

# Supporting Meaningful Assessment

Cambridgeshire Early Years, Childcare and School Readiness Service (CambsEYC)

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# Introduction

The early years foundation stage statutory framework is clear that assessment needs to be carried out in a way that minimises the time that the adult is taken away from the child, since we know children learn best through positive and sensitive interactions with adults. Assessment should provide us with a broad and balanced view of what a child can achieve, conducted as part of a conversation between practitioners, the family, external agencies, and the child.

If we consider assessment as a tick list of “this is what we want children to achieve” we potentially risk misunderstanding a huge amount of information about a child. Assessment should not be used as a reason to race children on to the next point as fast as possible – this may tell us about the speed at which children can move on at, but does not consider the depths of their knowledge, whether they are practising those skills at home, what barriers they may have to learning or how we, as adults, need to support them. Instead, assessment should be used to identify what a child can and cannot do, what learning they have embedded, and what they need more support with, to achieve.

In this toolkit we reflect on how to ensure our assessments in early years settings and schools are meaningful, useful and reflect all aspects of the child’s development.

Integral to teaching is how practitioners assess what children know, understand, and can do, as well as taking account of their interests and dispositions to learn (characteristics of effective learning), and how practitioners use this information to plan children’s next steps in learning and to monitor their progress. Ofsted Education Inspection Framework: Early Years Handbook April 2024, paragraph 186.

Once you have established a curriculum based on progression that is attainable for all, then assessment can be made against the curriculum that is being provided. In Cambridgeshire, our systems will reflect the following terminology:

1. **Good Progress** – this will be for many of the children, much of the time. By assessing a child as making ‘good progress’ the practitioner is indicating that they have no concerns about the progress the child is making through the curriculum that is being offered.
2. **Some Progress** – this would be used to indicate a child that is making some progress but not at the pace that would keep them on track to meet the curriculum aims/goals. They may therefore require some form of intervention or adjustment to the curriculum to support them to make accelerated progress back to being on track.
3. **Little or No Progress** – this would indicate that a lack of progress in one or more areas of learning is causing concern despite intervention and adjustments to the curriculum being introduced. At this point a school or setting may need to seek additional advice or involvement from SEND specialists if appropriate.

Where children are making little or no progress, we would expect practitioners to identify the barriers to learning. These may be fixed, e.g., a physical disability such as a visual impairment or learning difficulty such as dyslexia or ADHD. Barriers to learning can also be dynamic, e.g., hunger, tiredness, lack of confidence, boredom, low self-esteem, turbulence at home (parental separation, parental/sibling illness). Precise identification of these barriers should ensure the correct support is provided with appropriate adjustments to move children back to making good progress.

# 1. Meaningful assessment

Assessment has meaning when it is acted upon quickly to ensure an appropriate response from adults. This could be to capitalise on children's individual interests, or on their current care needs, or to progress their learning over time.

Some form of assessment is necessary to determine whether what you planned for the children engaged them and helped them progress in their learning. Naturally, their needs change over time as they grow and develop, and the analysis and interpretation you made of your observations will inform how the learning environment and pedagogical approach might be continually adapted or enhanced to meet these needs.

Assessing children's progress does not require collecting and recording unnecessary evidence. It can be an internal or peer-to-peer moderation conversation based on the holistic knowledge gained about a child through formal and informal observations. Meaningful assessment, when viewed as a collaborative process, will help remove any identified barriers to learning and ensure all children can thrive.

## **EYFS Statutory Framework (January 2024) page 19, paragraph 2.1**

2.1. Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers, and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners knowing children's level of achievement and interests, and then shaping teaching and learning experiences for each child reflecting that knowledge.

**Development Matters** Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage. (Updated September 2023) page 10, section 5

## **Reflecting on practice**

Ask yourself...

