

# Early years self-evaluation form guidance

Guidance to support using the self-evaluation form to evaluate the quality of registered early years provision and ensure continuous improvement

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**Age group:** Birth to 31 August following a child's fifth birthday

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## Introduction

The optional early years self-evaluation form is for providers on the Early Years Register. You may prefer to record your self-evaluation on a different form, for example:

- a children's centre self-evaluation form which covers the registered part of your provision
- a local authority form
- a quality assurance scheme system.

Self-evaluation is important in helping you to consider how best to create, maintain and improve your setting so that it meets the highest standards and offers the best experience for young children. The early years self-evaluation form helps you to evaluate your practice against the judgements inspectors make.

## Completing your self-evaluation form

You may wish to refer to the following when completing your self-evaluation form:

- *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012* (the EYFS)<sup>1</sup>
- *Early Years Outcomes*<sup>2</sup>
- *The evaluation schedule for inspections of registered early years provision* (the evaluation schedule).<sup>3</sup>

We recommend that you complete the self-evaluation form online. The form may take some time to complete initially but completing it online means you can update it easily at any time you want.

There is no fixed time when you should complete your self-evaluation form. You can complete it as often as you wish and when it best suits you. You may choose to complete your self-evaluation form to fit in with your normal cycle of review and planning. We recommend that you review and update it at least once a year.

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<sup>1</sup> *Statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage 2012*, Department for Education, 2012; <https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/AllPublicationsNoRsg/Page1/DFE-00023-2012>.

<sup>2</sup> *Early years outcomes*, DfE, 2013: a non-statutory guide for practitioners and inspectors to help inform understanding of child development through the early years <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-outcomes>

<sup>3</sup> *The evaluation schedule for inspections of registered early years provision*, Ofsted, 2012; [www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120086](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/120086).

## Submitting your self-evaluation form

Once you have completed the form submit it online, or if completing it in hard copy save a copy for yourself and then post it to:

EY SEF  
Ofsted  
National Business Unit  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

When you send your updated self-evaluation form to us it will replace any earlier version.

## How Ofsted uses your self-evaluation form

The inspector will use your self-evaluation form for planning your inspection. It will provide evidence of the quality of your provision, detailing the main strengths and areas for improvement that you have identified and how well you use self-reflection as part of your commitment to continuous improvement.

During your inspection, the inspector will consider carefully how you evaluate the service you offer children and how compatible your views are with the judgements they make.

We may also consider your self-evaluation form if we receive any information about your provision that raises concerns. It will help us to decide if your inspection needs to be brought forward or prioritised.

## Part A. Setting details and views of those who use the setting or who work with you

### Section 1. Your setting

In this section you should describe the main characteristics of your setting and the culture and backgrounds of the children who attend, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, or speak English as an additional language. Include details of:

- your building, including areas/rooms used
- the area your provision is in, such as 'residential area close to the local school'
- how your provision is organised, including any links with a school or children's centre
- any access to outdoor space

- access to and within the building, such as a lift, ramps or stairs
- the days and hours you operate
- the maximum number of places available on any one day
- the number of adults working with the children and their qualifications, and how you organise where they work
- any support staff, such as a cook
- any special features of the provision, such as particular methods of teaching.

Outline any specific issues that aid or prevent the smooth running of your setting, such as:

- recent training attended and any qualifications gained
- difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff
- recent or impending re-organisation or change of staff.

## **Section 2. Views of those who use your setting or who work with you**

This section asks you to tell us about the views of the children and their parents or carers. It also asks how you capture the views of other professionals who may work with you, including your staff and any volunteers, those who administer quality assurance schemes, your local authority advisers, your local children's centre colleagues and any health professionals or social workers. Things to consider include:

- how you obtain and use the views of others, for example through using parental questionnaires, parent meetings and staff meetings
- whether parents are included in your management body or how else they contribute directly to the running of your provision
- how you know and use children's views and ideas
- how you work with other organisations, for example whether you have any agreed working protocols
- whether you are part of a quality assurance scheme or use any other systems or methods to assess what you do – if so, capture the details here
- reference to any local authority support and intervention examples of any feedback you have had from other professionals who work with you or with the children you care for
- examples of any action you have taken to change your provision as a result of the views of others.

