

Education Support Early Years

Supervision Toolkit

Introduction and Aims of this Toolkit

Effective supervision provides childcare practitioners with an opportunity to reflect on their practice, explore any worries or concerns about the welfare of children in the setting and contribute towards a robust staffing structure with confident and competent staff groups. All of these are important in establishing safe organisations where children are safeguarded from harm.

This Toolkit will provide information to support managers and staff to undertake effective Supervision, as well as highlighting the difference between Supervision and Appraisal. We have also included a template supervision form for you to adapt and use at your setting.

EYFS

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage September 2014, which outlines the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five states that:-

3.21. Providers must put appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families. Effective supervision provides support, coaching and training for the practitioner and promotes the interests of children. Supervision should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues.

3.22. Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being;
- identify solutions to address issues as they arise; and
- receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.

Ofsted

Ofsted Evaluation Schedule - The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early year’s provision:-

Inspectors will make a judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management by evaluating the extent to which leaders, managers and governors:

- improve staff practice, teaching and learning through effective systems for supervision, rigorous performance management and appropriate professional development

The inspector will obtain evidence of:

- how well practitioners and any trainees or students are monitored, coached, mentored and supported, and how under-performance is tackled
- qualification levels and the effectiveness of a programme of professional development, arising from identifying staff needs and improving qualifications

Grade descriptors for the effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding (1)

- Incisive evaluation of the impact of staff's practice leads to rigorous performance management, supervision and highly focused professional development. As a result, teaching is highly effective or improving rapidly.

Good (2)

- An effective and well-established programme of professional development helps practitioners to improve their knowledge, understanding and practice. Through effective systems for supervision and performance management, practitioners are monitored regularly and under-performance is tackled swiftly. As a result, teaching is consistently strong or improving steadily

Requires improvement (3)

- Leadership and management are not yet good.

Inadequate (4)

- Leaders do not identify weaknesses in practice or understand how to improve practice or any actions taken to tackle areas of identified weakness have been insufficient or ineffective. Training for staff is ineffective.

Appraisal vs Supervision

Appraisals are annual meetings to review a staff member's performance over the year, set targets for the next year and discuss any training needs / CPD (Continual Professional Development) linked to the setting's business plan and SEF (Self Evaluation Form).

The appraiser is making an assessment of performance against the Job Description and so should use the following to inform the assessment and to determine where performance has been exceptional, good, average or poor. You could use the same descriptors as Ofsted – Outstanding, Good etc.

- Job Description
- Targets
- Relevant action points from team meetings.
- SEF
- Ofsted reports
- LA assessments/reports

To validate the appraisal and assessment of performance, evidence should be collated to illustrate any points that are made. Examples may include feedback from peers, management and parents, new initiatives that have been successful, attendance records, complaints or the implementation of new ideas following the completion of training. If the appraisal is with a newer staff member then the induction notes will help to identify progress.

The appraisal form can also offer a unique opportunity for an employer to gain feedback on the setting and to ask for comments on specific issues which may affect staff welfare; for example, work/life balance issues, length of journey time, staff facilities or even general staff morale within the setting.

Supervision is not the same as appraisal

Supervision is a formal and recorded process through which the actions of staff are examined and regularly reviewed. It provides a recorded system of decision making that is audited to improve practice and therefore the service that is provided to children and parents. A sample supervision template is available at the end of this toolkit.

Supervision is a legal requirement – in the EYFS Statutory Framework (2014) supervision of staff became a '**must**' rather than the '**should**' it was in the previous 2012 EYFS

Supervision acts as a way of ensuring that members of staff have access to the support, training and procedures they require for professional growth and development. It also enables the employer/manager to ask the statutory questions around safeguarding and personal circumstances in a safe and confidential environment.

Supervision enables supervisors and supervisees to examine and reflect on the quality of their practice and to facilitate discussion.

