

Implementing my Continuous Provision Curriculum



Inspiring Awe & Wonder

Children deserve to receive the best quality care, teaching and learning; and the role of the adult in supporting children's attainment and progress is critical. The Quality of Education judgement is key to success.

I challenge you to reduce the burden of documentation and to work Smarter – not harder. I will show you how to reduce planning paper work; and to really focus on what's important – time spent supporting the children's learning, development and well-being

Deborah Udakis Consultancy Ltd

What you should do ...

Understand how children learn?

Watching - using my senses

Alone/in a group/with a partner

Making mistakes

Having fun!

Achieving success/being praised

Copying/imitating

Teaching someone else

Experiencing

Experimenting, exploring

Communicating Repetition

Listening

Using appropriate equipment

Doing

Asking

Taking risks

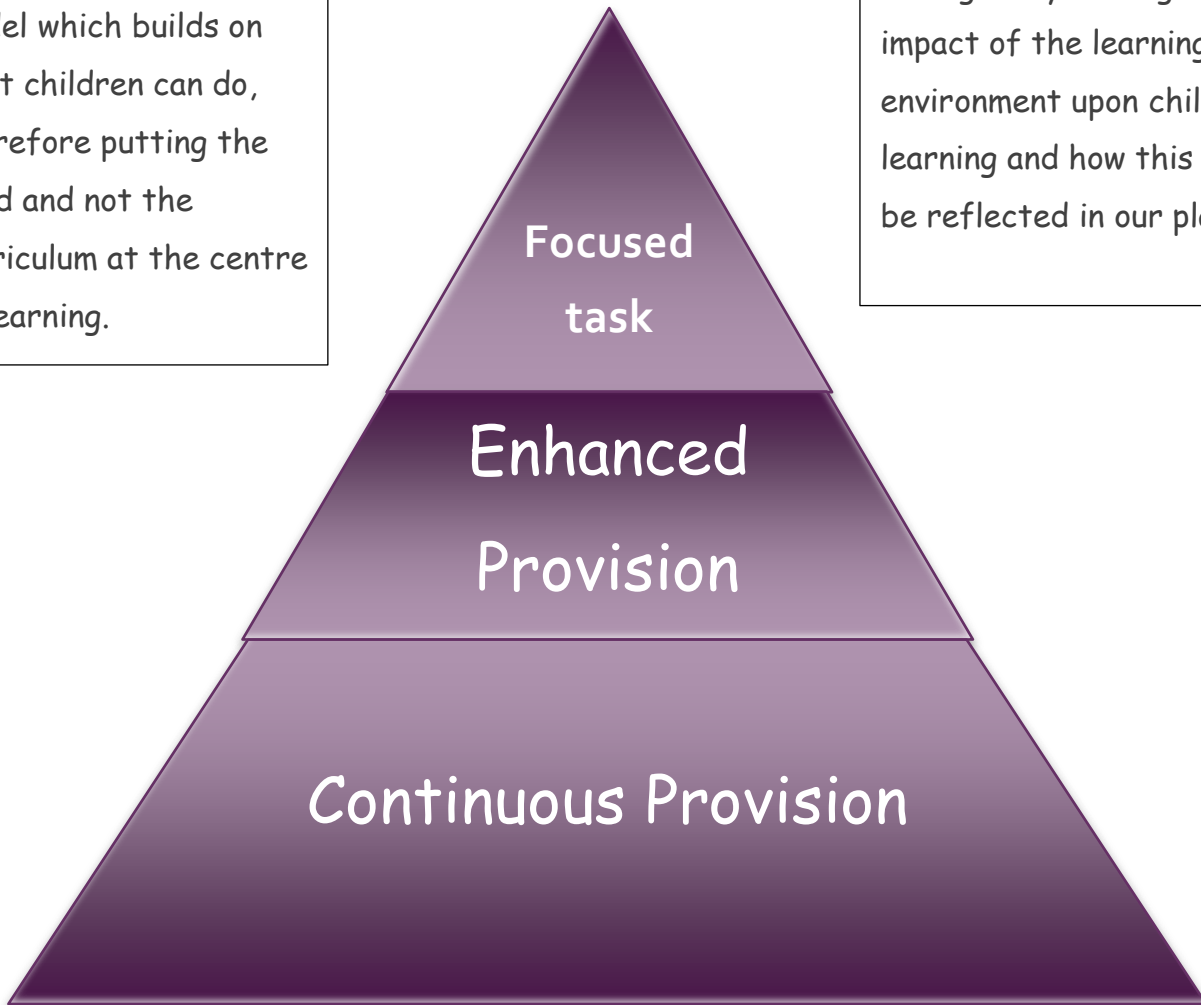
Reflecting - being given time.



