

Objective	Actions (how I will achieve this objective/ what needs to be done?)	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?)
To finish my early years education degree.	To be able to achieve finishing my degree I would need to attend all lectures regularly and activity participate, ensure all my assignments are completed on time, while also maintaining good marks.	Access to lectures, online resources, and the library. While also following my assignment guidance and seeking support when needed.	10 th May 2026	I will know I have achieved this goal once I receive my overall marks and certificate, and graduate in 2026.
Continued education on speech and therapy.	When I have completed a speech and therapy course and, demonstrate proficiency and, successfully apply newly acquired knowledge and techniques in speech and therapy sessions with children, showing improved outcomes.	Access to formal training programs, such as workshops, specifically focused on speech and therapy in early years education. Also access to educational materials, such as textbooks and online resources, while also having a supportive environment that values and prioritizes professional development.	2 nd June 2027 By this date I would have graduated my early years degree and will have another year of continued education.	Measure my progress, by improved documentation, while also seeking feedback from supervisors, mentors and instructors on my performance and areas for further growth in speech and therapy. While also demonstrating proficiency, knowledge and techniques in speech and therapy.
To gain more practical experience in an early year setting.	To actively seek for a job role within the early years industry and spend time observing other experienced practitioners in action.	Access to jobseekers pages such as Our recruitment process (gov.wales) . Also enrolling my son into full time education allowing me to free up my hours to gain more experience in an early year setting.	1 st of April 2027	To have a successful job offering in an early year's education setting. While continuously gaining new experience. And for my son to have a successful full-time place in a primary school.
To complete my first aid training.	I will need to book an essential first Aid (All ages) with defibrillator demo with St Johns ambulance service, with an annual refresher first aid demo every year to maintain my knowledge and understanding.	online access to First Aid Courses, Advice & Volunteering St John Ambulance (sja.org.uk)	4th of May 2025	When I receive my certificate of achievement of completing my first aid training, while also maintaining my knowledge and being able to help in an unfortunate event that will need first aid assistance.

What is reflection and reflective practice? (Authority, 2024) states that reflection in early years refers to the process of thinking critically about one's own experiences, actions, and decisions in working with young children. Reflective practice involves regularly engaging in this process to deepen understanding, improve practice, and enhance professional development. It entails examining successes and challenges, considering alternative approaches, and identifying areas for growth and improvement. Through reflection, early years practitioners can refine their skills, enhance their interactions with children, and create more effective learning environments.

why is reflective practice important to early years practice? Reflective practice is crucial in early years practice because it allows educators to continually evaluate and improve their methods. It helps them understand the needs of each child better, adapt teaching strategies, and promote positive outcomes in children's development and learning. Additionally, reflective practice fosters professional growth, ensuring that educators stay informed about best practices and remain responsive to the evolving needs of children and families. (PACEY,2016)



(Main,2023)

The theory of reflection. (Sherly Third and Ece. C, 2022) states that John Dewey's theory of reflection, often associated with his educational philosophy, emphasizes the importance of active, experimental learning. Dewey believed that genuine learning occurs through a continuous process of experience, reflection, and action. In this view, learners engage in experiences, reflect on those experiences to derive meaning and understanding, and then apply their insights in future actions. Reflection is thus seen as a crucial component in the learning process, facilitating deeper understanding and personal growth. Dewey's idea has had a significant impact on educational theory and practice, particularly in promoting hands-on, inquiry-based learning methods. (Kurt, 2020) in addition, Kolb's theory of reflection, known as the experiential learning theory, builds upon the ideas of John Dewey. According to Kolb, learning is a continuous process that involves four stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. In this model, learners engage in experiences, reflect on those experiences by observing and analysing what happened, then conceptualize their reflections into general theories or principals, and finally apply these theories in new situations through active experimentation. Kolb suggests that effective learning occurs when all four stages are engaged in a cyclical manner, with each stage informing and influencing the others. This theory emphasizes the importance of integrating both concrete experience and abstract conceptualization, as well as active experimentation and reflective observation, to facilitate deep learning and skill development.

