

Personal Development Plan



<https://www.cim.co.uk/content-hub/editorial/back-to-basics-how-to-set-smart-objectives/>

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	RESOURCES	TARGET DATE	SUCCESS CRITERIA
To successfully complete each module to a good standard and continually grow my knowledge and understanding which I can take forward and successfully practice as an early years professional.	To achieve successful grades in each module I will focus on my time management and plan and study each module on a week by week basis. Attend weekly lectures, and study sessions.	Lecture notes, reading lists, Moodle, peer discussions. Tutor feedback, module. handbooks.	Ongoing date throughout the 2 years, however each end of module deadline (approximately 6 weeks) will be the benchmark to successfully pass each module.	Module mark is good and improves when taking forward the tutor feedback.
Sustain a healthy and stable mental Wellbeing.	Focussing on my awareness of my current state of mind and being continuously mindful of any changes that may affect me. Attend MIND and Remploy sessions.	MIND, Remploy, Headspace, Mindfulness app, yoga.	Ongoing lifestyle requirement which needs to be practiced daily. Each target will fluctuate dependant on each given situation.	Understanding the fluctuations in my mental health and acting when intervention is required. Recognising A more positive outlook on life and embracing those feelings.
Implement reflective practice as an ongoing skill into the workplace and at home. Further develop my critical analysis skills and evaluate each specific situation.	Constant self-awareness and questioning whilst in action or following a particular situation using the What? So What? Now What? reflective model. Implementing change if improvements are likely to be achieved. .	Driscoll's model of reflection is a simple resource to keep a constant thought process for me to consider whilst practising in real time, and also reflecting after something has occurred.	This can be measured month by month week by week, day by day, hour by hour or even minute by minute in some instances. Awareness of my critical thinking will be the trigger for each specific target date.	Effective critical thinking and self reviewing of the tasks undertaken. I will recognise the improvements personally and it will be clear what I have achieved in my appraisals.

SMART Checklist

- S** – Are Specific details of my objectives are noted, and clearly set out? ☒
- M** – Measurable – Can I account for my actions and the frequency in which they will be necessary to achieve? ☒
- A** -Achievable – Have I questioned my ability, resources and other factors beyond my control? ☒
- R** – Relevance – Are my actions and resources realistic and have I considered all factors to reach my goal? ☒
- T** – Timed – Have I set clear target dates which are attainable? ☒

What do I know already?

Critical thinking, analysis and awareness of situations around me is the key to developing my core skills. Having strong values are important, as these are my own personal qualities which will direct my behaviour. Maintaining a healthy wellbeing will aid my thinking, analysing, confidence and a range of other essential daily functions.

What have I learnt?

Having the ability to utilise and link all my skillsets whilst reflecting in, and on action is at the forefront for me to develop as a Professional Practitioner. Following my objectives in a well-planned manner aids with my personal and professional development, however I have a constant awareness that when events do not go to plan, I have my own system in place to reevaluate and change the situation into a positive solution.

My development goals.

Focussing on my objectives within my PDP following each step until the success criteria is achieved. If unforeseen factors prevent this, I will analyse and re-evaluate the situation, to achieve the best possible outcomes. I can then reflect upon each journey which should result in me completing my early years degree successfully and growing and developing even further as a professional practitioner.

The Significance of reflective practice in facilitating professional Development within Early Years

Understanding reflection and professional practice

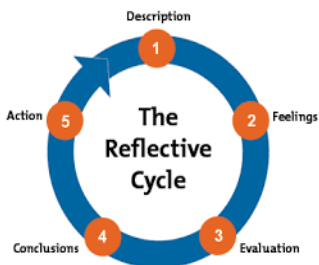
It is critical for the professional practitioner to implement strong reflective skills within all aspects of their practice. The Health and Care Professions Council (2021) defines reflection as a sequence of thoughts and actions which, when processed and analysed fully, will provide an overall view of all aspects within the professional practise. When applied, this will maintain not only good practice, but also has the potential to implement factors which could enhance and improve the quality of the output with both the professional and service users. Finlay (2008) defines reflective practise as 'learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice'. To have good Reflective skills, is one of the initial building blocks to becoming a successful practitioner. If day to day practice is challenged, and the implementation of critical evaluation is incorporated within the practitioner's scenarios, it will provide a higher level of self-awareness and a deeper insight and understanding within the practice. Schon (2007) divides reflection into two processes: reflection in practice, and reflection on practise. When reflecting in action, it will demand continual thinking, processing, adapting, and implementing suitable changes in events or activities as they arise – somewhat like the motions following an unexpected shock. When a professional applies this process it generates not only an added knowledge of the situation in hand, but also allows for improved changes to be applied to the situation. In contrast, to reflect on action is to utilise your reflective skills after the situation has occurred. The professional should break down all factors to identify what the cause was.

