

# Reflections and personal development essay sample



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There are a huge range of jobs within the Early years sector, and the duties and responsibilities of these roles vary enormously. So it is important that you understand what is required of you in your own specific job role.

This will be set out in your job description issued by the setting. The duties and responsibilities will often be expressed as tasks. For an example, if you are working in baby room of a nursery, tasks listed on your job description may include: – meet the emotional and physical care needs of babies sensitively. – make regular observations and assessment of the development of babies.

Often there is an additional ‘ person specification’ section of a job description. This details the knowledge, experience and attributes that the practitioner will need to fulfil the duties and responsibilities. This may include things such as: – the ability to interact with babies with sensitivity and respect – experience of meeting the emotional and physical care needs of babies – excellent knowledge and understanding of the development patterns of babies.

Duties which I carry out at my setting are :

- Care for children and young people and babies throughout the day -
- Feeding, including bottle feeds
- changing nappies
- observations, following the EYFS
- cleaning duties such as hovering and mopping.

When the settings are devising their job descriptions and person specifications, they will consider the relevant standards that they expect

their new staff member to meet. Settings will not reach the minimum standards required of them if the practitioners they employ are not up to scratch. The standards that will be considered are shown below: \* Codes of practice

\* Regulations

\* Minimum standards

\* National occupational standards

\* Quality assurance scheme standards

\* Organizational ethos or principles, e. g. Montessori or Steiner

## Outcome 2

Be able to reflect on practice

1.

Reflective Practice/reflecting –

The process of thinking about and critically analyzing your actions with the goal of changing and improving occupational practice. (national occupational standards) ‘ Unit SHC 32, Children and young people’s workforce, Miranda Walker.’

Reflecting on how you do things, what you do and what you achieve (known as your processes, practices and outcomes) effectively helps you to see how well you are working in practice. Reflective practitioners regularly: – think about their practice

– analyses their actions

– evaluate their personal effectiveness

– record their reflections, perhaps in a journal

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- discuss their reflection with others
- use feedback from others to improve their own evaluations.

This will help them to then do the following:

- identify their strengths
- identify their weaknesses
- notice their achievements
- identify their development needs
- solve problems
- improve practice

Reflection also helps you to see which of your practical strategies and techniques are successful and where a fresh approach would be beneficial. This increases your professional knowledge, understanding and skills. With the benefit of hindsight, you can take time to think through an event or an issue, gaining deeper insight or a cleaner idea of the impact of your actions. You can share your reflection with others using their feedback to further inform your evaluation. In the interests of high quality, it's advisable for practitioners to measure how well they are doing by the best-practice benchmarks, and not by minimum standards.

When individual practitioners improve their own practice, this impacts on the quality of the service provided by the setting as a whole. In addition, when working as part of a team, practitioners will also be involved in jointly reflecting on and evaluating organizational practices and policies and procedures. This analysis of effectiveness allows the setting to make improvements where necessary.

2.

There are many methods that can be used to reflect on your practice, as I have explained below. These are known as ‘reflective analysis techniques’.

- Questioning what, why and how

Imagine that a practitioner has experienced previous difficulty keeping children seated at story time. Today one child got up and took another child’s cushion, causing them to cry. The practitioner may question, ‘What actually happened and why did the event occur? How did I respond and why?’.

-Seeking alternatives

‘How else could I have handled things?’

-Keeping an open mind

‘There could be a better way to handle or prevent such situations’.

-Viewing from different perspective

‘How might colleagues have responded? How were the children involved feeling at the time?’.

-Asking ‘what if’

‘What if I’d given children more time to settle in their seats?’.

-Thinking about consequences

‘A colleague came to deal with the situation while I tried to carry on with the story. But what would have happened if I’d stopped reading the story to the rest of the group until the situation was resolved?’.

-Testing ideas through comparing and contrasting

‘ What similar events have I experienced, and were they handled effectively?

Could techniques used then work in this situation? Did my actions compare or contrast with policies and values of my setting?’

-Synthesizing ideas

‘ The process of gathering different ideas from different sources. These are reflected upon, and in a considered way they are blended or joined together to form a new idea’ (www. silkysteps. com)

‘ I’ve thought about the issue myself , and discussed it with a colleague. I remember reading that it is good to take time to settle children at story time. It can help them to concentrate and feel engaged during the session.

-Seeking, identifying and resolving problems

‘ On reflection, I think the problem was that the children had not settled before I started reading. Next time I will try giving them more time, and I will ask if they are comfortable and can see the book.

