purpose of the quality improvement cycle is to ensure that all settings consider how best to create, maintain and improve their provision in order to offer the highest quality experiences for all young children. It is by doing so on a continuous basis that they can secure the best possible outcomes for all young children as set out in the *Every Child Matters* agenda and the principles of the EYFS.

There are many factors which contribute to high quality early years provision. This is a complex area but certain elements have been identified as having the greatest impact on the quality of provision.

The following diagram referenced by research sources² summarises the important features of high quality provision organised around the three key factors of: workforce, practice and environment. With the child at the centre, these factors interact and enable the children’s enjoyment, well-being, learning, development and better long-term outcomes.

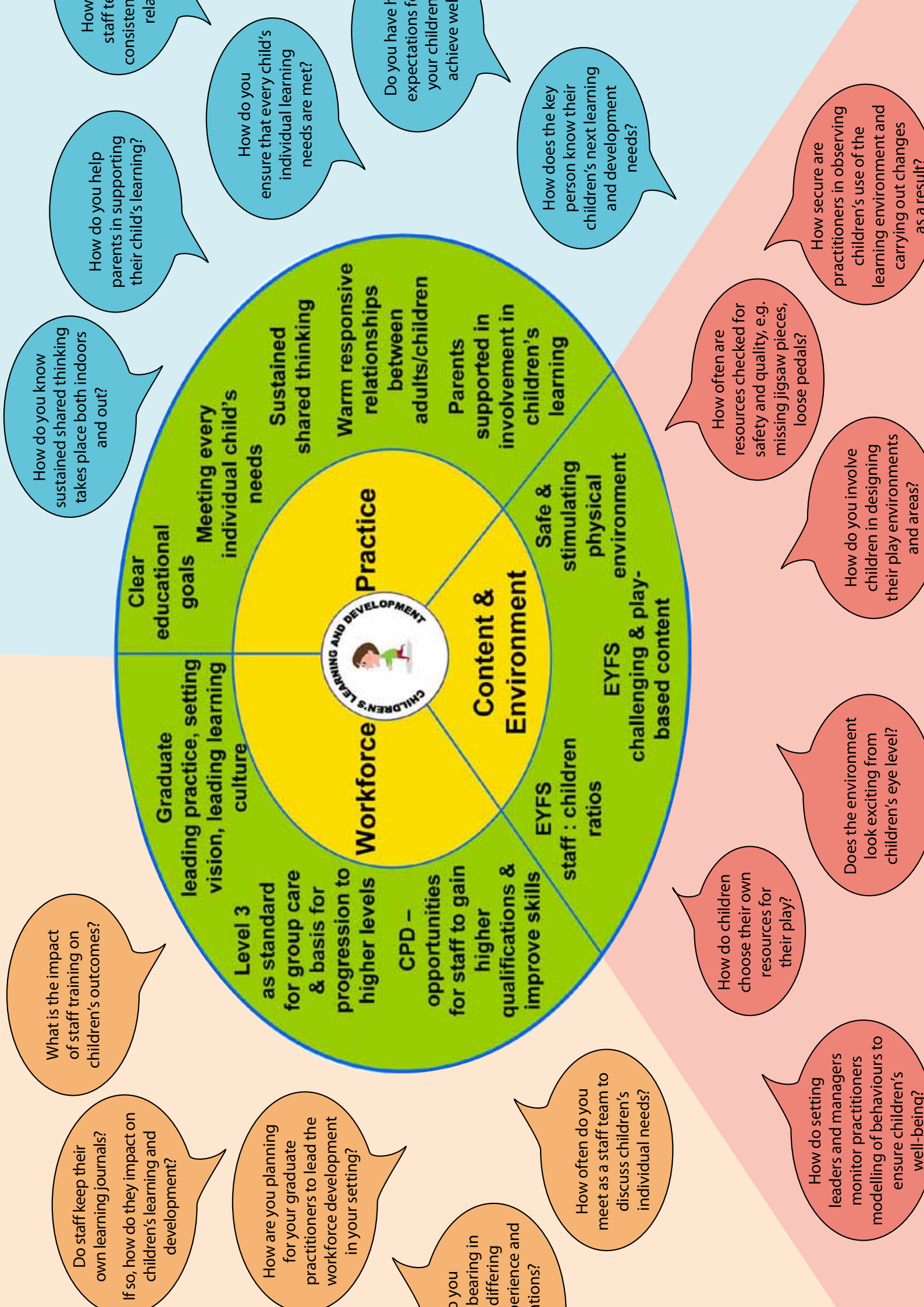
Fuller details of this diagram and the Quality Improvement Programme can be found at: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/features/foundation_stage/ey_qip



² Sources: EYFS, Effective Provision of Pre-School Education, Research into Effective Pedagogy in Early Learning, Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning

3.2

By unpacking these elements at setting level, practitioners can enter into pedagogical dialogue, challenging themselves and each other to establish a clear vision of quality provision in relation to children's needs. To stimulate such discussion the prompts on the following pages may be useful:

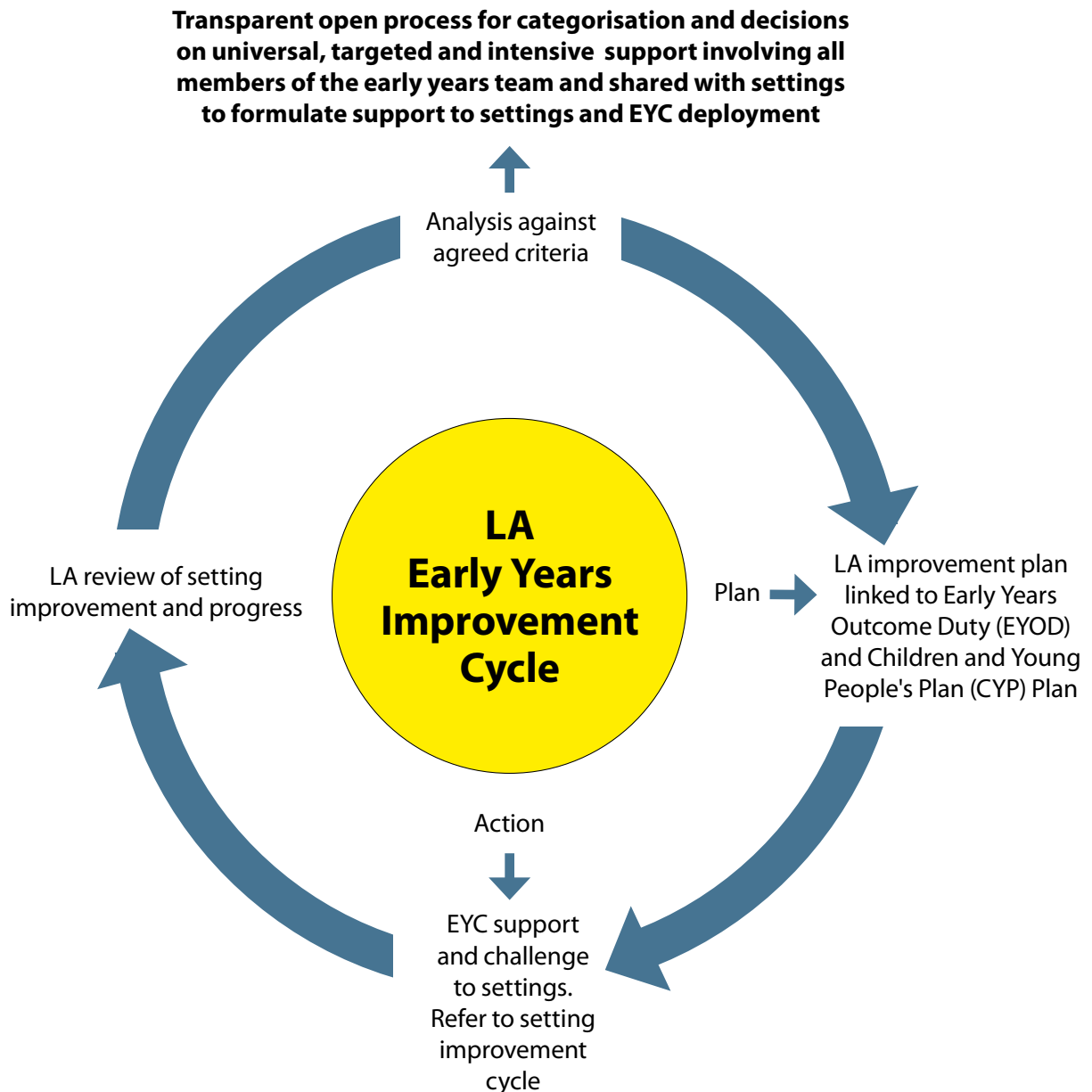


Section 4

4.1 Quality Improvement Cycles

In order to seek and work continually towards quality improvement there are two cycles that need to be considered:

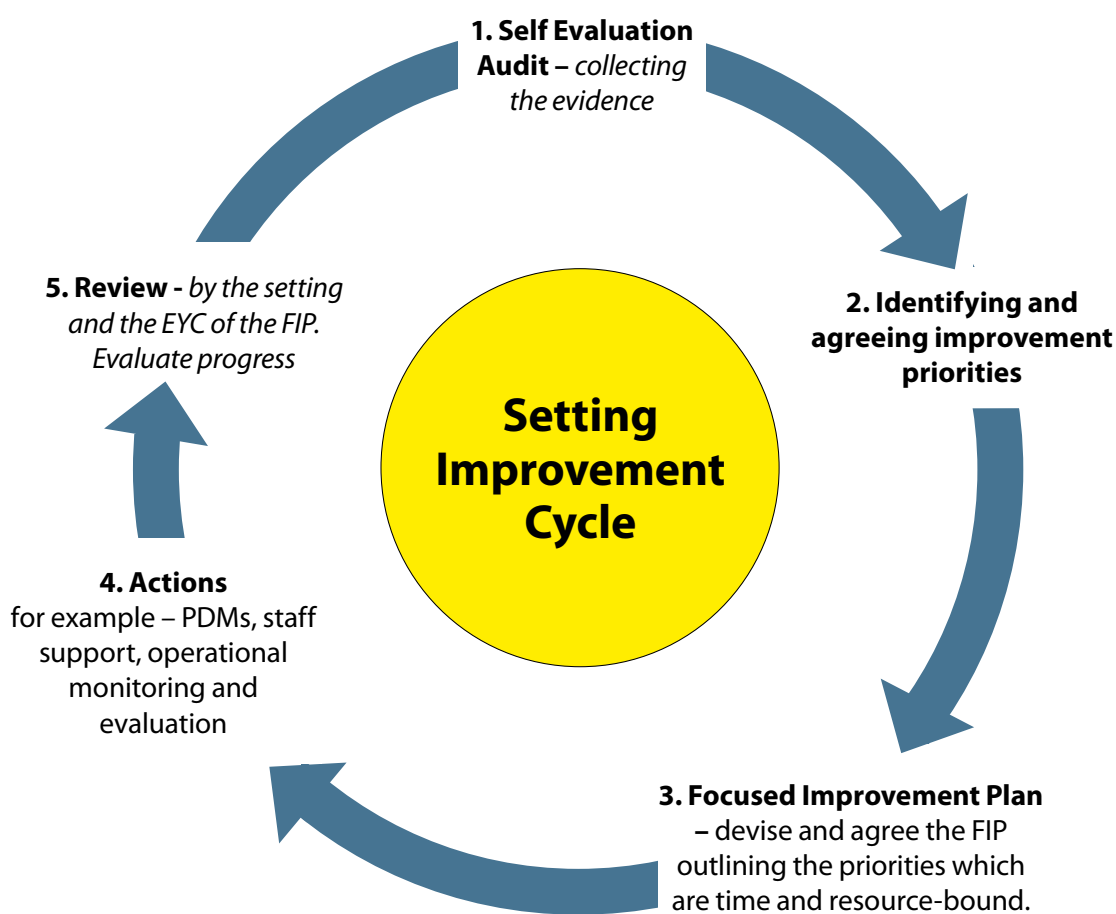
- the local authority improvement cycle – Early Years
- the setting's improvement cycle.



