



Foundation Phase child development assessment profile

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- Audience** Headteachers, teachers, practitioners and governing bodies of maintained schools; funded non-maintained settings; local authorities; teacher unions and school representative bodies; church diocesan authorities; national bodies in Wales with an interest in education.
- Overview** This document sets out the six Developmental Areas against which all children should be assessed when they first enter the Foundation Phase. It describes how, where and when these assessments may be undertaken and provides examples of what practitioners may observe when making their judgements.
- Further information** Enquiries about this guidance should be directed to:
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- Additional copies** Can be obtained from:
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Or by visiting the Welsh Assembly Government's website at www.wales.gov.uk/educationandskills
- Related documents** *Foundation Phase Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales; Observing Children* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2008); *Foundation Phase Child Development Profile Guidance* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009); *Foundation Phase on-entry assessment and reporting arrangements* (Welsh Assembly Government, 2011)

Contents

How to use the <i>Foundation Phase child development assessment profile</i>	2
Key to the guidance pages	5
Personal, Social and Emotional	9
Speaking and Listening	33
Reading and Writing	57
Sort, Order and Number	81
Approach to Learning, Thinking and Reasoning	99
Physical	123
Acknowledgements	141

The purpose of the *Foundation Phase child development assessment profile*

'On-entry' assessment

The main purpose of the *Foundation Phase child development assessment profile* (referred to as the 'Profile' throughout the remainder of this document) is to assess children within six weeks of their entry to the Foundation Phase in order to provide a 'baseline' assessment. The assessment will be a description of the whole child using the six Developmental Areas that make up the Profile. There are two documents – the *Foundation Phase child development assessment profile record form* for practitioners to record their observations and the guidance materials (contained in this document) which define and illustrate the behaviours to be observed and assessed.

The Descriptions of Behaviour are grouped into six Developmental Areas which describe the journey between 'child development' and 'learning outcomes':

- Personal, Social and Emotional
- Speaking and Listening
- Reading and Writing
- Sort, Order and Number
- Approach to Learning, Thinking and Reasoning
- Physical.

The Profile of the child at the point of entry to the Foundation Phase will, for the majority of children, be made at around the age of three. Some children might not enter the Foundation Phase (and thus will not be assessed) until they reach compulsory school age, i.e. the term following their fifth birthday.

Formative assessment and planning next steps in learning

The Descriptions of Behaviour, which comprise each Developmental Area, are made up of seven steps that span the developmental age equivalents of 18 to 84 months. This span is greater than the age range of the children who will be assessed, which is 36 to 60 months. The upward and downward extension is necessary to cater for children who may be at an early stage of their development and also for those who are more able. The following table describes the broad age ranges relating to each step.

Step	Age equivalent (months)
1	18–24
2	24–30
3	30–36
4	36–48
5	48–60
6	60–72
7	72–84

However, the Profile is likely to prove useful to practitioners beyond a one-off on-entry assessment, for as long as there remains progress to be made by children against the Descriptions of Behaviour. For example, practitioners should be able to see the potential of the Profile to support their formative assessment and subsequent planning of next steps in learning for many children, beyond the first six weeks of the children's Foundation Phase experience.

How to assess and record assessments using the record form

Each of the six Developmental Areas span seven 'Steps' and each 'Step' is represented by two or three Descriptions of Behaviour. Each Description of Behaviour has its own cell on the record form, for recording purposes. Assessment is achieved by observing each child, either individually, in a pair or in a group, as they engage with the various kinds of resources provided in a setting. (References to settings include funded non-maintained settings and maintained schools.) As far as possible, assessments are spontaneous and observe characteristics and behaviours that occur naturally in a setting. However, there will be occasions when behaviours may have to be encouraged to allow practitioners to make an informed judgement. A child should not need to be withdrawn from a group for the purposes of undertaking an assessment, although there may be occasions when particular behaviours need to be encouraged by the provision of particular resources.

It is recommended that recording is noted first in a temporary manner, prior to a final decision as to whether or not the Description of Behaviour has been met. The temporary record might take the form of a sticky label added tentatively to the appropriate section in the record form, allowing time for reflection and perhaps discussion with other practitioners before making the record of evidence that the Description of Behaviour has been met. Alternative ways of storing assessment information on a temporary basis could include a note on a section of whiteboard reserved for assessment evidence, or a note or annotated photograph in a child's file or portfolio. Only when success against a Description of Behaviour is confirmed should the evidence be permanently entered in the relevant section of the record form and signed and dated. This record should not be removed or modified subsequently as to do so would invalidate the 'on-entry' assessment.

There is no fixed or prescribed manner of managing the assessment, though practitioners should discuss their observations and judgements until they are confident that an accurate assessment has been made. It will be for the setting to make their own arrangements to undertake their assessment; however, this assessment should be spontaneous and consistent with children's interests and activities.

Using the assessment stories

Children will enter the Foundation Phase at different ages and stages of development, so it is advised that the practitioner utilises the assessment story provided within each Developmental Area. These stories provide an overview of the types of Descriptions of Behaviour pertinent to each of the Developmental Areas. The assessment story offers guidance as to where it is appropriate to begin the assessment process, on the assumption that some behaviours are likely to be judged as being well within the child's capability. Where prior knowledge of a child exists, this should form part of the child's on-entry assessment. Each child to be assessed might range from being extremely familiar to practitioners (perhaps because they have been attending the setting prior to the Foundation Phase) to being totally unknown (perhaps having moved from another setting or from another area). Assessment of a Developmental Area should begin with the earlier statement and continue until a point at which the upper limits of development have been reached.

Where to start and where to stop assessing with each Developmental Area – best fit

When all Descriptions of Behaviour relevant to the Developmental Area have been observed and no further behaviours are likely to be met, the assessment of that Developmental Area will be complete for on-entry purposes. All evidence should then have been entered as a permanent record, signed and dated. This provides the evidence for making a decision as to the single point in each Developmental Area which best describes a child's performance. Sometimes 'best-fit' decisions will be obvious, while at times – as for example when performance across the Developmental Area is uneven – they will be more challenging. The important point to bear in mind is that the purpose of the procedure is to simplify the information collected. The best-fit summative decisions make the data more manageable and transferable through reducing the richness of the individual Descriptions of Behaviour to a single summative point on a seven-step scale. If the best-fit decision proves difficult, the practitioner might find it helpful to return to the assessment story to check which paragraph, on balance, is most consistent with the accumulated evidence. Once the best-fit decision has been made, the circle at the corresponding row on the record form is shaded and the decision is dated. A summary of the information within the record form is then transferred by shading the relevant circles on the record wheel.

Definitions and examples of the Description of Behaviour

Figure 1 illustrates one page from the guidance materials. The page carries information about one Description of Behaviour. All the Descriptions of Behaviour in all six Developmental Areas have their own page and each page is organised in a similar manner. Each page includes: a brief definition of the Description of Behaviour as it is shown on the record form, a fuller definition of that behaviour; the step to which this behaviour relates; suggestions as to how, when and where the behaviour might be assessed and some examples of assessed behaviours which include photographic exemplars. There is also some indication of how the assessed behaviour is relevant and working towards the end of Foundation Phase Outcomes, as well as some notes on relevance to creativity and Creative Development.

Figure 1

Developmental Area colour code

Description of Behaviour short definition as it appears on the record form

Description of Behaviour: full definition

Developmental Area → Speaking and Listening

Step number → 2a

Brief suggestions of likely assessment opportunities → **How, where and when to assess**

Photographic example designed to show just one instance of the assessed behaviour in action. Note: children may be developmentally advanced or delayed, so the behaviour shown is not age-specific → **Examples**

Practical narrative example of the assessed behaviour → **Examples**

Suggested indication of how the particular behaviour being assessed develops through to the end of Foundation Phase Outcomes → **Progress towards outcomes**

Suggestions as to the possible ways in which the behaviour being assessed may lend itself to some form of creativity and Creative Development → **Creativity**

Foundation Phase Child development assessment profile 39

Use of the record wheel

Once a final decision on the Description of Behaviour has been made, the information can be recorded on the wheel at the back of the record form. Similarly, best-fit decisions can be transferred to the record wheel. These records are what matter for on-entry purposes and so must be completed within six weeks of the child entering the Foundation Phase.

Once this has been completed, the Profile has served its primary purpose. It will be noticeable that the six Developmental Areas that form the 'spokes' of the record wheel provide a visual summary of the relative development a child shows across the Profile as a whole. If the length of the 'spokes' as indicated by best-fit records are relatively long, good developmental progress is indicated, and vice versa. If all the best-fit positions are similar across the six Developmental Areas, it suggests that development is even across all areas. Any large differences may indicate that certain Developmental Areas are in need of practitioner intervention and support. It is this diagnostic information that points to the usefulness of the Profile beyond supporting on-entry assessment.

Practitioners may decide to continue using the Profile throughout the period for which they retain responsibility for the child's progress in the Foundation Phase. If an on-entry assessment is completed when a child is about three years of age, the Profile will continue to be useful for recording progress and planning the child's development for at least two more years, and possibly longer.

Additional learning needs

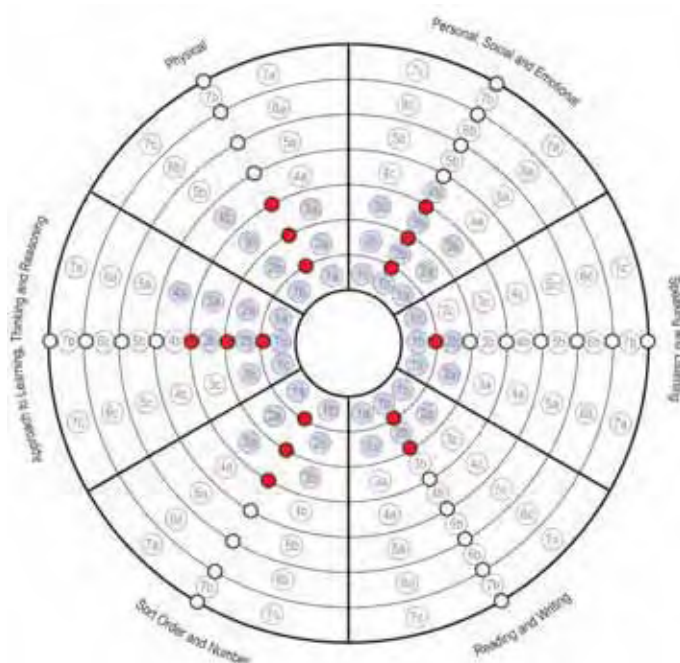
Any additional resource that is used as common practice to support children with additional learning needs should also be used in the course of assessments using the Profile. The informal, observational and spontaneous spirit of the assessment must be maintained. Practitioners should continue to support the child's development, encourage engagement as well as reinforce a positive sense of achievement, whatever the activity.

Creativity and Creative Development

Creativity is acknowledged as an important element of the Foundation Phase and is assumed to be present across the whole curriculum and in any of the six Developmental Areas. While creativity is included in this Profile, it does not attempt to describe progression, nor does it offer an assessment story for Creative Development or individual Descriptions of Behaviour. However, where appropriate the guidance page refers to creativity in general and where relevant suggests links to the Creative Development Area of Learning. Such information is offered only when relevant to the particular Description of Behaviour; not all statements have explicit links to creativity, but practitioners will identify a child's creative development as part of their ongoing observations.

Creative Development is not included as a discrete spoke on the record wheel, as it is not formally assessed. However, practitioners are invited to record creative endeavours or events in the space provided around the wheel on the *Foundation Phase child development assessment profile* record form. These will serve as a qualitative record of individuals' particular accomplishments or talents and inform the reports that will be prepared at the end of the year.

Example of a completed record wheel



All Descriptions of Behaviour that have been assessed and met in each Developmental Area have been recorded by shading the appropriate circles on the record wheel. Similarly, the best-fit judgements relating to each Developmental Area have been shaded in red.

It is possible to see at a glance the best-fit overall pattern. One Developmental Area (Speaking and Listening) has been set at Step 1; (Reading and Writing) is shown as having a best-fit with Step 2; the four remaining Developmental Areas (Personal, Social and Emotional; Physical; Approach to Learning, Thinking and Reasoning; Sort, Order and Number) have performance summarised as best fitting Step 3.

Overall, there might be a suggestion that language skills need to be looked at more closely, but further details such as the age of the child would need to be considered.

Through reference to the shaded step numbers all assessed behaviour can be tracked back to reveal the evidence collected and recorded on the *Foundation Phase child development assessment profile record form*.



Personal, Social and Emotional

Assessment story | Personal, Social and Emotional

This Developmental Area is concerned with the observation of children's shift from dependence on adults and older peers towards managing their own needs. While emotions are highly personal reactions, parents/carers have a very significant impact on the manner in which emotional responses are expressed or controlled. Settings have an important role to play when children are in their care, in helping them to understand and regulate their feelings.

Toilet training is an important aspect of children's move away from dependence on adults. They may be able to signal that they are wet or have soiled after the event, and gradually, children become [aware that they have wet themselves \(1a\)](#). Early social interactions begin when the child [responds verbally or by gesture to familiar adults and children \(1b\)](#), either spontaneously or when prompted. Once they are out of nappies they can begin to have some control over their own dressing and undressing, beginning with attempts to assist with these routines. Similarly, feeding is a very personal activity over which the child will wish to assert control, leading to attempts to use two hands to drink from a cup. Children learn from their primary carers about expected behaviour and the expression of feelings and are likely, in turn, to express similar behaviours and emotions towards others. Echoes of the loving attention they have received will be reflected in the way a child [shows care towards a familiar toy \(1c\)](#). With increased mobility, children become confident to move away from their parent/carer, while probably keeping that person in view.

Adults introduce solid foods with control of feeding handed over to the child when he or she is able to use a spoon to eat. At around the same time, practitioners will be looking to see whether the child is reliably aware of toilet needs and makes these known, so that the child [remains dry during the day \(2a\)](#) and is toilet trained, apart from occasional accidents. Children may still need, at this point, the physical help of an adult or the odd word of guidance or support in meeting the Description of Behaviour of being 'toilet trained'. Awareness of the feelings and needs of others will begin to be shown, as for example when the child [shares toys and other objects with encouragement \(2b\)](#) from an adult. Unspoken needs will be met by practitioners' recognition of children's requirements, but gradually, the child must learn to make its needs known to others, for example when hungry, cold, or apprehensive. Children rehearse and [express emotions through role/pretend play \(2c\)](#) when playing with toys, dolls or when dressing up.

More independence is possible with dressing using a sleeved garment and progress is shown when a child [puts on a coat \(3a\)](#) – but may need help with fastenings. Children will usually wish to take control of their dressing but may be able to manage only to put their arms into the sleeves correctly, needing help with buttons, zips, etc. Early forms of social interaction become apparent when the child [plays in parallel \(3b\)](#) alongside another child with glances and comments but without real interaction. Children need to feel sure that they are worthy of someone else's affection before they are able to relate warmly to familiar adults. As they become aware of themselves as individuals they will be able to [identify their own feelings and emotions \(3c\)](#).

Greater independence will be revealed as the child [dresses independently \(4a\)](#). It is likely that an accompanying ability to wash and dry their hands without support and to take full control of their own feeding will become apparent at about the same time. From self-absorbed parallel play, children's increased willingness and ability to socialise becomes apparent when they [play co-operatively \(4b\)](#) with one or more other children, as shown in conversations or actions. Gradually, they will show an increasing ability to recognise emotions in others. They will separate from parents/carers without reluctance. The expression and handling of emotions is important to development: 'temper tantrums' are noisy expressions of emotion – anger, frustration, fatigue – acted out by young children. With increasing emotional maturity, the child will be [able to recover from disappointments \(4c\)](#), temper tantrums, or upsets.

Taking control and exercising personal responsibility for all these essential aspects of daily life contribute to a child's sense of maturity and autonomy. Accompanying this increasing independence, the child will show awareness of [knowing some unique personal information \(5a\)](#), such as telephone number, address, family name or parents'/carers' full name. Self- and social awareness will extend to the capability to [give explanations for their social interactions \(5b\)](#). Children enjoy experiencing a range of emotions through activities, stories, etc. The ability to put themselves in another's position and to imagine how others feel comes into play when the child [shows empathy \(5c\)](#), with the capacity to support, comfort and help other children when they are upset.

Awareness of personal likes and dislikes is symptomatic of a child's growing sense of personal identity. Being more independent of adults requires that the child [pays attention to safety \(6a\)](#), and understands that some practices may be personally dangerous (such as using matches, sharp objects, etc.). The route to awareness of safety issues in a wider context than home and setting is usually approached by making children aware of professional and other services, so that the child identifies people who help: teacher, police, crossing patrol, doctor, etc. Appreciation that there are rules and laws that govern acceptable behaviour is apparent when the child is able to [take turns and understand the rules of simple games \(6b\)](#). With experience and insight, children appreciate their own emotional states and recognise and express their own feelings appropriately. In a similar manner, increasing maturity in self-perception and social maturity will lead to children being able to [respect others and value own and others' achievements \(6c\)](#) without feeling threatened by others' successes or deprecating their own achievements.

Social consciousness (and possibly awareness of potential threats to safety to self and others) is apparent when the child [takes responsibility for decisions and actions with awareness of consequences \(7a\)](#). A reflective self-awareness gradually develops to the point that the child can be quite self-critical of his or her own behaviour at times. Greater social awareness and sensitivity towards others enables children to [cooperate and communicate with a diverse range of people \(7b\)](#), primarily peers and familiar adults. Moving away from a self-centred emotional view of beliefs, values and relationships will be possible when the child understands that people have different preferences, views and beliefs and has an understanding of how to relate appropriately to others. Rather than simply feeling and acting out their current emotional state, there will come a point at which the child [demonstrates control over own emotions \(7c\)](#).

Each of the Descriptions of Behaviour that make up the Personal, Social and Emotional Developmental Area has been linked to the Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity Outcomes. These links and how the Descriptions of Behaviour shows progress towards the outcomes is explained on the relevant page.

1a

Shows awareness that they have wet themselves

Children may be able to recognise the urge to go to the toilet and may be starting to control bladder movements. This could include pulling at their clothes or nappies, showing restlessness and going to the toilet without prompting.

How, where and when to assess

Children's awareness of their toilet needs will occur regularly but it may be useful to observe before or after meals and drinks. All staff could make the assessment but individual staff may be allocated responsibility.

Examples

- Nia moved along the sofa towards her parent/carer to signal that her nappy was wet.
- Delyth wriggled deliberately to indicate she needed the toilet. She then made eye contact with an adult who asked if she needed the toilet and she nodded. An adult assisted her by accompanying her to the toilet.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's increasing awareness that they have wet themselves is likely to be associated with the capability to communicate or signal the event in some way. This signalling in actions or gestures suggests a developing awareness of the familiar care and cleaning routine, which is a component of Outcome 1.

1b

Responds verbally or by gesture to familiar adults and children

Children may use speech or gesture to greet familiar people by saying 'Hello' or by using non-verbal gestures such as a smile, making eye contact or by using physical gestures such as hugging, holding hands, spreading their arms, etc. They may need to be prompted by an adult.

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour could be observed as children are first entering the setting and at the end of the session when they are handed over to parents/carers. Additional opportunities might occur when children are engaged in role play or when visitors come to the setting.

Examples

- Elin stood at the door of the playgroup and waved happily to her mum.
- Evie saw her key worker as she went into nursery with her father. She waved her hand and attempted to shout 'Jackie'.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's recognition of familiar adults or children and their capability to respond to social greetings by gesture, utterance, or speech is one component of Outcome 1.

Creativity: Children's unique or novel responses to adults might be encountered as they begin to explore, enjoy, manipulate and experiment with expressing themselves in their interactions with people.

1c

Shows care for a favourite toy

Children reveal their sensitivity to others' needs as well as their own need for contact through their attachment, and the attention they give, to soft toys and dolls. They may express affection towards a toy by holding it carefully, pretending to talk to it or giving it a cuddle. They may feel very attached to it and carry it around with them and be aware of its whereabouts when it is not in their possession.

How, where and when to assess

Caring behaviour will be regularly observable at any time and may be observable in all areas of continuous provision.

Examples

- Menna took good care of her dolly. She put it over her shoulder and patted its back.
- Every morning, Jake brought his toy dog into the setting. He carried it carefully and tended to hold on to it tightly. He put it on the 'special things' shelf.



Progress towards outcomes: Having a favourite toy and showing it affection allows them to express in simple terms how they feel and is one element of Outcome 1.

2a

Remains dry during the day

The child may occasionally wet himself or herself, but in meeting this Description of Behaviour will, more usually, be able to inform an adult of their need for the toilet. They are toilet-trained apart from occasional accidents. The adult may prompt or remind the child that they may need to go to the toilet. Children may need some help with removing and pulling up some clothes, using the toilet and with washing and drying hands, but will actively contribute rather than be totally dependent on adult help.

