

Early years self-evaluation form guidance

Guidance to support using the self-evaluation form to evaluate the quality of registered early years provision and ensure continuous improvement.

Age group: Birth to 31 August following a child's fifth birthday

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Introduction

The optional early years self-evaluation form is for providers on the Early Years Register. You may prefer to record your self-evaluation on a different form, for example:

- a children's centre self-evaluation form that includes the registered part of your provision
- a local authority form
- a quality assurance scheme system.

Self-evaluation is important in helping you to consider how best to create, maintain and improve your setting so that it meets the highest standards and offers the best experience for young children. The early years self-evaluation form helps you to evaluate your practice against the judgements inspectors make.

Completing your self-evaluation form

You may wish to refer to the following when completing your self-evaluation form:

- Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (from 1 September 2014) (the EYFS)¹
- Early years outcomes²
- Early years inspection handbook from September 2015³
- Common inspection framework: education, skills and early years from September 2015⁴

We recommend that you complete the self-evaluation form online. The form may take some time to complete initially but completing it online means you can update it easily at any time you want.

There is no fixed time when you should complete your self-evaluation form. You can complete it as often as you wish and when it best suits you. You may choose to complete your self-evaluation form to fit in with your normal cycle of review and planning. We recommend that you review and update it at least once a year.

¹ *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (from 1 September 2014)* Department for Education, 2014; www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2.

² *Early years outcomes*, DfE, 2013: a non-statutory guide for practitioners and inspectors to help inform understanding of child development through the early years
www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-outcomes

³ *Early years inspection handbook from September 2015*, 150068, Ofsted 2015;
www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015

⁴ *Common inspection framework: education, skills and early years from September 2015*, 150065, Ofsted 2015; www.gov.uk/government/publications/common-inspection-framework-education-skills-and-early-years-from-september-2015

Submitting your self-evaluation form

Once you have completed the form, submit it online. Or, if completing it in hard copy, save a copy for yourself and then post it to:

EY SEF
Ofsted
Applications, Regulatory and Contact (ARC) Team
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

When you send your updated self-evaluation form to us it will replace any earlier version.

How Ofsted uses your self-evaluation form

The inspector will use your self-evaluation form to plan for inspection. It will provide evidence of the quality of your provision, detailing the main strengths and areas for improvement that you have identified and how well you use self-reflection as part of your commitment to continuous improvement.

During your inspection, the inspector will consider carefully how you evaluate the service you offer children and how compatible your views are with the judgements they make.

We may also consider your self-evaluation form if we receive any information about your provision that raises concerns. It will help us to decide if your inspection needs to be brought forward or prioritised.

Part A. Setting details and views of those who use the setting or who work with you

Section 1. Your setting

In this section you should describe the main characteristics of your setting and the culture and backgrounds of the children who attend, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or speak English as an additional language. Include details of:

- your building, including areas/rooms used
- the area your provision is in, such as 'residential area close to the local school'
- how your provision is organised, including any links with a school or children's centre
- any access to outdoor space

- access to and within the building, such as a lift, ramps or stairs
- the days and hours you operate
- the maximum number of places available on any one day
- the number of adults working with the children and their qualifications, and how you organise where they work
- any support staff, such as a cook
- any special features of the provision, such as particular methods of teaching.

Outline any specific issues that aid or prevent the smooth running of your setting, such as:

- recent training attended and any qualifications gained
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff
- recent or impending re-organisation or change of staff.

Section 2. Views of those who use your setting or who work with you

This section asks you to tell us about the views of the children and their parents or carers. It also asks how you capture the views of other professionals who may work with you, including your staff and any volunteers, those who administer quality assurance schemes, your local authority advisers, your local children's centre colleagues and any health professionals or social workers. Things to consider include:

- how you obtain and use the views of others, for example through using parental questionnaires, parent meetings and staff meetings
- whether parents are included in your management body or if they contribute directly to the running of your provision in some other way
- how you know and use children's views and ideas
- how you work with other organisations, for example whether you have any agreed working protocols
- whether you are part of a quality assurance scheme or use any other systems or methods to assess what you do – if so, capture the details here
- reference to any local authority support and intervention
- examples of any feedback you have had from other professionals who work with you or with the children you care for
- examples of any action you have taken to change your provision as a result of the views of others.

Part B. The quality and standards of the early years provision

In Part B, there are sections covering the judgements the inspector will make at inspection, and one for the overall effectiveness of the provision. You may find it helpful to refer to the criteria the inspector will consider and the evidence they look for when making these judgements. You can find these in the inspection handbook, and the Common inspection framework.

Grading your provision

For each of the judgements, the inspector will give your provision a grade using a four-point scale. The self-evaluation form uses the same four-point scale so that you can consider how well you are doing against the same criteria used by the inspector. You should look carefully at the grade descriptors used by the inspector and decide which judgement best fits your practice.

