This chapter will provide an introduction to the format of the EYPS process – it is necessary to consider this at the beginning of the book in order to provide an overview of what the expectations are for those seeking the award of EYPS in relation to the CWDC 39 EYPS standards. This chapter will explain the CWDC (2008a) process for the formative assessment called the Gateway Review and the summative assessment process of the Written Tasks and Setting Visit. Links will be made to Chapter 9, ‘Going through the Gateway’, which will examine in more detail the interview techniques, presentation skills, group discussion and ways of receiving constructive feedback for those undergoing the assessment process. The production of a documentary evidence file to support the assessment process will also be introduced and developed further in Chapter 9. This chapter will be further strengthened by the addition of supporting theory, case studies and reflective tasks. By starting to explore the concept of the early years leader in the context of organizational and educational literature, theory and key research findings, the chapter aims to provide a starting point about the characteristics required by an EYP leading high-quality early years provision and improved outcomes for children and their families. The chapter challenges the leadership characteristics needed by a mainly female-dominated workforce and opens up a debate about defining the characteristics required of the Early Years Leader. The chapter concludes by asking the reader to explore their personal leadership perspective.
Starting the EYPS Journey

This book has been designed to support your journey to becoming an EYP, however, in order for you to make the most out of your journey and make it a positive experience, you will need to consider how you will balance your work commitments with your studies and your personal life. There will be demands on your time, as part of the training process which has been designed by CWDC (2008a), you will be required to attend training days with a CWDC-approved training provider, engage in periods of reflection, undertake a range of professional development activities, and engage in a non-traditional academic assessment process.

Overview of the EYPS Process

To achieve EYPS, you will be required to demonstrate that you are leading, managing and delivering effective practice in line with the set of 39 CWDC (2008a) National Standards as outlined in Appendix 1. The standards are designed around working safely with babies, toddlers and young children from birth to five years and relate to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS, 2008b).

The CWDC (2006) has designed a number of pathways for those aspiring to become an EYP:

- The four-month Validation Pathway is for candidates who already have considerable knowledge, experience and skills relative to the CWDC (2008a) EYPS standards.
- The six-month Short Extended Professional Development (EPD) Pathway is for early years professionals who have qualification and experience that is broadly relevant to EYPS but who require further training or experience to meet the standards.
- The fifteen-month Long Extended Professional Development (EPD) Pathway is for early years professionals who have qualification and experience that is broadly relevant to EYPS but who require training or experience to meet the standards, or for candidates that hold a relevant foundation degree who will be given the opportunity to top this up to a degree status with EYPS.
- The twelve-month Full Training Pathway is for graduates who are new to the early years – they will be given the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of working with babies, toddlers and young children. They will undertake full-time study and work experience in order to prepare them for a career in the early years sector.
- CWDC are also running a number of pilots for those currently studying on Foundation Degree and BA (hons) Early Years programmes.
With the exception of the EYPS Full Training Pathway (CWDC, 2006), which will give candidates seeking a career in the early years sector the opportunity to undertake work experience, early years practitioners on the Validation pathway (4 months), the Short extended professional development pathway (6 months) or the Long extended professional development pathway (15 months) will need to meet the criteria set by CWDC (2006) that is illustrated in Table 2.1.

The validation process that leads up to the award of EYPS is the same for whichever pathway you are following. Please see Table 2.2 which describes the overall validation process and the training that you will receive to support you. By the time that you are ready to undertake your final assessment, you will be required to demonstrate your knowledge and understanding in relation to the EYPS standards and that you use this to inform your leadership of others and your own practice. Your training provider will provide you with a copy of the CWDC (2008a) Candidate Handbook. This will provide you with information about the programme.

You may be a graduate new to the profession, you may be working singly as a childminder or as part of a network of childminders, you may be working in a preschool group or a group of small nurseries, you may be working in a Children's Centre or a day nursery. Nonetheless, you will have certain attributes that will distinguish your role – whatever your circumstances, you will need to show, firstly, that you are a reflective practitioner and, secondly, that you are able to provide leadership and support to your colleagues in order to effect change and improvement in children's care and learning experiences (CWDC, 2008a).