The local authority's early years team has a pivotal role in securing quality improvement. This role is explored in the EYC's Handbook.

Settings are responsible for their own improvement. The diagram below illustrates a five-step cycle that supports setting self evaluation and improvement and links to the tools outlined in this document.

The setting's leadership is central to the five steps in the improvement cycle. It is essential that the setting has ownership of these steps to ensure the strengthening of self evaluation and sustained quality improvement. The cycle is ongoing and provides means to build capacity.



Section 5

5.1 Categorising settings and targeting support

This section outlines materials to support local authorities in the transparent categorisation of their settings. Crucial to this process is securing partnership working and trusting relationships in order for settings to work with their local authority EYC on taking forward quality improvement. It raises questions about how local authorities deploy their EYC team in supporting settings.

It contains:

1. suggested evidence and criteria required to categorise settings
2. possible levels of support and EYC deployment
3. ways of sharing this information
4. support for EYCs
5. illustrative case studies.

Local authorities' work with early years settings and practitioners must be guided by the principles identified in the *Early Years Foundation Stage framework: A Unique Child, Positive Relationships, Enabling Environments, Learning and Development*.

Early years settings within the local authority will be operating in different contexts with varying challenges, and at different stages on their journey of continuous improvement. EYCs will have a range of strategies which they will be able to offer to support and challenge settings. The purpose of using a categorisation process is to match and target levels of support according to the setting's needs.

The process of categorising settings provides a basis for consolidating the partnership relationship between practitioners and EYCs through a shared understanding of:

1. roles and responsibilities
2. quality improvement planning
3. expectations on outcomes and impact of support
4. actual impact of support.

The process will provide information and evidence which will enable the delivery of appropriately targeted support. The deployment of the EYC team will be directly related to the categorisation, with support offered in inverse proportion to success .

5.2 The process to support local authorities with their categorisation of settings

Step 1

Collation and scrutiny of evidence

The early years team collates and scrutinises recent and relevant evidence relating to settings. This evidence could include, in no specific order:

- the setting's own self evaluation, including inclusive practice, involvement of parents, and listening to the children's voice
- reports: local authority, Ofsted, external
- EYFSP results data (where appropriate)
- progress in a quality assurance scheme or quality improvement programme
- notes of visits from all the professionals involved in the setting, which could include observations of learning and teaching/enabling environments
- the meeting of the welfare requirements
- continuous professional development: training attendance, support received and impact, qualifications of practitioners
- management of transition/effectiveness of partnership working with other local providers
- stability of management and staff teams
- effectiveness of leadership and management.

The evidence may include, for example, a request from a setting for additional support due to short-term circumstances identified by the setting, or as part of the strategy for responding to necessary improvements identified in an Ofsted report.

Step 2

Identifying the criteria for categorisation

The early years team identify the criteria which would exemplify high, medium or low quality settings. Good practice suggests that the criteria are shared with settings. The following grid, *Criteria for categorisation of Early Years Foundation Stage settings* adapted from Trafford local authority, gives an illustration of the criteria which could be used.

Criteria for categorisation of early years settings

Criteria	Welfare requirements	Staffing and leadership	Learning and Development requirements	Outcomes for children	Partnership with parents, carers and partner professionals	SEN provision/inclusion	Training and CPD	Transition	Sustainability issues in business planning	Level of Support
Evidence	<p>Inspection report</p> <p>LA notes of visits</p> <p>Parent voice</p> <p>SEF incident(s)</p>	<p>Staff qualifications</p> <p>Retention and recruitment</p> <p>Identified strengths and weaknesses in leadership</p> <p>Inspection reports</p> <p>LA notes of visits</p> <p>SEF</p>	<p>Inspection report</p> <p>LA notes of visit</p> <p>Parent voice</p> <p>Children's voice</p> <p>Reports of progress against Quality Assurance Scheme or Quality Improvement Programme</p> <p>SEF</p> <p>EYFSP results</p>	<p>Inspection report</p> <p>LA notes of visits</p> <p>Parent voice</p> <p>Children's voice</p> <p>Reports of progress against Quality Assurance Scheme or Quality Improvement Programme</p> <p>Children's portfolios</p> <p>Assessment information</p> <p>SEF</p> <p>EYFSP results</p>	<p>Parental complaints.</p> <p>Poor response to communication with local authority</p> <p>Inspection report</p> <p>LA notes of visits</p> <p>Parent voice</p> <p>Children's voice</p> <p>SEF</p> <p>Parent information</p> <p>Feedback from partner professionals</p>	<p>Inspection report</p> <p>LA notes of visits</p> <p>Parent voice</p> <p>SEF</p> <p>Reports/notes of visits from professional partners e.g. health visitors, SaLT</p>	<p>Training records</p> <p>Training evaluations</p> <p>SEF</p> <p>Learning journals</p> <p>Staff meeting minutes</p> <p>Use of established tracking tools</p> <p>Feedback from schools</p>	<p>LA notes of visits</p> <p>Parent voice</p> <p>SEF</p> <p>Children's weekly planners/diaries across settings</p> <p>Minutes of transition meetings</p>	<p>Limited communication with local authority</p> <p>Inspection reports</p> <p>LA notes of visits/records</p>	<p>The levels of support will be determined by the number of EYCs and must be decided at local authority level</p> <p>Support should be differentiated according to the progress settings are making</p>

The following is a guide.

Criteria	Welfare requirements	Staffing and leadership	Learning and Development requirements	Outcomes for children	Partnership with Parents, carers and partner professionals	SEN provision/ inclusion	Training and CPD	Transition	Sustainability issues in business planning	Level of Support
High priority	Welfare requirements not being met or many inconsistencies	Newly registered setting New manager or other key staff Some weaknesses or only just satisfactory leadership High staff turnover Low qualifications and no commitment or plans to support further qualifications	Inconsistent implementation of EYFS or not being implemented throughout the setting at all. The learning and development requirements are not being met. Feedback from Reception schools, or data from the LA point to specific areas for improvement	Children not making satisfactory progress towards the <i>Every Child Matters</i> outcomes / Development Matters/ Early Years Foundation Stage Learning Goals Inadequate Ofsted rating with identified actions Children at risk of low achievement not identified	Little or no information exchanged with parents No engagement, with parents and other professionals	Insufficient evidence of inclusive practice Vulnerable children are identified within the setting but not given targeted support SEN Code of Practice not being met Attendance at SENCO training is fewer than one session per term – little evidence of impact	Staff attendance at training is fewer than one session in three months and/or limited impact on practice	No information sent to next provision No information shared with 'peer' provision across a day, week or month	The setting has sustainability issues and/or unsatisfactory business plan in place	Joint Action Plan agreed A minimum of one visit every four weeks

Criteria	Welfare requirements	Staffing and leadership	Learning and Development requirements	Outcomes for children	Partnership with Parents, carers and partner professionals	SEN provision/inclusion	Training and CPD	Transition	Sustainability issues in business planning	Level of Support
Medium priority	Meeting welfare requirements consistently	No significant staff changes for 12 months Satisfactory to Good leadership qualifications and plans in place for staff working to gain further qualifications	Generally good implementation of EYFS Learning and development requirements met to minimum standards	Children making satisfactory progress within the EYFS towards the <i>Every Child Matters</i> outcomes / Development Matters/ Early Years Foundation Stage Learning Goals Satisfactory Ofsted rating Children at risk of low achievement identified but not given targeted support	Some information exchanged with parents Some parental engagement Some engagement with partner professionals	Vulnerable children are targeted and supported adequately SEN Code of Practice met to minimum requirements Attendance at SENCO training is on average one session per term – is having an impact Satisfactory SEN policy	Staff attendance at training is on average one session in three months and is having a good impact	Information sent to next provision Information shared with 'peer' provision across a day, week or month	The setting has some sustainability issues Business plan in place	A minimum of one visit half termly or every eight weeks

Criteria	Welfare requirements	Staffing and leadership	Learning and Development requirements	Outcomes for children	Partnership with Parents, carers and partner professionals	SEN provision/inclusion	Training and CPD	Transition	Sustainability issues in business planning	Level of Support
Low priority	Meeting the welfare requirements with continuous improvement	No changes for 18 months Consistently good or outstanding leadership Graduate practitioners in place or plans in place showing a commitment to extending qualifications	Good or better implementation of EYFS Learning and development requirements addressed well	Children making good progress within the <i>Every Child Matters</i> outcomes/ Development Matters/ Early Years Foundation Stage Learning Goals Good Ofsted rating Early identification and appropriately targeted support for children at risk of low achievement	Information regularly exchanged with parents Strong parental engagement with innovative practice Strong working relationships with partner professionals sign-posting parents to other support services to promote child well-being	Vulnerable children are targeted and supported effectively Attendance at SENCO training is on average more than one session per term and impact evident throughout setting SEN Code of Practice implemented effectively	Staff attendance at training is on average more than one session in three months and is having a sustained and continuous impact	Information sent to next provision Information shared with 'peer' provision across a day, week or month Strong partnership between settings	No sustainability issues Good business plan in place	Contact maintained through meetings, training and telephone calls

Case Study An example of how one local authority has identified criteria against Intensive (Red rating), Targeted (Amber rating) and Regular (Green rating) Support		
The Quality and Standards Team will regularly review the support needs of settings using clear quality criteria		
Quality criteria for settings needing intensive support (Red rating)	Quality criteria for settings needing targeted support (Amber rating)	Quality criteria for settings with regular support (Green rating)
No SEF or evidence of reflective practice	SEF started and some evidence of reflective practice	Completed SEF and evidence of reflective practice
Setting requesting intensive support	Setting requesting some support	Setting has some areas for development
EYFSP results (school or feeder setting) with a high percentage of children not reaching national expectations	EYFSP (school or feeder setting) shows a proportion of children not reaching national expectations	EYFSP (school or feeder setting) shows a high proportion of children reaching national expectations
EYFSP (school or feeder setting) shows widening gap between average and lowest 20% of children	EYFSP (school or feeder setting) shows no closing of the gap between average and lowest 20% of children	EYFSP (school or feeder setting) shows a closing of the gap between the average and lowest 20% of children
No evidence of transition planning or record sharing with parents and other settings	Some evidence of transition planning or record sharing with parents and other settings	Good transition planning with strong networking in place and record sharing with parents and other settings
Evidence of serious breaches of compliance with welfare and/or safeguarding regulations	Some evidence of non-compliance with welfare and/or safeguarding regulations	Meeting welfare and safeguarding regulations
Significant issues with management, leadership or ownership	Number of issues with management, leadership or ownership	No issues around management or leadership or ownership
No evidence of effective workforce development planning and training take-up	Some evidence of effective workforce development planning and training take-up	Evidence of effective workforce development planning
Staffing concerns regarding high turnover, low qualifications and staff ratios	Some staffing concerns regarding turnover, qualifications and staff ratios	Few staffing concerns regarding turnover, qualifications and staff ratios
Poor attendance at relevant meetings	Limited attendance at relevant meetings	Good attendance at relevant meetings/events
Concerns about setting's sustainability	Some concerns about sustainability	No/little concern about sustainability
Inadequate Ofsted	Satisfactory Ofsted	Good or Outstanding Ofsted
* Newly registered (early years/compulsory registers) settings and childminders will be visited within three months of registration and supported thereafter according to need		
* Settings on voluntary part of the Childcare Register will receive information and signposting to support and training		

Step 3

Moderation of judgements

Moderation of judgements involving a round table discussion using all evidence available and professional input from:

- early years team members
- inclusion team members
- professional partners, e.g. speech and language therapists (SaLTs)
- where appropriate, suppliers contracted to provide relevant services who may have a central role in this process, depending on the LA.

To ensure this process is fair and equitable, some thought should be given to the structure of the meeting. At the end of this step each setting should be categorised with an allocation of EYC time.

Step 4

Sharing of judgements

Sharing the categorisation judgement should take into consideration the following points:

- individual setting information feedback, criteria for contact (phone, meeting, mail out)
- feedback to practitioners and providers as well as management
- information shared with all early years teams and School Improvement teams in relation to a school's level of support
- general feedback to all settings about the quality in local authority early years settings
- outline of the support which will result from the judgements
- process of appeal if a setting disagrees about judgement and level of support.

