

Personal Development Plan (PDP)

What do I know already? What have I learnt so far? I have good knowledge of childcare and development, I have developed an awareness of different Additional Learning Needs and ways to help and meet their needs. I have also developed skills in British Sign Language and Makaton both up to level two.				
What do I want to develop? I would like to further my professional development in child care and education as well as developing my British Sign Language skills from the level two that I have already achieved to level three. I would also like to increase my knowledge in Additional Learning Needs and inclusion due to my role as my settings Additional Learning Needs Coordinator.				
Objective	Actions (how will I achieve this objective/what needs to be do?)	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?)
Complete my BA in Early Education and Care Degree	Attend weekly classes, complete module work set each month, attend any additional sessions that may be required where possible.	Support and information from lecturers, research books, journals and research papers and credible websites	July 2025	Certificate and an increased knowledge of early education and care
Complete a British Sign Language Level Three course	Look at British Sign Language courses that are available around working hours, attend weekly courses if appropriate course is found, practice current British Sign Language Skills along with skills learnt during lessons	Practicing with other British Sign Language learners and users, use apps such as Sign BSL, research D/deaf culture history and look in to D/deaf events to attend to help	December 2025	Increased knowledge of British Sign Language and D/deaf culture and history and a certificate upon completion

		support me in learning British Sign Language Skills		
Develop my knowledge in Additional Learning Needs and the inclusion needs of children with additional needs	Attend training opportunities with Flying Start and other multi agencies to increase knowledge of Additional Learning Needs, liaise with inclusion teams to help meet children with additional learning needs, independent learning from online courses on Additional Learning Needs	Booklets and books available from training opportunities, links to useful and up to date informational websites, online courses	July 2024 (this will be part of my continuous professional development so will be refreshed as and when needed)	Confidence in improved knowledge of Additional Learning Needs
Develop my confidence in my critical thinking skills and public speaking	Participate in activities that involve speaking in front of groups of various sizes during my degree, look at leading planning or team meetings to develop confidence in public speaking. Participate in group activities that encourage critical thinking skills, ensuring that I am reading relevant information and research on early education and care	Group discussions with follow students and colleagues, ensure that I am reading books from the essential and further reading list provided by the university as well as independent research from credible sources	This will be an ongoing target but I am hope to see an improvement in this target by July 2025	Progression in confidence to speak in public and the ability to critically look at information with an open mind and not to take the information at face value as well as asking questions with increased confidence

Reflective Practice

What is reflection and reflective practise?

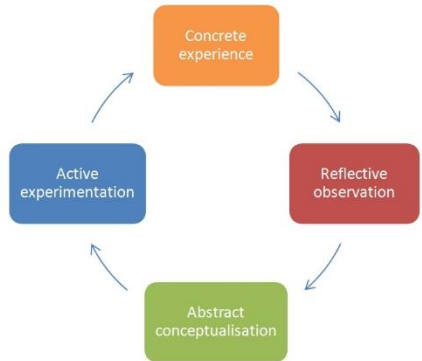
Crow, A. and Bailey, W. (2018, p. 60) mentions that "Reflection is more than just thinking and dialogue and discussion (Brock, 2015)", through reflection we are able to reflect upon our practice and situations as individuals, and collectively, means that we are able to think about how the situation went, the positives/negatives, what improvements could be made and how to implement them, any strengths and weaknesses, developing a change in our interpretation of situations, Jones, C. (2012, p. 347) supports this by saying that "During the process of reflection perceptions of the situation may change and develop." As we take time to discuss and reflect upon situations we will start to develop a reflective cycle that will help highlight our professional progression and improvement. A reflective cycle can be repeated allowing for further reflection on our professional practice and personal growth, allowing for analysis, evaluation and improvements on situations that occur within our settings and professions. We, as professionals are able to reflection how we are feeling about the situation, explore our thoughts and develop our understanding of how to work within best practice. Through sharing our reflective practice, we are able to work collectively with our colleagues, further encouraging us to analyses and evaluation our practice from other's view point, as mentioned by Paige-Smith, A. and Craft, A. (207, P. 16), "Through questioning what we do and how we might develop our practice it builds a bridge from our professional to our personal lives and vice versa". Reflection and reflective practice enables us as professionals to take a step back, reflect on the situation at hand, analysis, evaluate, problem solve, discuss, review and adapt our professional practices to improve on best practice.

Why is reflective practise important to EY practise?