Reflect on the Learning Pyramid

This is a 'bottom-up' model which builds on what children can do, therefore putting the child and not the curriculum at the centre of learning.

It begins by looking at the impact of the learning environment upon children's learning and how this must be reflected in our planning.



Stop producing weekly planning documentation

Ofsted has made it absolutely clear that they do not expect to see huge folders of planning documents or assessments. Inspectors will not spend time reviewing documentation, assessments and planning - its highly likely documentation will not feature strongly at all during the inspection.

Devise and implement a flexible daily routine

Children thrive in an environment that is familiar and secure. Allow lots of time for children to become absorbed and fully immersed in their explorations, investigations and play.

Children want consistency so do not change the room around without their knowledge and input.

Focus on your Continuous Provision

Continuous provision is the activities and resources that you provide for children each day / week. Your Continuous Provision must cover the 7 areas of learning - with a significant focus on the prime areas - Communication & Language, Personal, Social & Emotional, and Physical Development. It is what you provide for children every day within your teaching and learning indoor/outdoor environment:

- areas of provision
- routines
- adults.

Understand why continuous provision is important?

As practitioners, it's essential to fully understand both what continuous provision is and how it helps support children's development. Crucially, effective continuous provision should provide children with the opportunity to demonstrate the characteristics of effective teaching and learning identified by the EYFS - I.e. Exploring & Playing, Active Learning, Creating and Thinking Critically. For example, in the construction area, children may independently investigate how high they can build a tower by using wooden blocks. Trying to arrange the blocks in different ways or testing if they can add any other construction materials to their tower to make it sturdier, demonstrates aspects of both playing and exploring. Continuous provision also enables children to return to their explorations and consolidate their learning over the course of a day or a more extended period. When children do this, they can explore what happens to things as they change over time and make changes to explore new ideas. Continuous provision also allows children to make choices and initiate play without interaction with an adult.

Understand what effective continuous provision looks like?

Continuous provision transcends all areas of learning. When preparing resources for continuous provision, try the following:

- Make sure that each area set up for continuous provision has the necessary resources to encourage children to play and explore in a variety of ways.
- Offer a range of high-quality resources that will act as a good starting point for the children's explorations.
- Use open-ended questioning and conversation to engage the children in conversations and prompt their creative thinking.

- Give children time to revisit what they did yesterday, last week, or even a few weeks ago.

Effectively support continuous provision.

The practitioner's role is crucial. It's important that you not only provide a high-quality enabling environment but also support children's ability to interact with the resources. As children engage with continuous provision, take the opportunity to interact with the children more and help scaffold and build on their learning during play.

Model language and ideas. This will strengthen your relationship with the children. It also gives you the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions, extending the children's learning even further.

Use your knowledge of the children – their likes / dislikes / fascinations / and what they already know and can do to determine how to further enhance the environment.

Establish rules, boundaries and behavioural expectations.

Once children are clear about the rules and what's expected, they will then be able to carry out their explorations with an increased sense of confidence. If children do not know their boundaries, then they will often return to 'familiar' play, which is less challenging.

Plan for continuous provision.

The continuous provision should be linked to the needs and interests of the children. It needs to provide familiar areas for them to explore, so, for the most part, your continuous provision will stay the same, only to be enhanced as children's learning progresses. Rather than carrying out time-consuming and extensive planning for the continuous provision, I recommend using my Continuous Provision documents (see examples below) - to be displayed in each activity / area of learning. It is the role of the practitioner - with child support - to replenish the area when required.

You can also design / produce task cards to suggest specific challenges that the children can complete alongside their free play.

Provide high-quality resources.

If we want children to be creative, curious, and to pursue their interests, then we must make the environments appealing and plentiful. Children will disengage if resources are old, broken, or incomplete. And why wouldn't they? So would we. It's always worth setting aside or

requesting a reasonably generous budget to renew resources at the start of a financial year. I have always found it useful to send a list of things needed to parents and carers in the hope that some items will be donated or sourced from local businesses. The provided resource list outlines some of the basic resources needed to set out each area of learning.

Supplement your Continuous Provision with enhancements – Enhanced Provision.

Enhance the learning environment in order to provide additional learning opportunities. This will move children's learning forward.

An enhancement is added to an area of the Continuous Provision. It suggests new ways to use the basic set of resources, enriches the play, extends the children's ideas and moves their learning forward.

