

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

---

## Contents

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) .....	1
Assessing children’s progress .....	2
Do I need to print a copy of Development Matters statements out for every child? .....	2
I am making “best fit” judgements for the child’s age and stage of development, but some monitoring tools divide the stage into three bands (emerging, strengthening, secure). How do I decide where a child is within these three bands? .....	2
How do I show progress when I child stays within one band for a long time? .....	3
I have a child who is secure in 8-20 months, but emerging in 16-26 months, which stage do I put them into? .....	3
I have some children who are working within the Early Learning Goals, how do I show their achievements using the tool? .....	3
I also have a child who has Down’s Syndrome and is using an Early Support Developmental Journal specifically for his condition. This Learning Journal is not like the others? .....	3
Learning journals .....	3
What records of children’s attainment do I need to record in the Learning Journal? .....	3
How do we involve parents in using the Learning Journal? .....	4
Do I need to get parents to comment on the Next Steps plans? .....	4
Should we use the ‘Characteristics of Effective Learning’ box in the Next Steps Plans to reflect on how the child is currently demonstrating these or to plan for how to further support and develop them? .....	4
Do all settings, including childminders, have to complete the Group Progress Review? .....	5
Two-year-old progress checks .....	5
Can I have further guidance on what should be included in the 2 Year Progress Review? .....	5
If a child does not attend a setting or access provision until they are 3 years old will there still be a requirement for the progress check to be completed for them? .....	5
School Readiness Integrated Reviews .....	6
Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP) .....	6
Where can I find information about the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile? .....	6

# Assessing children's progress

## **Do I need to print a copy of Development Matters statements out for every child?**

No. The EYFS clearly states that the statements should not be used as a checklist and they are a guide to the types of things that children might be doing at particular ages and stages of development. It is your professional judgement on the "best fit" for each child and whether or not a child is working at an age-expected level that is central to monitoring their progress, through the Individual Progress Review sheet. For further information please refer to Learning Journal: Guidance Notes.

## **I am making "best fit" judgements for the child's age and stage of development, but some monitoring tools divide the stage into three bands (emerging, strengthening, secure). How do I decide where a child is within these three bands?**

The statements contained within the EYFS are not to be used as a checklist. They provide a few statements illustrating some of the things that a child may be doing at this particular stage as guidance to support practitioners making their judgements on children's stage of development.

Many practitioners will want to record a "best fit" judgement and record the progress children make through the next steps plans and review in the Learning Journal.

Some settings may wish to be able to show the steps children make in development whilst still in one band as the best fit. The guidance below may provide more clarity for settings when making these decisions.

- Emerging (.1) - When this is the best fit stage for a child but there are elements where the child is still working in the stage below.
- Strengthening (.2) - When this is the best fit stage for a child, they are becoming very confident at this level but have not yet begun to move into the next stage.
- Secure (.3) - When this is the best fit stage for a child, they are confident at this level and you are starting look to the next stage to plan their next steps.

It is not appropriate to use these statements in relation to the number of statements the child has achieved within each stage. These bands do not relate to the number of times that a child has been recorded within this stage of development.

## **How do I show progress when I child stays within one band for a long time?**

Your observations and next steps plans will indicate progress that an individual child is making. Some practitioners may wish to use the above banding to have another record of progress.

## **I have a child who is secure in 8-20 months, but emerging in 16-26 months, which stage do I put them into?**

The best fit stage is the stage for which the descriptors in the EYFS most closely fit their stage of development. For this child, first choose whether the descriptors for Stage 2 or 3 best fit the child. You can then decide to record as emerging or secure as appropriate.

## **I have some children who are working within the Early Learning Goals, how do I show their achievements using the tool?**

The Early Learning Goals are shown in the bold script of the descriptors in the 40-60+ month band, so you would record the child's level as Stage 6. There is no specific method of recording attainment against the Early Learning Goals, but this could be recorded within the Learning Journal.

## **I also have a child who has Down's Syndrome and is using an Early Support Developmental Journal specifically for his condition. This Learning Journal is not like the others?**

The Early Support Developmental Journals are designed to break children's development into small steps so that families can celebrate their child's progress. The Early Support Developmental Journal for Early Years has been designed to show links with the EYFS. Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities should still be assessed within the EYFS and will have a best fit stage. Developmental Journals can be used alongside this, if the parents would like it, to evidence and show progress within their best fit band and to celebrate key milestones.

