

Birth to Five Matters

Learning and Development

Observation, assessment and planning

OAP as Quality improvement

Quality Improvement

As practitioners, teachers, leaders and managers use formative and summative assessment processes, they can reflect on what their evaluations and findings tell them about the quality of the experiences, education and care the children receive. They can then use these reflections to think about how to develop or improve practice.

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 the learning, development and care they offer. (Practice guidance for the early years foundation stage May 2008, 1.23, p7)

High quality, informed improvement has a substantial impact on children's overall development learning and progress. It helps to improve the outcomes for all children and their families as it gives them the best start to their learning. Quality improvement links to reflective practice as it is a continuous cycle of self-reflection undertaken as part of the OAP process.

Having a good understanding of Birth to Five Matters (2021) will also support a deeper understanding of quality improvement and the way that this is woven through many aspects of good practice such as observation, assessment and planning. In turn this will build practitioner/teacher knowledge and confidence particularly in identifying where change is needed to support children's progress.

By using the information on Learning and Development to support continuous observational assessment practitioners will form a view of where each child is in their learning, where they need to go, and the most effective practice to support them in getting there. (Practice guidance for the early years foundation stage May 2008 – p11)

See Birth to Five Matters: Quality Improvement and Leadership

Continually reflecting on what a setting does well and what needs to be improved is a fundamental sign of a successful leader. A leader can purposefully make the necessary changes that enables children to develop to their full potential across all areas of learning.

Case study 1:

A Group Leader was looking through the team's formative assessment and discovered that there seemed to be a lack of observations which included children's physical development. She brought the teams formative assessments together and made a summative assessment to track all the children's interests and gather their next steps. They reflected on this and decided to plan for more physical activities including a morning dance routine and outdoor play experiences based on the evidence she found. Further observation of the children showed how engaged and involved they

were in the new provision and also how the practitioners had extended their own professional development further.

Case study 2:

Tina is a full-time practitioner in a baby room. Tina uses the observation, assessment and planning cycle to understand where each child is in their developmental journey. She then uses her knowledge of child development to inform possible next steps for all her children as well as building on their interests. This ensures that the quality of experiences she provides for the babies really match their unique needs and support their development and learning. Tina encourages the children to take part and she joins them as a play partner supporting each child by '*scaffolding their learning*' through conversations, modelling skills and following the babies lead. During this play she is observing-in-action, assessing-in-action and planning-in-action as she responds to the babies ensuring that the quality of the experience is as good as it can be.