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How to use this book

This book contains all the units you need to master the skills and knowledge for the NCFE CACHE Level 3 Technical Occupational Entry for the Early Years Workforce (Early Years Educator) (Diploma), the Level 3 Diploma for Working in the Early Years Sector and the Early Years Educator Apprenticeship.

This book should be taught in conjunction with the most up-to-date specification document, available from the NCFE CACHE website. You should also refer to the most up-to-date EYFS statutory framework document available on the gov.uk website. References to parents are intended to include other carers as well.

Key features of the book

The professional roles and responsibilities required to work in an early years setting

Understand all the requirements of the qualifications with clearly stated learning outcomes and assessment criteria fully mapped to the specifications.

4.3 Opportunities for progression

Key areas of each learning outcome to signpost what you are going to cover in this section of the unit.

Key term 🔑

Key person: An adult in an early years setting who is responsible for a group of children.

Understand important terms.

Reflect 🌻

Have you noticed how young children like to copy other people?

Learn to reflect on your own skills and experiences.

Research it! 🔎

When you start working in a setting, ask to see a copy of the organisational chart, if it is not already displayed.

Enhance your understanding of topics with research-led activities encouraging you to explore an area in more detail.

Practice point

As you are just starting out in your career, think about ways in which you can be organised in your studies.

Practical advice and tips to help you with your practice.

Case study (

Look at these two examples of students who are working in an early years setting:

See how concepts are applied in settings with real-life scenarios.

Test yourself 🗸

1 What is meant by a key person?

Short tasks and knowledge-based questions to help enhance your understanding of the unit just studied.

Evidence collector

Find a copy of your own job description and complete a table relating it to specific examples of your responsibilities.

Opportunities to collect evidence for your portfolio.

Sustainability focus

When thinking about your role, you should also consider the 17 Sustainable Development Goals as set out by UNICEF.

Ways in which to bring in a sustainability focus to your practice, processes and general setting.





There are eleven learning outcomes for this unit:

- Understand the professional roles and responsibilities required to work in an early years setting
- Understand procedures that must be adhered to in the work setting and their importance
- 3 Understand the role of supervision
- 4 Understand professional development
- 5 Be able to use and model good communication skills, including a good command of the English language
- 6 Be able to explain your own role, responsibilities and expected behaviours, and the roles of colleagues in the setting

- 7 Be able to explain the impact of your own and others' behaviour on babies and children, and the importance of role-modelling positive behaviours
- 8 Be confident in supporting or challenging the practice of colleagues, including difficult conversations
- 9 Be able to follow procedures in the work setting, including updating policies and procedures
- Be able to foster a culture of mutual support and teamwork through effective supervision
- 11 Be able to seek out feedback and use reflection to identify personal goals



LO 1 The professional roles and responsibilities required to work in an early years setting

All professionals will have a **job description** and a **person specification**.

Key terms 🔑

Job description An outline of the role and responsibilities for the job, including key skills and required knowledge.

Person specification A description of the ideal candidate for a job role, including their skills, experience and behaviours.

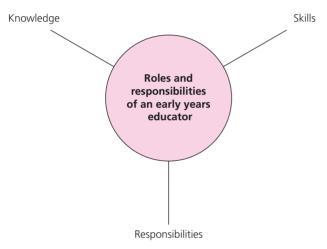


Figure 1.1.1 Roles and responsibilities of an early years educator

→ For more information on job roles, see LO6 in this unit.

1.1 The professional roles and responsibilities of an early years educator regarding knowledge, skills and behaviours

As an early years educator, you will need to develop your knowledge, skills and behaviours in order to work effectively, and be able to reflect on your role in the setting.

Knowledge

To succeed as an early years educator, you will need to:

- have a clear understanding of your role
- have a thorough knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework and know how to promote an effective early years curriculum
- have a good level of literacy and IT skills
- have current knowledge of relevant legislation such as the Equality Act 2010
- know how babies and children learn and develop
- know how to support their learning and development at different ages and stages
- know how to promote health, safety and wellbeing in your setting
- know how to support children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- know the importance of promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
- know how to assess and monitor children's progress, and be able to adapt activities accordingly
- know about safeguarding and child protection, and how to promote the welfare of children
- know about and understand the need for confidentiality as part of your role.

Key term 🔑

Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) A term used when a child or young person has learning difficulties and/or a disability that means they might require special education support or provision.

These areas of knowledge will all be covered as part of your qualification. When you have completed the relevant units, you might also need to have a professional discussion with your assessor or write a reflective account for them, so they can verify that you have achieved the required knowledge in each area.

Skills

Having a commitment to working with children

Working with children should not be seen as an 'easy option'. You will need to enjoy working

with them, and have an understanding of and respect for their needs.

Good communication skills

This is very important, as you will need to be able to communicate effectively with babies and children, and their families/carers, as well as your work colleagues.

→ For more detail about different aspects of communication, see LO5 in this unit.



Figure 1.1.2 How can you tell that this adult enjoys working with children?

Being able to work as part of a team

You will need to recognise that, as an early years educator, you will be working as part of a team. This means:

- knowing when to share information and knowledge that will help others
- knowing about confidentiality, and respecting this when necessary.
- → For more on working as part of a team, see LO6 in this unit and Unit 10 on partnership working.

Research it! 🔎

When you start working in a setting, ask to see a copy of the organisational chart, if it is not already displayed.

Can you work out where your role fits with the rest of the team?

Effective organisational skills

Good organisational skills are vital. You will need to learn how to balance your everyday duties in the workplace with prioritising other parts of your job role when needed. For example, you might be asked to update a policy or run a meeting within the setting, alongside your normal role in supporting children's learning. You should also be able to plan and organise activities that are inspiring and capture children's enthusiasm for learning.

Practice point

As you are just starting out in your career, think about ways in which you can be organised in your studies. This may be through keeping a **reflective log** of what happens each day, or making sure any action points from your day are completed straight away. This will help to get you into good habits from the start.

Key term 🔑

Reflective log A personal diary or record of learning.

Patience and understanding

Young children can have difficulty in managing their emotions. This can lead them to place demands on adults that can be challenging to manage. You should be able to remain calm, so that you can help children to manage and discuss their emotions when they are upset or distressed.

Being able to create a positive and inclusive learning environment for children

It will be helpful if you have creative skills, for example in art or music, or are imaginative and resourceful in setting up different learning environments, such as role-play areas or displays. The learning environment should:

- be inspiring for children
- reflect the wider community
- be inclusive for children of all needs, ages and abilities.

Being able to work closely with parents/carers and families

Early years professionals should have positive relationships with parents/carers and families so that they can support children's learning and development more effectively. If you are a **key person**, you will need to make sure that you communicate regularly with these families and carers.

→ For more on the key person approach, see Unit 2, LO3.

Key term 🔑

Key person An adult in an early years setting who is responsible for a group of children. The key person builds a close relationship with the children and their families.

Being able to develop children's independence

Children learn and develop at different rates, but you will get to know them and their abilities. It is important for you to support their independence as much as you can, particularly around self-care such as toileting, handwashing and dressing.

Being able to keep children safe and promote healthy living

It is part of your job role to understand health and safety requirements, **safeguarding**, and the importance of healthy food and exercise. You should be able to talk to children about how to be safe and keep their bodies healthy.

→ For more on this, see Unit 6.

Key term

Safeguarding Protecting the wellbeing, health and rights of all babies and children, ensuring they are safe from harm or abuse.

Research it! \nearrow

Look at some current early years educator job vacancies. These should list the knowledge and skills that are needed for specific job roles. Are these duties the same as or different from vour own?

Sustainability focus 🗸



When thinking about your role, you should also consider the 17 UNICEF Sustainable Development Goals. These highlight the importance of acting in a way that teaches children about sustainability, while also supporting the setting in working towards sustainable practice. To find out more, see Sustainability Matters in Early Childhood, published by NCFE.

Behaviours

Behaviours are closely linked to skills, and your own behaviour should both set an example for children and colleagues, and support them.

→ For more information on specific behaviours, see LO6 in this unit.

Being a positive role model

One of the key behaviours you will need to have is to act as a positive role model to young children. This means showing them how to behave through your own behaviour, and also talking to them about what the setting expects of them and why. As they grow and develop, they will start to realise that they have control over their own behaviour.

→ For more on this, see LO7, in this unit.

Key term

Role model Someone who others see as a good example.