Step 5

Deployment and support to settings

Use judgement to plan deployment of the team and for the EYC, in partnership with the setting, to agree actions.

Case study

An example of how one local authority has approached the categorisation process

Croydon early years team have been using their Improvement Programme process with registered private and voluntary (PVI) settings since 2002. It was developed as a means to focus support on effectively improving the quality of the early years settings in relation to specific criteria. The programme matches the primary and secondary sector Improvement Programmes, and is based on the Ofsted categorisations.

The process has been reviewed and revised on an annual basis. It has involved collaborative working with practitioners/providers to work towards its current version.

The Improvement Programme brings together the following elements:

- *a focus on the Every Child Matters outcomes and the impact of good quality practice on individual children's learning experience;*
- *collaborating with managers and practitioners to identify the needs of the setting;*
- *supporting the development of practitioners' reflective practice and self evaluation skills;*

- *developing the use of a setting Improvement Plan as an effective tool for continuous improvement;*
- *clarifying the respective roles of practitioners in the setting and the members of the Improvement Team;*
- *delivering appropriate levels of support in inverse proportion to need;*
- *regular monitoring visits to settings to build up a picture of progress and quality over time.*

The Improvement Programme booklet describes examples of practice for each of the four levels. For each level there are two examples; one relates to the practitioner's role, and the other to the children's learning and development. These examples are used by team members during visits to provide a basis for shared judgements with practitioners in the setting.

For example:

Helping children enjoy and achieve

Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>All practitioners show an excellent understanding of how children develop and learn. High quality observation and rigorous assessment are used very effectively to inform the planning.</i> ● <i>Children respond to challenges with enthusiasm and follow their interests with persistence and concentration. They have the confidence to try new activities by themselves.</i>
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Most practitioners have a good understanding of how children develop and learn. Good quality observations inform their planning.</i> ● <i>Children are keen to learn and respond well to challenges. They follow their interests and show confidence in trying new activities.</i>
Level 3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Practitioners show satisfactory understanding of how children develop and learn. They recognise the need to record children's learning, but their observations are inconsistent and not always linked to planning.</i> ● <i>Children show an interest in learning when offered appropriate challenges. They are not always supported in following their own interests and exploration.</i>
Level 3b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Practitioners show limited understanding of how children develop and learn. Observations of children's development and learning tend to be infrequent and rarely link to the planning.</i> ● <i>Children show initial interest in activities, but their learning is hindered by a lack of challenge. They have little opportunity to follow their own interests.</i>
Level 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Practitioners have little understanding of how children develop and learn. They do not use observations effectively.</i> ● <i>Children's learning is limited and their progress is inadequate. Their time in the setting is not challenging.</i>

The outline of the process is:

- 1. annual visit to all settings to complete a monitoring form linked to the five outcomes and the setting's Improvement Plan;*
- 2. follow-up monitoring visit six months later to discuss progress of the Improvement Plan and to offer support to keep developments on track;*
- 3. review the setting's SEF, Improvement Plan, Ofsted report and any feedback from the Inclusion Team. After full discussion, decide on an appropriate level of the Improvement Programme for each setting and confirm with the setting in writing.*

Participation and involvement of practitioners is integral to every stage of the process. The aim is for shared, evidence-based judgements which inform current priorities for support.

New settings have a comprehensive induction programme which introduces them to the 'Conditions of Grant' which are based on the principles of the EYFS, the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs and the Disability Discrimination Act. During their induction there is also preparation for taking on their role in the Improvement Programme.

Every term all setting levels are reviewed and adjusted to take account of any developments or changes that may have occurred, and the impact these changes may have on the quality of the setting.

The following gives an outline of the support available for higher quality settings.

Levels 1 and 2 – Outstanding/good settings

- Monitoring visits*
- Support meetings to develop Improvement Plan*
- Sharing good practice scheme*
- Focus visits*
- Training on request*
- Training for staff teams in their own setting*
- Leaders and managers mentor visits*
- Early years resource library and long-term loan of resources*

Visit schedules are agreed at the beginning of the programme, with targets and timescales identified so that expectations are clear for all involved.



Section 6

6.1 Self Evaluation Audits of non–negotiables

(linked to steps one and two of the Setting Improvement Cycle)

This Self Evaluation Audit focuses on the setting's capacity to support children's learning, development and progress. It is a tool designed in two formats for use by settings and EYCs supporting those settings, and by setting leaders with their staff team. By working through the tool, relative strengths and areas for further development can be considered as well as the next steps which feed into the Focused Improvement Plan (FIP) (refer to Section 7 of this booklet).

The Self Evaluation Audit should be the catalyst for discussion and reflection.

Questions should be answered more fully than by yes or no. Consider these questions:

- How do you know?
- What is your evidence?
- What would we expect to see in such a setting?
- Does that always happen?
- Is that true for all practitioners?
- Is that true for all children?
- Can you think of anything that could be further improved?

Consider these questions in the context of the four themes and commitments of EYFS:

- A Unique Child
- Positive Relationships
- Enabling Environments
- Learning and Development.

Where it may be useful, reference to specific EYFS cards is included after the question, e.g. 'How does provision ensure each child is included? *EYFS 1.2, 3.2.*'

The Self Evaluation Audit does not include all aspects of the EYFS themes and commitments, but is divided into the five key elements of effective early years settings referenced in the introduction of this document.

These five elements are addressed by a series of questions requiring judgements, evidence, impact and future developments which will link to the Focused Improvement Plan.

Format One

Questions are openly phrased and need to be discussed in full before agreeing a judgement based on the evidence.

Format Two

Questions are more direct, requiring robust discussion of the evidence before deciding if:

Y – yes, in place;

P – partially in place;

N – no, not in place;

DK – do not know, no evidence either way.

References to the Ofsted SEF questions and the EYFS Framework are referenced for each of the five elements on the left-hand side .

6.2 Using the EYQISP Self Evaluation Audit: Some practical considerations

Why?

The audit provides a starting point for the improvement process. From it, key areas for development can be identified and prioritised. These will form the focuses for the first FIPs, and can be drawn on for later plans. It also provides a permanent touchstone against which progress can be measured.

What?

The audit needs to be honest and evaluative, drawing on all available evidence in the setting. EYCs or setting leaders should act as 'critical friends' during the process, asking questions such as *How do you know? What would we see in the setting that shows that? Does that always happen? Is that true for all practitioners? For all children? Can you think of anything that could be further improved?* It is the aim that by initially working with EYCs settings will move into a position in which they will be able to use the audit tools independently.

However, the audit is unlikely to be fully comprehensive. One of the outcomes of using the EYQISP tools may be that the setting knows itself better or is able to be more objective and evaluative as a result of the support. One action in the FIP might be to find out more about a particular section of the audit which is unclear or not known, through observation, investigation and discussion.

Some sections of the audit may be completed in more detail than others. It is important not to get bogged down in doing the audit – although it is important to establish a starting point, key areas for development need to be identified so that the cycle of improvement can begin.

Who?

To be effective, the audit should reflect the views of staff and all key partners including partner professionals in the setting. The National Strategies Early Years Regional Advisor can support this process by working with the local authority EYC to support the leader of the setting in enabling this partnership to work. Where views differ, and evidence for each is available, the audit should reflect this.

How?

The audit process will need time and there are a number of possible approaches to addressing this.

Whichever approach is employed, it is important that the process should be planned to fit the context of the setting. Effective approaches tried in settings previously include the following.

- Leaders complete a draft of the audit from their viewpoint and present this to staff in a meeting for comment/feedback (NB: This approach is facilitated in PDM 1: Introducing EYQISP).
- Leaders complete a draft of the audit from their viewpoint, distribute it to staff and ask for written/oral feedback/comments by a certain date.
- All staff meet to complete either the whole or sections of the audit, either in groups or altogether. This could be undertaken in a closure day, or at a specially arranged meeting.
- Leaders meet with individual members of staff at different times to discuss particular sections of the audit.
- At any point in this process, EYCs could be involved. They may discuss the initial draft audit with leaders or with the members of staff. At different points in the process, a draft of the audit may be sent to the EYC to consider before meeting with leaders and/or staff. Alternatively, the EYC may facilitate the whole process.

Where?

The audit questions are available electronically on the web at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/. They can be downloaded for completion electronically or, if this is not possible, they can be edited to leave gaps for handwritten responses. In some cases, several questions can be used as prompts for a single answer.

6.3 The Self Evaluation Audits can be found in the appendices as follows:

Format 1, see Appendix 1

Format 2, see Appendix 2

Section 7

7.1 Focused Improvement Plans – action planning for quality improvement *(linked to step three in the Setting Improvement Cycle)*

The FIP will be built around the areas identified for improvement through the Self Evaluation Audit process. It is important to prioritise the areas identified for improvement over a realistic period of time matched to the resources available.

To maximise the effectiveness of the Self Evaluation Audit process the FIP should be developed with all stakeholders, for example:

- setting leaders and the EYC
- setting leaders and staff
- setting leaders, staff and management boards/governing bodies.

FIPs are living documents. It is important to monitor the progress of the plan.

In preparing the plan the following questions may be considered.

- 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 the FIP

Monitoring is the ongoing assessment of progress against the improvement plan(s), priorities and success criteria.

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

The monitoring and evaluation of the FIP should include questions such as the following.

- 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?

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

SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, REALISTIC, TIME-SPECIFIC, EXTENDING and REWARDING

An example of a blank FIP can be found in Appendix 3.

In the FIP process which involves the EYC there is a crucial role for the EYC in being the change agent and facilitating the setting's ability to measure the impact of their actions.

The following table highlights the roles of the stakeholders in the FIP process and how these roles and follow-through actions impact on quality improvement.

Stakeholder	Role	Actions	Impact
EYC	Support and challenge Change agents	Facilitating : Self Evaluation Audits Focused Improvement Planning PDMs Modelling Demonstrating Coaching Monitoring Evaluating	Improved: Children's outcomes Leadership and management in owning the Quality Improvement agenda Settings' own self evaluation Quality as recognised in the SEF, Ofsted and LAs categorisation process
Setting Leader	Leading and managing staff by example Leading on implementing the FIP	Day-to-day monitoring and evaluation Observing learning and development Observing environments Performance management of staff As above	Improved: Outcomes Categorisation level of support Staff qualifications Success criteria met in the FIP
Practitioner	Contributor to and implementer of Quality Improvement Cycle	Implementing the FIP Attending staff development sessions and training Contributing to the self evaluation audits and process	Improved: Children's outcomes both for ECM and the principles of the EYFS Practice Qualifications
Advisory Board/ Governing Body	To hold the setting to account, focused on: Children's outcomes Leadership Management Narrowing the gap	Monitoring and evaluation: Outcomes Budget Staffing Sustainability Value for money FIP	Increased knowledge and understanding of the setting's improvement programme Involvement in leading, managing and evaluating
Professional Partners, e.g. health visitors	Support setting with embedding the ECM agenda	Advise and support within own agency expertise	Improved ECM outcomes which will be evident in the SEF
Ofsted	Inspection	Validating self evaluation	Action planning for improvement

Section 8

Professional Development Meetings – themes and outlines

The following materials are intended as illustrative suggestions to support improvement within an early years setting. Each one has been designed slightly differently around a theme to show differing approaches to PDMs.

Each one will need to be *tailored, adapted* and *extended* to meet the specific needs of the children, staff and context of the setting. Decisions about the use of these materials will depend on the setting's FIP and the starting points of adults and children in the setting.

Additional materials and expertise may be required to deepen practitioners' understanding.

Each PDM could be led by EYCs or independent trainers and can be used as in-house training in settings, INSET sessions or centrally run training sessions.

In planning PDMs it is worth noting the characteristics of effective continuing professional development (CPD).

