

You Can... **Tackle Ofsted forms!**

The revised inspection framework (April 2005) requires settings to complete a self-evaluation form. It asks the question, What is it like for a child here? The form requires the provider to assess how well they meet the outcomes described in the document Every Child Matters. It consists of tick boxes, and providers grade their own provision on the same scale as the inspector, from a '1' for outstanding to a '4' for inadequate. A useful tick list for required documents is provided with the self-evaluation form.

Thinking points

- Complete the form in good time rather than putting it off, and revisit it quarterly. Day care providers will normally receive no notice of the inspection. It is important, therefore, that all documents are kept up to date and reviewed regularly.
- Once you have completed the form, you will have identified areas that require attention. You need to show how you are taking action to improve. Self-evaluation is the key to the planning and review cycle. One of the inspection judgements is assessing the setting's ability to improve.
- When completing the form, it is useful to keep the *National Standards*, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage or Birth to Three Matters*, and the Ofsted guidance *Are you ready for your inspection?* close by as reference.
- Have you evidence to show how you organise your childcare, promote the children's well-being and provide quality teaching and learning?

General requirements

- The self-evaluation form will be the starting point for discussion with inspectors. Think carefully about the grades and remember to add written comments on the form as to the reason for your grades.
- If you have not completed the form before the inspection, you will be asked to do it on the day.

Tips, ideas and activities

- Don't procrastinate. Say, *I want to complete this form* and not, *I have to*.
- Review your time management. Make an appointment with yourself to allocate time to research and complete the form.
- Be systematic in tackling the sections on the form; complete one at a time. Collect all the relevant information for each section. Start with the section you see as most difficult – once that is completed the rest should be easy.
- Equip your setting with attractive files, make them easily accessible and develop a filing system for each section of the form.
- Tape an index at the front, so you can retrieve and update information quickly. Colour-code the files into broad categories: records, assessment and regulations.
- Put 'inspection' on the staff-meeting agenda. Make sure all staff are familiar with the self-evaluation procedures and the way the inspection will be carried out. Enlist their help in collecting information.

