

A one-minute guide to Supervision in the Early Years for School and Group Based Providers

In the context of early years education, staff supervision plays a crucial role in promoting quality practice and ensuring the well-being of both children and staff.

Supervision for all EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) staff is also a statutory requirement within the EYFS 2024, which states:

EYFS 2024 Section 3.27

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.

EYFS 2024 Section 3.28

Supervision should provide opportunities for staff to:

- *Discuss any issues – particularly concerning children’s development or wellbeing, including child protection concerns.*
- *Identify solutions to address issues as they arise.*
- *Receive coaching to improve their personal effectiveness.*

This one-minute guide provides an overview of supervision in the early years and outlines how early years providers within schools and group-based settings can effectively support staff supervision.

Understanding supervision:

- It is important to note, that supervision is different from appraisals and that appropriate supervision arrangements should be in place, separate to appraisals, for all staff working with early years pupils.
- Supervision involves regular meetings between Supervisors (such as Team Leaders, Managers, or experienced colleagues) and staff members.
- It provides support, coaching, and training for practitioners.
- The goal is to enhance practice, address challenges, and maintain high standards.

Why is supervision important?

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) identifies regular staff supervision as being a statutory requirement.

Supervision contributes to:

- **Improved practice:** By discussing experiences, challenges, and strategies, practitioners can enhance their skills and knowledge.
- **Effective safeguarding:** Ensuring the highest standards of safeguarding for both children and staff.
- **Performance management:** Supporting staff and promoting continuous professional development.
- **Well-Being:** Addressing well-being concerns and fostering a positive working environment.

Key functions of supervision:

- **Support:** Supervision offers emotional and professional support to staff.
- **Performance improvement:** It identifies areas for growth and helps staff enhance their effectiveness.
- **Confidential discussion:** It creates a safe and open space for discussing sensitive issues related to practice, child development, and wellbeing.

Components of effective supervision:

- Regular meetings: Arrange scheduled supervision sessions to discuss various aspects.
- Child development and wellbeing: Address any concerns related to children's development or safety.
- Problem-solving: Identify solutions to challenges as they arise.
- Coaching: Provide guidance to improve staff members' skills and effectiveness.
- Wellbeing of staff: Provide the opportunity for discussion about staff's wellbeing, identifying if any further support needs to be put in place.
- Safeguarding: Discussion around safeguarding, including an opportunity to discuss any concerns about their own work, or the work of others.
- Changes to circumstance: Opportunity to discuss any changes in their personal circumstance which may affect their suitability to work.

Creating a supportive culture:

- Foster a culture of mutual support and teamwork.
- Encourage open dialogue and confidentiality during supervision meetings.
- Promote continuous improvement and a commitment to best practices.

Expectations from Ofsted:

- Ofsted expects early years settings and schools to have supervision arrangements in place for all staff working with early years children.
- They will want to know that arrangements align with the statutory requirements and contribute to safeguarding and wellbeing.

Models of supervision:

- Various models exist, such as reflective supervision, group supervision and developmental supervision.
- Early years providers will need to choose a model that suits their settings and staff needs and context.

Implementing supervision:

- Providers need to consider their own individual organisational structure to ensure that all staff, including Managers, receive regular supervision.
- A clear policy, agreement and procedures for supervision should be in place which outline and support the process. These should be reviewed regularly.
- Supervision meetings should be recorded, including agreed actions, and stored confidentially.
- Where the outcome of supervision identifies training needs, plans should be made to support ongoing professional development.

Frequency of supervisions:

- Policies and management systems should include regular supervision for all staff members.
- At times, the frequency of supervisions may increase, for example if a member of staff has a personal change of circumstance or if a member of staff is dealing with a challenging child protection case.
- Staff members may request a supervision meeting with their Line Manager at times where they feel this would be beneficial.
- Alongside planned supervisions there may be times that supervision meetings occur in an unplanned capacity. These might be during times when there are increased concerns in relation to an individual child's development or Child Protection concerns around a child and family.

Remember, effective supervision not only benefits practitioners but also positively impacts the children they care for.