How, where and when to assess

Independence in relation to toilet needs is likely to be observed regularly but may be particularly observed before or after meals or breaks. All staff could make the assessment, but in some settings the practice may be that particular individuals have responsibility for helping children with toileting. Such individuals might take responsibility for this aspect of assessment.

Examples

- Jack can go to the toilet unaided, in plenty of time. He occasionally asks for assistance with the top button of his trousers.
- Chloe was playing with the water toys and chatting to the group of children. She was reliably aware of when she needed to go to the toilet but in this instance she realised she wanted to go only after she had wet herself.



Progress towards outcomes: Showing that they are trying to be independent by remaining dry for most of the day but sometimes needing assistance is one element of Outcome 2.

2b

Shares toys and other objects with encouragement

Children may develop a strong sense of ownership over some communal toys and objects provided in the setting. However, they will be able to share toys and objects with the other children when directed to do so, and possibly when being supported by an adult. Some children may need lots of encouragement from the adult to relinquish sole possession, but would be able to share on most occasions.

How, where and when to assess

Sharing behaviour should be frequently observable in continuous provision areas, indoors and outdoors. Children can be observed sharing the many resources available in the setting but different attitudes may apply with personal property, where expectations may differ.

Examples

- The children were playing together. Climbing up the slide and sliding down are both good fun, but incompatible when different children want to do both at the same time. Kerys, at the bottom of the steps, called for an adult to help them take turns.
- Eira placed the doll in the pram and offered the handle of the pram to Bethan to push.
- In the creative area, Jake and Saffir both wanted the small sponge to make circles. The adult asked Jake if he could allow Saffir to use the sponge first, which he happily did.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's sharing of toys and other materials, albeit when that sharing requires the encouragement of adults, is an aspect of Outcome 2. Such behaviour lays the foundation for the later development of important social skills such as turn-taking and awareness of fair play.

2c

Expresses emotions through role/pretend play

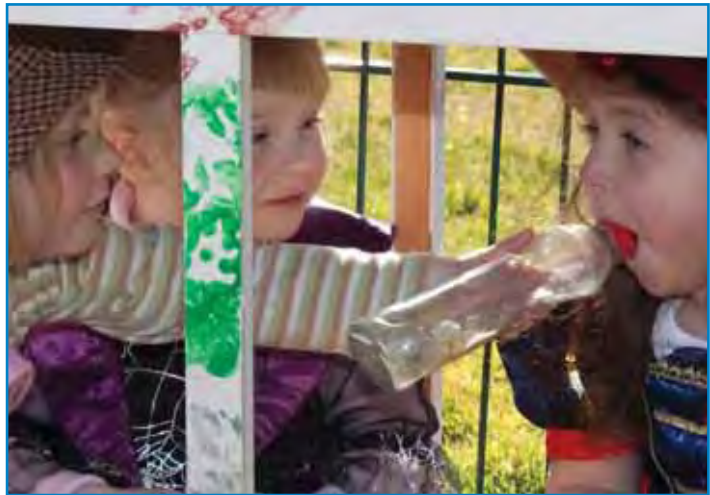
Children role play different emotions while engaging in pretend play. These emotions might range from showing care by rocking a baby through to more negative gestures such as pointing a finger and using a stern voice when pretending to be a parent/carer or practitioner. This Description of Behaviour looks for the emergence of a level of self-awareness through the capability of play-acting a range of emotions.

How, where and when to assess

The expression of emotions will be observable in role play situations as children interact with each other and with adults.

Examples

- The children role played mummies, daddies and babies. Megan cried because she was hungry and Chloe put the 'feeding bottle' into her mouth.
- Sophie said "You be teacher and I'll be Sophie. I'm sad now because I've fallen over." She pretended to cry.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's gradual awareness of their own feelings and emotions and their beginning to identify some emotions in others might become apparent during pretend play as children make progress towards Outcome 2.

3a

Puts on a coat

Children may be able to put their arms in their coat without adult help and are not required to pull up the zip or fasten any buttons to meet this Description of Behaviour. They may use a variety of ways to put on their coat, e.g. placing the hood on their head so they are able to put their arms in more easily, or use the method of putting the garment on the floor and sitting on it. Children may need help with fastenings.

How, where and when to assess

Putting on coats will be observable at times when children are coming into the setting or leaving at the end of a session or moving between indoor and outdoor activities. It may also occur in children's role play as they put on and remove dressing-up clothes.

Examples

- Kacie put on her coat and the adult helped by fastening the zip.
- At home time, Daryn recognised his own coat. He put it on independently but asked for help with the zip.



Progress towards outcomes: Putting on a coat or other item of clothing shows progress towards just one element of Outcome 3 – that of being able to cater for personal needs independently.

Creativity: Selecting and putting on different dressing-up cloaks and coats for role play, dance and music or stories can support the development of imagination and the creative expression of ideas and fantasies.

3b

Plays in parallel

Parallel play is a stage during which children will be close together, perhaps even playing with the same toy, but stopping short of real social exchanges and interactions. Children at this stage may verbalise, but use independent commentaries, more like two monologues than an exchange of views. Several children may be playing together but children may leave and join the play according to their interests.

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour will be observable frequently in all areas of continuous provision in the setting, both indoors and outdoors, when children are gathered together or in close proximity.

Examples

- Both children were exploring making mud. They had each collected soil and water and used sticks they had found under the trees to stir their mixtures. They were sitting close enough to be aware of one another's actions. They did not engage in any verbal exchange though there seemed to be the occasional glance between the two.
- Ellie took some blocks from the basket and carefully added them to her house. Rhian shared the same basket of bricks to build a wall. Neither child made eye contact or discussed each other's building.



Progress towards outcomes: Playing in parallel with other children suggests an increasing independence from practitioners in their learning and play. Gradually, during these kinds of interactions, children may be sensitive to the needs and interests of other children included in Outcome 3.

3c

Identifies own feelings and emotions

Young children do not always have awareness of the fact that they are experiencing different emotional states. This Description of Behaviour is concerned with the developmental stage at which such emotions come to personal awareness. For instance, they may be happy, sad, excited, nervous, or scared and can recognise and express how they feel. This self-awareness is evident when children are able to identify and describe their emotions to an adult or another child.

How, where and when to assess

Awareness of feelings can be observed in all areas of continuous provision at any time of day, or in focused activity designed to talk about different feelings. The feeling must be identified verbally, in gesture, using puppets, or perhaps in an annotated drawing.

Examples

- Mirrors can provide feedback to children in many different ways. In this example, children were trying out various expressions denoting a range of emotions. The mirror activity was about more than making faces, owing to the fact that children were articulating the feeling associated with each expression with which they were experimenting.



- Jess, Ieuan and Gareth sat with Mrs Williams who had just read them a story about an owl. Jess said "I am scared in my bedroom. I hear noises and shout my Dad." She had identified experiencing a sense of fear and was able to articulate this feeling, reminded by the emotion felt in listening to the story.

Progress towards outcomes: As they make progress towards Outcome 3, children's appreciation of the range of their emotions increases. They are likely to demonstrate some control over their emotions and some of the ways in which emotions are shown in different contexts.

Creativity: Explorations of materials, sounds and pictures can encourage the expression of ideas and moods such as happy or sad which are features of Creative Development Outcome 3.

4a

Dresses independently

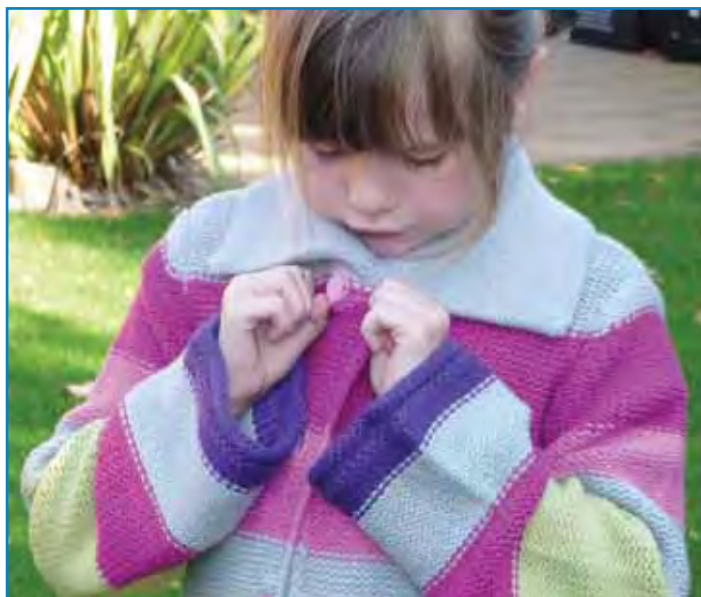
Children are able to put on their clothes, including such garments as tops, pants, coats, hats, underwear, shoes and socks, without assistance. They are reliably able to fasten front zips and buttons. They may need help with tying bows.

How, where and when to assess

Putting on a variety of clothes will be observable at times when children are coming into the setting or leaving at the end of a session, or moving between indoors and outdoors. This behaviour may also occur in children's role play as they put on and remove dressing-up clothes, with such contexts providing excellent assessment opportunities where there is uncertainty.

Examples

- As Jasmine was getting dressed after a physical development activity, she provided an ideal assessment opportunity. She pulled the zip on her skirt, pushed the press-stud fastenings easily and fastened the buttons on her cardigan by herself.
- Emlyn wanted to be the chef in role-play restaurant. He put on the chef's hat and carefully fastened the front buttons of the chef's top.
- Rianna was getting dressed after swimming. She put on all her clothes and managed to fasten all the buttons on her jacket.



Progress towards outcomes: Being able to dress and fasten zips and buttons lays the foundation for being able to cater for personal needs independently. This is a component of Outcome 3. Other contexts in which this increasing independence might be deployed may include feeding, tooth cleaning or washing.

Creativity: Making choices about dressing up or creating costumes from materials provides opportunities for children to imagine themselves in other contexts, relationships, times and spaces, and behaviour, and has associations with Creative Development Outcome 4.

4b

Plays cooperatively

At this stage of play, there is real interaction and exchange between children around a shared activity. Children will take part in cooperative play independently, without the prompting of adults. Their play involves dependence on one another, usually with verbal communication helping them to achieve a common goal. Taking on different and possibly complementary roles might be an aspect of cooperative play. Children take account of the roles of the other children, showing awareness of the needs and wishes of their peers.

How, where and when to assess

All continuous provision areas will provide opportunities for cooperative play to be observed. It may also be observed in the course of some enhanced and directed activities where children work at a common task in pairs or small groups.

Examples

- Olwen and Isolda helped each other climb in and out of the wooden boat. Together, they examined the sides of the boat, looking for holes and checking the paintwork.
- Jeremy, Clara and Callum made camp together in the outdoor construction area. "Put that plank on top of that crate," said Callum. "This plank is no good," said Clara. "OK," said Callum, "let's find another one." "This one will fit" said Jeremy, and the children carried it together and placed it on the crates.



Progress towards outcomes: Signs of playing cooperatively occur when children develop beyond self-centred behaviour, with increasing social awareness, and when they become sensitive to the needs of others, features of Outcome 3. In these instances, children will seek to influence and shape the joint activity while treating the views of others with respect.

Creativity: Children's cooperative play provides creative, open-ended opportunities to take risks and share ideas. Children's explorations of their imaginations, and the materials, sounds and space around them link with Creative Development Outcome 4.

4c

Is able to recover from disappointments

Children may express strong emotions such as anger or sadness and can become frustrated when they are prevented from doing something, or perceive a situation to be unfair. Such emotions can be overwhelming and may spiral out of control. This Description of Behaviour seeks evidence that children – with adult help – have developed the more mature capability to understand and regain control of their emotions.

How, where and when to assess

This behaviour may be observed in any time or place where resources have to be shared, turns taken or adult attention has to be waited for. Because it is infrequent, it is a behaviour that practitioners should be vigilant in observing and recording.

Examples

- Ewan noticed that the model he had made and displayed on the cupboard had been damaged. He was very upset. An adult discussed with him some of the possible ways the damage might have happened accidentally. Ewan soon cheered up and with help, repaired the model.
- Jenny went out to the bikes and trikes depot. She walked towards the last available tricycle but Carol got there in front of her and jumped on the seat. Jenny tried to pull Carol off but let go and Carol rode off. Jenny had an upset expression momentarily but composed herself quickly, moved to the 'Queue' sign and waited patiently for another tricycle to become free.



Progress towards outcomes: Elements of Outcome 3 suggest an awareness of the appropriateness of behaviour for different situations and the ability to respond to reason. Later, children might show some self-control, responding to disappointments in developmentally appropriate ways – behaviour consistent with aspects of Outcome 4.

5a

Knows some unique personal information

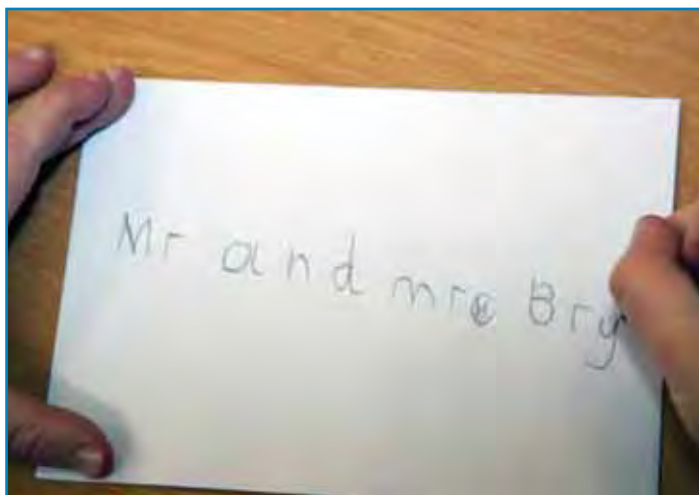
To meet this Description of Behaviour, children should be able to recall unique information about themselves such as a telephone number, address and family name. They should be able to provide this information verbally from memory to others when asked. The minimum information should be their own family name and their address. A telephone number and family name can be an acceptable alternative if they are unsure of their address.

How, where and when to assess

This may require adult-prompted activities providing children with opportunities to use their name and address. Specific role-play activities such as 'providing personal details at a clinic or hospital', 'creating and posting letters or membership cards' or 'making a passport or luggage labels for a holiday' might be planned.

Examples

- Gwenna wrote her parents' name and address on an envelope so that she could 'post them her letter'. She needed adult help to spell the address correctly.
- While role playing holidays, Dafydd made a passport and said his address and family name so that an adult could write it on the passport.
- Bethan gave her name, street name and town accurately to the receptionist in the hospital role-play area.



Progress towards outcomes: Knowing some unique information about themselves is linked to features of Outcome 4 in which children show an awareness of similarities and differences between themselves and their peers.

5b

Gives explanations for their social interactions

Children's social interactions occur spontaneously, without self-consciousness. However, they gradually gain the capacity to reflect on such behaviour and achieve insight into the manner in which they interact socially, whether positively or negatively. To meet this Description of Behaviour, children should be able to frame a reflective sentence that explains a positive or negative interaction in the past, present or future. Adults may need to question children to prompt this kind of analysis.

How, where and when to assess

Explanations for their behaviour may occur in continuous provision where children cooperate with each other, or in directed or informal activities. Role play may include rehearsal of anticipated events, such as parties. Practitioners may need to draw particular interactions, positive or negative, to children's attention, inviting reflective comments.

Examples

- The teacher intervened when it appeared that Aimee and Dai were contesting possession of the hoop. Both were able to explain what led up to the incident. They had both been playing and when they heard the signal to tidy up, both of them had wanted to put the hoop away. The discussion enabled each of them to reflect on their own contribution to the situation and it was resolved amicably.
- During Friday's circle time the 'Talking Ted' was passed around. The children finished the sentence 'I like to play with . . . because . . .'. When it was Mandy's turn she said "I like to play with Edward because he always has good ideas when we go to the 'plan and do' table."



Progress towards outcomes: The development of self-control identified in Outcome 4 links with the requirement for children to reflect on the nature of their interactions with peers and adults.

5c

Shows empathy

This Description of Behaviour is met when children have developed sufficient emotional maturity and understanding to empathise with some of the emotions of others and are able to support, comfort and help other children when they are upset. They may show physical gestures, e.g. putting their arm around someone, or verbalise their empathy by talking to the child who may be upset.

How, where and when to assess

Empathy may be observed in simple behaviours that acknowledge others' presence, needs and feelings, as well as incidents of particular distress. It may be noticeable during regular 'play' or 'dinner' time breaks when children join other younger and older children.

Examples

- Morganna looked out for the needs of her brother Howell when she joined him in the after-school setting.
- Jamie and Freddie had been climbing over the logs in the outdoor environment. Jamie slipped and landed on the grass. He rubbed his leg where it was scratched. Freddie immediately moved to him, helped him up and said "Don't cry. We'll find a plaster." He put his arm around Jamie and helped him hop to the teacher.



Progress towards outcomes: As children's emotional development proceeds, they will show some of the capabilities included in Outcome 4, such as the capability to support, help and comfort other children when they are sad or upset. Gradually, they will develop the skill of seeing other people's point of view as they progress towards Outcome 6.

Creativity: Role-play situations provide opportunities to rehearse and try out new ways of interacting with social relationships and to explore some of the views that might be held by others.

6a

Pays attention to safety

Children are able to demonstrate the understanding that some things are dangerous (matches, sharp objects, traffic, hot drinks) without adult supervision or assistance. They will need to have been instructed, either at home or in the setting, as to what is safe behaviour, in order to conduct themselves in a similar manner.

How, where and when to assess

This capability may be assessed regularly as children interact indoors and outdoors. There may be particular planned discussion opportunities in which children share their ideas about safety and danger. It may be necessary for practitioners to help some children to revise unsafe behaviours that they have developed. Crossing the road using the safety code might be an example.

Examples

- Huw put on a safety hat and goggles. Both children held the handles of the knives carefully. Huw was aware of possible dangers, though the safety hat was part of the role play rather than for protection. Dee had forgotten to put on the goggles. An adult made sure both children were safe.
- Sian showed her awareness of safety in helping to make a snack. She held the knife with the handle and cut carefully through the pears, keeping her fingers away from the blade of the knife.
- Aled was tidying up the scissors when he reminded Amy "You must hold the scissors like this." His actions showed that he understood the need to hold the scissors by the closed blades.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's interactions indoors and outdoors will show their increasing awareness of potential dangers. Personal safety might be increasingly linked with aspects of Outcome 5 – understanding of right and wrong and displaying safe, appropriate behaviours in a range of what might otherwise be potentially hazardous situations.

6b

Takes turns and understands the rules of simple games

Children come to be able to understand the principle of 'give and take', demonstrating that they are able to take turns in a variety of paired, small group and larger group situations. They should be able to behave in this manner consistently and without adult support or intervention. In similar manner, they can understand and adhere to the rules of simple games by exercising self-control to contain their excitement to have their turn.

How, where and when to assess

Turn-taking in pairs or small groups can be observed in areas where children play or make up their own games. Directed activities may involve children planning, making and describing a game to others.

Examples

- Mrs Jones asked a group of children to make a game using the hoops and beanbags. They used the outdoor blackboard to write down the rules, and then played the game themselves, each waiting their turn and following the rules.
- Sally and Heledd were playing number snap. They both waited their turn and followed the rules correctly. Heledd then explained how to play the game to Gary and Sam.



Progress towards outcomes: The ability to wait from time to time to have needs met during cooperative play – a feature of Outcome 4 – evolves into an ability to take turns. Turn-taking that is thoroughly embedded in children's independent play can be thought of as approximating Outcome 5 as it signals an awareness of fair play.

Creativity: Inventing their own games using materials and resources they have chosen themselves and being able to experiment and make their own decisions in relation to rules of the games offers children creative possibilities.

6c

Respects others and values own and others' achievements

Children meeting this Description of Behaviour will have the confidence to be able to recognise things that they have done well and also to recognise the things that other children have done well. They may show this appreciation through words and gestures in a constructive manner rather than with self-deprecation of their own work or jealous envy in respect of their peers' outputs.

How, where and when to assess

Constructively critical respect for their own and others' outputs may be observed in continuous provision and especially in activities where children create some form of product in pictorial, written, modelled or other form of expression. Displays of photographs or slide shows serve to remind children of what they and their friends have achieved and what they might like to emulate.

Examples

- A group of children was asked to review photographs of other children's work and suggest one thing they liked about each piece of work.
- Children had worked outside creating mud monsters on a drizzly day. Megan said to David "I like yours. That's really clever, using the leaves and sticks to make the scary face."
- During 'show and tell' Sarah said "I'm proud of my model. The wheels work because I had to make them loose and not hammer the nails all the way in."



