

Part one- 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	December 2025	Increased knowledge of British Sign Language and D/deaf culture and history and a certificate upon completion

		help 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

Part two- Reflective Practice Briefing

What is reflection and reflective practise?

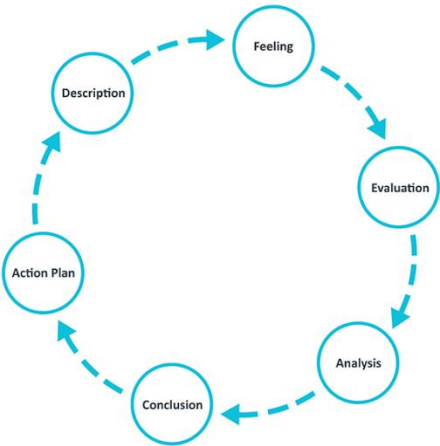
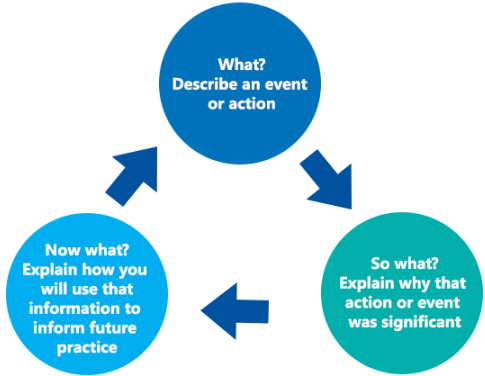
Through reflection practitioners are able to reflect upon practice, practitioner might find that the process will require more than thinking, communication and discussion and situations Crow and Bailey (2018) and according to Jones (2012, p. 347) "During the process of reflection perceptions of the situation may change and develop." As practitioners take time to discuss and reflect upon situations, they will start to develop a reflective practice cycle that will help highlight their professional progression and improvement. A repeated reflective cycle allows for further reflection on professional practice and personal growth, allowing for analysis, evaluation and improvements on situations that occur within our settings and professions. Professionals are also able to reflect on their feelings about the situation, explore their thoughts and develop their understanding of how to work within best practice. According to Paige-Smith and Craft (2011, p. 24), reflecting with colleagues, practitioners will have the opportunity to discuss situations, gain and share different perspectives and compare interpretations of situations, this is further supported by Lindon and Trodd (2016) who suggests that reflective as a standalone might not be well supported as it is a professional learning opportunity, promoting communication and positive relationships along with sharing responsibility for positive experiences. Reflection and reflective practice enables practitioners to take a step back, reflect on the situation at hand, analyse, evaluate, problem solve, discuss, review and adapt our professional practices to improve on best practice.

Why is reflective practise important to EY practise?

According to Hallet (2013, p.25), "The purpose of reflective practice is to provide better quality experiences for children and their families." Brock (2014), mentions that reflective practice and to be able to reflect on practice is a professional attribute that helps them to reflect the change to children and families as well as how the changes impacts the workplace 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, identify 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:

Dewey (no date), described reflective practice as a carefully thought out, active, effective and consistent consideration on supposed beliefs or forms of knowledge. 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 developed in 1983, his theory is based on practitioners learning through the processes of reflection-in-practice and reflection-on-practice (Aubrey and Riley 2019). 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  University of Edinburgh (no date)	Driscoll's model  nursinganswers.net, (no date).
<u>Analysis of models – compare/contrast/pros/cons:</u> Campbell- Barr, V. and Leeson, C. 2016, p. 4) mentions <u>“Novice reflectors find the existence of such models useful as they start learning how to reflect.”</u>. Gibbs' model of reflection as shown the image above shows seven stages of reflection, such as describing what happened, reflecting on our feelings separately, whilst evaluation and analysis the situation, forming a conclusion and then forming an action plan. 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.	
<u>Conclusion</u> Reflective practice 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.	

Part three- Professional Practice

Professional practice is a collective ethos within a work place, providing a high standard of best practice and ethics, with professionals working collaboratively and collectively towards a shared aims and objectives and with the best interest of the children at the setting (Dyer, M. 2018, p 349). Professional practice will have a collective set values, and attributes that are relevant to our roles and responsibilities within the work place. A professional is a group of people who are skilled or knowledgeable within the field. Hyson, M. and Tomlinson, H. (2014 p. 9) says that “**whatever their specific roles or functions, these professionals share a strong foundation of knowledge, skills and dedication...**”, a professional is someone who is not only knowledgeable and skilled but is also reliable, strives to deliver best practice, working collaboratively with others, sharing information. 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.

Practitioners will come across values that will be important to practitioner's role as professionals, some of these values could include: -

Empathy- the ability to be able to put ourselves in other people's shoes and see it from their point of view, shows that practitioners 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, healthcare services and more. To able to do this we also need to make sure that we have **equity** meaning that practitioners are able to adapt provision and give help when needed meaning that practitioners are able to remove barriers.

Integrity and transparency- the ability to be show others what practitioners do, promote best practice, enabling practitioners to be honest with themselves and other professionals, parents/carers and the community whilst also be able to show consistently with professional 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 allow practitioners to be able to develop as individuals, providing practitioners with a professional identity and sense of being within the education and care sector.

Within early education and care, practitioners need to be able to communicate with others and develop positive relationships, to be 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 develop 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. Ward, U. (2009 p. 37) state that **"It is important to be inclusive and non-discriminatory in your efforts to build relationships."**, to be able to communicate effectively with children, their parents/carers and families is key to developing positive relationships. 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
- An awareness of the times when to speak to people, ensuring that these times are appropriate for all.
- Ensure that clear boundaries are set when communicating with others
- Ensure that we express a genuine interest in what is being communicated to practitioners and acknowledge what is being told.
- Make certain that we remain honest, trustworthy and transparent
- Be mindful about making promises during communications and ensure that these are realistic
- Furthermore, practitioners must remember to actively listen and understand 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.

In-depth knowledge and understanding is important to professional practice, as through knowledge and experience, be able to provide high quality care, education and best practice with the setting.

From the wealth of skills and knowledge that professionals can gain from qualifications alongside experience within the sector ensures that practitioners 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.”** Having in depth knowledge will give us the confidence in understanding child’s development and education, supporting children through the stages of development and identify any additional learning needs or delays in development that may require extra assistance, we can plan according to the children’s needs and interest (Barber, 2019). Practitioners will also become confident in aspects of safeguarding. This awareness of acts that is damaging to children, professionals and member so the communities have a responsibility to prevent harm and ensure we meet the child’s right for protection (Falch-Erickson, A.2018, p. 43). Furthermore, everyone has the responsibility to keep children and young people safe from harm, abuse and mal treatment (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) (no date). Everyone have a duty of care to the children and their families in the setting and by having an in-depth knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, care, additional learning/behaviour needs and education as it enables professionals to work together with others to protect the rights and needs of those in their care.

Working in partnership is important as practioners are able to work together to provide high quality care and education to children within the setting. They 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 practioners know likes/dislikes, where 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, practitioners 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, practitioners can 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 practitioners 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>). 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 \(unicef.org.uk\)](#)). 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 \(gov.wales\)](#))

In conclusion professionals is a group of individuals, who work collectively within the early years who have an in-depth knowledge of early education and care, children's rights and safeguarding.

Professional practice is where practitioners are providing best practice that have values and principles ingrained within the workplace, communication, working together and multiagency working, as well as observation and planning enables professionals, parents/carers work to provide the best outcomes for the children in their care ensuring that they are working towards the child's best interests and enabling their voices and views are heard.

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