

Improving quality for children

Quality improvement tool for Early Years Foundation Stage providers
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Early Years Foundation Stage best practice

Part 1: Guidance Notes



Richmond upon Thames' Early Years Foundation Stage best practice vision statement

- Strengthening leadership for play learning
- Developing practitioner play learning
- Facilitating partnerships for play learning and development
- Supporting progress, play learning and development
- Securing high quality environments for children's play learning and development

Play underpins all development and learning for young children. Most children play spontaneously, although some may need adult support, and it is through play that they develop intellectually, creatively, physically, socially and emotionally.

Practice Guidance for the EYFS p7 1.17

Play is a process that is freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.

Playwork Principle

This document illustrates best practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

There are references from key documents and research at the start of each section, these statements and the photographs are included to stimulate discussion and to help you and your staff evaluate the quality of your provision.

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Introduction

These materials are provided to help you (the manager and practitioner) improve the quality of your provision in order to offer the highest quality experiences for all young children. By evaluating your practice on a continuous basis, you can secure the best possible outcomes for the children in your care. The sections are set out in a similar format to Ofsted's self-evaluation form (SEF), so that as you assess the quality of your provision, you can use this information to update your Ofsted SEF. As you complete each section, consider the key elements of high quality provision set out below in the diagram – 'What quality looks like' produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

What quality looks like Settings – What are the key elements of high quality provision?



'Research shows that high quality experiences in the early years, including a good home learning environment, have a significant positive impact on children's social, emotional and cognitive development and therefore, their progress at school and into adult life. It is vitally important that early years provision is of a consistently high standard, and that providers continually look for ways to improve the quality of learning, development and care they offer.'

Guidance notes for IQC process

'Improving quality for children' (IQC) is an audit toolkit used to support the development of high quality early years provision in London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. This joint evaluation process between the setting and the Early Years and Childcare service aims to promote reflective practice at both practitioner and setting level.

The IQC process and outcome is used to give a transparent indication to setting staff and the Early Years and Childcare service which level of support or training is required. A red, amber, green rating system is used to indicate this. A 'red' rating is often temporary e.g. where there has been a change of management or an urgent action is required.

New Early Years providers

From 2009 it has been a requirement that settings wishing to join the Directory of Providers (DoP) in order to become eligible to receive Nursery Education Grant for three and four years olds, take part in the IQC process. The settings will need to complete all the steps set out below and be rated as 'green' before being accepted on the DoP. As part of the process the EYC will need to observe a session with three and four year old children attending. Where there are not enough children on role, the observation visit may need to be delayed and the process of joining the Directory of Providers will take longer.

Introductory session

Staff from the setting will be invited to an introductory meeting with other providers also using the audit. At least two people should attend this meeting, usually the manager and one other senior member of staff. At this meeting the setting staff will receive the paperwork and the IQC process will be explained in full, in particular Section 3 which relates to the statutory welfare requirements. The Early Years Consultants (EYCs) will be available to answer queries and will book a visit to the setting.

Completing the document back in the setting

The staff team should spend time looking at sections 1 - 9 of the IQC document and plan how they will manage the audit (see appendix 1). The aim should be for **all** staff to be included in the process and for the team to use it as an opportunity to review what is working well and what isn't and to update procedures and policies if necessary.

The first 8 sections are linked to the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework (EYFS) and Ofsted's self evaluation form (SEF). Settings are advised to begin by looking at Section 3 which relates to the welfare of the children and policies and procedures. Section 9 links to the government's Early Years Outcome Duty – you are not RAG rated against this section. The local authorities 'Children and Young People's Plan' sets out to meet this duty and your involvement in supporting the commitment to achieve better outcomes for all children in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

In sections 1-8 there are key statements relating to high quality early years provision against which you can audit the quality of your setting. These key statements are designed to focus on your capacity to support children's play, learning and development. You must agree, as a whole team, where your setting's practice is in relation to these key statements. To the right of the key statements are three columns. In column 'S' (setting) indicate the current quality of your provision. As a team consider if the key statement is currently being put into practice in our provision?

N = No, not implementing	P = Partially implementing	Y = Yes, implementing to a high standard	N/A = Not applicable
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You should be able to evidence this in the usual way through policies, practice or photos for example. **You do not need to produce any additional written documentation to support this process.**

Setting's areas for development

In this box put any key statement reference numbers from that section that needs action e.g. 1.4, 1.5, 1.23.