Some features of effective CPD*

- Has a direct relationship with what practitioners are doing in the setting
- Uses external expertise linked to activity within the setting
- Involves observation and feedback – especially practitioners observing and learning from each other and expert colleagues
- Includes peer support – colleagues supporting one another
- Provides scope for participants to identify the focus of their development
- Enables all staff to be reflective and focus on their contribution to children's development and progress
- Provides opportunities to work with other colleagues and share practice
- Includes opportunities to receive regular and structured feedback
- Builds in structures to ensure learning is embedded in practice
- Includes opportunities for independent self-study

*Adapted from Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years
Reference: (DfES 0518-2004G)

The following PDMs are only suggestions and can be delivered to one setting, a cluster of settings or a network.

The first PDM consists of one session and introduces the notion of an Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme. The other PDMs are written as modules and consist of more than one session.

PDM: Example ONE

Introducing the Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme

This is the first of a possible series of professional development meetings designed to provide support and challenge for EYFS practitioners working in settings. The content should be tailored and adapted to each setting's or cluster/network of settings' needs.

This PDM is one session and should last about an hour, but could be adapted as required. It is important to keep up the momentum, so ensure plans are kept to as closely as possible. Remember, this PDM is one in a series and there will be many opportunities to explore Quality Improvement further.

NB: It is likely that some participants may be anxious or defensive about the categorisation of the setting and/or participation in EYQISP.

Try to ensure the PDM is professional and positive. Focus on the shared commitment to improving outcomes for all children.

Preparation

EYC and setting leader(s) meet to agree programme and content of PDM.
Agree who will lead each session.

Prepare materials:

- On flipchart or PowerPoint, write key questions for discussion (see **Context**, below)
- Prepare sufficient copies of either completed audit or blank version for participants
- Prepare audit questions for discussion either on A4 for small group discussion or flipcharts (see **Self Evaluation Audit**, below)
- Collect sufficient paper, pens, felt-tips
- Arrange furniture to facilitate discussion in small groups and/or whole group as decided.

Session 1

Introduction

5 mins

Who?

Leader of setting

Key questions and activities

Welcome and introduce people as required.

Brief explanation of lead-up to this meeting (e.g. identification of setting for support, any meetings already held, etc.)

Context

10 mins

Who?

EYC or external support

Key questions and activities

Outline:

- Categorisation of setting
- Opportunity to be part of new 'QISP' programme for support to improve provision and outcomes for children.

Discussion: In twos or threes (or whole group depending on number):

- **What do you think are the strengths of this setting in supporting children's development and progress?**
- **What do you think could be improved in order to support children's development and progress more effectively?**
- **Can you identify any barriers to improvement within the setting?**

Take brief feedback (on a flipchart if appropriate), asking for clarification if necessary and whether other practitioners agree. Do not comment or go into detail. Keep this brisk.

Overview of EY QISP

10 mins

Who?

EYC or external support

Key questions and activities

Explain EY QISP briefly. Include:

Aims (to improve outcomes and progress for children by improving provision within the setting)

Key tools:

- Setting Improvement Cycle
- Self Evaluation Audit of strengths and areas for development within the setting (see below)
- FIP (Focused Improvement Plan): Series of short-term action plans for the setting, to focus key activities, identify responsibilities and make it easier to track improvement. Progress reviewed regularly (how often?) and new FIP produced.
- PDMs: (Professional Development Meetings/Modules): Part of staff continuing professional development. Training and discussion responding to needs identified in the audit and by practitioners. Agreed actions as a result, which will be reviewed and evaluated. Explain procedure for these, e.g. *Within the setting or cluster based? Who will attend? Arrangements for cover, payment.*
- Support of:
 - a) external consultants
 - b) colleagues within the setting ...to improve practice of individuals and setting as a whole. Will include observations and feedback, demonstrations, discussion, etc.

Answer any questions, but keep this brief as the pattern will become clearer as the setting works with the Quality Improvement programme.

Self Evaluation Audit

30 mins

Who?

Leader of setting and/or EYC or external support

Key questions and activities

Either:

1. If the Self Evaluation Audit has already been completed by leaders, consultant(s) and some staff:

Introduce the audit. Explain who has completed it and that this is their perspective.

Divide staff into small groups (twos or threes) to see how far they agree with the judgements. Either focus on one or two sections of the completed self evaluation audit, or (in a larger setting) ask different groups to focus on different sections.

Ask: Do you recognise this setting? Is there anything else/ anything different you would say in answer to these questions? What is your evidence for this?

Ask one person in each group to make written notes during group discussion.

Feedback: Ask for one key comment per group.

Collect in written notes to collate.

or:

2. If the Self Evaluation Audit has not yet been undertaken:

Introduce the Self Evaluation Audit tool. Explain that this will be completed to gain a snapshot of the setting in relation to the effectiveness of the support it gives to children's learning, development and progress.

Have paper copies of some key questions from the tool where staff perceptions and evidence are required, with room for written responses.

Divide staff into small groups (twos or threes) and distribute questions. Either focus on one or two questions/ sections of the Self Evaluation Audit, or (in a larger setting) ask different groups to focus on different questions.

Ask: What would you say the picture was in this setting? Is it always true/ true for everyone? What is your evidence for this?

Ask one person in each group to make written notes during group discussion.

Feedback: Ask for one key comment per group.

Collect in written notes to collate into the Self Evaluation Audit.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACH for either 1 or 2:

Instead of small group discussions with written notes, key questions (with current response if Self Evaluation Audit has already been undertaken) could be written at the top of flipchart papers round the room. Participants with felt-tip pens could circulate and write their own views on any of the sheets.

Finish by asking participants to read all contributions.

Conclusion

5 mins

Who?

Leader of setting

Explain next planned steps and dates, e.g. completion of/ sharing of Self Evaluation Audit, next PDM, visit of external consultant.

After the session

Who?

Leader of setting and/or EYC or external support

Key questions and activities

Try to arrange to stay around for at least 10 minutes, so as to be available for individuals with immediate questions/concerns.

PDM : Example TWO

Theme: Parents as Partners³ – exploring parental engagement

This PDM consists of two modules, which should be delivered on different occasions with time in between, to allow practitioners to reflect and bring about change in their settings.

Each module is divided into sessions, each of which could be delivered in one long meeting or four or five shorter ones of around an hour. This is flexible and dependent on circumstances, as more time might be needed for discussion if more practitioners are involved, and can be extended to another meeting if required.

Module 1

Respecting diversity and building positive relationships – one long session or three to four short sessions

Module 2

Learning together: valuing and supporting the home learning environment – one long session or four to five short sessions

Audience and intended use:

EYCs working with early years settings and Year 1 teachers

Training sequences:

These notes are for guidance only; session leaders should take careful note of the individual circumstances in each setting represented and use the most appropriate materials available. Session leaders will also need to collect books, publications, CD-ROMs, etc. to facilitate discussion and provide examples of good practice. Examples of such material are the EYFS *Principles into Practice* cards, (Ref: 00012-2007DOM-EN) and *Confident, capable and creative: supporting boys' achievements* (Ref: 00682-2007BKT-EN).

Aims:

- To provide an opportunity for practitioners to reflect on practice to ensure high quality provision for all children
- To explore the importance of working in partnership with parents to improve outcomes for children
- To encourage settings to reassess the way they attempt to involve parents through identifying possible barriers to engagement
- To examine how to build positive relationships with all parents
- To identify ways to value and support the home learning environment.

³ Parents in this context refers to mothers, fathers and carers.

Module 1

Respecting diversity and building positive relationships

Introduction

Parents as Partners within the EYFS

Why is it important to work with parents?

Establish the place of parental engagement in the context of effective practice within the EYFS – show its place within the principles, themes and commitments.

Key points:

- Positive relationships which are rooted in trust and mutual respect are at the heart of effective practice.
- Parents are children's first and most enduring educators.
- The home learning environment has a significant impact on children's social, emotional and cognitive development.
- Parents and practitioners working together will have a positive impact on children's development and learning, and therefore improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.

The following series of discussions and key questions are intended to allow practitioners and settings to reflect on their current practice, to identify ways to move their practice forward in order to improve quality and to build effective relationships with all parents.

Session 1

We must start with the presumption that all parents want to be involved in their children's learning and development. We can start by looking at what we already offer to parents, to make sure parents are informed of what their child is learning and how they are encouraged to become involved in this process.

What are we doing already to engage and involve parents in our setting?

Small group discussion. Make a list of the ways your setting actively tries to engage parents.

Note: If more than one setting is represented, each setting can feed back an idea that works particularly well for them; or if PDM is being delivered to one setting, then the presenter can supply a further example of good practice for the setting to consider.

What might be stopping some parents getting involved?

Make a list of possible barriers to engagement and record on a flipchart.

The list could include, for example:

- time
- balancing work and childcare commitments
- several children to get to different places
- lack of confidence – parents unsure of what to do
- own poor experiences of school/education
- English not first language
- a feeling of being judged on their parenting skills

- poor literacy and numeracy skills – have difficulty reading any written information
- feeling unwelcome
- suspicious and not trusting of practitioners
- mental health issues
- pressures associated with poor housing , low incomes or being a single parent
- experience of discrimination.

Key point: Respecting diversity

Every family is different and every family needs to be looked at in a unique way. Possible barriers for some will not be the same as for others. Settings need to respect diversity and recognise that no one approach to engaging parents will suit every family. It is important not to be judgemental, and to find ways to support each family to become engaged in a way that is meaningful and comfortable for them.

Session 2

Identifying barriers to engagement for individual parents and families – making a difference

Key questions for settings to consider and discuss:

- Which parents in our setting have we been unable to engage actively in what we do?
- What could be the reasons for this? What are the possible barriers for engagement for them?
- How can we get to know these families better so that we can engage them more effectively?
- Are there particular groups of parents who we need to find ways to engage with – fathers, families with English as an Additional Language (EAL), young parents, etc?

Small group discussion: Each setting to look at the parents that they feel they do not engage so readily with. Choose a few examples and identify the possible barriers for these individual families. Identify if there is other information that needs to be gathered and discuss ways that this can be done.

Record key points to be included in action planning.

Note: This part of the session is aimed at helping settings identify what they need to do in order to make a difference to parental engagement for individual families in their setting. If a cluster of settings are involved in the PDM the issue of confidentiality should be taken into account if sharing ideas.

Session 3

If we want to get to know families better so that we know what their individual needs and interests are, then we need to build up positive relationships based on trust so that parents will feel confident enough to share information about themselves and their children.

Questions for settings to consider and discuss:

- Does the quality of the relationships with parents in our setting promote trust, respect and genuine partnership?
- How do we promote a friendly and welcoming atmosphere for all parents?

Practitioners should discuss the ways that their setting helps to promote a friendly atmosphere where parents feel welcome and valued, with their views taken into consideration .

Share key points between settings and then ask each setting to identify one thing that they can do better to promote good quality relationships.

Points should include the following:

- Make time to talk.
- Listen carefully to parents.
- Be flexible and open – try not to be judgmental if a parent does not have the same approach to parenting as you.
- Smile and show a friendly face.
- Show a genuine interest in families.
- Use first names (with permission).
- Remember names.
- Ask for parents' views and ideas.
- Develop practitioner confidence in talking to parents.
- Encourage parents to stay during the session.
- Talk to parents about their children on a regular basis.
- Ask for contributions from home for displays.

Final session – Session 4

Take time to reflect on the three parts of the PDM Module 1 and identify the three things that your setting is going to do as a result of this training to improve the quality of your practice with regard to parental engagement.

Be prepared to discuss the progress of these identified areas for development at the next PDM.



Module 2

Learning together: valuing and supporting the home learning environment

Introduction

Recap on last session's key messages about why it is important to work with families while at the same time respecting that all are unique and one approach will not suit everyone.

Encourage feedback on what the settings have done to improve their practice with regard to parents, with a particular emphasis on how they have looked at the needs and interests of individual families.

The practitioner and parent have a great deal to learn from each other, as each is an expert in their field. The parent is an expert on their own child and can bring a wealth of information about what they like and how they behave, and the practitioner is an expert on learning and development. The child's learning will be supported and extended when this expertise is shared in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect.

Key points:

- Parents and practitioners have a great deal to learn from each other.
- Parents and practitioners working together will have a positive impact on children's development and learning, and therefore improve outcomes and reduce inequalities.
- The home learning environment plays a key role in children's learning and practitioners should value and support parents in developing children's learning at home.
- There needs to be effective communication involving a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise between parents and practitioners.
- Practitioners can support parents to have a better understanding of how young children learn and develop.

