

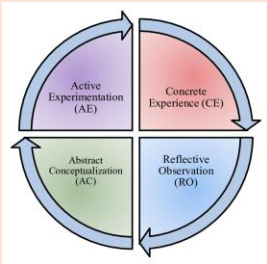
You can make sense of a situation with the help of reflection. By critically analysing any aspect of your professional practice, you can gain insight into it through the process of reflection. It enables childcare professionals and teachers to grow and develop their own working theories, philosophy, and pedagogy. Any educator's reflections that are individual or group reflections produce useful information and evidence of their evolving pedagogy and professional development. All staff within a setting are more likely to see a positive impact where practitioners reflect and have a space within the setting to discuss best practice and to learn from themselves and each other the positives and negatives that have happened throughout the day and how they can resolve any issues. Reflection can help early years practitioners to evaluate their practice, identify different areas for improvement and make changes that benefit children's learning and development. As a result of this, children can learn in a more interesting and dynamic way and will encourage them to become independent and creative. As well as this, it can lead to better outcomes for children including improved social-skills, self-esteem, and academic achievements.

When practitioners reflect, it can be alone or with other staff members. Some practitioners will find it easier to reflect by themselves and figure out a plan and other like to reflect with members of staff to discuss and gain feedback off one another. As Dr Helen Edwards (2023) states that practitioners should celebrate success and acknowledge what has gone well and to share your success with your staff members, congratulate others and to keep the plan going. To keep track of what is happening in the childcare environment, a straightforward way to stay on track is to write out a diary. This way practitioners can go back to their notes and expand them, change them, and ask for other opinions from different members of staff. As Skills You Need (2011) states that there are six steps to make reflecting easier for a practitioner. Firstly, reading. Practitioners can read, research, and get help from individuals if they are struggling with something specific within the work environment. To ask other members of staff if they have any current ideas or improvements that they can include in the setting. To watch what is going on in the setting and inspect and see if you can see any visible improvements being made. To feel your emotions, it is important for practitioners to not only look after the children's emotions, but their emotions too. For the practitioners to talk and share their views and experiences with other members of staff. And lastly, for practitioners to think and learn to value their time spent on thinking about their work.

Teach Early Years (2023) describes how when a practitioner reflects in a childcare setting, they can think what routine is suited best, which resources are used well, what resources are not working as well, are all the staff members keeping the children safe and supported and so on. It is crucial to reflect on our performance as a means of growing and developing personally. When we gain insight from our reflections, we can improve as practitioners. Kelly (2015) states that when reflecting in a childcare environment, practitioners will think about their work, acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses within the setting, identifying and resolving problems, be open to listening and trying out new methods within the setting, reviewing their methods to improve the quality of their practice and to consider the impact their actions will have on the children they are looking after and their families. By practitioners reflecting on their practice, practitioners can gain a deeper understanding of the children in the setting, their individual needs and how practitioners can support their development and learning effectively. As practitioners get a better grasp of each child's personality and needs, reflection can encourage closer bonds to the children and families. Reflection can ensure that children receive the best care and support in the early years of their lives.

When a practitioner is reflecting in a setting, an effortless way to keep track of their reflection and what has happened in the environment recently, is to keep a diary. The reflective cycle developed by Gibbs (1988) can be quite helpful in encouraging you to consider every stage of an experience or activity. The practitioner should consider a description of what happened, what was the practitioner thinking or feeling, an evaluation of what went well about the situation and what did not, an analysis what sense can the practitioner make out of the situation, a conclusion of what else could the practitioner do and lastly an analysis, if the same situation came around again, what would the practitioner do different. This method is a great method of reflection as it allows the practitioner to cover all areas of what happened and where improvement can be achieved upon. It also can lead to better outcomes for children and therefore is rewarding for the practitioner. Staff meetings are a great way to reflect. It provides time for reflections, discussions, and training. As Kimberly (EYC) (2016) portrays that staff members should have the time to reflect and discuss any thoughts, feelings, or issues they may have regarding towards their job duties and responsibilities. This makes it possible for staff members to feel respected and appreciated. Meetings provide an excellent opportunity for resolving any issues or challenges, as a result of these meetings it benefits not only the staff but the children as issues are getting resolved and discussions to make situations and tasks more successful within the setting. Not only are staff meetings important, but practitioner's discussions with parents are also too. As Shelia Matthews (2023) states that there are several reasons why this is important. Firstly, exchanging progress and observations on a child, the practitioner can let the guardian know what the child's strengths are in the setting and what can be improved. Discussing assessments and expectations, knowing what the child likes and dislikes. Keeping parents updated on any announcements and addressing any concerns. Building a positive relationship with one another and reflecting on if there could be any improvements or any strategies to help the child if there are any concerns.