Reflect 😲

Have you noticed how young children like to copy other people? A child is more likely to try to do something if they have seen an adult doing it. This can have a positive influence – for example, learning to treat people kindly, or wanting to read a book. However, if adults display negative behaviour such as regularly interrupting others or leaving the environment in a mess, young children will also be likely to do the same.



Figure 1.1.3 Why are children likely to look up to and imitate adults and what they do?

Being able to validate and support children's emotions

Adults in early years settings play a key role in helping young children to recognise and validate their emotions. Children need adults to guide them in **co-regulation** and **self-regulation** so that they learn how to behave in an acceptable way alongside others. For example, saying 'I understand that you are upset because it's time to tidy up, but we need to get ready to go home' helps the child to recognise the connection between what is happening and how they are feeling. It is important to do this rather than telling them to be quiet or to stop crying, as it helps to develop the child's ability to express how they are feeling in an acceptable way.

→ For more on self-regulation, see Unit 2, LO5.

Key terms

Co-regulation Supporting another person with managing their feelings.

Self-regulation Being able to regulate and control one's own emotions and behaviour.

Being positive, self-motivated and using your initiative

Your attitude to your work and role should also be positive, and this should be reflected in your behaviour in the setting. Try to be flexible and willing to undertake additional duties or out-of-hours activities, such as attending staff or parent/carer meetings, taking part in off-site activities or carrying out additional training. This will show your colleagues that you are able to support them as well as the wider work of the setting. Being ready to join in is also important when you are around young children, as this will encourage them to try new activities.

Recognising the feelings of others

In the workplace it is important to recognise the feelings of others and be sensitive to their needs. For example, a colleague might be experiencing problems at home or have an additional workload that places them under stress; they might come to you for advice or support. You will be better able to support your colleague and develop your relationship with them if you can see the situation from their point of view and recognise how they are feeling. This will also help to develop a culture of understanding within the setting.

Young children often fall out with their peers as they are not always able to control their own feelings, and having to regularly take turns and share with their peers can become a challenge. This is because empathy, or recognising the feelings and wishes of others, is linked to a child's stage of development. For example, while a three-year-old might be able to take turns, a two-year-old will find this very difficult. You will need to be able to support young children and talk through why they are upset, so that they can recognise other people's feelings and start to look at situations from others' point of view.

Case study (

Look at these two examples of students who are working in an early years setting:

Gemma is always slightly late to arrive to her placement. She has good relationships with the children. She is pleasant and polite to colleagues, and does what she is asked to do in her role, although she has missed the staff meeting on safeguarding.

Mo always arrives early to help set up, has read the setting's policies and procedures, and is friendly and approachable to everyone in the setting. He dresses appropriately and always makes a point of asking if there is anything else that needs to be done before he leaves at the end of the day.

- Which of these two students might be seen as more professional in their new role? Give reasons for your answer.
- Why is it important to appear professional at work?

Research it! \nearrow

Watch an experienced educator supporting two children who have had a disagreement.

How do they recognise the children's feelings and encourage each to see the situation from the other child's point of view?

It may help to refer to the following documents for additional guidance:

- Early years qualification requirements and standards, available on the gov.uk website
- IfATE Early Years Educator standards.

You may wish to note this down in your reflective log.

For more on your own behaviours, see LO6 and LO7 in this unit.

1.2 The professional role of the early years educator with regard to the potential of supervising other staff and leading the setting

You will also have other responsibilities in your professional role at the setting. As well as your work with babies and children, you might be responsible for supervising other staff.

Supervising other staff

As an early years educator, you might be responsible for supervising other staff and ensuring that they deliver high-quality outcomes to each child in their care. This means you will need to ensure that they are delivering the early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework in line with statutory requirements. It can therefore be one of the first steps for you to progress within your role.

Practice point

Make sure you don't confuse supervising children or other staff in the setting with supervision sessions with work colleagues. These concern professional development and are covered later in this unit.

→ For more on supervision, see LO3 and LO10 in this unit.

Research it! \nearrow

The Early Years Foundation Stage **statutory** framework on the gov.uk website is the key document for all those working with children from birth to 5.

It gives details of the curriculum and assessment requirements, and the legal requirements for safeguarding and welfare. There are separate documents for childminders and nurseries. Make sure you use the most up-to-date version! Have a look at the most recent document for your own setting and read through the Summary

We will be referring to this document throughout the book.

Key term 🔑

and Introduction at the start.

Statutory Something that is required by law.

Leading the setting

You might have other responsibilities in leading the setting. Look closely at your job description, as it might include the following responsibilities.

Leading the curriculum

This means ensuring that the early years curriculum in your setting is planned and delivered in line with the EYFS statutory framework. The curriculum should include a wide range of both adult- and child-led learning experiences, which are fully inclusive so that all children can achieve.

Being responsible for key children

As mentioned earlier, all staff in early years settings are responsible for a number of key children and are known as their key person. They will get to know these children more closely than other members of staff, beginning at the settling-in period, when they should find out as much as possible about each key child. The key person liaises with parents and carers regularly, ideally on a daily basis, so that they have up-to-date information about their key children. They also share photos or videos

regularly with parents and carers (in accordance with your setting's video and photo policy), so that they can see what their child has been doing, and feel able to share and discuss their child's experiences in the setting.

Each child must be assigned a key person. Their role is to help ensure that every child's care is tailored to meet their individual needs, to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents and/or carers. They should also help families engage with more specialist support if appropriate.

(EYFS statutory framework, 2024)

Research it! \nearrow

Do you have responsibilities for key children in your setting? If not, find out who does.

Ensuring children's safety and wellbeing

The physical and emotional welfare of babies and children must be your priority at all times. You will need to comply with your setting's health and safety and safeguarding policies, as well as the EYFS statutory guidelines for safeguarding and welfare requirements.

→ For more on health, safety and wellbeing, see Unit 6.

Respecting and promoting equality, diversity and inclusion

As a leader in an early years setting, you will need to show that you respect and promote **equality**, **diversity** and **inclusion**, as well as cultural differences and different family circumstances. This includes your relationships with colleagues, parents and carers, as well as the children in your care. All individuals have a right to be treated equally – to help ensure **equity** – and in a way that allows them to achieve.



Figure 1.1.4 How can you ensure children's safety and wellbeing at all times?

- → For more on respecting the diversity, equality and inclusion of children, see Unit 7, LO2.
- → For more on diversity, equality and inclusion when communicating with others see Unit 4, I O3.

Key terms 🔑

Equality Being equal in status, rights and opportunities.

Diversity Recognising and including people with a range of individual differences.

Inclusion The process of identifying, understanding and breaking down barriers to participation and belonging.

Equity Making adjustments to be fair and impartial to all.

Working with parents and carers

All early years educators need to work alongside parents and carers to ensure that there is regular, two-way sharing of information about their child. The key person will be the parent's or carer's first point of contact, and they should have regular conversations about their key children. These conversations may be formal or informal.



Figure 1.1.5 Why is it important for early years educators to work closely with parents and carers?

→ For more information on developing and working in line with policies and procedures to meet organisational and legal requirements, see LO2 and LO9 in this unit.

Working with other agencies

As an early years educator, you will also need to work alongside professionals from other agencies. If, for example, you are supporting children who have special educational needs and disabilities, you will need to communicate regularly with other professionals to share relevant information about each child's progress.

Dealing with conflict

In professional environments, conflict can occur between adults from time to time, causing bad feeling and damaging relationships if not resolved. This is usually caused by a lack of communication or awareness of another person's point of view. You might need to take steps to support both sides in working through this.

→ See LO8 in this unit for more guidance.

Keeping records in line with organisational and legal requirements

You will need to ensure that you (and any staff or volunteers you are responsible for in the setting) are keeping children's records in line with legal and organisational requirements. For example, information that settings are required to hold on each child should be stored securely, in order to protect their privacy.

For more on keeping records, see Units 6, 7 and 8.

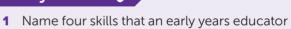
Research it!

Find out about the legal requirements for storing data in early years education.

- 1 What are the key principles?
- 2 Are there any points that surprise you?

Test yourself 🕑

needs to develop.



- 2 What is meant by a key person?
- **3** Why is it important to be aware of equality, diversity and inclusion?

LO 2 Procedures in the work setting and their importance

All professional settings need to have **policies** and **procedures** in place. These are important for the smooth running of the setting, and are often linked to legal requirements – for example, when looking at staff-to-child ratios in the settling or how to deal with infectious diseases. The EYFS statutory framework is a legal document that must be implemented

in the setting's policies and procedures. It is mandatory and has two versions: one for schools and group settings such as nurseries, and the other for childminders. Both may be found on the gov.uk website. Procedures are designed to provide clear and accessible guidelines for all those involved in the setting. It is also useful to refer to procedures when speaking to staff, parents and carers, or when making decisions about the way in which the setting is run.