Session 1

Practitioners and settings need to consider how they use the information which the parent provides about how the child learns and behaves in the home learning environment when the child starts at a setting.

Discuss and list the opportunities that already exist before a child starts at the setting for practitioners to gain information about the child from the parent.

Ideas might include:

- home visits
- visit to the setting before starting
- booklets about the child filled in by parent
- discussion with a key person
- introductory parents meetings
- settling-in period.

Discuss and list the sort of information that is collected and feed back ideas to the whole group.

Key points to include if not suggested:

- whether a child attends more than one setting
- information from a previous setting
- the child's particular interests and passions
- how the child behaves at home
- who the child spends most time with – who is special for that child
- particular learning styles
- any particular learning needs
- involvement with other professionals.

Questions to discuss in setting groups:

- How is this information used?
- Do we need to collect different kinds of information?
- How are the child's strengths and interests, as identified by the parent, incorporated into plans for provision in our setting?
- Do we really listen to and value what parents have to say to us about their children? How will parents know this?

Note one thing that you can do to make sure that you actively take account of what parents have to tell you about their child to support and extend their learning within the setting. Share ideas with the rest of the group if there is more than one setting present.

Session 2

Supporting learning experiences within the home learning environment

Research has shown the importance of a high quality home learning environment in giving children an advantage in social and intellectual development, particularly in language skills. It is important to note though that:

'What parents do is more important than who parents are' (Sylva, 2004).

'Research consistently shows that what parents do with their children at home is far more important to their achievement than their social class or level of education' (Desforges, 2003).

So practitioners need to value and respect what goes on at home, and actively support parents in developing a rich learning experience for their children that supports and extends their learning and development.

Small group discussion: Make a list of the types of experiences which you would like to encourage at home.

Share ideas with whole group. Ideas should include:

- sharing books together
- going on visits
- cooking together
- singing songs and learning nursery rhymes
- being outside together – looking at nature

- playing with other children
- counting together
- sharing a conversation
- being creative with paint, mark making tools and materials with different textures.

This will not be the experience of every child. Each family has a different starting point and we need to find out how individual families behave at home and build on this. We need to value what they already do.

Questions to discuss:

How do we tell parents in a respectful, non-patronising way about the experiences that will make the most difference to their children's outcomes?

How can we value and celebrate what they already do?

How can we help them to ensure that both boys and girls engage in learning experiences at home?

Note one key point to include in action planning.

Session 3

Helping parents to understand how children learn through play

Their own experience of school will have a direct impact on what they think they need to do with their children at home. Practitioners need to help parents understand how children learn through play in the context of warm secure relationships, where adults should be seen as co-players.

List the ways in which each setting already tries to help parents understand about children's learning.

Ideas will include:

- workshops
- parents' evenings
- newsletters
- information on the notice board
- inviting parents into the settings
- informal discussions with a key person
- lending resources to parents to use at home with their child.

Questions to consider and discuss:

- Do all parents in your setting access these types of opportunities?
- How do we monitor this to ensure that all parents are included?
- How do we make sure that parents who are unable to access what we have to offer develop their knowledge of children's learning and development?
- What ways would be meaningful to them as individuals?
- Have we taken parental strengths and interests into account?

Each setting can brainstorm some ideas that might help particular parents in their setting develop a greater understanding about how their child learns.

Capture key points for future action planning.

Session 4

Reviewing children's progress together

Parents should have regular opportunities to review their children's progress, discuss their child's learning with a practitioner and contribute to their child's learning and development profile. The importance of effective two-way communication is key to helping children make the progress they are capable of. The parent will bring an important perspective to the ongoing observational assessment process within an early years setting.

'Assessment must actively engage parents in developing an accurate picture of a child's development' (www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/primary/publications/foundation_stage/creating_picture/creating_pic_0028307.pdf)

Questions for settings to consider and discuss:

- What opportunities are there for parents and practitioners to talk about the child's learning and development in our setting?
- What support do we offer for parents who do not speak or understand English?
- Does the parent have access to their child's records on a regular basis?
- Are there opportunities for parents and children to share these profiles?
- How do we incorporate the parent's viewpoint into the records and into our planning for individual children?
- How can we encourage parents to capture learning at home so that it can be included in the child's profile?

Discuss in setting groups and identify key points that can be changed within setting practice to enable parents to contribute more fully to documenting children's learning and development. Feed back to the whole group.

Final session – Session 5

Take time to reflect on the four parts of PDM Module 2. Identify the main action points that need to be included on your setting action plan in order to bring about improvement in the quality of your provision, with particular regard to engaging parents more effectively.

You will be supported in ensuring these improvements have an impact on children's outcomes through regular visits from your EYC.

PDM: Example THREE

Theme: Enabling Environments

Developing a high quality learning environment, indoors and outdoors, which supports problem solving, reasoning and numeracy

Audience and intended use:

EYCs working with settings and Year 1 staff as appropriate

It is suggested that this PDM takes place in a setting or classroom that exemplifies a rich learning environment, indoors and out.

Aims:

- To focus on the importance of the indoor and outdoor learning environments in supporting Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy (PSRN)
- To identify those features of the learning environments which will impact significantly on teaching and learning.

Training sequences

These notes are for guidance only. Session leaders should take careful note of the individual circumstances in each setting represented and use the most appropriate materials available and set timings. This PDM consists of one module which could be delivered as a series of sessions. Session leaders will also need to collect books (both adult reference and children's story and information texts), publications, CD-ROMs, visual images and other resources to facilitate discussion and provide examples of good practice. Examples of such materials are the EYFS *Principles into Practice* cards (Ref: 00012-2007DOM-EN) and *Supporting children learning English as an additional language*, (Ref: 00683-2007BKT-EN).

Introduction

This PDM module is intended to guide attendees through a series of experiences which will facilitate the setting's self evaluation related to the development of indoor and outdoor learning environments which support PSRN.

Purpose and key messages

Enabling environments

Practitioners can effectively support PSRN by giving particular attention to:

- recognising the mathematical potential of the outdoor environment
- exploiting the mathematical potential of the indoor environment
- ensuring resources to support Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy are readily available indoors and outdoors.

The learning environment

A rich and varied environment supports children's learning and development. It gives them the confidence to explore and learn in secure and safe, yet challenging, indoor and outdoor spaces.

The outdoor environment

- Being outdoors has a positive impact on children's sense of well-being and helps all aspects of children's development.

- Being outdoors offers opportunities for doing things in different ways and on different scales than when indoors.
- It gives children first-hand experience with weather, seasons and the natural world.
- Outdoor environments offer children freedom to explore, use their senses, and be physically active and exuberant.

The indoor environment

- The indoor environment provides a safe, secure yet challenging space for children.
- The indoor environment contains resources which are appropriate, well maintained and accessible to children.
- Indoor spaces are planned so that they can be used flexibly and an appropriate range of activities is provided.

*EYFS Principles in Practice Card 3.3
Enabling Environments
The Learning Environment*

DCSF May 2008

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

Requirements

Children must be supported in developing their understanding of Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy in a broad range of contexts in which they can explore, enjoy, learn, practise and talk about their developing understanding. They must be provided with opportunities to practise these skills and to gain competence in their use.

Aspects of Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy

Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy is made up of the following aspects:

Numbers as Labels and for Counting – how children gradually know and use numbers and counting in play, and eventually recognise and use numbers reliably, to develop mathematical ideas and to solve problems.

Calculating – how children develop an awareness of the relationship between numbers and amounts and know that numbers can be combined by ‘adding together’ and can be separated by ‘taking away’, and that two or more amounts can be compared.

Shape, Space and Measures – how through talking about shapes and quantities, and developing appropriate vocabulary, children use their knowledge to develop ideas and to solve mathematical problems.

What Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy means for children

- Babies’ and children’s mathematical development occurs as they seek patterns, make connections and recognise relationships through finding out about and working with numbers and counting, with sorting and matching and with shape, space and measures.
- Children use their knowledge and skills in these areas to solve problems, generate new questions and make connections across other areas of learning and development.

*EYFS Principles in Practice Card
Learning and Development
Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy*

DCSF May 2008

Session 1

WARM UP ACTIVITY

Talk to the person next to you about your own play experiences when you were a child.

- What did you do?
- Where did you do it?
- Who did you do it with?
- What did you learn?

Take feedback (it is often difficult to stop conversations).

This may include follow-up questions.

- Who told you what to do?
- Who told you who to play with?
- Who told you the rules/resolved disputes?
- What time did you have to get home?
- What maths do you think that included?

Draw out key points, which may include the following:

- The groups are 'whoever was there' – often mixed ages, boys and girls.
- Many of the experiences were outdoors.
- Time to come home was often 'dinner time' or 'before it gets dark'.
- The experiences/games vary depending on where the children grew up, but often include hands on, physical, messy experiences, including collecting mini-beasts, digging in dirt, building dens, collecting things, making 'petal perfume', playing games with balls or ropes.
- The rules developed over time and disputes were resolved between the children.
- So much problem solving, reasoning and numeracy went on – counting, sorting, comparing, classifying, noticing and creating patterns.

Remind attendees that young children today also have a right to immerse themselves in their own play and be responsible for their own learning, indoors and outdoors. Emphasise the role of the key person in providing a stimulating, challenging, secure indoor and outdoor environment which supports all six areas of learning and development, including PSRN.

Activity One

If the PDM is taking place in a setting which exemplifies a rich indoor and outdoor learning environment, then go on a 'learning walk' in pairs, each starting in different parts of the setting.

Use handout 1 – Audit of the Learning Environment as a starting point.

Alternatively, attendees should work together in pairs/small groups with colleagues from their own setting to discuss and begin to complete the audit.

Take feedback about positive aspects of the environment.

Draw out key points which could include the following:

- The outdoor environment should not be a replication of the indoor environment – it should enhance and extend indoor learning, e.g. if children are exploring repeating pattern indoors through mark-making, threading beads, making patterns with natural objects, outdoors they could be making large-scale movement patterns, making patterns with crates, tyres and buckets or making sound patterns beating dustbin lids and pans with wooden spoons. Outdoor maths will often be louder or messier, include more movement, be on a larger scale or include the natural or built environment.
- PSRN reference areas or workshops are essential indoors – children and practitioners need to know where things are. Children should be encouraged to use resources from the workshop in other areas of provision/learning zones and return them. Meaningful, relevant number lines are an essential part of the area – particularly if they include photographic images of children or real items which interest children as clues. The outdoor area should include number lines and height charts which reflect the outdoor area and the environment.
- Resources which support PSRN do not have to be expensive. Practitioners can develop collections of resources, in collaboration with families and community members. Emphasise the importance of maintaining these resources. Remind attendees of the importance of play with large cardboard boxes, blankets and rugs – *what does it feel like to be inside or under something?* Children can find out by doing and being.
- Emphasise the importance of high quality role-play indoors and outdoors, which is based on children's current interests and needs and can be developed with the children. If there is time, create a list together of indoor and outdoor role-play scenarios which are particularly suited to supporting PSRN for example:
 - Indoor** – assorted shops, different restaurants and cafés, post office, health centre, veterinary surgery, baby clinic;
 - Outdoor** – building site, garden centre, pizza delivery, train station, fruit and vegetable stall.

Where possible, share a short PowerPoint presentation with more images of rich learning environments which support PSRN – this is particularly important if the PDM is not taking place in a setting which exemplifies a rich learning environment indoors and outdoors that supports PSRN.

Session two

Activity 1

Working together in pairs, or small groups, plan a role-play scenario, indoors or outdoors using handout 2 – Developing Role Play Scenarios to support PSRN. Share the plans with the whole group and discuss/adapt plans as appropriate.

Practitioners could carry out this plan in their setting, recording the children's responses and bringing their observations to a third session for presentation and discussion with the whole group.

Activity 2

Either hand out one small box/container to each attendee, filled with a few 'magic beans', or pass around one box for everyone to shake and guess the contents.

Talk about the 'magic beans'³ – how could they be used?

