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# Leading Excellence in Early Years: Quality First Teaching – Briefing Session

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3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026 | Online



# Purpose of the programme



To support current and aspiring leaders in early education settings to develop their skills in delivering high quality, inclusive practice that improves outcomes for all children and narrows the attainment gap.

*"Recognising and valuing the role of the leader results in a more reflective and analytical approach to practice that in turn supports a culture of continuing improvement."*

Birth to Five Matters



# Leadership vs Management



| Management                     | Leadership                                |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Maintains order and stability  | Sets direction and vision                 |
| Focuses on tasks and processes | Focuses on people and relationships       |
| Controls, monitors, reports    | Inspires, motivates, engages              |
| Minimizes risk                 | Makes bold decisions and removes barriers |
| Responds to change             | Anticipates and leads change              |



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## Overview

| Activity                                                                       | Date                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Session 1 - Introductory session with EY Educator and Manager*                 | 23 September 1-4pm         |
| Carrying out activity in setting                                               |                            |
| Session 2 - Developing an Inclusive Setting Culture                            | 30 September 9.30am–3.30pm |
| EYCA phone support                                                             |                            |
| Session 3 - Leading for Continuous Improvement and Change                      | 14 October 9.30am–3.30pm   |
| Carrying out activity in setting plus EYCA phone support                       |                            |
| Session 4 - Supporting children with vulnerabilities to fulfil their potential | 4 November 9.30am–3.30pm   |
| Carrying out activity in setting + 2 EYCA visits – 1 includes setting manager  |                            |
| Session 5 - Communication and Wellbeing                                        | 2 December 9.30am–3.30pm   |
| Carrying out activity in setting +1 EYCA visit                                 |                            |
| Session 6 - Evidencing Impact and Sharing Your Learning                        | 13 January 9.30am–3.30pm   |
| Carrying out activity in setting plus two EYCA visits                          |                            |
| Session 7 - Celebration and Presentations                                      | 3 February 9.30am–3.30pm   |

