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This assignment will discuss quality, what it is and why it is important. It will then continue to discuss ITERS and parent questionnaires and further discuss the advantages and disadvantages of them and how they benefit the Early Year's Setting.

Quality may have a variety of definitions to a variety of people. Palaiologou (2023) suggests that according to research quality could be divided into two sections. The first section being Structural quality which refers to staff to child ratios, leadership and staff training. The second section is Process quality which refers to pedagogy, practice and child experiences within the setting. Both sections intertwine with one another and are crucial parts in delivering holistic quality within early years settings. Palaiologou (2023) further explains that early year's settings should have discussions amongst the early year's practitioners using and sharing their knowledge to find the levels of care that is agreed is a suitable quality of care which adheres to the National Minimum Standards and meet's these standards and in some cases, goes beyond that.

Birth to 5 Matters (No dates) also supports this by explaining that a high quality early tears setting could be a setting in which personalises the learning of the individual children within the setting and that also builds strong foundations for the children's learning and wellbeing whilst involving and communicating effectively with their parents along this journey.

It is important to have a high level of quality within an early year's setting. Foundation Years (No date) explains that children who attend a high quality setting and experience high quality care and education may be able to learn and lay a good foundation in their holistic development which may enable them to continue to do well in their educational careers and additionally develop deeper cognitive, social and emotional skills which will prove beneficial for the children throughout their lives, both socially and professionally. UK Parliament (2021) states that there is research which supports the suggestions from the Foundation Years (No date). However, this does not necessarily mean that all children who do not attend settings will not do well in school as variety of different

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factors may contribute to a child's put come, such as poverty and Additional Learning Needs* (*ALN).

The next part of this assignment will discuss the benefits of Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale* (*ITERS) and parent questionnaires and how they can improve and provide quality within an early year's setting. Coventry City Council (2019) explains that ITERS is a rating scale that concentrates on the needs of the children up to the age of 36 months. The ITERS provides guidelines for settings to ensure high quality is achieved and maintained within the setting. The ITERS not only focuses on the holistic needs of the children, but it also additionally assesses the environment of the setting and the provisions and experiences the children receive whilst in the setting.

ITERS is a requirement of the Flying Start program. According to the Welsh Government (2024) Flying Start is a government funded program which targets specific areas of Wales which may be classed as disadvantage areas. Flying Start provides additional support for children with speech and language, partially funded childcare, and additional health visit support. Flying Start incorporates ITERS into the guidelines for the settings to ensure high quality care, education and experiences for the children within the setting.

Parent Questionnaires are commonly found in Early Years Settings. Parent questionnaires are a form given out to parents whose children attend an early year's setting asking them on their opinions of various aspects of care and education that their child receives within the setting. Birth to 5 Matters (No Date) explains that parent questionnaires are a beneficial way of improving and maintaining quality within an early year's setting. It allows the parents the opportunity to express their feelings and / or concerns that they may have about the setting or the education and care their child is receiving within the setting.

Nursery World (2012) explains that an advantage of the ITERS is that it is extremely detailed in all areas. It allows the early years practitioners to evaluate the setting

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thoroughly and to apply the guidelines of ITERS within their setting. This is also supported by NH Connections (No date). Another Advantage of ITERS suggested by La Paro et al (2014) is that the ITERS are accompanied by annual ITERS inspections which will allow the setting to be assessed and be rated. This will allow the early year's practitioners to see what a government body has rated the setting in an unbiased manner and reflect on how they can improve moving forward.

The next method of quality assurance is Parent Questionnaires. According to Autism Education Trust (No date) parent questionnaires allow the parents the opportunity to express their opinions on the care and education that their child is receiving in the setting. This additionally supports open communication between the setting and the parents. A disadvantage of parent questionnaires explained by NIH (2014) may be that parents do not wish to express any concerns they may have within the setting as they may feel they want to communicate with the setting first. Alternatively, NIH (2014) further explains that if a parent has had previous complaints about or within the setting they may be biased or unreliable feedback due to strong feelings clouding any normal judgement they may have. Parent feedback is a required part of quality within the settings as all feedback recieved will contribute to the daily running of the setting and the feedback will affect the Quality of Care and SASS reports. Care Inspectorate Wales * (*CIW) (No date) explains that the Quality of Care and SASS reports are a legal requirement to be carried out annually by all childcare providers.

The information provided by these methods of quality assurance will allow settings to gain an accurate overview of the quality of the setting and the care and education provided within it. This will then allow the early year's settings to be able practice reflective practice. According to Birth to 5 Matters (No date) explains that reflective practice is beneficial aspect of practice in which early year's practitioners can reflect on the feedback given by the ITERS and parent questionnaires. By reflecting on the feedback given by these quality assurance methods it will allow the early year's setting opportunity to plan on changes which they can make to improve the environment and

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their practice which will benefit, not only themselves in other upcoming inspections such as a CIW inspection but it will also benefit the children within their setting, allowing their experiences to support the holistic development and wellbeing of the children.

In conclusion, ITERS and parent questionnaires are an overall effective method of quality assurance to be used within an early year's childcare setting. It allows opinions of governing bodies carrying out the inspection and the more personal opinions of the parents within the setting to be heard. This supports the overall setting development. When using alongside other tools such as reflective practice it will allow the settings to explore thoroughly all aspects of improvement within their setting.

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