Good reflective practitioners learn to use all of these techniques, applying one or more of them to each situation or issue they reflect on. They keep a record of their processes and outcomes, often in a reflective journal.

Observation of other practitioners is also a good way to become inspired, and visits to other settings are also valuable. Question why and how things are done, and if appropriate reflect on how this could influence your own practice.

3.

Reflection is a very effective tool for comparing and contrasting what we say we do and what we actually do. It is important to think about this periodically, because although principles, values and policies may be known and understood, there can be times when practice does not promote them. Reflection allows the practitioners to identify this, and then this indicates when it may be necessary to challenge their own practice.

This can be difficult to do. It can be very hard to admit that personal beliefs, values, experiences or feelings may be prejudiced or otherwise negative in some way, and that personal development is necessary. But everyone is influenced to some degree by the way we were brought up and educated, by what happens to us and by what we believe. This can manifest itself in many ways – for example, if you dreaded having to play team games in PE as a child, you may avoid including them in your own activity programme for young people. Or if you were brought up to finish everything on your plate as a sign of respect for the person who prepared the meal, you may then find yourself expecting children in your care to do this too. To address weaknesses and improve practice, honest reflection is required. Remember everyone has room for improvement and the capacity for continuing professional development.

Outcome 3

Be able to evaluate own performance

1.

Once you are aware of your own work role and the responsibilities it contains

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and also the expectations of that role as expressed in relevant standards, you can then begin evaluating your performance against them.

This requires thinking carefully about your practice and considering: — what you can already do well.

— areas for further development.

You will need a way to structure and record your evaluations. Sometimes settings have set self-evaluation forms for practitioners to complete periodically, or if you're on course, your tutor or assessor may provide you with forms to fill in.

Evaluating yourself against the relevant standards helps you to ensure that your knowledge, performance and understanding meets (and continues to meet) the adequate professional levels that are both expected and legally required. To help both the setting as a whole and the practitioners as individuals to achieve this, settings may elect to undertake a quality assurance scheme. Such schemes state what they consider to be best practice by expressing benchmarks. These are similar to the welfare requirements expressed by Ofsted. However Ofsted states the minimum standards that settings must not fall below. Quality reassurance schemes state the best-practice benchmarks for settings to aim towards. When undertaking quality assurance, settings are generally required to compile a portfolio of evidence. When the setting is ready, the portfolio will be assessed by a representative of the scheme, and an observation visit will be to the setting. The assessor will observe what is going on, in a similar way to an Ofsted inspector. Gaining quality assurance is an achievement for settings.



Its demonstrates that the setting provides a service that is better than the minimum standards legally required.

You should remember that while it's essential to fulfill all minimum requirements and legal obligations and requirements, it is considered best practice to aim towards meeting the current best-practice bench marks.

(Best-practice Benchmarks widely agreed as the most up-to-date thinking and practice against which you can measure what you are doing - not minimum standards. Benchmarks can be statutory/regulatory or based on other requirements or research.) -National occupational health standards-

(CYPW disc, Definitions, Miranda walker)

2.

When your evaluating, it really helps to consider the feedback that you receive from others on your own performance, alongside your own self-evaluations, and to see this to inform future development. This can help us to overcome the difficulty of being objective about ourselves. We may sometimes be 'too close to see' things clearly. For example We may worry that we are doing something properly when in fact we're doing a great job, or may not be aware that there is something that we need to improve on or to learn.

Feedback on your performance may come from a number of sources, including colleagues, supervisors, assessors/tutors, parents, careers or children. It may be given formally or informally. For instance, an assessor will

give you formal feedback during an assessment, while a parent may make an informal passing comment about their child's care.

Most settings will have an appraisal system that officially facilitates giving workers feedback on their performance, usually once a year. Generally, senior staff will make an appointment to talk with each worker individually. The staff member's work performance will be jointly discussed. Strengths and performance will be jointly discussed. Strengths and weaknesses will be considered, and as a result a personal training/development plan will be agreed. Practitioners get the most out of an appraisal when they reflect on their own strengths, their weaknesses and also their development needs prior to the meeting and contribute their own thoughts during the meeting. It is very common for settings to give practitioners a self-appraisal form to complete in advance, to help them with this reflection. Once the form is completed, this will then be handed to an appraiser and informs the appraisal discussion.

#### Outcome 4

Be able to agree a personal development plan

1.

