

## AN INTRODUCTION TO

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# Implementing Continuous Provision into Your Environment

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THE STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING CONTINUOUS PROVISION IN  
YOUR NURSERY ENVIRONMENT

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## What is Continuous Provision?



# WHAT PRACTITIONERS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT CONTINUOUS PROVISION

It is important for practitioners to fully understand the concept of **continuous provision** and how its principles will help support children's learning and development.

The purpose of an effective continuous provision is to offer children a constant environment that is safe for them to explore, whilst challenging their learning. It should allow children the freedom to explore and become independent in making choices.

An important part of the EYFS is to support children in becoming active learners; continuous provision allows children to demonstrate this aspect and practitioners can closely observe this during their play. Continuous provision supports children's learning and development across all seven areas and let's not forget the characteristics of effective learning (How children learn).

The quality of each area of continuous provision should be continuously assessed, both indoors and outdoors, to ensure children are getting the maximum benefits from all areas.

In order for each area of continuous provision to be of high quality practitioners should:

- Plan each area carefully- think about where this area is within the room, should the role play area be near the graphics area?
- Equip each area with basic resources, this will then allow you to enhance the areas according to children's individual next's steps or group interests.
- Demonstrate outstanding practice, through using open ended questioning, using language to support learning and use skills and knowledge to scaffold children's learning.

## Why is continuous provision important?

Continuous provision enables practitioners to take children on a journey and the environment is key to supporting children on this journey.

Children need to be given time to thoroughly explore the learning experiences, to be able to return, time and again to expand and build on newly developed concepts. Practitioners need to appreciate that it is fundamental that children are given opportunities to build on what they did yesterday or even a few weeks ago.

Giving children time is precious as it enables them to fully explore their ideas and concepts which is highly important for children when taking them on a journey.

Within **continuous provision** children are able to explore the environment and develop independence. It allows children to make choices and initiate their own play.

Some nurseries may use an adult led planned approach for all children in the setting, however there are ways to adapt continuous provision to plan for children's individual needs.

# CHECK OUT THIS GREAT BOOK ON CONTINUOUS PROVISION

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Continuous Provision in the Early  
Years (Practitioners' Guides)

<http://amzn.to/1JC09N2>



# An Understanding of What Continuous Provision Planning is



# CONTINUOUS PROVISION PLANNING FOR EARLY YEARS SETTINGS

There have been mixed views on continuous provision planning. Some people say it is very time consuming, whereas others find it more effective in planning for children's individual needs.

Practitioners need to fully understand what continuous provision is. It is not just the provision that should be accessible, it is also all about what resources have been added to the areas of continuous provision that will allow the continue of learning in the absence of a practitioner.

When it comes to completing your planning, it should be linked very closely to children's assessments/observations. Initially you would add open ended resources to each area of continuous provision, allowing children to investigate, explore and use their thinking skills. You would then add further resources to the areas that are linked to children's interests or observations, by doing this it will encourage children's engagement and this will then move children on in their learning and development.

Practitioners should ensure that resources/experiences or activities added to the areas should challenge children, as this will help them make a progression in their learning

Developing a new way of working can prove challenging and there may be issues that crop up, such as finding that children don't actually do what is written on your planning. The key to helping overcome this is to reverse your thinking and think about what the children will do when an adult is not there. If you find yourself questioning the implementation of your planning then it may be worth rethinking the ideas.

Having an adult focus might be considered when you feel that the play would benefit from support and challenge. It is also used when you are concentrating on a skill for children to investigate and explore; for example you may have enhanced your creative area with a focus on printing.

When it comes to deciding on your planning format, there are many available for you to consider, you will need to find one that best suits your needs.

Some settings use the method 'What', 'Why' format, this is a simple overview of your continuous provision. The format can be as simple as a grid, where each box becomes an area of your continuous provision. In the box under 'What', list how you have enhanced that area for that week and then in the box 'Why' you would make reference as to why you have added this.

If you are adding an adult focus this can also be added to the planning format sheet.

Always remember that the area is not an area from the EYFS, it is an area within your room. You will find that by using continuous provision planning you will use an area of provision as a facilitator for another area of learning.

On your planning sheet you may have an 'Objective' and an 'Enhancement' column, within this column you will identify:

- Area of learning from the EYFS.
- Focus for the adult to enhance if required.
- Objectives that your **continuous provision** in that areas has been planned to support.
- In the Enhancement column you will list the resources you are adding to each area to enhance the learning opportunities, you may also add any differentiation and challenges.

# DOWNLOAD A COPY OF CONTINUOUS PROVISION PLANNING

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<http://www.earlyyears careers.com/eyc/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/example-planning.pdf>



# Creating Continuous Provision in your Learning Environment



# CREATING CONTINUOUS PROVISION IN THE BABY ROOM

Let's first explore how **continuous provision** can be created in a baby room and the impact that this can have on the learning and development.