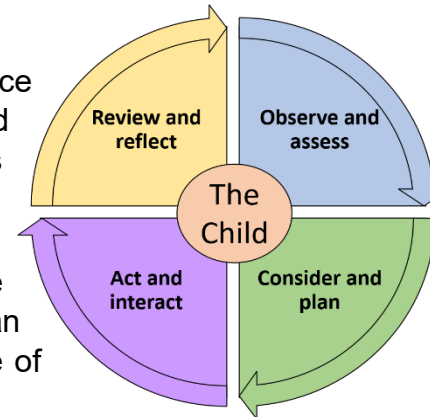
- Are there times our assessment opportunities take priority over children's experiences?
- What does it feel like for the child, to have adults assessing their play and learning?
- How are the voices of children reflected in assessments?
- How do we ensure our assessments reflect the unique child?
- How do we ensure assessment opportunities are purposeful and proportionate?
- When do we monitor the integrity of our assessments?
- How do we ensure meaningful assessment informs an ongoing dialogue with parents and teachers, supporting successful transitions?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

## 2. The observation, assessment, and planning cycle

The observation, assessment and planning cycle has traditionally been portrayed as a three-part cycle, however, it may be helpful to consider the cycle in more detail, for example, as a four-part cycle (shown below). The purpose of the planning cycle is to ensure that planning is centred on the child and responsive to their needs. Whether planning is done in the moment, in advance, or a combination of both, the intent of the planning and the impact it will have on the child is key.

- **Observe and assess – how do you see and understand me?** Notice and identify what the child can and cannot do, what their likes and interests are, what they are saying and feeling. Ensure that the views of the child and parents are included.
- **Consider and plan – how do you support and teach me?** What do we want the child to learn next? What rich experiences would we like them to have? How can we help them build vocabulary? How can we build on what they know and can do to scaffold the next stage of their learning? How can we help them develop their thinking?
- **Act and interact – how do you play and talk with me?** Implementing our planning. To facilitate learning we may need to amend the environment or resources. Sensitive interactions will support and scaffold children's learning. We need to ensure that plenty of time is allowed for children to repeat activities and actions to embed their learning.
- **Review and reflect – how do you know if I am ready for another challenge?** Does the activity need to be repeated? Do children need more or similar experiences to help embed and extend their learning? How often do we reflect on the enabling environment to ensure it is supporting the needs of all children?



Observation, assessment and planning is all about noticing what the children's interests are, what children can do, how they are feeling and what they are saying, interpreting this so we know how to adapt our behaviour and environment to support them to build on what they already know and can do. It is also about noticing what children cannot yet do and what unmet needs they have.

### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- How do we ensure that our observation and assessment is free from any bias or stereotyping, whether conscious or unconscious?
- Is our planning based on the needs of individual children?
- How do we ensure our children have access to a wide range of rich experiences?
- How do we use assessment to reflect on the impact of our planning?
- How often we reflect on the effectiveness of our assessments?
- Do our assessments include the views of colleagues, the child, and their family?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

### 3. The importance of understanding the child's journey

Child development theories and approaches should underpin a child's development through practice and provision. Staff should be confident to reflect and discuss these as a team with other professionals and families, e.g., Bowlby and Attachment theory. The individual child, their environment and cultural background are key in supporting significant stages of their development.



#### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- How knowledgeable are you and your team on child development?
- Do you have pedagogical discussions linked to individual children and their developmental progress?
- What support systems do you have in place for staff and parents?
- Does your setting's ethos support the consolidation of a child's journey?
- How do you promote the child's characteristics of effective learning to support their mindset?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

Development Matters “sets out the pathways of children’s development in broad ages and stages. The actual learning of young children is not so neat and orderly. For that reason, accurate and proportionate assessment is vital. It helps you to make informed decisions about what a child needs to learn and be able to do next.” Development Matters, updated September 2023.

“Development refers to the processes through which the body, brain, abilities and behaviour of the infant, child and adult become more complex and continue to mature throughout life. Development involves cognition, memory, attention, language, and communication as well as feelings, relationships, and sensory-motor skills. Although development is often considered in terms of various aspects, it cannot really be compartmentalised since one domain very often influences the development of other domains. It is important to consider the whole child at the centre of many influences on development.

“The baby’s brain is not simply a fixed structure which develops in a genetically pre-determined way. It depends on external stimulation from experience to form neurological connections. Babies and children are not passive in the process of development but are actively stretching their own capacities as they observe and interact with other people, objects, and events in the world.” Birth to 5 Matters 2021, page 18



## 4. Schema

Schematic play is a normal part of children's development and although some children will obviously engage in schematic play, not all will. It is important that practitioners and parents understand and value their children's schematic play and recognise that the child is not being disruptive in their play but is exploring and developing vital brain connections.<sup>1</sup>