It is good practice to have a Supervision Policy. This should include:

- a clear statement of purpose
- clarify confidentiality and access to notes
- state clear expectations and boundaries
- stipulate the frequency, duration and recording of meetings
- demonstrates how quality supervision links to staff retention and motivation

The purpose of supervision is:-

- To provide a regular 'safe space' for staff/volunteers to be supported and reflect upon their work and all areas affecting their health wellbeing
- To assess staff/volunteers suitability to work with young children, review any changes regarding the Health Declaration and DBS check
- To develop understanding and skills and be directed to training as and when appropriate
- To praise or constructively challenge staff as appropriate
- To clarify priorities
- To recognise and resolve potential and existing problems
- To discuss how personal factors are affecting work and provide support
- An opportunity to moderate, observe practice and review judgements to ensure accurate and consistent assessment of children's developmental milestones/concerns about children
- Supervision sessions and objectives are linked to the setting's SEF

Who should have supervision and how often?

You cannot support if you yourself are not supported, therefore the manager must also receive regular supervisions. These should be carried out by the owner or the Chair of the Committee. Supervision should be regular but Ofsted does not specify how often Supervision should take place or how long it should last. We recommend a minimum of once a term, more for staff who work full time, all year round with additional responsibilities, such as SENCO or DSL.

What are the benefits of supervision?

Supervision will promote and model the following indicators of a safe setting:

- Staff are respectful to all employees as well as children
- Staff are open about discussing good and poor practice
- Blame only occurs in extreme circumstances
- Leaders model the appropriate behaviour
- Staff are knowledgeable about the vulnerability of the children that they look after
- Staff are aware that abusers may already be in the employment of the provision
- Children are listened to
- Staff are listened to and empowered to challenge poor practice

- Parents are encouraged to be involved in planning their child's care and are welcomed into the provision
- Staff are valued
- The culture of the setting is embedded and fortified
- Whistle-blowing procedures are in place and staff know how to use them (there is a model whistleblowing policy in the LBWF EY Safeguarding Policy 2016)

Supervision will benefit the Provision:

- To find out about staff as individuals and enable them to see where the provision they work for is going and how they can contribute to it
- An opportunity to respectfully and constructively challenge practice
- To manage performance and capabilities
- Reiterates provisional expectations and the culture of the setting
- To make sure children and their families receive the highest quality care and service
- To improve communication and share responsibility
- Assist staff retention
- Maximise safeguarding of children

Supervision will benefit the Practitioner:

- Opportunity to look at your role and responsibilities, where you are now and where you would like to go. This could include training opportunities
- To reflect on, analyse and evaluate own practice
- Supports the setting of personal goals and a chance to review, change or adapt recent or past actions
- Promotes confidence and safe working practices
- Provides an opportunity to agree actions for both parties
- Allows disagreements to be recorded and solutions explored at the earliest opportunity
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Supervision is Supportive



- It is a time to be listen to each other, value, motivate and empower staff their work and ongoing commitment
- Get staff involved in decision-making and problem solving
- Can be used to reduce stress and explore staff feelings
- Will support staff to manage work effectively
- Any issues can be discussed including issues related to health and safety, safeguarding and caseload

First Things First – Organise Your Organisation

Before the supervision process can be implemented, the following MUST be in place:-

1. Organisational Structure

- A. Line Management Structure, what is this in your provision and is it clearly communicated? Is there a clear dissemination of duties? The manager shouldn't be the DSL, SENCO and a keyperson as well, for example. Once additional role per person is advisable, unless they have no keyperson duties. In this instance, the DSL may also be the SENCO etc
- B. Depending on the size of the setting, it may not be appropriate for the manager to be managing the whole team. A maximum of 5 staff is advisable for any one person to manage and supervise. Room Leaders/Deputy should be line managing the people they supervise in order to allow for development, it fosters good relationships within the team and frees up the manager's time. Sharing responsibility will develop the skills of the whole team and increases staff morale and aid staff retention.
- C. If the provision is run by a committee, the manager should be attending committee meetings. This will give them the opportunity to discuss budgets and training, as well as update the committee on staff and deal with HR issues.