→ For information on how to adhere to your workplace's policies and procedures, see LO9 in this unit.

Key terms 🔑

Policy A set of rules that is agreed by an organisation as the accepted way of doing something.

Procedure The guidelines for following policies that are agreed and adopted by an organisation.

Research it! \nearrow

Find out where you might find the policies and procedures in your setting.

Who should know where they are kept?

2.1 Reflecting on prior learning and experience

Your setting will have policies and procedures for a range of different areas. For the purpose of this qualification and before looking at how to work in line with these procedures, you need to reflect on your own prior learning and experience in each of the following areas, and how they relate to the role of the early years educator.

Reporting and types of records expected

 Do you know how to report any issues
 within the setting, and whether these need
 to be documented? If so, how would you record and/or report them?

- Whistleblowing procedures What would you need to do if you had to pass on information about wrongdoing by colleagues, known as whistleblowing?
- Protecting and promoting the welfare of children in line with statutory requirements
 What are the statutory requirements?
 Where might you find them?
- Safeguarding What are the statutory requirements for safeguarding? Where might you find them?
- Confidentiality How can you ensure that information such as child records, medical information and contact information are kept secure, and are not discussed outside the workplace?
- Information sharing When is it appropriate to share information with others?
- Use of technology What technology can you use in early years settings? What should you be aware of?
- Referring developmental concerns How should you refer any developmental concerns about children?
- Protecting self (e.g. your social media and online presence) – What does this mean, and how can you do it?
- Staff health and safety, including mental health, wellbeing, support and supervision

 What does staff health and safety mean, and where should you look for information on this? Where can you find support for mental health and wellbeing? What procedures are in place to support staff in their duties and professional development?

Key term 🔑

Whistleblowing Reporting or passing on information about wrongdoing at work that affects other people.

Evidence collector

Table 1.2.1 contains a list of procedures. Working in a group, discuss each one in turn and complete the table, outlining your current understanding of these procedures in relation to your role as an early years educator, and the importance of each procedure. Use the questions in the bullet list above to guide you.

You could revisit this activity after you have completed LO9 of this unit. Have any of your answers changed?

Table 1.2.1

Procedure	My role as an early years educator	Why is it important?
Reporting and types of records expected		
Whistleblowing procedures		
Protecting and promoting children's welfare		
Safeguarding		
Confidentiality		
Information sharing		
Use of technology		
Referring developmental concerns		
Protecting self		
Staff health and safety		
Staff mental health, wellbeing, support and supervision		

Test yourself 🗸

- 1 Why are procedures important in the early years workplace?
- 2 What is meant by whistleblowing?

3 What is the difference between a policy and a procedure?

LO 3 The role of supervision

Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families.

(EYFS statutory framework, 2024)

Supervision is a development tool that is used in professional settings to:

- monitor and review staff effectiveness
- support the interests of children in the setting.

Key term

Supervision A professional development tool to identify solutions, address issues as they arise and receive coaching to improve personal effectiveness.

Supervision takes place with a supervisor or room leader, who may be part of the senior leadership team in the setting. It is likely to be documented so that both parties can refer to it and keep a record of what has been discussed.

→ For more on supervision, see LO10 in this unit.

This is an opportunity to consider any issues or concerns in your work, and address them as they occur.

Supervision should be carried out regularly – for example, every six to eight weeks – although this will depend on your experience and your setting's supervision policy.

3.1 Discussing issues, concerns and plans

A supervision session is a good chance to work through your own issues, concerns and plans. Figure 1.3.1 shows the different aims of supervision.

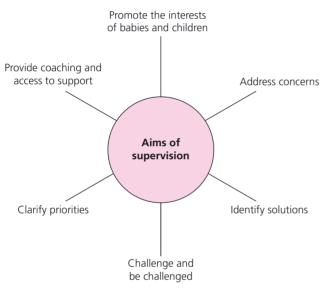


Figure 1.3.1 Aims of supervision

Aims of supervision

Supervision should:

- Provide coaching and access to support –
 Supervision provides members of staff
 with a specific time to talk through their experiences, and think about their work and its impact on the children in their care.
- Promote the interests of babies and children – Supervision should ensure that the focus of an early years educator is on babies and children, and that the main priority is their development and wellbeing.
- Address concerns The supervision process should provide a safe space for

- the supervisee to address any concerns. However, any safeguarding issues or concerns about practice should always be shared as soon as possible, rather than waiting for the next supervision meeting.
- Identify solutions Discussing and working through concerns with a more experienced member of staff empowers the supervisee to find solutions and develop problem-solving skills.
- Challenge and be challenged Supervision should be a free space for both sides to challenge and be challenged about their experiences in the workplace.
- Clarify priorities Actions should be agreed and written down on a template so that they can be reviewed at the next meeting.

Case study (

Pushra has been working alongside a childminder for eight months. She has had two supervision sessions since she started, but the childminder says that she 'does not have time' to carry out any more supervision sessions with her

- What should Pushra do in this situation?
- Explain why it is important that she continues to receive her supervision sessions.

There are differences between supervision and other forms of professional development such as an annual appraisal:

- Supervision takes place more regularly.
- It is a response to what has taken place since the previous meeting.

Supervision is also a form of reflective practice, and it encourages practitioners to improve their work by discussing any concerns as and when they happen.

Research it! 🔎

Have a look at the NCFE Education and Childcare Career Toolkit, where you will see an example of a professional practice framework containing a supervision template.

Reflect 🍄

Write a reflective account about what you understand supervision to mean. Analyse its effectiveness as an opportunity for staff to discuss issues, concerns and plans.

→ For more on contributing to a culture of mutual support through supervision, see LO10 in this unit.

Test yourself 🗸

1 Identify three aims of supervision.

LO 4 Professional development

Continuing professional development (CPD)

is an important part of your role, and should be integrated into your work. Supervision is just one aspect of reflecting on practice and thinking about professional development. You should always be thinking of ways in which you can improve your own skills in the workplace so that you continue to evolve in your role and can support children and colleagues more effectively. As part of your professional development, you are also likely to receive feedback from others. This is important because feedback:

- Improves performance Ongoing feedback will help you to reflect on your performance and think about how you can develop in your role.
- Supports children's academic outcomes If you are observed working with children, feedback from your colleague might include strategies you could use to improve your work with them. This will better support their learning, particularly if you are working in an area of disadvantage (such as an area where there is a lack of employment, high levels of crime or limited income). It will also keep children at the centre of the process and enable you to support them to achieve success.

- Increases motivation Talking to another person about your role and setting targets that have specific time limits should help to boost your motivation and enthusiasm for your role.
- Enhances both personal and professional growth – Feedback can enhance your personal and professional growth as it allows you to see your situation from another point of view. A change of perspective can often draw your attention to something that you have not seen before.
- Provides constructive criticism We often say that the person giving feedback is acting as 'a critical friend' who can work with us and show us how we might improve our practice in a positive way.
- Supports reflective practice to identify your professional developmental needs – Ongoing feedback should encourage you to reflect on your practice (an activity known as reflective practice) so that you can start to think about developmental needs through a structured process.

Key terms 🔑

Continuing professional development (CPD)

The ongoing process of training, monitoring and

The ongoing process of training, monitoring and documenting your professional skills, practice and subject knowledge.

Reflective practice The process of looking at your own practice and what you could do to improve and develop.

4.1 The role of reflective practice and continuing professional development

Reflective practice for continuing professional development (CPD) is the process of thinking about and analysing what you do in your role so that you can improve and develop your practice. It is important to make time to do this, because it will encourage you to take a step back and look at your own experiences and beliefs. This will help you to improve your

self-awareness, and think about how you react in different situations and why. It is important that your CPD is evidence based, and looks closely at your own skills, practice and subject knowledge.

Reflective practice means taking time to think about:

- how you support children in the setting
- your own areas for development
- your work with colleagues and others
- your specific training needs.

Reflective practice should improve your work and increase your career opportunities.

Sustainability focus



Improving your practice can also help better the learning experience of children in your care. This could help to improve their academic outcomes throughout education and contribute to reducing inequality between disadvantaged areas.