Observing children's schema enables practitioners to recognise their patterns of behaviour as meaningful and plan opportunities for them to develop and build on these skills. A skilled practitioner can support in redirecting explorations of schema into an appropriate way for that setting, e.g., a child exploring a trajectory schema can be directed to throw beanbags in an allowed area. When observing and assessing children, practitioners should take account of the range of skills children are learning from their schematic play. Examples of [schematic play - sketch](#)\* created by Education Scotland. \*Size: 1,297 KB File format: pdf

Types of schematic play children may engage in could be:

- **Transporting:** Moving themselves or objects from one place to another
- **Positioning:** An interest in ordering and placing objects or their own bodies.
- **Rotational:** A preference for things that turn, twist, roll, wind and unwind.
- **Enveloping:** An interest in covering and hiding items and themselves.
- **Enclosing:** An interest in enclosed spaces, making barricades and borders.
- **Trajectory:** A fascination with the horizontal, vertical, and diagonal movement of things and self
- **Connecting:** Joining things, taking them apart, using string and other materials to hold things together.
- **Orientation:** Experiment by moving objects or themselves around or upside down, they like to view things from different angles.

### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- Do we understand the distinct types of schematic play and what these might look like?
- Are we proactive in supporting children's schematic play?
- How do we support parents in understanding their child's schematic play?
- How do we use schema in observation, assessment, and planning?
- Do we look at schematic play as a way of understanding children's behaviour?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

Schemas are a repeated pattern of behaviour that enables children to develop and deepen their understanding of concepts by building links in their brains. By repeating actions children learn how to modify or update them and can observe what happens because of these changes.

<sup>1</sup> Occasionally children with development needs may have slightly more pronounced schematic play, which is important to note, but should not be used as a diagnostic assessment. However, if a child will only engage in one type of schematic play, and will not engage in anything else, this should be considered as a barrier to learning.

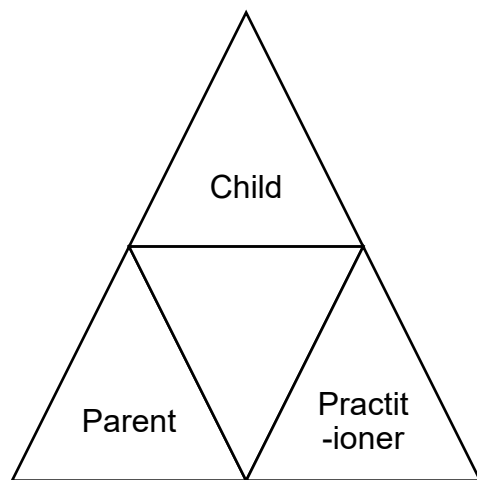


## 5. Effective record keeping

Keeping effective records is an important part of working in the Early Years to ensure we are building bridges between what we observe and what we are planning to offer children next. Effective records provide insight into the learning journey of individuals, groups, and cohorts of children.

Effective records include:

- Contributions from parents and main carers
- The voice of the child
- A variety of sources of evidence, e.g., notes, images, video, audio, child's own work
- Links to the curriculum being offered.
- Evidence of progress over time
- Key milestones and achievements



Some settings choose to use digital recording platforms for observations and assessments. It is important that these are viewed as a tool and are used to provide a holistic overview of a child's development, rather than as a tick list or by simply selecting statements to verify a child's progress. It is important that practitioners trust and apply their own knowledge and judgement rather than relying on checking off a list of statements.

The 'Triangle of Trust' (Elfer, Goldschmied & Selleck, 2012) plays a crucial role in the way records are kept for a child. For parents to feel records about their child are meaningful or useful, they must trust in the key person responsible for keeping them. Records must be an accurate, honest, and holistic depiction of the child.

### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- Is the 'Triangle of Trust' embedded in the practice around record keeping in your setting?
- Do the records you keep capture significant moments in the child's learning journey?
- Are the six bullet points listed on the left evident in your records? If not, which will you prioritise to develop further?
- Do the records you keep both assess children and evaluate the curriculum being offered?
- Are your records jargon free so that all practitioners and parents understand them?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

"2.2 Assessment should not involve long breaks from interaction with children or require excessive paperwork. When assessing whether an individual child is at the expected level of development, practitioners should draw on their knowledge of the child and their own expert professional judgement. Practitioners are not required to prove this through collection of any physical evidence." EYFS Statutory Framework

## 6. Including children in their assessments

When children are involved, and their voice is heard they feel listened to, and we can see their experience from their point of view. For example, we may assume a picture they have drawn is of a house when it is of a completely different building. Children thrive when they ask, imagine, plan, create and interact with the world around them. Including the children's voice in our assessments of them not only ensures that we have a complete picture of the children's knowledge but enables them to understand their learning and learning journey and helps to build metacognitive function<sup>2</sup> in the child.