Emphasise the importance of curiosity, direct experience, fun and creativity in children's learning and the vital role of practitioners in developing indoor and outdoor learning environments which foster positive dispositions and attitudes that underpin all learning.

³ Create 'magic beans' by spreading a pack of dried butter beans on several sheets of newspaper, well away from children, preferably outdoors or in a very well ventilated room. Spray one side of the beans with a non-toxic paint – gold works particularly well.

Handout 1

Learning Environment Audit

Developing Indoor and Outdoor Learning Environments to support PSRN

Wherever possible, ensure that all members of the staff team contribute to this audit. It can be completed as part of a PDM.

Providing a wide and diverse range of high quality learning experiences and indoor and outdoor environments which support PSRN is vital. It may be useful to audit the learning environment using the following guidelines.

	In place	Area for development	Comments
<p>The overall environment – indoor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the setting bright, well organised and inviting to walk into? ● Are the resources and working areas clearly labelled – with words, pictures or real objects where appropriate? ● Do the resources reflect all families and cultures? ● Is there a number line which reflects children’s interests displayed at child height – with picture clues where appropriate? ● Do displays include typed and handwritten numerals, by both adults and children? ● Do the displays celebrate children’s achievements in PSRN and support children’s future learning? ● Are there interactive displays/ investigation areas which promote children’s exploration of PSRN? 			

	In place	Area for development	Comments
<p>PSRN workshop/zone/reference area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are there story and information texts which support numbers for labels and for counting, calculating and shapes, space and measures? ● Is there a height chart showing standard and/or non-standard measures? ● Is there a meaningful number line at child height? ● Are resources clearly labelled so that children can access them independently? ● Is there a wide range of natural resources e.g. pebbles, fir cones, shells? ● Is there a wide range of commercially produced resources to support exploration of number and calculating? ● Is there a wide range of commercially produced resources to support exploration of shape, space and measures? ● Can children access games independently e.g. lotto, snap, dominoes, track games? ● Are there 'collections' of things for children to investigate, sort and sequence e.g. boxes, buttons, socks, coins, beads, keys? ● Is there a display which draws attention to numerals in the environment/ everyday life? ● Can children display their early attempts at recording independently? ● Is there a washing line at child height so that children can peg numerals in the correct order? 			

	In place	Area for development	Comments
<p>Other areas of provision/learning zones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Are resources that support PSRN high profile in all areas of provision/learning zones? ● Are children encouraged to use resources from the PSRN workshop/ area to support their learning in other areas of provision? ● Are there opportunities for children to match 3D objects to 2D silhouettes in storage e.g. water play, sand play? ● Are there books/cards with words of number songs and rhymes in the music and sound making area? With number props e.g. five frogs, ten in a bed? ● Are there empty boxes and packaging, reclaimed materials, materials to encourage exploration of pattern in the creative workshop? ● Are books which support PSRN high profile in the book area With story props? ● Are numerals explicit in small world, imaginative play e.g. road signs? ● Are there practical, hands on opportunities to explore shape, space and measures e.g. sand, water, play dough, clay? ● Does the large block area/small construction area have visual images of things children can construct, photos of children's constructions and a range of construction equipments, including reclaimed materials? 			

	In place	Area for development	Comments
<p>The outdoor learning environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does the outdoor environment complement and extend the indoor environment? ● Is the area well organised, inviting and challenging? ● Are there opportunities for children to be physical? ● Are there opportunities for children to be messy on a large-scale? ● Are there opportunities for children to explore PSRN through movement e.g. obstacle courses, den making, travelling games, tracks, construction on a large-scale? ● Can children access resources and return them independently? ● Is there a washing line at child height so that children can peg numerals in the correct order or socks/T-shirts to make repeating patterns? ● Are there opportunities to explore drawing shapes, patterns or numerals on a large-scale e.g. chalking on floors, large scale chalk boards, easels, 'painting' with water and decorators' brushes? ● Are there permanent playground markings or chalked markings which support PSRN e.g. shapes, numerals, tracks? ● Is there a number line and height chart? ● Are there small resources and 'targets' to support scoring e.g. basketball hoop, beanbags, quoits, skittles, knock-down cans? ● Are there resources to support the use of tallies or scoring? 			

Handout 2

Developing role-play to support PSRN

Role-play scenario: (indoors/outdoors?)

Specific resources to support PSRN:

Key resources (which may not be maths based):

Adult input (including specific vocabulary and questions):

WHEN PLANNING A ROLE-PLAY THEME, CONSIDER CREATING A 'ROLE-PLAY BOX' TO STORE EVERYTHING – THIS WILL INCLUDE KEY RESOURCES TO USE ON ANOTHER OCCASION, PHOTOS OF THE SCENARIO, AND A FULL LIST OF EVERYTHING USED THIS TIME, INCLUDING WRITING FRAMEWORKS AND SIGNS.

PDM: Example FOUR

Theme: Effective Transition

Module 1 Developing thinking about Transition

Module 2 Transition across the day: meeting the needs of the well-travelled child

Module 3 Moving on within the day care setting

OR

Module 4 Moving on across the Early Years Foundation Stage and into Year 1
in school settings

These modules could form a series of one-hour sessions or be combined into a day course/inset day.

EYCs, leaders or facilitators should identify which are the most relevant to the setting after Module 1.

Audience and intended use:

EYCs and setting leaders working with day nurseries, pre-schools, childminders, independent schools and maintained nursery schools, nursery classes, Reception and Year 1 teachers

Aims:

- To increase understanding of transition issues and impact on children's welfare and development
- To identify good practice in transition across settings, within settings and across individual children's day-to-day experience
- To motivate practitioners to review their current practice and move towards a better experience for all children
- To foster closer relationships between parents and other providers to aid children's welfare and development
- To lead practitioners in recognising transition as long-term embedded practice, and not just a 'one-off' event

Training sequences

These notes are for guidance only; session leaders should take careful note of the individual circumstances in each setting represented and use the most appropriate materials available. Session leaders will also need to collect books, publications, CD-ROMs, etc. to facilitate discussion and provide examples of good practice. Examples of such material are the EYFS *Principles into Practice* cards (Ref: 00012-2007DOM-EN) and *Confident, capable and creative: supporting boy's achievements* (Ref: 00682-2007BKT-EN).

Module 1: Developing thinking about Transition

Introduction from session leader (5 mins)

Key points:

- Transition is a normal part of everyday life, and we are in transition situations throughout our own lives.
- Transition for young children needs to be seen as an ongoing process, not just as an event.
- Good transition experiences develop children who make strong attachments, can cope with and relish change, and are excited by new opportunities.
- A setting with well thought out and executed transition processes indicates a setting with a genuine understanding of the 'unique child' as a factor in achieving quality for all.

Activity 1

Warm up (10 mins)

Personal transition experiences

- With a partner, share a 'starting somewhere new' experience of your own: moving house; job; school; club; gym! Between the two of you, identify the good and bad aspects of your experiences.
- Tutor collects a few feedback comments; look for examples of:
 - knowing someone already there
 - visiting beforehand
 - having information in advance, especially with photos
 - good written information
 - well constructed induction programmes.

From this input, identify some key principles and good practice for effective transition

Activity 2

Transitions within the setting, reviewing current practice (45 mins)

- Divide participants up into groups of three or four; if there is a large staff group, create groups where there is a mix of staff from baby room, toddler room, etc.
- Ask each group to identify (brainstorm/thought shower) on flipchart paper all the transition points within their setting that children experience.
- Take feedback from all groups; tutor should look for horizontal transitions across the day, i.e. in-and-out of the setting on a daily basis to other providers, as well as the more expected transition points.
- Give each group a specific situation to work with that relates to the audience, for example;
 - a baby starting day nursery
 - a toddler moving to the preschool room
 - a child moving from a childminder to a pre-school on a daily basis
 - starting school from pre-school
 - moving to Year 1 class from Reception in a large school (three form entry)
 - moving to a Year 1 group in a small school with mixed EYFS/Year 1/Year2 class.

Task for each group

Identify aspects of transition and how the setting currently manages.

Ask groups to consider in their responses the following:

- links with parents, including issues of data transfer
- providing links to the new situation before transition
- key person issues
- activities to support children's move from one situation to another.

At each stage, look for ways to improve the current situation.

Feedback

Session leader to identify themes and common areas and to identify good practice already demonstrated and new ideas to consider.

Next steps

Session leader to help setting identify:

- areas of strength in transition already in place
- areas to develop considered a priority from discussion
- action plans process so that tasks are allocated.

Close



Module 2: Transition across the day: meeting the needs of the well-travelled child

Introduction from session leader (5 mins)

Key points:

- Many children experience several transitions across the day or week on a regular basis, where family need and choice involves the use of different kinds of early education and care.
- Although there is a need to ensure that all providers meet the requirements of the EYFS to a high standard, there is a corresponding need to ensure that children's differing needs throughout the day are met. There is no expectation that all settings will provide an identical service.
- The challenge for practitioners is to find a manageable system for keeping different providers in touch on a daily or weekly basis, transferring information that will support the child's day.

Activity 1

Warm up – brief individual activity (15 mins)

Aim

- To identify our different needs and moods across the day.

Each participant should look at a time-line of a typical working day, to identify and review, and their activity levels across the waking day.

This is to focus on our differing needs and personal preferences; participants to identify whether they are 'larks or owls;' chill out time; times where they feel sluggish, times when they know they are most effective.

Ideally, represent this pictorially as a time line across the day and display to compare with others.

Activity 2

Exploring transitions across the day; the well-travelled child (20 mins)

- Divide participants up into groups of three or four; if there is a large staff group, create groups where there is a mix of staff from baby room, toddler room, etc.
- Ask each group to identify on flipchart paper examples they are aware of where children attend more than one setting across a day or week. (In a day nursery where the babies and youngest children may attend for the entire time in the setting, examples outside the setting should be explored.) In this session, staff should also consider transition between the setting and the home.

Feed back to the whole group.

Make sure the following are identified (include others identified by staff);

- home to childminder to pre-school to childminder to home
- home to childminder to school to after-school care to home
- home to setting to school to setting to home.

Activity 3

Walk a mile in my shoes (20 mins)

- Ask each group to take one of the examples, and in the eyes of the child 'walk' through the day, focusing on the differences between the different providers. Ask the groups to identify those aspects that will make this a poor or upsetting experience.

Feedback

Ensure the following are identified:

- too many adults to relate to
- no adults to relate to;
- differing sets of rules/expectations of behaviour
- getting used to more than one building, toilets, equipment, resources, etc.
- repeating the same activities
- having to tell the same information over and over again (child/parent)
- being somewhere where my friends aren't (they are in the other setting)
- being expected to be interested in activities all day, when I just want to curl up on this cushion with my teddy for a quick snooze and watch Bob the Builder.

Ask groups to go through the list and identify a solution to the issues raised.

(Some could start at the bottom of the list to ensure 100% coverage.)

Task in pairs (to be completed in the session, or before the next session for discussion):

Each pair to design a simple manageable format to travel between providers with the child over one week. Provide for discussion an 'empty' proforma and a completed one showing what you consider to be relevant information.

Note for tutor

Look for a simple format that gives equal space for each provider, no bigger than one A4 sheet for a week.

Look for entries that identify children's emotional responses to experiences, rather than just information about activities.

Ensure it is a manageable system.

Close

Module 3: Moving on within the day care setting

Introduction from session leader (5mins)

Key points:

- Good transition within a setting should be ongoing embedded practice across the setting.
- Transition between rooms should be decided on the basis of individual children's developmental and learning needs.
- If practitioners are involved in building or designing accommodation for day care, consideration should be given to the opportunity to create common areas where different age groups can mingle. This will foster good transition through mixing with other staff and children. Also, mixed use of outside areas could perform this function.

Activity 1

Where are we now? (20 mins)

Ask practitioners to work in 'room' teams; identify the transition practice in place when children move into and out of your room. List details on a flipchart.

Display and share! – is there continuity of understanding and practice across the setting?

Identify and explore any inconsistencies, and try to resolve them.

Activity 2

Case studies (30 mins)

Divide the participants into threes, with representatives from two or more different rooms in each group.

Ask them to construct the 'perfect' transition for these situations.