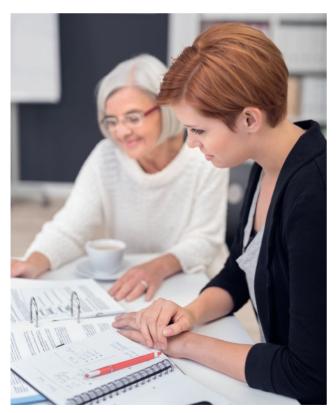


Figure 1.4.1 How does reflection help you to improve your practice?

Reflect 2

Have you thought about your own role in the setting and where you would like to be this time next year? Look at this as your target and then start to plan how you can achieve it. This is one of the first steps towards planning your professional development.

Reflective practice helps improve children's academic outcomes because it will encourage you to critically evaluate what you are doing in your work with them and adjust your practice to suit their needs. For example, you might set up a learning activity with a specific learning outcome, but the children take their learning in a different direction through their play. This does not mean that the activity has not been successful, just that the children have chosen to explore it differently. Children can often surprise us with their creativity! Reflecting on the activity afterwards might help you to see why it resulted in different learning outcomes, and how you could change your approach next time.

→ For more on reflective practice, see LO11 in this unit.

4.2 Methods of reflective and reflexive practice

You will need to reflect on your practice regularly as part of this qualification. Through reflection, you might think about and evaluate things that have gone well or not so well, and how you might change things next time. In this way, you will learn from your experiences and better support children's learning.

→ For more information on reflection and development, see LO11 in this unit.

Reflective practice

Check your practice by keeping a reflective log of what you do in the setting and updating it regularly - daily, if you have time. You could write in a notebook, or record your thoughts for an audio description. This will enable you to record and consider a range of content:

- Information A factual record of what happened – who was there, what was said, the activities, dates and timings, and resources used.
- What you noticed Were the outcomes what you expected? Did you make any assumptions?
- Reflection Your interpretation of what happened and why.
- Links to theory Does the log relate to any theories you have learned about as part of your qualification?
- Questions What questions do you have?
- Evaluation How successful or effective was this experience? Has anything changed? How has your practice been affected?

Keeping a reflective log may also help you when writing reflective accounts from the real work environment for your portfolio. Always remember confidentiality when keeping a log that may be seen by others: use initials or 'Pupil A/B/C/D' when writing about individual children, to show that you are aware of this.



Figure 1.4.2 How can keeping a log help you to think about your experiences?

Reflect 🌻

Think about an activity you have carried out with children in the past week. What went well? What could you have done differently? Would you make any changes if you repeated the activity?

Another form of reflective practice is an appraisal or performance management meeting, in which you might create a personal development plan. This might be carried out once a year with your line manager, so that together, you can clarify specific goals to work on.

→ For more information on personal development, see LO11 in this unit.

Reflexive practice

Reflexive practice means looking at your practice as and when it happens, and responding to it immediately. This differs from reflection, which takes place at a later time. Reflexive practice encourages you to be more aware of your own actions, habits, thoughts and attitudes while you are working, and to develop strategies to improve. It might persuade you to be more proactive and to acknowledge your own role in shaping your surroundings.

Reflexive practice can take place during supervision, as it is a means of evaluating your practice as it happens.

→ For more on supervision, see LO3 and LO10 in this unit.

Key term 🔑

Reflexive practice The process of looking at your practice in the moment, and evaluating how your role might affect the situation and the outcome.

Case study

Helene is an early years educator working in a nursery. She has two key children under two years as part of her role and has good relationships with the families. However, when she came back from a week's holiday, one of the parents had issued a complaint because she had not told them she would be away or that their baby would be looked after by another member of staff in her absence.

- Should this incident be part of the reflective or reflexive process?
- How can this occurrence help to develop Helene's practice?

There are other opportunities for CPD, as shown in Figure 1.4.3.

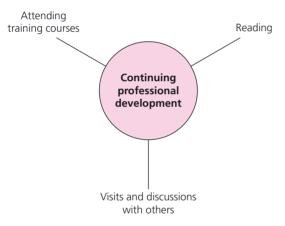


Figure 1.4.3 Continuing professional development

- Attending training courses If additional training is available, for example in first aid or early language development, it is a helpful way of developing your professional role and a good opportunity to network with professionals from other settings.
- Reading Reading and being up to date with relevant news, both online and through publications, will keep your work in line with current practice and thinking. It is also important to follow childcare issues in the news and be aware of changes to legislation. Online early years groups are another useful resource for information.

Research it! \nearrow

Search online for these useful websites and browse their content:

- Nursery World
- Under 5 magazine

Choose **two** articles or pages from any of the sources above to read in more detail.

Visits and discussions with others

These can be a good source of new ideas to support your practice, and might help you to reflect on what you do. You might be able to observe colleagues in your workplace or visit other settings to be inspired by new ideas.



Figure 1.4.4 How might visits to other settings help your own practice?

Reflective and reflexive practice for professional development

For your own professional development, begin to use both reflective and reflexive practice regularly, as well as the other opportunities we have explored above. As you become more experienced in your role you will become more skilled in reflecting on your work and will be able to quickly process each day's events.

4.3 Opportunities for progression

As we have seen, there are many ways in which to progress and develop your personal practice. However, your own experiences as an early years educator will also help you to progress professionally and to think about working towards leadership and management positions, either within or beyond your current setting. If you look at an organisational staff chart for a setting and your position within it, this should help you to think about your own next steps. You might need further qualifications and experience to achieve your goals, but progression might also include smaller steps, such as gaining experience in working with different age groups or taking on additional responsibilities.

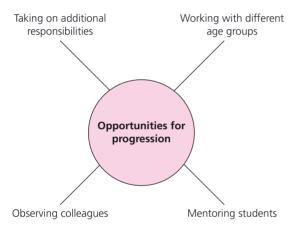


Figure 1.4.5 Opportunities for progression

Taking on additional responsibilities

You might be given the opportunity to take on additional responsibilities within your setting, such as managing learning resources or **risk assessments**. In addition, if there is an area that is of interest to you, for example creating displays, or if you have an idea you would like to develop, you should make this known to your colleagues.

Key term 🔑

Risk assessment a check for potential hazards which also looks at the likelihood or risk of them happening, so that measures can be put in place to control them.

Case study

Mark is new to his setting and has a talent for music. He has asked if he can run a singing session at the end of each morning with his guitar, and teach the children some additional nursery rhymes and songs.

- Name two benefits from Mark's suggestion.
- Consider your own areas of interest and how you might work them into your role.

Working with different age groups

You should always take the opportunity to work with different age groups in your setting. You might have more experience at working with one age group, and are therefore more confident with those children, but you might find that you enjoy another age group just as much. This can expand your knowledge and experience at the same time!

Mentoring students

As you will have experienced the mentoring process as part of your qualification, you might be well placed to mentor other students in the future. This is good experience for future senior positions, as you will be working alongside others to reflect on their own practice and identify areas for development.

Case study

Look at the management chart in Figure 1.4.6. Sajida is working as a Level 2 student in the baby room. She would like to work towards her Early Years Educator qualification when she has completed Level 2, and is particularly interested in working with pre-school children as she thinks she might eventually want to be a primary school teacher.

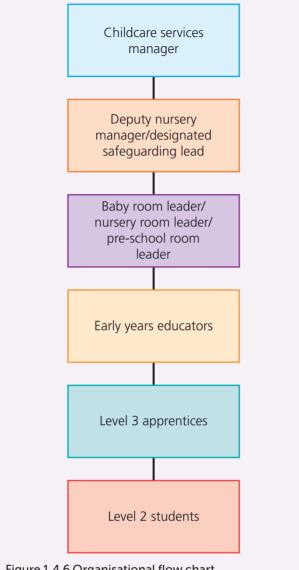


Figure 1.4.6 Organisational flow chart

- How might Sajida expand her knowledge and experience?
- What other method could she use to support her progression?

Reflect

Have you ever given advice or help to others in your setting? How could you do this in a more formal way?

Observing colleagues

You might be given the opportunity to observe more experienced colleagues in the workplace. This might enable you to look at specific issues, for example how they use questions with children to encourage their learning, or how they manage children's behaviour.

Test yourself •



- 1 What is meant by reflective practice?
- 2 Give two examples of ways in which you can progress within an early years setting.
- 3 How can reflection help you to develop in your own role?

LO 5 Using and modelling good communication skills

Another important aspect of your role is the ability to use and model good communication skills with others. This is vital both in your work with babies and children and in your relationships with colleagues and other adults. You will need to have good communication skills, including a good command of spoken and written English, so that you can work cooperatively with colleagues and children, and alongside parents and carers. Good communication skills also include non-verbal aspects, such as giving eye contact and using positive body language when speaking to another person.

