

## Quality Assurance

### 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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## Quality Assurance

'Education Scotland's How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare provides a robust quality framework to support critical reflection and continuous improvement for both ELC and early primary settings.

(Realising the Ambition – Being Me)

Self-evaluation for self-improvement has been a feature of improving the early years sector of Scottish education for our youngest children in Scotland for many years. As members of the early learning and childcare sector, we have used our previous self-evaluation frameworks as a tool to help in the process of self-evaluation for settings to improve their quality and aim for excellence. We have become familiar with the use of quality indicators, which has been a key feature to influence our practice for the benefit of children's outcomes.

'How good is our early learning and childcare?' builds on the strengths of previous and existing frameworks for improvement but at the same time takes a fresh look at the developing needs and reflects upon the changes and increased provision of the ELC sector today.

HGIOELC takes account of childminders and all private, voluntary and local authority settings. It is therefore for all practitioners working with children from birth to starting school. It complements the newly published How good is our school? (4th edition), for primary and secondary schools, and underpins the approach to self-evaluation to drive forward improvement work across Scotland. It takes full account of recent guidance initiatives such as, National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare: Realising the Ambition – Being Me, Getting it Right For Every Child and Curriculum for Excellence. The Care Inspectorate guidance 'Quality framework for Daycare of Children, Childminding and School-aged Childcare' should also be used to help evaluate the quality of the provision and to support improvement planning processes.

'Research has shown that high quality early years provision promotes children's development and learning and, in the longer term, enhances their educational and life chances (Sylva, 2014).

High quality settings have:

- a clear, shared vision
- practitioners with an understanding of child development and how young children learn
- rich adult-child interactions

Practitioners in high quality provision:

- understand... the importance of curriculum and pedagogy
- work with families... and value children's learning at home
- a skilled workforce which engages in critically reflective practice



'How good is our early learning and childcare?' (HGIOELC) is made up of 15 quality indicators (QIs), which are organised into three key areas: Leadership & management, Learning Provision, Successes & Achievements. The framework is aimed at practitioners working with children aged 0-5 years in early learning and childcare and the early stages of primary school.

Each QI is described further in several themes, each of which have illustrations of what 'very good' looks like. In this framework, for each QI have been added 'features of highly effective practice' and 'challenge questions' which guide us to strive for excellence.

HGIOELC takes account of the continuous aspiration to make Scotland the best place to grow up and embraces the diversity and type of provision across the country.

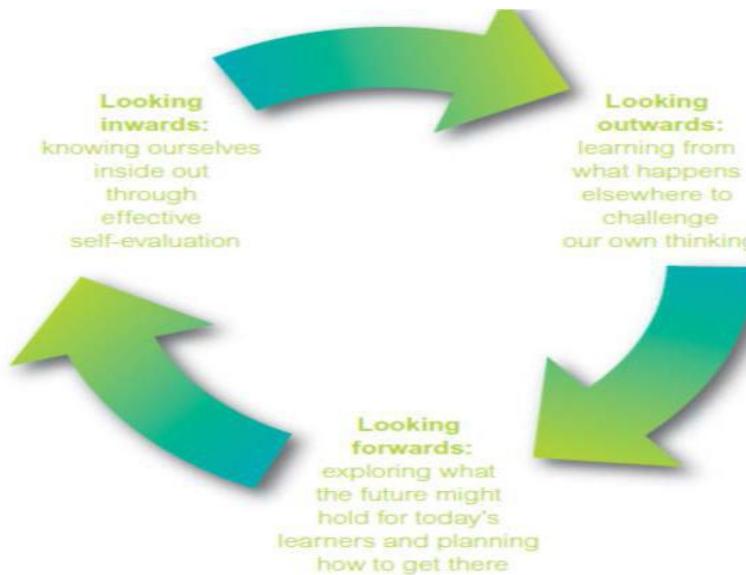
### **Partnership, collaboration and self-improvement**

Meeting the wide-ranging needs of all children and their families is the heart of what we believe makes excellent provision. However, we believe that we cannot achieve this by ourselves. How good is our early learning and childcare? highlights the importance of partnership and collaboration as significant features of a highly effective setting. Parents and carers have unique experience of their children and have important knowledge of their progress as learners over time within the ELC setting, at home and in other aspects of a child's life. It is important that their views on the setting are considered, from what they see on an informal daily basis, what help and support and response they may receive at times of difficulty or concern, and by generally gathering their views on the impact of improvement. We do this on a regular basis through informal conversations and more planned and organised question and answer session.

The term 'self-evaluation' is used to cover the way in which we explore our progress, development and practice to identify what has improved and what still needs to improve. We use evidence to assess achievements and success and areas that still need action. We do this by asking ourselves these questions for the areas we have chosen:

- How are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What are we going to do now?

Key sources of evidence come from, for example, observations, from data of various kinds and collating the views of people who are involved with the setting, such, parents and carers, partner agencies, practitioners and the children themselves. We value the contribution of children, as they provide a thoughtful and valuable perspective of their experiences. Through this approach, we look inwards to analyse own work, reflect on what we are providing, then make adjustments to make the provision better for children's learning. At the same time, look outwards to find out more about what is working well for others locally and nationally, and look forwards to gauge what continuous improvement might look like.



We aim to ensure that we continue our "Journey to Excellence" through a rigorous process of self-evaluation which involves all stakeholders including children, parents, staff and the wider community.

We involve children through:

- Mind maps
- Learning walls
- Photographic evidence
- Making choices
- Consultation
- Questionnaires

We involve parents through:

- Learning walls
- Photographic evidence
- Consultation – resources, new developments, parents' classes, children's learning, achievements and successes
- Questionnaires – end of year evaluation, PLP chats, induction etc.
- Formal & informal audits
- SIP wall

We involve the staff through:

- Team consultations
- Consultation
- Ongoing & end of year self-evaluation
- Planning
- Staff meetings

We involve the community through:

- Learning walls
- Photographic evidence
- Consultation
- Questionnaires
- Partnership working

The nursery continually seeks innovative methods of gathering the views of all stakeholders. Consultation will be ongoing throughout the year.

We strive to provide the very best early years learning experiences for all our children and families, whatever their need and whenever they need it, with the ultimate view to provide them with the best start in life.