1. A six-month-old baby, attending the nursery for the first time. The mother is going back to work reluctantly, and is very anxious.
2. A 10-month-old who is walking at an early age and is physically ready to move into the next room. However, this child took a long time to settle, and is very attached to two of the staff in the baby room.
3. This child needs to move into age 3+ rooms, because of age, friendship groups and general learning opportunities. However, the staff have concerns about the maturity of the child, which is affecting the personal, social and emotional development of the other children.
4. One of your setting's children, who is leaving to join the Reception class of the nearby school with friends, has spent long periods in hospital. This accounts for an unusually limited pre-school experience.

Challenge for facilitators

These have been written deliberately with the gender of the child not given; be on your guard for boys and girls being treated differently, and challenge this.

Put on your 'business head' and challenge any 'uneconomic suggestions' (e.g. having extra staff, visits.) Encourage participants to argue for quality, continuity and meeting the needs of the unique child.

Next steps

Take feedback from each group and highlight how discussions could be captured and translated into the setting's practice.

Module 4: Moving on across the Early Years Foundation Stage and into Year 1 in school settings

For maximum impact, this session should include EYFS teachers and practitioners, Year 1 teachers and support staff, and representatives of the senior leadership team.

Introduction from session leader (5 mins)

Key points:

- Transitions within any school are just as relevant to children's emotional and cognitive development as those that take place in other settings.
- Practitioners need to be aware that the most stressful times for children new into school, are not experienced in the classroom, but at break, lunchtime, and whole-school times such as assemblies.
- There are a number of nationally produced support documents and online information available to support continuity of learning from Reception to Year 1: *Continuing the learning journey*, NAA; *Early Years Evaluating School Performance*, see www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/eyfs/resources/downloads/qca-05-1590_cont_lj.pdf, as well as many locally produced documents to support schools in this area. (See publications list at end of this module.)

Activity 1

Warm up

Pair activity: auditing current practice (15 mins)

Ask candidates, in pairs, to identify all the relevant transition points up to the end of Year 1, and the current practices in place to aid transition at each of these points.

Change partners and cross-check to see if there is a common understanding across the school and if there are accepted practices in place.

(**Facilitator:** look for 'into school from other settings', 'nursery to reception', and where appropriate, 'Reception into Year 1'.)

Feed back and chart answers, under:

happens all the time, some of the time, in one class only.

Identify some key areas where there is agreement for whole-school practice.

Activity 2

Identifying best practice (45 mins approx or as agreed by tutor)

This is a jigsaw activity; each working group will work on a separate topic, then split and reconvene in groups where there will be one member from each of the working groups to share their findings.

Divide the group into smaller groups. (Groups of three, four or five work best.) Each group will work on one of the case studies. You will need to provide further resources to prompt extended thinking and fresh ideas. If you are aware of good or unusual practice in your locality or elsewhere, write it up and make it available.

Case studies

Look at one of these situations and identify good transition practice, including curriculum issues to meet the needs of:

1. the child
2. the parents
3. the 'outgoing' setting:
 - moving from pre-school to nursery class;
 - moving from full day care to Reception class and childminder at the beginning and end of the day
 - moving from Reception to Year 1 for a high achieving September born child
 - moving from Reception to Year 1 for an August born boy.

After the agreed amount of time (as decided by the tutor, depending on depth required and resources available), rearrange the groups so that there is one from each case study in each new group. (The easiest way to achieve this is for each group to have a number and then like numbers regroup together, (i.e. all the 1's, 2's, 3's, etc.)

This should be followed by discussion and time in each group for all cases studies to be presented.

Activity 3

Transferring the learning data to Year 1

For this activity, you will need either mock-up data from a setting or anonymous Foundation Stage profile data from a real class.

The data need to show the individual scores of each child at point level and the number of children scoring 6 or more in each scale.

1. Give out copies of the data to participants, who are working in small groups. Ask each group to look at the set of data for the whole class and discuss what it would signify to the Year 1 teacher receiving it, and how would this affect the curriculum for at least the first half-term.
2. Choose two children (data previously 'doctored' by the tutor to show high scores but missing crucial scale points). Ask participants to discuss the learning needs of these two children and how they can be best met in a Year 1 class.

General feedback should then be followed by action planning for staff, with relevant timescales, resource allocation, monitoring and evaluation systems in place.

Close

Useful publications to support the PDMs

PDM: Example TWO

Theme: Parents as partners – exploring parental engagement

Confident, capable and creative: supporting boys' achievements. Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage, DCSF, 2007 (Reference: 00682-2007BKT-EN)

Parents' Early Years and Learning (PEAL): www.peal.org.uk

Parents as Partners in Early Learning case studies, DCSF, 2008 (Reference: 00196-2008PCK-EN)

Playing and learning together, DCSF, 2007 (Reference: 00671-2007DVD-EN) – a DVD of practical examples of how parents and carers can get involved in their children's early learning, building on work with parents, carers and practitioners. Also with subtitles and audio in the following languages:

Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu (Reference: 00111-2008DVD-EN); Albanian, Bulgarian, Czech, Romanian, Turkish (Reference: 00109-2008DVD-EN); Chinese, French, Polish, Portuguese, Somali, Spanish, Vietnamese (Reference: 00108-2008DVD-EN) e. *Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage*, DCSF, 2007 (Reference: 00683-2007BKT-EN)

The Early Years Foundation Stage: setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five, DCSF, May 2008 (Reference: 00261-2008PCK-EN), principles into practice cards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4

PDM: Example THREE

Theme: Enabling environments

Learning through Landscapes: www.ltl.org.uk

The Early Years Foundation Stage: setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five. DCSF, May 2008 (Reference: 00261-2008PCK-EN), principles into practice cards 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 (particularly Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy)

PDM: Example Four


Theme: Effective transition


Seamless Transitions – Supporting Continuity in Young Children's Learning, QCA, (Reference: 0267-2006PCK-EN) leaflets and a CD-ROM.


Appendix 1


Self Review Audit of non-negotiables for early years settings requiring improvement


Format 1

<h2 style="color: #0070C0;">1. Securing high quality environments for learning</h2>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting the needs of each unique child ● Supporting all areas of learning and development 	<p>Links to Ofsted SEF Section 3</p>	<p>Judgements and evidence – what is the impact of this on the learning and development of the children?</p>
<p>Key questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is the progress of children of different ages, developmental stages and interests supported through the learning environment? (EYFS 1.1, 3.3) ● How are all the EYFS areas of learning and development appropriately supported through the learning environment? (EYFS 3.2, 4.4) ● How are all areas of learning supported by activities and provision both indoors and outdoors? (EYFS 4.4) ● What is the balance of adult-led and freely chosen or child-initiated activities? Is it appropriate? (EYFS 2.3, 4.1) ● How does provision ensure every child is included? (EYFS 1.2, 3.2) ● Are all areas of provision well used by children – how do you know? (EYFS 3.3) ● How have you changed provision over the last year to respond to the needs and interests of the children? (EYFS 3.1, 3.2) ● How is the progress of children of different ages, developmental stages and interests supported through planned and ongoing (informal?) interaction with adults? (EYFS 2.3, 3.1) ● Are children able to use their home language in play and learning? How does the provision support opportunities for all children to develop English? (EYFS 1.2) ● Do you have an approach/policy for display? How do children and adults engage with displays? (EYFS 3.3) ● How effective is the Behaviour Management Policy? How is it monitored and evaluated? (EYFS 1.3, 2.1) 		
<p>Areas for further development/Next steps</p>		

<h2 style="color: #0070C0;">2. Supporting progress and learning</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning ● The quality of the adult support for children's learning experiences ● Assessment 	<p style="text-align: center; color: #0070C0;">Links to Ofsted SEF Sections 3 & 4</p> 
<h3 style="color: #0070C0;">Key questions</h3>	<h3 style="color: #0070C0;">Judgements and evidence – what is the impact of this on the learning and development of the children?</h3>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do staff plan for the EYFS six areas of learning and development? (EYFS 3.1, 4.4) ● How do practitioners use assessments to inform their planning on a day-to-day basis? How does the management know this is happening?(EYFS 3.1) ● How is the effectiveness of planning monitored? (EYFS 3.1) ● How are children not making appropriate progress identified? What is done to support these children? How does the management know this is happening? (EYFS 1.1, 2.3) ● How do adults talk with children and support them in extending their communication, vocabulary, comprehension and learning? (EYFS 2.3, 4.3) ● How confident are adults in using assessments to support planning, and in planning effectively to support each unique child's progress and development? (EYFS 1.1, 2.3) ● Do all staff members know what the age-related expectations in Development Matters are for the children in the setting? (EYFS 1.1) ● Do all adults have a clear view of their responsibilities and role in supporting children's learning? (EYFS 2.3, 3.1, 4.2) ● How clear are all staff as to data collected about individual children and its purpose? (EYFS 3.1) ● How are assessments made to ensure children's progress towards the Early Learning Goals? (EYFS 3.1) ● How are all adults who interact with a child enabled to contribute to the assessment of that child's progress? (EYFS 3.1) ● How is consistency in the understanding of assessment criteria assured? How do managers monitor and support this? (EYFS 3.1) ● How confident are all adults in using observation to assess children's progress? (EYFS 3.1) 	<p>Areas for further development/Next steps</p>

<h3>3. Strengthening leadership for learning</h3>	<p>Links to Ofsted SEF Sections 5 & 6</p> 	<p>Judgements and evidence – what is the impact of this on the learning and development of the children?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Legal framework ● Planning for improvement ● Leading learning 	<p>Key questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does the ratio of qualified staff match the legal requirements for the age and number of children in the setting? ● Does your setting have a QTS/EYPS? How does this role support quality in the setting? ● How well are all staff trained for and confident with EYFS? ● Are all children assigned a key person? Does the key person have the support and knowledge to carry out this role? (EYFS 2.4) ● How does the current improvement plan for the setting arise from an audit of current practice and needs? ● How effectively does the improvement plan set out the next steps and identify timescales and evaluation procedures? ● Who is involved in creating and monitoring the improvement plan? ● How closely does the allocation of resources and staff match the priorities as identified in the improvement plan? ● How do the managers and leaders of the setting rate the quality of planning, learning and teaching? ● Who monitors planning, learning and teaching? ● Is planning consistent with EYFS? How does it match the needs of the children in the setting? ● How is planning done? Who does the planning? What resources are available to support planning? ● How is planning shared with any adults not involved in the initial planning? ● How do you ensure that all children are supported, stretched and challenged? ● How are adults deployed to support learning? Do they have the appropriate training and skills to carry out their roles? How is the work of all adults monitored? 	<p>Areas for further development/Next steps</p>


<h2 style="color: #0070C0;">4. Developing practitioner learning</h2>	<p style="text-align: right; color: #0070C0;">Links to Ofsted SEF Section 5</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff confidence and ability ● Training and continuing professional development (PD) 	<p>Key questions</p>	<p>Judgements and evidence – what is the impact of this on the learning and development of the children?</p>
	<p>Staff confidence and ability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do all adults understand child development so that they can identify key progress and next steps? ● Do all adults have a clear view of their role and responsibilities in supporting children's learning? ● How confident are all adults in supporting children's development and challenging their learning? <p>Staff development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How are the training needs of staff identified and met? ● Is there an audit of staff training needs? Who is responsible for this? ● What are the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and how is CPD planned to respond? ● How are the CPD needs of individuals balanced with curriculum development priorities? ● How is CPD provided in a variety of ways to meet the differing needs and learning styles of staff? ● How is attendance at training disseminated/monitored? ● How is the effectiveness of CPD measured? ● How does CPD link to performance management? 	<p>Areas for further development/Next steps</p>


