

3. Inclusion

The EYFS Profile is an inclusive assessment, capable of capturing a wide range of children's learning and development outcomes. For some children, the processes of observation and assessment present a particular challenge to practitioners, which must be addressed for attainment to be accurately judged and recorded. This challenge applies both to

- understanding how some children might demonstrate attainment at the level expected at the end of the EYFS; and
- how to capture the attainment of children whose development is judged to be at the emerging level.

3.1. Children with special educational needs and disability

The range of special educational needs and disability (SEND) is diverse and includes physical, emotional, sensory and learning needs.

For children with SEND the setting will develop additional relationships with other professionals. It is vital that communication between all professionals and the child's parent is strong so that a clear picture is gained of the child's learning and development.

Observational assessment is the most effective way of making judgements about all children's learning and development. Depending on their special educational need, children will demonstrate their learning and development in different ways. Practitioners observing the child involved in day to day activities must take account of the following:

- where any item in the EYFS Profile contains the word 'talks' or 'speaks' children can use their established or preferred mode of communication; and
- the need to be alert to the child demonstrating attainment in a variety of ways, including eye pointing, use of symbols or signs.

Any adaptations children use to carry out their activities, such as mobility aids, magnification or adapted ICT and equipment, should be employed so that practitioners come to know all children at their most capable.

Where a child's learning and development does not yet meet the description of the level expected at the end of the EYFS for an individual ELG, the outcome will be recorded as emerging. Further information is available in the Development matters guidance, which is available from the Department's website at www.education.gov.uk/eyfs. The child's learning should be described in relation to these earlier developmental statements. Practitioners should also record details of any specific assessment and provision in place for the child, and use this comprehensive record as a basis for discussion with parent/carers and to support planning for future learning. This will ensure that parents and carers have a clear, rounded picture of their child's development and are informed about additional support and future activities.

Please note that P scales are an assessment tool designed for use at Key Stage 1 and should not be used for assessing children in the EYFS. As stated earlier, in these instances practitioners should refer to the Development matters guidance.

3.2 Children for whom English is not their home language

The communication skills of children for whom English is not their home language are not all the same. These children will be at different stages of learning English and one or more other languages. Learning English as an additional language is not a special educational need. Practitioners need to find out as much as they can about a child's prior language experience and any education experienced elsewhere. Parents, as the first educators, are an important source of information.

Underpinning the EYFS Profile assessment is the understanding that language is central to our sense of identity and belonging to a community, and that linguistic diversity is a strength that is recognised and valued. Practitioners may need to share with parents the understanding that a child's home language development will help them learn English.

Parents also need to know that it is perfectly acceptable, even desirable, for the child's home language to be used in the setting. Practitioners will need to observe the child over time and raise questions with the parents, and/or bilingual support assistants, to be confident about what the child knows and understands.

There are three aspects specific to the assessment of children for whom English is not their home language:

- development in their home language;
- development across areas of learning, assessed through their home language; and
- development of English.

Within the EYFS Profile, the ELGs for 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.

This has implications for provision. The principles of good practice for children learning English are the principles of good practice for all children. Children must have opportunities to engage in activities and first hand experiences that do not depend solely on English for success, and where they can participate in ways that reveal what they know and can do in the security of their home language. For children to grow in confidence, and hence demonstrate their embedded learning, their environment must reflect their cultural and linguistic heritage and their learning be supported by a wide range of stimuli and experiences.

3.3 Children from minority groups

The ethnicities of children within a setting can be diverse, particularly in urban settings. The children may be refugees or asylum seekers, their families may have histories of persecution and trauma, or they may have had positive experiences but different cultural conventions governing behaviours and gender roles. This cultural background may also determine how early education is perceived, and how much experience of school or another Early Years setting the child may have had prior to their EYFS Profile assessment.

Children may come from settled communities or travel frequently. This latter consideration affects not only minority groups such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children but also other groups such as children with armed forces, embassy and global corporate backgrounds.

Practitioners must take particular care that the environment echoes children's own positive experiences. Children will be able to demonstrate their attainment when opportunities such as role play, cookery, celebrations and visits to special places or events are linked to their cultural experience. This will also be captured in the narrative relating to characteristics of learning, where the child's ability to begin their play and exploration with things which are familiar and build new knowledge and learning from this starting point, are expressly considered (Playing and exploring: using what they know in their play).

The relationship with parents is crucial to developing the practitioners' knowledge of the child and their ability to make an accurate assessment. Parents can help practitioners understand the different values that explain their child's responses to the environment and social situations. A child will find it easier to express their feelings and feel confident in their learning if practitioners listen and respond in ways that show understanding.

3.4 Taking account of the needs of individual children

Reaching accurate assessments using the EYFS Profile requires practitioners to enable all children to reach their full potential. Consequently, practitioners must be alert to the general diversity of children's interests, needs and inclinations.

For instance, there may be children who are at an earlier stage of development than others in the cohort; some may have summer birthdays. These children and others may be highly active and more likely to demonstrate what they know, understand and can do in situations which are sympathetic to this inclination, often outdoors.

Practitioners should reflect on their observations and ensure that the provision enables all children, regardless of their stage of development or interests, needs and inclinations, to demonstrate attainment in ways that are motivating to them.

3.5 Transition conversations for children with an outcome at the emerging level.

Where children have an outcome of emerging for an ELG within the EYFS Profile, it is likely that this will not provide full information about their learning and development at the end of the EYFS. Additional information should be considered alongside EYFS Profile outcomes, to ensure that conversations between EYFS and Year 1 staff are meaningful, and lead to successful transition for the child.

An outcome of emerging may mask a wide range of levels of learning and development, the detail of which is built over time through observation, interaction with the child and ongoing assessment. There are many sources of information about how children learn and develop, how this may be manifested and how further learning and development might be supported. There is no requirement on practitioners to use any specific source of information in this context.

Specialist professional guidance is available for many specific special educational needs and disabilities and children with SEND may have records from professionals within and outside of the setting. These records should inform assessment and transition processes and, wherever possible, other professionals working with the child should be invited to contribute to transition conversations.

The Development matters guidance provides one source of detailed information about children's learning and development prior to reaching the level expected at the end of the EYFS, and practitioners may find this a useful point of reference when summarising a child's development at the emerging level, where additional detail is needed. Development matters is not designed as an assessment tool or checklist, but could underpin the development of shared understanding between EYFS and Year 1 colleagues about individual children.

The provision of additional information around the 20 items of the EYFS Profile, in order to support successful transition and a smooth learning journey for the child, should be considered by settings in advance of the summer term so that processes can be built on shared understanding, thoroughly planned, and implemented in good time. Decisions about what sources of guidance might be used and what additional information shared, should be made at a setting level and reflect local needs and circumstances.