



Being self-reflective

Helping you understand and improve your childminding practice



The National Childminding Association (NCMA) believes every child should reach their full potential. We work with registered childminders and nannies, as well as other individuals and organisations, to ensure families in every community in England and Wales have access to high quality home-based childcare, play, learning and family support.

Introduction

As anyone who works with children will know, we learn by looking back at what we can already do and working out what we need to do differently to achieve even more. This is being self-reflective.

Just as every child is unique, so is the service that each childminder provides. One thing common to all registered childminders in England, however, is the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Registered childminders must be able to demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the EYFS.

This resource aims to help you:

- reflect on your own childminding practice
- build on your strengths and identify areas for development
- prepare for your Ofsted inspection.

Working through this resource will help you:

- develop confidence in your skills and knowledge
- understand the importance of being a reflective practitioner
- demonstrate how you are meeting the Every Child Matters agenda
- see how you are delivering the EYFS requirements
- prepare for completing your Ofsted self-evaluation form (SEF).

The resource is split into the five Every Child Matters outcomes (see below) and these are then cross-referenced to the EYFS framework. Throughout the text are prompts to help you complete your Ofsted SEF.

There are templates for you to copy and complete, helping you identify and record your good practice, and to plan your further development.

And we've included examples from a childminder, Lisa, showing how she has completed the forms based on her own self-reflection. Although these examples will be different from your own reflections and plans, they may give you an idea of how to use the templates.

Reflective practice

One way of checking how you are meeting the needs of the children in your care is to work on developing your reflective practice. This means regularly looking at every aspect of your practice and being honest with yourself about how you are doing.

One definition is that a reflective practitioner:

- takes professional responsibility for constantly improving the quality of their own practice
- thinks about the way they work, and why they choose certain ways of working
- considers working in different ways and introduces new ways of working
- plans how to maintain and develop their practice in future, seeking new information and training opportunities.

This resource will help you to develop your skills as a self-reflective practitioner. Try to be as honest as you can when thinking about the ways you do things but remember, it is a great opportunity to highlight the many positive aspects of your childminding rather than simply concentrating on a few areas that may need some extra attention or improvement.

What is Every Child Matters?

Every Child Matters is a government agenda that focuses on bringing together services which support children and families. There are five outcomes which all children should achieve:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic wellbeing.

It is important to make sure that the service you provide as a registered childminder supports the children you care for in meeting these outcomes. Inspectors will be looking at how you meet the EYFS welfare requirements and how you are supporting children to achieve the early learning goals, both of which are underpinned by the Every Child Matters outcomes.

What is the EYFS?

The EYFS framework sets the standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to the end of the Foundation Stage – this is 31 August after their 5th birthday.

Working to the ultimate goals of Every Child Matters, the EYFS has four distinct themes:

- A unique child
- Positive relationships
- Enabling environments
- Learning and development.

The EYFS brings together and replaces three separate frameworks:

- Birth to Three Matters
- The Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage
- National Standards for Under 8s Day Care and Childminding.

If you were registered with Ofsted before September 2008, you will be familiar with the National Standards for Under 8s Day Care and Childminding, and probably Birth to Three Matters. You may not be so familiar with the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage unless you are a childminder accredited to deliver Early Years Education as part of a formal childminding network such as NCMA's Children Come First scheme. All this means that much of the EYFS will already feel familiar to many registered childminders.

If you want to develop your skills further, the Certificate in Early Years Foundation Stage Practice is available to all registered childminders, and NCMA may be running a training course near you. Call your local NCMA office to find out more about this award. You can find contact details at www.ncma.org.uk/contact or at the back of this book.

Ofsted self-evaluation form (SEF)

Registered childminders in England can complete a self-evaluation form from Ofsted to support their inspection. Though it is not compulsory to complete the SEF, the Ofsted inspector will use it as the main document for planning their inspection of your setting, so if you don't provide information via the self-evaluation form you may need to provide it in another way. Completing the form as fully as possible can help your inspection go smoothly and gives you a chance to highlight your good practice.

Using this resource to practise and develop your self-evaluation skills and reflection will help you complete a successful and accurate SEF. The early years self-evaluation form is available for childminders to complete online. You will be able to access the secure form using the password sent to you by Ofsted. Visit www.ofsted.gov.uk and www.ncma.org.uk/sef for more information about Ofsted's SEF.

So what does all this mean in practice?

At the centre of every childminding setting is the most important thing – the child. The new Ofsted inspection requires childminders to think about their setting from the child's point of view. You may already be used to looking at your setting from the child's point of view, as that's often the best way to check for hazards in your home. However, you also need to think about what the children experience with you every day. Keep the child at the centre of your service and make sure that being with you is a happy and positive experience for the child in all aspects of their care and development.