Progress towards outcomes: Valuing the fact of being productive and creating exciting and worthwhile achievements, showing respect for others and valuing their achievements, are linked with aspects of Outcome 5. As children make progress in their understanding of their learning, they will make simple suggestions to each other about how they might improve.

Creativity: Divergent thinking is supported when children initiate discussion of their own learning and the learning of others. The context is one in which the expression of ideas is valued and nurtured. Responding to the work of others forms part of Creative Development Outcome 5.

7a

Takes responsibility for decisions and actions with awareness of consequences

Children showing capability against this Description of Behaviour are able to take responsibility for their decisions and actions, such as independently taking charge of materials and resources, looking after them and putting them away without the support or encouragement of an adult. This kind of behaviour signals a sense of responsibility and a growing sense of awareness of how their setting operates as a social organisation.

How, where and when to assess

The capability to take responsibility for the careful use and storage of resources can be revealed regularly in indoors and outdoors provision. Care and respect for the environment might also be in evidence.

Examples

- The children had completed their number work with the cubes. Phoebe decided that the cubes should go away properly and asked the other children to help. Some of the other children readily followed Phoebe's example and put their own equipment away.
- Hueil tidied away the paints and brushes and washed the glue pots when he had finished his painting, without waiting for the signal for tidy-up time.



Progress towards outcomes: Showing understanding of the consequences of their actions and taking responsibility for their decisions is one element of Outcome 5. Gradually, as they become more aware of other people's views, children might begin to appreciate that their decisions can influence other people, events and activities.

Creativity: The capability to make choices and decisions is fostered in the creative learning environment in which children are supported and encouraged to pursue independent ideas in their learning.

7b

Cooperates and communicates with a diverse range of people

Children will communicate, cooperate and associate with peers and adults in a range of social contexts. They will show awareness of the ways they might modify their behaviour and speech so that they interact appropriately with different people. They will show an interest in and awareness of the ideas and preferences of a range of adults and children beyond parents/carers and immediate family. These interactions become possible as children become less egocentric and more able to empathise with the needs of others.

How, where and when to assess

Observation of a wide range of interactions might be possible throughout the day in various provision areas, and at play and lunch times. Children's interactions with parents/carers and visitors might provide evidence of their capability to communicate with a wider range of people. Observations of interactions during role play might provide further insights.

Examples

- Keira greeted the adult on the occasion of her school visit. She explained her class' healthy eating campaign. Her teacher noted that Keira was a pupil who had communicated well with different visitors to the school, both on this and on previous occasions.
- Rees noticed Stuart's mummy looking around the room. He asked "Are you looking for Stuart?" Mummy nodded and Rees said "I will go and find him for you. He said he was going to the dentist today."



Progress towards outcomes: Showing the capability to associate, cooperate and communicate appropriately with peers and familiar adults is an element of Outcome 5. Gradually, children will develop some of the social skills featured in Outcome 6 such as seeing other people's point of view and appreciating that people have different preferences, views and beliefs.

7c

Demonstrates control over own emotions

Children will be able to demonstrate that they can recognise and reliably control the range of more subtle emotions that they experience, including frustration, anger, sadness, happiness, jealousy, impatience, etc. They begin to demonstrate self-awareness and then self-control. This development is helped by the fact that they can describe their feelings and explain some of the reasons for their emotions, and for the most part respond in a manner appropriate to the context.

How, where and when to assess

Opportunities to observe this behaviour may arise throughout the day in all provision areas. The range of emotions to which the Description of Behaviour can be applied is unrestricted, including excitement about prospective events, apprehension, nervousness or anger. Because it is infrequent or unpredictable, this is a behaviour that practitioners should be vigilant in recording.

Examples

- Harry had expected to be part of the football team but was not selected. He explained to William that he was feeling angry but understood that he had not played well. Harry asked if William would go with him to cheer for their team.
- Jenny went to the investigation table and began to dismantle the clock, but Kevin came and took it from her and moved to another part of the room. Jenny ran after him and was about to snatch it back but stopped and said to him "That's not fair. You made me cross. I had it first. You can have it when I have finished."



Progress towards outcomes: Control over emotions in appropriate ways is consistent with aspects of Outcome 5 when, in the main, children are able to control their emotions and cope with disappointment. With increased reflectivity and experience of a range of social contexts, they will learn that they can, and often do, control their emotions, as anticipated by Outcome 6.

Creativity: Open-ended opportunities to express emotions in a variety of creative ways including speech, music, movement, drawing and especially drama, will foster the awareness of and appropriate handling of emotions.



Speaking and Listening

Assessment story | Speaking and Listening

Evidence suggests that babies learn to recognise their mother's voice from the womb, while those hearing two languages show indications of bilingual interest. Obviously, speaking and listening are linked in children's use and development of oral language. Assuming that the physical means for hearing speech (the outer and inner ears) and for speech production (the mouth, tongue and vocal chords) are intact, language production (expressive language) is likely to lag slightly behind the level of language comprehension (receptive language). Development in this Developmental Area encompasses increasing vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and expression.

The very young child is likely to be born sensitised to its mother tongue and will engage in turn-taking during interactions with people well before possessing any spoken language, showing interest in and soon able to follow simple commands and directions. The emergence of single words will include the ability to name some things, for example [name objects \(1a\)](#). Putting an action word and an object (verb and a noun) together is sufficient for a young child to make its intentions or desires known as it [uses two or three words to indicate needs \(1b\)](#). This active use of language is mirrored by the complementary increase in comprehension, as when children demonstrate the capability to [follow simple commands and directions \(1c\)](#).

Typically, since it is likely to be the word the young child will have heard perhaps more than any other, an early indication of receptive language will be the child's response to his or her first name. Language development is complex but happens rapidly, as witnessed by the fact of the child being able to [follow two-step instructions \(2a\)](#). Spoken language in the form of stories will also be attractive in holding the child's attention, finding them willing and able to [listen to and follow stories that are read aloud \(2b\)](#). A general increase in vocabulary will be illustrated by the fact that he or she can [point to two or three body parts when asked \(2c\)](#).

Stringing a sequence of words together becomes possible as the child's vocabulary increases and they will be heard to [use four-word sentences consistently \(3a\)](#). The immature form of negative such as 'Me no want to' soon gives way to the more mature 'I don't want to' when the child masters the [use of negatives correctly in spoken sentences \(3b\)](#). Children will find some sounds difficult to articulate and some rules – for example, ways of making the past tense of a verb – will be applied in the wrong contexts, e.g. 'I go'd to the park'. The social inclusion that spoken language activities offer is usually attractive to young children at this stage and they will very happily and [actively join in songs and rhymes \(3c\)](#), either non-verbally with actions or verbally, if they feel confident with the words.

The rapid increase in vocabulary and use of more mature sentence forms continues in speech and comprehension but with some immature pronunciation and unconventional use of grammar likely. The increase in control of spoken language and the ability to make themselves understood will tend to lead to an increase in [asking a variety of questions \(4a\)](#) using the words 'Who?', 'What?', 'Where?', 'When?', 'Why?', etc. This same increased control of language will also be seen as children [use several pronouns in their conversations \(4b\)](#) such as 'I', 'me', 'mine', 'you', 'yours', 'his', 'hers', 'we', 'us', 'our', 'them' and 'their'. Increasing control of language as a tool to construct meaning will be apparent in more playful, creative and imaginative contexts when the child shows the capability to [appreciate humour in wordplay and jokes \(4c\)](#).

The immature forms of sentence with their lack of joining words and 'made-up' word forms will gradually be replaced by skilful and accurate sentence construction which includes the [use of linking words appropriately in sentences \(5a\)](#) (conjunctions). Care will also be taken to make sense of what others are saying. The fact that others' speech is usually understood can be inferred from the fact that the child [listens to others during conversations and responds appropriately \(5b\)](#). This capability indicates that both listening and speaking are being used to support two-way communication. Increased command of the grammatical rules of sentence construction will also be apparent when the child [uses tenses appropriately in sentences \(5c\)](#).

Language competence continues to grow, enabling the child to **initiate or participate as a speaker and listener in a variety of structured and unstructured situations (6a)**. Vocabulary will continue to expand in spoken (expressive) language, to the extent that children **understand words that mean the same thing and words that mean the opposite (6b)**. This will initially relate to the use of simple pairings such as 'large' is the same as 'big' and 'small' is the opposite of 'large'. They will understand that there is more than one way of expressing the same idea and that variation can help to make meaning clear. The use of language to communicate in a social context is seen in the child being able to speak in a group and answer questions. At this point speaking and listening, albeit using simple vocabulary and grammar, should be sufficiently developed to serve a function in day-to-day situations. For example, in circle time or similar situations the child **follows group discussions and understands when it is his or her turn to speak (6c)**.

The outcome of all these developments in vocabulary, grammar and other skills is that the child **talks fluently and with confidence (7a)**. The subtle shaping of the tongue, lips and mouth to produce the sounds and blends of the Welsh and English languages are mastered so that the child pronounces the majority of sounds in their own language. They will be able to communicate their ideas and needs as they intend. In spoken communications, the child **shows an understanding of the main points of a story or information given (7b)** and talks about significant details. The implication is that there is comprehension and the ability to recall the main ideas presented in various forms of narrative, including stories, poems, plays and videos. The passive skills of understanding are complemented by the more active endeavour of ensuring that they are making their meaning clear, when they **show awareness of the needs of the listener by including relevant detail (7c)**.

Each of the Descriptions of Behaviour that make up the Speaking and Listening Developmental Area has been linked to the Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcomes. These links and how the Descriptions of Behaviour shows progress towards the outcomes is explained on the relevant page.

1a

Names objects

Children achieving this Description of Behaviour will use a small vocabulary of single words to name one or two objects, routines, food and people. They understand that words stand for objects or people, whether the items are physically present or appear as images or photographs in books. These 'labelling' verbalisations should be initiated by the child, rather than a repeat of the adult's words.

How, where and when to assess

While looking at everyday objects or familiar scenes in books, posters and displays, children should name one or two objects. It should be possible to observe this capability, if it is present, in almost any place and time in continuous provision, both indoors and outdoors.

Examples

- Niamh made a collage of her favourite fruit. She said, "table" and then pointed to the picture of the banana and said, "naanna". Her teacher understood that Niamh was referring to the banana and recorded her capability to name a few objects.
- While looking at the picture book Lucy was able to point to and say 'flower' and 'chair' when the adult asked "What is this?"
- Anwen was looking at the weather display. She named some of the objects hanging from the ceiling ('umbrella', 'sun', 'hat', 'raindrops') and pointed them out to the adult.



Progress towards outcomes: Children show they can recall and express the names of some familiar objects (Outcome 1). The labelling of objects and people and gradual build up of vocabulary is followed by attempts to put words together so that children converse simply in their conversations with adults and peers (Outcome 2).

1b

Uses two or three words to indicate needs

This Description of Behaviour refers to children's capabilities in combining words to express their needs or describe their actions to another person. The combinations used may be surprising and unexpected, differing from the patterns of adult speech, but are functional in succeeding in gaining the attention and cooperation of adults and other children. For instance, the combination of a verb ('want') and a noun ('drink') is often sufficient to allow children to make their desires known.

How, where and when to assess

This capability might be observed frequently in adults' discussions with children and occasionally between children. Practitioners will be able to assess the content of their discussions with children as they engage in continuous provision, indoors and outdoors.

Examples

- Ellin was learning about being safe with candles. She said "You blowed it!"
- Charlie wanted the butterfly to come back and said simply "More butterfly".
- Anwyn followed an adult into the toilets. "Wash hands," she said, as she held her hands out to the adult.



Progress towards outcomes: As children's capability to produce words extends beyond Outcome 1, their early labelling of objects and people gradually evolves into attempts to put a few words together. This new skill suggests progress towards Outcome 2 in which children are able to converse simply.

Creativity: Children are often very creative in their two-word utterances, inventing novel combinations to express their intended meaning.

1c

Follows simple commands and directions

Children will demonstrate they have heard and understood spoken language when they follow a request or instruction. Usually, the request will be made by an adult. It is essential that the adult should make eye contact and ensure the child's attention, using the child's name (and perhaps a pointing gesture when appropriate) as part of the simple command.

How, where and when to assess

This capability can be observed in all areas of provision. While children will tend to be following their own interests, there will be opportunities for adults to give simple directions during the course of the day.

Examples

- Nia's dad asked her if she would like to sit in the pushchair. She walked over and sat in the pushchair.
- The adult said to Jamie "Can you put your wellies on?" Jamie understood what was asked of him and fetched his wellies. Although he struggled to put them on, he had clearly understood what he had been asked to do.



Progress towards outcomes: Elements of Outcome 1 suggest children will follow simple instructions expressed in words. Adults may use gesture and words to help children's understanding of instructions. Later, as their understanding of vocabulary extends, they will respond to more complex instructions and questions (Outcome 2).

2a

Follows two-step instructions

The request to carry out simple actions is usually from an adult to a child. In order for the child to know precisely what behaviour is required, the instruction must be expressed clearly and with eye contact and use of the child's name to ensure attention. It must be ensured that children listen carefully to the instruction, remember the sequence of demands and carry out the actions in the correct sequence without need for a reminder. The emphasis should be on comprehension and action rather than speed of response.

How, where and when to assess

This capability can be observed frequently in continuous provision and through focused tasks, both indoors and outdoors. Generally, settings will encourage children to select activities and follow their own interests, but on occasion adults will wish to give an instruction or advise on a sequence of actions. Such routine management will offer assessment opportunities for this Description of Behaviour.

Examples

- After the cake-mixing, Erika's teacher asked her to put her cake tray on the worktop and then wash her hands. Erika followed the two-step instruction and was pleased with her success.
- Dewi was asked to pick up the beanbag and throw it through the hoop. He aimed his throw towards the hoop. Although the beanbag did not go through the hoop, he had followed the two-step instruction accurately.



Progress towards outcomes: The requirement to follow two-step instructions is a feature of progress towards Outcome 2, in which children are described as showing an ability to respond to instructions, questions and other stimuli.

Creativity: Requests to listen to and follow simple instructions might be expressed in the context of creative open-ended opportunities to experiment and explore materials and objects. Such requests might be made to ensure children's safe exploration of resources.

2b

Listens to and follows stories that are read aloud

Children achieving this Description of Behaviour listen attentively to stories read to them individually or in small groups. The quality of listening required is active rather than passive, as demonstrated by the child's attention and reactions. (An adult reading a story to a child does not in itself meet this Description of Behaviour when the child is not actively responding to the story.) Reactions may be non-verbal movements that convey emotions of, for example, surprise, excitement, or concern. The story must be age-appropriate.

How, where and when to assess

Opportunities to show this capability are available in continuous provision indoors and outdoors when adults read to children. Opportunity should be taken to observe whether children have the interest, comprehension and attention span to listen to and follow such stories.

Examples

- During the story-reading session, some children held a mask or a toy to stand for characters in the story. As the adult read the story, the children lifted their masks or moved their soft toys at relevant parts of the story. Children's interest is shown by their facial expressions, eye contact and hand gestures.
- Children were sitting in a small group listening to the story being read to them by an adult. All except Ewan showed a keen interest, looked at some of the pictures in the book and joined in with some of the repeated dialogue.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to listen to and follow stories is consistent with some aspects of the demands described in Outcome 1, in which children are expected to begin to follow stories read to them and start to respond appropriately.

Creativity: Children can be offered creative opportunities to respond in their own way to stories. They might explore different ways of making sounds as they follow the story or experiment with materials to make masks, or dress up responding in their own way to the story.

2c

Points to two or three body parts when asked

Children possessing this capability show a widening of their understanding of vocabulary to include some of the labels for parts of their own body. There should be evidence in children's actions of understanding the names for some of the following major body parts: head, eyes, hair, nose, ears, mouth, hands, feet, legs, knees, etc. In their interactions, children will be able to show their understanding by pointing to or moving two or three different body parts on request, without hesitation or error.

How, where and when to assess

Opportunities to show this capability are available in continuous provision indoors and outdoors when adults are speaking with children or as children are talking to each other. Opportunities to check children's understanding might be planned as part of group activities when children join in action rhymes and songs by pointing to various body parts.

Examples

- Children were in a small group joining in games, songs and rhymes. The adult asked children to put their fingers on various parts of their head. As she said each word, most of the children pointed without hesitation to each body part.
- Children were choosing materials to make faces. An adult was on hand to help them discuss the materials. The teacher reminded them of the parts of the face and the children chose materials and stuck them in place to stand for the eyes, nose, mouth and hair.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to understand the words for body parts when they are presented to children orally in meaningful interactions is consistent with aspects of Outcome 1, in which the gradual increase in children's vocabulary is acknowledged in the phrase 'can understand many more words than they can speak'.

Creativity: Children can be given opportunities to investigate the ways in which different materials (paper, card, clay, cakes or biscuits) can be used to model people and animals, naming body parts as they do so.

3a

Uses four-word sentences consistently

The four-word constructions may be original rather than grammatically correct. It is not the intention to assess the skill of repetition, but rather, to be alert for four-word sentences generated spontaneously by children. The word order used by children may be unusual, but this is not important. Children may show an understanding of some rules by over-generalising in unusual ways, such as "I go'd to the shop."

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour can be assessed at almost any time in continuous provision areas, indoors and outdoors. Children should be observed talking to each other while playing with each other or in parallel play. Adults might also engage children in direct conversation.

Examples

- The children were using metal detectors in the garden area. Haydn said "I want find metal." The four-word construction communicated to everyone Haydn's excitement.
- As children were eating their snacks, they discussed their favourite foods. Maddie listened to other children and then said "I like pizza. I like chicken curry."
- In role play, Alfie said "I go'd to farm." This spontaneous construction was original rather than grammatically correct. Nevertheless, Alfie had assembled together four words to share with the others that he had been to the farm.



Progress towards outcomes: Using four-word sentences describes the point in children's progress towards 'beginning to use complete sentences', which is one element of Outcome 3. Initially, children will find the assembly of these sentence constructions challenging. Gradually, children will construct longer sentences comprising many more words.

Creativity: Novel opportunities to explore prompt children to express themselves. Children are creative in their word combinations and sentences such as 'I founded metal' should be treated as such.

3b

Uses negatives correctly in spoken sentences

To achieve this Description of Behaviour, children will have moved from using negatives in short spoken sentences such as 'Me not want', or 'Tom no go toilet', to the use of negatives in complete sentences: 'I don't want any', or 'I don't need the toilet'. There may be ambiguities in meaning which can be probed further during the interaction. (For example, does Tom mean he does not need the toilet, or that he refuses to go?) These ambiguities do not affect the decision that children have shown the capability to achieve this Description of Behaviour.

How, where and when to assess

This capability will be revealed frequently during the day in all provision areas. Several conversations offering the possibility for children to express negative responses will be required to establish a clear view of their current use of negatives in speech.

Examples

- The children were having a puppet show. The adult asked Alan if he would like to hold one of the puppets. Alan said "I don't want to!"
- In snack time, Millie said "No thank you. I don't want any more crackers." The adult offering Millie snacks recorded the sentence to illustrate Millie's skill and added that Millie consistently produces sentences in which the negatives are used correctly.



Progress towards outcomes: An ability to use negatives correctly in spoken sentences is consistent with children beginning to use complete sentences. As they make further progress they will draw on an increasing vocabulary in their talk (Outcome 3).

Creativity: Children create novel ways of using negatives in their speech which they are unlikely to have heard in conversation.

3c

Actively joins in songs and rhymes

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children will actively join in songs and rhymes as part of a group activity. Participation could be orally in speech or song but could include movement, gesture, dance and music. The child's contribution to the group activity should demonstrate that the child is listening closely to the song or rhyme and can identify relevant opportunities to contribute to repeated dialogue or actions, etc. The support of the group in maintaining the song or rhyme is accepted; independent and completely accurate performance is not required in order to meet this Description of Behaviour.

How, where and when to assess

Opportunities to show this capability are available in continuous provision indoors and outdoors when adults or children engage as part of a group in action songs and rhymes. Opportunity should be taken to observe whether children respond appropriately at the correct points in the song or rhyme.

Examples

- In a large group, children were joining in the action song "The farmer's in his den." Before starting the song, some of the children chose dressing-up clothes from the box provided for them. As the music started, children in the outer circle clapped their hands and danced around the farmer and his wife.
- Children sat in a large circle singing 'Mi Welais Jac y Do'. Their movements showed their understanding of the words.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's capability to listen to and memorise action songs and rhymes and respond appropriately is consistent with some of the elements of Outcome 3.

Creativity: Choosing to use their own sounds and movement to join in songs links with Creative Development Outcome 2 in which imitation of simple rhythms and musical patterns might be expected.

4a

Asks a variety of questions

Children achieving this Description of Behaviour will not rely only on intonation to indicate a question, but will have adopted the conventional terms 'How?', 'Why?', 'What?', 'Where?' and 'When?' to ask questions. Meeting this Description of Behaviour requires both curiosity to know and the capability to frame questions. Children start to use questions from a very early age. The emphasis here is on a range of different questions. Correct grammar is not essential.