An enhancement could be:

- a display
- a visitor
- additional resources
- a challenge.

Provide added interest with Focused Tasks

Focused tasks are adult-led and are initiated/modelled/led by the practitioner.

Our observations of the children will inform what Focused Tasks will take place.

Keep children interested and curious by introducing Provocations.

Provide open-ended resources, working in collaboration with children to help the construction of their knowledge. Without making sweeping changes to the room layout, you can inspire children's curiosity and explorations by adding natural objects, posters, living things, nature, books, works of art, gadgets etc

Reduce the number of Next Steps

When we spend hours of time writing down planning and next steps for every child in the setting, you end up with 90+ next steps. - That's madness.

We need to be thinking about the big picture.

Practitioners should not spend time writing out copious planning and next steps, but there may be five or six children that you really do need to know why they're struggling / falling behind in their learning and development.

Those children need targeted and intensive help. If we don't give them that help they miss out on the chance to catch up and to keep up with other children, and that's where the inequality gaps really set in.

We need to focus our planning and assessment on intensively supporting those children who are struggling to learn, and deepening other children's knowledge.

That way, you end up with a group of children who all know about numbers 0-10, and you don't end up with some children who can't count at all and some who are counting on to 50 and beyond. It is in this situation that the 'gap' is intensified.

- Make greater use of group next steps - e.g. all children focusing on learning Makaton, a group of children developing social and personal interaction skills.
- Make new learning instantaneous - when next step emerges provide opportunities there and then for children to develop learning and skills.
- Record new learning taking place without delay - and use this information to scaffold future / ongoing learning.
- Focus on the 'bigger picture'.

Use the Leuven Scales

To measure children's emotional well-being and involvement in activities - (see below).

Ferre Laevers

Emotional well being and involvement scales.

The Leuven Scale for Involvement (in learning)
It's time for an honest observation of your students
Based on: <http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/documents-ldtoolkit/leuven.pdf>

Let's hope teachers are designing and evaluating classroom activities with an aim that every learner might reach a state of **flow**.

Extremely low	Low	Moderate	High	Extremely High
Activity is simple, repetitive and passive. The child seems absent and displays no energy. They may stare into space or look around to see what others are doing.	Frequently interrupted activity. The child will be engaged in the activity for some of the time they are observed, but there will be moments of non-activity when they will stare into space, or be distracted by what is going on around.	Mainly continuous activity. The child is busy with the activity but at a fairly routine level and there are few signs of real involvement. They make some progress with what they are doing but don't show much energy and concentration and can be easily distracted.	Continuous activity with intense moments. The child's activity has intense moments and at all times they seem involved. They are not easily distracted.	The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest involvement. They are concentrated, creative, energetic and persistent throughout nearly all the observed period.

By Richard Wells
Twitter: @EduWells
EduWells.com

Look out for: focused concentration on the present moment; loss of self-consciousness; activity that's intrinsically rewarding; Distorted awareness of time; personal agency.

Emotional well being

Well-being focuses on the extent to which pupils feel at ease, act spontaneously, show vitality and self-confidence. It is a crucial component of emotional intelligence and good mental health.

The Leuven Scale for Well-being

1) Extremely low

The child clearly shows signs of discomfort such as crying or screaming. They may look dejected, sad, frightened or angry. The child does not respond to the environment, avoids contact and is withdrawn. The child may behave aggressively, hurting him/herself or others.

2) Low

The posture, facial expression and actions indicate that the child does not feel at ease. However, the signals are less explicit than under level 1 or the sense of discomfort is not expressed the whole time.

3) Moderate

The child has a neutral posture. Facial expression and posture show little or no emotion. There are no signs indicating sadness or pleasure, comfort or discomfort.

4) High

The child shows obvious signs of satisfaction (as listed under level 5). However, these signals are not constantly present with the same intensity.

5) Extremely high

The child looks happy and cheerful, smiles, cries out with pleasure. They may be lively and full of energy. Actions can be spontaneous and expressive. The child may talk to him/herself, play with sounds, hum, sing. The child appears relaxed and does not show any signs of stress or tension. He /she is open and accessible to the environment. The child expresses self-confidence and self-assurance.

The rationale underlying the focus on these two process dimension is that high levels of well-being and involvement lead in the end to high levels of child development and deep level learning. This latter concept is centred around the notion that learning should result in significant changes in a pupils capacity leading to better outcomes in the way that he or she approaches work, relationships and life in general.