## Part B. The quality and standards of the early years provision

In Part B there are four sections covering the four judgements the inspector will make at inspection. You may find it helpful to refer to the criteria the inspector will consider and the evidence they look for when making these judgements. You can find these in the evaluation schedule.

### Grading your provision

For each of the four judgements, the inspector will give your provision a grade using a four-point scale. The self-evaluation form uses the same four-point scale so that you can consider how well you are doing against the same criteria as the inspector. You should look carefully at the grade descriptors used by the inspector and decide which judgement is the best fit for your practice.

### Section 3. How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend

You may find it helpful to refer to the learning and development requirements in pages 4–12 of the EYFS, *Early Years Outcomes* and pages 6–11 of the evaluation schedule. You should evaluate how well your teaching strategies:

- promote children's learning and development
- meet the needs of each child who attends your provision
- help each child enjoy their learning and make progress towards the early learning goals.

Do not just list what you do but consider how well you and any assistants or staff who work with you:

- plan the learning environment to support children's play and exploration in and out of doors
- provide a balance of adult-led and child-led activities that help children to think critically, play and explore and be active and creative learners
- have high expectations for children and enthuse and motivate them
- establish what each child knows and can do when they first start with you and during their time with you and whether this is in line with the expectations for their age
- use information from observation and assessment to plan personalised support for every child and ensure that children achieve as much as they can in relation to their starting points and capabilities, taking into consideration how often they attend the setting
- plan for individual children, taking into account their culture and background, including any children with special educational needs and/or

disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and those who achieve beyond what is expected to ensure that you are offering an inclusive service and that each child receives an enjoyable and challenging experience across all areas of learning

- support each child in their learning and work with parents and carers as partners in children's learning and development.

## **Section 4. The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being**

You may find it helpful to refer to the sections of *Early Years Outcomes* referring to children's personal, social and emotional development and pages 11–14 of the evaluation schedule. This section is about how your care practices help children feel emotionally secure and ensure they are physically, mentally and emotionally healthy. You should evaluate how well you help children:

- form appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments with their carers
- learn to behave well and develop good relationships with their peers
- develop the characteristics of effective learning.

Do not just list what you do but consider the impact of your care on children's healthy development by considering whether:

- practice ensures each child forms appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments with carers
- care practices ensure children are happy and enjoy what they doing
- children are learning how to behave well, play cooperatively and develop their independence
- care practices and routines such as nappy changing are used to support children's all-round development and well-being
- practitioners encourage children to explore their surroundings and use their imagination
- practitioners help children to talk and play with each other and the adults that care for them
- practice helping children to develop an understanding of the importance of physical exercise and a healthy diet
- children are prepared for their transition within the setting, into other early years settings and into maintained nursery provision and/or reception class.

## **Section 5. The leadership and management of the early years provision**

You may find it helpful to refer to the safeguarding and welfare requirements in pages 13–29 of the EYFS and pages 14–18 of the evaluation schedule. This section is

about how effective leadership and management are. If you are a childminder, you should consider how well you organise the childminding service you provide and how well you work with others, such as the network coordinator and any other provision a child attends.

You should consider how well you:

- understand your responsibilities in meeting the learning and development and safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS
- oversee the educational programmes to ensure that all areas of learning are included and that assessment is consistent and used well to inform planning
- promote equality and diversity and have a clear overview of the progress of all the children who attend
- evaluate your provision, use this information to identify priorities for development and set challenging targets for improvement, with a focus on children's achievements
- have effective systems for performance management, including how you tackle under-performance and arrange for the continuous professional development of any staff or assistants
- work in partnership with parents and others
- safeguard children
- have tackled identified weaknesses including any identified at the last inspection.

## **Section 6. The overall quality and standards of the early years provision**

You should refer to pages 18– 19 of the evaluation schedule. In this section you should take account of the judgements you have made about your provision in the three key areas. In particular, you should consider:

- the progress all children make in their learning and development relative to their starting points and their readiness for the next stage of their education
- the extent to which your practice meets the needs of all the children who attend, including any children who may be disadvantaged or need additional support because of their home background or because they have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- children's personal and emotional development, including whether they feel safe and are secure and happy
- whether the requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare are met
- your effectiveness in evaluating practice and securing continuous improvement for your provision.