Please note that you will need to hold a suitable Level 2 English qualification (e.g. GCSE or Functional Skills English) to be included within the staff-to-child ratios at Level 3.

Good communication is at the centre of what you do as an early years educator, as it enables you to form relationships and support children more effectively. If we have positive relationships with others, we are far more likely to want to interact and share with them. This in turn will benefit everyone at the setting, from staff, parents and carers to babies and children.

→ For more information on effective communication with babies and children, see Unit 4.













Figure 1.5.1 Can you identify what is being communicated by these expressions and gestures?

5.1 Communicating effectively in spoken and written form

Effective communication is one of the key aspects of your professional role. You will need to be able to listen and respond appropriately in different situations, and have a good command of written English.

Spoken form

You will have to communicate effectively in spoken form during meetings and in discussions with parents, carers and colleagues. Communicating effectively in spoken form includes a range of skills:

Ability to listen to others (active listening) –
Many of us appear to listen to others but
can be distracted or thinking about what
we are going to say next. Take time in
conversation to focus on what people are

- saying to you, rather than just thinking about your own responses. Asking questions to clarify what has been said, or summarising what has been discussed to the other person, are good ways to make sure you have understood the conversation.
- Making time to talk to others Sometimes colleagues or parents and carers will just need some time to talk through an issue or seek advice. Make sure you are approachable and offer time to talk, particularly if you are specifically asked for support.
- Being polite and considerate, and showing respect – Check that you are being polite and considerate in your responses. Also, take account of any cultural differences that may affect how others interact with you. For example, shaking hands with members of the opposite sex is normal

in some cultures but considered rude in others.

Being clear in what you say and adapting your communication methods if necessary – Make sure you are very clear, particularly if you are speaking to someone who has communication needs, or who speaks English as an additional language. You might need to plan ahead and use alternative methods of communication such as a hearing loop to enhance what is being said. Check that everyone understands what has been said, and recap at the end of any meeting to repeat key action points.

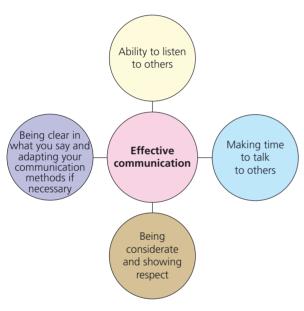


Figure 1.5.2 Skills of effective communication

Reflect 😲

When you are speaking to others, are you communicating in any other way at the same time? Do you think about the communication needs of other people when you are speaking to them?

In addition, you will need to think about how you adjust the way in which you speak to adults as opposed to how you communicate with young children.

Spoken language skills - with adults

Adults should be able to communicate with one another in a way that is open and professional. This applies to parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals with whom you may come into contact as part of your role. Make sure that you know the correct titles (such as Mr, Miss, Dr) and family names of the people you are talking to, and can pronounce and spell them correctly. This is particularly important if you are the key person to a parent's or carer's child. Remember also that parents and carers might hold different attitudes, values or ideas from those of the setting, and that this might cause barriers to communication.

Case study (

You are running a session for parents/carers of children who will be joining the setting in a few weeks. You discuss the different foods available for the children at meal and snack times. One of the parents interrupts you, saying that their child has a special diet due to their culture and that they are concerned the setting will not be able to cater for the child's needs.

- How might you respond to this parent?
- Why is it important to be calm and respectful in this situation?

You should also be aware of your own values, attitudes and behaviour when communicating with adults, and how these affect the way in which you view them. For example, you might make incorrect assumptions about what a person with a disability is able to do or understand.

Case study (

Sami is one of your key children and his mum is partially sighted. You are giving out some leaflets to parents/carers about the children's summer production later in the term, but decide not to give her one and plan to speak to her instead to pass on the information.

- How has your own attitude impacted on your behaviour?
- What might have been a more appropriate way of approaching this?

Spoken language skills - with children

Young children are developing their own communication skills. They model their communication on those around them, as they learn to work and play together cooperatively. Progress in communication skills also affects other areas of learning and development, for example social and emotional development. Good communication helps children to develop positive relationships with both their peers and adults, and also those from other backgrounds and cultures.

→ For much more on communication with children, see Unit 4.



Figure 1.5.3 How is this adult showing effective communication skills?

Written form

It is important to remain professional at all times when using written forms of communication, such as letters and emails, reports or responses to concerns. If you do not have a good command of the English language when writing, this might come across as unprofessional, as it will appear as though you have not taken the time to check what you need to say. Always use spellcheck, and read through your writing or ask a colleague to check it for you if you are unsure.

Your setting might also have a procedure that sets out the professional expectations when communicating via email and your use of social media (e.g. acceptable use, ICT policy). You are likely to be given an email address for use when communicating on behalf of the setting, and should not use personal emails for this purpose.

Evidence collector

Carry out a discussion with a group about the importance of good communication skills for early years educators. You might wish to record this, making it clear which is your contribution. Make sure that you are given the opportunity to put forward your ideas, so that this can be used as evidence for this assessment criterion.

LO 6 Individual role, responsibilities and expected behaviours, and the roles of colleagues

As well as the professional knowledge, skills and behaviours described in LO1.1, you need to be able to explain the roles and responsibilities of the people in your team and others within the setting.

6.1 Roles and responsibilities

All professional roles within the setting have a job description and person specification. A job description sets out the role's specific duties and responsibilities, while the person specification sets out the person's required experience, knowledge, skills and behaviour. Job descriptions vary in their detail, but the responsibilities of an early years educator are generally similar for most settings.

Evidence collector

Find a copy of your own job description then draw up and complete a table like the one below, relating your job description to specific examples of your responsibilities.

We have given a few examples in Table 1.6.1 to help you.

Table 1.6.1

Responsibility examples (add your own from job description)	Example in practice (add your own)
Ensuring high-quality, inclusive childcare	Including all babies and children in high-quality learning activities.
Setting up and maintaining the learning environment	Setting up indoor and outdoor learning activities each morning; maintaining the learning environment; regularly changing displays.
Carrying out planning and evaluation, monitoring and assessment	Attending and contributing to weekly planning meetings with other staff. Providing monitoring and assessment for key children.

Reflect 🌻

During a morning within your own setting, take notes on your role as you carry out different activities, and write down which of your responsibilities you cover. You might be surprised by how many of these you fulfil in just a few hours!

Other roles in your setting

As well as your own role and responsibilities, you also need to be aware of the roles of others in your setting and team. Your team is likely to include a manager and deputy, room leaders and early years educators. Some settings might also have a special educational needs and

disabilities coordinator (**SENDCo**) and additional students or apprentices. Each member of the team has their own roles, responsibilities and person specification, which will reflect what is expected of them. In childminding settings, the childminder's role will incorporate many of these areas.

Key term 🎤

SENDCo/SENCo Special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, responsible for identifying and supporting children with special educational needs (SEN).

Manager and deputy

The manager has overall responsibility for the management of the setting. This includes making sure that:

- the staff are suitable and qualified
- the EYFS curriculum is followed
- care, safeguarding and key person requirements are fully implemented
- all legal and statutory requirements are met
- the necessary policies and procedures are in place.

All early years managers must have a named deputy who has the necessary knowledge and skills to run the setting in their absence. The deputy might also have responsibility for supervising and managing any volunteers or students in the setting, and managing staff rotas.

Research it!

- 1 Who is responsible for the following in your setting?
 - Nutrition and food policy
 - Supervision
 - Online safety
- Who is the designated safeguarding lead (DSL)?
- 3 Was this easy to find out?
- 4 How does the setting ensure that roles and responsibilities are clear to all staff and to parents and carers?

SENDCo/SENCo

This will be an experienced member of staff who might have additional training in the area of SEN and disabilities. In their role they work closely with all members of staff in the setting along with parents and carers to identify and support babies and children with additional needs. They also liaise with outside professionals and agencies where needed, to provide adequate resources and training for staff and to ensure that these children's needs are met on a day-to-day basis.

→ For more on special educational needs and disabilities, see Unit 3.

Room leaders

Room leaders are responsible for the day-to-day running of their room. They need to be able to lead and supervise other staff, and ensure they work as a team to meet the requirements of the EYFS statutory framework and the setting. Their role might also include monitoring the effectiveness of the key person system in their room.

PANCo

The setting may also have a PANCo, or physical activity and nutrition coordinator. They are responsible for promoting health and nutrition within the setting, and support the wellbeing of all. The PANCo will have an additional Level 4 qualification, and will support children in understanding the importance of healthy eating and exercise.