The importance of reflective practice in the early years

Hallet (2013) suggests that there is a heightened emphasis on reflection within the early years practice. The diverse and ever-changing environment of an early years setting, means that having strong reflective skills are of key importance to the success of a good practitioner. Powell (2010) suggests that some key values within early years includes for the practitioner to have confidence, commitment to social inclusion, being able to work effectively as part of a team, and having good communication skills with parents and other carers. Having experience within practice can also assist in the reflection process. (Schon 1987), suggests that the varied and diverse situations that professionals must manage, are analysed and processed by prior instances or events that the professional has faced, which displays the depth and intricacy of reflection. To demonstrate and achieve a high level of 'reflection in action' will strengthen the outcomes when practising the four fundamental core British values within early years: - mutual respect and tolerance, rule of law, individual liberty, and democracy all fall within PSED and the UW categories. It suggests that the promotion of these values differs between ages, and stresses that a varying approach is required (Paige-Smith and Craft 2011). Within the reflect framework, Hallet (2013) displays some key elements and qualities that the practitioner must demonstrate when liaising with all service users. Having the ability to analyse, problem solve, critically think and act, compromise just a few qualities which should be demonstrated by practitioners. There needs to be fluidity in the practitioner's communication skills - expressing the ability to adapt to each level-specific individual. To have an open mind that welcomes feedback, and having the ability to consider alternative views, in addition to attributes such as being able to contemplate differing opinions and techniques from other users. To support this Jones and Shelton (2011) states that if there is no purpose in the reflection process then there is a likelihood that unnecessary factors will be explored, and the procedure will become almost meaningless. Early years practitioners need to have the ability to express their feelings and thoughts and be able to articulate not only at a professional level, but also within their personal and inter-personal levels. Forde et al. (2009) suggests that implementing your reflective skills, the ability to understand the reason of actions, and the subsequential responses thereafter should allow the delivery of a genuinely inclusive curriculum, similarly, GTCS.org states that there should be ownership and understanding of the subject along with a pragmatic teaching approach, but in addition to this it suggests that there is also a need to possess a variety of extended characteristics within the professional sector – Attaining professional values and practice standards as well as having a full knowledge of professional codes and more importantly being able to endorse these.

Theory and analysis of reflection

Gibbs Reflective Cycle



Applying a reflective cycle within your practice will allow for structure and system within the overall process. There are a variety of models and

cycles to assist the practitioner, and it is key to identify that the most suitable model is chosen for the individual who is utilising it. Gibbs Reflective Cycle applies five steps for reflection. The University of Cumbria (2020) state that the cycle can be used for the purpose of both a repeated experience, and that of an individual event. It highlights how the cycle identifies the significance of feelings in reflection, however it also notes that although the extra stages may be of advantage to some practitioners, others however may find the stages somewhat demanding. Driscoll's Model of Reflection however is more simplistic and targets the process of reflection in just three steps – What? So What?, and Now What? This is a model that provides a quick solution and simplified solutions, even a newly qualified professional, this model can be practised with ease. In contrast however Forrester (2020) suggests this needs careful consideration and states that there is a heightened risk that reflection may not be achieved to its full capacity, if each of the steps have not been explored in enough depth.

<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/reflective-cycle.htm>

Conclusion

Pound (2008) suggests that the practitioner should understand the importance of addressing how critical our involvement is in the development of a child, to understand and reflect upon how a child will interact, and the importance of how we respond in our interactions. To unite in the thinking process and actively reflect, is at the core of successful early years provisions. If the practitioner has the knowledge and skills to apply reflection within an early years setting there are likely to be significantly better outcomes.