Using this resource

There are five areas for you to consider, each covering one of the five Every Child Matters outcomes (see above). These ECM outcomes are then cross-referenced to the relevant themes of the EYFS framework and the sections of the Ofsted SEF. This will help you consider how your work supports these different areas.

Self-reflection is also about learning to understand how your everyday work underpins the Every Child Matters outcomes. Using this resource will help you become familiar with the Every Child Matters outcomes and to identify which aspects of your work underpin which outcome most effectively. In time, self-reflection and evaluation will become a normal part of your childminding day.

There are worksheets within this resource, and these can help you to carry out your self-reflection.

The self-reflection tool gives you the space to look at what you do now and how it already supports the ECM outcomes and the requirements of the EYFS. Use this space to highlight your good practice – ideal to demonstrate on the Ofsted SEF.

The development plan helps you identify the things you need to do to improve on some areas of your practice. Here you can list your aims, the resources, training or assistance you might need, and the timescale you're working to.

The self-reflection process is not a one-off event, and you should aim to review your development plan on a regular basis. Use the development plan as the basis of your next self-reflection, seeing how you've achieved your goals and which you are still working towards. From this you can create a new development plan to move forward.

When using this resource, you may find it useful to consider the following questions from the SEF. In your childminding setting, how well do you encourage the children to:

- make progress towards the early learning goals in relation to their starting points, capabilities and interests?
- be active learners, be creative and think critically about what they do?
- work independently and with each other?
- enjoy and have a positive attitude towards learning, be motivated and keen to learn and communicate their learning?
- have good relationships with other children and take into account each other's diverse needs and backgrounds?

Taking it further

To help you think further about the ways in which your work supports Every Child Matters and the EYFS, you may find it helpful to have a folder that you can use to gather together material that supports each outcome. Consider including things like policies, observations, photographs and children's work – anything that helps you paint a picture of your provision. Not only will it be a useful collection to show during your inspection, but it will provide a snapshot of your provision for any new parents considering using your childminding service. Do remember to think carefully about confidentiality. It's good practice always to check with a child's parents – and the child, of course – whether they're happy to have their photo taken for your portfolio.

Being healthy

How do you support the Every Child Matters outcome of being healthy? The outcome links to the other frameworks in the following ways:

EYFS theme: A unique child

SEF reference: Helping children to be healthy

Considering the ECM outcome

Being healthy is more than just eating the right foods and getting enough exercise.

Think about the question “how you are able to demonstrate that you are meeting the needs of the children you care for, and enabling them to be healthy?”

The list below suggests some of the ways you might help to meet the outcome in your childminding setting. Adding other examples of your own to the list will help you identify the areas of your practice you want to highlight.

To be healthy, children need:

- nutritious food
- plenty to drink
- fresh air and exercise
- a clean and safe environment
- healthcare
- mental stimulation
- loving and supportive relationships
- rest and sleep
- to feel positive about themselves and others
- to belong
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Take time to look at your everyday practice and think carefully about how you already help children to be healthy. Use the self-reflection template to note your thoughts. You may find this information useful when completing your Ofsted SEF.

Use your development plan template to help identify any areas for further improvement. Consider the timescale you plan to use when completing your development plan and review it on a regular basis.

Lisa's self-reflection

Every Child Matters outcome: Being healthy

Date: March 2009

Which aspect of the ECM outcome are you looking at?

Offering nutritious food

How can you demonstrate the ways in which you help children achieve this aspect of the ECM outcome?

I offer a wide menu with a selection of different foods. Fruit and cheese is offered at snack time, and water is always available to drink.

What parts of your childminding service are you really proud of? Are there any that you think will really help children meet this ECM outcome?

Food is a big part of our childminding setting, and the children enjoy the meals and snacks I provide for them. We talk about different foods, and children are encouraged to taste new foods.

Are there things you could do differently to improve the way you support the children?

I'd like to involve the children a bit more in preparing the food they eat.

Lisa's development plan

Area	Issue identified	What I'm going to do about it	Timescale	Outcome
Being healthy	The children could be more involved in food preparation	We'll create a poster showing some foods we usually use	End of month. Will start collecting magazine pictures of food	Done
		The children can help me shop for ingredients	Whenever possible	The children enjoyed shopping and cooking with me
		We'll prepare some simple meals together	Whenever possible	

Date of next review: May 2009

Staying safe

How do you support the Every Child Matters outcome of staying safe? The outcome links to the other frameworks in the following ways:

EYFS theme: A unique child

SEF reference: Helping children to stay safe

Your main aim as a childminder is, of course, to keep the children in your care safe.

