

Part 1: Personal Development Plan.

What do I know already?

I have attained a Level Three qualification in family support and outreach work, which encompasses a range of competencies such as personal development, practice preparation, child protection, professional practice, group work, promotion of positive living, and child development until the age of five.

I have successfully completed my first year in psychology, encompassing extensive studies in social sciences, psychological exploration, and mental health and counseling. Regrettably, unforeseen circumstances forced me to put my studies on hold, but I intend to return to them in the future.

In the meantime, I am employed at a school that specializes in managing challenging behavior. This job has provided me with valuable training and skills in supporting children who may be struggling due to their school or personal issues, as well as in handling difficult behavior.

What have I learnt so far?

With my experience, I have discovered effective methods of providing support to families who require intervention or assistance in accessing the variety of services available to them. My insights on managing challenging behaviors and assisting children with such issues while keeping their families informed are valuable. I prioritize child protection and safeguarding and have extensive knowledge in these areas. Additionally, I possess comprehensive knowledge of autism in both adults and children, including autism's understanding, communication, sensory, stress and anxiety, and supporting families. I am skilled in computer use and have a strong aptitude for studying to enhance my knowledge and understanding in my areas of interest.

What do I want to develop?

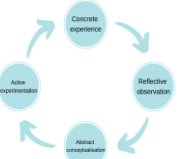
I am eager to acquire basic Welsh language skills to improve my communication with individuals who exclusively speak Welsh. This will broaden my horizons and provide me with more opportunities. Furthermore, I aspire to augment my professionalism to advance in my current job position. My ultimate goal is to enhance my leadership abilities to continue progressing in my career.

Objective:	Actions (How will I achieve this objective/what needs to be done?)	Resources (What support and resources are needed to achieve this objective?)	Target date for achieving objective:	Success criteria (How will I know I have achieved this goal; how will I review this?)
Obtain Level three in my job role.	Sustain a dependable and consistent level of performance within my role, while also achieving recognition for my diligent efforts.	Job vacancy, Job application, Laptop, Qualifications.	September 2024	I will have obtained a level three contract.
Obtain my degree within Early years.	I would like to pursue my degree by continuing my studies with the university.	University, Laptop, writing materials, reading materials.	August 2025	I will have obtained my certificate of qualification (Degree).
Obtain my PGCE.	By completing my Early years degree.	University, laptop, writing materials, reading materials.	August 2030.	I will have obtained my certificate of qualification.

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Part 2: Briefing paper

What is reflection and reflective practice? The act of reflecting involves the recollection of thoughts and memories, during cognitive processes such as thinking, contemplation, meditation, or any other form of attentive consideration. The purpose of reflection is to make sense of these thoughts and memories, and to make contextual changes when necessary (Taylor, 2000). Reflective practice is a method of gaining new insights and learning about oneself and their practices through experiences (Finlay, 2008). This systematic approach enables educators to evaluate their work and identify connections between various experiences. As a result, teachers can effectively support their students in achieving maximum progress. According to Pacey (2016), reflective practice involves thinking about and analyzing your work to challenge, modify, and improve it. Reflective practice involves analyzing and modifying your practice to improve it continuously (Pacey, 2016).	Why is reflective practice important to EY practice? The use of reflective practice is an effective method for practitioners to gain insight and analyze their work critically. This process enables them to develop the necessary skills, knowledge, and approaches to support the optimal development, learning, and progress of children. Furthermore, reflective practice enhances the confidence of practitioners, empowering them to become more proactive in their roles and elevate the quality of care and education they offer (birthto5matters, no date). As well as this Pacey, (2016) suggests that engagement in reflective practice is a critical approach to maintain and improve the skills and abilities of caregivers. The process of reflection is also advantageous for parents and carers as they are able to ascertain changes in caregivers' practice, thus providing them with the confidence that the care provided is of high quality and progressively improving. By reflecting on their practice, caregivers can identify areas that require improvement and implement changes that result in higher quality care. Parents and carers will appreciate witnessing the positive changes in caregivers' practice and will be more confident in their ability to provide consistently high-quality care (Pacey, 2016).
The theory of reflective practice: Donald Schon's work is widely recognized as a valuable contribution to professional education, as he emphasized the crucial role of reflection in the learning process (Schon, 1983). In his research, Schon identified two types of reflection that are essential for examining professional practice: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Reflection-in-action, also known as "thinking on our feet," describes the process that allows professionals to modify their approach to a task or situation as it unfolds. This type of reflection is typically associated with experiences of surprise. Schon suggests that professionals reflect on unexpected events and conduct experiments that result in a deeper understanding of the situation and lead to positive changes. Reflection-on-action, on the other hand, involves reflecting on an experience, situation, or phenomenon after it has occurred. When professionals engage in "reflection-on-action," they examine what happened in a particular circumstance, why they acted as they did, and whether there were alternative approaches they could have taken. This type of reflection is commonly associated with reflective writing, where professionals reflect on their experiences and consider ways to improve their practice. Reflective practice, as defined by Dewey in 1910, involves actively and persistently examining one's beliefs and knowledge considering the evidence that supports them. This approach involves asking questions about why things are the way they are and exploring alternative perspectives. By practicing reflection, we can anticipate the outcomes of our actions and act with purpose and intention. This is particularly crucial in teaching, where careful planning and a thoughtful, informed approach can lead to more effective classroom management and student learning. Dewey (1910, p.6) wrote that reflective practice refers to 'the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it'. This means that you will have a questioning approach; you will consider why things are as they are, and how they might be. Dewey went on to say that being reflective 'enables us to direct our actions with foresight ... It enables us to know what we are about when we act'. This is extremely important in teaching. What you do in the classroom and how you behave should have been carefully planned, informed by theory and experience and be purposeful.	