Firstly, and most importantly, to be an EYP and to lead effective early years practice, you do not have to be in a senior position, a head of a setting or an organization. I have been privileged to work with some outstanding early years leaders from across the early years sector: childminding network coordinators, childminders, early years setting supervisors, room leaders, key workers, Special Education Needs Coordinators.
(SENCOs), Children’s Centre coordinators, play workers, family liaison officers, university and Further Education early years lecturers, assessors and mentors, specialist support advisors, and early years advisors. So being an Early Years Leader is not about position – it is more about what you do and the way that you do it.

Points for Reflection

Time Management

✓ How long is your EYPS training pathway? Are you able to demonstrate all of the CWDC criteria?
✓ Are there any areas that you will need to develop?
✓ Do you need to set yourself any Sustainable, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-focused (SMART) goals?
✓ Consider the time frame that you have to achieve the EYP status, look at the time that you have available, be realistic about your work and personal commitments – how are you going to manage yourself and your time?
Do you need to make colleagues, friends or family aware that you are training to become an EYP and that you will need time to reflect, write and undertake some professional development activities?

Point to remember

Remember, ‘Goals energise people. Specific, clear, challenging goals lead to greater effort and achievement than easy or vague goals’. (Blanchard, 2007: 144)

The Assessment Process

You will engage in three different types of assessment processes on your programme – these will include the:
In Chapter 9, ‘Going through the Gateway’, I will be inviting you to explore the ways in which you can demonstrate your knowledge, skills and understanding for each of the assessments that you will be required to undertake.

The Gateway Review

Once you are ready to undertake your first assessment, your training provider will arrange for you to take part in a ‘Gateway Review of Skills’. The analogy of a ‘gateway’ means that once you have successfully completed the assessment, you can go through the ‘Gateway’ and start your next stage of assessment. The Gateway Review does not contribute to your final assessment, however it can be used by your training provider to advise you on the most appropriate pathway to follow. The CWDC (2008a) Candidate Handbook (pages 6–8) provides information about what is expected of you during the Gateway Review assessment.

The Gateway Review will last for half a day and you will be invited to attend your assessment centre to undertake a review of your skills. During the review, you will be asked to undertake written exercises, a personal interview, a group exercise, an interview with an actor and a written reflection alongside other candidates. The exercises are designed by CWDC to assess the knowledge, skills and understanding about what they consider fundamental to your training as an EYP. You will receive formative feedback from your Gateway Review, identifying your areas of strength and some development points to be considered. You may want to discuss these with your tutor or mentor. Table 2.2 describes the purpose of the CWDC Gateway Review (2008a).

The Written Tasks

During the last three months of whichever pathway you are following, you will be asked by your training provider to submit a series of reflective accounts of aspects of your own practice and experience of leading others. The written accounts must be written at graduate level and provide information about how you lead and support other practitioners to implement the EYFS with babies, toddlers and young children. You will need to cross-reference your accounts to the CWDC EYFS standards (2008a). The Written Tasks must also reflect a depth and breadth of the knowledge and understanding that you have of the early years sector and how this underpins your practice. You will also be asked to collate a file of supporting documentary evidence, for example assessment records, plans, minutes of meetings, case studies, policies, etc. You must ensure confidentiality...
for the materials produced by deleting names and gaining written permission if you are using photographs. I always advise my candidates to annotate each piece of evidence by giving an overview of what their contribution was to each of the pieces of evidence, as you do not want to leave your assessor guessing – they only have a limited time to review your documentary evidence during the visit. As the Written Tasks and the documentary evidence file will form the basis of the next stage of your assessment – the ‘Setting Visit’ – they are very important documents and you must apportion time appropriately to ensure that you present yourself in the best way possible. It’s a bit like imagining a TV talent show – ‘You can be that EYP’ – you must be able to demonstrate to your assessor how you can meet the EYPS standards.

