

Quality is defined as 'the standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something' (Oxford 2024). Within Early Years settings quality is paramount and is at the forefront of their statements of purpose. Moss (2016) states how quality is not a necessity, but more than a choice made and the concept of thinking of particular individual assumptions. Looking at two different quality assured schemes shows how although quality has a definition it can be interpreted differently, and standard requirements can vary. Quality is about 'human technology' depicting desired effects on how performance is perceived. Within a setting it should recognise and highlight the importance of context and diversity with any approach to early childhood development (Rose 1999). Although quality can emerge from a philosophical paradigm it also stems from politico-economic regimes known as neo-liberalism. This emphasises how human technologies that present itself with social investment high returns, completes a part of the calculative, instrumental and economic rationality that is defined as a part of neo-liberalism (Moss 2016). By practitioners being able to be receptive to children's emotions and have an understanding of their development then high-quality care will be based upon this (Grenier 2020). Children who are exposed to stimulating environments and supported by creative practitioners have the opportunity to accommodate their own individual needs whilst helping towards their physical and emotional development (CIW 2025). Siraj-Blatchford (2009) states that the theory derived from Vygotsky's zone of proximal development relies upon the adult's knowledge to support the child's knowledge but also how the child's knowledge will also impact the adults learning working together to think and learn. By practitioners adapting to the children's individual ways of thinking they will be able to develop the skill of when to intervene and support or when to stand aside and observe children.

(Meithrin Cymru 2025) In 1971, Mudiad Meithrin was established to bring a new outlook in to Welsh medium play groups to develop learning experiences for children from birth until they start school. It is a voluntary run organisation by practitioners who are enthusiastic for promoting and celebrating the Welsh heritage language to be used throughout play and having a positive influence on children within Wales. As all practitioners strive to work towards the same outcome that all children be emerged in their own culture and language it is apparent that the newest generations will be given the sense of belonging and feel immensely proud to be Welsh. Meithrin Cymru states that over 76% of children that use their services come from a non-Welsh speaking household. They stress this in their website to make sure parents who do not speak Welsh do not feel like they are allowed to enrol their children. They offer support to non-Welsh speaking parents or carers and offer advice and guidance when they are considering the transition. (Meithrin Cymru 2025) As Meithrin believe it is beneficial to

children to become bilingual they strive to make both the children and parents feel welcome and support them all the way through their time in the Meithrin. They host a wide range of activities where parents can take part too even if they do not speak Welsh. Cymraeg for Kids groups, Cylchoedd Ti a Fi (Baby and toddler groups), Cylchoedd Meithrin (Welsh-Medium playgroups) and Day Nurseries. Cylch Meithrin's mission statement is promoted 'As an organisation passionate about giving every child the opportunity to play, learn and grow through the medium of Welsh, we appreciate how important it is for you as a parent to find quality childcare and to feel that you are choosing the best education for your child'. As a playgroup, a consistent transition is offered for children to a Welsh-medium education so that they become bilingual. Having over 1,500 friendly and qualified staff working in the setting and stating with 50 years' experience in early years care and education, Cylchoedd Meithrin are confident to assure parents and carers that their children will receive the best early years care and education at any local Cylch Meithrin. By promoting children's development and education from the age of two years to school age, children will be able to experience a setting with friendly, enthusiastic and competent staff whilst playing alongside their peers forming social connections. Professor Colin Baker of Bangor University quotes 'The research showed that children who attend Mudiad Meithrin's cylchoedd develop considerably across a wide range of Welsh language skills' noting the importance of contribution to the future of the Welsh language. Providing equal opportunities by trying to ensure the activities provided meet all individual needs and requirements. The arrangements of the staffing for the Cylch comply with the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registration requirements, including DBS checks, qualifications and experience of the practitioners. An inspection is carried out approximately six months after the Cylch is registered and becomes operational. Further inspections are carried out when determined by intelligent led scheduling (CIW 2025). It is the Cylch's management committee that has the responsibility of the employing and dismissing of staff. All policies and procedures are adhered to and each Cylch has a specific Child Protection Policy in place and follows GDPR regulations (Meithrin Cymru 2025).

