Cohort Analysis and Tracking

This card gives guidance on how to use the Cohort Tracker to identify strengths and weaknesses of the setting and to further develop your practice and provision. This responsibility lies with leaders and managers.

Why do we need a Cohort Tracker?

As the leader and manager of a setting you will need to identify the strengths and weaknesses of your provision.

By collecting information about a group or cohort of children, you will be able to look for patterns across areas of learning and development that will help you, and consequently all practitioners, to further improve the quality of provision within the setting.

This information will help you to plan for the future of your setting, to further develop staff practice and your ethos.

It is always important to remember that this type of information is best used when it enables reflective leaders and managers to ask questions about the provision they offer – e.g. the environment, resources, adult interaction and understanding, etc. A helpful flowchart can be found at www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/05/progress-matters.pdf

How do we use a Cohort Tracker?

Each key person will have made observations and completed an Individual Progress Tracker sheet for each child (see Card 3). This information will then need to be transferred onto the Cohort Tracker (see fig i).

Ideally you should have a Cohort Tracker for each group of children in the setting (e.g. age-range/room).

The grid needs to be completed once a year at a time chosen by the setting (e.g. you may decide to do this in January, as the information can then be used to further develop practice and provision before some children transfer to school).

Initially some general observations can be considered to develop provision but when the grid is compared with the following year(s) then more detailed observations can be generated.

Fig i Cohort Progress Tracker
What do we do with the information from the cohort tracker?

Look to see if there are any areas of learning and development where less/more progress is being made.

Compare how well boys and girls are doing in each area of learning. If one gender outperforms the other, consider the reasons why this may be.

Look to see if term of birth is making a significant difference to children’s development compared to their peers by looking at Individual Progress Trackers.

You may want to look at the data for children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to ensure the provision that you have put in place is making a difference for those children.

You may also want to look at those children who have English as an Additional Language to ensure that the children are accessing the full range of provision you have on offer and that staff are skilled in observing what children can do.

When looking at the Cohort Tracker you may notice some children who may be outside the range of most of the children within the cohort. This is when you need their Individual Progress Tracker to support you as it will confirm the knowledge you have about the individual child and will help you give explanations about their learning and development.

As part of this process you may also want to consider how well practitioners are matching children to the Development Matters statements. Is this consistent across the setting? Do they need some extra support?

Once you have made the comparisons and can recognise the trends, as a leader and manager your role is to be reflective and to consider how to further develop the provision. Ideally this should be written in the form of a report which will inform your Self Evaluation Form, your development planning and should be shared with staff and other professionals such as, Ofsted and Improvement Advisors.

Consider:

- Do practitioners need further training, expertise and knowledge?
- Do you need further provision and resources to reflect the children's interests and culture?
- Does the setting need to develop the learning environment and enhance where the learning takes place?
- Are there opportunities for practitioners to moderate observations and match children to the Development Matters stages to ensure consistency across the setting?

Leaders and Managers must ensure that:

- cohort trackers are completed annually, in line with the guidance on this card
- the information gathered in this process contributes to the development of practice and provision

Think about:

- How do you identify and support the most vulnerable children to ensure they make progress?
- e.g. How are you providing for the specific needs of children receiving EYPP/2 year old FEEE funding?