People who often give feedback are often also sources of support when you are planning and reviewing. This will include people working within and also beyond your own organizations. Supervising staff responsible for delivering your setting's appraisal process are a particularly good source of formal support for planning and reviewing your development. They're experienced in working with staff to identify and plan to meet development needs. If you

are relatively new to a setting and have not yet been appraised the information the appraiser learns about your development while supporting you can be used to inform your first appraisal. If you have already been appraised, the staff member will already be aware of your performance, knowledge, skills and development and therefore will be well placed to help support you. Colleagues can also often informally recommend ways in which they've successfully made and actioned their own personal development plans, and suggest learning activities you might want to look into. If you are on a course tutors, assessors and mentors are an excellent resource, and will have secure knowledge about your necessary learning development. If you're interested in developing your current practice in a new area or undertaking training or qualifications so you can progress up the career ladder, careers advisors and the admission tutors of training centers, colleges and universities can offer advice and support.

The sources of support when planning and reviewing are :

- Training center and educational establishment admission
- Mentors
- Careers, guidance advisors
- Assessors
- Tutors
- Senior Staff members.

2.

Once you have drafted up a personal development plan, it is good practice to review it in conjunction with the other people involved in your personal development, working together to priorities your learning needs and <https://assignbuster.com/reflections-and-personal-development-essay-sample/>

professional interests. Within the setting this may include your supervisor, line manager, or employer. Outside professionals such as tutors, assessors and mentors may also contribute, and if applicable, carers and advocates.

Prioritising is sometimes purely a matter of timescales. For instance, if your first aid certificate will expire soon it will be priority to renew it. If a new piece of legislation is coming in, it may need to be researched as soon as possible. Or you may want to take advantage of an opportunity coming up soon – a seminar series at local university, for example or a short course starting at the local college.

If your workplace will be supporting your personal development financially, they may tell you how and when they'd like you to meet your personal development needs. If they feel there is a weakness in a certain area that affects performance – a lack of knowledge about the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for instance – they may require you to address this as a matter of priority.

You should also agree how and when will you review your development and monitor your progress towards your plan.

3.

When your plan has been reviewed and prioritized, you can produce a final draft. Many settings will require staff to hand this in to the supervisor or manager, who will keep a copy for the settings records. If the setting will be supporting your development financially (by paying for training perhaps), it is usually at this stage that the money is officially allocated in the budget.

Once a plan is agreed, make sure that you understand who has responsibility  
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for any organizational details – for instance, should you make a booking for yourself to attend a course or will the supervisor do it and make payment at the same time.

## Outcome 5

Be able to use learning opportunities and reflective practice to contribute to personal development.

1.

You will need to evaluate the effect your learning activities have had on your practice. However you should make sure you give yourself a reasonable amount of time to allow newly integrated learning to become embedded in your practice. It may take you a while to get used to new ways of working, and this may also apply to children, young people and colleagues that you're working with. When you're ready to evaluate, the previous techniques you have learned can be applied.

2.

Reflective practice has led to improved ways of working because when a practitioner reflects on their own work role and things they've carried out such as activities or observations they are able to see what did work and what didn't work and where able to see where things went wrong. Doing this gave them the options to change and improve their ways of working in the future. Examples of this could be:-

- A routine of the day may not work, but if you reflect on this and understand what went wrong you can make changes so you could reconsider the routine.

- If a child is being disruptive and using unpolite behavior you may use a <https://assignbuster.com/reflections-and-personal-development-essay-sample/>

technique to diffuse the situation that may not work, but reflecting on your own practice could help you consider other techniques for future situations

3.

It's very important to record your progress in relation to professional development. Some settings provide professional development files for practitioners, in which they keep all related information. If you don't have access to these, it's a brilliant idea to start your own file – it will be with you throughout your career. [pic]

Internet example of self-evaluation sheet

(<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/16559046/Sample-Self-Evaluation-Form-Sample-Team-Evaluation-Form>)

You should always take care of qualification certificates, and also file away certificates of attendance (such as those issued on local authority training courses). These are your proof of learning and evidence of your professional development progress. Should practitioners wish to change their jobs or apply for training or study and also potential employers will want to see them. Sometimes the setting you work in will want to file copies of your certificates for themselves as they can be used as evidence during Ofsted inspections and quality assurance assessments. You can also file any written feedback you receive on progress made in your practice as a result of implementing your learning. Another good idea is to also keep another file containing notes you make and also any handouts you may receive during learning activities, so you can refer to them in the future.

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