How, where and when to assess

Such questions are more likely to arise in stimulating or novel situations rather than when behaviour is constrained by routines. Practitioners should observe whether children reveal the curiosity and the verbal capability to ask appropriate and contextually relevant questions within the stimulating provision of the setting.

Examples

- Children checked the flowers and vegetables they had planted in tubs. Jack picked the last of the carrots and as he showed the carrot to his friends he asked "Why is this carrot so little?" The question was relevant to picking the vegetables. It suggested that the size of this carrot compared to others required an explanation.
- Sian and Jake were making longer and shorter shapes with the dough. They were able to decide the shape for themselves. Sian asked Jake "Why did your sausage break?"
- In the role-play area outside, Amy listened to the children as they waited for the pretend boat to sail on the sea. She asked Tom "Why is the boat isn't here?" He started to make a boat shape in the sand.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's use of a range of different types of questioning words in complete sentences as they explore their environment links to elements of Outcome 3. Drawing on increasing vocabulary in their talk, children will begin to formulate their own questions to help them find out more about their environment and people.

Creativity: An important feature of encouraging children's creative exploration and experimentation of materials, sounds, movement and their local environment should be the provision of opportunities for children to pose their own questions.

4b

Uses several pronouns in their conversations

The pronoun 'I' will be likely to be in regular use, but to meet this Description of Behaviour children will need to be using a wide range of pronouns in their spoken language to indicate individuals and groups such as 'I', 'me', 'mine', 'you', 'yours', 'his', 'her', 'we', 'us', 'our', 'them', and 'their'. Regular use of at least three of the pronouns listed will be sufficient to indicate that progress is being made in meeting this Description of Behaviour.

How, where and when to assess

This capability will be revealed frequently during the day in all provision areas. Adults should plan to listen to children's discussions for use of pronouns and this may be encouraged by engaging them directly in conversation in the normal manner in the course of their social interactions.

Examples

- Children used role play to practice their road safety skills. One child pointed to 'the traffic controller' and asked "Please can you let us through?" The child demonstrated correct use of two pronouns. The adult's record showed this correct use of pronouns in her other observations of the child.
- The adult told Isabelle there were some birds next to the hide. She said "I am coming to see them. Do you want to come with me?" In this example, Isabelle has shown the correct use of four pronouns and has demonstrated the capability to meet this Description of Behaviour.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's increased use of pronouns in their conversations suggests an increase in vocabulary featured in Outcome 3 and an increased ability to listen and respond to peers and adults that can be linked with Outcome 4.

4c

Appreciates humour in wordplay and jokes

Children might enjoy word rhymes and homonyms and change some words slightly so that the meaning of the sentence changes to become humorous. In their conversations, children achieving this Description of Behaviour might use words in their conversations that they know from experience attract smiles and laughter because they are witty. The deliberate and more flexible grasp of spoken language required to make and understand a joke requires an increasing vocabulary and awareness of different meanings in conversation.

How, where and when to assess

This capability will be revealed during the day in all provision areas in children's conversations with each other and with adults. Adults should listen to children's discussions for use of jokes and humour. Wordplay may be encouraged.

Examples

- Ffion asked her teacher "Do you know why the banana went to the doctors?" The teacher shook her head. Ffion responded "It didn't peel well." They all giggled.
- In conversation, Harry said he was going to his Nan's to mop up. Phoebe asked "Has your Nan got you a pup?" "No, mop up!" he replied. "Have you got a pup?" she enquired. Harry realised Phoebe's mistake and exclaimed "No! MOP UP!" They both laughed and repeated "Mopup, mopup!"



Progress towards outcomes: Their appreciation of how to convey meaning – an element of Outcome 3 – and early grasp of how words might be altered may in the future develop into knowledge of letters and sound–symbol relationships that form part of the capabilities in Outcome 4.

Creativity: Children's own experimentation with jokes and wordplay is consistent with expectations for their Creative Development at Outcome 4.

5a

Uses linking words appropriately in sentences

Practitioners should observe children's ability to link two phrases using conjunctions such as 'and', 'but', 'after' and 'because'. Examples might take the form 'I'll finish my painting after I've had my drink.' Conjunctions also enable children to describe cause and effect: 'I didn't stand up to dance because Chloe was . . .'

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour could be met frequently in the continuous provision areas indoors and outdoors when there is opportunity for extended discussion involving longer than very brief utterances. Stimulating, open-ended and novel activities are likely to encourage children's comments and discussions.

Examples

- The children were putting groups of numbers into sequences. Carie said "We should move the six because number three will go after number two." Her statement showed her ability to use conjunctions to signal to listeners that she intended to give reasons for her suggestion. This is likely to have strengthened her advice.
- In role play, Dylan took out the pirate's hat from the 'talking box'. He talked freely about the hat, saying "I am a pirate and I can sail a big boat. You will be scared because I am a pirate." Dylan uses the conjunction 'and' to link the boat to the pirate. Additionally, he signalled he wanted children to show fear, using the conjunction 'because' to explain to them why they will be frightened.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to use linking words in sentences points to progress towards aspects of Outcome 3 in which children begin to use complete sentences in their conversations. As their oral communication develops, they may demonstrate aspects of Outcome 4 and increasingly speak audibly, conveying meaning to a range of listeners.

5b

Listens to others during conversations and responds appropriately

Children meeting this Description of Behaviour will engage in effective dialogue with interested adults and peers, implying that they will need to listen carefully and respond in a relevant manner. Question and answer sessions in which the response provides relevant information to the questioner (and perhaps triggers another question) would count as meeting this Description of Behaviour.

How, where and when to assess

The act of listening to others and responding appropriately in conversations between children or between adults and children can be observed frequently, indoors and outdoors. Adults will need to listen as children discuss things they are experiencing or remark on things that interest them.

Examples

- The adult explained that children could choose stories to share with each other. Megan reached for her piggy nose and hat with piggy ears and picked up the story of the three pigs. She handed the book to the adult who asked what character she was going to be in the story. Megan smiled shyly and said she was the little pig.
- In a forest school session, children used a talking stick in a circle and thought of things they had enjoyed doing. Charlotte said "I liked looking for worms." Some of the children wriggled like worms. Amy responded "I found some worms in the soil." Most of the children listened to Charlotte. Their actions showed that they understood Charlotte enjoyed the worms. Amy responded appropriately, describing where worms could be found.



Progress towards outcomes: Listening to others is illustrative of aspects of Outcome 4 in which children listen to others, usually responding appropriately. Increasingly, children will attend and listen more carefully to a range of stimuli as they make progress towards elements of Outcome 5.

5c

Uses tenses appropriately in sentences

To satisfy this Description of Behaviour, a range of tenses must be used appropriately in children's conversations. Children may use the past tense to describe actual or imaginary events in the past; they may use the future tense to refer to events they might expect in the future. Children should show that they have mastered a range of tenses and use them flexibly, comfortably and appropriately. Some errors are acceptable, e.g. 'I runned.'

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour could be met at any time and very frequently in the continuous provision areas indoors and outdoors. It may require observation of several episodes of a speech or conversation. Open-ended questioning and discussions or activities that encourage children to draw on their own experiences are likely to encourage children to comment upon past events or their future expectations.

Examples

- Evan was the waiter in the café. He said "Say what you like to eat and I'll tell the cook. There are no cakes 'cos we ate them yesterday." He used present, future and past tenses confidently and met the Description of Behaviour, even though he used the word 'eated' rather than 'ate'.
- The children were going on a bug hunt. Summer said "I'll take the camera. I taked some pictures on my holidays."



Progress towards outcomes: As part of their progress towards conveying meaning in sentences (Outcome 4), children will refer to events in the past or in the future using the correct tense. Their increased grasp of tenses might in due course lead to increased confidence in the oral expression of ideas (Outcome 5).

Creativity: Children's descriptions of past experiences and events may sometimes include experimentation with the past tense and novel as well as novel and creative language constructions.

6a

Initiates or participates as a speaker and listener in a variety of structured and unstructured situations

Children achieving this Description of Behaviour will initiate conversations in a variety of structured and unstructured contexts, rather than participating in more passive or monosyllabic interactions. They will start the dialogue and take part in a variety of question-and-answer activities. It is important that children listen to replies, and respond to them, carefully.

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour will be met in continuous provision areas throughout the day. It is likely that adults will need to make several observations over a range of activities in order to assess the capability in both structured and unstructured activities. Relevant discussions in which children participate are likely to occur indoors or outdoors, while children are playing with their friends or taking part in a range of situations.

Examples

- The children had built a seat in the forest school. As they sat on it, one of the boys exclaimed as it collapsed "It's all fallen over!" His friend replied "Let's start again." The girl advised "We need to build more carefully next time".
- Ahmed wrote a story that he wanted to share with the group. He invited the children to listen while he reads it. The children ask him questions and he is happy to answer.
- Lucy was video-recording children making an allotment. She was going to put the video on the school website. She asked a question, turned the camera on and recorded responses. When they had finished speaking she turned the camera off.



Progress towards outcomes: The ability to speak audibly conveying meanings is one of the features of Outcome 4. Children will have made progress in their speaking skills when they choose to deploy these skills independently. Their increasing confidence in such interactions in a range of contexts is associated with some aspects of Outcome 5.

Creativity: Creative and innovative ways to participate as a speaker include children using audio and video. Experimenting practically and imaginatively to record their ideas links with Creative Development Outcome 4.

6b

Understands words that mean the same thing and words that mean the opposite

Children will be aware of alternative vocabulary they can use to express the same or the opposite idea in their everyday interactions. Initially, adjectives having the same meaning will include simple examples such as 'little-small', while opposites will refer to simple pairings such as 'large-small', 'good-bad' and so on. As their vocabulary becomes richer, they will become aware that there is more than one way of expressing the same idea.

How, where and when to assess

An adult may need to plan games or activities that invite children to show this capability, e.g. 'Can you tell me a word that means the same as . . . or the opposite of . . . ', though it is possible that it may arise spontaneously.

Examples

- The class was gathered around the teacher who asked the children "Can you tell me a word that means the opposite of 'sweet'?" Children offered their suggestions and they discussed and agreed which of the words were correct. Molly and Jake both said "sour" and everyone quickly agreed.
- In the snack area, children described the cake they were eating. An adult encouraged children to think of as many words as they could to describe the cake. The small group suggested 'yummy', 'scrummy', 'delicious' and 'tasty' – Ellie suggested three of these words.
- The children played an 'opposites' game, identifying which of two dogs is fat/thin, which of two women is tall/short, etc.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's growing vocabulary equips them with the skills necessary to listen to others and respond appropriately, which is a feature of Outcome 4. Increasingly, as their spoken vocabulary extends, they will show an awareness and use of some of the variety of language they hear around them (Outcome 5).

6c

Follows group discussions and understands when it is his or her turn to speak

Children achieving this Description of Behaviour will participate in and follow attentively the content of group discussions. They will understand when it is appropriate to respond to or contribute to the discussion and will tend to wait until there is a gap or pause in the discussion in order to make their contribution.

How, where and when to assess

This capability will be revealed indoors or outdoors in all provision areas when children are participating in group discussions. Adults should plan to listen to children's discussions and to identify those children who follow the conversation carefully and contribute at appropriate points in the discussion.

Examples

- The two children were talking to their teacher about mixing materials. Megan listened to Robert and the teacher describing mixing peas and marbles together. When they paused she added "We could get the peas back if we pour them through the yellow net."
- The children discussed their plans together as they constructed their small world model, taking into account one another's contributions before responding.



Progress towards outcomes: Children will follow discussions attentively and listen carefully – an aspect of Outcome 5 – and be sufficiently skilled to recognise points in the discussion when it is their turn to speak. As their competence as language users develops towards Outcome 6 they will show an awareness of the sequence and progression in ideas.

7a

Talks fluently and with confidence

Children meeting this Description of Behaviour will discuss ideas confidently with a range of others, conveying a sequence of ideas using a series of connected complete sentences. The fine-tuning of vocabulary results in careful selection of words to express subtle differences in meaning as well as an increased ability to listen to and take part in a wider range of interactions. Children may invite others to express a view and be responsive to their listeners' reactions.

How, where and when to assess

This capability will be revealed in children's interactions frequently during the day. Opportunities for children to hold lengthy conversations or present ideas in which they take turns will need to be planned for by practitioners.

Examples

- The class was divided into groups, each working on one aspect of a science investigation. Megan presented her contribution to the investigation to other learners. She had prepared some notes and referred to them to report exactly what she had found out. The other children asked questions, most of which she was able to answer with confidence.



- Ryan and Dylan had collected information from local people about the wind farm being built nearby. Local people had given them reasons why it was not a good idea and they also found some people who liked the windmills. Ryan presented their work to the class, stopping frequently to allow children the opportunity to ask questions.

Progress towards outcomes: Speaking fluently and with confidence resonates with elements of Outcome 5. Children develop and use a growing vocabulary and show awareness of the needs of listeners by including relevant detail. In some situations they adopt a more formal vocabulary and tone of voice.

Creativity: The use of multimedia support materials offers creative possibilities for using posters, visual aids, video or sound in ways that are stimulating and engaging, lending polish and structure to discussions and presentations.

7b

Shows an understanding of the main points of a story or information given

Children will show the capability to read a story, watch a video or listen to an account and be able to recount the principal features. They will show that they have grasped the main points as a meaningful and engaging account by talking about significant details. They will reveal understanding of the main points as well as the ability to listen to and respond to questions about the information, linking the main details and bringing their prior knowledge to bear.

How, where and when to assess

An adult may plan specific steps to observe this capability in continuous provision. Owing to a child's personal interest and engagement, following the viewing of a video, a visit to a pantomime or some other significant event, it may also be possible to allow the child to recount the main points spontaneously.

Examples

- Hannah spoke with her teacher about the Year 2 production that was going to be held for the Foundation Phase children at the end of term. She showed detailed awareness of the schedule, costumes, musical interludes and of which children were involved in different aspects.
- Philip had developed an interest in puppets and an adult asked him to choose one of his favourite stories and produce a puppet show that described the main points of the story. Philip produced a puppet show that illustrated the main characters and the major events in the plot.
- Following the trip to the art gallery, Haydon collected all the information he needed to summarise the main points for his presentation.



Progress towards outcomes: They show understanding and express opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction, which are linked to Outcome 5. As they progress towards Outcome 6, they might be expected to discuss significant details and explain preferences.

Creativity: Choosing how to create their personal reviews of stories, art, plays, music or dance provides meaningful and novel opportunities to assemble and present the main points of a story.

7c

Shows awareness of the needs of the listener by including relevant detail

Children may omit details that are critical to an understanding of the issues that have to be conveyed – not because they are unaware of the facts, but because they have failed to assemble a coherent narrative. Alternatively, they may ramble and lose their way, including details that are not relevant to the message to be conveyed. This Description of Behaviour concerns children's capability to assemble a coherent account that provides the information the listener needs in order to understand the intended message.

How, where and when to assess

A great deal of continuous provision will be mediated by spoken language between children and between children and adults. The implication is that the relevant behaviour may be encountered (and therefore, may be assessed) at virtually any time. In routine activities, clear communications are valued, but in emergencies it would be particularly important to convey the facts clearly and concisely.

Examples

- Teleri explained her plan in detail to her teacher. She clearly appreciated the level of detail needed, using apparatus and referring to other objects that she would use, the manner in which she would use them, and what she hoped to achieve as her outcome.
- Children practiced making emergency 999 calls using newspaper reports. The challenge was to list the facts in priority order, use just enough words to convey the message in a short time and to speak clearly into the sound recorder. Using their own success criteria they compared how effective each of their recorded messages were.



Progress towards outcomes: Shows awareness of the needs of the listener by including relevant detail (Outcome 5). As children make progress in their listening skills, they will show increasing signs of being able to modify their talk to the requirements of the audience, which features as one of a number of elements of Outcome 6.



Reading and Writing

Assessment story | Reading

The decoding of marks on the page has many dimensions: social (recognising familiar words by sight from signs), emotional (the pleasure of stories and the resulting motivation to learn to read), and cognitive (learning how phonemes can be put together to make whole words).

Parents/carers who read to young children find that they show an interest in books even at as young as six months. They may show particular engagement when the story is a familiar everyday event, such as a book reading bedtime routine. Sitting with the story reader, they will reach for books and may tend to want to put them in their mouths. When they come to understand the images, especially those they are familiar with in favourite stories, they will show that they [know the right way up to hold a book \(1a\)](#). This interest may lead to sharing books with adults, reaching for and handling books without prompting. They may [point randomly at text or pictures while being read to aloud \(1c\)](#). Their ability to understand and produce speech and understand some of the patterns and sounds of language is shown when they recite phrases from familiar nursery rhymes.

In their early handling of books, children will gaze at or point at words, and turn the pages when they are handling a book alone or sharing one with an adult. Such behaviour familiarises them with how books are organised to tell a story. Children may clap to [imitate the tempo and speed of sounds \(2a\)](#), increasing their awareness of the rhythm of language.

Children gradually come to be able to identify initial sounds of words in their spoken language and will [find objects in a picture that have the same initial sound \(3a\)](#). They will make distinctions between the marks that stand for words and marks that stand for other things, beginning to distinguish between print and pictures. At this point, they will be [aware of the difference between reading print and following pictures in stories \(3b\)](#).

Children begin to value books and to handle a book as a 'reader', talking about its contents, recognising that it contains print that they can interpret (decode) and read as a story. At this point, children will understand that written symbols have sound and meaning and in a similar manner [recognise that letters make sounds that go together to make words \(4a\)](#). Children will be aware of the link between some letters and sounds.

Children will begin to [recognise familiar and high-frequency words by sight in simple text \(5a\)](#), such as their own name on labels. When reading aloud, they will use knowledge of letter and sound patterns to sound out words and establish meaning. They may use pictures to infer meaning, gradually realising that reliance on illustrations alone may lead to reading errors.

Accessing words by sight is likely to be used alongside a phonic approach. Reading will reveal more understanding and animation. They begin to [express opinions about what has been read \(6a\)](#). They will recall the main details of a story. They will show that they [can read simple texts \(6c\)](#) independently, using appropriate strategies to establish meaning.

As children become more skilled users of phonics, they will [understand how to create words by substituting one sound for another \(7a\)](#), as in 'slice > price > nice'.

Assessment story | Writing

The Foundation Phase invites children to make marks that represent things in all manner of ways – pencil or paint on paper, chalk on a board, and so on. Starting with technical control, the development moves on to include writing as an imaginative communication medium.

When a child first [makes intentional marks on surfaces \(1b\)](#), a significant first developmental step is signalled. Many contexts – finger painting, tracing in sand, snow or condensation on windows – offer opportunities for mark-making.

Increased control becomes apparent when the child [begins to use a preferred hand for mark-making \(2b\)](#). Attempts at the simulation of writing can be seen when the child [lifts the pencil from the page to make separate marks in pretend writing \(2c\)](#), with private meaning being ascribed to these marks. An appreciation that text has a function is in evidence when children label pictures using scribble writing.

With the establishment of greater control, a wider range of mark-making possibilities becomes available to children. The capability to make distinctions between the marks that stand for words and marks on paper that stand for other things than words is seen when the child [shows awareness that writing and drawing are two different activities \(3c\)](#).

Prior to the acquisition of formal writing skills, children are likely to engage in role play using ‘pretend writing’. Progress in writing may be in evidence when the child [writes some of the letters with which he or she is familiar \(4b\)](#) and in the child’s developing [awareness of the link between some letters and sounds in writing \(4c\)](#). A parallel development of phonic awareness is likely to emerge in reading and writing though the timing may differ.

‘Real writing’ may be seen firstly in the form of the child being able to [make phonetically plausible attempts at writing simple words \(5b\)](#), in developmentally appropriate activities such as writing a message in greetings cards. With practice and development of fine motor skills, the child [will form recognisable numbers or letters with a pencil \(5c\)](#).

A significant step is when the child is able to communicate meaning in writing that can be understood without the child interpreting. Writing as a medium for communicating meaning, rather than as a purely mechanical skill, will be apparent when the child [shows the capability of developing written ideas in a sequence of connected sentences \(6b\)](#).

Further development of writing capability will be shown when the child [chooses words for variety, interest and effect \(7b\)](#) and demonstrates an interest in imaginative construction of meaning. Increasingly, the child’s written expression of ideas will be organised, imaginative and clear so that it meets the purpose for which it was intended, whether lists, plans or stories. This level of skill will also be in evidence in the fact that the child [uses the main features of different forms of writing appropriately \(7c\)](#).

Each of the Descriptions of Behaviour that make up the Reading and Writing Developmental Area has been linked to the Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcomes. These links and how the Descriptions of Behaviour shows progress towards the outcomes is explained on the relevant page.