Think about the question “how am I helping the children in my care to stay safe?”. The list below suggests some of the ways you might help to meet the outcome in your childminding setting. Adding other examples of your own to the list will help you identify the areas of your practice you want to highlight.

All childminders should consider the following when caring for children:

- physical environment
- equipment
- safety
- child protection
- making choices
- understanding boundaries
- accidents and injuries
- security, stability and being cared for
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Take time to look at your everyday practice and think carefully about how you already help children to stay safe. Use the self-reflection template to note your thoughts. You may find this information useful when completing your Ofsted SEF.

Use your development plan template to help identify any areas for further improvement. Consider the timescale you plan to use when completing your development plan and review it on a regular basis.

Lisa's self-reflection

Every Child Matters outcome: Staying safe

Date: March 2009

Which aspect of the ECM outcome are you looking at?

Safety in the childminding setting

How can you demonstrate the ways in which you help children achieve this aspect of the ECM outcome?

I do a thorough risk assessment whenever a new child starts and review it regularly, especially when a child moves to a new stage of development, e.g. walking.

What parts of your childminding service are you really proud of? Are there any that you think will really help children meet this ECM outcome?

Whenever we go out, the children who can walk hold onto the buggy. We practise crossing the road together and I encourage the children to tell me about anything that they think is dangerous.

Are there things you could do differently to improve the way you support the children?

Some more risky play might be useful, helping children to learn to assess risks for themselves.

Lisa's development plan

Area	Issue identified	What I'm going to do about it	Timescale	Outcome
Staying safe	We need to know more about fire safety in the setting	Ask the fire station for advice	One month	Fire safety officer came to assess my house
		Practice fire escape drill	Once a month and for every new child	Children are confident about how to escape in the event of fire

Date of next review: June 2009

Enjoying and achieving

How do you support the Every Child Matters outcome of helping children enjoy and achieve? This outcome links to the other frameworks in the following ways:

EYFS theme: Learning and development
Enabling environments

SEF reference: How well do children enjoy and achieve?

Children are learning new skills all the time. How well do you support them in this?

Think about the question “how am I helping the children in my care to enjoy and achieve?”. The list below suggests some of the ways you might help to meet the outcome in your childminding setting. Adding other examples of your own to the list will help you identify the areas of your practice you want to highlight.

The following are all important when supporting children to enjoy their learning and achieve success:

- planning
- observations
- knowledge of child development
- range of activities
- adult support
- recording progress
- creativity
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Take time to look at your everyday practice and think carefully about how you already help children to enjoy and achieve. Use the self-reflection template to note your thoughts. You may find this information useful when completing your Ofsted SEF.

Use your development plan template to help identify any areas for further improvement. Consider the timescale you plan to use when completing your development plan and review it on a regular basis.

Lisa's self-reflection

Every Child Matters outcome: Enjoying and achieving

Date: January 2009

Which aspect of the ECM outcome are you looking at?

Recording children's progress

How can you demonstrate the ways in which you help children achieve this aspect of the ECM outcome?

Each child has a personal journal that I keep up to date with photos and news about what they've done. The children stick in pictures and things they've enjoyed doing.

What parts of your childminding service are you really proud of? Are there any that you think will really help children meet this ECM outcome?

The journals help children and their parents reflect on what they've achieved with me.

Are there things you could do differently to improve the way you support the children?

As the children get older they should be able to choose more of their activities.

Lisa's development plan

Area	Issue identified	What I'm going to do about it	Timescale	Outcome
Enjoying and achieving	The children need to be more involved in planning	Create a "choice board" with lots of photos showing games and activities that the children can choose for each day.	A couple of weeks to photograph the items and make the choice board	The children enjoy deciding that extra things they want to do during their time with me.

Date of next review: March 2009

Making a positive contribution

How do you support the Every Child Matters outcome of helping children make a positive contribution? This outcome covers how children develop positive ways of behaving, engage in decision-making and develop respect for each other. It links to the other frameworks in the following ways:

EYFS theme: Positive relationships
A unique child
Enabling environments
SEF reference: Helping children to make a positive contribution

Think about the question “how am I helping the children in my care make a positive contribution?”. The list below suggests some of the ways you might help to meet the outcome in your childminding setting. Adding other examples of your own to the list will help you identify the areas of your practice you want to highlight.