Section 3. Effectiveness of leadership and management

This section is about how well your provision is led and managed. You may find it helpful to refer to pages 30–34 of the Early years inspection handbook and the learning and development requirements on pages 7–12 of the EYFS. If you are a childminder, you should consider how well you organise the childminding service and how well you work with others, such as the network coordinator and any other provision a child attends.

You should evaluate how well your leadership and management activities:

- create a culture of excellence where children can excel
 - help your staff improve
 - evaluate the quality of your provision, and make successful improvements based on this evaluation
 - provide a learning environment, programme and curriculum that is suitably broad, and meets the needs and interests of children
 - support all children so they get a good start and are ready for the next stage in their learning
 - promote equality and diversity, promote British values and tackle poor behaviour, including bullying
 - meet statutory requirements of the EYFS and other government requirements
 - meet requirements to make sure that all children are safe, and protected from radicalisation and extremism
- support partnership working with parents and agencies to support children in your setting.

Do not just list what you do but consider how well you and any assistants or staff who work with you:

- plan the learning environment to support children’s play and exploration in and out of doors
- have high expectations for children and enthuse and motivate them to explore and develop in their learning
- adapt your teaching style and method to meet the needs of individual children in the setting
- use continuous professional development and training to improve the quality of teaching in the setting, and meet statutory requirements
- use coaching and mentoring of trainees and students
- use any additional funding, including the early years pupil premium, and the impact of the funding on narrowing gaps in children’s achievement
- support each child in their learning and work with parents and carers as partners in children’s learning and development.

Section 4. Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

You may find it helpful to refer to pages 34–38 of the Early years inspection handbook and pages 8–9 of the EYFS. This section is about how well teaching promotes learning throughout the provision. You should evaluate how well you:

- understand the age group you work with and if you have high enough expectations of each child
- use assessment information to understand children’s current level of development, and how you use this to plan their learning over time
- support children to develop the characteristics of effective learning
- work in partnership with parents and carers to support each child’s learning, in and out of the provision
- promote equality of opportunity and diversity through teaching.

Do not just list what you do but consider the **impact** of your activities on children’s learning and development by considering whether:

- activities encourage children to play and explore, be active in their learning and think creatively and critically
- practitioners adapt activities, resources and routines to match the observations they make of the children
- plans are made for the children’s next stages of learning, based on observations and understanding of each child’s development
- parents are involved in the learning process and understand how they can be involved in helping their children learn

- practitioners are able to identify those children who need extra support and are providing it.

Section 5. Personal development, behaviour and welfare

This section is about how your care practices help children feel emotionally secure and ensure that they are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy. You may find it helpful to refer to pages 38–41 of the Early years inspection handbook. You should evaluate how well you help children:

- secure emotional attachments with their key person
- learn to behave well and develop good relationships with their peers
- keep them themselves healthy and safe
- become self-aware and confident learners.

Do not just list what you do but consider the **impact** of your care on children's healthy development by considering how well children:

- form appropriate bonds and emotional attachments
- are happy and enjoy what they are doing
- attend regularly
- are learning how to behave well, play cooperatively and develop their independence
- explore their surroundings and use their imagination
- become confident in social situations, talking and playing with each other and the adults that care for them
- understand the importance of physical exercise and a healthy diet
- are prepared for their transition into their next stage of learning, including school where applicable.

Section 6. Outcomes for children

This section is about the progress of different groups of children from their starting points. You may find it helpful to refer to pages 41–44 of the Early years inspection handbook, pages 10–12 of the EYFS and Early years outcomes. You should evaluate how well you:

- identify children's starting points and the progress they are making over time
- support those children who are disadvantaged or underperforming to catch up
- help children to work at typical levels of development for their age, including those whose development exceeds what is typical for their age

- help children to develop skills that will help them to be ready for the next stage of learning.

Do not just list what you do but consider the **impact** of your work and how well you and any assistants that work with you:

- challenge children to develop and make good progress towards the early learning goals from their starting points
- help children to think critically, play and explore and be active and creative learners
- check the progress children are making across the areas of learning
- ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points
- help children to enjoy their learning, be motivated and excited to take part in activities.

Section 7. The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

You should refer to pages 28–30 of the inspection handbook. In this section, you should take account of the judgements you have made about your provision in the four key areas. In particular, you should consider:

- the progress all children make in their learning and development relative to their starting points and how ready they are for the next stage of their education
- the extent to which your practice meets the needs of all the children who attend, including any children who may be disadvantaged or need additional support because of their home background or because they have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- children's personal and emotional development and behaviour, including whether they feel safe and are secure and happy
- the children's readiness for their next stage of learning, and how you support them in getting ready for transition
- whether the requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are met
- your effectiveness in evaluating practice and securing continuous improvement for your provision.