Driscoll's Model of The Theory of Reflection



<https://nursinganswers.net/reflective-guides/driscoll-model-of-reflection.php>

The significance of different aspects of professional practice and the importance in meeting the individual and inclusive needs of children

This essay will consider the best future chances of the child. Recognising the engagement of the practitioner who is fully on board with all significant aspects of the child's learning journey that includes a wealth of strong values, communication across all channels, constant planning and observation strategies, an ability to integrate and understand the importance of multiagency involvement, whilst approaching the individual and inclusive needs of each child by practicing a rights based approach to learning and adhering to the 54 articles as set out in the UNCRC.

All children should have the right to the best possible beginnings and a supportive environment to achieve their individual best possible future chances. The early years journey provides a dominant impact upon the child's expected adult achievements (Nutbrown 2011).

Values are Principles that guide human actions and judgements. The significance of defined values within the early years is of paramount importance that will inevitably gain both the individual and inclusive needs of the child. The website futurelearn.com state that throughout your life each event, experience, influence and friendship will all form a part of creating your own personal values. These will be unique to yourself and may differ in a variety of ways to that of the educational setting, the children and parents, your peers and in some cases even the law.

Johansson and Einarsdottir (2018) state that values are standards that will lead a person's behaviour and reasonings if those behaviours are of importance or not. Within the seven dimensions of professionalism, Hallet (2013) states that values are regarded as a key dimension of being a professional practitioner. Two more examples of these traits are to have a robust confidence in learning and teaching within the learn through play curriculum and to strongly support principles that are relevant to that of the child and parents' requirements. Ioanna Palaiologou (2012) suggests the importance as a practitioner within an early years setting is to gain values which are both relevant to your own beliefs and also applicable to all service users. However, this would require constant evaluation and analysis of these values to keep up with the ever-changing environment. Each individual child is unique, meaning they all have different needs. As a practitioner we must identify and acknowledge the needs and values of each child.

The website Togetherscotland (2023) state that values reflect over all levels of professionalism and are applicable to all qualified teachers irrespective of their roles. Values are intricate and ultimately create and form the individual as a professional.

When exploring play for early childhood studies Andrews (2012) suggests that we gain an understanding of behaviours by observing. We should make observations to pinpoint the child's actions and understanding of their surroundings. For the practitioner to have an awareness of each individual child, there needs to be ongoing engagement to observe and reflect in the moment. This is supported by Tovey (2013) who suggests that when observing children, it can allow the practitioner to familiarise itself with the level of the child, thus allowing for a more personalised interaction. Taking these observations forward will aid the level of support you provide in addition to a well-structured plan.

The video planning in the moment from littlelearners.education (2022), recognises the significance and benefits of the child's interest in three simple steps, the child's interest, the teachable moment and documentation. It is critical to have engagement with the child otherwise the child cannot learn. Firstly, there should be an environment which has an abundance of appropriate resources, indoor and outdoor access which is safe but also easily accessible. Next, there needs to be a strong bond between the child and the practitioner without this there will be a lack of confidence and the child would be less likely to apply themselves during play. Littlelearners.education (2022) also suggests that it is important to ensure that there are clear rules, boundaries and expectations that the child understands to ensure their safety and smooth running of the setting. Interruptions are a key factor, there should be as few as possible when planning in the moment. Child led play allows the child to take the lead in his learning experience, and the practitioner should consider limiting these interruptions as much as possible and adjust any planned activities or events to sustain the child's engagement with his play. Observation of the child at all times will enable the practitioner to teach in the moment, extending upon the child's interests, asking open ended questions, joining in during play and showing that the practitioner is involved in 'their' moment all the while encouraging the child's spark to further develop their learning.

The role of communication within early years is the main structure for successful teams, that can distribute information effectively, can gain further understanding which results in collective team working. A primary aim for early years practitioners should be to form good relationships and two-way communications with parents or carers to discuss and share information. Positive relationships that will reflect the key role of the parent in a young child's life as well as communicating policies relating to a parent's impact can aid and build the framework for a parent's involvement (Farrelly 2010).