The following are all important when supporting children to enjoy their learning and achieve success:

- parents as partners
- positive behaviour
- inclusive practice
- listening to children
- developing self-confidence
- friendships
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Take time to look at your everyday practice and think carefully about how you already help children to make a positive contribution. Use the self-reflection template to note your thoughts. You may find this information useful when completing your Ofsted SEF.

Use your development plan template to help identify any areas for further improvement. Consider the timescale you plan to use when completing your development plan and review it on a regular basis.

Lisa's self-reflection

Every Child Matters outcome: Making a positive contribution

Date: November 2008

Which aspect of the ECM outcome are you looking at?

Parents as partners

How can you demonstrate the ways in which you help children achieve this aspect of the ECM outcome?

I involve parents in outings and activities and invite them in to share skills, interests and cultural traditions.

What parts of your childminding service are you really proud of? Are there any that you think will really help children meet this ECM outcome?

My portfolio shows new and prospective parents all about my childminding service and gives examples of how the children learn and develop with me. My collection of policies and procedures gives a clear illustration of how the setting works and gives parents confidence in my abilities as a childminder.

Are there things you could do differently to improve the way you support the children?

Be more inclusive to new children.

Lisa's development plan

Area	Issue identified	What I'm going to do about it	Timescale	Outcome
Making a positive contribution	I want to welcome new children more effectively	When a new child starts, I'll support the current children to make a welcome card for them to include the child and their family in the setting.	Ongoing	Older children like getting a welcome card, and the parents of the new baby have commented that it was a lovely gesture.

Date of next review: March 2009

Achieving economic wellbeing

Helping children achieve economic wellbeing is about ensuring that they have the skills and abilities to support themselves in the future. It links to the other frameworks in the following ways:

EYFS theme: Positive relationships
Enabling environments

SEF reference: Helping children to develop skills for the future

Think about the question “how am I helping the children in my care achieve economic wellbeing?”. The list below suggests some of the ways you might help to meet the outcome in your childminding setting. Adding other examples of your own to the list will help you identify the areas of your practice you want to highlight.

Helping children achieve economic wellbeing might, at first glance, seem tricky to demonstrate, but your support now can help prepare children for the future so they can reach their true potential. Children and families need continued support to encourage their future wellbeing. Consider how you support the following:

- curiosity and a desire to learn
- positive attitudes towards others
- good relationships with others
- development of creative and critical thinking
- literacy
- numeracy
- critical thinking
- risk-taking
- problem-solving
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Take time to look at your everyday practice and think carefully about how you already help children prepare for their future. Use the self-reflection template to note your thoughts. You may find this information useful when completing your Ofsted SEF.

Use your development plan template to help identify any areas for further improvement. Consider the timescale you plan to use when completing your development plan and review it on a regular basis.

Lisa's self-reflection

Every Child Matters outcome: Achieving economic wellbeing

Date: March 2009

Which aspect of the ECM outcome are you looking at?

Children's literacy

How can you demonstrate the ways in which you help children achieve this aspect of the ECM outcome?

There are always different books on offer, and we go to the library each week to choose new ones. Older children read to some of the younger ones, and we also act out the stories with puppets or dressing-up clothes.

What parts of your childminding service are you really proud of? Are there any that you think will really help children meet this ECM outcome?

Writing, reading and mark-making are really important in the setting. Children have access to paper and crayons at all times, and we have a whiteboard with notes each day. The children choose the stories they want to read. Encouraging children from a very early age to enjoy reading and make marks and lists is helping them grasp literacy.

Are there things you could do differently to improve the way you support the children?

Offer other types of mark-making

Lisa's development plan

Area	Issue identified	What I'm going to do about it	Timescale	Outcome
Achieving economic wellbeing	Need to think about new ways of encouraging mark-making	Offer new ways of mark-making for youngest children, including drawing with water, in sand, and with paints outside.	Ongoing	Youngest children have more opportunity to try mark-making.

Date of next review: July 2009



Self-reflection tool

Every Child Matters outcome:

Date:

Which aspect of the ECM outcome are you looking at?

How can you demonstrate the ways in which you help children achieve this aspect of the ECM outcome?

What parts of your childminding service are you really proud of? Are there any that you think really help children meet this ECM outcome?

Are there things you could do differently to improve the way you support the children?



Development planner

Every Child Matters outcome:

Date

Area	Issue identified	What I'm going to do about it	Timescale	Outcome

Date for planned review

There are NCMA support workers around England. For details of support near you, contact your local office.

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“ This publication helped me understand what I need to be looking at to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes and ensure children in my care are happy. ”

“ It boosted my confidence. ”

“ It's written in clear to understand language and is very straightforward. ”

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