Children say that to fully hear them; they need you to be an adult who:

- builds warm, nurturing, respectful and responsive relationships with them, their families and the other adults in their Early Years setting.
- is playful, fun and enjoys learning alongside them.
- recognises that meaningful conversations and interactions are based, not only on subject knowledge, but also on your knowledge of the child, their family, and their community.
- responds sensitively to their family culture and home language.
- notices when to pause, engage and extend their learning and interests through meaningful conversations and interactions.
- recognises the importance of modelling and scaffolding their learning through contexts meaningful and interesting to them.
- provides both intentional and responsive experiences which actively support the development of their learning including opportunities for one to one and group conversation and interactions.
- can identify relevant materials and an understanding of the learning opportunities which you can offer to support their progression in learning.

“Children can make good use of assessment information when it is shared with them. It can help them to remember their previous learning. It can give them an opportunity to talk about how they learn best. It can enable them to see how they are becoming powerful learners as they develop more skills and learn new things.” Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice, Dr Julien Grenier, page 48

### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- How often do children take their own pictures to share on online learning platforms and how often is the text their own words?
- What other methods could you use to reflect the child's voice in their assessments?
- How do you ensure you listen fully to what children are doing and not make assumptions?
- How do your assessments reflect the child's home and community context?

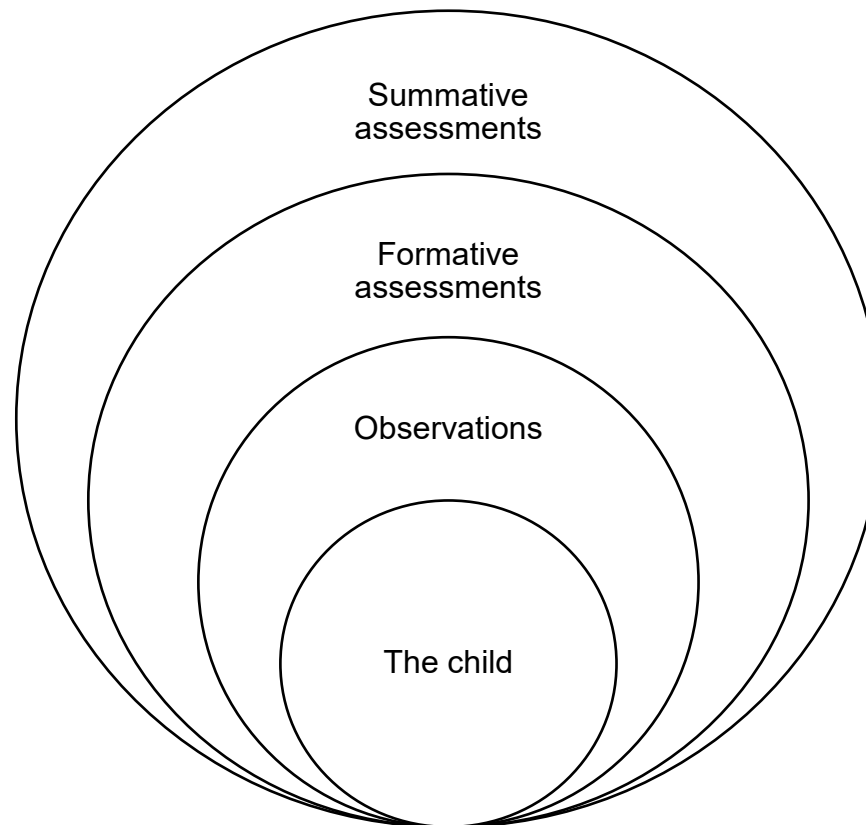
Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

<sup>2</sup> **Metacognition** is the child being aware of themselves as a thinker and learner.