Analysis of different reflective models. (Gunning, 2022) states that reflective practice in early years education is crucial for educators to continuously improve their teaching methods and respond effectively to the needs of young learners. Several reflective models are used in early years settings, each offering a unique framework for self-assessment and professional development. (Robinson, 2022) declares that Schön distinguishes between 'reflection- in- action' (which is thinking on your feet during teaching) and 'reflection- on action' (reflecting after the fact). This model emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and the role of intuition and tacit knowledge in professional practice. It encourages practitioners to become more aware of their actions and to learn from their experiences in real time. (Study prism, 2023) states that Schön's "reflection in action" method offers several benefits, particularly in professional practice and learning environments, such as immediate problem solving, enhanced professional competence, improved decision making, resilience and adaptability and ethical practice. Schon's reflective in action method fosters a dynamic, thoughtful, and responsive approach to professional practice it also has some disadvantages and limitations states (Waugh, 2023) suggesting that Schön's reflective practice is condensed and that practitioners need to reflect on the day with second opinions and critically think about their actions and decisions, Schön's model is relatively unstructured and open- ended, which might be challenging for individuals who prefer more concrete guidelines and frameworks. Some practitioners may struggle with how to effectively implement reflective practice, which can cause emotional stress. Whereas (Reflective Practice in the Early Years – Teach Kloud, 2019) states that Kolb's reflective model, also known as Kolb's experimental learning cycle, is a framework for understanding how people learn through experience. It is a very concrete and structured model, and it consists of four stages that form a continuous cycle. Starting with the concrete experience, this stage involves having a new experience or encountering a situation that presents a learning opportunity. It can be a planned or spontaneous event. Which then moves onto the reflective observation. After the experience, the practitioner reflects on what happened, this involves observing and thinking about the experience from different perspectives. Then the abstract of conceptualization during this stage, the practitioner forms theories or concepts based on their reflections. They develop generalizations or principles that can be applied to future situations. Concluding with active experimentation where the practitioner tests the new concepts and theories in practice. This involves planning and trying out what was learned in a new situation, creating a new concrete experience, and continuing the cycle. (Dennison, 2010) states that Kolb's reflective model has several benefits also such as allowing the practitioner to experience a holistic learning approach it integrates both practical and theoretical aspects of learning, addressing different learning styles and preferences. The cyclic nature encourages ongoing learning and adaption, promoting personal and professional development. While also encourages practitioners to be more self-aware by reflecting on their experiences and understanding their learning processes. Although Kolb's reflective model has numerous benefits it also has some limitations states (clinical psychology community UK, 2021) such as being time consuming, completing this entire cycle can be time intensive, especially when thorough reflection and conceptualization and considered. To conclude both Schon's reflective practice model and Kolb's experimental learning cycle offer valuable insights into the process of learning from experience. Schon's model is more fluid and emphasizes the integration of reflection into immediate practice, making it highly applicable to professional development. In contrast, Kolb's model provides a structured, cyclical approach that is widely applicable in education contexts. Understanding and integrating elements from both models can enhance reflective practice and experimental learning across various fields.

Professional practice in the early years, requires the application of specialized knowledge, skills, and ethical standards to support the development and learning of young children from birth to eight years old. This field requires educators and caregivers to create nurturing, stimulating, and safe environments that promote the holistic growth of children. Early childhood professionals play a critical role in laying the groundwork for children's future learning and development, ensuring they have a strong start in life. Being professional encompasses a set of behaviours, attitudes, and qualities that are expected in each profession, demonstrating competence and expertise, and conducting oneself in a manner that reflects positively on oneself and the profession. (Kelly, 2015).

(Pacey, 2015) states that professional practitioners in early years education must embody several key values to effectively support the development and well-being of young children. These values guide their behaviour, interactions, and decision-making processes, ensuring that they provide a high-quality, nurturing, and inclusive environment for all children. Some essential values are, respect for children, valuing each child as an individual with unique needs, interests and abilities, listen to children's voices, respecting their choices, and recognizing their rights, empathy and compassion, Understanding and being sensitive to the feelings and experiences of children and their families, providing emotional support, creating a caring environment, and responding to children's needs with kindness, inclusivity and diversity, valuing and embracing differences, and ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities for all children. (Dyer,2016) also adds that values within the industry are fundamental to professional practice because they guide behaviour, decision-making, and interactions, ensuring that professionals act ethically, responsibly, and effectively. Values serve as a moral compass, helping professionals distinguish between right and wrong, they ensure that actions and decisions are ethically right, fostering trust and credibility. While so adhering to core values helps build and maintain trust with families, and colleagues.