Figure 1.6.1 Why is the role of the PANCo important?

Research it! \nearrow

- 1 Visit the PANCo website as a starting point.
- 2 Find out more about the role of a PANCo.
- 3 Is there one in your setting?

Evidence collector

Choose to complete one of the following activities to use as evidence for your portfolio.

- Using your own organisational chart as a starting point, create a leaflet for parents/ carers, outlining the job titles and roles of each member of your team and setting.
- 2 Carry out and record a small discussion with others in your group, explaining your own role and those of others within your team and setting. Make sure you use a professional level of spoken English.

Expected behaviours

We looked at some of the expected behaviours of an early years educator in LO1.1 and how they are linked to your skills, but expected behaviour in your setting will also be linked to your person specification. For example, the specification is likely to say that you should be able to relate well to children and babies, and have good relationships with adults. **Professionalism** is important in any workplace, so make sure you have seen your person specification or that of an early years educator, so that you are aware of what kind of professional behaviour is expected of you. In addition, you need to be able to show the following significant attributes through your practice.

Key term 🔑

Professionalism conducting yourself in a way that is suitable and appropriate for your job.

Being self-motivated

In your professional role, you will need to show that you are interested, have enthusiasm for your work and want to make a difference. This in turn will mean that you have a positive influence on children and inspire them in their curiosity for their environment, supporting the development of their own motivation.

Being proactive

This means thinking about how you act and being focused on planning your actions in advance, rather than just reacting to what others do. Being proactive can make you feel empowered and give you more control over what you do. You might feel inspired to be proactive after a supervision session during which you reflected on your work with children.

Case study (

Jo has just been promoted to room leader in the under-twos room. Although she is keen to do the job well and is enthusiastic about it, she feels that she will not be good enough in her new role. After a supervision session with her line manager, Jo has set out a small list of tasks to complete before the next meeting.

- Give two reasons why this might be a helpful activity for Jo.
- How might being proactive help Jo to grow into her role?

Using your own initiative

There is always plenty to do in an early years environment, and you need to show that you can carry out your duties without specific instructions. For example, if you see something that needs tidying up, you can set an example for children by using your initiative and moving it. On a professional level, you might use your initiative in other ways, such as:

- identifying areas in the curriculum that might be approached differently
- finding different ways of involving parents and carers in the life of the setting.

Evidence collector

Carry out a small-group discussion with your peers in which you give examples of how you have been motivated and proactive, and used your initiative in your professional role. Make sure this is documented in some way so that you can use it as evidence for your portfolio.

→ For more on professional relationships and partnership working with others, see Unit 10.

LO 7 How your own and others' behaviour can impact on babies and children

As discussed in LO1.1, it is important that you act as a positive role model for babies and children in the setting at all times. This is because it is natural for them to imitate what adults do and want to be like them – children learn through imitation, and feel the need to belong and be accepted by adults. As an early years educator, you are in prime position to act as a positive role model for children, and your behaviour should reflect this responsibility.

→ See also Unit 7, LO11, for more information.

7.1 The impact of our behaviour and the importance of role-modelling positive behaviours

As well as the expected behaviours discussed in LO1 and LO6 of this unit, other forms of adult behaviour that can impact on babies and children include:

- how adults relate to and communicate with others
- how adults manage and express their feelings (emotional intelligence and self-regulation)
- how adults act within the setting (e.g. tidying up, acting responsibly, following routines)
- how adults use problem-solving skills.

How adults relate to and communicate with others

This covers your relationships with both children and adults, within and outside the setting. You should always be polite, respectful and approachable in your relations with others. Remember to bear the needs of the other person in mind, particularly if they have communication

needs or speak English as an additional language. Young children learn how to respect others from seeing the reactions of adults, and might need particular guidance when relating to those who have a different culture, appearance or form of dress. For example, if an adult reacts negatively to anyone who is different from them, children are likely to respond in the same way. You should always be respectful and interested in differences, and show children that everyone is unique.

You can also give children opportunities to develop positive relationships through carrying out group activities such as games that encourage turn-taking.

→ See also LO5 in this unit.

Case study

Jack is three and has recently started at pre-school. Both his parents have hearing impairments and use British sign language (BSL) to communicate. Although Jack does not have a hearing impairment, he knows how to sign. However, his speech has not developed as quickly as that of other children his age. Rebecca is Jack's key person and is able to communicate with his parents using BSL.

- Give two examples of how this will support Jack's parents.
- How can Rebecca support and encourage Jack's speaking and listening skills?

How adults manage and express their feelings

The behaviour of adults when managing and expressing their feelings is important too, as children are also likely to copy what they see. In early years settings, adults need to demonstrate high levels of **emotional intelligence** and self-regulation. If you respond to a difficult situation or a disagreement with anger or overreaction, the situation is likely to escalate and cause distress. By remaining calm and showing that you can talk about and regulate your emotions, you will be a positive role model for children to imitate.

Key term 🔑

Emotional intelligence The ability to be aware of, understand and manage emotions effectively.

Reflect 🌻

Have you thought about how you respond when faced with difficult situations? What effect might this have both on yourself and on others around you?

How adults act within the setting

Young children respond well to routines and familiarity, as they bring feelings of safety and security because children know what will happen next, and this is linked to their wellbeing and emotional health. An early years setting is full of routines and schedules. For example, children might tidy up before lunchtime or have a story with their snack. If children see adults regularly tidying up and sticking to routines, they will be encouraged to join in, and you will be supporting these areas of their development.

Practice point

When you are doing something that you want a young child to remember to do, such as washing your hands, talk to them about it as you are doing it so that they learn why it is important. This will also support their language development.

How adults use problem-solving skills

Children look at how adults respond when they are faced with a problem, and it will help them if you can explain the steps you are taking to solve it. For example, if you experience something unexpected or challenging, try to react in a calm and measured way, talking through the problem as you address it. Remember that it does not need to be a big problem to enable you to use it as a learning opportunity!

Reflect 🌻

Imagine that you have taken a group of children outside to do some work with them. When you get back to the door, you find that you are unable to get in as you have left your key fob inside. Consider your potential reaction, what you might say to the children and how you could use this as a learning opportunity for them.

You can also give children problem-solving activities and challenges to do, as this will help to develop their self-esteem and self-confidence by experiencing a feeling of achievement. If you model how to approach problem solving with them, children will see challenges as something to be worked through rather than something to be feared. For example, young children can practise problem solving within the following activities:

- puzzles
- simple sorting activities
- building a tower using bricks
- emptying and filling using water and sand
- threading beads.



Figure 1.7.1 How can threading beads support children's problem-solving skills?

Case study

Hafsa has taken a small group of children to the outdoor area to show them an obstacle course that she has set up for them to use. She has challenged them to find the easiest way of getting from one end to the other, and asked them to think about what they will have to do when they reach each obstacle.

- How will this activity support children's problem-solving skills?
- What could Hafsa say to the children after they have completed the course to extend their learning?

Evidence collector

Write a reflective account or a log entry about the different ways in which you are a positive role model for children, including a paragraph about why this is important. Find ways of demonstrating your positive behaviour through your practice when your assessor visits your setting.

LO 8 Supporting or challenging the practice of colleagues

As part of your professional role, you need to be confident in speaking out, both when supporting and challenging practice. You should also know what to do if you notice something that is poor practice or not in the interests of the babies and children in your setting. These kinds of conversations can be difficult to have, but they can be extremely important, particularly if they impact on the children in your care.

8.1 The importance of challenging practice

You might need to challenge the practice of a colleague or another adult working in your setting if you feel that it is not appropriate or does not follow the setting's policies. In cases where safeguarding is the issue, this will mean adhering closely to the setting's safeguarding policy. However, you might also need to challenge practice where colleagues are not acting in an appropriate or professional way. It is important to raise this because the practice of all those working in early years settings should always focus on the best interests of babies and children.

Your setting should have a staff or employee document (sometimes called an employee handbook) that sets out employees' rights and responsibilities for a range of issues, including behaviour. It should also outline what will happen when practice needs to be challenged, particularly in the case of grievances, concerns about capability or misconduct.

Reflect 🌻

How do you respond if you do not agree with someone's practice? Is it more natural for you to remain silent or to speak out? How would you go about challenging someone else's practice?

Difficult conversations

Challenging someone else's practice is likely to involve a difficult conversation where the issue is discussed in the first instance. You might also need to support colleagues in doing this, to back them up or help to find a solution.