## 7. Summative and formative assessments

Formative assessments are the ongoing assessments that we conduct on a day-to-day basis and form an integral part of the learning and development process. Formative assessments are not always written down but can be part of the practitioner's reflective practice. Conducting formative assessments helps practitioners to understand the children's level of development, interests and learning styles. Formative assessments enable practitioners to adapt and adjust provision as soon as the assessment has been made, to ensure that children are able to continuously learn and develop. Importantly, formative assessments also enable practitioners to identify children who are finding an activity or skill harder than their peers and to put in support or additional opportunities for them to practice the skill. It is important that if a formative assessment highlights a problem or difficulty that support is put into place straight away, rather than waiting for a defined "assessment point" to act on what has been observed. In this way, small difficulties are less likely to accumulate and become larger gaps in knowledge or skills.

Summative assessments are used to summarise a child's progress, for example by completing a tracker or writing a report and help to provide an accurate overview of a child's development and progress. It is important that summative assessments are used to meet the needs of the child and their family, rather than the needs of the setting, and are conducted at key points in the child's journey, for example when transitioning between rooms or into a new setting.



### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- How do we support practitioners in their formative assessments?
- Do we capture assessments in a meaningful way, without unnecessary paperwork?
- How often do we complete summative assessments? Are these completed at meaningful points in the child's journey?
- How are practitioners supported to act on assessment straight away rather than waiting for a fixed point in time to act, e.g., a summative assessment or supervision?
- How are summative and formative assessments used to inform quality teaching and learning?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

# 8. Reflecting on progress

Ofsted make it clear in their Early Years Inspection Handbook that leaders and managers of settings are expected to understand the strengths and weaknesses of their own provision. One way this can be done is by looking for patterns across areas of learning and development for different groups of children. In particular:

“Inspectors will evaluate how well:

- leaders assure themselves that the setting’s curriculum (educational programmes) intentions are met, and it is sufficiently challenging for the children it serves.
- leaders use additional funding, including the early years pupil premium where applicable, and measure its impact on disadvantaged children’s outcomes.” Early Years Handbook, paragraph 185.

It is important that we reflect on the progress of diverse groups of children in our setting, particularly those in vulnerable groups. Group (or cohort) tracking is one way of enabling leaders and managers to understand specific patterns or trends. This enables them to reflect on practice and provision and identify any changes that may be required. It also enables appropriate interventions to be implemented and monitored to support all children to make good progress. A cohort tracking tool is provided in Appendix 4, however reflection on progress could use a tool from an electronic journal. The tool and the data produced is less important than the reflective conversation on the progress of children in the setting. Reflecting on the progress of groups of children can help to identify weaknesses in continuous provision, the need for further staff training or enhancements to target specific groups of children. It can then be used to influence action plans and to improve the quality of teaching and learning within your setting.

Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- Do we look at the progress of different groups of children, especially those who are disadvantaged?
- How do we ensure that cohort tracking, and reflection does not become burdensome and is genially useful?
- How does reflecting on progress influence our setting self-evaluation? Do we use it to identify gaps in provision and training needs?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

“Cohort analysis has helped me identify that the boys in our preschool room are not making good progress in writing. We have reviewed our provision in this room and accessed some training to support the staff.”

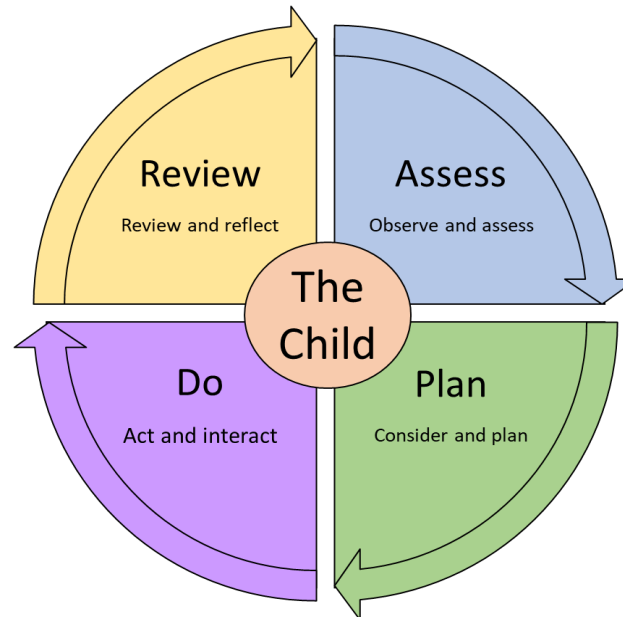
“We were concerned that our children with English as an additional language were not doing as well as our English-speaking children. However, cohort analysis revealed that they were making better progress than other children and should catch up by the time they leave.”