## **Learning journals**

### **What records of children's attainment do I need to record in the Learning Journal?**

Learning Journals can be used as a celebration of individual children's learning and development and as a tool to engage with children and their families. Recording children's learning is a fundamental part of supporting their progress and contributes to the holistic picture that forms your professional knowledge of the child. It is important that any recorded evidence is meaningful and demonstrates the learning that is taking place. Written observations, photographs and examples

of children's recorded work can support your assessments and create a celebration of children's achievements to share with the child and their family. For further information please refer to Learning Journal: Guidance Notes pages.

### **How do we involve parents in using the Learning Journal?**

Practitioners using the Learning Journal have a good opportunity for engaging with families by sharing the records they keep and encouraging parents to contribute their views. This can be done by encouraging parents to share news, photos and updates on their child's interests and new skills that they attain. It is important to work with parents in genuine partnership to support children's learning and development. Practitioners should share their views about the child and listen to the parents' views and then work together to plan for the child's next steps. Ideally this is done through discussion with parents, but practitioners will need to understand the needs of the families and find the most appropriate way to communicate with them on a regular basis.

### **Do I need to get parents to comment on the Next Steps plans?**

Parental involvement in learning is essential to supporting children's progress and outcomes. Ideally, practitioners would meet with the parents and plan next steps together but, however information is shared, it is important that parents are aware of your assessment of their child's progress and how you are continuing to support their learning, as well as what they can do to support their child at home. The Next Steps Plans can be used as a tool to keep as a record of these discussions. For further information please refer to Learning Journal: Guidance Notes pages.

### **Should we use the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' box in the Next Steps Plans to reflect on how the child is currently demonstrating these or to plan for how to further support and develop them?**

Comments within this box should reflect how children currently engage with learning opportunities throughout the setting. As the Characteristics of Effective Learning are not progressive, practitioners should reflect on how the wider experiences on offer every day and their own interactions support children to demonstrate and further develop these Characteristics.

For example, it is not possible to plan for a child to become more motivated (as this is an inherent trait in all children). However, it is possible to ensure that experiences are open-ended and relate to a child's interests which will allow them to demonstrate their motivation.

Recording information about the Characteristics of Effective Learning is helpful to show how an individual child learns in addition to what they are learning. Supporting children using their learning styles is important to enable them to be life-long motivated learners and reflects the importance of the learning process over the outcomes of learning.

## **Do all settings, including childminders, have to complete the Group Progress Review?**

It is important that settings have an overview of the progress of children within their setting so that they can monitor progress of individuals and specific groups of children. Reviewing the overall progress of children within the setting can help to identify strengths and areas where practice can be developed to improve outcomes for children.

All formats within the Learning Journal are recommendations made by WSCC and fulfil the assessment requirements set out within the EYFS. However, as stated within the Early Assessment Guidance, you are free to select processes that meet your specific requirements. It is important for individual providers to determine whether this format or another process will enable them to most effectively identify and reflect on the progress of a range of children within the setting.

## **Two-year-old progress checks**

### **Can I have further guidance on what should be included in the 2 Year Progress Review?**

Refer to our [website](#) for full information.

### **If a child does not attend a setting or access provision until they are 3 years old will there still be a requirement for the progress check to be completed for them?**

Practitioners are expected to regularly update information about children's progress in whatever form they keep these records. The requirement to complete a 24-36 month progress check only falls upon settings when children are attending an early years setting at the age of two.

The two year integrated review is an opportunity, for children aged between 24 and 30 months, to share information with the family and a Healthy Child Programme practitioner to celebrate a child's progress and to identify any potential delays in children's development. For two year olds not receiving an integrated review, setting should complete their two year assessment and share it with the child's family. This assessment can be shared, by the family, with the Healthy Child Programme practitioner.

If a child does not access a setting until after their third birthday, there will be no requirement for a progress check to take place, but practitioners should still monitor children's progress and liaise with other professionals where appropriate – particularly if they have concerns about a child's development.

## School Readiness Integrated Reviews

In September 2018, West Sussex launched a new review aimed at supporting children to be ready for school. Refer to our [website](#) for full information.

## Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (EYFSP)

### **Where can I find information about the new Early Years Foundation Stage Profile?**

The Early Years Foundation Stage Profile is the assessment that is made at the end of the Foundation Stage (usually at the end of the child's time in Reception class in school). Refer to [Gov.UK](#) for full information.