2. Good Quality Supervisions for the Manager

You cannot support if you yourself are not supported. The manager must receive supervisions - this could be with:-

- Committee Chair/nominated person for childcare
- School Governor/Head/Deputy/nominated person for childcare
- Manager and Leader/Deputy could line manage each other
- The Manager join up with another provision and receive supervision from each other (peer to peer), which would work really well in a chain or an existing network group. In chains, there is also an Area/Regional Manager
- Owner
- LA – you can buy in support

3. Clear Job Descriptions (JD) and Person Specifications (PS)

From recruiting the right staff, to ensuring staff are competent; everything hinges on having clear and accurate JDs and PSs, these can be referred to in the supervision and appraisal process. There should be a separate JD and PS for each role. For example, a Room Leader who is the DSL should have a JD for Room Leader which incorporates the practitioner responsibilities as well as lead responsibilities, and another JD for the DSL role.

Where and How Do You Start?

Once the above 3 elements are in place, the supervision process is ready to start

The Supervision process is more effective if the whole team understand the value and importance and are committed to the process. Using a team meeting to discuss the process and agree a standardised Supervision template and policy. At the very least, talk through the existing one and ask for feedback.

The process should start with the Manager's supervision and the senior staff she/he supervises, then progress to the next and subsequent layers of staff. The Deputy/Leader needs to receive good quality supervision in order to give good quality supervision, so spend some time at the top of the organisational chart first and lead by example. Targets set for the Manager can then filter down to colleagues so they are able to support the Manager in achieving the overall targets for the nursery.

The process should be about the individual's wellbeing, emotional support and development in order to enable them to do their job to the best of their ability, not about using the opportunity to find fault, refer to previous resolved issues or be punitive.

In this toolkit supervision has been split into 3 sections; CPD, the job and wellbeing:-

Part 1 Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Consider initially choosing an area, or allowing the staff member to nominate an area for development and focus on this. For example, it could be the physical environment of the room they work in, or engaging parents in their children's learning. Or it might be an area of their practice which needs developing such as behaviour management or supporting children with SEND.

If the practitioner cannot think of an area they want to develop or research, then together choose a topic that the individual has an interest in or an area of weakness that they, or the setting overall, needs to work on. By including the practitioner in the process and choosing the topic together, they will feel more invested and included, which in turn encourages loyalty and high performance.

Use SMART goals to set targets

Be **S**pecific about what you want to achieve.

It must be **M**easurable so you know when you have achieved it.

Don't set yourself up to fail, goals must therefore be **A**chievable

Is goal this **R**ealistic in the time allowed?

Tasks need to be completed in a **T**imely fashion, so set an end date.

Asking the 2 year lead to ensure that all 2 yr olds have a progress check by the time they turn 3 is a SMART target. Asking practitioners to create an enabling environment across the nursery is not.

Use the GROW model to support staff who carry out supervision, as one of their most important roles is to coach staff to do their best. It helps them to become autonomous decision makers who learn new skills, problem solve and progress, ideally in your setting.

Very few people are fortunate enough to get formal training in coaching and so many people have to develop this important skill themselves. This may sound daunting but, if you arm yourself with some proven techniques, practice, and trust your instincts, you can become a great coach.

The GROW Model is a simple yet powerful framework for structuring your supervisions

About the Model

GROW stands for:

- **G**oal.
- Current **R**eality.
- **O**ptions (or Obstacles).
- **W**ill (or Way Forward).

The model was originally developed in the 1980s by performance coach Sir John Whitmore, although other coaches, such as Alan Fine and Graham Alexander, have also helped to develop it.

A good way of thinking about the GROW Model is to think about how you'd plan a journey. First, you decide where you are going (the goal), and establish where you currently are (your current reality).