As professionals, we will need to go through a reflective process to evaluate and analyses our practice and consider any improvements and/or changes needed. According to Hallet E, (2013, p.25), "The purpose of reflective practice is to provide better quality experiences for children and their families." This is further supported by Brock, A. (2014, P. 22), who says that "It is a key professional attribute to be able to reflect on the impact of change on the children and families with whom you work and the effects on working practice." Reflection and reflective practice is important as reflection on our practice allows us to become self-aware of our current skill set and professional knowledge, identity our strengths and weaknesses and areas of improvement, learning and development as individuals and collectively as a team. Reflective practice fosters a curiosity philosophy on our best practice and promotes different views and ideas.

The theory of reflective practise:

Origins of reflective theory can be tracked back to John Dewey (1933), Dewey, J. (no date), described reflective practice as "Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it...". In essence this translates to us as having a questioning method, contemplate on why things are the way they are and how they might be changed or adapted for the future. Schon's theory of reflection (1983) differs a little as according to Aubrey, K. and Riley, A. (2019, P.183), Schon's theory mentions "... our understanding of learning and its various processes through his introduction of the practices of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action", reflection-in-action is effectively a way of thinking on our feet, adapting whilst in the moment whereas 'reflection-on-action' is completed after the situation allowing you to be able to reflect, question and evaluate the situation, this is where Schon is similar to Dewey in reflecting after the fact. Both theories are similar as they encourage us to reflect on our practice in a way that will suit us as individuals, finding a reflective theory that suits our needs leading us to find the model of reflection that will suit the way we would reflect our professional practice.

Gibbs' model 	Kolb's model 
Analysis of models – compare/contrast/pros/cons: Campbell- Barr, V. and Leeson, C. 92016, p. 4) mentions “<u>Novice reflectors find the existence of such models useful as they start learning how to reflect.</u>”. One model of reflection is Gibbs’ model of reflection as according to the University of Edinburgh (no date) “<u>Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion, Action Plan</u>” Driscoll’s reflective model as stated by BC Campus (no date) “<u>... incorporates the ‘what’, ‘so what’ and ‘now what’ of the experience in to reflection (Driscoll, 1994)</u>”. Driscoll’s model is a simpler form of reflective practice, as according to nursinganswers.net, (no date), Driscoll is “<u>...one of the simplest models of reflection.</u>”. Gibbs’ model provides us with an in-depth reflection encouraging us to go in to a deeper reflection of the situations, enabling us to explore what happened, examine our feelings as well as being able to evaluate and analyse separately before drawing to a conclusion and action plan. Driscoll’s model differs from Gibbs’ model as it is the simpler model of the two, we are able to go in depth but may find that we may not explore the situations as acutely as we might do with Gibb’s model. There are advantages and disadvantages to any model of reflection, advantages to reflective models are providing us with a starting point on our reflective journey, helping to give us a structure that we can follow and digest, we are able to gage various stages of the situation and can open up honest and positive communications with other professional peers. The disadvantages are that we need to complete steps in a particular order or pattern, we may not always start at the beginning within the reality of our professional setting, reflective models may not be suitable in particular situations, we may come across negativity from professional peers who may be stuck within a familiar routine. Library guides (2022) suggests that “<u>Reflective practice is a continuous process</u>” as a disadvantage, this may be true within certain educational settings where we may not be able to dedicate time to reflect, improve ad revisit but can be advantageous to those whose professional setting dedicates time to reflection as a part of their work routine.	
Conclusion Reflective practice is in my opinion should be an innate practice of our profession, as this allows us to reflect upon our ability to deliver best practice to the children in our care and support and work alongside parents/carers and their families. Reflection allows us to evaluate our knowledge, highlight where we may need to improve or areas we would like to develop more of an in-depth knowledge. Reflective practice can also enable us to be able to work collaboratively with other professionals in our settings and other multi-agencies to improve overall practice and professional development. From my research on reflection and reflective practice, I feel that this is important our development as individuals as well as professionals to be able to reflect on our abilities, I feel that reflective theories such as Dewey and Schon can help us understand what reflection and reflective practice is and reflective models such as Gibbs and Driscoll.	