Gibbs' model  Fig 1	Kolb's model  Fig 2
Analysis of models As you can see in figures one and two, utilizing models to guide your actions has its pros and cons. On one hand, models offer a clear structure to follow, which can be particularly helpful for individuals who are unsure of where to begin. These models also allow for a comprehensive assessment of a particular situation, providing a clear indication of when the process has been completed (University of Cambridge, no date). However, it's crucial to note that models can sometimes be restrictive. Since they suggest that specific steps must be taken in a particular order, models can overlook the fact that real-world situations may require a more flexible approach. Furthermore, certain models may not be relevant in every circumstance. Finally, it's important to understand that reflective practice is an ongoing process that cannot be accomplished simply by following a prescribed set of steps (University of Cambridge, no date).	
Conclusion There exists a range of reflective models that can aid in personal development. However, it is possible that none of these models may perfectly suit your needs. While these models can provide a useful framework or starting point, it's essential to acknowledge that reflection is a personal journey and each individual approaches it uniquely. It's perfectly acceptable to take your time experimenting with various methods until you find the one that resonates with you. As you progress as a reflective practitioner, you may find it necessary to adapt your approach to match your current circumstances. Ultimately, the key is to discover an approach that works for you. If a particular method doesn't suit your needs, don't hesitate to move on and explore other options.	

Part 3: Written essay.

Recognise and analyse the significance of different aspects of professional practice and why these are important in meeting the individual needs of children.

This essay explores the fundamental concepts of professional practice and professionalism, including the crucial values that practitioners must embody and why they are important. Communication and relationships are also discussed in the context of professional practice, as they play a vital role in meeting the needs of children. Additionally, the significance of possessing an in-depth understanding of safeguarding is examined. The essay also delves into how the observation and planning cycle informs professional practice and ensures that practitioners are meeting the needs of children. Finally, the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) are explored, along with their impact on professional practice and why this is significant.

To begin, Professional Practice refers to the activities that help apply knowledge to the workplace (National Design Academy, no date). To be a professional, one should have a combination of qualities and conduct that are essential for success. This includes having relevant knowledge, skills, behavioural qualities, and values such as integrity, ethical probity, and the ability to work effectively with patients or clients, colleagues, and the public (Oxford Reference, 2023).

According to Gasper's research in 2015, early years education prioritizes valuing individual qualities demonstrated through practical experience, rather than formal qualifications. This approach emphasizes "principled practice" based on ethical principles that prioritize the needs of the child

and parents. The role of the professional is to facilitate this partnership, recognizing the importance of addressing the child's and parents' needs (Gasper, 2015).

Additionally, a strong theoretical foundation in the child's physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual development, these qualities enable professionals to provide the best possible care and engage in "best practice." However, it is crucial to keep in mind that when it comes to Early Years Practitioners, prioritizing the best interests and well-being of the child should be at the forefront of their actions and decisions. This is articulated in Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Unicef, no date).

As well as this, values are just as important for professional practitioners in any job, including early years settings. Therefore, it is crucial to uphold professional values to project a competent image. Powell (2010) emphasizes the importance of several key values for those working with children. These include demonstrating a sincere interest in and fondness for children and their growth, possessing strong communication skills for interacting with both children and their caregivers, displaying confidence, patience, and professionalism, exhibiting a caring and empathetic demeanor, effectively collaborating with both children and parents, adhering to principles of social inclusion, being willing to undergo training, and having a sense of enjoyment in the work (Social Work in England, 2023). Honesty, reliability, and consistency are also crucial components of these core values. It is equally important to dress and act appropriately and deliver work that meets the agreed standards and deadlines. Taking responsibility for one's actions is integral to maintaining professional values (University of Bradford, 2023).