(Welsh Government, 2022) states in the curriculum for Wales, that practitioners should recognise that they are the enabling adult in the environment and to be able to allow the children to feel they are within a supportive environment, we should be making strong connections with those around the child, such as family, and other multiagency that support the holistic development of the child. (HQ,2019) suggests that looking at theorist such as Bronfenbrenner can put into perspective just how crucial it is to build a connection with the microsystem of the child's life and make them feel a sense of belonging within the setting. (Murphy *et al.*,2024) building strong relationships with parents or caregivers is crucial. Regular, open communication ensures that parents are informed about their child's progress, needs, and any concerns, fostering a collaborative approach to the child's education and well-being. By doing this we are encouraged to keep on top of the child's current needs as a team with families and be able to meet their needs within the setting.

(GOV.UK,2022) states that in-depth knowledge of safeguarding procedures and policies are essential to protect children from harm. Practitioners must recognize signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation and know the appropriate actions to take. This ensures that children are kept safe, and any concerns are promptly addressed. Early years professionals must adhere to local and national safeguarding laws and regulations. Understanding these requirements helps ensure compliance, thereby protecting the setting from legal repercussions and maintaining high standards of care. A deep understanding of professional practice and safeguarding allows practitioners to reflect on and improve their practices continually. It encourages a culture of learning development, which is essential for maintaining high-quality care and education. In summary, having an in-depth knowledge and understanding is foundational to effective professional practice in early years settings. It ensures the safety and well-being of children, supports compliance with legal standards, builds trust with families, and enhances overall professional competence and effectiveness.

. (2 2 The Benefits and Challenges of Collaborative Multi-agency Working, 2008) states that working with multiagency teams can significantly benefit professional practice in early years setting, collaboration with various agencies such as, health services and social care allows for a comprehensive approach to addressing the diverse needs of children. This ensures that their physical, emotional, social, and educational needs are met more effectively. Multiagency work brings together professionals with different expertise and resources. This collective knowledge enhances the ability to create tailored support plans and interventions that are more likely succeed in promoting children's development and well-being. Engaging with professionals from different fields provides opportunities for learning and professional growth. Early years practitioners can gain new insights, skills, and strategies that can be applied to their practice, enhancing their overall effectiveness. In summary, working with multiagency teams enriches professional practice in summary, working with multiagency teams enriches professional practice by providing a broader range of expertise, resources, and support, ultimately leading to more effective and holistic care for children and their families.

(Pacey,2016) states that the observation and planning cycle is a fundamental process in early childhood education that enhances professional practice and ensures that practitioners meet the developmental and educational needs of children effectively. This cycle consists of a series of interrelated steps, observing, assessing, planning, implementing, and reflecting. To gather detailed, objective information about the child's behaviour, skills, interests, and interactions in various contexts. Once a practitioner has a deep understanding of each individual child's unique characteristics and developmental stage. This helps when identifying strengths, areas for growth, and any additional needs. Accurate observations ensure that practitioners tailor their approach to support individual learning styles and developmental needs. Observation can also reassure the practitioner that they are using the correct teaching skills with the correct individual child. Overall, the observation and planning cycle is crucial for fostering a responsive and child-centred approach in early childhood education. It ensures that practitioners are not only aware of but also actively addressing the individual collective needs of the children in their care. This cycle promotes an environment where children can thrive developmentally, socially, and academically.

The principles of the UNCRC are foundational to guiding professional practice in fields that involve children. These principles inform professional practice in several critical ways, ensuring that the best interests of the child are always primary consideration. (article 12) Respecting the views of the child fosters autonomy and self-esteem, helping children develop into confident and engaged members of society. It also ensures that solutions and interventions are more likely to be effective and accepted by the child. Professionals should create environments where children feel safe to voice their opinions and ensure these opinions are considered in decision making process. (Article 3) Best interest of the child, Decisions affecting children must prioritize their best interests professionals are required to consider the potential impacts on children in their planning and decision-making process, ensuring that the child's best interests are paramount helps safeguard their welfare and development, providing a supportive environment that promotes their over-all wellbeing. In summary the principles of the UNCRC are vital for informing professional practice as they ensure that all actions and decisions prioritize the rights and well-being of children but also for fostering their long-term development and inclusion in society (UNICEF, 2016).

In conclusion, professional practice is an essential role within the early years, to help safeguard and support the development and well being of young children. While also building strong relationships with the community around the child to allow them to feel included.

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