The Setting Visit

I feel that this final stage of your assessment should be called the ‘Setting Assessment’, as a visit conjures up a picture of me visiting your setting to admire the children and the activities that are taking place and at the same time meeting you and your colleagues and exchanging pleasantries. The Setting visit is far more formal than this – your assessor will be working very hard, almost like a detective, to verify the claims that you have made against the standards in your written tasks. You will be interviewed by your assessor and you will be asked to show your assessor your file of

Table 2.2  The GATEWAY process

The overall GATEWAY process is designed, first, to check that you understand the standards and, second, to assess three skills generic to working as an EYP and fundamental to meeting the standards.

The three generic skills assessed in the Gateway Review:

1. The ability to make decisions on the basis of sound judgement (see Chapter 8)
   - thinks beyond the immediate problem and avoids ‘quick fix’ solutions
   - concentrates on what is most important
   - makes appropriate decisions, using the available information but seeking further information when necessary
   - bases decisions on agreed principles and policies.

2. The ability to lead and support others (see Chapter 8)
   - gets ideas agreed, whether one’s own or those of others
   - improves practice by motivating others to achieve agreed aims
   - recognizes and develops the potential of others
   - proposes clear strategies for improvement as a change agent.

3. The ability to relate to, and communicate with, others (see Chapters 7 and 8)
   - communicates clearly, both orally and in writing
   - listens to others’ concerns and responds appropriately
   - shows respect for others in a sensitive manner
   - manages own feelings and needs.

Adapted from CWDC Candidate Handbook (2008a)
supporting documentary evidence. You will take your assessor on a tour of your setting and you will arrange for a number of witnesses to either come into your setting to be interviewed by the assessor, or to be contacted during the day by telephone. The CWDC (2008a) Candidate Handbook (pages 12–17) provides information about what is expected of you during the Setting Visit.

**Defining the Early Years Professional**

The CWDC define Early Years Professional (EYP) as someone who is a ‘change agent and an innovator’ (CWDC, 2008a). These words sound very grand and they have serious implications, and this description of an EYP might sound to you like an alien in a science fiction book. In reality, an EYP is the equivalent of an early years ‘super hero’ – the government in England has high expectations and believes that EYPs will make the government’s early years transformation agenda happen. What does all this mean for you? This book will aid the journey in the search of the most appropriate leadership styles, characteristics and skills required to lead others, and at the same time guide you through the 39 CWDC (2008) EYPS National Standards (see Appendix 1).

Throughout the book and during your EYPS training programme, you will be encouraged to be a ‘reflective practitioner’ and identify your personal leadership strengths, and at the same time consider ways in which you can strengthen and develop yourself as a Professional Early Years Leader.

**Points for Reflection**

- ✓ What does raising the quality of the early years provision mean to you?
- ✓ What personal skills will you need to raise the quality of early years provision in your work place?
- ✓ How do you identify what colleagues know and can do?
- ✓ How do you manage change in the work place?
- ✓ How do you get others to take your ideas on board?

It seems so easy to refer to EYPS as a vehicle for change and one that will create transformational leaders. There lies a dichotomy – in as much as EYPs work across the public, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector, many hold responsibility for running their own business, many work for non-profit-making settings and others work within the Local Authority, and yet they are all equally responsible for delivering government policy and reforms.
Leaders in early years settings which are very diverse in character as well as quality and effectiveness are henceforward charged with managing the related areas of care, health and family support and integrating these with education; they will also need to continue effectively to manage, deploy and develop staff with different professional perspectives and associated qualifications, as well as with varying levels of experience and exposure to professional training. (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2006)

What makes an effective Early Years Leader?

Leadership is a serious business and it is universally acknowledged that ‘despite its contemporary importance, there is no agreed definition of the concept of leadership (Bush and Middlewood, 2005: 4). Yukl (2002: 4–5) believes that the definition of leadership is arbitrary and very subjective. Some definitions are more useful than others, but there is no “correct” definition’. Cuban in Bush and Middlewood (2005: 4) links leadership with change – he suggests that ‘by leadership I mean influencing other’s actions in achieving desirable ends. Leaders are people who shape the goals, motivations, and actions of others. Frequently they initiate change to reach existing and new goals … Leadership … takes … much ingenuity, energy and skill’.