Furthermore, our core values shape the way we approach our work, influencing everything from our decision-making to our behavior. It's essential to examine our values closely and consider how they impact our decision-making process. Equally important is respecting the values of others, even if they differ from our own. These differences provide valuable opportunities for growth and self-reflection, as long as they don't cause harm to anyone (Social Work England, 2023).

Additionally, clear and purposeful communication involves exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and data in a well-defined manner. Effective communication occurs when both the sender and receiver understand the message. This is crucial in all settings, particularly when

building positive relationships with children, young people, families, colleagues, and professionals (UNICEF. No date) Effective communication is a fundamental aspect of children and young people's rights, as stated in the UNCRC. These rights include access to information, freedom of expression, thought, and association, the right to a name and nationality, and protection from torture or ill-treatment (UNICEF, No date).

Having a comprehensive understanding of professional practice is imperative in the early years. To be successful, one must possess the appropriate expertise and know-how for their desired profession, evaluate their responsibilities, and refresh their knowledge consistently. Critically assessing educational research, pedagogy, and assessment and keeping abreast of the latest practices, research, and industry standards are also key. (The Open University,2023). Sharing knowledge of effective techniques with colleagues, networks, and research groups and developing knowledge of special educational needs and disabilities are crucial to creating inclusive learning environments. Understanding one's duties and obligations, as well as how these are influenced by legal, regulatory, institutional, and ethical factors, is essential. (Education and Training Foundation, no date). Effective adult-child interactions are crucial in building children's knowledge and abilities. Practitioners must rely on a well-planned curriculum to foster high-quality interactions. Creating a safe environment by following safeguarding protocols for children requires a mutual understanding of the school's policies and procedures by everyone involved. Staff and volunteers must be confident in identifying and reporting any concerns while leadership must be equipped to respond to and refer these concerns to relevant agencies. (NSPCC, 2023).

Following on from this, working alongside other organisations and services, known as partnerships and multi-agency working, is extremely important to professional practice. By collaborating with one another, public service organizations can achieve better value and outcomes that would be difficult or impossible to attain through individual efforts. The foundation of collaborative advantage lies in the synergies that arise from combining resources, expertise, and ideas from different agencies and authorities (gov.uk, 2023). Collaboration is essential for public service organizations to address complex issues and challenges that require a coordinated effort. This approach enables organizations to pool their resources, skills, and knowledge to achieve common goals and objectives. Furthermore, collaboration fosters innovation and creativity, as organizations are exposed to diverse perspectives and fresh ideas. This, in turn, leads to the development of more effective and efficient

solutions to address public service challenges (gov.uk, 2023). The benefits of collaboration are significant, but successful collaboration requires effective communication, mutual respect, and a willingness to work together towards common objectives. By embracing collaboration, public service organizations can deliver better services and outcomes for the communities they serve (gov.uk, 2023).

As well as this, according to West Sussex County Council (2023), supporting a child's development and learning is a complex process that requires careful observation, assessment, and planning. As an early year's practitioner, it is crucial to observe the child's behaviour, interests, and learning style to create a plan that effectively meets their individual needs. Observation is critical in this process as it involves analyzing the child's behavior, watching and listening to them. By observing the child, we can gain insight into their current development, interests, and learning needs. To assess the child's progress, we gather information from various sources, including parents, and analyze our observations. This information helps us identify the child's care and learning needs, interests, and current development, allowing us to plan for the next steps in their development and learning. Effective planning relies on our observations, assessments, and information from parents to create an individualized plan that meets the child's unique needs (West Sussex County Council, 2023).

In addition to this, throughout the early years and education industry, there are policies, procedures, and protocols that all professionals and staff must adhere to. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has introduced 54 articles that advise how childcare should be approached. Out of these 54 articles, there are four that are mostly mentioned as follows: Non-Discrimination - All children must enjoy their rights without any discrimination based on factors such as race, gender, religion, or disability (Article 2). Best interests of the child - In all actions concerning children, their best interests must be the primary concern (Article 3:1). The right to survival and development - Beyond prohibiting the act of killing, states must ensure that children have the means to thrive and reach their maximum potential (Article 6:2). The views of the child - Children's views must be respected and given due weight in all matters affecting them (Article 12:1). (Unicef, no date).

In conclusion, after analysing only some of the information available regarding professional practice, professionalism, communication and interactions within early years, as well as the wide range of multi-agency work that goes on behind the scenes, the importance of safeguarding our children with protocols and articles developed by UNCRC and observations and planning that takes place in order to help children develop,

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one would like to believe that all children are living in a safe environment, nurturing and nourishing environment all around the world. However, unfortunately, this is not always the case, and this is why following all protocols, policies, and procedures is of the utmost importance and communicating extensively with all the agencies involved with each individual child and of their families helps to enable professionals to access everything that is available to those that need it.

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