

Rhyme time and Seven Quality Principles toolkit

Instructions

Arts Council England has developed seven quality principles to raise the quality of work by, with and for children and young people. The principles were developed as a result of close collaboration between the Arts Council England and arts and cultural organisations that work with children and young people.

The seven quality principles are:

1. Striving for excellence and innovation
2. Being authentic
3. Being exciting, inspiring and engaging
4. Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience
5. Actively involving children and young people
6. Enabling personal progression
7. Developing belonging and ownership

This toolkit has been developed and tested by a partnership of 11 library services from across the country. It will enable libraries and other services delivering under-fives rhyme sessions to assess and develop their programme.

It is comprised of the following documents:

- 1: What makes a quality rhyme time framework: This is the master document which is divided into six quality outcomes for rhyme time. Within each outcome, there are a number of quality statements mapped against the quality principles.
- 2: An observation schedule supporting staff to observe and assess rhyme times.
- 3: A family survey.
- 4: A self-assessment questionnaire for session leaders.

The framework and the other documents are divided into six sections describing outcomes of rhyme times. These outcomes were determined by community/partner consultations.

Section 1: Rhyme time supports children's early learning and cultural development

Section 2: Rhyme time builds the relationship between parent and child



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Section 3: Rhyme time is inclusive

Section 4: Rhyme time reduces social isolation

Section 5: Rhyme time is accessible for parents and children

Section 6: Rhyme time is embedded in strategy and enables strong partnerships

Within each section there are a number of quality statements which are mapped against the seven quality principles.

How to use the toolkit

The toolkit is very detailed and is designed to be flexible depending on the areas you need to focus on. It is not intended that a service would look at all the elements at once, but select the sections or Quality Principles that support your needs. There are word versions of the tools so that you can delete the elements that you don't wish to use.

For example

- A: You may wish to focus on one evaluation tool – for example the family survey. Use the tools in conjunction with the Framework document.
- B: You may wish to focus on one or two of the six outcomes, for example just looking at section 1 and section 5 and you may decide to look at these sections across the observation schedule and the family survey.
- C: You may want to focus on one or two quality principles and look at these across the observation schedule and the family survey. For example if you wanted to focus specifically on the quality principle of Enabling Personal Progression (number 6), you would just select those questions in the observation schedule and in the family survey that had been mapped against that principle.

Using the Observation Schedule

The observation schedule is divided into the six quality outcomes and the statements are mapped against the quality principles. It is important that you involve staff in the observation activity so they don't feel intimidated by being observed but are actively



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engaged in the process. They need to understand why they are being observed. If you can enable staff to swap libraries either within or between authorities, they will learn from each other as well as providing constructive feedback. It is also important to explain to families at the rhyme time why it is being observed.

Observers who have tested the schedule have used it in different ways. Some have noted comments on the schedule as they watched the rhyme time, others memorised the areas they wanted to focus on, watched the rhyme time and then recorded the comments on the observation schedule afterwards.

Family Survey

The statements in the Family Survey have been based on Arts Council England's [quality metrics](#). Those testing the survey have advised to keep it short and simple for busy parents to complete so we've used a simple happy/sad face scoring system and parents can circle the face symbol that most closely reflects their feelings.

- Happy face (Excellent) - 3 points
- Neutral face (Neither good nor bad) -2 points
- Sad face (Poor) -1 point
- Circle with question mark – don't know or not applicable

The testers advise not including too many questions but to include the box for comments.

Session leader self-assessment

Session leaders completing the self-assessment should complete it in full. It should be accompanied by reading the framework and can act as an initial training aid, helping staff to reflect on their own practice, to discuss training needs with supervisors and to support refresher training.



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