You might also need to hold difficult conversations with parents and/or carers. If you don't address issues immediately, situations can become increasingly challenging. It is better to plan ahead if you need to have a difficult conversation with someone, so that you can prepare yourself. In some cases, you might be able to discuss this in a supervision or mentoring session. Bear in mind that the person with whom you need to have a difficult conversation might be extremely reluctant to do so.

It is very important, when thinking about having these difficult conversations, that you

act in accordance with your setting's policy and discuss these conversations with your manager/room leader and parents/carers as appropriate.

Planning the conversation

- Be clear on what you want to say.
- Think about the best way to say it.
- Support what you are going to say with examples.
- Consider the other person's reaction and how you might respond.
- Role-play or rehearse the conversation with your mentor or supervisor.
- Arrange a time and place for the conversation to occur.

During the conversation

- Say what you need to say in a calm way.
- Make sure you listen to the other person's viewpoint.
- Keep focused on the subject matter.
- Be considerate and give others time to speak.
- Acknowledge the feelings and emotions of others.
- Make sure that next steps are discussed, or allow time to reflect on what has been said.

Case study

Vicky is the line manager with responsibility for the two early years students in her setting. She has noticed that one of them has been regularly asking the children to give her a hug. The policies of the setting say that hugs are acceptable if a child is upset, but should be instigated by the child rather than the adult. Vicky feels that she needs to speak to the student about it.

- How could Vicky approach this conversation?
- Why is it important that she says something to the student?

After the conversation

- Allow time for reflection.
- Consider how you might approach a similar conversation next time.

- Discuss how it went with your mentor or supervisor if appropriate.
- For more on the discussion of sensitive issues, see LO10 in this unit.

Evidence collector

Write a reflective account to discuss the importance of challenging other people's practice, and why it is in the best interests of babies and children. Alternatively, write about a conversation you have had with a colleague, or use an example from your own reflective log.

8.2 Steps to take when challenging practice

If you need to challenge the practice of a colleague, be aware of the steps you should take. If it is a safeguarding issue, you should follow the setting's safeguarding policy so that information is passed on through the appropriate channels.

→ See also LO9 in this unit.

For other issues, the setting's whistleblowing policy will set out the steps to follow, in line with correct procedure so that any poor practice is thoroughly investigated.

You will need to log your own and your colleagues' initial concerns. The kinds of steps that may be taken will depend on the situation, but could include:

- speaking to a line manager or supervisor about your concerns, to discuss your approach and decide who will take it further
- suggesting a meeting with those involved
- planning in advance what you are going to say
- after the meeting, setting out next steps.



Figure 1.8.1 How should you plan what you are going to say when challenging someone else's practice?

Reflect 😲

Have you ever needed to challenge others in the setting? How have you managed this, and what steps did you take?

Evidence collector

Find a copy of your setting's staff handbook. Highlight and annotate it to show the steps that should take place when practice needs to be challenged in the best interests of babies and children. Your annotation should include why it is important to do so.

LO 9 Following procedures in the work setting

Have you ever had a situation in your setting where you have had to refer to one of its policies? As part of this qualification, you need to show that you are able to follow policies and procedures in the work setting, as well as knowing how to update and develop them where appropriate. You have already considered your understanding of these policies and procedures in LO2 of this unit, and now you need to show how to adhere to them as part of your role.

Policies and procedures need to be updated from time to time, and this usually occurs on a planned cycle to ensure that it happens regularly. Remember that many policies directly relate to legislation, so you are legally required to follow them.

9.1 Working in adherence to policies and procedures

Reporting

You need to know about the different types of report and record that are kept in your setting, and how they should be used. This might include:

- how to record and report an accident or infectious illness
- where to report safeguarding concerns
- records on individual children.

Your setting is likely to have a recording and reporting policy, which sets out your responsibilities for reporting and gives information on what should happen in each case.

→ For more on reporting with regard to your role, see Unit 6 for record keeping and Unit 8 for records of observation and assessment.

Evidence collector

Find out about the kinds of record and report that are kept in your setting and where they are stored. What are your responsibilities regarding recording and reporting within the setting?

Whistleblowing

Another type of reporting in an early years setting is whistleblowing, which is the reporting of any misconduct or serious concerns about others in the work setting. This policy should ensure that staff know it is their duty to report concerns and provide a means to do so. Staff should be aware that they will not be penalised in any way for acting in good faith and raising concerns.

→ For more on whistleblowing and challenging the practice of colleagues, see LO2 and LO8 in this unit.

Evidence collector

Using a copy of your setting's whistleblowing policy, outline its aims and the steps you should take if you have any concerns about a child.

Protecting and promoting the welfare of children/safeguarding

Protecting and promoting the welfare of children is one aspect of safeguarding, and the same policy might cover both. Children's welfare is part of the EYFS statutory framework and as such is a legal requirement. All settings will have a designated safeguarding lead, and you need to identify who that is for your setting so that you know who to approach to report safeguarding concerns as well as how to do this. Your setting is likely to have regular safeguarding training that all staff will need to attend.

→ For more information on safeguarding and welfare, see Unit 5.

What are your responsibilities regarding safeguarding and protecting and promoting the welfare of children in your setting? Make sure you refer to your setting's policies and procedures as well as the EYFS Statutory Framework.

Research it! \nearrow

Read the two documents below and think about how they could be applied to your everyday work.

- 1 Working together to safeguard children: This document outlines how agencies should work together to protect children. It also lists helpful websites and documents where you can find further information.
- 2 What to do if you're worried a child is being abused: This document lists the steps to take if you need to report a case of abuse.

Both documents are updated regularly and are available on the gov.uk website.

→ For more on safeguarding, see Unit 5.

Confidentiality and information sharing

You should share information only with those who need to know it and, as mentioned earlier, information that the setting holds on children will be kept confidential. The confidentiality or information-sharing policy should provide guidance about who you can share information with, and it should emphasise the importance of passing files and records about an individual child only to the parents or carers of that child.

Case study (

Leanne is working towards her Level 2 childcare qualification at a local nursery. She has twin boys who are at a school joined to the setting. A good friend of hers, whose child is in the boys' class, also has a daughter in the nursery. She asks Leanne to tell her as much as she can about one of the other children in the nursery room where she is working, as she has heard that the girl is disruptive and is concerned that her own child's learning is being interrupted.

- What should Leanne say to her friend?
- What might happen if she passes on information about the child?

Use of technology/ICT policy (sometimes known as acceptable use policy)

This policy is often created in line with the safeguarding policy, outlining the measures the setting has put in place to protect children surrounding technology use, and explaining how to use all kinds of technology safely. For example, staff will not be able to use the cameras on their mobile phones while working with children, and most settings will require these to be locked away out of sight while children are present. The setting is also likely to have measures in place to block inappropriate websites when on the premises.

Research it! 🔎

Make sure you have read your setting's policy for ICT, and that you can outline your own responsibilities when using technology. This may also be in your staff handbook.

Referring development concerns

Your setting will have a procedure for referring concerns about a baby or child's development. This may be to your line or room manager in the first instance, or an early years SENDCo. They might ask you for a record of your concerns, including dates and additional information.

Evidence collector

Outline the procedures you should follow if you are concerned about a baby or child's development in your setting.

Protecting educators

Adults must have a **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check**, and should be aware of any policies for lone working and the use of technology. Any social media accounts that you have should not be used for communicating with families and carers from the setting – this will be set out in the acceptable use policy. All staff need to be aware of the policies and procedures for nappy changing and intimate or personal care.

Key term 🔑

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check A check carried out by employers which searches for an employee's criminal record.

Case study

Sam lives in a small village and knows many of the people there. She has just secured a job at the village nursery. She is already friends with a number of the parents on social media, as she has known them for a long time.

- What should Sam do in this situation?
- Why is this important?

Staff health and safety

Settings need to protect educators by being mindful of their mental wellbeing and fostering a positive culture in the workplace. Your setting's health and safety policy is an important document and should be read and understood by all staff – you might need to sign to say that you have done this. You will need to know about issues concerning general safety, emergency evacuation and safe use of resources, as well as support for staff mental health and wellbeing.

→ For more information on staff health and safety, see Unit 6.

Evidence collector

Ask a member of your senior leadership team which policies and procedures are due to be updated in the next few months and whether you can work alongside other staff to update and develop them. You can then use the completed policies and procedures as part of your evidence for this learning objective, if you are able to highlight your contribution.

If this is not possible, carry out a simulation in relation to each of these policies, showing what you would do in each situation.

