

## **Reflective practice and peer observations**

All childcare professionals strive to provide the best possible care and learning opportunities for the children in their setting. Reflective practice can be supported by undertaking peer observations which help to maintain and continually improve practitioners working practices. It is the process of thinking about and analysing your own practice, whilst challenging yourself to develop your working practice further that supports effective teaching and learning practices in being maintained.

### **Peer observations should:**

- Celebrate your strengths, skills and knowledge.
- Support you in identifying areas for personal development.
- Give you professional responsibility to improve your practice.
- Enable you to consider why you work with children and families in a certain way.
- Enable you to introduce new ways of working.
- Enable you to develop professional relationships with your colleagues (if you are a childminder, you can ask another childminder to observe you).
- Enable you to develop your working practices.
- Be embedded into systems for staff supervision and mentoring.
- Support managers to identify common themes for strengths of the staff team and areas for development. These can be further explored during staff meetings and training or mentoring identified.
- Provide good evidence for Ofsted and the setting's Self-Evaluation processes.

### **Peer observations help you to:**

- Meet all of the children's needs.
- Increase children's self-esteem.
- Provide an enabling environment (In a group setting of 2 or more professionals the observations can be reviewed to support the development of a particular area of practice)
- Increase your confidence and self-esteem.
- Identify your strengths and areas for development.
- Set personal targets, whilst identifying any training requirements.

### **What is a peer observation?**

- A colleague observes you and your interactions during a nominated activity (usually planned but it can be unplanned) for a short period of time.
- The observer should be discreet and objective.
- The observer offers feedback at an elected time as soon as possible after the observation.

- Through the feedback discussion or written report you both reflect upon the observation and agree any identified development areas.
- Observations should be carried out at different times of the day and during the range of different activities available to gain a balanced overview of the setting.
- Peer observations should be undertaken using a set format (to ensure consistency).
- It is a learning process, different people observe the same thing differently.

Links to Ofsted documents:

**The Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014):**

Point 3.21 page 20 'Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of the children'

Point 3.22 page 20 'supervisions should provide opportunities for staff to, receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness'

**Early years inspection handbook:**

Point 25 page 7

'The provider must demonstrate how they will evaluate their service and strive for continuous improvement'

Point 35 page 10

'Inspectors should tell the provider of the relevant documentation and information they are likely to need to access includes: information about the supervision of staff'

Point 17 page 16

'Joint observations enable the inspector to gain an insight into the effectiveness of the provision'

**The Common inspection framework: education, skills and early years:**

Point 28 page 12

'evaluate the quality of the provision and outcomes through robust self-assessment, taking account of users' views, and use the findings to develop capacity for suitable improvement'

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