<p>5. Facilitating partnerships for learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing a learning culture ● Collaborating beyond the setting <p>Key questions</p> <p>Home (EYFS 2.2):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is information about the progress of individual children shared with parents/carers satisfied with this process? How do you know? ● How do parents/carers contribute information and concerns about their children's learning? ● How does the setting explain its approaches to supporting the learning of young children with parents/carers? (e.g. <i>how to support the development of oral language and phonological awareness</i>)? <p>Other settings (EYFS 3.4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How is information shared between all practitioners who work with a child, both within the setting and between settings? ● How do you ensure that learning is consistent for a child accessing provision in more than one setting across a week? ● How do you prepare children for points of transition? (e.g. <i>home/setting, setting/school</i>)? ● Do you investigate and share good practice and CPD opportunities with other settings? <p>Other agencies (EYFS 3.4):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do you involve other agencies to support children (and their families) when you identify concerns about children's progress? ● How is the impact of this collaboration monitored? <p>Areas for further development/Next steps</p>	<p>Links to Ofsted SEF Section 5</p> <p>Judgements and evidence – what is the impact of this on the learning and development of the children?</p>	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------


Appendix 2


Self Review Audit of non-negotiables for early years settings requiring improvement


Format 2

		Y	P	N	DK
<p>1. Securing high quality environments for learning</p> <p>Key questions: <i>How do you know? What is your evidence?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meeting the needs of each unique child ● Supporting all areas of learning and development  <p>Links to Ofsted SEF Section 3</p>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is the progress of children of different ages, developmental stages and interests supported through the learning environment? (EYFS 1.1, 3.3) ● Are all the EYFS areas of learning and development appropriately supported through the learning environment? (EYFS 3.2, 4.4) ● Are there activities and provision available for all areas of learning both indoors and outdoors? (EYFS 4.4) ● Is there a balance of adult-led and freely chosen or child-initiated activities? (EYFS 2.3, 4.1) ● Are all areas of provision well used by children – how do you know? (EYFS 3.3) ● Is the progress of children of different ages, developmental stages and interests supported through planned and ongoing (informal?) interaction with adults? (EYFS 2.3, 3.1) ● Does provision ensure every child is included? (EYFS 1.2, 3.2) ● Have you changed provision over the last year to respond to the needs/ interests of the children? (EYFS 3.1, 3.2) ● Are children able to use their home language in play and learning? Does the provision support opportunities for all children to develop English? (EYFS 1.2) ● Do you have an approach/policy for display? Do children and adults engage effectively with displays? (EYFS 3.3) ● Is the Behaviour Management Policy effective? Is it monitored and evaluated? (EYFS 1.3, 2.1) 					
<p>What is the impact of the learning environment and provision on the learning and development of the children?</p>					
<p>Areas for further development/Next steps</p>					

		Y	P	N	DK	
2. Supporting progress and learning						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning ● The quality of the adult support for children's learning experiences  <p>Links to Ofsted SEF Sections 3 & 4</p>	<p>Key questions: <i>How do you know? What is your evidence?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do staff plan effectively for the EYFS six areas of learning and development? (EYFS 3.1, 4.4) ● Do practitioners use assessments to inform their planning on a day-to-day basis? (EYFS 3.1) ● Is the effectiveness of planning monitored? (EYFS 3.1) ● Are children not making appropriate progress identified? Is appropriate action taken to support these children? (EYFS 1.1, 2.3) ● Do adults talk with children and support them in extending their communication, vocabulary, comprehension and learning? (EYFS 2.3, 4.3) ● Are adults confident in using assessments to support planning, and to use planning effectively to support each unique child's progress and development? (EYFS 1.1, 2.3) ● Do all staff members know what the age-related expectations in Development Matters are for the children in the setting? (EYFS 1.1) ● Do all adults have a clear view of their role and responsibilities in supporting children's learning? (EYFS 2.3, 3.1, 4.2) ● Are all staff clear as to what data is collected about individual children and its purpose? (EYFS 3.1) ● Do assessments ensure children's progress towards the early learning goals? (EYFS 3.1) ● Are all adults who interact with a child enabled to contribute to the assessment of that child's progress? (EYFS 3.1) ● Is there consistency in the understanding of assessment criteria? Are assessments between all adults consistent? ● Are all adults confident in using observation to assess children's progress? (EYFS 3.1) ● Do managers ensure planning and assessment are appropriate, effective and consistent? 					
	What is the impact of planning, adult support and assessment on the learning and development of the children?					
	Areas for further development/Next steps					

		Y	P	N	DK
3. Strengthening leadership for learning					
<p>Key questions: <i>How do you know? What is your evidence?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the ratio of qualified staff match the legal requirements for the age and number of children in the setting? Does your setting have a QTS or EYPS whose role is clear and effective? Are all staff appropriately trained for EYFS? Are all children assigned a key person? Does the key person have the support and knowledge to carry out this role? (EYFS 2.4) Is the current improvement plan for the setting based on an audit of current practice and needs? Does the current improvement plan set out clearly the next steps and identify timescales and evaluation procedures? Are all relevant people involved in creating and monitoring the improvement plan? Does the allocation of resources and staff match the priorities as identified in the improvement plan? Do the managers and leaders of the setting know what the quality of planning, learning and teaching is? Is there an effective system for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of planning, learning and teaching? Is planning consistent with EYFS? Does planning match the needs of the children in the setting? Are all children appropriately supported, stretched and challenged? Is planning shared with any adults not involved in the initial planning, so that they understand the aims and purpose of the activities? Are adults appropriately deployed to support learning? Do they have the appropriate training and skills to carry out their roles? 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal framework Planning for improvement Leading learning  <p>Links to Ofsted SEF Sections 5 & 6</p>					
What is the impact of leaders and managers on the learning and development of the children?					
Areas for further development/Next steps					

4. Developing practitioner learning		Y	P	N	DK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff confidence and ability ● Training and continuing professional development 	<p>Key questions: <i>How do you know? What is your evidence?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Do all adults have a clear view of their role and responsibilities in supporting children's learning? ● Are all adults confident and able to support children's learning? ● Is there an audit of staff training and development needs? ● Are the training and development needs of all staff identified and met? ● Is CPD planned to respond to the identified strengths and weaknesses of the setting? ● Are the CPD needs of individuals balanced with curriculum development priorities? ● Is CPD provided in a variety of ways to meet the differing needs and learning styles of staff? ● Is attendance at training disseminated/monitored? ● Is the effectiveness of CPD measured? ● How does CPD link to performance management? 				
 <p>Links to Ofsted SEF Section 5</p>					
What is the impact of practitioner confidence and CPD on the learning and development of the children?					
Areas for further development/Next steps					

5. Facilitating partnerships for learning		Y	P	N	DK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Developing a learning culture ● Collaborating beyond the setting  <p>Links to Ofsted SEF Section 5</p>	<p>Key questions: <i>How do you know? What is your evidence?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is information about the progress of individual children shared with parents/carers? ● Are parents/carers satisfied with both the quality of the information they receive about their child's progress and the process by which that information is shared? ● Do parents/carers contribute information and concerns about their children's learning? ● Does the setting explain its approaches to supporting the learning of young children with parents/carers? (e.g. how to support the development of oral language and phonological awareness?) ● Is information shared between all practitioners who work with a child, both within the setting and between settings? ● Is learning consistent for a child accessing provision in more than one setting across a week? ● Are children appropriately prepared for points of transition? (eg. home/setting, setting/school)? ● Do you investigate and share good practice and CPD opportunities with other settings? ● Do you involve other agencies to support children (and their families) when you identify concerns about children's progress? ● Is the impact of collaboration with other agencies monitored? 				
	What is the impact of partnerships with parents, other settings and agencies on the learning and development of the children?				
	Areas for further development/Next steps				

Appendix 3

Focused Improvement Plan

PRIORITY 1: Title of priority							
SUCCESS CRITERIA							
Action	Personnel	Timeline	Resources: including Budget, People	Monitoring: Who, How	Evaluation: How	Impact	

Appendix 4

Feedback Form

It would help us if you could take time to give us your feedback on the tools in this booklet including areas that you would like to see developed further to support the continuous quality improvement agenda.

An electronic feedback form can be found at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/primary/

or email your responses to: earlyyears@nationalstrategies.co.uk.

1. Are further materials/tools on supporting the continuous quality improvement agenda required? If so, what topics would you like to be addressed?

2. Is further guidance specific to leaders and managers required? If so, what would that need to address?

3. How useful are the tools provided in this set of materials, and how could they be improved or added to?

Self Evaluation Audits

Very useful	Useful /Useful in parts	No use
-------------	-------------------------	--------

Focused Improvement Planning

Very useful	Useful/useful in parts	No use
-------------	------------------------	--------

PDMs

Very useful	Useful/useful in parts	No use
-------------	------------------------	--------

Comments

Glossary of terms

CYP – Children and Young People’s Plan

Early Years Consultant (EYC) – a person employed by the LA to provide support and challenge to ensure effective implementation of the EYFS Framework, high standards of provision and continuous quality improvement by early years providers.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) – the learning and development requirements and welfare requirements that early years providers must comply with.

Early Years Outcomes Duty (EYOD) – the duty placed on LAs by the Childcare Act (2006) to improve the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes of all young children and to reduce inequalities.

Early years provider – a person or setting supplying early years provision, for example, a childminder, nursery, or school. This includes any person on the Early Years Register, and any school (maintained or independent) offering early years provision. A company, committee or group may constitute a registered person.

Early years provision – the provision of learning, development and care for a young child.

National Strategies Early Years team – the fieldforce appointed by the DCSF to offer support and challenge to local authorities with regard to the early years.

Ofsted – Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools in England. An independent, non-ministerial government department, responsible for the arrangement and the inspection of a range of education and children’s services, and for the inspection and regulation of early years provision and registered childcare. From April 2007 the organisation’s full title changed to the Office for Standards in education, Children’s Services and Skills, but it continues to be known as Ofsted.

Parents – mothers, fathers, legal guardians and the primary carers of looked-after children. There may also be other significant adults in children’s lives and other relatives who look after them.

Practitioner – any adult who works with children in a setting.

Quality improvement (QI) – the process of raising the quality of experiences enjoyed by children and young people and their families in a whole setting. It is therefore a journey towards ever higher quality, involving teamwork, commitment and some thorough self-examination of practice.

Quality assurance – a specific type of quality improvement, which provides recognition that an individual setting has made real progress against a set of agreed standards and has achieved an accredited level or stage.

School – for the purposes of this document, refers to maintained schools, independent schools and non-maintained special schools.

Setting – any out-of-home provider of early years provision for children from birth to five, including childminders, local authority nurseries, nursery or early years centres, children’s centres, playgroups, pre-schools, schools in the independent, private and voluntary sectors and maintained schools.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) – the responsibilities of the SENCO may include ensuring liaison with parents and other professionals in respect of children with special educational needs, and advising and supporting other practitioners in the setting.

Young child – the Childcare Act (2006) defines a child as being a ‘young child’ from birth until the end of the month of August following his or her fifth birthday.

Acknowledgements

SPEEL Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning, published by the DfES © Crown copyright 2008. Used with kind permission.

Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years, published by the DfES © Crown copyright. Used with kind permission.

Extract from *Croydon case study*, courtesy of Croydon Local Authority © Croydon Local Authority. Used with kind permission.

Extract from *Merton case study*, courtesy of Merton Local Authority © Merton Local Authority. Used with kind permission.

Extract from *Trafford Case study*, Trafford Children and Young People Service © Trafford Local Authority. Used with kind permission.

Audience: Early Years Practitioners and Early Years Consultants

Date of issue: 09-2008

Ref: **00669-2008BKT-EN**

Copies of this publication may be available from:

www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications

You can download this publication and obtain further information at: **www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk**

Copies of this publication may be available from:

DCSF Publications

PO Box 5050

Sherwood Park

Annesley

Nottingham NG15 0DJ

Tel 0845 60 222 60

Fax 0845 60 333 60

Textphone 0845 60 555 60

email: dcsf@prolog.uk.com

© Crown copyright 2008

Published by the Department for Children,
Schools and Families

Extracts from this document may be reproduced for non-commercial research, education or training purposes on the condition that the source is acknowledged as Crown copyright, the publication title is specified, it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context.

The permission to reproduce Crown copyright protected material does not extend to any material in this publication which is identified as being the copyright of a third party.

For any other use please contact
licensing@opsi.gov.uk
www.opsi.gov.uk/click-use/index.htm

80% recycled

This publication is printed
on 80% recycled paper



When you have finished with
this publication please recycle it

department for
children, schools and families