1a

Knows the right way up to hold a book

Children will show that they know how to hold a book the right way up by turning the book around until they can see the pictures in the correct orientation. They will need to have experience of books to realise that there is a right way to look at them in order to make best sense of the pictures.

How, where and when to assess

This capability should be observable throughout the day whenever books are available in continuous provision. Children will tend to select books themselves, either to share with another child or look at themselves. A well-placed adult can observe whether the book is the right way up.

Examples

- Emely opened the book and held it the right way up.
- Dylan quickly noticed the pictures in the book he was holding were upside down and turned the book around.
- Daisy was observed taking a book from the shelves and turning it around until the book was the right way up.



Progress towards outcomes: Seeking, reaching for and holding books suggests an early curiosity about books. The demand is linked to Outcome 1 in which children's interest is described as shown by their ability to follow stories read to them. Children will learn that there is a correct orientation by following pictures as stories are read to them.

1b

Makes intentional marks on surfaces

Practitioners may observe children making marks in numerous situations, using a wide variety of materials and media.

How, where and when to assess

Children have opportunities to make marks in continuous provision situations, indoors and outdoors. Drawing in condensation on a window, in snow with a stick, or in sand, glitter or foam, all count as mark-making, whether using chalk, crayons, brushes, pencils or fingers.

Examples

- Ellie made marks on paper using the paints and brushes provided. She was able to load the brush with paint by herself. She showed control over the brush and made deliberate marks on the paper.
- Daniel was moving his fingers through the tray of paint. He made vertical lines and swirls.
- In the cooking area, Rhiannon and Zak were decorating biscuits. They used edible gels and icing tubes and concentrated really hard to make shapes.



Progress towards outcomes: The desire to make marks in the course of play is linked to the aspect of Outcome 1 in which children experiment with mark-making.

Creativity: Children’s experimentation with mark- and pattern-making with fingers and tools is expected in Creative Development Outcome 1 and might include their exploration of the look, feel, sound, movement and smell of different materials and tools.

1c

Points randomly at text or pictures while being read to aloud

Practitioners may observe that the child will point to the words in a book while listening to a story. The action may appear to be random in nature and may not show that the child is following the text of the story in the sequence intended by the narrative. However, the pointing suggests engagement and is sufficient to meet the Description of Behaviour.

How, where and when to assess

Opportunities to look at books will allow the child to track the words on a page and come to realise that the marks have meaning. This recognition can be encouraged, both indoors and outdoors, while on walks, by looking at street signs, images on advertising hoardings, shop labels and direction signs, and so on.

Examples

- Luc listened to a jungle story and as the adult turned a page, he pointed at the text. Sometimes he pointed to a word, and sometimes at pictures, while at other times he missed the word and pointed at the bottom of the page. His pointing revealed that he was closely engaged.
- The child had an understanding that the black marks on a page meant something. He often brought an adult a book and said "Read".



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to point randomly at text or pictures while being read to aloud resonates with elements of Outcome 1 in which it might be expected that children follow stories read to them and respond appropriately.

Creativity: Novel responses may emerge as children enjoy, explore, imitate and respond in their own way to stories. The possibilities for imitating actions and sounds links with Creative Development Outcome 1.

2a

Imitates tempo and speed of sounds

This Description of Behaviour looks for children's capability to clap slowly and quickly, following an adult's lead, following the rhythm of spoken words. There should be evidence that the child is demonstrating an understanding of the pattern between the rhythm of the words and the action but this does not have to be absolutely accurate, nor explained verbally.

How, where and when to assess

This may be observed in the musical instruments area of continuous provision or in circle time. This behaviour may be encouraged when children tap out the words to follow simple repetitive songs and rhymes, following the adult's guidance.

Examples

- A group of children were with an adult singing 'Baa, baa, black sheep'. Sian clapped in time with the base rhythm. She clapped faster to represent 'Have you any wool?', but was not able to remain entirely in time with the faster beat.



Progress towards outcomes: Children may imitate the tempo and speed of sounds by tapping or clapping to a rhythm. This joint activity, as children listen to stories, shows some of the qualities of interest and enjoyment expected at Outcome 2.

Creativity: Creating novel patterns in sounds to match the rhythm in stories and rhymes is related to Creative Development Outcome 2 in which imitating the simple rhythms and broadly matching the dynamics of spoken words might be expected.

2b

Begins to use a preferred hand for mark-making.

Practitioners should observe children to establish that hand dominance has been established when they are using mark-making or other implements of various kinds requiring fine coordination. Children may be ambidextrous in many large movements but move to a preferred hand to achieve the greater control they require for fine hand movements such as when making marks.

How, where and when to assess

This capability can be met throughout continuous provision indoors and outdoors, when making marks using a crayon, pencil, etc. The adult's role is to identify the preferred or dominant hand when the child is using fine motor control.

Examples

- Rees picked up the blue stamp with his left hand. He continued to hold the stamp in his left hand as he created his painting.
- Kaitlin was in the construction area. She chose a red pen, which she held in her right hand and took the lid off with her left hand. She began to 'write' a list of materials with the pen, using her right hand.



Progress towards outcomes: Early signals of hand preference as children begin to draw using their preferred hand is an element of Outcome 1. The step up in this demand – expected as an element of Outcome 2 – is when children try out a range of instruments to make marks.

2c

Lifts the pencil from the page to make separate marks in pretend writing

The child may be observed holding a pencil and imitating the process of writing on paper. The child must be observed lifting the pencil off the page and then replacing it periodically, as if to illustrate the beginning and end of words.

How, where and when to assess

The behaviour meeting this Description of Behaviour might be seen in the continuous provision areas indoors and outdoors. The child might be seen holding a writing implement and using it to imitate writing in the role-play area.

Examples

- Bethan was playing in the café. The adult was supporting her learning. She was talking with the adult and writing down the food and drink order. Bethan made marks to record the order, lifting the pencil off the page to indicate she had written down each item required. Each mark represented, for her, an item requested.



Progress towards outcomes: The process of making separate marks as if to imitate writing can be linked with parts of Outcome 2 in which children use a variety of implements to make marks and shapes on paper or other material.

Creativity: Children's creative production of marks, lines, and shapes links with Creative Development Outcome 2.

3a

Finds objects in a picture that have the same initial sound

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children should locate accurately, by pointing or by verbalising, familiar or known objects in a picture which begin with a particular initial sound. The adult will need to say the initial sound and the children, individually or in a group, must then select things in the picture that start with the same sound. The adult may repeat the initial sound if the child is unsure. This should be demonstrated with a minimum of three initial sounds, to be sure that the selection is not random.

How, where and when to assess

Children can be encouraged to think about the images around them and consider the starting sound of objects in pictures. When sharing a book or playing letter games, children can be asked to identify objects sharing a particular initial sound.

Examples

- Steffan pointed to his picture and said "'Sh' for shark!"
- Sarah picked out three objects from pictures on the wall with the initial sound 's': 'sand', 'sun' and 'salt'.



Progress towards outcomes: Finding objects in a picture during interactions with each other or with adults can be just one component of Outcome 3, when children are talking about a book's contents. Increasingly, children will recognise that written symbols stand for sounds.

3b

Shows awareness of difference between 'reading' print and following pictures in stories

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children will show awareness of different forms of representation in a book and will accurately locate the text on a page and distinguish it from pictures. Children will begin to recognise that print on a page is associated with words that are read and spoken. They may mimic the reading process by pretend-reading the words on a page.

How, where and when to assess

Children can be encouraged to talk about the different things to be seen on the pages of books, with each other, or when sharing a book with an adult.

Examples

- Simone was 'reading' a book with Rees. She described what was happening in some of the pictures. Rees pointed to the text. She said "I can't read that. It's 'words'!" and started to turn the page.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's interest in books and their desire to follow stories that are read aloud progresses into a capability to differentiate between print and pictures. These steps are linked to elements of Outcome 2. Later, as they make progress towards Outcome 3, they will discriminate between letters and begin to write familiar letters in a conventional way.

3c

Shows awareness that writing and drawing are two different activities

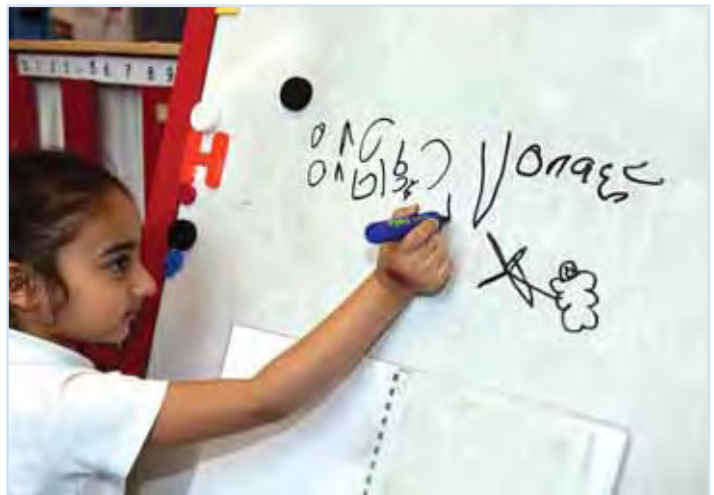
The child might decide initially that he or she wants to write something and collect the appropriate materials to do so, but may start by drawing a picture before moving on to the writing. Although writing and drawing may be seen as parts of a single process, the child should be able to identify to an adult which is which when questioned.

How, where and when to assess

Children can be encouraged to talk about the different aspects of their drawing and writing work with each other or with adults in continuous provision, indoors and outdoors. Familiarity with a variety of resources to experiment with making marks and to develop their writing skills will help children to distinguish between writing and drawing across a range of media.

Examples

- Amena showed the other children her story. She pointed to her writing and her drawing and said "These are the words in my story and this is my picture of a fairy."
- At home time, Rhiannon got her picture from her tray and showed it to an adult. She told the adult that the painting of flowers was for her mummy and that "this bit . . ." (she pointed to the circles and lines) says "Happy Birthday".
- Morgan's mummy picked him up from nursery. His mummy asked if he had painted a picture at nursery. Morgan replied "No, I was writing you a letter."



Progress towards outcomes: As children cross the border from making marks in Outcome 2 towards recognising that written symbols have sounds and meaning – an element of Outcome 3 – they may, additionally, appreciate that writing and drawing are two separate activities.

Creativity: Using materials and tools imaginatively to create novel drawings and writing links with Creative Development Outcome 2 in which they might show they can use a range of tools and are able to create images and symbols.

4a

Recognises that letters make sounds that go together to make words

Children come to understand that symbols on the page stand for sounds and words that have meaning. This general recognition is sufficient to meet this Description of Behaviour. The understanding of 'phonic attack' as a decoding strategy is sufficient to meet this Description of Behaviour, though this will be a necessary precursor to segmenting familiar and common two- or three-letter words, e.g. 'b'- 'u'- 's' (using sounds). At least six phonemes should be sounded by the child.

How, where and when to assess

Observations may be made in continuous provision areas where appropriate books are available. They might also be made in guided group reading or individual reading activities. Children will need to demonstrate their understanding to an adult.

Examples

- The children were playing a 'sound out the word' game. They used their fingers to write in foam. One would write a word and the other children would try to sound out and say the word that had been written.
- The children used the ink stamps to print and then sound out letters to make words. Anna printed the letters 's'- 'a'- 't' on the page. She read each word she had produced, sounding out each letter.



Progress towards outcomes: As they develop their understanding of phonemes towards an awareness that letters make sounds that go together to make words, children will progress towards Outcome 4, at which point they might be expected to use their accumulating knowledge of sound-symbol relationships to read words.

4b

Writes some of the letters with which he or she is familiar

Practitioners should observe whether children are able to write some of the letters they have become familiar with – perhaps some of those in their own name. These can be written in upper or lower case and need to be recognisable, though not necessarily perfectly accurately formed. There is not a requirement to link the sound associated with the letter to its physical construction in order to meet this Description of Behaviour, though practitioners will naturally wish to encourage such linkages.

How, where and when to assess

Opportunities may occur in the writing or creative area but they might also be regularly observed in the role-play and construction areas. A variety of resources will support this activity, including chalk, paint, crayons, foam, sand, treacle and dough.

Examples

- Elspeth worked outdoors with the different coloured chalk and independently wrote several recognisable letters on the patio area. The letters included upper and lower case, but did not go together to make recognisable words.
- Olivia was writing a birthday invitation with adult support. At the bottom she was asked to write her name. She wrote some letters with which she was familiar.
- The children were making letters in a tray of glitter. Gareth made three letters that were recognisable: 'g', 'e' and 't'.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to form some random letters might be accompanied by elements of Outcome 3 in which children hold writing instruments appropriately, discriminate between letters and begin to write in a conventional way.

Creativity: Children can be creative in their choice of materials, tools and even the places where they might choose to write individual letters, numbers and symbols.

4c

Shows awareness of the link between some letters and sounds in writing

Children will use their knowledge of initial sounds in words and represent these graphically. The child's writing may consist of a string of initial letter sounds and other marks. Once written, these initial letter sounds could be sounded back to an adult. At least six correspondences between the written initial letters and their sounds as repeated by the child should be confirmed by an adult.

How, where and when to assess

Observations might be carried out in different areas of continuous provision. Children should be able to access a range of writing resources, which will support frequent opportunities to observe this Description of Behaviour.

Examples

- Brad was able to write many letters in a recognisable fashion and was starting to write the names of objects with the correct starting sound. He wrote the 's' as the starting sound for 'starfish' on the playground, but struggled, understandably, with the rest of the word.



Progress towards outcomes: Elements of Outcome 3 point to children's skill in recognising the alphabetic nature of writing. As they progress in their understanding of phonemes and their assembly into words, they will be expected to use their knowledge of sound-symbol relationships to write simple words and phrases (Outcome 4).

Creativity: Children's reading and writing will show imaginative and novel uses of the links between some letters and sounds.

5a

Recognises familiar and high-frequency words by sight in simple text

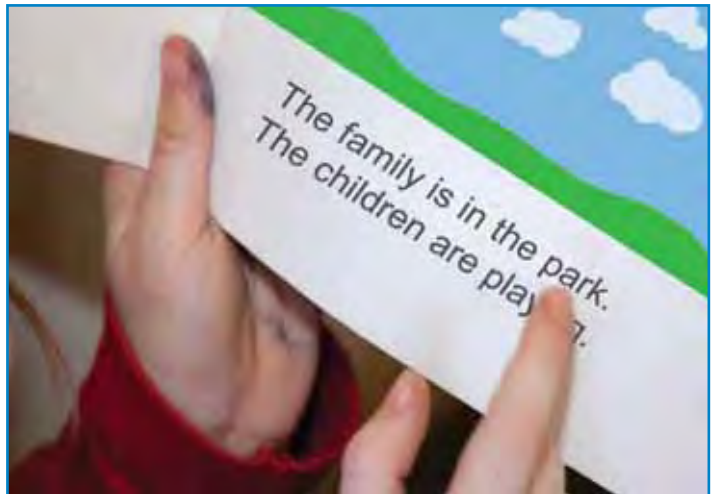
To meet this Description of Behaviour, children should show the capability of recognising 10–20 high-frequency familiar words on sight. As this skill concerns whole-word recognition, the sight vocabulary should result in immediate recognition, without needing to sound words out. The text used should be age- and developmentally appropriate. Familiar and favourite everyday books used in the setting would provide appropriate stimulus material.

How, where and when to assess

Reading familiar words by sight can happen in any area where words are displayed in books, posters, packaging, games and the computer. The activity should be conducted one-to-one or in a small group with an adult.

Examples

- Sian was sharing a book with an adult. She pointed to some of the words and read them successfully.
- Cai could read some of the children’s names that he recognised on their coat hooks.
- Haleigh read some signs in the street as the group were having their road safety instruction. She read ‘bus stop’ and some other road signs.



Progress towards outcomes: As part of Outcome 4, children are expected to recognise familiar words in simple texts when reading aloud.

5b

Makes phonetically plausible attempts at writing simple words

To meet the Description of Behaviour, most of the words written should have some accurate phonic connection with their written form (e.g. at least one sound–symbol correspondence in a multi-syllabic word) so that the words can be matched between written and spoken forms.

How, where and when to assess

The developmentally appropriate activities in which children's early attempts at phonetically plausible writing might be encouraged will include writing shopping lists in the role-play area, adding greetings to cards or annotating their own drawings in the creative area.

Examples

- Grant's teacher gave him some of the words on cards so as to help him to get started with his letter to the three bears. All or most of the words he attempted to write by himself had a recognisable phonic connection with the correct form.



Progress towards outcomes: As part of their practical activities children might create a written record that communicates the intended meaning through simple words and phrases. Using their knowledge of letters and sound–symbol relationships to establish meaning will also resonate with Outcome 4.

Creativity: Children's creative and sometimes novel use of phonics to record their ideas and feelings from observation, experience and imagination in writing links with Creative Development Outcome 4.

5c

Forms recognisable numbers or letters with a pencil

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children will show the capability to form letters or numbers that are clearly shaped and correctly oriented. A pencil or similar writing implement offering fine control should be used.

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour can be observed in continuous provision indoors and outdoors where children might communicate in writing (typically to family and friends), producing a coherent message.

Examples

- Wendi and Gower represented the different numbers on a dice in blocks, pictures and handwritten symbols. Gower's work showed a well-formed '6'. The teacher made a note to check whether he was able to form his letters with similar skill.
- Dylan wrote a simple message to invite his friends to the party. The letters were clear and all the right way up. The message was understandable.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to write letters that are usually clearly shaped and correctly oriented is an element of Outcome 4. With practice in handwriting, progress will be made towards Outcome 5 in which letters are expected to be accurately formed and uniform in size.

6a

Expresses opinions about what has been read

This Description of Behaviour concerns children's capability to consider carefully stories or information they have read, and their ability to form opinions as a result of their reflection. They are expected to express a view and to explain the reasons for their view. Their explanations should be supported with evidence or reasoning.

How, where and when to assess

Children might be encouraged to reflect on stories and information they have read and stories they have had read to them on a regular basis. The source of information could be, for example, simple instructions for games, stories or other information. They might access these on the computer or on paper. Assessment will require meaningful opportunities to describe their ideas in discussions with an adult or using voice recorders.

Examples

- In the authors' corner, children reviewed and discussed some of the stories they had read. Each child offered a point of view and then explained their reasoning. Later, they voted on each one to try to find the most popular story to dramatise.
- Jacob recorded his view of one of the books he had read on a voice recorder. He explained his view of the good parts of the book and described how his enjoyment of the book might have been improved.



Progress towards outcomes: This Description of Behaviour connects with aspects of Outcome 4, which expects that children will respond to stories and information they have read, initially with support. Gradually, as children progress in their ability to reflect on their reading, they will show understanding and express opinions characteristic of Outcome 5.

Creativity: Children might choose to use their own sounds and images to support their creative expression of views about what has been read.

6b

Shows capability of developing written ideas in a sequence of connected sentences

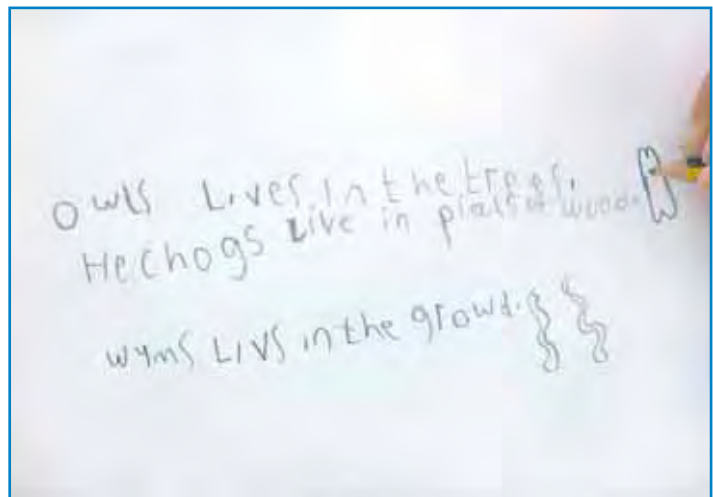
This Description of Behaviour concerns children's understanding that writing conveys sense by connecting sentences together to develop meaning. The capability is one of developing and elaborating a connected story, narrative or sentiment rather than mechanical, discrete and disconnected sentences. There is no need for the correct spelling to be in place in order to achieve this Description of Behaviour, since the focus is on connected ideas to communicate meaning.

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour can be observed in continuous provision indoors and outdoors where children might communicate in writing (typically to family and friends), producing a coherent message. The writing could use a computer and contain at least three linked sentences.

Examples

- Megan recorded some of her ideas about animals that could be found in the forest. She created several linked sentences: "Owls lives in the trees. Hechogs live in pials of wood. Wyms livs in the growd."
- The focused task required Dylan to write a clear letter to 'Dermot the dragon' to invite him to visit the children. Dylan wrote: 'Dear Dermot, Please can you come to see us again. We have made a nest for you outside. You can lay your eggs in it. I miss you. Love Dylan x.'