Level of involvement

Involvement focuses on the extent to which children are operating to their full capabilities. In particular it refers to whether the child is focused, engaged and interested in various activities.

The Leuven Scale for Involvement

1) Low Activity

Activity at this level can be simple, stereotypic, repetitive and passive. The child is absent and displays no energy. There is an absence of cognitive demand. The child characteristically may stare into space. N.B. This may be a sign of inner concentration.

2) A Frequently Interrupted Activity

The child is engaged in an activity but half of the observed period includes moments of non-activity, in which the child is not concentrating and is staring into space. There may be frequent interruptions in the child's concentration, but his/her Involvement is not enough to return to the activity.

3) Mainly Continuous Activity

The child is busy at an activity but it is at a routine level and the real signals for Involvement are missing. There is some progress but energy is lacking and concentration is at a routine level. The child can be easily distracted.

4) Continuous Activity with Intense Moments

The child's activity has intense moments during which activities at Level 3 can come to have special meaning. Level 4 is reserved for the kind of activity seen in those intense moments, and can be deduced from the 'Involvement signals'. This level of activity is resumed after interruptions. Stimuli, from the surrounding environment, however attractive cannot seduce the child away from the activity.

5) Sustained Intense Activity

The child shows continuous and intense activity revealing the greatest Involvement. In the observed period not all the signals for Involvement need be there, but the essential ones

must be present: concentration, creativity, energy and persistence. This intensity must be present for almost all the observation period.

Measuring well-being and involvement

The evaluation process begins by assessing the levels of well-being and involvement using the scales outlined above. Practitioners /teachers must observe children as a group or individually for a period of approximately two minutes then give a score for wellbeing and/or involvement. It is thought that unless children are operating at 4 or 5, learning will be limited. However, it is natural for levels of well-being and involvement to fluctuate throughout the day and it is unrealistic to expect children to operate at levels 4 or 5 at all times.

The initial observation is the starting point for further analysis concentrating on children with lower levels of well-being and / or involvement. This analysis should inform practitioners /teachers about the quality and suitability of their work and it should provide some sort of framework for intervention toward individual children.

Measuring a child's wellbeing and involvement can also empower and energise teachers and practitioners. If they can see that their efforts are leading to a high level of wellbeing involvement in their children then it's likely that this will serve as a galvanising force and result in a cycle of continual improvement.

The Centre for Research in Early Childhood published an interesting article detailing how to carry out the Leuven Scale observations: Effective Early Learning Programme Child Involvement Scale.

The Research Centre for Experiential Education (RCEE) has produced list of 10 action points that should help practitioners to focus the learning environment on the well-being and involvement of children:

1. Rearrange the classroom in appealing corners or areas.
2. Check the content of the areas and make them more challenging.
3. Introduce new and unconventional materials and activities.
4. Identify children's interests and offer activities that meet these.
5. Support activities by stimulating inputs.

6. Widen the possibilities for free initiative and support them with sound agreements.
7. Improve the quality of the relations amongst children and between children and teacher(s).
8. Introduce activities that help children to explore the world of behaviour, feelings and values.
9. Identify children with emotional problems and work out sustaining interventions.
10. Identify children with developmental needs and work out interventions that engender involvement.

In addition to the action points Professor Ferre Laevers (director of the RCEE) highlights the importance of the way in which adults interact with children. He believes that this is key to the achievement of well-being and involvement and recommends the use of the Adult Style Observation Schedule (ASOS), which is made up of three components: stimulation, sensitivity and giving autonomy. Writing in an article published in the Encyclopaedia of Early Childhood Development, Dr. Laevers defined the three components in the following terms:

"Stimulating interventions are open impulses that engender involvement, such as: suggesting activities to children, inviting children to communicate, asking thought-provoking questions and giving rich information. Sensitivity is evidenced in responses that witness empathic understanding of the child. Giving autonomy means: respecting the children's initiative, acknowledging their interests, giving them room for experimentation, letting them decide upon the way an activity is performed and letting them participate in the setting of rules".

Guide to implementing my Continuous Provision Curriculum.

This guide sets out how I intend my continuous provision documentation to be used. However, you may have other ideas for their use - and that is totally fine too!

Ok, to be clear, my Continuous Provision Curriculum does include quite a few documents. So, when I say you can reduce the amount of documentation by using my curriculum, what I mean is that I have done most of the work for you - but using many of your ideas 😊.

If you use this curriculum, you do not need to produce weekly or monthly plans - or make wholesale changes. Indeed, children want routine and consistency - and this curriculum delivers that.