## Quotes from Cambridgeshire settings

## 9. Supporting children with SEND and emerging needs

Assessment for children with SEND or emerging needs should follow the assess, plan, do review cycle. This aligns with the planning cycle in section two but will require additional resources to enable you to ensure that the process identifies all the children's barriers to learning and supports you to effectively meet children's needs.

- **Observe and assess – how do you see and understand me?** You may need to conduct more observations on a child with SEND and Emerging needs to ensure that they are making progress and assess in more detail, for example using the Cambridgeshire Early Years Developmental Journal (CEYDJ)
- **Consider and plan – how do you support and teach me?** It is important that children with SEND and Emerging Needs have access to a suitably adapted curriculum that meets their needs and that next steps for the adults collaborating with them are planned and recorded using an Individual Child Plan (ICP).
- **Act and interact – how do you play and talk with me?** Children with SEND and Emerging needs may need a higher level of adult interaction to support their learning and development. Careful thought needs to be given to ensuring that adult expectations around play and communication reflect the child's level of need.
- **Review and reflect – how do you know if I am ready for another challenge?** Children with SEND and emerging needs may need an activity repeated more frequently or broken down into smaller steps to fully embed it. Consider seeking support from an external professional if after breaking an activity down into smaller steps a child is still not making progress.



“5.4 Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN. The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point, and then making effective provision, improves long-term outcomes for children.” SEND Code of Practice, page 79

### Top Tips

- You may need additional assessment processes and tools, e.g., Universally Speaking, ECAT, CEY DJ to fully understand the child's level of need.
- You should seek support if you need to complete an EHCP.
- You should include the views of involved professionals in your assessments.
- Views and opinions of parents must be paramount in your assessment.
- SEND assessment sits alongside a good knowledge of child development. Consider referring to Development Matters, Birth to 5 Matters and other tools.
- You should capture the child's barriers to learning, needs, interests and strengths to form an appropriate plan to meet needs.
- You should consider dynamic barriers for children – barriers are not always static, e.g., sleep changes, feeding changes.

## 10. Assessment conversations

It is important to see assessment as part of a holistic conversation about the child. Assessment conversations should involve parents/carers and all professionals working with the child, including external professionals, to establish the wider picture of what the child can do and what they need more support with.

If parents/carers or professionals have different opinions, especially about what the child can do it can be useful to plan to support the conversation and ensure that it is productive.

- **Establish the facts:** ensure that everybody in the conversation has a chance to establish the facts, using examples and observations, if required. Try to avoid giving opinions not based on fact.
- **Acknowledge the differences:** is there a reason for the different opinion? It may be that a child progresses at different rates or has different barriers in different settings.
- **Clarify where you have got to** summarise what has been discussed so far and repeat back what has been said so that everyone is clear.
- **Work out the next steps:** agree a plan to move forwards, even if it is watching and waiting for an agreed period.

Where the conversation could be emotionally sensitive consider how this information is shared, for example by using a “sandwich model” highlighting what is going well, then sharing the concern, followed by something else that is going well.

It can be helpful to ensure that you have a quiet place, away from the children and other parents/carers to have these conversations. It is important to have ongoing assessment conversations with parents/carers so that any concerns can be addressed rapidly.

“2.3. Practitioners should keep parents and/or carers up to date with their child’s progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.” EYFS Statutory Framework 2024, page 19

### Top Tips

- Ensure you have enough time to have a conversation without rushing.
- Consider how to ensure any professionals working with the family are included in the conversation.
- Consider the time of day you are having a conversation, is it suitable for the parent, do they have another child with them?
- Do you need an additional person to take notes, or would this be overwhelming for the family?
- Ensure that you are sharing the background for the facts, e.g., by using relevant pages from Development Matters, Birth to 5 Matters, or What to expect When?
- Discussing children’s development can be emotional for some families, ensure you are prepared to support them.
- Seek support from a colleague after the conversation if you need to, e.g., through a supervision or other professional conversation.