Early Years Wales is an organisation that supports a variety of membership services within the Early Years sector making them the largest in Wales. Enhancing the education and development of pre-school children in Wales is their main priority and helping parents and carers to realise that high quality pre-school provisions and childcare settings will meet the individual needs and requirements of their children. Early Years Wales mission statement is to support all pre-school children including their families by allowing all children in Wales access to the best start in life by providing high quality settings. They strive to do this by supporting early years providers as well as families to engage in play whilst promoting widely the work within the Early Years. They develop and maintain the organisation's governance and management by contribution

to policy implementation at both national and local levels. They develop partnerships and are responsible for recruiting and developing staff to a high level of standard. They are constantly managing funding and seeking further investments to maintain and expand their services (Early Years Wales 2025). The clear objective of the organisation is that parents and families should be at the forefront of children's development by making them aware how important and valuable it is to participate in their child's learning journey. Early Years Wales has always supported parents and families to participate in their children's development. This was a founding objective of the organisation, and we continue to develop ways to ensure that families are supported from birth through their early years, giving children the best start in life. Being a charity, working with other organisations and collaborating with them to offer flexible, affordable and high-quality childcare is what they strive to do. By being committed to providing high quality support and representation to their members offering them their own accredited quality assurance scheme 'Quality for All (QFA) they promote a listening ear to support members to achieve their goals. A strategy plan has been put in place in April 2023 and with the continuation until 2026. The plan is a pathway to be followed, ensuring that all members will be provided with the best services and given the correct help and support to navigate opportunities presented and how to overcome any barriers that are present. Within the plan, the organisation has implemented the Welsh Government target of creating one million Welsh language speakers by the year 2050 in Wales by adding extra resources into the Welsh language structure. There are many different policies and procedures that must be followed, and the organisation states several times the importance of the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) throughout their campaign and adhering to give children the best possible start to their learning and development. They deliver their work and outline their outcomes through five independent pillars. The pillars are there to support and aspire the values of quality by enhancing the early years sector. They represent; Sustainable, quality childcare businesses, A qualified, valued and skilled workforce at all levels, Support for parents of children in the early years, Promoting a positive start for all children through the early years, Advocacy for the providers and users of early childhood education and care. The action plan states 'Sustainable, quality early education and childcare business, charities, and parent-led groups' (Early Years Wales 2025).

Both of the organisations comply with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework that is based on the learning and development requirements are given by legal force by an Order made under section 39(1)(a) of the Childcare Act 2006 and the safeguarding and welfare requirements are given legal force by Regulations made under section 39(1)(b) of the Childcare Act 2006. They both promote the emphasis that all children deserve the care and support they require to make sure they have the best

start in life and are in agreement that children from birth to five years old, learn and develop at a faster rate than any other time in their lives, supporting the reasons that their experiences in early years should be of a high quality as it will have a major impact on their future (gov.uk 2025). The Cylch Meithrin is a Welsh-medium organisation, so their main objective is to give children the best start by supporting them to become bilingual. This can pose as a disadvantage to non-Welsh speaking families as although the support is stressed throughout the journey can prove quite difficult when families feel they cannot communicate with their children and helping them with their learning and development. It also eliminates the non-Welsh speaking practitioners who will not be able to be employed within the setting so experienced staff cannot share their expertise. This is one of the benefits of the Early Years Wales organisation, even though they are promoting the Welsh language within their organisation, there is no boundaries for qualified practitioners (gov.uk 2025).

Looking at both organisations, it is clear to see that 'quality' is at most importance and their main priority. Early years childcare needs to be at the highest standard to make sure all children have the best start in life. How they learn and develop before attending a school setting will give them the skills needed to give them the best possible start on their school journey. They both provide parents with the required information for them to determine which setting will be right for them as a family and are assured that the support will continue whilst the child attends the setting. This is linked to sustained shared thinking that derived from Siraj-Blatchford et al. (2002) and described as a collaborative when two or more individuals of any age work together solving a problem in an intellectual way. They do this by clarifying a concept then they can evaluate activities, but each individual must be responsible for contributing to the task. The two organisations incorporate Vygotsky's theory (1934) that social interaction and encounters supports the cognitive development immersing the children in both language and culture. By the organisations providing a high-quality setting, the environment in which the children will be able to explore and interact will help towards their learning and alongside their peers give them the opportunity to have social interaction (Palmer 2002). Although there are differences between the two organisations their ethos remains the same, their values are cohesive and are promoted throughout. Putting both children and their family's needs and requirements as their priorities. Parental preference would play a big part in which setting they choose for their children and building good relationships with the setting is a key factor. All children deserve the right to high quality childcare settings in which high standards are set and continuously met so that they will be able to thrive in their learning and be given the best start in life.

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