In my experience, too frequently, when asked to explain the purpose of activities (the intent), practitioners fumble their way to a half-baked response - usually relying on 'fine and gross motor skills' and 'social involvement'. Sadly, this may be a lack of confidence - or more likely - a lack of practice talking and explaining Why they have set out or enabled the activity; How they intend to support new learning and skills; and What evidence they are looking for that shows that children have achieved new learning and / or made progress in their development.

Why = why this activity? What knowledge or skill do you hope the children will learn? (The intent)

How = how do you support new skill acquisition or development across the 7 AOL? This includes how you deliver high-quality teaching, interactions, an enabling environment, resources, invitations and provocations - that excite and stimulate children's interests and curiosity. (Implementation).

What = what evidence do you observe / record that demonstrates that the learning intent is met. What new skills / learning has taken place; or evidence that child has further developed or embedded existing knowledge and learning? For instance, is the child using a wider vocabulary and new words in context?

1. Visit my website www.deborah.udakis.co.uk - menu - downloads - scroll down and select the following; continuous provision documents, Daily Routine, Playdough, and The Beauty of Clay.

I have the following Continuous Provision documents for you to select

Communication & Language	Personal, Social & Emotional	Physical
Expressive Art & Design	Literacy	Maths
Understanding the World	Role / Imaginative Play	Sensory Play
Tinkering Table	Forest School	Heuristic Play
Baby & Child Yoga	Clay	Playdough
Cooking & Baking	Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM)	Music & Movement
Learning French	Tennis Lessons	

2. Save the documents in Word.
3. Review and discuss the continuous provision documents with your leadership team and make any initial changes in readiness to share with your practitioners.
4. Amend the Daily Routine to reflect your own setting. Allow between 2-3 hours of learning through play each morning and afternoon (or according to your settings opening hours). Minimise interruptions to the children's play and plan flexible snack times so children can more easily enjoy a snack at a time convenient to their play.
5. Ensure that outdoor learning and play features in your Daily Routine. According to the Government's Chief Medical Officer, children must access at least 3 hours of physical activity every day. This should include, yoga, music & movement, standing, reaching and stretching, moulding Clay, mixing Playdough, as well as outdoor physical challenges.
6. Introduce the Continuous Provision documents and your Daily Routine to practitioners. Discuss during team meetings and supervisions. Seek practitioners input and ideas to

improve / implement the curriculum. It is important that all staff commit to the Continuous Provision Curriculum and Daily Routine for it to be successful.

7. Once the Curriculum and Daily Routine is agreed, make the documents truly reflective of your setting. Add your logo and setting name, and feel free to change the photographs.
8. Print the documents and display them (beautifully) in the setting. I suggest specific Continuous Provision documents are displayed in activity areas - e.g. Role / Imaginative Play document is displayed in the role play area, Tinkering Table document is displayed above the Tinkering Table.
9. Upload the documents onto your website and consider including one of the Continuous Provision documents in each of your newsletters. You will want to share your curriculum with parents and carers.
10. Print off copies of all the relevant documents and place them in a file which is accessible to parents and carers. You might want to display your curriculum in the reception area for all to see.
11. When opportunities arise, take time to explain the value of activities to parents and carers, other professionals, and visitors. Refer to the documents until such time as you and your practitioners are able to confidently explain the Intent, Implementation and Impact of the Curriculum.
12. I recommend Early Years Leaders conduct weekly Learning Walks throughout the setting, asking practitioners key questions about the 3 Is. You can download my Learning Walk document - with leader prompts together with my document explaining the 3 Is, from my website). Leaders should also make use of the Leuven Scale to evaluate how involved children are in the activities.
13. Follow up practitioners knowledge and understanding of the Curriculum, Intent, Implementation and Impact during team meetings and supervision sessions.
14. As leaders, Continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Continuous Provision Curriculum and Daily Routine. Review how well the Curriculum has been implemented in

the first month. Highlight what has gone well and any aspects you would like to improve - and act on them.

15. If necessary, add Enhanced Provision documents to plan and explain the benefits of additional / extra curriculum activities e.g. external visits from fire fighters, storytellers, magicians.

16. Make use of Pinterest / professional publications / and professional network sites to seek out exciting ideas, activities and provocations - and importantly to ensure your Curriculum remains rich, vibrant and relevant.

Any questions? Please contact me via my website.

Deborah Udakis Consultancy Ltd

www.deborahudakis.co.uk

Please like / follow my professional FaceBook page - Deborah Udakis Consultancy Ltd

I regularly post information, news, curriculum ideas etc