Lo 10 Mutual support and teamwork through effective supervision

Supervision is a requirement of the EYFS statutory framework, and you will therefore be required to take part in the process regularly. Although we discussed what is meant by the role of supervision in LO3, for this qualification you will also need to show how you contribute to it in your own setting, to promote the best interests of children in your care.

10.1 Contribute to a culture of mutual support through supervision

All members of staff in early years settings need to foster a culture of mutual support and teamwork, as well as being open to CPD and improvement. This should be true at any point in your career. In an early years setting, remember that you are part of a team, and should regularly think about ways in which you can support others.

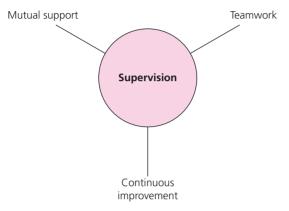


Figure 1.10.1 The collaborative role of supervision

Mutual support

Members of a team should show respect to one another and value the contributions of their colleagues. This level of support maintains the high morale of the team, as members continue to grow and develop in their roles. Supervision gives staff the opportunity to collaborate with others and work through issues together. This will both develop staff relationships and provide professional support. In this way team members will be able to work more collaboratively towards team objectives and common goals.

Evidence collector

During the day, note down or highlight in your log anything that may be helpful or useful to discuss during your next supervision session or to use as part of a professional discussion. It can be easy to forget things like this during a busy day!

Teamwork

Although supervision takes place on a one-to-one basis, it also provides support for **teamwork** in the setting. It is important that members of the team work together and that the group agenda is more important than that

of the individual. More experienced staff can share their knowledge and support others in identifying their training needs. This can be positive for the workforce, as the team might achieve better outcomes for the children in their care. Supervision will provide opportunities for collaboration between colleagues, and so lead to increased productivity and job satisfaction within the setting.

Key term



Teamwork Individuals working together to achieve a common goal.

Continuous improvement

All members of the team should be committed to continuous career improvement and regularly reflect on their progress and career goals. During a supervision discussion it might become clear that staff have training needs, which can therefore be planned for and provided. This will strengthen the work of the team and also ensure that all members of staff continue to develop their skills. This should ultimately result in positive outcomes for children in the setting, which should be your priority.

Research it!

- 1 Does your setting have a supervision policy?
- 2 Outline your setting's requirements for supervision and find out how often it should take place.

For supervision to be effective, meetings between the supervisee and their line manager or supervisor should take place regularly. For best results, both sides should value the exchange of information and communicate honestly.

During supervision sessions, you may want to discuss:

- your key children
- your current job role

- your performance management targets
- your progress since the last meeting
- any specific issues you are facing in your role.

This is not an exhaustive list, and you might wish to discuss other topics. It is also helpful to have the advice and support of a more experienced member of staff, and to be able to talk through different aspects of your practice. By routinely scheduling supervision sessions, you will be able to have regular conversations with your line manager in which to reflect on your achievements, celebrate successes and identify any problems.

Evidence collector

Using documents you have gathered during supervision sessions, show that you have taken part in the process and how regularly this takes place.

Where sensitive or confidential issues have been discussed, remove names and details where appropriate to ensure that you are complying with the setting's policies for confidentiality. Speak to your supervisor or assessor if you are unsure of what to include.

10.2 Confidential discussion of sensitive issues

Effective supervision will have a number of benefits for those who take part. One is that it can encourage staff to discuss any issues that are sensitive or confidential in a safe and non-judgemental environment, at any stage of their career. The fact that supervision sessions are confidential means they will encourage the supervisee to be open about any potentially difficult issues. To support this, supervision should be held at a time where there are unlikely to be any interruptions.

Supervision sessions are for everyone and should therefore also be provided for managers and line managers. A manager's supervision might take place with the setting's owners, or

members of the management committee if they have received appropriate training.

For more information on confidentiality, see Unit 6. LO3.1

Evidence collector

Create a booklet for staff about effective supervision. It should provide guidance about the process and its benefits, in particular how it encourages confidential discussions. Include an introduction and definition of supervision, and outline the benefits for staff and for the setting.

LO 11 Using feedback from others

As we have already mentioned in LO4, you will need to reflect on your practice regularly as part of your role. This helps you to plan how to move forward in your career by planning your next steps more closely, and it gives you ownership over how you might achieve this. Reflection and feedback might take place through supervision sessions or a formal appraisal, which will usually take place on an annual basis.

11.1 Collecting feedback from others

→ See also LO3.1 and LO4.1 in this unit.

One of the main methods of reflecting on your practice and receiving feedback is through an appraisal or performance management meeting with your line manager. This may involve first being observed in your practice, and then discussing what happened and

and then discussing what happened and receiving feedback to encourage reflective practice and areas for development. This will encourage you to think about what has happened, and to proactively and regularly examine your role and how it relates to the roles of others in your team.

This type of feedback usually takes place on a yearly cycle, and you will be asked both to review what you have done and to think about what you would like to achieve in the future. This professional feedback from your line manager should support you to meet your targets and work towards your career goals.

Evidence collector

Your line manager might wish to observe you carrying out an activity with children, or alternatively have a discussion with you and give you feedback and suggest areas for development. In either case, make sure this is recorded so that you can use it as evidence for this assessment criterion.

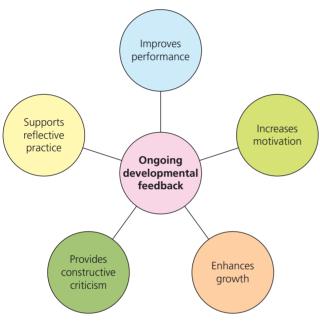


Figure 1.11.1 Have you been able to meet with your line manager to set professional targets?

11.2 Developing a personal development plan

Before a CPD or performance management meeting with your line manager, you might be asked to complete a self-evaluation or self-assessment of your role. This might include the following questions:

- Is my job description still accurate? Are there any changes that need to be made, and if so what are they?
- What do I think are my greatest strengths, and which are the areas I need to improve?

- What areas of my job satisfy me the most?
- Do I have gaps in my knowledge? What skills or training would help me improve my performance?
- What goals or targets would I like to work towards over the next 12 months?

These questions are helpful as they will encourage you to reflect on what you have done in your role and what you would like to do going forward. They also bring focus and provide ideas to discuss in the meeting. Your line manager will record your responses and use them to help set a series of about four small, manageable targets.

A personal development plan will often consist of the following areas:

- Self-evaluation
- Review of current targets
- New targets for development

Evidence collector

Thinking about your own role in the setting and using the questions above, complete your own self-assessment. Alternatively, your setting might have its own form that you should use before your appraisal.

In your meeting, you will go through these questions with your line manager and come up with a personal development plan, containing your targets to focus on over the next 12 months. You can use this personal development plan as evidence for this assessment criterion.

11.3 The role of the mentor and supervision in supporting career goals

As well as having some form of supervision, you are also likely to be assigned a mentor when you start working in your new role. Although mentoring is not the same as supervision, it can contribute to it as it supports practitioners' development and can lead to a focus on a specific area. There are some differences between the two:

- Supervision is a formal, ongoing process.
- Mentoring is more informal, and sessions do not need to be structured.

Table 1.11.1 sets out these differences in more detail.

When you start out in your new role, you are likely to have a trained mentor to support you. Mentors can be beneficial throughout your career whenever your role changes and you need support. Mentors might also have other roles and responsibilities within the setting.

Both mentoring and supervision can support career goals, as both enable early years educators to discuss and address any ideas and concerns as they arise. They will both be instrumental in supporting your practice and professional development within your setting.

→ For more on supervision, see LO3 and LO10 in this unit.

Table 1.11.1 Differences between supervision and mentoring

Supervision	Mentoring
Identifies solutions to address issues	Offers accessible guidance to individuals
Identifies any mentoring needs	Acts as a role model
Provides coaching, training and support	Recognises potential in staff for further responsibility
Promotes the interests of babies and children	Supports improved outcomes
Shares successes	Offers an area of strength
Identifies areas for development	More informal
Is usually face to face	Can be face to face or virtual

Case study (

Jamie is new to the setting and is being mentored by Shanice. A corner of the outdoor area has recently been developed and Shanice will be setting up some new activities for the children to use. Jamie will be working alongside her to develop the new activities.

- How might this working beside Shanice support Jamie's professional development?
- What other benefits might come from this partnership?

Evidence collector

Do you have experience with a mentor and supervisor in your own setting? Describe the work you have done together and how this has supported your practice. Include any paperwork for your portfolio.