

# Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision Audit Tool

Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) can be defined as the provision made for children whose special educational needs can be met from the resources generally available to the Early Years setting, childminder or School. This will apply to all children without an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), but children with an EHCP will also benefit from this type of provision in addition to the provision written in their plan. This audit tool is designed to help you identify what your provision has in place already and other areas not consider. It is not an exhaustive list, and you are not expected to implement everything within it.

## Social, Emotional, and Mental Health

Complete sections as appropriate and relevant for the individual child/young person.

### Whole setting approach

☐ A whole setting approach to behaviour that is nurturing and therapeutic. (A therapeutic approach nurtures positive feelings in all involved and seeks to understand reasons for behaviours).

☐ Policies that identifies evidenced strategies that support the behaviour of all children ensuring consistency and are clearly reflected in everyday practice.

☐ Practitioners seek to work in genuine partnership with children's parents and carers to support children's emotional, social, behaviour and mental health.

☐ Practitioners use observations to identify what the child is communicating through their behaviour, identify underlying causes and triggers for behaviours and respond within the policy or individual plans.

☐ Practitioners are alert for possible underlying developmental needs and ensure these needs are addressed appropriately.

☐ Descriptions of the child's behaviour when written are accurate, proportionate, and evidenced.

☐ When appropriate a positive interaction plan is in place for individual children and understood and followed by all staff.

☐ When appropriate risk assessments are in place, up to date and followed consistently.

☐ Practitioners understand the impact of the environment on children's behaviours, particularly for children with sensory differences, and adapt the environment accordingly.

☐ Practitioners are supported through supervision, informal chats, and observation to ensure that they are well-placed to support children and know how to access appropriate support should they need it.

### Positive relationships

☐ Practitioners ensure the child's developmental level is appropriately identified and staff expectations are in line with the child's needs.

☐ Practitioners understand that children's experiences shape their behaviours.

☐ Practitioners are aware of and responsive to children's emotional needs.

☐ Practitioners are aware of their own emotional needs and ensure that their responses to children's behaviour are not related to their own needs.

☐ Children's emotional and developmental needs are responded to in a timely and appropriate manner.

## Whole Group Support

- ☐ The setting ensures there is a quiet cosy area for children access to relax, regulate, and get away from the busyness of a group.
- ☐ Practitioners routinely use a Visual timetable (alongside consistent routines and preparation for a change).
- ☐ Practitioner ensure noise levels are monitored, and consideration is given to how to reduce where needed, for example removal of background noises.
- ☐ Practitioners support children to explore social and emotional situations through appropriate stories and supported play.
- ☐ Practitioners understand that children's emotions demonstrated through their expressions and behaviours, and these are appropriately acknowledged are responded to.
- ☐ Practitioners model behaviours they want to see.
- ☐ The setting ensures that any rules are simple and positively phrased.
- ☐ There is a clear setting ethos that focusses on children's strengths and interests.
- ☐ Practitioners understand the schema and schematic play as a positive play experience for children.

## Communication

- ☐ Practitioners are clear about whether they are giving a choice or an instruction.
- ☐ Practitioners are confident to give positive choices to support children's engagement and behaviour.
- ☐ Reduced and predictable language (one instruction) is used where appropriate.

- ☐ Practitioners say what is wanted rather than what is unwanted.
- ☐ Practitioners ask what happened rather than why something happened, in line with children's developmental understanding.
- ☐ Practitioners summarise what has occurred in simple terms appropriate to the child's needs, without placing blame.

## Enhanced Support

- ☐ Desired behaviours are acknowledged.
- ☐ Achievements are celebrated in a meaningful manner (appropriate to the child's needs and ensuring the child is comfortable with this).
- ☐ Sensitive support is provided around key transitions (visual timetable, first then board, first language, sand timer, count down).
- ☐ Individual preparation for change is offered if needed.
- ☐ All children have opportunities to engage with trusted adults regularly throughout their day.
- ☐ Children are supported to regulate. For example, calm down box or accessing a quieter area.
- ☐ Where appropriate the staff team works together to focus connecting and redirecting behaviours and to ignore low level behaviours.
- ☐ Practitioners explore what is motivating behaviours to identify unmet needs or skills to be developed. For example, providing a throwing activity if the child repeatedly throws resources or supporting a child to make positive connections with peers if they have hit another child.

