

From Intent to Impact: Making Curriculum and Pedagogy Work in Childminding

Ofsted defines the curriculum as the **intentional framework** that sets out what children should learn during their time in an early years setting. For childminders, this does not need to be complex or heavily documented, but it does need to be **thoughtful, child-centred and clearly understood**.

Curriculum intent should reflect:

- the children in your care
- what you want them to know and be able to do
- how you support their progress over time

Pedagogy is the **implementation** of that curriculum — the way your teaching, interactions, routines and environment bring learning to life.

Curriculum intent: starting with the child

Children's learning and development are influenced by their experiences, family life, culture, language, relationships and wider environment. Ofsted refers to this as **cultural capital** — the essential knowledge and experiences children need to support future learning and success.

Cultural capital is not limited to religion or heritage. It includes:

- communication styles and language exposure
- confidence, independence and self-regulation
- access to books, play, routines and experiences
- relationships and emotional security

Each child arrives with a unique starting point. Effective curriculum intent recognises these differences and avoids assumptions based on background or circumstance.

Curriculum implementation: pedagogy in practice

Implementation is how the curriculum is delivered through daily practice. In childminding settings, this is primarily achieved through:

- warm, responsive interactions
- play-based learning
- modelling language and behaviour
- using routines as learning opportunities
- adapting plans based on children's interests and needs

For example, if a curriculum aim is to develop communication and language, implementation might include:

- modelling rich vocabulary
- commenting on children's play
- sharing stories, songs and rhymes
- supporting turn-taking and social communication

These everyday teaching strategies demonstrate how curriculum intent is translated into meaningful learning experiences.

Assessment and progress

Assessment supports both curriculum and pedagogy. Ofsted expects practitioners to understand:

- what children know and can do
- how they are progressing over time
- how assessment informs next steps

Most assessment in childminding is **formative** — ongoing observation, noticing and responding during play and routines. This informs in-the-moment planning and longer-term curriculum decisions.

Summative assessment provides a broader picture of progress over time. While only the two-year check and Early Learning Goals are statutory, many childminders use termly or six-monthly summaries to support:

- curriculum review
- transitions
- early identification of delay or additional needs

Ofsted is clear that inspectors do not expect extensive written observations beyond EYFS requirements. What matters is how well you understand the child and use assessment to support progress.

Impact: what children gain

Impact is shown through:

- children making progress from their starting points
- children being confident, curious and engaged learners
- secure relationships that support wellbeing
- increasing independence and self-regulation

Inspectors gather evidence of impact through observation of practice and professional discussion, not paperwork.

Articulating your approach

It can be helpful to prepare a short teaching statement that clearly explains your curriculum and pedagogy. For example:

“My curriculum is based on the children in my care and what they need to learn next. I implement it through play-based learning, modelling language, responsive interactions and strong relationships. I assess children through observation and use this to plan next steps and support progress over time.” —

This supports confident professional dialogue during inspection.

Reflective questions

- Can I clearly explain my curriculum intent and how it reflects the children in my care?
- How does my pedagogy support effective implementation of my curriculum?
- How do I use assessment to understand progress and inform next steps?
- How do my environment and routines contribute to learning and development?
- How do I ensure my practice supports children's cultural capital and future learning?
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