

Leadership and teamwork in early years

03/05/26 - Staff Meeting

Agenda:

- Gold Snack Award
- ALN Support and Funding
- Staff Training
- New Child
- Team Bonding

Script

Good Evening everyone, My name is Charlie Burman, and I'm working as your Manager within the setting.

Before I start, I'd like to take a moment to thank everyone for attending today. I understand how busy the setting can be, so your time and commitment are really appreciated.

Staff meetings are an important part of our practice, as they give us the opportunity to come together as a team, share ideas, reflect on what is working well, and identify areas where we can continue to improve.

They also help to ensure that we are all working consistently and supporting each other to provide the best possible outcomes for the children. (Indeed Career Guide, n.d.)

Before we begin, I'd like to give apologies on behalf of Karen, our SENCo, at the setting, who is unable to attend today.

I also just need to nominate someone to take minutes for today's meeting.

Would anyone be happy to take on this role?

Thank you, Mia, I appreciate that. Please make sure to note any key discussions, decisions, and actions so we can share these with the team afterwards.

We'll be talking about important changes in the setting today, with an emphasis on forthcoming dates, staff development, children's wellbeing, and strengthening team cohesiveness. These are all crucial components that help to foster an environment that is encouraging and helpful for both the staff and the children. (O'Sullivan, 2015)

We must continue to collaborate as a team and advance our professional practice in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales and the National Minimum Standards for Regulated Child Care in order to guarantee that every child receives high-quality care, education, and support. (GOV.WALES, 2023)

To give you a clear overview of what will be covered in today's meeting, I will quickly run through the agenda.

Firstly, we will discuss our goal of achieving the Gold Snack Award, with a focus on promoting healthy eating and positive habits within the setting. This will include looking at how staff members may help children learn about good health through regular interactions, activities, and positive role modelling.

Next, we will discuss Additional Learning Needs, including the importance of funding and how it supports inclusive practice for children who require extra support. Additionally, we will talk about the significance of early identification, collaborating with families and outside organisations, and modifying routines and activities.

After that, we will look at upcoming training opportunities available for staff, and how these can support both your professional development and our overall practice.

We will then discuss ways to facilitate a welcoming and seamless transition for a new child who will be starting at the setting.

This will involve talking about how we can collaborate with the child's family, learn vital details about their unique needs and interests, and assist them in feeling secure, at ease, and involved in the setting right away.

In order to fulfil the child's unique requirements and foster positive relationships, we will also look at how staff can support the child emotionally during the settling-in process and make sure that routines, activities, and interactions are modified as needed.

Finally, we will look at team bonding, focusing on ways we can continue to build positive relationships, improve communication, and strengthen our teamwork.

We will go through each of these areas in more detail, and there will be opportunities for everyone to contribute throughout the meeting.

In the upcoming weeks we will be preparing a visit from gold standard snack awards, they will be looking closely at our focus on healthy snacks and eating. The work of the snack award links with the Welsh Government Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme.

Our nursery setting would benefit from winning the Gold Snack Award since it shows a strong dedication to encouraging children to eat healthily and lead great lifestyles. It demonstrates how the environment offers nutritious foods, promotes adequate cleanliness, and helps children form positive relationships with food at a young age. This is extremely as several organisations and frameworks emphasise the importance of healthy eating habits for children in early years education. (CDC, 2024)

This award demonstrates high standards of care and welfare, receiving the award can also improve the setting's standing with parents, carers, and the larger community.

I feel our setting is very capable of gaining this award as we already prioritize healthy eating, but the next few weeks we need everyone's input as a team to ensure we are following these steps and meeting the criteria for our aim of the Gold Snack Award.

The Gold Snack Award is designed to promote healthy eating within early years settings by encouraging balanced, nutritious snacks and helping children to develop positive eating habits from a young age. (NHS, n.d.)

Encouraging children to eat healthy is crucial for their general growth and well-being. This relates to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which states that before children can fully participate in learning, growth, and social relationships, their basic physiological needs like access to food and nutrition must be satisfied. (van Lenthe, Jansen and Kamphuis, 2015)

Maslow's theory is a great example of how important it is for us all to work together, to reinforce healthy eating into our setting as much as we can, as it plays a key role in children's overall development, including their physical growth, concentration, energy levels, and long-term wellbeing. Establishing these habits early can have a lasting impact on children's health. (Gov.uk, 2024)

Within our setting, we are planning to review our current snack provision to ensure it is balanced and nutritious. This will include offering a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and healthy options, while also reducing foods that are high in sugar.

In line with the Curriculum for Wales, we aim to support children in developing healthy lifestyles and making informed choices about food. (Welsh Government, 2022)

We also want to encourage children's independence by allowing them to take part in snack routines, such as selecting their own food, pouring drinks, and helping to prepare simple snacks where appropriate. This supports both their physical development and their confidence. (Wolfenden et al., 2020)

In line with the Welsh government food and drink policy (2025), all staff must ensure that snacks meet nutritional guidelines and promote healthy choices. We will also involve children in discussions about food, helping them to understand why healthy eating is important.

We must also ensure that all allergies and dietary requirements are carefully managed. This links closely to our health and safety procedures, where staff

must be aware of individual needs and follow correct procedures to prevent any risks. (GOV.WALES, 2025)

This also supports safeguarding, as ensuring children's health, safety, and wellbeing is a key responsibility within our setting.

