

NCB Early Childhood Unit Survey: implementation of the EYFS progress check at age two

Summary of responses collated June 2013

Respondents

- The survey was circulated by the NCB Early Childhood Unit to local authority networks and recipients of the Early Childhood Unit bulletin.
- It was also sent to settings and childminders who originally gave feedback on the draft 'Know How Guide' for the EYFS progress check at age two.
- 101 responses were received.
- 38% of respondents were working in a local authority early years support role and 27% of respondents were managers of early years settings.
- The remainder of the respondents were childminders, people describing themselves as 'other' and practitioners working within early years settings.

Implementation of the EYFS progress check at age two

- 91% of managers and practitioners within early years settings had implemented the EYFS progress check at age two within their own setting.
- 40% of respondents within a local authority early years support role agreed that 'All or nearly all settings have carried out the EYFS progress check at two since September 2012'. A further 33 % of respondents within a local authority early years support role agreed that 'Most settings are carrying out the EYFS progress check at two and the others are on track to do so.'
- 77% of childminders were carrying out the EYFS progress check at two in their own setting and the remainder had not yet had any children in the applicable age range.

Benefits of the EYFS progress check at age two

- 61% of respondents felt that the EYFS progress check at two had brought positive benefits to children, parents and practitioners. A further 22% were not sure or needed more time to decide. 13% felt that no positive benefits had been brought by the EYFS progress check at age two.

- Comments touched upon the benefits of practitioners being more aware of child development at around age two, opportunities for early intervention and the opportunity to strengthen relationships between practitioners and parents.
- For example:

'We have found undertaking the progress checks very beneficial for providing an opportunity for a focused discussion between key-person and parents about the child's development. Whilst we did previously aim to include the parents' voice within our observations and record keeping, each of our progress checks has strengthened the relationship between staff and parents. In some cases the discussions that have emerged have been quite eye-opening!'

'Parents have really appreciated receiving a written overview of their children's progress, particularly as they can see that practitioners know their children well. Parents have made very positive contributions to the 2 year checks and have responded well when children have not been meeting the developmental milestones in some areas, e.g. speaking. The key is to highlight their achievements as well, and to present positive next steps to support children in achieving the milestones.'

Difficulties and challenges of the EYFS progress check at age two

- Challenges identified by respondents included practitioners' knowledge and understanding of child development, the skills required to prepare a written report, time and cost implications for settings and some difficulties faced by settings in engaging with health visitors.
- For example:

'This is the first instance parents have had to discuss their child's learning and development and their journey towards being ready for school. This requires sensitive handling and a LOT OF TIME.' (Respondent's emphasis)

'Our biggest hurdle has been and continues to be engaging Health Visitors, we have tried to encourage Health Visitors to carry out their 2 yr check at the centre and then the key person would join the parent and the Health Visitor so all three can have an input into our 2 yr check. This would mean parents only have to attend one meeting, the check takes place in an environment the child knows and promotes multi-agency working. When a Health Visitor has attended (very rare) the check has been really rich and productive.'

Readiness for the planned integrated health and early education review at age two to two-and-a-half

- Respondents were asked what steps had been taken towards an integrated review in their local area:

7% of respondents were already carrying out an integrated review;

18% of respondents had plans in place to begin carrying out an integrated review;

43% of respondents were discussing ways to enable services to work together more closely;

32% of respondents described their local area as 'not ready to do this yet'.

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