'Notes and Suggestions' box.

Use this box to record other comments about your practice, for example constraints or aspects of your philosophy that conflict with the EYFS principles and practice, e.g. 'due to the layout of our setting we have no direct access to outside'.

Criteria for RAG categorisation

When you have decided as a team where your setting is in relation to the key statements, use this information to identify which of the criteria in the RAG rating categories best reflect your practice. Put an 'S' next to the statements that best reflect your setting overall.

Before the EYCs visit

In preparation for the EYCs visit, please ensure that the relevant documents and information are gathered together in order to make the process quicker for you. The setting visit will last between a half day to a day, depending on the size of the setting and the timings will be arranged with you beforehand.

EYC visit

To make the process most effective the EYCs will need to have a copy of your staff team's fully completed IQC document at the start of the visit. The EYC will begin by looking at the paperwork relating to Section 3 at the start of the visit and will then spend time looking at the learning environment and observing practice. A senior member of staff should be available for part of this visit to provide input. If the EYC observes something on the visit which requires immediate attention, they will aim to speak to the manager and leave a written record with the setting.

If before the observation begins, it becomes clear that the welfare requirements need immediate attention, the EYC and manager may decide to postpone the observation and work together to ensure that the actions are addressed.

EYC paperwork

Following the visit, the EYC will add their evaluations to the IQC audit. They will complete this using information gathered from your documentation and from observing the learning environment and practice. They will use the column 'C' to indicate their evaluation of your practice. The EYC will carry out the same process as you and identify an overall RAG rating in the 'EYC' box at the end of the section.

Joint Evaluation Meeting

The EYCs will arrange to meet with you for a Joint Evaluation Meeting (JEM). This meeting will usually last for up to 3 hours, occasionally these meetings may take longer. The times, location and those attending will be mutually agreed beforehand. At this meeting you will compare evaluations and agree an overall RAG rating for your setting and an overall RAG rating for each section (1-8). The criteria and RAG rating that you jointly agree will be transferred to the IQC Summary Sheet. From this you will produce a Focussed Improvement Plan (FIP) which will set out future actions for the setting.

Guidelines for level of support

Red Urgent action for development	Amber Some action for development	Green Development towards outstanding
Audit of provision Visits determined by progress against FIP Visits will take place at least once a term	Visits to support FIP as agreed Visits will be minimum two a year	Contact maintained to support continuous improvement Visits will be minimum one a year

What do I do if I need additional help or advice?

Call or email your early years consultant if you have a query relating to early years foundation stage practice or need additional advice.

Under what circumstances might an earlier visit be scheduled?

An earlier visit might be arranged by your early years consultant if:

- there has been a complaint about your setting;
- there has been a change of manager;
- the setting has had a high staff turnover;
- there have been changes to the settings registration; or
- the outcome of the setting's ofsted inspection changes.

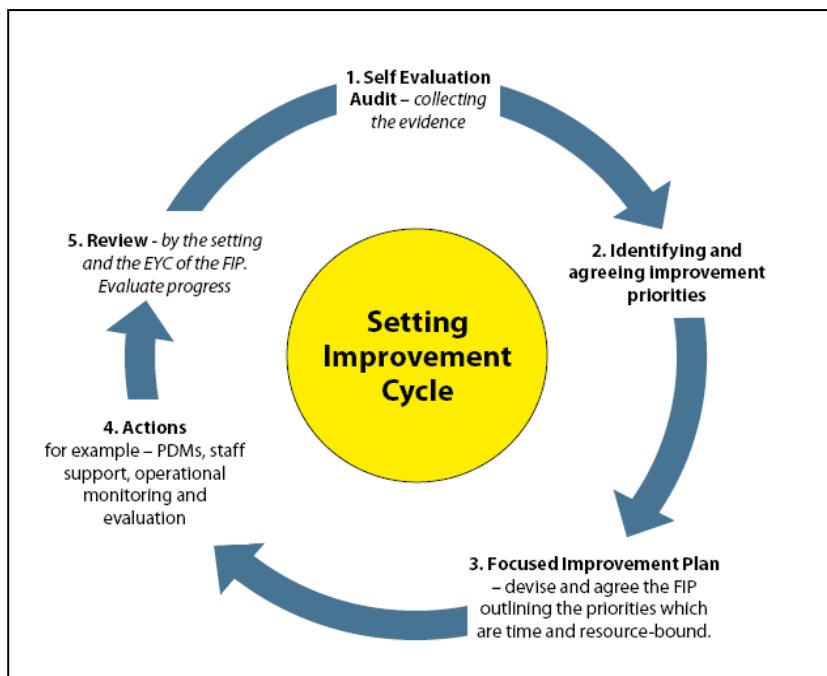
Are there any other quality improvement or audit tools used by the borough?