My own experience of leading multi-professional early years teams while working as Head of School in an FE college, leading early years practitioners in two full-daycare nurseries (one on each of the college sites) and working with early years practitioners as a Local Authority Early Years Advisory Teacher, started my search for the big question: ‘What makes an effective Early Years Leader?’. I am continuing to ask myself this question with the introduction of EYPS, which gives me the opportunity to share my research, observations and experience and to re-frame the big question: ‘What makes an effective
The key early years leadership characteristics illustrated in Figure 2.2 are the ones that I have identified in pursuit of answering the big question: ‘What makes an effective Early Years Leader?’. They should be viewed as a starting point and over time they will change to meet individual needs of EYPs working in the early years sector.

What are the characteristics that will be required of you to become an effective early years leader? Are the qualities that you will need any different to the qualities that are needed by leaders who run a political party or a successful business?
Margaret Thatcher, the daughter of a shopkeeper, had the willpower to become Britain’s first female Prime Minister at the age of 53. She possessed a strong vision and workable ideas to support it. She led Britain to a military victory over Argentina in 1982. She understood that politicians had to give military people clear orders about the ends and then leave them to get on with the means of doing it. Throughout the conflict, she portrayed leadership characteristics of courage, loyalty and perseverance and was admired for these throughout the world.

Nelson Mandela, despite serving 27 years in prison, played a leading role in the drive for peace in South Africa. He led the struggle to replace the apartheid regime of South Africa with a multi-racial democracy and became the first black South African President. He showed characteristics of immense courage, he stood by his personal moral code, he demonstrated a strong determination and is now a worldwide inspiration.

Sir Richard Branson set up the Virgin group in 1971 and is famous for being adventurous, innovative, having a sense of fun and a sense of competitive challenge. He aspires to delivering a quality service and believes in empowering his people and monitoring customer feedback to continually improve the customer’s experience.

Like Sir Richard Branson, Sir Alan Sugar, who left school at the age of 16, has used his entrepreneurial business leadership skills to build up a large corporation. He portrays the leadership characteristics of having relentless energy, being a hard worker and needing a challenge. He sets himself new targets and doesn’t suffer fools gladly. ‘He is without doubt a born entrepreneur who trusts his finely tuned instincts and he has no time for focus groups, management gobbledygook or decision by committee. He has created a business by leading his people to the company vision and sustaining a team-based culture’ (Brunel University, 2008).

Point for Reflection

Do you identify with any of the leadership values and characteristics portrayed by Margaret Thatcher, Nelson Mandela, Sir Richard Branson or Sir Alan Sugar?

In the quest to determine the leadership characteristics required of the EYP, let us now consider the leadership characteristics of the Early Years pioneers such as Dr Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner and Margaret McMillan. Are they any different to those offered by Margaret Thatcher, Nelson Mandela, Sir Richard Branson or Sir Alan Sugar?

The Montessori Nursery School organization was set up by Dr Maria Montessori in 1929 and is still in existence today. Its aim is to maintain and further develop
Montessori ideas and principles for the full development of the human being (Montessori Society AMI, 2008). Fundamental to the Montessori approach is a great respect for the child as an individual. Professionals are trained and supported to develop an understanding about the ways to provide effective early years experiences that are respectful of the child's capabilities and level of needs, and yet at the same time challenge and develop a sense of awe and wonder. As a leader, Dr Maria Montessori was a visionary and her legacy is still recognized today. She held a strong sense of identity and a belief about how children should be educated and made this become a reality – she inspired others and recognized the importance of training and continuous professional development.

Rudolf Steiner also held a strong belief that education should be designed to meet the changing needs of a child as they develop physically, mentally and emotionally. He believed that it should help a child to fulfill their full potential but he did not believe in pushing children towards goals that adults or society in general believed to be desirable. Rudolf Steiner’s leadership characteristics could be described as him being an idealist, a pragmatist, being proactive, being collaborative. He trained school teachers, he supervised the conversion of the school buildings, he met the parents, he got to know the children, he attended the teachers’ meetings, he lectured and he attended lessons. ‘Rudolf Steiner was always a charismatic figure, possessed by a burning energy and a formidable intellect’ (Freedom in Education, 2008).