☐ Practitioners identify and support children to develop skills that impact access and behaviour, for example social skills or turn-taking.

☐ Children are supported to develop skills when they are regulated, to enable them to learn effectively.

## Cognition and Learning

Complete sections as appropriate and relevant for the individual child/young person.

### Play

☐ The setting provides resources that are developmentally appropriate (regardless of age).

☐ Practitioners support children to make choices in what they choose to play with choice of two objects, choice boards, verbal choices.

☐ Practitioners sensitively offer support and choices to extend their play experiences where this is appropriate.

☐ Practitioners sensitively scaffold support children to play and engage with new toys and activities, modelling and building on existing skills and interests.

☐ Practitioners support children to engage with peers alongside self-chosen activities.

☐ Practitioners value children's interests, preferred schema, experiences, developmental level, and next steps when planning activities and the environment.

☐ Practitioners respect and celebrate children's play styles and interests, particularly where children's play follows a schematic pattern or is particularly repetitive.

☐ Practitioners understand that intrinsic motivation increases engagement, and attention and supports children to build on their skills and understanding.



☐ Practitioners identify whether there may be a sensory element to behaviour and address this in supporting the child. For example, sensory diet, sensory circuits, fidget toys or ear defenders.

☐ The setting environment is visually supportive to the children in accessing resources, for example photos on boxes, boxes put back in consistent places, etc.

☐ Practitioners sensitively follow the interests of individual children, make connections, and build on these.

☐ Practitioners consider how to present resources and activities to reduce the cognitive and sensory load.

### Supporting Children to Develop New Skills

Practitioners are confident and supported by the SENCo to:

☐ Break down tasks into small steps, using forward or backward chaining as appropriate.

☐ Model new skills.

☐ Present activities in a routine and with repetition.

☐ Ensure there are opportunities to revisit and reinforce learning.

☐ Ensure there are repeated opportunities to generalise new skills and embed previously learnt ones.

☐ Present learning experiences via meaningful first-hand experiences, for example learning unfamiliar words using real objects and experiences.

☐ Use errorless learning: teaching a child a new skill by using prompts to guide a child through each step correctly and not allowing them to fail.

☐ Build on children's strengths and interests.

☐ Provide an area where there are limited sensory distractions, for example quieter, plain walls, plain table, away from the bustle of the group where a child can focus for short periods.

### **Supporting Children During Group Times**

☐ Practitioners ensure group times are an appropriate length for the age and development of the group.

☐ Practitioners ensure the size of the group for group times are appropriate to the development and needs of all children, creating smaller groups if needed.

☐ Practitioners choose appropriate space for group times, for example they in low arousal spaces to make it easier to concentrate on the group time activity.

☐ Practitioners are confident in ensuring group times are motivating and meaningful to the children's interests and developmental needs.



☐ Practitioners are confidently and routinely using visuals at group times to support engagement, understanding and attention, for example story props, song bags, key pictures.

Practitioners adapt to individual needs through appropriate reasonable adjustments:

☐ Support children to sit comfortably during group times and practitioners understand that this may be different for individual children, and some children may need to stand or move.

☐ Practitioners are confident to adapt timings for individual children, for example shorter, only joining in for a part of it and gradually increasing time in the group.

☐ Practitioners understand that repetition with books and songs allow children to engage with increasing understanding and recall.

☐ Practitioners ensure children's individual needs are carefully considered and planned for.

☐ Where there are children using Makaton/BSL practitioners routinely use key signs during group times, for example for songs and stories.

☐ Children who will benefit from an individual matching book, set of pictures or objects relevant to the story to support engagement, attention and understanding are identified and appropriate resources provided.

## Speech, Language, Communication, and Interaction

Complete sections as appropriate and relevant for the individual child/young person.