The London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames also uses the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS), Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales (ITERS), Family Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales, Leuven Scales of Involvement and Early Years Foundation Stage Profile. If you would like more information about how and when these tools are used please talk to your early years consultant.

Quality improvement cycle

The primary purpose of the quality improvement cycle is to ensure that you consider how best to create, maintain and improve your provision in order to offer the highest quality experience for all young children

All settings are responsible for their own improvement. The diagram illustrates a five-step cycle that supports 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 the means to develop practice.

EYC: early years consultant

PDMs: professional development meetings could be led by an EYC, independent trainer or setting's early years professional (EYP) and can be part of the early years cluster sessions, inset training sessions or in-house training.

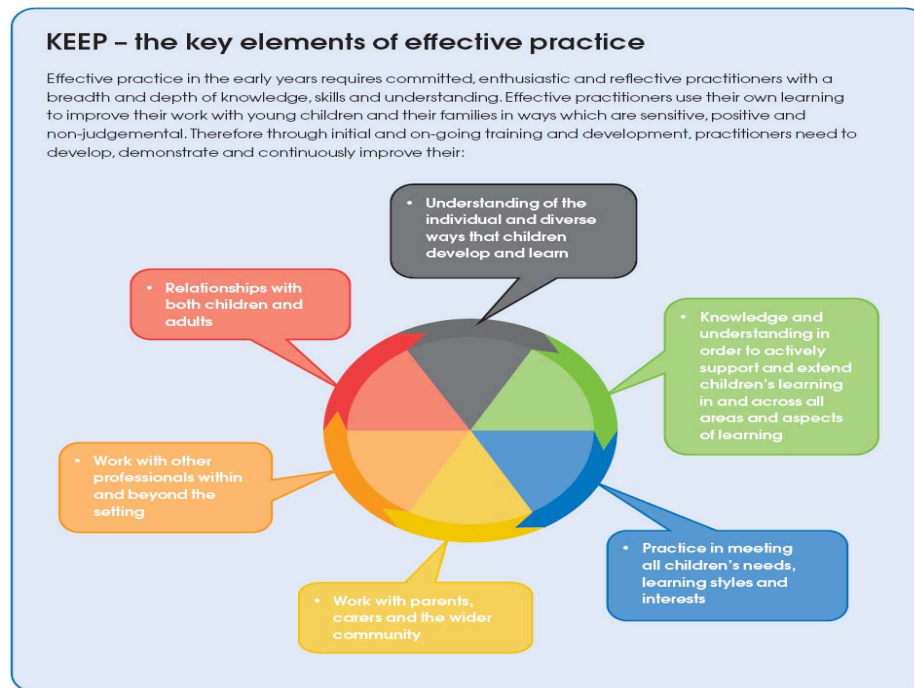
Setting the standards

'The EYFS sets standards to enable early years providers to reflect the rich and personalised experience that many parents give their children at home. Like parents, providers should deliver individualised learning, development and care that enhances the development of the children in their care and gives those children the best possible start in life. All types of providers have the potential to deliver the EYFS to an excellent standard.'

EYFS Statutory Framework 1.13

To identify the quality of your provision, you as managers or practitioners need to judge it against a set of criteria and provide evidence of good practice. This document will enable you to demonstrate to parents, colleagues, Ofsted inspectors, early years consultants (EYCs) how, what you offer supports high quality practice.

Key elements of effective practice – KEEP



KEEP draws on two major pieces of DCSF funded research on effective early years pedagogy.

Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE)

Research into Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) REPEY draws on and extends the EPPE research to identify the characteristics of effective practice in settings with good outcomes for children.

Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning (SPEEL) SPEEL highlights that effective practitioners are reflective, self-evaluative and able to analyse their practice.

Effective practice in the early years requires committed enthusiastic and reflective practitioners with a breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and understanding.

Effective practitioners use their own learning to improve their work with young children and their families in ways which are sensitive, positive and non-judgmental.