Hallet (2013) suggests that an example on the importance of effective communication would be to have a mentor within the workplace as your 'critical friend'; an essential work mate who will also guide you whilst providing feedback on your working practice (Knight et al.,2006). The practitioner must have an awareness that children can communicate in a variety of ways. In addition to this, Jones (2009) suggests that irrespective of a child's age or social status, children need to be heard. Communication may be displayed

with anger, frustration, and some may even be non-verbal. An essential skill that would guide the practitioner through working practice, would be to listen to parents effectively and communicate through various channels, to all service users, which would aid the outcomes and achievements for the child. Dunhill, Elliot and Shaw (2009) regard good communication as being central to working with children which involves both listening and questioning. It is therefore no surprising that most mishaps occur because of poor communication.

There are many aspects within professional practice that are key to serving the inclusive and individual needs of children. These qualities are brought together by the UNCRC which is a human rights agreement for every young person under the age of 18. It is the most common pledge in history. Its purpose is to make sure that each child has an upbringing enriched with equality, solidarity, freedom, peace, tolerance and dignity (TogetherScotland.org.uk). Unicef.org.uk state that there are 54 articles within the agreement, however 4 specific articles are regarded as particularly important as these are the core principles which filter all of the other rights: Non-discrimination (Article 2), Best interest of the child (Article 3), Right to life survival and development (Article 6) and the Right to be heard (Article 12).

The Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011 documents its commitments with the UNCRC and rights for children. More recently, The Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 provided a framework for educational settings that focuses on children's human rights. The 'right way approach' is an example of the support set out to encourage practitioners to create a rights-based approach. Adopting the core principles will likely enhance the educational journey. This is supported by Unicef.org.uk who state that having a curriculum which includes the UNCRC, will result in all stakeholders having a broader understanding of children's rights and its importance, which will result in the child identifying and sharing these principles with others. There is also evidence that common actions including prejudice and coercive behaviour, which does improve when educated about their rights and the need to display respect to peers. Article 29 of the UNCRC (1989) documents the importance of educating each individual child to his or her maximum potential considering all levels and capacity. The role of the practitioner should guide the child into having a knowledge and awareness of respect, human rights, all cultures and their environment. Article 3 shares an important link within early years which is vital for the practitioner to recognise and practice. It states that it is essential to ensure that each child's best interests are attained. The practitioner must consider every activity or decision within the setting that incorporates the child, and question if it has met the best interests of the child. To support this, the NSPCC (2023) state the importance for all practitioners to work in partnership to gain an understanding of the individual child that will provide a network of support that will span across all channels. Therefore, there is an emphasis on the importance of agencies interlinking with each other to enable all parties to have knowledge and understanding of any potential risks that may be likely and to intervene with the relevant action should it be necessary to ensure

the safeguarding of the child. Siraj, Clarke and Needham, (2009) suggest the key to successful multi-agency teams is to have strong leadership qualities and a clear and concise management system. The target outcome needs to be understood by all workers, in a simple and well laid out structure, avoiding in depth and complex statements and objectives which would run the risk of perhaps being avoided or ignored due to the sheer volume. Implementing your plan to achieve effective results is of higher importance. Having strong leadership qualities throughout multi agency teams will quickly identify the objectives, and allocate these to the relevant personnel to achieve each target. This is supported by Gasper (2010) who states that to achieve a positive outcome will depend on the standard of knowledge attained by each stakeholder. A positive attitude is required to allow a diverse outlook and flexible approach towards everybody involved.

In conclusion there are various aspects of this essay that need to be considered. Each core skill forms a significant part of the jigsaw that will aid the successful journey, and best possible outcomes for each individual child. Should there be a missing link within the aforesaid journey, breakdowns occur, communications are lost and the pathway of the childrens' development and learning throughout the early years settings are likely to be compromised.