Written essay

What do we think of, when we think of professional practice? The first thing that will possibly come to mind could perhaps be a group of professionals such as doctors, lawyers, or in our case early educators, teachers, occupational therapists, health visitors, these are

only some examples. We will find that professional practice will very likely be based on ethics, values and principles, with individuals working collectively towards the same aims, objectives and values within the early education setting, all working towards the same aim. Dyer, M. (2018, p 349), **“Professions are understood to operate as a collective with shared aims and interest...”**, professional practice involves as mentioned having values, and attributes that are relevant to our roles and responsibilities within our work place. This leads me on to what is a professional? A professional is an individual or group of people who are skilled or knowledgeable within the field. Hyson, M. and Tomlinson, H. (2014 p. 9) supports this by saying that **“whatever their specific roles or functions, these professionals share a strong foundation of knowledge, skills and dedication...”**, a professional is someone who is knowledgeable, reliable, strives to deliver best practice, working collaboratively with others, sharing information, experience and skills learnt through continuous professional development. Professionals are people who are willing to learn and expand their knowledge enabling them to strive towards best practice whilst working with and alongside others, whilst also being a good communicator and active listener whilst being reassuring, emphatic, and approachable.

Below are some values that I believe are important to professional practitioners: -

Empathy- the ability to be able to put ourselves in other people’s shoes and see it from their point of view, shows that we are effective and active listeners.

Respect and trust- by having respect and trust we are showing that care for other people’s needs and feelings, develop positive and genuine relationships with other professionals, parents/carers, and the wider community. This will also help develop open communication and confidence in approaching sensitive subjects.

Equality- is enabling everyone with the right to have an equal opportunity to access things like education, shopping, healthcare services, public transport and more. To able to do this we also need to make sure that we have **equity** meaning that we are able to adapt provision and give help when needed meaning that we are able to remove barriers.

Integrity and transparency- we are able to be show others what we do, promote best practice, enabling us to be honest with ourselves and other professionals, parents/carers and the community whilst also be able to show consistently in our practice.

By having a nature that is not only caring and approachable but also helpful and understanding, well developed communication skills with children, their parents and other carers along with the ability to work alongside parents/carers and children, we must also have a commitment to social inclusion. (Powell, S 2010 pp. 213-229). Values are important to professional practice as they are the characteristics that will govern an individual’s behaviour within the professional setting, they allow us to be able to develop as individuals, providing us with a professional identity and sense of being within the education and care sector. We are able to work collectively with colleagues, other professionals, parents/carers the community, is supported by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (2021), who states **“Develop our understanding of our role in collaborative working with a range of partners including families and communities.”** We are able to support and recognise

children's individuality, seeing them in their entirety, adapting and addressing their educational and care needs as well as being able to identify our contributions towards the safeguarding of children and young people and the difference we could make. Leading on from these we will also be encouraged to see where we are able to support and help others beyond our workplace, being able to support the children, their families and the communities more effectively. Values also facilitates us in propelling our professional and individual commitment to motivate and inspire our colleagues and the children in our care.

Within early education and care, we as practitioners need to be able to communicate with others and develop positive relationships, through good communication and positive relationships we are able to meet the needs of the children in their care. Practitioners that are at ease in their roles and are active in coordinating with the team became more confident about communication a vision for better practice (Lindon, J. and Lindon, L. 2011). Good communication skills amongst practitioners, multiagency and parents/carers will come from fostering positive relationships. These skills will come hand in hand, as practitioners we need to be aware of the values of good communication and being able to adjust our skills accordingly and sensitively to be able to adjust ourselves to whomever we are communicating with. Trodd, L. and Goodliff, G (2011 p. 37) state that **"It is important to be inclusive and non-discriminatory in your efforts to build relationships."**, this is also supported by City and Guild's (no date) who says **"The childcare worker must develop communication skills in order to work effectively with children, parents/carers, colleagues and other professionals."** To be able to develop relationships with parents/carers, colleagues and multiagency professionals we need to be able to: -

- Make time for conversations and discussions in appropriate areas of the setting, such as an office or quiet room
- Have an awareness of the times of when we need to speak to people, ensure that these times are appropriate for all parties
- Ensure that we set clear boundaries when communicating with others
- We must also ensure that we express a genuine interest in what is being communicated to us and that we acknowledge any achievements that we are told.
- We must make certain that we remain honest, trustworthy and transparent when we are communicating to others
- As practitioners, we must also be mindful about making promises during communications and ensure that these promises are realistic
- Furthermore, we must remember to actively listen whilst acknowledging and understanding what is being said.

These will help to promote progressive relationships amongst parents/carers, other professionals and colleagues, developing trust, respect and positive connections whilst developing the confidence to touch upon sensitive topics for example an issue concerning behaviour or additional needs. Developing communication skills and positive relationships is

beneficial to the needs of children as we are able to communicate ways to help progress their development, support the families, if they are in need of any help for example sign posting to parent plus (flying start) for extra support.

