

Waltham Forest Early Years Guidance

Reflective Practice Through a Lens – A Managers Guide

The purpose of this guidance is to support and guide managers to use video to support staffs' CPD and reflective practice to highlight positives and make adaptations to develop and enhance quality practice and provisions.

What is 'Reflective Practice'?

[Reflective practice](#) using video involves reviewing our own actions to engage in a process of continuous learning; thinking about our own experiences in-order to learn from them in the future and develop an action plan for what we will do next. Reflective practice requires a practitioner to critically analyse how they work to develop and improve.

Why?

Reflection is an important part of Early Years practice and will benefit the children in the setting and their parents and carers. Practitioners will also benefit both personally and professionally. Reflective practice will support practitioners and settings to maintain and continually improve.

Through reflection and continual improvement, you will achieve better outcomes for children. Other benefits for children include:

- ☐ Their individual needs are met
- ☐ Their self-esteem is increased
- ☐ An appropriate, enabling, interactive environment, including suitable resources for them, and opportunities indoors and out

The process will also benefit parents and carers, as they will be able to see changes in your practice and feel confident that the care,

teaching, learning and development opportunities you are providing are high quality and constantly improving.

Reflective practice supports staff to become more confident in their abilities, and this in turn causes a rise in morale and job satisfaction.

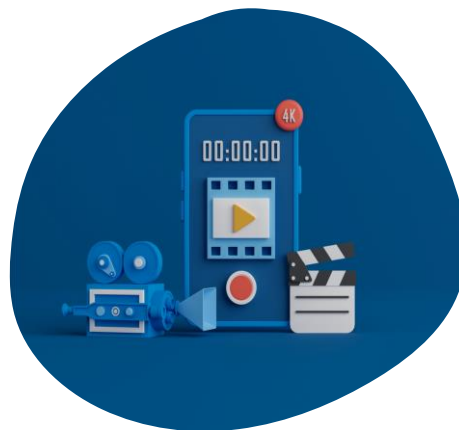
Continually reflecting on practice using video will:

- ☐ Enhance practitioner's skills whilst improving their confidence and motivation
- ☐ Help them to focus on and take ownership of their practice
- ☐ Identify professional development needs
- ☐ Support you and them to set targets/next steps and identify further training/support needs

How?

Introduce filming interactions and use recordings to guide reflection:

- Decide what interaction is to be captured. This could be a leader or practitioner decision. E.g., interactions at snack time, transition, storytelling, group time, joining play inside or outside etc.



- Set up a tablet on a tripod (if available) and record interaction – aim for up to 15 minutes. You may decide to record shorter times then build up to longer filming times
- Use the recording to share in supervisions and / or group reflection
- Use [All Talk's Responsive Practitioner Tool](#) and the [Shrec](#) approach to guide reflection
- Start with stronger practitioners first
- Guidance for implementing video as a tool for reflecting on interactions across the setting [Learning through a lens | Early Years Educator](#)
- The key principle of videoing practice is identifying what is good and striving to do more of it to move practice forward. It involves filming a short interaction between a practitioner and a child (or group of children or adult), and then reviewing it using the principles of All Talk's Communication and Language Tools and the Shrec Approach.

Practitioners then watch the video recording back, (they can do this alone in the first instance and then with a manager) to reflect on and analyse their practice, including identifying positives and changes that can be made. An action plan/next steps/targets can then be set together. Practitioners should be supported to reflect on what attuned interaction looked and felt like for the child/ren and the practitioner themselves and use this to develop their action plan.

What is the role of the manager?

As a manager, it is important to guide practitioners to choose the focus for their video recording. This should be done through discussion and coming to an agreed focus together.



It is important to use the video to identify someone's strengths; allowing successes to be celebrated. You should use it to pinpoint practice that can be replicated, extended and shared with others across the provision. Examples of quality interactions and practice etc can be shared and discussed with other practitioners in a secure manner. Practitioners can see practice directly and use this to aid discussion and their own practice.

Analysing the practice in the video, alongside the practitioner, enables managers to use this as an effective tool to support conversations during supervision sessions and to develop further training/support opportunities to enhance practice.

When reviewing the video, consider, are you using the All-Talk strategies?

- Following the child's lead (Observe, Wait and Listen)
- Being face to face
- Imitating – copy cats
- Repeating words and phrases
- Slowing it down – give extra time
- Using some silence
- Giving reasons to communicate e.g. offer choices
- Continuing talking even when children do not respond
- Giving reasons to communicate e.g. offer choices, sabotage
- Interpreting and commenting, rather than questioning
- Be careful with questions - try to make them genuine not testing!

When viewing the video with the practitioner/team, consider posing these questions to encourage a deeper level of reflection:

- What worked well? How and why did it work?
- What was the impact on outcomes for the children?
- What didn't work and why? How could it have been improved?

Use reflective questions from the [DfE's Help for Early Years Providers](#):

- Consider if you make enough time and space for conversations based on the interests of children?
- Do all your interactions throughout the day support the children's communication and language?
- Do you dominate interactions rather than sustain them?
- Are mealtimes relaxed and used as opportunities to chat with the children in a relaxed manner?
- Consider if the learning environments are set up in a way that enables communication and talk.

What Next?

Managers reflect on how this strategy has impacted on staff professional development and outcomes for their children.

The focus could move to more specific elements of practice – interactions during transitions, daily routines, mealtimes, child-initiated play, adult focused play or focus on how specific language is developed across rooms in the setting.

Invite practitioners as a team (Room meetings/ Room leader meetings/Staff meetings) to reflect on how they model language, introduce & consolidate new vocabulary through play, daily routines, and mealtimes, through the different activities on offer in the rooms, storytelling, instructions, feedback, comfort, and greetings.

Explore how you teach for:

- New descriptive language
- New emotional vocabulary
- New cultural language
- New instructional language
- Words for positive affirmations
- New vocab for curiosity, exploration, problem solving

- New words for sharing, turn taking
- Mathematical language

Get the staff motivated and engaged in the concept with an inspiring training session.

Identify a group of staff to start the project and then enjoy reflectively and positively on practice together! To get started on using video enhanced reflective practice, at a practical level, you need cameras or tablets to film on and time.

Further Information

- [Birth to Five Matters: Reflective Practice](#)
- [Reflective practice – How to use it in Early Years | Learning and Development | Teach Early Years](#)
- [Reflective Practice Models in the Early Years](#)
- [The Reflective Practitioner – Learning Through a Lens](#)

Use the template below to support the reflective discussions.

Supporting Reflective Discussions Template

Did you.....	Yes	No	Sometimes	Discussions
Get down to children's level so you can be face-to-face				
Let the children lead the play or activity				
Watch and wait for children to communicate (with a look, gesture, sound or words)				
Match your language to the children's level				
Use comments to describe what the children are doing instead of asking questions e.g., "wow that's a big truck!"				
Extend children's thinking by modelling language, ideas, new vocabulary and concepts "that dinosaur's by himself - I hope he's not lost!" (make sure this is at the right level for the child)				
Show that communication is fun by making your voice interesting and giving specific feedback- e.g. "I really enjoyed hearing about your cat!"				
Slow it down to give children extra time to think and respond				
Repeat what the children say and build on it by adding more words to turn it into a sentence				
Have extended back and forth interactions. Give children time to listen, process and reply				
Respond to children's non-verbal communication				