As all practitioners know it is important to create a calm, comfy yet stimulating room for the youngest children within our care and sometimes trying to create this balance can be difficult. This can be achieved by carefully planning the space you have available and which areas of the EYFS you are trying to promote.

As practitioners we know all seven areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage are important, however the new framework has split the EYFS into two areas; prime and specific. The prime areas are the ones which a baby room should be concentrating the most time on, as it is believed that development in these areas will then lead to development in the other areas.

Keeping this in mind, continuous provision creates a space which allows every child to play and explore, actively think, create and critically think.

To help you achieve this why not try these helpful tips.

- Create comfy cosy areas where the babies can feel safe and secure using cushions, blankets, mirrors and photo's.
- You may also choose to use a variety of low level units which create excitement and intrigue, and also contain a variety of accessible resources that the babies can access when they are interested such as books, photos and instruments.
- Keep the areas organised and ensure each child has the space they need to explore confidently.
- Use open ended resources such as treasure baskets, sensory bottles and messy play areas, as having these readily available will engage all of the babies senses and lead to a more holistic learning approach.
- Ensure that learning can be achieved in each area and that it has a continuous feel with no sudden changes.

To read more about  
Creating Continuous  
Provision in the  
Toddler room  
click link below

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<http://www.earlyyears careers.com/eyc/early-years-practice/a-guide-to-creating-continuous-provision/>



# Adults Role in Creating Continuous Provision



# HOW ADULTS CAN ENHANCE THE CONTINUOUS PROVISION

Now you have taken a continuous provision approach to your early years environment, you may be wondering what the adults role is and how to plan to extend the children's learning when all the resources are readily available.

This is where enhanced provision begins. As with anything adult led or any extended learning this process involves the planning cycle. The **Early Years** foundation stage shows a simple version of the planning cycle so all practitioners should be aware of how to complete this. To make your planning cycle work alongside continuous provision you may choose to add one simple element. The planning cycle may look more like OBSERVE, PLAN, ENHANCE and REVIEW. The element of 'enhance' has been added here.

Lets explore each part of the planning cycle in more detail.

## **OBSERVING in the Early Years**

This is the starting point for every Early Years practitioner and allows you to discover children's interest's, strengths and weaknesses. This is vital information about each child so that the environment can be effectively planned to meet all children's individual needs and abilities. You may choose to observe in a variety of ways and many settings have their own set sheets/cards and systems for documenting observations. All observations are based on the same principles, Look, Listen and Note. This may then be logged in the form of a snapshot, narrative, time sample or various other observation methods. It is important that these observations are collated and inform the next stage of planning.

## PLANNING continuous provision in the early years

Here you can now use your observations to see if there are any resources not out as part of your continuous provision that could be added or changed to promote the development of the children. Your observations may have highlighted that you are lacking resources which promote understanding of the world, you can then plan to add more provision into the environment. Your observations may have highlighted that the children are no longer interested in the provision you have in your role play area, you can then plan to change this by adding or taking away resources to bring interest back to this area.

### Enhancing the continuous provision

This again stems from any observations you have seen, you can now use these observations to enhance the resources you have out to meet interests and next steps. For example you may have discovered through your observations that the children are interested in the recent changes to the season with it now becoming autumn. From this you may then choose to enhance the provision in your art/malleable and tactile area to include conkers, leaves and sticks that the children can then create their own pieces of art work with through sticking and conker rolling. You may have discovered that a few children can now count to 10 and because of this you may want to work on the next step of recognising numerals. You may then choose to enhance the provision in your maths area and add some number flash cards to the unifix tray so the children can match the amount of unifix to the number card.

### REVIEWING your enhance Early Years provision

You may have a section for evaluation on your planning sheet or you may choose to review your planning and put your changes onto the following weeks planning. Reviewing or evaluation is an important process in the planning cycle and should not be missed out. This not only improves the children's learning and development but also helps practitioner reflect on their practice. You should review not only the enhanced provision that was on offer for the children but also the continuous provision. Consider what went well and what you would do differently if you were to complete the activities again.

# CONCLUSION

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Continuous Provision enables a multitude of learning and development from children of all ages. Implementing Continuous provision has many benefits which is why it is important this is created in your learning environment both indoors and outdoors. The importance of Continuous Provision in the Early Years is increasing and the benefits are clear to see, so creating an environment which is accessible for all allows for the children to truly engage in their learning.

Encouraging children to choose for themselves creates independence and means children are building on and following their own interests something which we know is key to children's learning. Therefore an environment that contains quality learning experiences is fundamental to children's learning.

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