

QUALITY AREA 4

Reflective playwork practice

THE STANDARD

We reflect on our individual and team playwork policy and practice to ensure that it is in support of children's play. We evaluate and analyse how children play and how we interact with children to improve play opportunities and identify areas for professional development.

This standard is about connecting knowledge and understanding of play theory to policy, and individual and team practice. Staff and management need to keep up to date with developments in play theory and practice and reflect on, analyse and evaluate observations of children's play and playwork practice in their provision.

The Playwork Principles say that the playworker's response to children and young people playing should be based on a sound up-to-date knowledge of the play process and reflective practice. This means thinking about what you do, why you do it and sharing the results so that your provision supports children's play.

Playworkers also need to recognise their own impact on the play space and the impact of children and young people's play on the playworker. A good place to start is to ask yourself why you are involved in children's play and what this means both for yourself and the children in your provision.

The standard recognises that reflective playwork practice will involve challenge and change for both individuals and teams. You will need to think about how and where reflection, and giving or receiving constructive criticism, takes place. Genuine discussion and sharing what different people think will help with organisational and professional development and lead to better outcomes for children.

A quality play provider encourages reflective playwork practice which builds sufficient time and resources into planning to develop good practice that supports children's play.

Commitment and planning

a. We are committed to supporting team and individual reflective playwork practice.

Getting started
date

Nearly met
date

Fully met
date

b. We have plans to ensure that staff are supported in their reflective playwork practice.

c. We have processes that enable everyone to reflect on their playwork practice.

Action

a. We reflect on, analyse and evaluate our observations of children's play and playwork practice.

b. We give and receive constructive criticism on playwork policy and practice.

c. Reflections are recorded and used as a tool for continuous improvement and for developing future practice.

Review

a. Records from reflective practice are used in the regular review and planning processes.

b. Training and professional development needs for reflective practice are reviewed and addressed through annual planning.

c. Good practice is valued by identifying what works and building on it for future development.

Commitment and planning

- How does our written policy explain the importance of reflective playwork practice and plan for how we will do it?
- What methods do we use, both individually and in teams, to support reflective playwork practice?
- How do we plan and resource time for individual reflective practice and ensure that team discussions take place to support professional development?

Action

- What practical steps have we taken to link play theory to staff and management practice?
- How is reflective practice organised to ensure confidentiality and trust?
- How do we record individual and team reflection and how do we assess, learn from and use the information?

Review

- What have we done well and can we do more of it?
- How have the results of our reflective practice been fed into our planning to support children's play?
- What areas have we improved upon and what difference has this made for all children?
- How are training and professional development needs identified, prioritised and achieved?

QUALITY AREA 5

Workforce development

THE STANDARD

We are committed to continuous workforce development for all our staff and managers, whether paid or unpaid, permanent or temporary. We recruit, induct, retain and develop our people through a cycle of supervision and appraisal, reflective practice, training and skills needs analysis, and plan resources to ensure continuous professional development. We work in partnership with relevant agencies to support children's play and develop our provision within an integrated children's workforce.

The focus of this standard is on all of the people in the organisation, including management and administration as well as those working directly with children. Therefore it links to all the other quality areas and the wider children's workforce development agenda. Staff, volunteers and managers need training, support and development to support children's play, to develop their skills and knowledge and gain the playwork and other qualifications needed in an integrated children's workforce.

Effective recruitment, induction and support are the foundations of successful workforce development. These then need to be built on through supervision and appraisal, reflective practice, resource planning, and building in the time to ensure continuous professional development. How you identify training needs, plan, design and deliver learning opportunities and evaluate them should be part of your planning cycle and overall approach to quality.

This will help everyone concerned to work within the Playwork Principles and develop the theoretical knowledge, reflective practice and practical skills to support children's play. You also need to plan for how you will be part of the wider children's workforce development — for example, in areas like safeguarding, information sharing, common core skills and the Common Assessment Framework — while retaining a play-centred focus.

As an advocate for children's play, a quality play provider uses close working relationships with the key local and regional partner, and support agencies concerned with play and children's well-being, to ensure they develop all their people, whatever their role.