Margaret McMillan (1860–1931) worked with her sister Rachel in Bradford to try to improve the physical and intellectual welfare of slum children. In 1892, Margaret joined Dr James Kerr, Bradford’s school medical officer, to carry out the first medical inspection of elementary school children in Britain. Kerr and McMillan published a report on the medical problems that they found and began a campaign to improve the health of children by arguing that local authorities should install bathrooms, improve ventilation and supply free school meals. Just like the other early years visionaries, Margaret Macmillan stood by her strong conviction, campaigned for her cause and made things happen.

**Leadership and the Early Years Workforce**

The Eleys study (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2006: 13) identifies that the early years workforce in Britain is predominately female: ‘The Daycare Trust reports that 97.5% of the childcare workforce is female. Yet much of the current literature on leadership and management has ignored issues of gender and much of the literature and research in the wider context of education has inevitably (sic) been based upon men’s experiences and male approaches. Cubillo (1999) argues that “the modes on which the characteristics of effective leaders are
based are therefore stereotypically androcentric”, often associated with “mas
culin” attributes and behaviours such as competitiveness, dynamism, power and
aggressivity.’

I agree with this statement and discovered whilst undertaking my Masters-
level study in Educational Leadership that most of the literature surrounding
leadership has been written for corporate organizations by males often
described as ‘leadership gurus’. These include Charles Handy, Stephen Covey,
Ken Blanchard, Warren Bennis, John Kotter and Peter Senge, amongst others.
Their leadership, theories, tools, frameworks and models are aimed at corporate
business leaders, however they are acknowledged in educational circles and
provide a valuable insight into the mystical world of leadership. There is a
National College for School Leadership and literature has been written to sup-
port school leaders – maybe one day we will have a National College for Early
leaders as taking on the ‘… the responsibility for policy formation and, where
appropriate, organisational transformation’, which compares favourably to the
new role of the EYP.

Point for Reflection

You do not have to be perfect to lead effective early years practice.

‘There has been a long search for the alchemy of Leadership: we all want to find
the elusive pixie dust that we can sprinkle on ourselves to turn us into glittering
leaders’. (Owen, 2005: xii)

In the past, lack of opportunities for Early Years Leadership training coupled
with limited access to experienced role models (Humphries and Sendon, 2000;
Ebeck and Waniganayake, 2003, in Rodd, 2006: 23) and the antithesis many
women appear to have towards roles that involve power and authority (Cox,
1996 in Rodd, 2006: 23) have acted to impede development of an understanding
of leadership, particularly as it pertains to early childhood. As Belenky et al.
have played only a minor role as theorists in the social sciences. The omission
of women from scientific studies is almost universally ignored when scientists
draw conclusions from their findings and generalise what they have learned
from the study of men. If and when scientists turn to the study of women, they
typically look for ways in which women conform or diverge from patterns found
in the study of men’.
Point for Reflection

One of the dangers for women is that they’re often seen as the ones who take care of an organisation. They are perceived to have the caring skills of empathy, or being good with people or being good listeners. Male leaders are seen as very incisive people who can take charge and make decisions. This whole ‘taking care’ versus ‘taking charge’ thing is very stereotypical and can disadvantage women when it comes to talking about Leadership. Actually I think a leader has to have both traits. You have to be caring as a leader and humane, you have to demonstrate trust and authenticity. But you have to take charge, pull teams together and unify them behind a common purpose. (Carolyn McCall, chair of Opportunity Now, which works for gender equality and diversity in the work place – Leighton, 2007: 239)

Consider the following questions:

✓ Can you identify a time when you had to take charge, pull people together and unify them?
✓ How did you achieve this?
✓ What did you learn from the experience?

