

Leadership and Management

Implementing peer observations



It is important for leaders to introduce peer observations carefully and thoughtfully to a team. As with any new system staff members can be unsure and this can lead to anxiety and misunderstanding.

Therefore, leaders should do some research on the subject prior to implementation and hold staff consultations to alleviate this.

Peer observations help assess and develop the quality of adult/child interactions in a setting. In order to improve quality, peer observations should feed into the supervision and appraisal system and inform action plans and training needs. They can also be used as part of the wider organisation's quality improvement processes. All practitioners should be involved, including the leadership and management team.

Peer observations require:

- A willingness from both practitioners involved in the process.
- Key questions for the observer to focus on
- Commitment from the practitioner being observed.
- Ability to listen to constructive feedback once the observations are complete.

Task 1

Start your research- here is a link for you to consider the challenges and barriers of implementing peer observations.

[Making peer observations work | Croner-i \(croneri.co.uk\)](https://www.croneri.co.uk/making-peer-observations-work)

Task 2

Consultation with staff- An initial staff meeting should be held to discuss the aims of carrying out peer observations and the process. Share your findings with the staff from the previous task. Being confident and motivated about the new strategy is the first step to positive implementation.

During the staff meeting, practitioners should have a space to reflect on-

- How they feel about the process and any worries or concerns
- Shaping what the process may look like
- Help develop the questions or observational points.
- Establish who may be observing who.
- Establish staff skills and confidence in their observation skills.
- Establish staff's skills and confidence in giving and receiving feedback.
- CPD gaps that are need prior to implementing peer observations.
- What they would like to get out the process

Task 3

Group peer practice - once you have established some of the key points above. A good start is to observe together. This will help with consistency, identify and gaps and give confidence to the whole team as a unit. Practice is key.

Use this clip to observe together as a team. [early years staff playing children - Google Search](#)

- Did you observe the same things?
- Were the interactions positive? If so, why?
- How could the staff improve on practice?
- Was the activity suitable?
- Was the child meeting development milestones?

Task 4

Reflecting on practice - Some questions to ask yourself.

- How do you organise peer observations?
- Are they sporadic or are they scheduled?
- Are they at random or do staff have a timeline in which they are expected to adhere to e.g. one a month?
- How do staff feel about peer observations?

- What training/support have staff been offered to develop their skills in observing their peers?
- Are staff confident to offer honest feedback to one another?
- Are individuals prepared to accept constructive criticism from their peers?
- Are staff clear about the intention of peer observations?
- How do you ensure that there is consistency in the approach applied to peer observations?
- Do you have a formal template that staff can use when observing a peer? If so, does the template include the following: context of observation (what activity or part of the routine is being observed, time, and duration, influencing factors), strengths identified, areas for development/missed opportunities identified space to capture their feedback.
- Are practitioners given adequate time to feedback their observations and to explain their views?
- Are peer observations used to inform the supervision process?
- Are peer observations moderated/quality monitored by leadership?