Commitment and planning

a. There are systems to support recruitment, induction, supervision and appraisal procedures and reflective practice.

Getting started
date

Nearly met
date

Fully met
date

b. We have a plan to identify and meet learning needs for all staff and managers, including entry level, skills training, education qualifications and continuous professional development.

c. Budgets and resources for training, education and skills development have been identified.

Action

a. We have an induction process and information pack for all staff, volunteers and managers.

b. We provide support for each person working for the organisation through supervision, appraisal and an individual professional development plan with clear entitlements.

c. We implement an organisational workforce plan with resources linked to related local, regional and national initiatives.

Review

a. We review how well our workforce development procedures are working annually and when new requirements or initiatives arise.

b. We monitor practice to evaluate the impact of training and identify further professional development needs.

c. We use the results of review and evaluation to inform future plans, allocate resources and link with partner organisations concerned with workforce development

Commitment and planning

- What policies, procedures and recording systems do we have relating to recruitment, induction and supervision?
- What regulatory requirements and local, regional and national initiatives are relevant to our workforce development?
- What budget do we dedicate to training and what funding support, training provision or in-house delivery methods can we use?

Action

- What information do we provide to new staff, managers and volunteers in order for them to understand the organisation and their role in it?
- How often does supervision and appraisal take place? What records do we keep and how are individual training plans developed? What external support can we access?
- How is the organisation's workforce development plan devised, monitored and recorded and how does it relate to plans in the wider context?

Review

- How do we review and evaluate workforce development procedures and how do we identify new requirements or initiatives?
- What issues have come out of consultation with staff in relation to training?
- How do we monitor the impact of training?
- How have results been incorporated into future plans and which organisations have we reported to?

QUALITY AREA 6

The law and regulation

THE STANDARD

We meet the requirements of the law and regulation relevant to play provision and are clear about the difference between these and non-statutory guidance or standards. We keep up-to-date with developments and good practice, and focus on supporting children's play when considering how we comply with legal and other requirements.

A range of specific legislation and associated regulations applies to children's services and play provision, as does more generic law, for example, on equality and human rights, health and safety, employment and insurance information sharing and data protection, that will continue to develop. They are supported by statutory and non-statutory guidance and standards that also develop and change over time.

Though complying with the law, regulations and statutory guidance must be a priority, you should always consider the benefit for children when thinking about how guidance is interpreted and applied in practice. This is especially important in relation to non-statutory guidance and standards, where over-zealous interpretation can sometimes be used as an excuse for not doing things that support children's play. Play providers should always question and challenge themselves and others to ensure that how the law, regulation, guidance and standards are interpreted supports children's play.

Playwork Principle 4 says that for playworkers the play process takes precedence and playworkers act as advocates for play when engaging with adult-led agendas. You need to keep up-to-date with changes and developments in professional practice so that you are able to use authoritative arguments and examples of good practice when advocating for children's play within the adult-led legal and other agendas.

A quality provider works within law, applies guidance and standards so that they support children's play and can clearly make the arguments for why they have done so, backed up by authoritative sources.

Commitment and planning

a. Our staff and management are aware of the legal, regulatory and statutory requirements and the non-statutory guidance and standards relevant to our provision.

Getting started
date

Nearly met
date

Fully met
date

b. We have a plan for how we keep up with changes and developments through using up-to-date and authoritative sources of information.

c. Our overall planning is consistent with good practice in how legal and other requirements are applied and we are committed to ensuring that how we do this supports children's play.

Action

a. We induct, train and provide relevant information to all our staff and management on their specific and overall legal and other responsibilities.

b. We use local, regional and national networks and other sources of information to ensure that we keep up-to-date with changes and developments.

c. We implement good practice from authoritative sources so that the benefits of children's play remains central to risk and other assessments of compliance with legal and other requirements.

Review

a. We annually review how we comply with legal requirements and how we have implemented guidance and standards.

b. We evaluate how our involvement with networks and links with information sources has helped to improve our practice in implementing legal and other requirements.

c. We use the results to question and challenge our own practice and other people and agencies where necessary to ensure that everything we do is in support of children's play, while working within the law.

