Notes on how to use the planning formats for children birth to three

Please first read Principles and guidelines for planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Weekly Plan for Focus Children

This is the main sheet for recording weekly planning for individual children. This planning should be based on your observations of the child and discussions with the child’s parents or carers. It can be added to throughout the week.

The sheet has 5 columns with a section at the bottom to record notes and evaluations as follows:

Child’s name: We recommend that you record the child’s age, also, in this column.

Interests, schemas, learning needs: In this column record the main interests and schemas that you have noted from your observations of the child. From these decide on the child’s learning needs and note them.

Parents’ information: Involving parents in the planning process promotes the partnership and also provides you with valuable information which you can use in your planning.

Support needed from adults & next steps for learning and development: In this column record the actual support you will give and how it will look in practice.

Experiences offered indoors and outdoors: Remember to note experiences that can be offered outside as well as inside. The outside should complement what is being offered inside, often on a bigger scale. The experiences are not just about activities which you will do with the children but are very much about opportunities offered for children to explore and try out for themselves with the adult in the supporting rather than directing role.

Notes and evaluations: This section is where you note the child’s responses and evaluate the development and learning that has taken place. This section can then be cut out and inserted into the child’s observation record file which forms a link between planning and record keeping.

As young children’s learning is holistic, we have not headed the columns according to the EYFS Areas of Learning and Development. However, you may find it helpful to put the initials of the relevant areas in this section. (Please see the filled in example).

Environment Plan

A well resourced learning environment which is accessible to very young children is fundamental to their development and learning and forms a large part of planning. Within this learning environment, responsive adults are the most important resource
to children and an appropriate environment will provide you with the opportunity to focus on the individual child.

The environment sheet is set out with boxes for the main learning resource areas which you may want to amend according to your setting’s needs and organisation. The plan is designed to be used to list resources that will be available for the length of time that the children are interested. This time will vary from a few days to several weeks. The resources chosen should be based on observations of the children’s current interests and stage of development.

The resources will be used independently by the children sometimes and supported by adults at other times. You may find it helpful to highlight on the form where an adult has been involved.

Let children combine resources and do unexpected things with them. Observe them and follow their lead. Children will transport resources to other areas and make connections in their learning through this. Returning the resources to their “home” to tidy up is an important learning opportunity also. Remember that mark making can happen anywhere and everywhere, so provide opportunities for this throughout the learning environment.

Remember to provide quiet, snugly places which children can go to on their own or with an adult.

Most resources should be available outside, also, but in offered in a different way; for example, bigger, louder, messier.

Evaluating the children’s use of the resources regularly and amending them appropriately is important. Ideally evaluations should involve the team at regular team meetings. These evaluations can be recorded on the back of this form. Individual children’s learning observed should be recorded on the child’s observation record.

**Continuous provision planning**

We have provided two examples of how key routines, when carefully thought-through, provide many opportunities for development and learning. We suggest that you compile a planning folder containing a breakdown of your continuous provision in this way, as this makes up a significant amount of your total planning for children. It is important to involve all staff in this process in order that they can better support children’s development and learning as well as explain to others, when required.