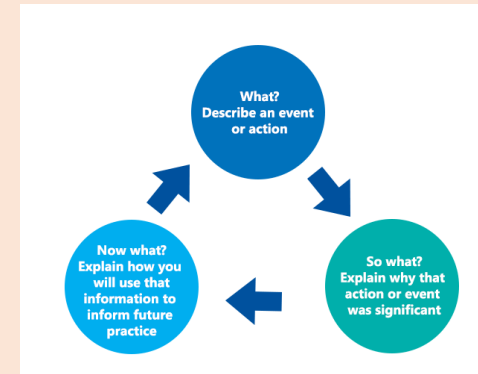
Practitioners who reflect on their daily work not only help to improve the environment but also support and encourage to develop solid professional approaches. Practitioners who reflection within the early year's environment can help children in many ways. By practitioners making adjustments based on their reflections, it can improve the effectiveness, engagement, and supportiveness of the learning environment for the children. This may result in better results for children, such as enhanced cognitive, social, and emotional growth. As Study Prism (2023) states that a main reason it is important for practitioners to reflect is due having a better understanding of themselves and their interpersonal relationships as a result. Additionally, it enables practitioners to understand their place in the workplace, how to assist other staff members or children with their needs, what needs to change, and what should remain the same. Therefore, it benefits not only the practitioner, but the children and staff within the setting too. As Ospina Avendano (2020) portrays that a theory that links within reflection is Boud's Reflection model (1999) which focuses on the learning aspect by reflecting on one's practice. Boud states that any reflective practitioner can examine their own practise to gain a deeper understanding of their actions and background and to enhance how they handle their professional obligations and responsibilities.



(Source: [Kolb's experiential learning cycle](#).
[Kolb's \(2016\) model of learning... | Download Scientific Diagram](#)
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A theory that illustrates a great way for practitioners' reflection within a childcare setting is Kolb's (1984) experimental learning cycle. Firstly, concrete experience, practitioners can think of an experience they have made regarding their learning. Then there is active experimentation which is what the practitioner has thought about their experience and its relation to their learning. After that, abstract conceptualisation which is how would the practitioner conceptualise their thoughts. And lastly reflective observation. Which is where the practitioner will debate what impact does this achieved learning outcome now have on their future and reflect on what it has benefitted. This portrays learning as a straightforward result of the practitioners' reflections and experiences. As Jane Johnston (2009) practitioners reflect on their experiences, and they use that information to think critically about how they may improve future situations. After that, put the adjustments into practise and see if they are effective. As Kolb's (1984) summarised this as "the process whereby knowledge is created through transformation of experience". Study Prism (2023) states that Klob's Reflective Cycle is a straightforward process that is easily understood and put into practice, is flexible and helps individuals to develop better self-awareness. Although, it can be seen as over-simplified and not detailed enough.

Another theory that is effective for practitioners to use in an environmental setting is Driscoll's Model of Reflection (1994). This includes three questions starting with What? the practitioner can describe an event of action that has happened. What happened? Did the practitioner find it a valuable experience, and if not why? After that, So What? The practitioner can portray why that action or event was significant and meaningful. How did the practitioner feel and react? And lastly, Now What? By allowing the practitioner to explain how they will use that information to inform future practice. What would the practitioner of done differently if a comparable situation happened in the future? Will the practitioner try something new? As Online Nursing Papers (2023) indicates that Driscoll's Model of Reflection is beneficial due to it being effective and fast for results, it is simple and easy to follow and understand, the procedure is quick, and it is a straightforward survey format that serves the same purpose. Although, it is not an in-depth reflection and does not convey a deep and multistage reflection. These two different models of reflection are different from one another as Driscoll's theory is focussing on three questions that the practitioner can reflect on and know how it can be changed if there is needed improvements for a more successful future. Whilst Klob's theory focuses on four key stages within an experience and makes the practitioner debate if the experience was successful, if it needs changes and to think about innovative ideas that could potentially be more prosperous.



(Source: [Driscoll's Model of Reflection](#)
[\(nursinganswers.net\)](#)

To conclude, reflection is a crucial part of the early years sector. It helps practitioners and other staff members to assess their work and skills, highlights areas if development and adjustments that are key for children's growth and learning. Reflecting on children's learning and work helps practitioners understand the children's likes, dislikes, and needs. Reflecting benefits not only the practitioners and staff, but also the children in the setting. To reflect and it be beneficial, practitioners must be open-minded, aware, and dedicated to constant progress for themselves and the children in the setting. When reflecting, practitioners can contribute to ensuring that children receive the best care and education possible.

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