Commitment and planning

- What examples could we give to show how staff and management are made aware of legal and other requirements?
- How could we show that we plan ahead to ensure we have the latest information from the best available sources?
- What is our policy on how we apply legal and other requirements in a way that supports children's play?

Action

- How could we show or explain how everyone concerned knows about the legal and other requirements that apply to their role?
- What networks and other sources of information do we use to make sure we keep up-to-date?
- What examples do we have that show how we have used good practice in risk or other assessments?

Review

- Who was involved and what methods did we use?
- How does the review show that our practice has improved as a result of using our networks and sources of information? Can we give examples?
- Can we give examples of how we challenged ourselves or others when interpreting and applying legal and other requirements?

QUALITY AREA 7

Project and resource management

THE STANDARD

We manage our resources in line with our aims and values to support children’s play. We have a clearly defined project management structure and systems that help us manage every aspect of our provision effectively. We make best use of what we have and plan for how we can make it better with a focus on the reliability and sustainability of our service.

This standard is about making sure that you use your human, physical and financial resources effectively, efficiently and ethically in support of children’s play. It covers play provision run by local authorities, the voluntary sector and private organisations, whether individual projects or provision centrally managed within a larger organisation. Your project management structure should have clear reporting lines so that everyone concerned knows who is responsible and how they are accountable, and are clear about shared or changing areas of responsibility. This includes deputising or other arrangements, for example, when a manager or team member is on leave or otherwise absent.

You need systems to manage your tangible assets such as money, premises, outdoor play area, equipment, materials, furniture, facilities, vehicles, records and files — not forgetting your Quality in Play portfolio! You should be able to demonstrate that your physical resources are well used to support children’s play, in line with your aims, objectives and values.

Your planning should cover all aspects of premises and site security; maintenance and repair or replacement schedules for premises facilities and equipment; insurance, inventories and secure storage of equipment materials and records; cleaning and waste collection, and how you dispose of or recycle items when they are no longer needed. There should be contingency plans in place to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

A quality play provider has project management systems that are clear to everyone concerned: are regularly reviewed and evaluated for effectiveness; and used for effective forward planning. The overall aim is to ensure the efficiency, reliability and sustainability of the service in support of children’s play.

Commitment and planning

a. We are committed to managing all our resources effectively, efficiently and ethically in line with our aims and values as part of our overall business planning.

b. We have a clear project management structure with plans and systems in place that are understood by everyone.

c. Our resource management plans cover both current and future needs, with contingency plans for unforeseen circumstances, to maximise the reliability of our service.

Getting started date	Nearly met date	Fully met date
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Action

a. We involve staff and management at all levels in our resource management planning, and we take the views of users into account.

b. We use staff team, management and other planning meetings to make sure that everyone concerned is clear about roles and responsibilities, how our systems work and that they understand and implement our plans.

c. We implement a year or longer-term plan with schedules for who needs to do what by when and how we will deal with unforeseen circumstances.

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Review

a. We annually review our resource management plans and check with users and other stakeholders that they continue to be fit for purpose.

b. We review our structures and systems for what has worked well and what we could do to improve them.

c. We use the results to plan ahead so that our service continues to support children’s play to the greatest extent possible.

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Commitment and planning

- How could we show or explain that how we manage our resources fits with our aims, values and overall planning?
- What is our evidence of a clear project management structure, and how could we show that our staff, management and other stakeholders understand our systems?
- Can we give examples of how our plans cover both routine project management and unforeseen circumstances to ensure we maintain a reliable service to children and families?

Action

- Who was involved in our planning, and how did we take the views of children, families and other stakeholders into account?
- How could we show that our people are clear about their roles? What examples could we give of how they have put our plans and systems into practice to support children's play?
- Have we got examples of who did what, and by when, in order to deal with routine resource management and how we dealt with problems that we couldn't foresee?

Review

- Who was involved in our annual review, and how could we show that how we manage our resources continues to meet the needs of our users and other stakeholders?
- What examples could we give showing how our structures and systems have worked well, and is there anything we have changed to improve them?
- How could we show that we plan ahead to sustain our service and, where possible, improve how we support children's play?