

Supervision in the Early Years

Good supervision can give staff an opportunity to reflect on their practice, explore any worries or concerns about the welfare of children in the setting and contribute towards developing confident and competent staff groups. All of these are known to be important in establishing safe organisations where children are safeguarded from harm.

Supervision is a legal requirement – in the revised EYFS Statutory Framework (2014) supervision of staff becomes a ‘must’ rather than the ‘should’ as it was previously in EYFS (2012).

(Ofsted Evaluation Schedule 4) - The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early year’s provision:-

When evaluating the quality of leadership and management, inspectors must consider the extent to which providers: have effective systems for supervision, performance management and the continuous professional development of staff which have a positive impact on teaching and children’s learning and development

Background

On 1st October 2009 Vanessa George the Deputy SENCo at Little Ted’s Nursery in Plymouth admitted to taking hundreds of photographs of herself abusing infants whilst she was working as a nursery nurse. Following her conviction, a Serious Case Review was carried out by Plymouth Safeguarding Children Board, as defined by Chapter 8 of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 (DCSF:2010). Following the Serious Case Review and along with the review into the 2008 EYFS by Dame Clare Tickell it was recommended and is now mandatory that all staff early year’s settings receive supervision (EYFS 2012).

What is supervision?

Supervision is not a new concept, the formal supervision process has been around for many years in Social Work, therapy and counselling. Of recent, government guidance has identified that effective supervision is important for any practitioner, from any agency, involved in day to day work with children and their families (Working Together to Safeguard Children...Chapter 2, para 4 DfE:2013). Along with this, lessons from serious case reviews have found that supervision is essential for any staff working in this sector “Supervision is ... essential to help practitioners to cope with the emotional demands of work with children and their families which has an impact at all levels of intervention” (DCSF:2008).

Supervision is a regular, planned, accountable two-way process which should offer support and develop the knowledge, skills and values of an individual, group or team. The purpose of supervision is to monitor the progress of professional practice and to help staff to improve the quality of the work they do. This helps to improve outcomes for children and families as well as achieve agreed objectives. The supervision process also provides an opportunity to discuss sensitive issues including the safeguarding of children and any concerns raised about an individual or colleague’s practice.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of supervision is to allow staff and their supervisors to:

- Discuss and challenge concerns, issues or difficulties;
- Identify solutions to address concerns and issues;
- Be coached in tackling issues as they arise and plan future action;
- Review work and workload;
- Explore feelings and emotional impact;
- Develop practice and competencies, including training needs;
- 5 • Explore the understanding of setting policy, philosophy and practice;
- Ensure every child's safety and wellbeing;
- To maintain an accurate and agreed record of professional progress.

The rights and responsibilities of a supervisee

- To receive effective and sensitive supervision;
- To be treated in an anti-discriminatory manner;
- To have their feelings and opinions recognised;
- To raise issues of concern about their own practice and that of their colleagues;
- To learn from mistakes and seek advice if they are unsure;
- To be listened to and receive appropriate professional support;
- To be briefed about changes;
- To commit to regular supervision and understand its value.

Supervision Policy

This should have a clear statement of purpose; clarify confidentiality and access to notes; reference the supervision contract and record; state clear expectations and boundaries; stipulate the frequency, duration and recording of meetings; and demonstrate how quality supervision links to staff retention and motivation, performance managements and safeguarding of all employees and children.

Supervision Contracts

The Supervisor should make a written contract/agreement with their supervisees taking into account the following;

- Frequency of supervision sessions;
- Approximate length of sessions;
- Location of sessions;
- Main items for discussion/agenda items; (including key children if applicable)
- Confidentiality issues;
- Agreement regarding notes, when they will be produced and by whom;
- Procedure for complaints and/or reconciling differences.

Why should Supervision be recorded?

- To keep a record of what was discussed and actions agreed;
- To keep a record of any disagreements;
- To benchmark and audit the quality of supervision;
- For performance management of staff. At the end of each session, or as soon as possible thereafter, both supervisor and supervisee should sign and date the supervision notes to confirm its accuracy and both should keep a copy. The supervisor's copy may be kept in a supervision file or personal staff file.

What are Appraisals?

Appraisals are annual meetings to review a staff members performance over the previous year, set targets for the next year and discuss any training needs / CPD (Continuing Professional Development) linked to the setting business plan and quality improvement plan. Appraisals consider the individuals performance against the Job Description, and the previous year's objectives and relevant action points from team meetings. From this process the individual's performance can be measured.

Remember Supervision is a formal and recorded process through which the professional actions of staff are examined and regularly reviewed. It provides a recorded system of decision making that is audited to improve practice and to improve the service that is provided to children and parents.

Supervision Contract between Supervisor and
Supervisee

Name of Setting/School..... expects all staff to take part in regular supervision sessions. The main purposes of the supervisory process are:

- To ensure that the worker is fulfilling their responsibilities to the expected standards;
- To provide support to the worker; and
- To identify the professional development and learning needs of the worker.
- We have agreed on the following structure for the supervision sessions, which will typically:
 - Take place monthly for full time staff, less frequently if appropriate for part time or seasonal staff. Admin staff can be supervised at longer intervals.
 - Last no longer than 1 Hour.
 - Be uninterrupted, unless by prior agreement.
 - Be held in a mutually agreed setting, which is quiet and ensures privacy.
 - Be booked in advance and then given priority over commitments whenever possible. If a supervision date has to be altered by either party, a new date and time should be fixed straight away.
- Follow the agenda set out on the supervision record sheet. In addition to standing items, specific topics may be added at the start of each session by either the supervisor or supervisee.

Items to consider for agenda

1. Actions from previous supervision
2. Work life balance, annual leave, absences etc
3. Equalities
4. Health and Safety issues
5. Any problems, issues, support needed etc
6. EYFS – meeting children’s needs, planning, record keeping,
7. Keyworker children (issues/concerns)
8. Appraisal targets (review)
9. Continual professional development (*review of training accessed, impact, formal or informal*)
10. Recent success and progress
11. any other business

SUPERVISION

Date of supervision

Name of Supervisor

Name of Supervisee

Date and time agreed for next meeting

Agenda standing items:

Specific additional agenda items:

Supervisor

Supervisee

Both the supervisor and supervisee should sign and date the end of this record to confirm its accuracy

Agenda Item	Actioned by

Signed: (Supervisor).....

Signed: (Supervisee)

Date

Review of progress on action from previous sessions	ACTION(ED BY)

Signed: (Supervisor).....

Signed: (Supervisee)

Date