In-depth knowledge and understanding is important to professional practice, as through knowledge and experience, we are able to provide high quality care, education and best practice with the setting. From the wealth of skills and knowledge that we can gain from qualifications alongside experience within the sector ensures that we are able to meet the needs of the children in our care, we are also able through continuous professional development further develop our learning increasing the quality of care that we provide. Sylva *et al.* (as quoted by Hevey, D. (2014, p 266) mentions that **“There is also a positive relationship between the qualification levels of the staff and ratings of the centre quality.”** This suggest that increasing the qualifications of staff leads to an increase of their knowledge and developing their experience further enabling them to improve the quality of care and education alongside supporting children’s individual learning and developmental needs. As we develop our knowledge in childcare we are also able to develop our knowledge in areas such as safeguarding, we are able to recognise the need for discretion and confidentiality when it comes to safeguarding children within our care. Falch-Erickson, A. (2018, p. 43), **“The child’s right to protection is a matter of the public prohibiting every act of care that causes detriment to the child”** Furthermore, the NSPCC (2023) also states that **“It is everyone’s responsibility to safeguard children and young people”**. We have a duty of care to the children and their families in our setting and by having an in-depth knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, care, additional learning/behaviour needs and education as it enables us to work together with others to protect the rights and needs of those in our care.

Working in partnership is important as we are able to work together to provide high quality care and education to children within the setting. We are able to adapt the learning opportunities to meet the needs of the child as an individual, for example working in partnership with parents/carers. This important as they are the child’s main carers and will know their child best, they will be able to let you know likes/dislikes, where they feel their child is in terms of developmental stage and any concerns they may have, to help us modify their learning journey, gov.uk (no date) states that **“It’s about working together to share knowledge, understanding children’s interests and discover how best to support their learning.”** This is also true for multiagency working, ensuring that we are working and communicating together for the best learning experience for the child. Essentially multiagency working is practioners working collaboratively with other agencies, providing the best support to children and their families. Gasper, M. (2009, p.2) mentions that multiagency working is, in essence, **“...the notion of children, parents, families and communities having access to a wider range of support and developmental services...”** By working in partnership and with multi-agencies, we are able to support children as a whole, along with being able to assist and collaborate with parents/carers to access the help they may need.

The observation and planning cycle facilitates practitioners to further enhance and extend children's learning, we are able to keep track and monitor the progress of children through assessment and observation (Bruce, T. 2015, p. 201). This enables us to see what the children's interests are at present, areas they need support in and enables us to provide challenging and stimulating learning opportunities to meet their developmental learning needs. Nutbrown and Carter (2010, p. 113) supports this as they mention that observations allow us to have a starting point to review the settings provision and its effectiveness alongside being able to assess where children are in their learning journey. Observation and planning cycles enables practitioners to be able to observe in the moment, evaluate areas that children need to be challenged more in and where they may need more support. We are able to gauge children's abilities as a whole and adapt children's learning and development accurately within the planning cycle, observations also provides the opportunities to examine how activities and resources are supporting children and if there are any improvements in the resources and activities we are providing.

The principles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) helps to inform professional practice as within the education and childcare sector, there will have policies and procedures that underpins children's rights and that is in-line with legislation and guidance from the Welsh government who have adopted and implemented the UNCRC within these legislation and guidance, (<http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/children-and-young-people/rights/uncrc/?lang=e> accessed 25th October 2023). Within in early years' sector, practitioners will work with the best interest of the child (Article 3- UNCRC) at the heart of what they do within the setting, this can be done by working with children, parents/carers, families, communities and multiagency to ensure that we are able to meet their needs and interest. Practitioners take the views of the children through observing their play, listening to their voice and interests (Article 12) and implementing these in the planning of activities and resources and showing an interest in them and their families as a whole and provide support when and where possible. Practitioners are there to help support children to learn their home language, culture/ traditions, religion (Article 30), providing opportunities to promote this within the setting through equity, play and learning opportunities, practitioners also support children to play, relax and explore different cultural experiences within the early years (Article 31) ([UNCRC summary-1 1.pdf \(unicef.org.uk\)](#) accessed 25th October 2023). These principles are important to us as they enable us to provide care and education to children whilst being able to implement and support children's rights within the setting, we are able to ensure that children have the provision to things such as education, healthcare, they are able to participate in a range of activities within the setting and communities and protection from harm, abuse and mal-treatment and support them with rehabilitation ([1 UNCRC Rights En \(1\).pdf \(gov.wales\)](#) accessed 25th October 2023)