

Rough Guide to Planning & Review

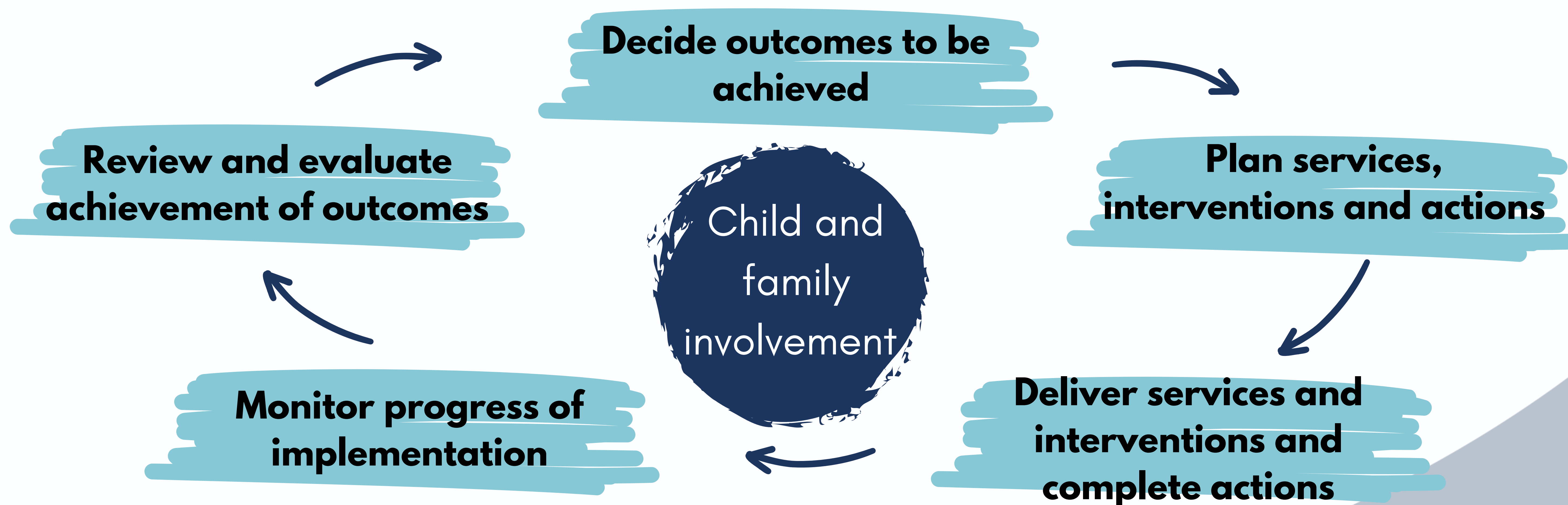
what

Planning is the process of deciding what needs to be done, how it needs to be done, when it needs to be done, by whom, and what resources or inputs are needed. The process also allows practitioners to decide the results and outcomes to be achieved.

why

Planning is integral to a coordinated multi-agency approach and allows all professionals, services and agencies to deliver an effective and timely package of support to children, young people and their families.

Overview of the planning and review process:



What does planning involve?

- **Deciding who should be involved in developing the plan.** Participants should include people who will be affected by the plan and those who can impact it.
- **Deciding the results or outcomes.** This is where you should start and are what interventions should lead to. You also need to agree how outcomes will be achieved and how you will know.
- **Prioritising outcomes** as not all will be of equal priority. Decide which outcomes are the most urgent to the child's situation.
- **Agreeing the actions that need to be taken** for each outcome, listing the steps that need to be taken to achieve it.
- **Clarifying any inputs or resources needed.** This could include finances, people, materials, equipment and transport. You also need to decide who will be responsible for each and by when.
- **Deciding timescales.** Depending on the level familiarity with the tasks, you should have some idea how long each will take. You also need to consider scheduling and ensure there are no significant clashes.
- **Deciding who will be responsible** for carrying out each activity. Each responsible person should have a degree of authority to ensure their task is completed. Consider the experience, skills, capabilities, confidence, time commitments and willingness of each person involved to complete each task.
- **Deciding which information will be needed to monitor and check progress.** Consider what information will be needed, how you can collect it, who will collect it and who will analyse it.
- **Implementation.** This is bringing the plan to life and ensuring outcomes are actually achieved, or your planning will go to waste. Everyone involved should know exactly what is expected of them and when they are expected to deliver it.
- **Collecting information throughout implementation.** You should already know what information will be needed for monitoring progress. Focus your information collection around the questions that you want answering about progress.

Remember, planning is only useful if people are committed to implementation, which is a joint effort between practitioners and the family.

Principles Underpinning Effective Plans

Good planning should define the steps needed to achieve the desired outcomes. The process should reflect the following principles:

- **It is comprehensive**, addresses unmet needs and considers all options.
- **It is efficient**, timely and avoids delays in implementation.
- **It is inclusive** and gives children and families the opportunity to be involved.
- **It is integrated** – all agencies and practitioners collaborate and contribute.
- **It is logical** with each step leading to the next. All actions, interventions and services are linked to outcomes.
- **It is transparent** – everyone involved understands the aims and how to achieve them.

What Makes A Good Plan?

- It is fit for purpose and complete
- It is realistic and can be implemented
- It is specific. Progress and results can be tracked against the plan
- It clearly defines responsibilities for implementation
- It clearly identifies assumptions
- It is communicated to the people who have to implement it and who are affected by it
- It motivates people and gains their commitment
- It is kept alive by monitoring and review

Top Tips

- Centre your planning on the results that you want for the child, rather than thinking of it as a list of tasks to be completed. Everything you and others do should work to improve the child's situation and be linked to achieving results and outcomes.
- Be specific in relation to the what, who and when. Vague and abstract plans are meaningless to the people who are implementing them.

Monitoring A Plan

A key part of implementation is monitoring. This is key for a number of reasons:

- It helps assure you and others that you're 'on track'
- You need to ensure that the results you achieve are what you intended to accomplish
- It helps identify any unexpected problems
- It allows you to assess how likely it is that the next milestone will be completed on time
- It allows for adjustments and corrective action to ensure the desired results are achieved
- It allows you to determine whether the resources and capacity you have are sufficient
- It helps to keep everyone focussed and committed to the main goal – helping the child
- It provides a useful base for a full review

Whatever the format of your monitoring, the focus will always be on how the planned actions are progressing, has everyone delivered their contributions, are we on track, whether any unexpected issues arose and how the plan can be adjusted accordingly.

Reviewing A Plan

Whilst monitoring is focused on the implementation of a plan, reviewing is **focussed on results** or outcomes. It involves:

- Looking at what they plan set out to achieve
- Considering if the desired outcomes are still appropriate and relevant
- Assessing progress towards what they plan aims to achieve
- Looking at what worked, what didn't, whether outcomes were achieved, and whether there were any unplanned outcomes.

Reviewing a plan involves analysing the information that was collected throughout implementation, in relation to the outcome indicators. This part of the process **should always include the child and family** as some of the information will come from child or family reporting.

Information collection and analysis should be built into the planning process.