### General Setting Support

- ☐ Where a setting supports an autistic child the setting CPD helps practitioners to understand the potential impact on a child's social communication, sensory, emotional regulation and learning needs.
- ☐ Practitioners understand the language pyramid and use in informing understanding of the foundations of language development.
- ☐ Practitioners understand or seek support to ensure effective support is in a place where a child uses an augmentative or alternative communication system.
- ☐ There is a whole-setting commitment to accessing and engaging in SLCN training.
- ☐ There is consistency across strategies and visual support systems used throughout the setting, which may be adapted for individual children to meet their needs.

### Pre-verbal strategies

Practitioners are confident to:

- ☐ Reduce language and questions.
- ☐ Engage children in people games, for example action rhymes and peek a boo
- ☐ Follow the child's lead or imitate the child (intensive interaction), adding their own actions and comments.
- ☐ Observe carefully, to respond to children's communication attempts
- ☐ Use visuals to support communication (photos, symbols, props).
- ☐ To engage children in anticipation activities to prompt communication, for example Ready Steady Go...

- ☐ Provide opportunities to give choices in motivating and meaningful situations, for example holding up two objects.
- ☐ Support children to access and use augmentative and alternative communication, for example Makaton, communication books, etc.
- ☐ Use songs and sensory stories to build in anticipation and opportunities to engage and communicate.

### Attention and listening strategies.

Practitioners are confident to support children with the following strategies where appropriate:

- ☐ Reduce background noise and distractions.
- ☐ Activities to support joint attention.
- ☐ Listening activities or sound discrimination activities.
- ☐ Small group activities to support attention and listening.
- ☐ Activities 1:1 or in smaller groups in a distraction-free environment.
- ☐ Stop-and-go games.
- ☐ Action songs and rhymes.
- ☐ Stories with a repetitive refrain.

### Play and interaction.

- ☐ Observe to respond to children's communication attempts.
- ☐ Follow the child's lead and imitate the child (intensive interaction).

- ☐ Use simple repetitive language in play and songs.
- ☐ Play people games.
- ☐ Create motivating and meaningful opportunities to communicate.
- ☐ Create predictable routines for the child to communicate (for example, Ready Steady Go activities).
- ☐ Provide activities to support the development of joint attention (this may include “Bucket time” and attention-building activities).
- ☐ Create opportunities to engage in turn-taking activities in play.
- ☐ Practitioners understand the individual needs of the child including specific interests and areas of strength and needs.
- ☐ Practitioners value children’s self-chosen activities, schemas and “special interests.”
- ☐ Experiences, activities, and resources are provided for the child to engage in and build upon their interests and skills.
- ☐ Learning is planned to reflect the child’s interests.
- ☐ Modelling and imitating play.
- ☐ Model playful language and sounds in play.
- ☐ Create playful opportunities in play for the child to initiate and communicate, for example pausing in a fun interaction such as bouncing on a ball.
- ☐ Comment on play with simple and predictable sounds, and words.

## **Social communication and interaction**

- ☐ Practitioners do not insist children make eye contact, this can be difficult for some children.
- ☐ Practitioners provide opportunities for children to engage with them in motivating and meaningful opportunities, for example people games, action rhymes, peek-a-boo.
- ☐ Practitioners support children’s joint attention through motivating and meaningful opportunities
- ☐ Practitioners support children to understand children’s different communication and interaction attempts or to join activities of interest.
- ☐ Practitioners support individual children to play alongside other children offering support, reassurance and reducing challenges.
- ☐ Practitioners support children to engage with peers in a motivating and meaningful way, for example turn-taking activities.
- ☐ Practitioners set up small group activities to build interaction, communication, and social skills.

## **Visuals**

Practitioners are confident to use visuals to support understanding, engagement, and communication, through the following means.

- ☐ Objects of reference.
- ☐ Symbols of photos.
- ☐ First then boards.
- ☐ Visual timetables (for group or individual child).
- ☐ Visual sequences.
- ☐ Choosing boards.

☐ Social Stories.

☐ Visual supports such as visual timetables are accessible and used consistently for whole groups and individual supports are considered and consistently implemented by all staff where there is a need.

### **Supporting Receptive Communication**

☐ SENCo is confident to support Practitioners in using appropriate language strategies.

Practitioners confidently and routinely

☐ Support language with visuals, appropriate to the child's needs this may be objects, photos, symbols.

☐ Use consistent gestures and singing where appropriate to support language.