Glossary of acronyms

CM:	Childminder	IEP:	Individual education plan
CP:	Child protection	INSET:	In-service training
CPD:	Continual professional development	IQC:	Improving quality for children
DCSF:	Department for Children, Schools and Families	IRT:	Initial Response Team
DOB:	Date of birth	ISA:	Independent Safeguarding Authority
ECERS:	Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scales	ITERS:	Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scales
ECM:	Every Child Matters	KEEP:	Key elements of effective practice
EH:	Environmental health	LA:	Local authority
EYA:	Early Years Action	LSCB:	Local Safeguarding Children Board
EYAP:	Early Years Action Plus	NEG:	Nursery Education Grant
EYC:	Early years consultant	PDM:	Professional development meetings
EYFS:	Early Years Foundation Stage	PFA:	Paediatric first aid
EYFSP:	Early Years Foundation Stage Profile	QISP:	Quality improvement support programme (DCSF)
EYPS:	Early Years Professional Status	QTS:	Qualified teacher status
FIP:	Focused Improvement Plan	RAG:	Red, amber, green rating
FITERS:	Family Infant and Toddler Environmental Rating Scale	REPEY:	Research into Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years
HPA:	Health Protection Agency	SEF:	Self-evaluation form (Ofsted)
JEM:	Joint evaluation meeting	SEN:	Special educational needs
ICO:	Information Commissioner's Office	SENCo:	Special educational needs co-ordinator
ICP:	Introduction to childminding practice	SPEEL:	Study of Pedagogical Effectiveness in Early Learning
ICT:	Information and communications technology		

Appendix 1

Completing the audit

To be effective, the audit should reflect the views of staff and all key partners in the setting. It is important that the process should be planned to fit the context of the setting.

Effective approaches tried by the setting using the 'Improving quality for children' audit include:

- Leaders completing a draft from their viewpoint and presenting this to staff in a meeting for comment or feedback.
- Leaders completing a draft from their viewpoint, distribute it to staff and ask for written, oral feedback and comments by a certain date.
- All staff meeting to complete either the whole or sections of the audit, either in groups or altogether. This could be undertaken in a specially arranged staff meeting or INSET day.
- Leaders meeting with individual members of staff at different times to discuss particular sections.

Appendix 2

Focused improvement plan guidelines

Plan preparation

Identify all stakeholders, for example, setting leaders, staff and EYC or setting leaders, staff and management board or governing bodies.

We need to consider the following questions:

- Have we identified all the practical steps we need to take to achieve the objectives?
- Are the actions clear and specific: do we know exactly what we intend to do and who will do it?
- How will the steps lead to the required outcomes?
- How will we know when we have got there?

Monitoring and evaluating

FIPs are living documents and progress needs to be monitored.

Monitoring is an on-going assessment of progress against the improvement plan(s) priorities and success criteria. The manager will ensure that this takes place on a regular basis.

Evaluation is about measuring the effects of the actions against the criteria. This involves looking for measurable evidence that demonstrates how well we have done in terms of what we planned to achieve. This will be reviewed by your EYC at each visit.

We need to consider the following questions as we monitor and evaluate our FIP.

- 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

Areas for Development	Action	Person to action	Timeline	Resources: including budgets, people	Monitoring Progress: Who, How ¹	Impact	Evaluation or Review ²

To access information on all early years training go to www.richmond.gov.uk/workforce-development

Manager Early Years Consultant Date of next visit.....

¹ To be completed by the setting to demonstrate progress towards identified development

² To be completed by the EYC after the visit

The information in the focused improvement plan (FIP) is based on discussion between the setting and the early years consultant. The recommendations made by the early years consultants are based on their knowledge of the setting and observations of the practice. We endeavour to discuss issues identified from the Improving Quality for Children (IQC) summary sheet in this FIP. There may be occasion when further points are identified after the FIP has been completed. These can be added or set out on a separate FIP and discussed at the next meeting with your EYC. If you wish to discuss any aspects of this FIP, please contact your EYC either by phone on 020 xxxx xxxx, email at: xxxxxxx@richmond.gov.uk, or write to: Early Years and Childcare Service, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham, TW1 3BZ.

