

Early Years Audit Autumn 2019

As a Local Authority, we are required to audit settings delivering the free entitlement to ensure that all requirements around funding are being met.

Six settings were identified and an audit visit arranged to review the records and documentation for six children accessing funding:

Findings:

Birth certificates - most settings are indicating that a birth certificate had been 'seen' or they keep a copy on record.

Requirement – ensure that it is clearly stated who has seen the birth certificate and children's names on the headcount must be exactly as shown on the birth certificate.

Proof of address – once again this is not always seen when a child starts – it is imperative to see proof of address and if a copy is not retained, then a note should be made of what was seen e.g. driving licence, utility bill etc. as well as being dated and initialled by the staff member.

Requirement – ensure that it is clearly stated what evidence was provided e.g. utility bill and who saw the evidence

2YO eligibility – again largely in place

Requirement – ensure the evidence is dated and initialled on the Parental Agreement when code confirmed or evidence seen of DLA or that the child is Looked After. Remember all codes must be checked and be valid or we will remove the hours from the headcount.

Parental Agreement form – mostly present and correct.

Register – again largely in order.

Observations – these should always be dated and initialled. All staff should be following the same system of observation and next steps. The 2YO assessment check should also be kept in the child's folder.

Next steps - should also be initialled and dated, last for approximately 4 to 6 weeks and be SMART i.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed which will enable a child's progress to be tracked. They should be specific about what the child is to achieve and ideas for the parent to do at home. It is a good idea to start the next step with the child's name i.e. "John will..."

Good Practice:

Most settings have a good procedure for monitoring children's absences – if a child is absent and there is no contact from the parent on the day, most settings will call or email the parent on that day and on the following day if no response. Failing any

contact they will contact the emergency contact and refer to area manager and if there are concerns, refer to Local Authority.

Several settings had very organised paperwork and documentation and encouraged parents to attend meetings on a regular basis and had termly reports.

We have seen an increase in the use of online systems for record keeping and observations. Many of these allow parents to access the observations and next steps and to communicate with the setting. We came across variety of different systems in use in Croydon – a list is below for information:

Tapestry

<https://.tapestry.info>

i-connect

<https://connectchildcare.com/software/icontact>

EyLog

<https://eylog.co.uk>

Family

<https://family.co/>

Blossom

<https://blossomeducational.com/>