

Good morning my name is Ridwaan

Imagine walking into a day care setting where children's laughter fills the air, where they feel safe, loved, and truly happy. Now, imagine an inspection is coming up. How do we ensure that we not only meet but exceed the expectations regarding children's well-being? That's exactly what I'll be discussing today. I will be exploring how we can lead preparations for an inspection of a day care setting for children under four, focusing on the well-being aspect of the Quality-of-Care Report.

Our setting consists of 14 children and 3 employees, meaning we need to be strategic in our approach to ensuring a high standard of care. I'll be using key research studies, legislation, and national policy frameworks to guide this discussion, including the National Minimum Standards, the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS), and The Baby Effective Early Learning Program.

### **Defining Well-being in Early Years Settings**

Well-being in early years is about more than just physical health; it's about creating an environment where children feel secure, valued, and able to thrive emotionally and socially. According to Cottle and Alexander (2012), well-being is a key indicator of quality in early years settings, directly influencing children's confidence, learning, and emotional resilience.

A high-quality setting fosters well-being through strong relationships, stimulating environments, and child-centered practices. According to the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Childcare in Wales (2023), well-being is a cornerstone of childcare provision, with Standard 1 focusing on putting the child's welfare first and Standard 10 emphasizing the importance of a safe and nurturing environment.

### **The Importance of the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS)**

The Care Inspectorate Wales (2025) requires childcare providers to complete the Self-Assessment of Service Statement (SASS) to evaluate service quality. This tool allows us to assess our strengths and identify areas for improvement. It covers well-being, care, and development, making it an essential document during inspections.

By thoroughly reviewing our SASS submission, we can ensure we present strong evidence of our commitment to children's well-being. This means demonstrating that our staff-child interactions are positive, our activities support emotional and social growth, and our environment is both safe and engaging.

So how do we create an environment Implementing best practices for well-being where children feel secure and happy while ensuring we're prepared for inspection? Here are some of the most effective strategies:

1. **Building Strong, Trusting Relationships:** Research by Cottle and Alexander (2012) highlights that high-quality interactions between staff and children foster emotional security. In practice, this means ensuring every child feels heard and understood. Encouraging key person relationships helps children build trust, promoting emotional stability and resilience.
2. **Continuous Professional Development for Staff:** According to Leanna et al. (2009), well-trained staff provide better care, leading to higher well-being levels among children. Staff should regularly update their knowledge on attachment theory, emotional development, and positive behavior strategies. Providing training on mindfulness and emotional coaching can help staff support children in managing their emotions.
3. **Creating a Safe and Stimulating Environment:** The environment plays a huge role in children's well-being. Ho et al. (2010) examined early years settings in Hong Kong and England and found that a well-designed space with natural light, sensory-rich materials, and calm, organized areas positively impacts children's emotional health. For our setting, this means

ensuring spaces are well-lit, have comfortable quiet areas, and include a variety of resources that promote both active play and relaxation.

4. **Using the Baby Effective Early Learning Program (BEEL):** The BEEL program is an excellent framework for improving well-being through high-quality interactions between caregivers and young children. By integrating these principles, we can enhance emotional security and cognitive development.
5. **Strengthening Parent Partnerships:** Parental involvement is a crucial element of well-being. Cottle and Alexander (2014) found that when parents are actively engaged in their child's early years setting, children feel more secure and confident. Encouraging open communication, regular feedback sessions, and parent workshops ensures that families feel involved and valued.
6. **Investing in Early Years Provision:** Investment in early childhood education is not just beneficial; it's essential. Speib (2013) highlights that high-quality early years education leads to better long-term social and cognitive outcomes. Ensuring our setting has adequate funding for resources, staff training, and outdoor play equipment will directly enhance children's well-being.

**Preparing for Inspection:** Practical Steps we can follow to ensure we are fully prepared for an inspection could be

- **Review Policies and Procedures:** Ensure that all policies regarding child well-being are up to date and reflect best practices.
- **Conduct Internal Audits:** Regular self-assessments help us identify strengths and areas for improvement before the inspection.
- **Gather Evidence of Best Practices:** Document case studies, observations, and examples of high-quality interactions that demonstrate how we promote well-being.
- **Engage with Stakeholders:** Collect feedback from parents, staff, and children to present a well-rounded picture of our setting's effectiveness.

**Conclusion**

Well-being is the foundation of quality in early years settings. By following national guidelines, leveraging self-assessment tools like the SASS, and implementing research-backed best practices, we can create an environment where children flourish. Preparing for an inspection isn't just about meeting standards—it's about ensuring that every child in our care experiences a nurturing and enriching early years journey.

Thank you for listening.

## Reference List

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