Progress towards outcomes: The development of ideas in a series of connected sentences suggests progress towards one element of Outcome 5. As children develop writing skills they will begin to show not just how sentences work but will use capital letters and full stops with some degree of accuracy.

6c

Reads simple text

Children achieving this Description of Behaviour will use a wide range of strategies to read and understand simple text. They will use word-recognition strategies, their knowledge of sound-symbol relationships and contextual cues such as illustrations on the page to read familiar and unfamiliar words and establish meaning.

How, where and when to assess

Reading simple text can happen in any area where words are displayed in books, posters, packaging, games and the computer. The activity should be conducted one-to-one or in a small group with an adult.

Examples

- Jennifer read the story she had written to a small group of children. She had produced the story on the computer and successfully read it to the group.
- The children assessed one another reading a poem. They said "Awena read the words accurately", "She didn't hesitate" and "She wasn't sure about one word, but she sounded it out".



Progress towards outcomes: Children's accurate reading of simple text and their use of a range of strategies when reading unfamiliar words are elements of Outcome 5. With increased experience, children will read with growing accuracy, fluency and emphasis as required within Outcome 6.

7a

Understands how to create words by substituting one sound for another

This Description of Behaviour is concerned with children's practical phonic understanding. Children should be able to start with a word and change vowel and consonant sounds and blends to create new words. They should be able to show this capability both in speech and in writing and recognise that sounds may be changed at the beginning, middle or end of a word. There should also be awareness that the meaning of the word changes.

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour can be observed regularly in the reading or writing areas of continuous provision. The adult may also listen to children as they discuss words. Children might use an alphabet tray, wooden, plastic or magnetic letters and letter stamps to make their sound substitutions. This kind of activity can be made into a gently competitive turn-taking game.

Examples

- The children played a word game in conversation with an adult. Bethan said 'mice' rhymes with 'nice'. Her teacher challenged Bethan to think of as many words as possible that rhyme with 'nice'. She thought between offering each word and wrote 'slice', 'price' and 'rice'.
- Fiona used a letter stamp to change one letter at a time in her words 'rip', 'ripe', 'stripe' and 'striped'.



Progress towards outcomes: In creating new words, children show such a grasp and knowledge of sound-symbol relationships that they can use their knowledge flexibly to spell simple words accurately. Where children demonstrate inaccuracies the alternatives are phonically plausible. Application of this knowledge of sound-symbol relationships in this creative way is relevant to Outcome 5.

7b

Chooses words for variety, interest and effect

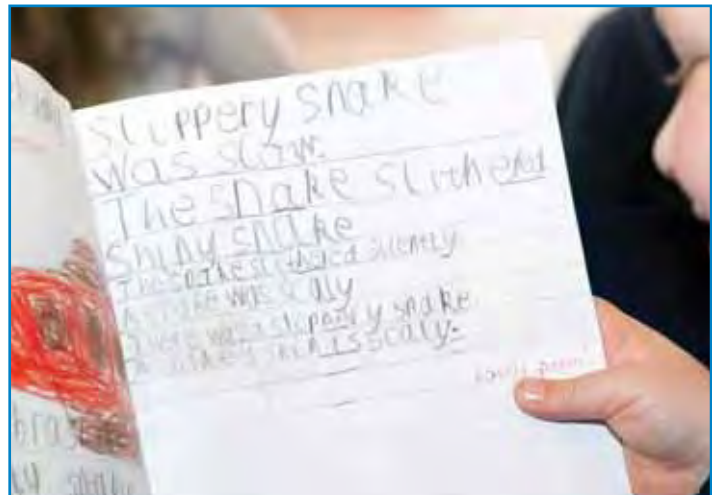
With basic technical control established, children's imaginations can have free rein. From pedestrian expression they will shift to enjoying the imaginative potential of new words. They will use a variety of words appropriately in their writing, bringing interest and impact to the work. To meet this Description of Behaviour, children must show that they relish expressing themselves in writing and sharpen the accuracy of their intended meaning by the selection of nuanced vocabulary.

How, where and when to assess

This Description of Behaviour is potentially observable throughout continuous provision involving speech or writing. Practitioners may plan opportunities for children to review their writing, suggesting to each other in a positive atmosphere alternative words that might improve a piece of writing. Information and communication technology (ICT) provides novel opportunities for collaborative writing.

Examples

- Sam wrote the following: 'Slippery snake was slow. The snake slithered. Shiny snake.' His careful choice of vocabulary captured and communicated the slow movement of the snake.
- Tintin recorded a football match on TV and then reviewed the game so that he could write a commentary. His written commentary on the game demonstrated a good use of vocabulary that described actions graphically, conveying meaning and a sense of drama in his narrative.



Progress towards outcomes: Choosing words for variety, interest and effect is one of a number of features of Outcome 6. Other relevant elements include the expectation that writing will be – for the most part – organised, imaginative and clear.

7c

Uses the main features of different forms of writing appropriately

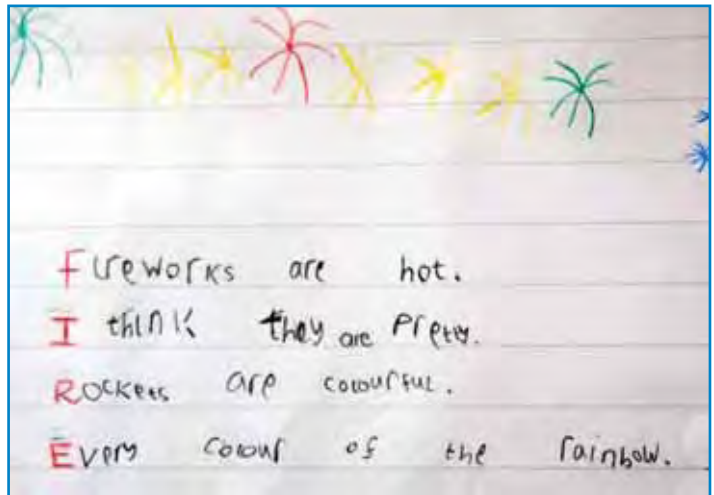
This Description of Behaviour is concerned with establishing the range of ways in which children might structure and present their written ideas. Children will extend the forms their writing takes and the tools they use to generate writing as their skills develop. The repertoire might include using software to create non-fictional and fictional narratives, adverts, instructions, commentaries, stories, poems and cartoon formats to show speech, jokes, etc. Children might decide to use texting or e-mail in addition to writing letters. ICT might also be used to build up collaborative pieces of writing.

How, where and when to assess

This capability may be observed indoors and outdoors. To ensure children's capabilities in a range of writing genres have been met, it is likely that some activities will require specific planning. Children across the achievement range might choose to use voice recognition software to express ideas in writing.

Examples

- Ewan wrote an acrostic poem in which the first letter of each sentence spelled another related word. He used his knowledge of the structure of an acrostic and his awareness of a range of vocabulary to produce an imaginative poem. He creates poems, stories, notes and science reports on the laptop.



Progress towards outcomes: An increase in writing skills is likely to bring with it an increasing awareness of both readers and the importance of interesting vocabulary – elements of Outcome 5. Towards Outcome 6, writing will be organised, imaginative and clear, and the grammatical structure of sentences correct.

Creativity: Writing provides the possibility of exploring collaboratively or independently novel and imagined worlds, fictional social relationships and diverse historical places and times.



Sort, Order and Number

Assessment story | Sort, Order and Number

This Developmental Area links skills that underpin mathematical development: sorting (putting things into groups according to a feature they have in common – also known as ‘grouping’ or ‘classifying’); ordering (putting objects in series or rank orders according to some dimension such as length, size, weight, etc.); and using numbers, a skill that uses the underlying classifying and ordering skills (or ‘logical operations’).

Children initially live in a world in which things exist or do not exist (when out of sight, for example). Using gestures to request ‘more’ reveals an understanding that objects may exist even when not in direct vision. This is referred to as an appreciation of ‘object permanence’, a fundamental logical understanding.

Some nursery toys are constructed to stimulate thinking challenges to young children. ‘Posting’ games require the use of one-to-one correspondence to [match simple shaped blocks into matching holes in boards or containers \(1a\)](#). Identifying things that are alike in some way, or have something in common, is an early sign that children are beginning to classify objects in their world. Children will demonstrate the ability to [locate objects according to criteria determined by an adult \(1b\)](#) such as colour, shape or size, for example when asked to ‘Find me as many green things as you can’, etc.

The number system allows us to quantify objects by numbering them in order, and the fact of being able to [count two objects \(2a\)](#) is an early step along this route. That objects differ in size and that we have names for these size attributes is apparent when children use and [understand the concept of ‘big’ \(2b\)](#). Putting similar things together is an early step in the process of learning to put objects into groups, so managing to match simple two-dimensional shapes in cut-out puzzles (e.g. circles, squares, etc.) is an important accomplishment.

Dealing with comparisons of quantity by using observation (rather than numbers or measurement) is in evidence when the child [identifies and compares quantities \(3a\)](#). Putting objects in order in a series is an important logical skill seen when the child shows the capability to [order shapes or objects from smallest to largest \(3b\)](#). This may be accomplished with rods or sticks of different length, or with more diverse or irregular objects (such as soft toys), which vary in several dimensions.

Putting together the things that go together is a much less demanding challenge when simple shapes or colours are provided. When the child is able to [classify everyday objects that go together by creating own sets \(4a\)](#), (for example when playing in the home corner, they may put ‘all the food together’, ‘all the plates’, ‘all the cutlery’, etc.) greater cognitive flexibility and imagination is required.

An early sign in the development of understanding the number system is that the child [understands that numbers represent quantity by selecting a given number from a larger set \(4b\)](#) when asked. For example, they may respond successfully to a request such as ‘Please would you bring me four pencils from the tray?’

Children will apply the understanding gained from prior experiences of ordering by size and using number names when considering coins having different values. This appreciation of coin value may be in evidence in role play based on shopping. While children may have rote counting skills, their deeper understanding of counting is revealed when they can [tell what number comes before or after a given number up to 10 \(5a\)](#). A milestone in understanding number has been achieved when children use their counting skills to [construct collections of real objects comprising equivalent numbers of things \(sets of two, three or four items\) \(5b\)](#). However diverse the individual members of the set of, for example, ‘four’, the common property of ‘fourness’ will be recognised – and so on for other numbers.

Frequent manipulation and rearrangement of groups of items generates familiarity with adding and subtracting numbers up to ten. Everyday experiences of adding to and taking away from small groups of objects – whether pencils, snack items or children – will give rise to fluency in [using number operations of addition and subtraction up to 10 in practical situations \(6b\)](#). Children are not expected to carry out calculations in their heads at this stage, though experience will increasingly tend to make their practical operations almost automatic. Evidence that a child understands simple number operations in a way that goes beyond rote repetition is seen when, with assistance, she or he explains the difference between addition and subtraction. Appreciation of the conservation of number is shown when a child [understands that the number of objects remains the same despite being rearranged \(6a\)](#) into a taller or wider or more dispersed array.

Working with numbers in everyday experience and in role play will result in larger numbers beginning to make sense to children. An application of the understanding of number is required for a child to [use mental calculations in attempting to solve number, measuring and money problems using numbers up to 100 \(7a\)](#). This acquaintance with numbers up to 100 will build on experiences of working with coins, measuring in centimetres, measuring volume, and other aspects of the metric system of measurement used in their settings.

Fractions will have been gradually introduced in settings and in their wider home experiences – perhaps through sharing or cutting cakes, fruit, pizza, and so on. Another practical application of the use of fractions is in telling the time, where children come to [understand the passage of time in whole, half and quarter hours \(7b\)](#).

Having learned to use their writing skills to construct lists, it is a significant step when children learn the possibilities of coordinating two lists to make a table. For example, they may construct a list of minibeasts found in the forest school area, with the number of each found in a second column. It then becomes a relatively straightforward step to convert their organised columns to [record the results of their practical enquiries and investigations in the form of tables and bar charts \(7c\)](#).

Each of the Descriptions of Behaviour that make up the Sort, Order and Number Developmental Area has been linked to the Mathematical Development Outcomes. These links and how the Descriptions of Behaviour shows progress towards the outcomes is explained on the relevant page.

1a

Matches simple shaped blocks into matching holes in boards or containers

Many toys encourage matching blocks and coloured shapes by posting them through holes or placing them in shaped recesses in a baseboard. Children may supplement their matching attempts with trial and error methods. The use of trial and error to succeed can be accepted as evidence that they understand the matching requirements of the task and are able to complete it.

How, where and when to assess

A young child may choose, or be encouraged, to play with a 'posting box' or inset puzzle. It may be necessary to demonstrate how the toy works in the first instance, before allowing the child to experiment.

Examples

- Ellen matched the pieces of a simple 'shape inset' jigsaw to their correct holes. It took her several attempts but eventually she was successful, turning the shapes until they went into the spaces.



Progress towards outcomes: Matching simple shapes is consistent with some of the matching demands described in Outcome 1 of Mathematical Development, in which children sort and match objects or pictures by recognising similarities.

1b

Locates objects according to criteria determined by an adult

Identifying things that are alike in some way is one of the earliest signs that children are beginning to classify objects. Children will locate objects according to an attribute such as colour or shape, for example when asked by an adult to 'Find me something green', etc. As a group activity, children may locate and place, e.g. green objects inside one hoop, red objects inside another.

How, where and when to assess

A range of equipment for simple sorting and classification activities will allow children to demonstrate this capability. Tidy-up time may also provide opportunities to assess children's sorting skills after this behaviour has been modelled and supported by an adult.

Examples

- The three children played together, sorting the objects by colour and then by shape. Nerys showed a good grasp and advised the younger children when she saw that they were unsure.
- Tom put all the outdoor coats away at tidy-up time. He put all the red ones together and all the black ones together on another set of hooks.
- Sally and Robert sorted the washing in the role-play corner into different colours.



Progress towards outcomes: The ability to identify objects that have a particular quality such as colour or shape involves the ability to compare physical properties of objects, which is one element of Outcome 1.

2a

Counts two objects

Practitioners will observe children counting familiar objects in a variety of everyday and routine situations. For example, children may count crackers at snack time, blocks when building, steps when climbing stairs, socks and shoes as they put them on or take them off. The children should point to an object when counting (consistent with one-to-one correspondence).

How, where and when to assess

Practitioners need to be aware of opportunities for counting with children in their everyday activities in all areas of the setting, indoors and outdoors.

Examples

- The children counted as they moved along the climbing area. Amy counted the steps "One, two" as she climbed.
- Jack was in the 'home corner' setting the cutlery and plates on the table. He gave one plate to Sam and one to Jenny, counting as he did so "One, two".
- Sue and Pam held hands as they jumped from one flagstone to the next. They counted together, "One jump, two jumps".



Progress towards outcomes: 'They count up to three objects reliably' is identified as a component of Outcome 2.

2b

Understands the concept of 'big'

Children might be observed identifying a 'big' object either by pointing, naming, selecting or fetching. This may occur during their play, when they will correctly select objects and equipment by size: the big blocks, big bucket, big spade, big book and so on. Practitioners may ask children to select a 'big' object of some kind to confirm their understanding of this adjective.

How, where and when to assess

There will be a range of toys and equipment in settings that can be identified as being 'big', indoors and outdoors. Opportunities will arise throughout sessions to ask children to compare sizes and identify big objects.

Examples

- Jay was able to select 'the big fir cone' from the fir cone collection which had been specially selected in a range of sizes. He selected the two extremes and had no difficulty in showing which one was 'big'.
- During a baking session, Sarah was asked to pass the 'big spoon'. She selected correctly from a teaspoon, dessert spoon and the tablespoon that were available.
- Mrs Jones asked Danny to find her a 'big' book to read so that all the children could see the pictures. He went to the book stand and selected a large book from the array of sizes available to choose between.



Progress towards outcomes: Using words to describe the size of objects is one aspect of Mathematical Development Outcome 1 in which children are expected to compare the physical properties of objects.

3a

Identifies and compares quantities

Children are likely to talk about quantity and compare quantities when they are playing. For example, when using modelling materials at the table, they will often take all of the dough or make comments about one child having more than another. They make comments about a child having some of the trains or all of the trucks. (The understanding of 'less' may be found to be more difficult for children to use, so is not a requirement in meeting this Description of Behaviour.)

How, where and when to assess

The words 'all', 'some', 'none' and 'more' might be used incidentally in continuous provision areas. Practitioners may ask children 'Give me some...' etc., to check their understanding of all these terms if they do not emerge spontaneously over the available time.

Examples

- Aled had all the modelling material until Megan said to him "You've got it all, Aled. We want to share some as well."
- Polly was sitting at the snack table with an empty cup. She attracted the attention of an adult and said "I've drunk all my milk up. Please may I have some more?"
- Rebecca and Jack were in the garden playing with some shells, sticks and sand on a tray. Rebecca said to Jack "Can I have some shells?" Jack gave her his shells and said "You've got all the shells now."



Progress towards outcomes: Children may compare the distribution of food and resources during play. Asking or gesturing for 'more' or 'all' of the food, or indicating that there is 'none' of the available food left, has some correspondence with the Mathematical Development Outcome 3 description of children's use of familiar words in practical situations.

3b

Orders shapes or objects from smallest to largest

Children will play with different sized objects in plastic or wooden sets, but also in the context of naturally occurring or 'found' objects such as leaves, flowers, stones, etc. It is likely and acceptable that children will use trial and error to arrive at the correct order from smallest to largest, or match and order pair by pair in meeting this Description of Behaviour. A set of at least five objects in order is suitable for confirming this capability.

How, where and when to assess

Size comparisons may occur at any time in any continuous provision, while children play with boxes, beakers and soft toys of various sizes. Any objects can be ordered – bricks, dolls, pieces of fruit, shoes and plastic shapes.

Examples

- Bronwen was in the forest school area and had collected sticks following a high wind the previous day. She set out all eight sticks in order of their length.
- A member of staff suggested to Mia that she could use boxes to make some steps for teddy. She ordered some boxes from smallest to largest to make a set of steps without assistance.
- Jessica was playing with a set of five Russian dolls. She removed each of them carefully, keeping the two parts of each doll together. She lined the bottom parts in order of size and put the 'tops' on, touching each completed doll.



Progress towards outcomes: Rank-ordering objects according to size is consistent with the Mathematical Development Outcome 3 suggestion that children compare or order two or more objects by direct observation.

4a

Classifies everyday objects that go together by creating their own sets

Children classify objects that go together in numerous situations in the setting. They may put all the food, all the plates, all the cups, all the cutlery into sets of objects having some attribute in common. Adults may need to check that children's sorting has been completed as intended. Members of a set are expected to have differences while sharing one characteristic, rather than all being identical in every way.

How, where and when to assess

Classification can be used in continuous provision areas indoors and outdoors. Home corner cutlery trays, shop play, washing line activities, making collections of leaves, etc., all offer opportunities for children to classify objects according to criteria they have decided upon themselves.

Examples

- The children were helping to tidy the resource area by putting all the things together that should go together in their own box or drawer. This provided an ideal opportunity to check their understanding of classification and set membership.
- Sam and Carla were playing with the farm set. They had sorted the animals into the fields they had made using coloured sheets of paper. Asked why they had put certain animals together Sam explained "The cows are here. The pigs are here. Cows eat grass and pigs eat other stuff."



Progress towards outcomes: Consistent with elements of Outcome 3 is that when sorting, children recognise when an object is different and does not belong to a familiar category. The step up is for children to identify and demonstrate the Description of Behaviour they have used, which is an element of Outcome 4.

Creativity: Children might be given opportunity to choose their own objects, materials or sounds to classify and decide their own set labels, offering imaginative enquires linking with building understanding through exploring in Creative Development Outcome 3.

4b

Shows understanding that numbers represent quantity by selecting a given number from a larger set

When asked by an adult or their peers, children should demonstrate that they are able to follow the requirement, most likely expressed verbally, to assemble the correct number of objects. The request might take the form 'Please can you give me four bricks from the box?' Quantities of no more than three, four or five should be expected to be understood.

How, where and when to assess

Simple games with adults and other children will help children to confirm this capability in an enjoyable way. Opportunities will arise in many provision areas and group times as well as during one-to-ones with adults in shop or other role play.

Examples

- The request to 'Please give me three sweeties', had the added incentive of referring to real sweets, and Nia had no problem in meeting the request.
- Dafydd asked for five apples from the role-play shop. Lynne, as shopkeeper, met the Description of Behaviour when she correctly and confidently counted five apples and gave them to Dafydd.



Progress towards outcomes: The selection of a given number of objects from a bigger set involves simple addition as children gather the objects together. These skills are likely to be deployed during practical enquiries and are consistent with some elements of Outcome 3.