## 11. Supporting multilingual learners

Assessing children for whom English is not their first language is built on the same principles used for assessing every child. It is important that you work closely with their family to ensure that their home language is developing as expected. The speed of children's acquisition of a second language will vary - if they have grown up hearing two languages, they will be at a different point from a child that has never heard or learnt English. There is no exact answer, but recent research suggests that it can take a child up to two years to learn enough English to get by socially and in the playground, and five to seven years to develop their skills to GCSE level. There is a difference, however, in the known "Silent period" whilst the child is acquiring a second language, to a child who is not developing any language in that period. It is important to check in with families during this period to ensure that the child's home language is developing as expected. The "Silent Period" is a developmental stage and is not necessarily an indicator that the child has SEND or Emerging Needs unless there are other concerns.

Children must have opportunities to engage in activities and first-hand experiences that do not depend solely on English for success. They must be able to participate in ways that reveal what they know and can do in the security of their home language. The three aspects specific to the assessment of children for whom English is not their home language are: development in their home language, development across areas of learning, assessed through their home language, development of English. The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) in communication and language and for literacy must be assessed in relation to the child's competency in English. The remaining ELGs may be assessed in the context of any language – including the child's home language and English.

"1.14 For children whose home language is not English, providers must take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.

1.15 Providers must also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin year one." Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2024, page 16

### Top Tips

- Ensure you work closely with other carers – family or other settings – to gather a holistic view of the child's understanding and use of English in the different contexts they use it.
- Be aware of different words used in different settings – try to keep core language the same in different settings the child attends and agree key words that the child will hear repeatedly.
- Ensure that you can communicate with the child key words and phrases in their home language.
- Consider how you can support the child and family with the use of visuals.
- Consider the use of videos for observations where the child is using their home language so families can help identify what is being said.



## 12. EYFS statutory assessments: the progress check at age two to three

When a child is aged between two and three, early years practitioners must review their progress in partnership with parents and/or carers. A short, written summary of their child's development in the prime areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) should be provided. It is also recommended that the Characteristics of Effective Learning are included in the progress check.

This progress check must identify the child's strengths and any areas where the child's progress is less than expected.

If there are significant emerging concerns, or an identified special educational need or disability, practitioners should develop a targeted plan to support the child's future learning and development. This should involve parents and other professionals (for example the setting's SENCo and/or health professional) as appropriate.

Practitioners must engage with parents and/or carers to agree how the summary of development can be used to support learning at home.

Where providers should work with health visitors, who will conduct the Healthy Child Check at age two and share information and any concerns, with parental permission, to integrate the two reviews.

### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- Are parents and carers genuinely part of a conversation about their child's progress at age two?
- How does the progress check reflect the child's strengths and interests?
- What action do you take when the progress check highlights significant concerns or barriers to learning?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

"2.8 The summary must highlight areas in which a child is progressing well; areas in which some additional support might be needed; and focus particularly on any areas where there is a concern that a child may have a developmental delay (which may indicate a special educational need or disability)." Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework 2024, page 19

## 13. EYFS statutory assessment: the reception baseline

The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) is taken in the first six weeks in which a child starts in Reception. The RBA assesses a child in early mathematics, literacy, communication, and language. The outcome of the test is solely intended for use as a progress measure when compared with end of key stage 2 outcomes seven years later. The RBA has been designed to be inclusive and accessible to many pupils, including those with SEND and learning English as an additional language.

The assessment consists of:

- mathematics tasks
  - early number
  - early calculation (early addition/subtraction)
  - mathematical language
  - early understanding of pattern
- literacy, communication, and language tasks
  - early vocabulary
  - phonological awareness
  - early comprehension

The RBA is a short, interactive assessment. Although the assessment is not timed, it has been designed to take around 20 minutes. The assessment can be conducted by a teacher, teaching assistant, early years practitioner or any other trained education professional who should be familiar with the child taking the assessment.

### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- Have you identified suitable individual/s to administer the assessment (reception teacher, reception teaching assistant or suitably qualified practitioner)?
- Are those conducting the assessment fully trained and familiar with the materials?
- How will the narrative statements about each child be used to support the wider holistic assessment practices?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

Further information can also be found on the Government website: [Reception baseline assessment framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-baseline-assessment-framework)

Standards & Testing Agency (STA), Assessment Framework, February 2020.

## 14. EYFS statutory assessment: the early years foundation stage profile

The EYFS Profile is a statutory assessment of a child's attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The EYFS Profile assesses the child's attainment in relation to the Early Learning Goal (ELG) descriptors. Practitioners may also choose to provide a short narrative describing how the child demonstrates the three key characteristics of effective teaching and learning.