Appendix 3 Reference materials and resources

Active Learning

A place to learn (2002)

All of Us: Inclusion Checklist for Settings

Assessing quality in early years (ECERS) (2006)

Building Futures: Believing in children

CAPT website Child accident prevention

Celebrating young children

Child Protection Leaflet

Coshe

Confident, capable and creative: supporting boy's achievements

Creating places

Creating the picture EYFS assessment and record-keeping

Early doors: A report on the experiences of children during the first hour of the day

Early Years and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme (EYQISP)

Early Years: Leading to Excellence

A review of early years and childcare provision 2005-08 with a focus on organisation, leadership and management

Early Years: Getting on Well: enjoying and achieving and contributing

A report on how settings promote children's learning and development

Early Years: Safe and Sound

Identifies best practice and can be used as a SEF tool to improve outcomes for children

Early Years: Firm Foundations

Identifies best practice against the ECM outcomes

NCMA www.ncma.org.uk Tel 0800 169 4486

P Cartwright, K Scott & J Stevens: Lewisham Early Years Advice and Resources Network (LEARN)

KIDS Phone: 020 7359 3073 www.kids.org.uk

K Sylva, I Siraj-Blatchford & B Taggart www.trentham-books.co.uk

DCSF ref: 00008-2009BKT-EN

www.capt.org.uk

DCSF ref: 00767-2008 BKT-EN

London Borough of Richmond upon Thames – ACPC Area Child Protection Committee
Phone: 020 8891 7600

www.hse.gov.uk

DCSF

Community Playthings www.communityplaythings.co.uk Phone: 0800 387 457

DCSF ref: 00283-2007DWO-EN-01 (download only) www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk
Phone: 0845 60 222 60

Ofsted

National Children's Bureau NCB 2003 www.ncb.org.uk Phone: 020 7843 6029

DCSF ref: 00261-2008PCK-EN

DCSF ref:00669-2008BKT-EN

Ofsted

Ofsted

Ofsted

Ofsted

Food for thought:

A survey of healthy eating in settings

Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults who work with Children and Young People

Guidelines for the Control of Infections and Communicable Disease in Nurseries and Other Institutional Early Years Settings in South West London Sector

I made a unicorn!

Inclusion Development Programme

Keep: Key Elements of Effective Practice

Letters and Sounds – Phase One

Managing Medicines in School and Early Years Settings

Mark marking matters:

Removing barriers: A can do approach

A report on good practice for children with special needs

RIDDOR

Risk Management in Early years – a practical risk management process

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

Supporting children learning English as an additional language

Social and emotional aspects of development

Seeing steps in children's learning: DVD and guide

Self-evaluation web tool for the Foundation Stage

Safeguarding children: Safer Recruitment and Selection in Education settings – guidance organisation and management

What it means to be 3

What it means to be 4

What it means to be 5

What to do if you're worried a child is being abused

Ofsted

DCSF November 2007

South West London Health Protection Agency Phone: 020 8682 6132

Community Playthings www.communityplaythings.co.uk

DCSF ref: 00215-2008BKT-EN

DCSF ref: DCSF 1201-2005G

DCSF ref: 00113-2008PCK-EN

DCSF ref: 1448-2005DCL-EN

DCSF ref: 00767-2008 BKT-EN

Ofsted

www.hse.gov.uk

Pre-school Learning Alliance www.pre-school.org.uk Phone: 020 7833 0991

DCSF ref: 581/2001 www.dcsf.gov.uk

DCSF

DCSF ref: 00707-2008-BKT-EN

QCA Publications Phone: 08700 60 60 17 www.qca.org.uk

www.principlesintopractice.org

Teachernet www.dcsf.gov.uk

J Lindon. Step Forward Publications www.practicalpreschool.com

DCSF ref: 04320-2006DOM-EN download at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk



The Council recognises the need for an appropriate balance between openness and confidentiality in the management and use of information. It places importance on the confidentiality of and the secure arrangements to safeguard both personal information and commercially sensitive information. Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has obligations and responsibilities to provide, on request, access to recorded information that it holds. This obligation is subject to exemptions which are set out in the FOIA. For example:

- Information of a confidential nature; or
- Information that would prejudice the commercial interest of any person.

Where a request for information is made, we will consult you for your views regarding the release of information. We will not release information without your consent unless the law permits it.

This quality improvement tool has been devised by the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames Early Years and Childcare Team modelled on:

The National Strategies **Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme (EYQISP)**
Early Years

Early Years and Childcare Team
Civic Centre
44 York Street
Twickenham
TW1 3BZ
020 8831 6267