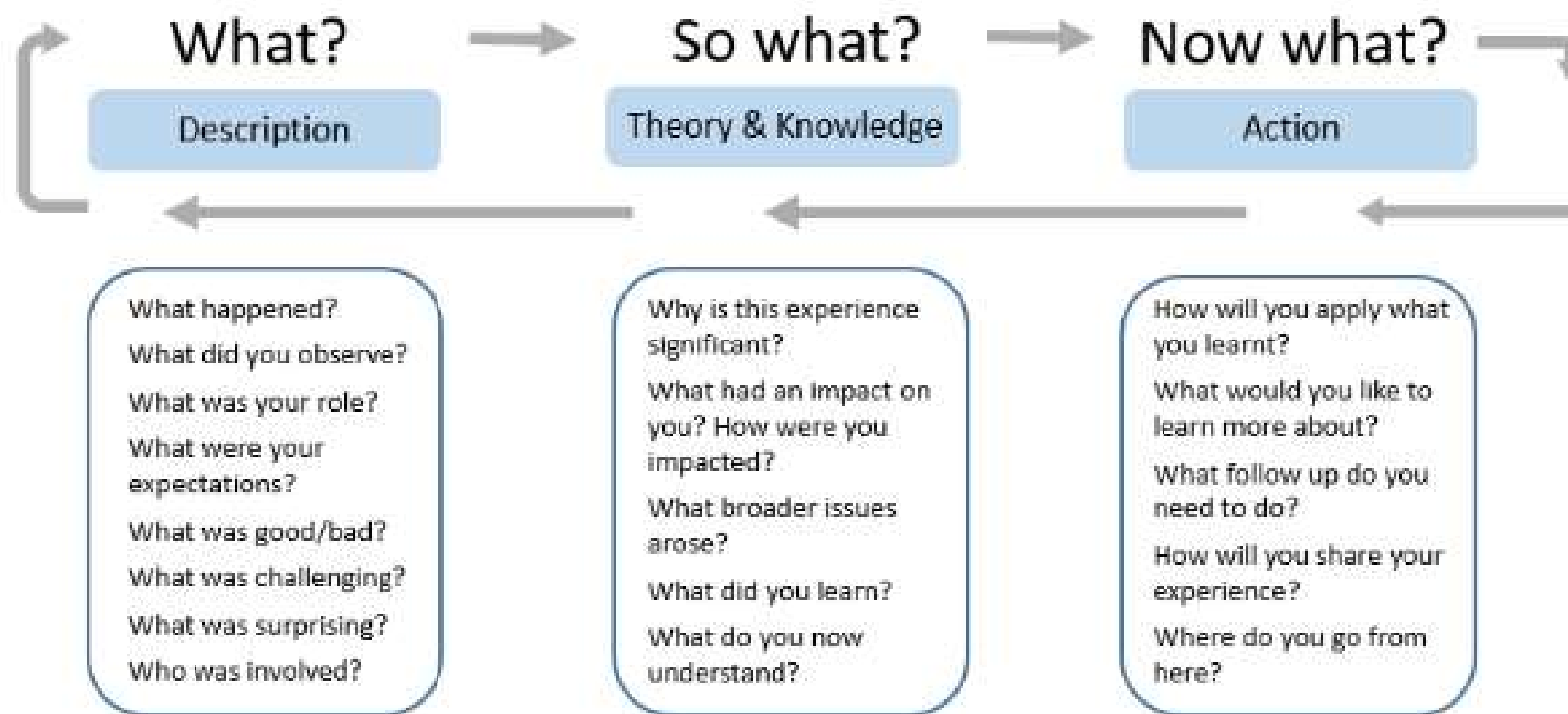
# In between sessions



- The Early Educator will review data to identify an area that they want to focus on – to narrow the attainment gap
- The Early Educator will reflect on their learning in the sessions and use this to make the change and review impact of the change
- An EYCA will phone/visit the setting to discuss progress and provide coaching to the Early Educator
- EYCA will check in with setting manager to ensure that the Early Educator is receiving effective support



# Reflective Journals



# The presentation



Introduction and context

The question

Project plan

The intervention

Data

Findings

Reflection and next steps

Impact on practice – now and in the future



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# Cost and Funding



The course is offered free to providers, for this we need:

- Commitment from the Early Educator
- Commitment from the manager
- Completion of all tasks and data sharing (including evaluation)

Funding – we will provide £1000 to each setting that engages with the entire programme:

- ✓ £500 following the completion of the EYCA visit to Early Educator and manager after session 3
- ✓ £500 following completion of the entire programme, including return of impact data and evaluation information by deadline

**Funding is conditional on completion of all elements of the programme.**

**Funding should be used to support the EY Educator to engage in the programme – including attending all sessions and release time in setting to carry out project work.**





# Impact



## Short-term

- ✓ Develop early educator skills and confidence in leading practice
- ✓ Improved outcomes for a targeted group of children in your setting

## Long-term

- ✓ Early educator will be able to share their skills with others
- ✓ Early educator will continue to reflect on impact of practice and embed further developments to improve quality and inclusion for all children
- ✓ Early educator will be committed to developing an inclusive culture



# One thing I learnt that had the biggest impact ...



The overall course has made me a better leader. This is through the way I look, listen and communicate holistically.

Giving the children the opportunity to exceed expectations.

Trusting my team and giving them opportunities ... to feel good about themselves ... demonstrating and role modelling this ... so the children ... experience the impact of relating to others in this way.

The team have realised that if they focus more on working together rather than as individuals ... the children respond to the togetherness in a more positive and enthusiastic way.



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# Who should apply?



What the early educator needs to be successful:

- Desire to develop their leadership skills
- Desire to improve outcomes for children
- Ability to effect change within the setting
- Commitment to engage in all aspects of the programme:
  - Ability to proactively contribute within the group
  - Commitment to completing all tasks assigned
  - Commitment to completing a targeted project within the setting
  - Ability to evaluate impact of project and present findings at the end of the programme



# Supervisor for the Programme



The supervisor will need to:

- ✓ Commit to “check-in” regularly with the Early Educator
- ✓ Ensure that the Early Educator has release time to carry out the project work
- ✓ Provide challenge and support to the Early Educator so they complete all tasks and evaluate the impact
- ✓ Ensure all paperwork is completed and returned as requested
- ✓ Raise any concerns with EYCA so we can address these as quickly as possible



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# How to get involved?



Following this session, we will email you a copy of the application form and information about the programme. This will also be available via the newsletter.

Applications should be completed in full and returned by **Friday 26th June**

All applications will be reviewed, and we will aim to inform you of the outcome by **Friday 3rd July**

Successful applicants will need to sign and return the agreement form and, once this is received, they will be enrolled on the programme.







# Q&A

If you have any further questions after this session, please email [lisa.guy@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:lisa.guy@westsussex.gov.uk) or [sue.woods@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:sue.woods@westsussex.gov.uk)