You then explore various routes (the options) to your destination. In the final step, establishing the will, you ensure that you're committed to making the journey, and are prepared for the obstacles that you could meet on the way.

Tip:

In its traditional application, the GROW Model assumes that the supervisor is not an expert in the client's situation. This means that the supervisor must act as a facilitator, helping the practitioner select the best options, and not offering advice or direction.

When leaders coach their team members, or act as mentors to them, this may or may not apply. On one hand, it's more powerful for people to draw conclusions for themselves, rather than having these conclusions thrust upon them. On the other

hand, as a supervisor, you'll often have expert knowledge to offer. Also, it's your job to guide team members to make decisions that are best for your organization.

How to use the Tool

To structure a coaching or mentoring session using the GROW Model, take the following steps:

1. Establish the Goal

First, you and your team member need to look at the behaviour that you want to change, and then structure this change as a goal that she wants to achieve.

Make sure that this is a SMART goal: one that is Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound.

When doing this, it's useful to ask questions like:

- How will you know that your team member has achieved this goal? How will you know that the problem or issue is solved?
- Does this goal fit with her overall career objectives? And does it fit with the team's objectives?

2. Examine the Current Reality

Next, ask your team member to describe their current reality.

This is an important step. Too often, people try to solve a problem or reach a goal without fully considering their starting point, and often they're missing some information that they need in order to reach their goal effectively.

As your team member tells you about their current reality, the solution may start to emerge.

Useful coaching questions in this step include the following:

- What is happening now (what, who, when, and how often)? What is the effect or result of this?
- Have you already taken any steps towards your goal?
- Does this goal conflict with any other goals or objectives?

3. Explore the Options

Once you and your team member have explored the current reality, it's time to determine what is possible – meaning all of the possible options for reaching objectives. Help your team member **brainstorm** as many good options as possible. Then, discuss these and help them decide on the best ones.

By all means, offer your own suggestions in this step. But let the practitioner offer suggestions first, and let them do most of the talking. It's important to guide them in the right direction, without actually making decisions for them.

Typical questions that you can use to explore options are as follows:

- What else could you do?
- What if this or that constraint were removed? Would that change things?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?
- What factors or considerations will you use to weigh the options?
- What do you need to stop doing in order to achieve this goal?
- What obstacles stand in your way?

4. Establish the Will

By examining the current reality and exploring the options, your team member will now have a good idea of how they can achieve his goal.

That's great – but in itself, this may not be enough. The final step is to get your team member to commit to specific actions in order to move forward towards his goal. In doing this, you will help them establish his will and boost his motivation.

Useful questions to ask here include:

- So, what will you do now, and when? What else will you do?
- What could stop you moving forward? How will you overcome this?
- How can you keep yourself motivated?
- When do you need to review progress? Daily, weekly, monthly?

Finally, decide on a date when you'll both review progress. This will provide some accountability, and allow them to change their approach if the original plan isn't working.

Tip 1:

A great way to practice using the model is to address your own challenges and issues. By practicing on your own and getting yourself "unstuck," you'll learn how to ask the most helpful questions. Then, write down some stock questions as prompts for future coaching sessions.

Tip 2:

The two most important skills for a coach are the ability to ask good questions and the ability to listen effectively.

Don't ask closed questions that call for a yes or no answer (such as "Did that cause a problem?"). Instead, ask open ones, like "What effect did that have?" Be prepared with a list of questions for each stage of the GROW process.

Use active listening skills and let your "client" do most of the talking. Remember that silence provides valuable thinking time: you don't always have to fill silence with the next question.

Part 2 Children and Families

Questions which should always be asked at supervision are:

- 1) Are there any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being? Are referrals needed, or partnership with other agencies required?
- 2) Are your key children making progress? If not, discuss strategies/intervention which have been /will has be implemented?

Staff should be encouraged to bring tracking data to the meeting to share with line manager

Part 3 Individual/Wellbeing/Emotional Support

This is a vital of supervision in the caring services.