5a

Tells what number comes before or after a given number up to 10

Children are likely to have experienced counting up and down in the series to 10 in a variety of situations, including rhymes, songs and stories. These experiences will enable them to remember the order of numbers. Their deeper understanding, beyond rote, will be demonstrated when they can say which number comes before and after a given number in the series 1 to 10.

How, where and when to assess

Outdoor number lines provide opportunities to discuss 'before' and 'after' numbers, linking the numeral with the spoken word. Songs and rhymes can be used. The Description of Behaviour requires moving backwards and forwards, starting at any point.

Examples

- Children were playing the 'before' and 'after' numbers game on the number line outdoors. Sarah asked Gareth to move to the number after 7. He correctly chose number 8. Careful observation was required to check how much each individual actually understood.
- Two children were playing a variant of the 'Snakes and Ladders' game. Steven managed to count forwards and backwards according to where he landed, plainly showing his understanding of which number comes before and after.



Progress towards outcomes: A step up from counting on by rote at Outcome 3 is the ability to identify numbers that come before or after a given number. Further progress expected as part of Mathematical Development Outcome 4 is the capability to count on and back in steps of different sizes and from different numbers.

Creativity: Children can show their flexible understanding of number sequences beyond rote recall as they create their own counting games, or in puzzles and patterns they produce themselves.

5b

Constructs collections of real objects comprising equivalent numbers of things (sets of two, three or four items)

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children need to be able to assemble sets comprising collections of objects having equivalent numbers. For example, a set of 'two' might contain two books, or an apple and an orange, or a sock and a cup, and so on. Children could decide any criterion for selecting objects to add to a collection, provided they match the 'numerousness' defined at the outset. Note that a group is permitted to be of 'different things' provided it meets the definition of how many objects are to be included in the collection.

How, where and when to assess

Adults will need to introduce the activity to children and check that they have indeed sorted according to the agreed 'numerousness' criterion.

Examples

- In the forest school area, the children placed four different objects they collected in each of the three hoops.



Progress towards outcomes: As a component of Outcome 4, children are expected to sort and classify objects demonstrating the criterion they have used.

Creativity: Gathering together resources of their choice to make sets of numbers of objects will foster children's creativity in handling numbers. Opportunity to review their practical work and that of others links with Creative Development Outcome 5.

6a

Understands that the number of objects remains the same despite being rearranged (number conservation)

Number conservation can be demonstrated by, for example putting the same number of objects in differently shaped containers, or by rearranging the second of two groupings that had previously been agreed to be equal by using one-to-one correspondence.

How, where and when to assess

When the number within a collection of items is established and that collection is then rearranged, there will be opportunities for children to demonstrate their understanding that the number remains unchanged.

Examples

- The children both appreciated that the two rows of sweets still had 'the same' amount of sweets, even when one row was stretched and the other row was compressed.
- Eda had put 20 beads into a short wide jar and 20 similar beads into a tall narrow jar. She remarked that there seemed to be more beads in the tall jar but knew that there were actually the same number.



Progress towards outcomes: As part of Outcomes 4–5, children are expected to use mathematics as an integral part of classroom activities. They count, order, add and subtract numbers when solving problems involving up to 10 objects. They can read and write numbers up to 10.

Creativity: Children might explore creatively the different ways groups of objects they have chosen can be arranged using puppets or toys as agents for changing the objects. Exploring practically number conservation is linked with Creative Development Outcome 5.

6b

Uses number operations of addition and subtraction up to 10 in practical situations

Everyday manipulation and rearrangement of groups of numbers to 10 will give rise to familiarity with adding and subtracting small numbers. Practical experiences of adding to and taking away items from sets of objects will generate fluency in using the number operations of addition and subtraction up to 10 in practical situations. Mental calculations are not expected in order to meet this Description of Behaviour.

How, where and when to assess

Number operations to 10 can be demonstrated in virtually any time and any place, provided practitioners are vigilant for opportunities, with the use of numbers being treated as part of everyday life.

Examples

- Children were playing a game of tossing beanbags into hoops. They started with 10 each and counted how many landed inside and how many outside their target hoop. Correct use of number operations by a child when calculating his or her score confirmed the use of number operations to 10 in the context of this game.



Progress towards outcomes: In meeting Outcomes 4–5, children use mathematics as an integral part of classroom activities. They count, order, add and subtract numbers when solving problems involving up to 10 objects. They can read and write numbers up to 10.

Creativity: Inventing novel games, quizzes and other challenges provide children with practical open-ended contexts in which they can use number operations in novel ways.

7a

Uses mental calculations in attempting to solve number, measuring and money problems using numbers up to 100

Familiarity with numbers up to 100 will build on experiences of working with 10 pence coins and pound coins, measuring in metres and centimetres and other aspects of the metric system of measurement that children encounter in their settings. The usefulness of working with numbers in everyday experience and in role play will become apparent to children and mental calculations with larger numbers will begin to make sense.

How, where and when to assess

Any time the decimal system is used will provide opportunity for mental calculations up to 100. Situations may include measuring volume, length and money.

Examples

- Vicky consulted a hundred square chart to check her answer to a mental calculation involving pennies.
- Catrin and Huw tried to make a shelter with polythene. They had metre rules and tried to estimate the lengths of the pieces to be cut, to the nearest 10cm.



Progress towards outcomes: Outcomes 5–6 require that children use mental calculation strategies to solve number, money and measure problems.

7b

Understands the passage of time in whole, half and quarter hours

Fractions are often introduced by problems involving sharing cakes, pizza and fruit, for example. The division of the clock face is another practical application of fractions. To meet this Description of Behaviour, children will need to demonstrate their understanding of time in three ways: 'telling' the time, and appreciating the passage of time both in terms of 'how long ago' and 'how long until'. They should use at least whole, half and quarter hours.

How, where and when to assess

An understanding of fractions needs to be coordinated with the ability to tell the time. Settings will have access to analogue clocks that can be referred to in order to establish children's understanding of elapsed, current and future passage of time.

Examples

- The children set one another challenges by making up sentences about the time, using a model clock.
- Rebecca tells from the clock that it showed 12 noon, that she had a break one and a half hours ago and would have her lunch in half an hour's time.



Progress towards outcomes: Outcome 5 requires of children that they recognise half-turns and quarter-turns. They identify and use halves and quarters in practical situations.

7c

Records the results of practical enquiries and investigations in the form of tables and bar charts

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children will have progressed from recording information in lists to making simple tables and bar charts to present their information. Children should have the capability to draw simple two-column tables to meet this Description of Behaviour. The recording of information into the table and bar chart should be carried out independently of an adult.

How, where and when to assess

This capability may be observed indoors or outdoors as children record information they have collected. Adults might encourage children to carry out enquiries such as measuring the lengths of their shadows, or their arm spans. Surveys such as finding the children's favourite story, pet or snack might be planned.

Examples

- Tom asked six children to choose their favourite pet from three options. He recorded their ideas in the correct place in the table.
- Freddie made a picture chart to show the children's favourite snack. He could see from his graph how many children liked each snack.



Progress towards outcomes: One element of Outcome 5 is that children record the information they have gathered during their enquiries in simple lists, tables, diagrams and block graphs. As they make progress towards Outcome 6 they will be able to talk about and explain the different ways they record results.



Approach to
Learning, Thinking
and Reasoning

Assessment story | Approach to Learning, Thinking and Reasoning

The process of learning is a lifelong progression. This Developmental Area seeks to identify milestones in the children's development of positive, confident dispositions that enable them to take active ownership of learning episodes (rather than being passive recipients), develop their thinking and reasoning skills and make progress with 'learning how to learn'.

From the earliest months of life, children signal interest in things around them by their gaze, by movement, by facial expressions and non-verbal utterances. As they gain physical control of their limbs and hands, children will **be curious to know what is inside boxes and containers (1a)**, and motivated to open these to remove objects, possibly with close adult support. Gradually, there will be evidence of children's awareness that objects continue to exist even when they fall from sight (object permanence), as evidenced by the fact that children will **look for or orients towards a dropped object (1b)**. An understanding that particular objects have special functions is revealed when the child **uses some objects as intended (1c)**. That is, an association between the recognition of an object and its purpose have been established: spoons are for eating; chairs are for sitting; beds are for sleeping.

Behaviour that shows discrimination between objects and events that are more or less favoured is in evidence when the child **maintains attention for about one or two minutes on a chosen activity (2a)**. Children demonstrate that they carry a mental plan (or mental representation) of their environment when they show that they remember where toys are kept. Rather than their mental operations appearing to take place within a very limited time span of 'the present', children show evidence of using a memory capacity. They will come to memorise routines as shown when they **relate an experience today to one that happened in the past (2b)**. They will begin to show an appreciation of cause and effect – the fact that some action on their part results in an outcome in the world: for example hitting a spoon on a tin produces a loud noise (that in turn, draws attention). Similarly, in a social context, the child **experiments with the effect of his or her own actions on objects and people (2c)**.

One way in which children clearly demonstrate their growing inquisitiveness for knowing how the world works is when they **show curiosity about their environment and wider surroundings (3a)**. The world offers children opportunities that require choices to be made. As they become more autonomous in their judgement and more independent of adult direction, they learn to make their own decisions based on their own preferences. As they shift from being passive to becoming active and realising that they can exert control over their environment, they will **use actions or words to indicate why one activity is favoured over another (3b)**, when given the option of at least two choices. Their inner sense-making can be communicated to others by the capability to **describe experiences or objects in speech, drawing, modelling, construction, movement or music (3c)** and dance. Their mental world is made known to others by these various forms of representation.

Increasingly a child will be happy to **remain engaged in an activity for at least 10 to 15 minutes, at times (4a)**. Their increasing memory capacity plus the ability to envisage that events in the past and the present often repeat themselves in the present or the future will be indicated when children **show that they remember events in the past and can use these to anticipate events in the future (4b)**. The capacity to think things through and envisage other possible ways of behaving is in evidence in role playing that acts out others' jobs and experiences. An example is when a child **takes on pretend roles and situations, using the appropriate language, tone, and movements (4c)**. While this kind of performance is encouraged by the provision of 'dressing-up' clothes, the speech and behaviour must be the focus of attention in deciding whether the child is actually trying out another role or way of behaving.

Strong personal interests demonstrate a positive approach to learning, as does willingness to take a personal initiative, as when a child takes ownership of their learning and [chooses to work on a project because the activity is of personal interest \(5a\)](#). Making sense of the world through observations and exploration is a step on the way to a more developed appreciation of cause and effect. Increasingly, the child will adopt a more thoughtful and analytical approach and be able to [give reasons for why things have happened or are happening \(5b\)](#). Increased experience and awareness of cause and effect patterns will enable future events to be anticipated or predicted more reliably, because they are more likely to be based on direct experience. The child will anticipate outcomes with more flexibility, considering more than one possible outcome, so that they can [explain how things might change, given changes in circumstances \(5c\)](#).

Thinking things through clearly is required (and most clearly observable) when children attempt to cope with things going wrong. They may need to use a different strategy, substitute materials, repair a situation or change direction in some way. Inner strength and commitment may be revealed by the fact of a child being able to [cope with reasonable challenges, show persistence and continue through difficulties \(6a\)](#). This capability reveals mental tenacity. Greater flexibility in envisaging possible outcomes from any particular set of circumstances is in evidence as a significant step when the child [can hold more than one point of view \(6b\)](#). Holding more than one point of view implies an appreciation that either of two (or more) ideas or statements may be possible, even acknowledging that only one can be true. Objective and clear thinking is required in order that a child [can describe the sequence of events in a logical way \(6c\)](#). To meet this Description of Behaviour, the description (which might be written, spoken or video-recorded) should include all the essential detail in the correct order. The listener should be able to actively reconstruct and fully comprehend the events described, without further prompting or probing.

A child who has a self-directed approach to learning will be confident enough to tackle new concepts, rather than be filled with self-doubt in the face of new ideas. They will show capability to [reflect on and evaluate the strengths and scope for improvement in their own work \(7a\)](#). Evidence that a child has a flexible approach to learning that goes beyond rote memorisation will be seen in the capability to use a variety of methods to express thoughts and ideas (e.g. discussion, art activities). Reasoning skills continue to develop, as seen in the capability to [plan the steps in an enquiry and explain decisions about the approach \(7b\)](#). Such planning must take account of many practical considerations. As well as offering explanations for things that happen in the real, external world, the child will be able to offer explanations for the internal working of his or her thinking. This kind of thinking about thinking is known as 'metacognition'. Distinguishing between internal fantasy and external reality is seen to be available to the child by the fact that they can [explain if a story is real or make-believe, when prompted \(7c\)](#). Adults and children alike enjoy fantasy, using the 'suspension of disbelief' to engage fully with the spirit of the narrative. At this stage in their thinking, children should be able to show that they can step back into the real world and apply a realistic analysis of events.

Each of the Descriptions of Behaviour that make up the Approach to Learning, Thinking and Reasoning Developmental Area has been linked to one or more Foundation Phase outcome. These links and how the Descriptions of Behaviour shows progress towards the outcomes is explained on the relevant page.

1a

Curious to know what is inside boxes and containers

Children will show curiosity in finding out about what is inside small boxes and containers by opening them and removing the contents. Children will show interest in emptying and filling all kinds of containers and moving objects around a setting. This exploratory behaviour signals a curiosity and interest to investigate and to learn.

How, where and when to assess

Children show interest in hidden or concealed objects in containers at any time of day in a variety of situations. The behaviour is likely to be observable on any day, at any time and in any place in the setting.

Examples

- The setting had a set of nested boxes decorated with coloured wrapping paper. Anwen was closely engaged for several minutes, exploring one box after another.
- Ellis filled and emptied the boxes with differently sized cars.
- Dilys opened the 'Seashore Box' and carefully extracted and observed each item of contents as she sat by herself.



Progress towards outcomes: Children explore objects and materials within immediate and familiar environments. (Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 1).

Creativity: Children can be encouraged to be exploratory early in their development by the provision of novel and interesting opportunities that arouse their curiosity.

1b

Looks for or orients towards a dropped object

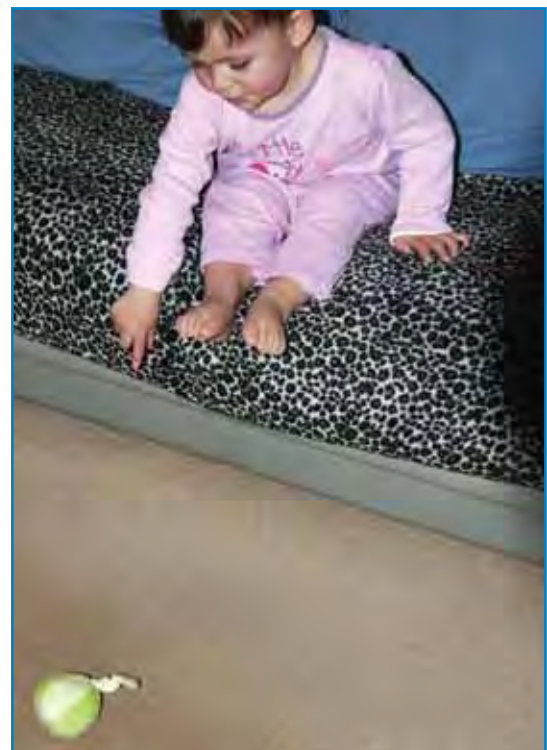
Children show awareness that dropped objects fall downwards, to the floor. When objects are out of sight the child knows that they continue to exist, demonstrating the concept of 'object permanence', and continues to look for them by scanning the path along which the object was moving.

How, where and when to assess

This behaviour is likely to be revealed frequently but unpredictably and might therefore be assessed at any time or place.

Examples

- The toy rolled off the sofa and onto the floor; Ella followed its fall with her gaze and gestured towards it, indicating that she wanted someone to pick it up.
- Dylan was feeding himself yoghurt. The spoon he was using fell off his high chair tray. Dylan looked down and pointed at the floor.



Progress towards outcomes: Looking for objects that have fallen is consistent with the Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 1 description of children being able to explore objects and materials within immediate and familiar environment. Interest in the position of, and the relationship between objects is also an element of Mathematical Development Outcome 1.

Creativity: Being creative includes children responding to the movement of objects and being curious about events.

1c

Uses some objects as intended

Young children tend to treat every object in the same manner – putting things into their mouths, clasping them and perhaps banging them. In time, they demonstrate their understanding that objects have a function. This Description of Behaviour is to establish children’s appreciation of such functions through using some objects in ways that reveal understanding of their intended purpose.

How, where and when to assess

Using objects (real or toy versions) as intended is likely to be a frequent feature of children’s interactions with materials and objects. It can be assessed at any time of day within a range of spontaneous or planned activities.

Examples

- Cara was outside helping in the garden. She showed by the way she used it that she knew exactly what the wheelbarrow was for. She wheeled some soil from one place to another, tipping the soil out when she reached her destination.
- Abigail was feeding her doll. She used a spoon and a dish, dipping the spoon into the dish and then placing the spoon near to the doll’s mouth and saying “Mmm, nice.”
- Lewis played with the toy phones, pressing the buttons and placing the phone near to his ear, saying “Hello, Mummy.”



Progress towards outcomes: The behaviour described by this Description of Behaviour is consistent with the Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 1 description of children being able to explore objects and materials within the immediate and familiar environment.

Creativity: Children frequently show imagination in adapting objects for purposes other than their intended function.

2a

Maintains attention for about one or two minutes on a chosen activity

Children will show the ability to maintain their attention at a chosen activity for about one or two minutes. This shows progress from earlier behaviour in which children move without engagement from one activity to another during a session. Gradually their interest and attention span will increase at their chosen activities.

How, where and when to assess

This behaviour will be observable when children are provided with opportunities to select an activity that engages their interest from a selection of activities available, either in continuous provision indoors or outdoors or as part of the focused provision.

Examples

- Libby sorted through the cupboards in the kitchen area for several minutes. She took out the various implements and put them back in again. She closed the doors to signal the end of her interest in that particular activity.
- Rhiannon clearly showed a preference for some activities above others. She concentrated on self-chosen painting activities for at least five minutes.



Progress towards outcomes: Making choices about materials and equipment to complete a given task is described as part of Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 2. With increasing confidence in finding their way in familiar surroundings, children will begin to choose tasks that interest them independently. Initially, they may move quite quickly from one activity to another.

Creativity: Observing children’s early absorption with activities can reveal what intrigues them, through some of the imaginative, novel and unexpected ways they engage with an activity.

2b

Relates an experience today to one that happened in the past

Children will build up a bank of memories which will help to guide their actions when events recur. To meet this Description of Behaviour, children will need to express their understanding, either in actions or in words, that there is a familiar experience in the past they are aware of that is guiding their actions, speech and behaviour in the present.

How, where and when to assess

This capability might appear as a regular feature of children’s behaviour. Children are likely to refer to previous experiences when they encounter repeat experiences. Occasionally, children may make the connections between earlier and new experiences explicit in their speech, but adult questioning about memories is permissible, provided it does not lead the child to say what the adult wants to hear.

Examples

- Louise had put her shoes in place on the outline footsteps that show how many children were in the play area. She learned the routine very quickly. She knew that when all the footprints had shoes on them, she should choose a different activity.
- Upon hearing a fire engine going past the setting, Sian said that she saw one before, going fast past her house.



Progress towards outcomes: Relating an experience to one that has happened in the past links to elements of Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 2 in which children begin to match specific activities to certain times of the day/week and show some appreciation of past and present.

2c

Experiments with effect of own actions on objects and people

Children begin to realise that they can influence others through their own behaviours. When they do something that draws attention, such as banging a box, something happens: they draw people's attention. They will also realise that when they do something such as waving or smiling, usually people will wave or smile back. This Description of Behaviour will be met when it becomes apparent that children have gained such awareness.

How, where and when to assess

This behaviour will be apparent in the frequent interactions children have with each other and with adults as they use various equipment commonly found in settings: toy telephones, vacuum cleaners, musical instruments, etc.

Examples

- The two girls were using various kitchen implements to bang on the metal cake tins. They noticed which combinations made the sounds they preferred. Incidentally, they realised that other children's heads turned to see what the noise was.
- Alex tapped the shoe of a visitor who was standing next to where he was sitting. He was trying to attract the visitor's attention. The visitor bent down and said "Hello". Alex had succeeded in gaining the adult's attention.



Progress towards outcomes: In their handling and exploration of familiar materials or equipment, children may explore the effects of their actions on objects and people (Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 2).

Creativity: Children's sense of freedom for independent experimentation with materials and resources is key to creativity. Their exploration of a range of sound sources links with Creative Development Outcome 2.

3a

Shows curiosity about their environment and wider surroundings

Children will show inquisitiveness about their surroundings and their wider environment, both indoors and outdoors, by seeking to explore physically. This is the kind of behaviour that requires particular vigilance on the part of adults. Equally, it requires opportunity, such as the facility to move from indoor to outdoor play areas.