Overall, by working towards the Gold Snack Award, we are aiming to create a positive food environment that supports children's development, promotes inclusion, and encourages lifelong healthy habits.

If anyone has any ideas on how we can incorporate this criteria into our daily routines within the setting, please feel free to speak to me at the end. I'd really value hearing your thoughts and suggestions.

I'd now like to move on to Additional Learning Needs, often referred to as ALN.

As Karen, our ALNCo, is unfortunately unable to attend today's meeting, I will be sharing and presenting her notes with you.

ALN describes children who require additional support with their learning or development compared to others of the same age. This may include needs related to communication, physical development, behaviour, or emotional wellbeing. (SNAP Cymru, 2024)

In Wales, this is supported by the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021, which sets out the legal responsibilities for identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs. (Welsh Government, 2021)

In line with this statutory guidance, it is our responsibility to identify children's needs as early as possible. This is done through observations, assessments, and working closely with parents to build a clear understanding of each child's development.

Funding is crucial because it enables us to offer children personalised, focused support so they may access education and realise their full potential. It would be more challenging to successfully address each child's unique requirements without this assistance.

In addition, we have had the good fortune to get additional funding within the setting, which has strengthened the support we can offer children with ALN.

We can utilise this funding to support additional staffing, such as one-on-one or small-group assistance, or to give extra resources, including communication aids or sensory equipment. This guarantees that children get the assistance they require to fully engage in education and everyday activities and aids in the creation of a more inclusive environment.

This also links to our inclusion policy, as we are committed to ensuring that all children are supported and able to participate fully in the setting, regardless of their individual needs. (Office, 2013)

Another important part of this role is working in partnership with external professionals, such as speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, and health visitors. Early identification is crucial because it enables staff to identify when a child might require extra assistance early on, enabling the implementation of suitable methods and interventions as soon as necessary. This will benefit children as they can receive regular help at home and in the classroom thanks to tight collaboration with families and outside organisations. Close communication with parents and professionals is essential to ensure a consistent and person-centred approach. (Education Wales, 2024)

Our ALNCo, Karen, plays a key role in coordinating this support. She works closely with staff to implement appropriate strategies, monitor progress, and ensure that support plans are regularly reviewed.

To meet statutory requirements, we must ensure that support is tailored to the child, regularly reviewed, and that families are fully involved in decision-making. This reflects a person-centred approach, which is a key principle within the ALN framework in Wales.

Overall, ALN funding allows us to provide the appropriate support, resources, and care needed to promote inclusion, safeguard children's wellbeing, and ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive.

This links closely to our next topic, which is staff training and development.

To ensure we are continuing to keep in line with policies and provide the best possible support for children with additional learning needs, it is important that

we continue to build our knowledge and skills as a team. Continuing our professional development allows us to work more confidently alongside families and external professionals, while also improving outcomes for the children in our care.

Ongoing training also helps us to meet statutory requirements and maintain high standards of care and education within the setting.

With this in mind, I would like to offer the opportunity for any staff who are interested to take part in ALN-focused training. This will not only help to develop your understanding, confidence, and ability to support children effectively but also It also encourages reflective practice, helping staff evaluate and improve their own approaches and interactions. (Department for Education, 2025)

If this is something you would be interested in, please let me or Karen, the SENCo, know after the meeting, as this will support both your individual professional development and the overall quality of practice within the setting.

In summary, we have covered several crucial topics that are critical to our setting's further development today.

We started by examining our objective of winning the Gold Snack Award, concentrating on how we can encourage children to eat healthily and develop positive habits in accordance with the Curriculum for Wales and our food and drink policy.

We then discussed Additional Learning Needs, including the significance of early diagnosis, collaborating with professionals and parents, and how ALN financing enables us to offer children specialised help. In order to make sure we are fulfilling our legal obligations, this was connected to the Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 and our inclusion policy.

We also talked about the value of staff growth and training, especially chances to increase our expertise in helping children with special needs, which will improve our team's overall performance.

We also examined how to assist a new child entering the setting, emphasising the significance of establishing a friendly atmosphere and facilitating a seamless transition. Since beginning a new environment can frequently feel overwhelming or unfamiliar for young children, it is crucial to provide emotional support during the settling in process. I feel confident that all my staff can assist the child in feeling safe, comfortable, and appreciated in the setting by offering reassurance, consistency, and a friendly atmosphere.

Lastly, we talked about how fostering good relationships, enhancing communication, and cooperating may fortify our team and enhance the children's results.

All of these areas are intimately related to creating a high-quality, safe, and inclusive environment that promotes children's learning, development, and well-being for the children as well as our staff.

Your time, talents, and continuous commitment to the setting are greatly appreciated. Your hard work and commitment play an important role in creating a positive, safe, and supportive environment for the children and families within our care.

We can continue to improve our practice and give each child the best care and educational opportunity by cooperating as a team, communicating clearly, and supporting one another.

Would anyone wish to contribute anything or ask any questions before we finish up?

If not, I would like to thank you once more for coming to and participating in today's meeting. Please remember that we do have an open door policy, my door is always open if you would like to discuss any of today's topics further or share any additional ideas or concerns.

We will now bring the meeting to a close.

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