Staff can only fully support the children and their families if they are supported themselves. Are staff emotionally secure?

If early year’s practitioners are to provide the kind of encouragement and support necessary for the support, development and challenge of children and families, they need to be encouraged, supported and challenged as well – ideally through formal supervision. People who work with complexity, discouragement and distress, are at risk of becoming overburdened, discouraged and distressed. It is only possible for a practitioner to fully support the children and families they are working with if they are supported themselves.

Practitioners need to be able to recognise and contain emotions rather than leaking them onto others, this requires support structures and safe spaces, such as individual and team supervision that offer regular opportunities for reflecting and communicating openly, sharing perceptions, practice dilemmas and concerns with others, and together deciding on a way forward. Appropriate support in supervision can help staff members achieve distance and perspective (Thanks to Nursery World)

In this section you should also ask if there have been any changes affecting their DBS Check and Health Declaration. These questions are included in the supervision template at the end of this document

Further items for inclusion in Supervision

Sessions:-

The setting’s training plan should be incorporated into supervision sessions. Training should be selected to meet a specific need. Settings should plan training using a structured needs based approach that integrates with recruitment systems and links to Job Descriptions and Person Specifications.

Do you brief staff prior to them attending a training course?

Do you de-brief staff after they have attended a training course? - you need to ensure the training has been embedded, so ask staff who attend training to cascade their learning with the rest of the staff, either at staff meetings or inset training days.

The current training staff has, as well as future training needs, can then be incorporated into a training matrix, which is a visual representation of the entire setting's current and future training.

Supervisions should be linked to the Job Description and Person Specification, to ensure staff is meeting all the job requirements.

In order to be able to address competency issues and suitability to undertake the role, the Job Description and Person Specification must be clear and accurate so you can see what you are measuring against.

The above should provide enough topics to really get discussion going. Supervision can feel like quite a strange process if it's new to both parties, so it's important to have a rough plan at the beginning. As a team review the process on at least an annual basis, assess how it's working and make appropriate changes to improve effectiveness.

Audit Tool Supervision Checklist	Yes/No	Action
Does your provision have a clear organisational structure?		
Do you line manage and therefore supervise more than 5 people?		
Does everyone in your provision have a clear and concise Job Description and Person Specification?		
Is the practitioner meeting the job requirements according to the Job Description and Person Specification?		
Are you, the supervisor, currently receiving good quality supervision?		
Reflect on past examples of positive and negative supervision experiences, who are your positive role models and why?		
From these experiences what styles and qualities will you adopt and avoid?		
What do you do now in terms of Supervision and Appraisal?		
How often do you currently hold Supervision and Appraisal?		
Are appropriate arrangements in place for the supervision of staff who have contact with children and families?		
Do you set targets during the Appraisal and review these throughout the year/after 6 months?		
Why is it important for your provision to retain staff?		
What factors affect your staff's motivation and		

job satisfaction both positively and negatively?		
Do you currently use a setting training plan?		
If not, how is training currently decided/selected?		
Is training decided by using a structured needs based approach that integrates with recruitment systems and links to the Job Description and Person Specification?		
Do you brief staff prior to them attending a training course?		
Do you de-brief staff after they have attended a training course?		
Do you factor in time for them to cascade the learning to the rest of the staff team?		
Why is Supervision and Appraisal important for the individual?		
Why is Supervision and Appraisal important for the manager?		
Why is Supervision and Appraisal important for the provision?		
What factors influence staff motivation, job satisfaction and retention?		
What do you as a manager need to have in place to get the best out of your staff?		
What is Supervision?		
Do supervisions provide opportunities for staff to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or well-being • identify solutions to address issues as they arise; • and receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness. 		
What is Appraisal?		
How do you currently deal with underperformance and competencies?		
How do you currently establish any changes to your staff’s Health Declaration and DBS Check?		
Have all staff completed the Safeguarding Questionnaire?		