☐ Ensure communication is developmentally appropriate to the child.

☐ Reduce questions, focussing on commenting.

☐ Reduce language (be aware of the child's level of understanding and pitch language appropriate to this).

☐ Instructions should be appropriate to the child's understanding, for example how many information-carrying words they can process, breaking down instructions where needed and given in the appropriate order.

☐ Give clear instructions in the order the child needs to do it (for example, "coat on the outside").

☐ Allow the child time to process instructions (ten seconds).

☐ Consider children's ability to understand group instructions and provide the appropriate support to do so.

☐ Give individual instructions where needed.

☐ Ensure you have the child's attention before communicating with them (say the child's name but you may need to wait for a response and or go close to the child and get down to their level).

☐ Use words/phrases the child is familiar with to convey meaning

☐ Use scripts and predictable language for routine activities and transitions, for example "First... then..." "It's time to..." "Five, four, three, two, one finished".

☐ Say what they want rather than what you do not want.

☐ Give choices appropriate to the child's developmental level with appropriate visual support

☐ Be clear if you are giving a choice or instruction.

☐ Avoid idioms (for example, "pull your socks up," or "it's raining cats and dogs").

☐ Use simple repetitive language in play, songs, and routines, including group times to provide a model appropriate for children to imitate.

☐ Use simple repetitive language in play, songs, and routines, including group times.

☐ Simple social stories to support spoken language to explain an event or activities.

☐ Consider children's access to group times which often has a significant reliance on the child's attention and listening skills and their understanding of language.

## Supporting Expressive Communication

Practitioners are confident to use appropriate strategies to support expressive language.

- ☐ Observe to respond to children's communication attempts, including requests and protests.
- ☐ Value and look for meaning in all attempts to communicate.

## Sensory Processing Needs

Complete sections as appropriate and relevant for the individual child/young person.

- ☐ The setting seeks to explore and reflect on a child's sensory needs.
- ☐ Practitioners are aware of individual children's sensory needs.
- ☐ Practitioners are mindful and responsive to a child's sensory needs.
- ☐ Practitioners understand that children's behaviour can be in response to sensory seeking, avoidance and or being overwhelmed by multiple sensory experiences, and practitioners are responsive to this.
- ☐ The setting provides activities and experiences that respond to children's sensory-seeking behaviours (for example, messy play for a child who seeks wet textures, movement activities such as bouncing on a ball for children seeking proprioceptive input).
- ☐ Practitioners seek to reduce or adapt sensory input for children who are showing sensory avoiding behaviours.
- ☐ The setting provides a quiet area with limited visual distractions for children where they can go when they are experiencing sensory overload, this could be a corner or a tent.

- ☐ Think carefully about what the child is communicating through their behaviour and respond appropriately.
- ☐ Support and respond to the child's preferred means of communication.
- ☐ Ensure the child is given motivating and meaningful way.

- ☐ When trying to engage with the child consider the competing sensory input and whether there are times the child needs access to a quieter environment or space to engage.
- ☐ Consider noise levels when setting out activities (for example, putting a fleece blanket on the table reduces the noise of banging bricks).
- ☐ Practitioner adapt activities in response to children's sensory behaviour (for example, you may observe a child swiping a cluttered table of puzzles but present one puzzle on an individual tray this may reduce the sensory impact and make the task seem more manageable).
- ☐ Practitioners support children in using resources provided to support individual sensory needs (for example, ear defenders).
- ☐ The setting considers the sensory environment for all children and attempts to reduce the sensory and cognitive load, for example reducing background noise, reducing unnecessary visual displays.
- ☐ The setting works with parents and carers where a child is showing oral sensory seeking behaviours to find safe appropriate alternative resources. (in most circumstances these should be provided by parents/carers).

## Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision Audit Tool

| Action Plan                                             | By Whom | Date Completed |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------------|
| <b>Social, Emotional and Mental Health</b>              |         |                |
|                                                         |         |                |
| <b>Cognition and Learning</b>                           |         |                |
|                                                         |         |                |
| <b>Speech, Language, Communication, and Interaction</b> |         |                |
|                                                         |         |                |
| <b>Physical and Sensory</b>                             |         |                |
|                                                         |         |                |