Look at the EYPS standards:

⇒ S33
⇒ S34
⇒ S36

Arguably, much of the existing literature on early years leadership to support EYPS needs to be reviewed with an element of caution, as it can be perceived as excessively prescriptive, disregarding the differences that exist between corporate organizations and the wide range of early years services EYPs are working within.

It was within these challenging contexts that the Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector (ELEYS) study (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2006) was developed as an extension of the Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) study (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002).

The Eleys research was designed to explore the following questions:

• What does the extant literature and research tells us about effective educational leadership in the early years?
• What characteristics or patterns of leadership can be identified in the Repey sample of effective settings?
The eminent researchers undertaking the literature review for the Eleys study reported that ‘Due to the paucity of evidence-based (i.e. non-anecdotal) literature that is available related to the leadership and management of early years settings, the authors were forced to consult leadership and management literature associated with both primary and secondary schools’. While this literature provided a starting point for their study, it was ‘treated with special caution and applied only where they are considered particularly relevant to the early years contexts’.

The lack of literature relating to Early Years Leadership identified in the Eleys study makes the journey to EYPS open-ended and exciting. To this purpose, while there will be reference made throughout this book to a number of respected early years authors, theorists, researchers and government guides, reference will also be made to a range of literature produced by non-early years authorities. You will need to research and explore materials that will work best for you in your journey to become an EYP.

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### Points for Reflection

Look at the Eleys study:

✓ Consider each category.
✓ How confident are you in each category?
✓ Do you need further training in any category?
✓ Which categories do you feel confident about?
✓ Can you find any evidence to support categories that you feel confident about?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Eleys ‘categories of effective leadership practice’:</th>
<th>Look at the EYPS standards:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identifying and articulating a collective vision, especially with regard to pedagogy and curriculum</td>
<td>⇒ S1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring shared understandings, meanings and goals: building common purposes</td>
<td>⇒ S33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective communication: providing a level of transparency in regard to expectations, practices and processes</td>
<td>⇒ S34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging reflection: which acts as an impetus for change and the motivation for ongoing learning and development</td>
<td>⇒ S38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to ongoing, professional development: supporting staff to become more critically reflective in their practice</td>
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*Continued*
Being an Early Years Leader requires you to utilize your many talents. If we reflect on the work of the early years pioneers, Dr Maria Montessori, Rudolf Steiner and Margaret McMillan, the political leaders Margaret Thatcher and Nelson Mandela and the business leaders Sir Richard Branson or Sir Alan Sugar, the things they all have in common are a strong vision, inspirational leadership and a willingness to put all of themselves into their roles. As an EYP, you will be asked to stand up for what is important, and adapt your ways of working appropriately to meet new challenges. To be an EYP, you will need to be emotionally intelligent and self-aware, and know your own strengths and limitations. You will develop both children’s and your colleagues’ learning and at the same time sustain a culture of mutual respect and collaborative working. You will need to build a platform for long-term success, by inspiring others, supporting their needs and guiding them through complex situations to collaborative decisions. In short, you will need to be committed to being an early years ‘super hero’ and become a key player in the British Government’s agenda in raising the quality of early years education.

To be an effective leader, it is important that you are clear about your thoughts on leadership. You need to be able to communicate these to your colleagues, your EYPS training provider, your EYPS mentor and your EYPS assessors, parents, carers and any other agencies that you work with. This will help others understand where you are coming from and will also help to clarify what they can expect from you and what you will expect from them. To help you establish a personal Early Years Leadership perspective, please complete the activity below.

**Activity**

**What is your early years leadership perspective?**

To clarify your EYP leadership perspective and to help you explain it to others, do the activities below:

1. List the leaders that have influenced you, such as parents, teachers, colleagues, politicians and sports people and note how they have inspired you.
2. Write a brief definition of yourself, your life, your work, why you are training for EYPS, what you are doing, how you model effective practice to others, what you are aspiring to.

3. List some personal characteristics that make you feel good about yourself, such as innovative, friendly, proactive, flexible, reliable, child-centred, people-oriented, trustworthy, caring.

4. List what others can expect of you as an EYP, for example offer inspiration, make informed decisions, set challenging goals and targets, encourage open communication, develop others.