Reference List

- Ally Dunhill, et al. *Effective Communication and Engagement with Children and Young People, Their Families and Careers*. Exeter Learning Matters, 2009.
- Andrews, Mandy. *Exploring Play for Early Childhood Studies*. London, Learning Matters, 2012.
- Brock, Avril. *The Early Years Reflective Practice Handbook*. London, Routledge, 2014.
- CIM. "Back to Basics: How to Set SMART Objectives | CIM Exchange." *Www.cim.co.uk*, 21 Sept. 2020, www.cim.co.uk/content-hub/editorial/back-to-basics-how-to-set-smart-objectives/. Accessed 17 Oct. 2023.
- "Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021." *Legislation.gov.uk*, 2021, www.legislation.gov.uk/asc/2021/4/contents/enacted. Accessed 20 Oct. 2023.
- Farrelly, Penny. *Early Years Work-Based Learning*. Exeter, Learning Matters, 2010.
- Finlay, Linda. "Reflecting on "Reflective Practice" ." The Open University, 2008.
- Forde, Christine, et al. *Putting Together Professional Portfolios*. Los Angeles ; London, Sage, 2009.
- Forrester, Maia. "Reflection and Reflective Writing." Dec. 2020.
- Gasper, Michael. *Multi-Agency Working in the Early Years : Challenges and Opportunities*. London, Sage, 2010.
- Hallet, Elaine. *The Reflective Early Years Practitioner*. London, Sage, 2013.
- Health and Care Professions Council. "What Is Reflection? ." *Www.hcpc-Uk.org*, HCPC, 8 Apr. 2021, www.hcpc-uk.org/standards/meeting-our-standards/reflective-practice/what-is-reflection/. Accessed 17 Oct. 2023.

Ioanna Palaologou. *Ethical Practice in Early Childhood*. Los Angeles ; London, Sage Publications, 2012.

Johansson, Eva, and Jóhanna Einarsdóttir. *Values in Early Childhood Education : Citizenship for Tomorrow*. London ; New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.

Jones, Phil. *Rethinking Childhood : Attitudes in Contemporary Society*. London ; New York, Continuum, Cop, 2009.

Miller, Linda, and Carrie Cable. *Professionalism in the Early Years*. Hodder Education, 2008.

NSPCC. "Multi-Agency and Interdisciplinary Working." *NSPCC Learning*, NSPCC, 5 July 2019, learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/multi-agency-working-child-protection. Accessed 20 Oct. 2023.

Nutbrown, Cathy. *Key Concepts in Early Childhood Education and Care*. London, Sage, 2011.

Paige-Smith, Alice, and Anna Craft. *Developing Reflective Practice in the Early Years*. Maidenhead, Open University Press, 2011, p. 1.

Powell, Sacha. "Hide and Seek: Values in Early Childhood Education and Care." *British Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 58, no. 2, June 2010, pp. 213–229, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071001003752195>. Accessed 18 Oct. 2023.

"Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011." *Legislation.gov.uk*, 2011, www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents. Accessed 20 Oct. 2023.

Schon, D A. *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching Learning in the Professions*. Chichester, John Wiley, 1987.

Schön, Donald A. *REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER : How Professionals Think in Action*. 1983. Basic Books, 2017.

Scotland, Together . "Together Scotland Is Non Profit Organization Working to Promote Child's Rights." *Togetherscotland.org*, 2023, togetherscotland.org/. Accessed 18 Oct. 2023.

Siraj, Iram, et al. *The Team around the Child : Multi-Agency Working in the Early Years*. Stoke On Trent, Trentham Books, 2007.

Together Scotland. "UN Convention on the Rights of the Child." *Together Scotland*, 2023, www.togetherscotland.org.uk/about-childrens-rights/un-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child/#:~:text=The%20UN%20Convention%20on%20the. Accessed 18 Oct. 2023.

Tovey, Helen. *Bringing the Froebel Approach to Your Early Years Practice*. London ; New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013.

UNICEF. "UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)." *Unicef*, UNICEF, 2023, www.unicef.org.uk/what-we-do/un-convention-child-rights/. Accessed 20 Oct. 2023.

University of Cumbria. "Reflection | MyCumbria." *Cumbria.ac.uk*, 2019, my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/Skills-Cumbria/Reflective-Writing/. Accessed 15 Oct. 2023.

University of Reading. "Values, Beliefs and Attitudes." *FutureLearn*, www.futurelearn.com/info/courses/supporting-learning-primary/0/steps/58658.
www.littlelearners.education. "Planning in the Moment | EYFS." *www.youtube.com*, 28 Feb. 2022,
www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=oslwlJXmEtk. Accessed 17 Oct. 2023.