

Implementing change in early years settings is a complex process, but by following these tips that are rooted in the EEF's research and guidance, you can increase the likelihood of successful, lasting improvements. Each step, from diagnosing needs to sustaining change, is crucial in creating a positive impact on the learning and development of young children.

Here are our five top tips for successful implementation:

**A School's Guide to Implementation
Summary of recommendations**

These three elements work together. The process helps schools do implementation. The cross-cutting behaviours and contextual factors help them do it well.

<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">1</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Adopt the behaviours that drive effective implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage people so they can shape what happens while also providing overall direction. • Unite people around what is being implemented, how it will be implemented, and why it matters. • Reflect, monitor, and adapt to improve implementation.
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">2</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Attend to the contextual factors that influence implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider whether what is being implemented is evidence-informed, right for the setting, and feasible to implement. • Develop systems and structures that support implementation, for example, time allocation or data systems. • Ensure people who enable change can support, lead, and positively influence implementation.
<p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">3</p> <p style="font-weight: bold;">Use a structured but flexible implementation process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a structured process to apply the behaviours and contextual factors to your day to day work. • Adopt a practical and tailored set of implementation strategies organised into manageable phases: Explore, Prepare, Deliver, and Sustain. • Treat implementation as a process of ongoing learning and improvement.

Start with a Clear Diagnosis of Needs

Tip: Before introducing any change, conduct a thorough assessment to identify the specific needs of your early years setting. This involves gathering data on children's developmental progress, consulting with staff, and engaging parents/carers.

1

Why Does It Matter?

Understanding the needs of your setting allows you to select the most appropriate intervention. According to the EEF's Guide to Effective Implementation, the "Explore" stage emphasises the importance of diagnosing issues and considering evidence-based interventions that align with these needs.

2

Select Evidence-Based Interventions

Tip: Choose interventions that have a strong evidence base, particularly those that have been shown to be effective in early years settings.

Why Does It Matter?

The EEF highlights the importance of selecting strategies supported by robust evidence. Their Early Years Toolkit provides summaries of research on various approaches, helping you make informed decisions about what is likely to work best in your context.

3

Plan and Prepare Thoroughly

Tip: Develop a detailed implementation plan that includes clear objectives, timelines, and roles. Ensure that all staff members are adequately trained and understand their role in the new initiative.

Why Does It Matter?

According to the EEF, the "Prepare" stage is critical for setting the foundation for successful implementation. Planning should be comprehensive and consider the specific developmental needs of young children, ensuring that the initiative is appropriate and achievable within your setting.

4

Pilot and Adapt

Tip: Start with a small-scale pilot of the new initiative before rolling it out more widely. Use this period to observe, gather feedback, and make adjustments as needed.

Why Does It Matter?

The EEF's guidance suggests that piloting allows you to refine your approach based on real-world application. This strategy helps to identify potential challenges early and adapt the initiative to better fit your setting.

5

Embed and Sustain the Change

Tip: Focus on embedding the new practice into the daily routines of your setting. Regularly review progress, celebrate successes, and make adjustments to ensure the initiative remains effective over time.

Why Does It Matter?

The "Sustain" stage of the EEF's implementation guide emphasises the importance of long-term planning and continuous improvement. Embedding change requires ongoing support, reflection, and adaptation to ensure that the benefits are sustained and that the initiative becomes a natural part of your setting's culture.