5. List what you expect of others, for example to accept responsibility, a willingness to view change as positive, effective practice, strong relationships with children, parents and carers, good team-working and collaborative skills, a commitment to continuous professional development.

6. Combine the definition of yourself with two of the personal characteristics that make you feel good about yourself, two things that you think others can expect of you and two things that you expect of others to discover your leadership perspective.

Finally, to make your EYPS journey a successful one, you must reflect on your own practice and the leadership and support that you give to your colleagues in your early years setting, network or service. To do this, I urge you to do two things: firstly, aim to keep a reflective log from the outset of your programme and secondly start to collate any sources of documents that you feel demonstrate your practice against the EYPS standards, for example plans, routines, reports, observations, records of contact with parents and audits of resources. This will help you prepare for your EYPS assessments (more information about these can be found in Chapters 9, 10 and 11). Allow yourself time to engage in reflective thinking, and use your reflective log to keep notes of ideas that you have had, and incidents and activities that you have had to lead or think on your feet about. Your reflective log will give you an insight into how you feel about your role. It will highlight your anxieties and uncertainties and give you the opportunity to reflect on solution-focused practice.

While recording your reflective log, consider:

- your personal feelings about leading effective practice with babies, toddlers and young children
- what worked well and what didn’t work so well when trying to motivate others
- what research, theory, policy and literature relates to your personal experience
- the benefits and outcomes for the children aged (0–5 years) and their families
- your personal learning of the situation or event.

Your log will help you to prepare for the Gateway Review assessment and the Setting Visit assessment. Further reference to the reflective log can be found in Chapter 3.
Table 2.3 Definitions of ‘leading effective practice’ from the ‘Leading Effective Practice workshop held at the South East Region EYPS ‘Here to Stay’ Conference 2008

Reflective and enthusiastic, offers inspiration and is approachable. Is valued and respected, and is open to change.

(Baby Room Leader)

To have a positive outlook. To go on a learning journey. Passionate about early years, dedicated to making a difference for children and families.

(Coordinator and Early Years Consultant)

Create children who believe they can achieve.

(Strategy Manager)

To be a change agent. A reflective practitioner who desires to empower children and instill a love of lifelong learning.

(Manager and Head of Nursery)

An influential role model committed to raising standards of early years through sustained shared thinking and child-centred reflective practice.

(Family Services Manager, Room Supervisor, Deputy Manager and Nursery Manager)

Being a role model, aspiring to be like other leaders.

(Nursery Nurse)

Parents have faith in you. Children have enthusiasm. Faith in your abilities and inspiration.

(Manager and Nursery Nurse)

Adaptable, flexible and positive

(Childcare Centre Manager)

Practice should be child-centred and all staff valued and given responsibilities. To be fair and consistent. Only expect from others what you would do yourself.

(Head of Nursing)

We know we can make a difference.

(Deputy Supervisor)

An inspirational agent for change.

(Leadership Practitioner)

Leadership is about being self-motivated, being an enthusiastic person with effective communication skills, inspiring others to work together to a shared vision, and take the team on a continuous journey.

(Day Nursery Manager)

A good listener who is able to learn from others.

(Trainee EYP)

Raise standards, be a good communicator, caring and warm, passionate, energetic, have empathy, make informed decisions. Be knowledgeable and understanding. Willingly do dirty jobs. Give approval and support.

(Children’s Centre Manager)
KP

✓ Become a ‘reflective leader’.
✓ Consider that to be a leader, you do not have to be in a senior position, a head of a setting or an organization.
✓ Remember that being an Early Years Leader is not about position – it is more about what you do and the way that you do it.
✓ Set goals that lead to greater effort and achievement rather than easy or vague ones.
✓ Continually reflect on and evaluate your leadership training needs.
✓ Establish a personal ‘Early Years Leadership’ perspective and share it with your colleagues, parents and carers and your EYPS training provider.
✓ Keep a journal to record your thoughts, your research and reading as you go through the process.

Further reading


Useful websites

Children’s Workforce Development Council – www.cwdccouncil.org.uk