For each ELG, practitioners must indicate whether a child is:

- meeting the level of development expected at the end of the EYFS (expected); or
- not yet reaching this level (emerging)

Practitioners should use their professional knowledge of the child to decide whether each ELG description best fits the child's learning and development. Year 1 teachers must be given a copy of the Profile report, and schools must share the results of the Profile with parents/carers.

Early years providers must report EYFS Profile results to their Local Authority who will return this data to the DfE.

Further information can be found on the Government website: [Early years foundation stage profile handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-handbook)

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Handbook, DfE

### Reflecting on practice

Ask yourself...

- How will internal and inter-school moderation throughout the year support the quality assurance of assessment judgements?
- How do I ensure 'best fit' is understood to mean that the child does not necessarily have equal mastery of all aspects of the ELG?
- What adaptations need to be in place to ensure each child can demonstrate attainment to the best of their ability?
- Do I know which ELGs must be assessed in English?
- Do I know how to submit data to the Local Authority?
- Do I know what to report to Year one colleagues and parents?

Why not discuss this as a team to ensure a consistent approach?

## Websites:

- [Inside the secret garden \(juliangrenier.blogspot.com\)](http://juliangrenier.blogspot.com)
- [Early years inspection handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Beyond levels: alternative assessment approaches developed by teaching schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Reception baseline assessment framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- [Early years foundation stage profile handbook - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Harvard University – information on unconscious bias: [Take a Test \(harvard.edu\)](http://harvard.edu)

## Books for further Learning:

- Observing Young Children (Bruce, Louis & McCall, 2015)
- Minds Matter –Early Years Alliance June 2018
- Working with the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principals into Practice – Dr Julian Grenier

## References:

- Early Years Inspection Framework April 2024
- Birth to 5 Matters 2021
- Realising the ambition [realisingtheambition.pdf \(education.gov.scot\)](#) Size: 15.9 MB File format: pdf
- Development matters 2023

## Appendix 1 - cohort tracking analysis example

<b>How many children, in total, attend your setting?</b>														
<b>How many children are currently part of a vulnerable group?</b>														
SEND			EAL				Deprivation Funding							
Summer born			EYPP				Funded twos							
Boys			Girls				Other							
<b>How many children in each of the identified groups are making good progress in each area of Learning and Development?</b>														
	<b>CL</b>		<b>PSED</b>		<b>PD</b>		<b>L</b>		<b>M</b>		<b>UW</b>		<b>EAD</b>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
All children														
Boys														
Girls														
SEND														
Summer born														
EYPP														
Funded twos														
EAL														
Deprivation														
Other														
<b>Are you concerned that any children are not making progress? If they are not moving forwards, why? Are there any setting wide barriers to learning and development?</b>														

**What patterns and trends have you identified in your analysis?**

**What needs to change to ensure that all groups of children can build on their knowledge and skills? (Think about staff training, routines, resources, interactions, and planning)**

## Appendix 2 - assessment language summary

Once you have established a curriculum based on progression that is attainable for all, then assessment can be made against the curriculum that is being provided. In Cambridgeshire, our systems will reflect the following terminology:

1. **Good Progress** – this will be for many of the children, much of the time. By assessing a child as making ‘good progress’ the practitioner is indicating that they have no concerns about the progress the child is making through the curriculum that is being offered.
2. **Some Progress** – this would be used to indicate a child that is making some progress but not at the pace that would keep them on track to meet the curriculum aims/goals. They may therefore require some form of intervention or adjustment to the curriculum to support them to make accelerated progress back to being on track.
3. **Little or No Progress** – this would indicate that a lack of progress in one or more areas of learning is causing concern despite intervention and adjustments to the curriculum being introduced. At this point a school or setting may need to seek additional advice or involvement from SEND specialists if appropriate.

Where children are making little or no progress, we would expect practitioners to identify the barriers to learning. These may be fixed, e.g., a physical disability such as a visual impairment or learning difficulty such as dyslexia or ADHD. Barriers to learning can also be dynamic, e.g., hunger, tiredness, lack of confidence, boredom, low self-esteem, turbulence at home (parental separation, parental/sibling illness). Precise identification of these barriers should ensure the correct support is provided with appropriate adjustments to move children back to making good progress.