

Planning

Category: Early Years

Risk Management and Legal Implications

Failure to manage risk may impact on the delivery of Service objectives and the outcomes achieved by Service users. Education and Children’s Services aim to mitigate the implications by ongoing management and review of risk in all elements of work activity.

The production of this document is one way in which we aim to reduce our exposure to risk. By providing staff with information on good practice, making reference to other guidance that is available across the Council and providing clarity on how we should do things, we can ensure that the management of risk is intrinsic to what we do.

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Planning

“We have a key role in providing motivating learning provocations and appropriate challenge. Our richer knowledge and understanding of the world helps young children to make progress in their learning. This is what Bruner meant by ‘scaffolding’. Children and practitioners working together can take learning further than the child could themselves.”
(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

Children’s learning is promoted through observing, interacting and planning with children during play. Assessment and planning are integral parts of learning and teaching.

The development of manageable and effective assessment and planning practices involves teamwork by staff and parents/carers.

Children’s learning is enhanced when staff reflect on learning and respond to children’s interests.

“What makes working with young children so exciting is the way the anticipated possibilities planned and provided for by the educator are used by individual and groups of children in spontaneous and dynamic ways. The people, children, parents and educators, who share the experiences, construct the curriculum.”
(Children’s Rights & Early Education/Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

We provide both responsive and intentional learning for children in our day to day practice. We constantly respond to the needs of our children alongside planning and implementing intentional experiences to help them develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Responsive and intentional planning approaches are informed by our observations of children’s actions, emotions and communication. This tells us what the child needs for us to develop their learning. A child-centred approach to planning learning helps the children to make connections in their learning to what they already know.

A long-term plan

This provides an overview of learning opportunities to be offered over the session and indicates areas of emphasis for learning during each term. A long-term plan helps to make learning and teaching manageable, recognising that it is neither possible nor desirable to try to teach or assess everything all the time.

Long term planning will:

- Ensure that children have a wide range of learning opportunities.
- Plan for festivals and seasonal themes.
- Prepare for interests or events, which usually emerge during a year, such holidays or seasons.



- Involve children in the decision-making process about what they know already and what they want to learn. Through the evaluation process, children should also be involved in identifying what they know now. This can be evidenced on learning walls as well as in their personal learning journals.

A short-term plan

A short-term plan will:

- Build on information about a child's or group of children's previous learning.
- Set out clearly what staff intend children to learn (referring to the Curriculum Framework document).
- Identify how individuals and the staff teams will support learning during group activities and free play.
- Show where observation and assessment will be focused.
- Give staff an opportunity to evaluate aspects which were particularly successful or those which need more attention.
- Involve children in the decision-making process about what they know already and what they want to learn. Through the evaluation process, children should also be involved in identifying what they know now. This can be evidenced on learning walls as well as in their personal learning journals.

How good is our planning?

"Planning strongly reflects children's ideas and interests and shows how practitioners very effectively respond to and promote their creativity, inquiry and curiosity."
(HGIOELCC – QI 1.2: Leadership of Learning)

"We have a key role to play in providing motivating learning provocations and appropriate challenge. Our richer knowledge of the world helps young children to make progress in their learning. This is what Bruner meant by 'scaffolding'. Children and practitioners working together can take learning further than the child could do themselves."
(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

Staff should regularly reflect on the quality of the planning process in their own playrooms. The following prompts should be considered:

Do we have a long-term plan that provides an overview of learning opportunities to be offered over the year, with areas of emphasis for learning identified for each term?

- ❖ Does it ensure that children have a wide range of learning opportunities over a year?
- ❖ Does it plan time for festivals and seasonal themes?
- ❖ Does it prepare for possible child-initiated learning, for example by creating resources boxes for topics, which tend to interest children every year, such as road safety visit or a snowy day?
- ❖ Does it help make learning and teaching manageable?

Do we have a short-term plan that provides a framework for learning in the areas of



emphasis identified in the long-term plan?

- ❖ Does it build on information about children's previous learning?
- ❖ Does it set out clearly what staff intend children to learn?
- ❖ Does it identify how individuals and the staff team will support learning during group activities and free play?
- ❖ Does it show where observation and assessment will be focused?
- ❖ Does it give staff an opportunity to evaluate aspects that were particularly successful or those that need more attention?
- ❖ Does it involve children in planning, assessing and evaluating their own learning?

How do we ensure that staff, children and parents/carers are involved in planning?

- ❖ Do staff share in the planning process?
- ❖ Have we taken account of children's comments and information from parents/carers during planning?
- ❖ Have we built in opportunities to share our plans?

Are our plans working?

- ❖ Is the nursery stimulating and well organised?
- ❖ Are the children responding well and making good progress?
- ❖ Are the resources we are using providing the learning opportunities that we want?
- ❖ Are the children involved in the planning process?

"We make very good use of children's ideas and interests to help shape the learning environment and experiences. Practitioners are highly skilled at encouraging children's curiosity and in using higher-order questions and making comments to extend children's thinking and understanding. Children are consistently encouraged to choose and lead interactions in their own learning in play and in real-life contexts. They are becoming increasingly confident in interacting with others, discussing possibilities and reasoning out answers to a self-satisfying conclusion within an exciting range of indoor and outdoor learning experiences. Taking very good account of children's age and stage of development, practitioners are flexible and responsive in their approach as they encourage children to discuss and plan their learning, enjoy their successes and share their achievements."

(HGIOELCC – QI 1.2: Leadership of Learning)