



## Case Study: 'Telling the Story' in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

### Synopsis

The implementation of the new EYFS framework in September 2008 generated the need for a system of effective observation, assessment and planning in EYFS settings in East Sussex.

Assessment enables:

- good progress for each child;
- quality improvement in settings through self-evaluation and reflection;
- smooth transitions and continuity of learning.

Practitioners must implement a seamless continuum of assessment from the child's first days in a setting to the end of the EYFS.

### Focus

Previously, settings used the East Sussex 'Stepping Forward Profiles' as a form of both formative and summative assessment. Additional guidance was available in the form of the East Sussex *Planning for Learning in the Foundation Stage* document. The introduction of the new EYFS provided the ideal opportunity to review and update these systems. The diverse nature of Early Years settings in East Sussex prompted the need for a flexible and adaptable system, which reflected the Themes, Principles and Requirements of the EYFS. The new 'toolkit' format was designed to enable practitioners to use and adapt the 'tools' that best suited their individual needs. This format also had the benefit of being able to add additional pages in the light of new research, and in response to the needs of, and contributions from settings.

### Provision

A multi-agency approach was taken with initial discussions between CfBT, the Early Years Childcare Extended Schools Service and representatives from East Sussex private, voluntary and independent groups. Materials to support observation, assessment and planning were gathered from a variety of sources, including formats trialled in East Sussex Children's Centres. A CD-ROM of all the materials was included in the Toolkit, enabling practitioners to use and adapt them as appropriate. The toolkits were handed out during training events across the county in the Autumn term 2008. Training was delivered at a variety of venues and at a variety of times to ensure that the diverse needs of all settings were met. Nearly 600 delegates attended training in this first roll-out, including managers, deputies, practitioners and accredited childminders.

Since the training Early Years Consultants have visited settings to offer further support in the implementation process.

### Action by the School

The toolkit has been very well received, with practitioners commenting on its usefulness. Many practitioners have embraced the new systems, moving forward and adapting practice and provision accordingly.

Using the toolkit alongside the EYFS guidance documents has enabled practitioners to understand the observation, assessment and planning cycle, which is the foundation of good Early Years practice.

The toolkit encourages practitioners to consider how they 'tell' each child's learning story and value the contribution of all adults including parents/carers and the children themselves.

## Impact

The initial impact of the *Telling the Story* toolkit is positive. Several settings which have adopted new systems following the training have reported that recording procedures are:

- more meaningful;
- more manageable;
- more focused;
- effective in promoting partnership with parents; and
- effective in ensuring the delivery of rich experiences for children's early learning and development.

Some settings have also developed their ability to self-evaluate and monitor quality of practice and provision. Requests for further toolkits have been received from settings in East Sussex, non-accredited child-minders, integrated teams within children's services, other educational organisations and interested parties from other counties.

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