How, where and when to assess

Children's curiosity may be observed regularly as they engage with activities designed to stimulate their curiosity and encourage discussion. It may be particularly evident when children are provided with unfamiliar, novel activities or when specific activities such as walks outdoors are planned.

Examples

- Ellis and Phoebe looked for minibeasts under the leaves. They discussed the kinds of things they might find and would like to discover. They had come prepared with spades and containers.
- Mervyn experimented with colour mixing, using all possible combinations of colours.



Progress towards outcomes: The interest and curiosity shown by children towards their environment will be fostered through enquiries in which children are able to observe and identify changes in their environment/materials/natural features (Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 3).

Creativity: Exploring and investigating resources are part of Creative Development Outcome 3.

3b

Uses actions or words to indicate why one activity is favoured over another

The important aspect of this Description of Behaviour is the capability of explaining, in either words or actions, a choice between two or more activities. The availability of choice is a necessity for this behaviour to be apparent, but the explanation to justify the choice made is the critical factor to observe. The reason given must refer in a realistic way to the choice made.

How, where and when to assess

Expressions of preference between choices will tend to occur regularly throughout the day, in continuous provision areas, indoors and outdoors. The adult observer may need to ask a question to elicit a child's reasoning behind making a choice that has obviously been favoured.

Examples

- Catrin was asked whether she wanted to use tools in the mark-making or paint areas. She chose the mark-making area, saying that the paint was 'messy' and went on her hands. "I want to draw flowers outside 'cos the paints are too messy."
- Given the choice, Jonathan said he wanted to stay inside rather than outside, to build with the blocks. When asked why, he replied that he wanted to make a track for his car and he couldn't lift the box outside.



Progress towards outcomes: With increasing independence, experience of choosing activities and a developing vocabulary through which they can communicate their knowledge of each activity they are able to signal why one activity is liked more than another (Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 3).

Creativity: Opportunities to make choices about their preferred activities supports creative development through pursuing personal interests. Their participation in planning future activities is part of Creative Development Outcome 3.

3c

Describes experiences or objects in speech, drawing, modelling, construction, movement or music

This Description of Behaviour is looking for the capability that children come to exhibit when they use one thing to stand for something else. They are able to represent an experience or activity in several different ways or modes of expression. For example, they might make a picture and also talk about their feelings about or memories of an outing. They might re-enact a mood by dance or acting.

How, where and when to assess

It may be necessary to plan opportunities for children to show their ideas and emotions in different ways. They might choose to use speech, drawing, models or actions. These capabilities will be shown frequently throughout the day, indoors and outdoors.

Examples

- The children worked together to make a larger-than-life model based on a story they had heard. Each one of them was able to explain how some aspect of the story had been made to look as it had in their model.
- Following her birthday the previous weekend, Ellie used dough to make a representation of the birthday cake she'd had. She sang 'Happy Birthday' to herself and blew out the candles.
- Alun drew a picture which he said showed his family when they 'went to the beach'. When invited to talk about it, he pointed to different parts of the picture and identified family members.



Progress towards outcomes: Children build up their knowledge of the characteristics of a range of materials/resources through exploring and investigating as a component of Creative Development Outcome 3. They use this accumulated experience to communicate understanding via different media.

Creativity: Children choosing different ways to represent their ideas is one aspect of creative development. The creation of meaningful artefacts is expected as part of Creative Development Outcome 3.

4a

Remains engaged in an activity for at least 10 to 15 minutes, at times

Children show persistence and engagement by staying involved in an individual or shared activity for 10 to 15 minutes. The activity may be one in which each child is engaged either alone or with other children.

How, where and when to assess

This behaviour of remaining engaged is potentially observable at various times during the day when children are absorbed in activities, indoors or outdoors. The engaged behaviour may be in relation to any activity observed by an adult.

Examples

- A group of children was asked to make one of the animals they had seen at the zoo using up to 20 plastic interlocking blocks. Some photos of the animals were on hand to help them. Mal was really interested and spent 15 minutes building his giraffe.
- Alys enjoyed creative activities and regularly spent 10 to 15 minutes painting, mark-making or creating things in the workshop area.



Progress towards outcomes: Children making suggestions and asking questions that influence the activity will demonstrate engagement. Engagement is illustrated in Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 3 as suggesting independently how and where to find information. Children’s increased involvement is also characterised in Personal and Social Development, Well-being and Cultural Diversity Outcome 4, with greater concentration on a task.

4b

Remembers events in the past and uses these to anticipate events in the future

This Description of Behaviour is about cause and effect: the appreciation that one thing happens and something else follows as a consequence. Through remembering past experiences children can begin to anticipate future events. Memory of events such as birthdays may be used for anticipating parties. Day-to-day, children may appreciate the consequence of particular events: when it rains you may get wet, if you are unkind to someone, they will be upset, and so on.

How, where and when to assess

Associations between previous and prospective events may happen at any time. Leaflets or photos of places visited may remind children of previous events and cause them to anticipate future possibilities, building up a fund of experiences to recall. Simple day-to-day procedures may be used, such as anticipating snack time, what happens and what to do.

Examples

- The children remembered to water the seeds each day – they knew where to get the watering cans and the water and that the seeds needed water to grow and would not grow if the soil became dry.
- Gethin looked through his 'weekend box' with an adult and a small group of children. Last week, he played in the snow and built a snowman. He said that if it snowed again on Friday he would need his gloves and hat to keep him warm because the snow had made his hands 'frozen'.



Progress towards outcomes: In revealing behaviours relevant to Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcomes 3–4, children are beginning to understand the passing of time, remembering significant events in the past and anticipating events in the future. Crossing the boundary to Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 4, they will show an awareness of the distinction between present and past in their own and other people's lives.

4c

Takes on pretend roles and situations, using the appropriate language, tone, and movements

Practitioners will observe children role playing in their settings. This kind of behaviour can be encouraged by the provision of appropriate dressing-up clothes and other resources that will encourage children to act out experiences that they have had or seen. The behaviour and language of the role, not just dressing up, is required to meet this Description of Behaviour.

How, where and when to assess

Possibilities include using the home area, hospital role play, shopping, construction areas, etc. While ready-made materials are likely to stimulate particular kinds of role play, the role play must involve taking on a different set of actions or speech.

Examples

- Emma was the shopkeeper and William was her customer. He told her he would like an apple. She told him the price and handed it over to him.
- Aysha and William played in the hospital area. Aysha used the stethoscope to find out what was wrong with William. The resources helped Aysha take on the role but she also used her language skills to ask William "What is wrong with you today?"
- Three-year-old Fiona pretends to be a baby, crawling on the floor and making baby sounds.



Progress towards outcomes: In taking on pretend roles, children initially communicate their knowledge of items in everyday use, which is one element of Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 3. Later, as they progress towards Outcome 4, role play provides opportunities for children to share and extend their ideas (Language Literacy and Communication Skills), explore relationships, cultural differences and diversity (Personal and Social Development, Well Being and Cultural Diversity Outcome 4) and show their awareness of other people's lives (Knowledge and Understanding of the World).

Creativity: Imaginative role play involves exploring the use of the language of people associated with particular roles, in pretend situations.

5a

Chooses to work on a project because the activity is of personal interest

Building on from the possibility of choosing one activity from the choice available, children will show a personal interest in an activity or use a personal interest to influence the direction of an activity. This Description of Behaviour is very specifically concerned with confirmation of a capacity for self-motivated or independent learning, rather than children’s simple compliance with what is put in front of them.

How, where and when to assess

Children’s capability to exert control over their learning could be revealed in all provision areas. Adults will need to be on the alert to provide children with opportunities to follow their own interests, perhaps by changing the resources provided.

Examples

- Alex is interested in underground railways. He draws a map of the underground on the whiteboard to show what he has learned.
- James has an enthusiastic interest in dinosaurs. He created an environment for them using new and recycled materials in the workshop area. He enjoyed playing with it afterwards, allowed others to play cooperatively with him.



Progress towards outcomes: The emergence of definite likes and dislikes in a range of fields including their learning (suggested at Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity Outcome 4) can be harnessed along with their increasing metacognitive abilities and independence to help children to make fruitful choices in their learning.

Creativity: Children might be more likely to initiate their own learning and make their own choices and decisions about the ways in which they communicate and share new knowledge if they have opportunities to pursue special interests in depth.

5b

Gives reasons for why things have happened or are happening

Although the reasons children offer to explain things might not always be correct, they reveal an increased willingness or need to think about effects and their causes. Children will hypothesise as to why things have happened in the way they did. Such comments are more likely to be provoked by unexpected turns of events, or ‘repairs’ when things go wrong. These thoughts about repairs might be to do with damaged objects, actions, pieces of work or social interactions.

How, where and when to assess

Commentaries on the reasons for things happening in particular ways might happen spontaneously at any time. Unexpected outcomes, both disappointing and thrilling, can happen at any point in the day. Adults might also invite children’s reasons for events.

Examples

- Sian explained to her teacher the problem that kept happening with the computer programme she was trying to use. She explained the circumstances in which the problem occurred, why she thought it was happening and the solution she had attempted.



- Geila wrote letter sounds in a foam tray but the foam closed over the shapes. “There’s too much foam,” she said, and scooped some away. She made a new, thinner layer of foam and continued her activity successfully.
- William tried to build a very elaborate tower of bricks. It collapsed several times. “The bricks have to be lined up exactly,” he commented, “or the tower falls down.”

Progress towards outcomes: Using their experiences of what did and did not work – an element of Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 4 – children develop an ability to explain outcomes, and reflect and modify their approach in the face of challenges.

5c

Attempts to explain how things might change, given changes in circumstances

This Description of Behaviour refers to hypothetical conditions in the future – what might happen, given a change in circumstances, or how things might be (or might have been) prevented (or might be made to happen) on another occasion. Children will try to make sense of things using their own words, explaining the consequences of changes that happen around them in a way that makes sense to them.

How, where and when to assess

Open-ended activities are likely to be ones that encourage children to make predictions and explain how things might change. Practitioners might need to engage children in conversation to encourage them to discuss 'what might have been in other circumstances'.

Examples

- The children discussed the effects of rain and light on the plants in the garden. Anwyn said "If there is no rain, the plants will die. If it's sunny, we might have lots of flowers."
- Ellie made chocolate Easter eggs. She said that the runny chocolate would go hard if it was put somewhere cold.



Progress towards outcomes: The expression of views about features of specific places and how some might change is one feature of Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 4.

6a

Copes with reasonable challenges, shows persistence and continues through difficulties

The evidence of meeting this Description of Behaviour will be apparent when children show confidence that they can complete a challenging task. They will show resilience and determination when the unexpected happens or the task does not go as planned, requiring a change in strategy. The distractions may be the result of other children, because of the materials being used or the sheer size or difficulty level of the task that has been started.

How, where and when to assess

This behaviour can be assessed regularly throughout the setting both indoors and outdoors. Challenges may be presented by a problem-solving activity or during interactions with others. Some dialogue with an adult may be needed to clarify the coping strategy used.

Examples

- Children may undertake tasks that require strength, dexterity or skills that stretch their capabilities to the limit. Careful management will enable them to build resilience and learn from challenges. This building task using large materials was a significant challenge but each child faced up and overcame the difficulties.



- In the process of making a home for her toy dog, Menna discussed with the other children the fact that the glue wasn't strong enough to join the resources together. She asked a member of staff for 'stronger glue' or 'strong tape' which she then used to complete the task.

Progress towards outcomes: Children 'begin to identify what did and did not work' with more awareness, and resolve difficulties (Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 4). The capability to 'reflect and evaluate by describing their work in detail' allows them to 'offer explanations why something worked or did not work' and approach tasks positively (Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 5).

6b

Can hold more than one point of view

Younger children tend to believe what they are told and assume that everyone believes the same. Gradually, they come to appreciate that different points of view are possible. Behaviour that is consistent with appreciating more than one point of view can be thought of in at least two different ways: firstly, one individual accepting more than one possibility from their own viewpoint; secondly, accepting that other children may have different points of view from their own.

How, where and when to assess

Conversing in pairs or small groups in shared activities will encourage children to appreciate they have ideas that may differ from each other. Encouraging them to express their ideas may prompt them to show that they appreciate that different viewpoints can exist and be held at the same time.

Examples

- The two girls had a discussion and it was apparent to the adult that Maggie was capable of accepting more than one possible explanation for events. This meant accepting uncertainty.
- Bethan said "Lisa is crying. I don't know if she hurt herself outside or she's upset because she had an argument with William.'



Progress towards outcomes: Appreciation that there are different ways of representing the past, which is a component of Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 5, requires learners firstly to be aware that there are different points of view, and secondly to empathise with those different viewpoints.

6c

Can describe a sequence of events in a logical way

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children need to demonstrate that they can think through a series of at least three steps. This capability may be observed when they describe a sequence of events: 'This happens, followed by something else, and finally this...'. The context for planning such a sequence of steps might be ordinary everyday events such as getting ready for school, how to follow a recipe, planning an enquiry or wrapping a present. There may be opportunities in describing life cycles such as those of butterflies or frogs.

How, where and when to assess

This kind of behaviour should be revealed by children rather than being drawn out step by step by an adult asking questions such as 'And what next . . . ?' Opportunities for sequencing are commonly planned and happen throughout the day.

Examples

- The two boys discussed how they would proceed with their Internet search for information on the project they were about to begin. They decided which search engine each would use, the search terms and how they would use a ranking procedure for their final selection.
- Rob and Evan played a game of tossing beanbags into hoops. They started with 10 each and counted how many landed inside and how many outside. Before they began, they agreed the sequence of turns, the rules for positioning and throwing and the scoring system that will be used to decide the winner.



Progress towards outcomes: Children's emerging sense of chronology is, according to Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 4, illustrated by using everyday terms about the passage of time and by sequencing a number of events and objects.

7a

Reflects on and evaluates the strengths and scope for improvement in their own work

The evidence for achieving this Description of Behaviour will be seen in children discussing what they believe they have done well and also standing back with sufficient confidence to describe ways they might improve. Children may be aware of some of the things that have helped them to learn, such as a friend or the practitioner. This metacognitive capability reveals a capacity to reflect on what has been learned and how that learning happened. This early form of self-assessment signals a desire to learn and a willingness to improve.

How, where and when to assess

Opportunities for children to reflect on what has been learned and what helped them can be planned into all activities that take place during indoor and outdoor sessions. Reflective dialogue with an adult will be essential, though some children may keep learning logs and self-assessment records.

Examples

- Michael thought long and hard about his project, discussed it with his teacher and asked the opinions of other children in the class. He accepted some suggestions for improvement as well as some criticisms, taking these into account by changing his plans.
- Amy and Jay discussed the multimedia adverts each of them had created. Amy thought the sounds Jay used attracted her attention. She had thought that he had chosen his words so that the advert would persuade people to try the game. She thought he could have spoken more clearly to make sure he was understood.



Progress towards outcomes: Reflecting on and evaluating their work suggested in Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 5, gradually they will explain their learning and suggest what they could have done differently – elements of Outcome 6.

7b

Plans the steps in an enquiry and explains decisions about the approach

Children will be able to plan the steps in an enquiry describing the sequence of steps in the correct order and with an explanation of their approach. They will give reasons for the choices made and be aware that there are 'fair' ways of investigating.

How, where and when to assess

Planned activities will require children to undertake enquiries. They can be required to explain the steps and the reasons behind decisions taken, either verbally to an adult, or in written or multimedia reports.

Examples

- The children planned an investigation of what creatures were found in which places in the forest school area. They used soft toys to set out their predictions, giving reasons for the locations selected to be investigated.
- Liam made a list showing pictures of each material. He explained that he tested the materials and put a tick or cross to show whether or not each material was magnetic.
- Summer and Imogen described how they found out how the shadow moves during the day. They had planned to draw around their shadow three times in the day to see if it had moved.



Progress towards outcomes: Elements of Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 5 resonate with the skills of planning and carrying out investigations. Communicating the steps needed to carry out their investigations signals the importance of planning and children's ownership of their enquiry. Their planning of a wider range of enquiries will mark progress towards Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 6.

7c

Explains if a story is real or make-believe, when prompted

Young children may make little or no distinction between fantasy and reality, but come to an understanding that stories can be made up and are not always based on real experiences. They begin to distinguish fact from fiction. For example, they realise that animals do not speak as humans do, but accept attributions of speech to animals as part of the story.

How, where and when to assess

This kind of understanding is likely to emerge in discussion with adults. The emphasis should be on the expression of evidence underlying the decision as to whether or not an episode describes something real or something make-believe.

Examples

- The children were acting out a story they knew well, speaking in Welsh through dragon puppets. A discussion started as to whether dragons could speak, and then, whether dragons ever existed. Gareth was clear that dragons could not speak and wondered if they had existed in the past, like dinosaurs. He could clearly discriminate fact from fiction.
- Some of the children were so involved with the story of monsters that they thought the monsters would be coming for snacks. David and Rhian asked the children to explain what the monsters could do that made them think they could be real.



Progress towards outcomes: Links might be made between the skills used to evaluate information in the context of their developing understanding of the world (Knowledge and Understanding of the World Outcome 5) and their discussions about the major events in stories and non-fiction (Language, Literacy and Communication Skills Outcome 5). In both Areas of Learning, children might compare the evidence for and against an idea.



Physical

Assessment story | Physical (fine motor skills)

Fine motor coordination proceeds in development alongside gross motor development. It starts with reaching, pointing and clapping, progressing to the coordination of hand and eye in the use of tools and utensils.

Children are born with a palmar grasping reflex which disappears at around six months and it is some time later that the fingers come into play under active control in opposing the palm. At this point, children manage to grasp objects with the whole hand, between fingers and palms. Children may also be observed, either by themselves or sitting with an adult, being able to turn single pages of a book. This may be with the flat of the hand initially, rather than using opposition of finger and thumb. Development continues with the child's ability to [pick up small objects using fingers and thumb in opposition \(1b\)](#), this pincer grip allowing far greater control and finer, selective movements, including the turning of pages in books.

Deliberate and precisely directed actions with the fingers will be seen when children begin [making pressing actions using one or more fingers to control toys and other objects \(2b\)](#), using the increasing strength of the index or middle finger of one hand to selectively press one of the buttons on a mouse, keypad, telephone or similar toy.

Gradually, fine control with the hand will become refined. With continued development, the child progresses from holding the pencil or crayon in a palmar grasp or in a fist grip to [holding a pencil or crayon with fingers and thumb in a tripod grip \(3b\)](#). This requires the thumb to press in opposition to the first and second fingers of the preferred (dominant) hand. Controlled movement will tend to come from the actions of the wrist and elbow.

Increasingly precise control using finger and thumb opposition is required for the child to [thread beads on a string \(4b\)](#). This skill will involve fine motor control and the hand-eye coordination using both hands, sufficient that the child can thread 10 or more plastic beads on a string. This is a step-up from threading two or three wooden blocks on a stiffened lace or wire, which might be observed much earlier in a child's development.

Children's use of scissors will gain in competence and control from a two-handed to a single-handed grip which allows them to [use scissors to cut around a simple irregular shape \(5b\)](#). This capability requires the coordination of hand and eye, one holding the paper and the dominant hand holding and manipulating the scissors. At this point, attempts at fine control of the cutting line are suggested, though errors are to be expected. More precise cutting of increasingly complex shapes and involving a wider range of materials will develop in the future.

The child's use of the tripod grip when holding writing implements will develop sufficiently for the child to use it with the control of movement by the hand and fingers – this is the time the tripod grip will be most mature. Control over finger and thumb movements will continue to develop and the child may demonstrate the capability to thread tiny beads on a thread. Careful picking up and placing of building blocks in a precisely balanced relationship with other blocks is needed to build progressively higher towers, using blocks small enough to use a pincer grip. With this level of skill, the child can build taller towers of blocks that are virtually straight. Using the finger and thumb of both hands together is required for children to be able to [tie shoelaces, a bow or a knot in string \(7c\)](#), ribbon or tape.

Assessment story | Physical (gross motor skills)

Over the first five years of life children develop from total physical dependence to independently mobile individuals. The assessment of gross physical movement involves observation of whole body movements as well as coordination and balance in more complex movements of the limbs to move across the ground and through the air.

A significant developmental landmark is when the child [walks competently and is able to start and stop safely \(1a\)](#). Greater control of the limbs and large muscles is seen when the child runs carefully, perhaps with occasional difficulty, trying to avoid obstacles initially. Progress with the control of large, whole-body movements is in evidence when the child shows the capability to [jump with two feet together off the floor \(2a\)](#). Muscle control sufficient to enable whole-body balancing is required for a child to show the capability to [stand on one foot for two seconds or more \(3a\)](#), i.e. in a controlled manner for a few seconds, without overbalancing. Similarly, maintaining balance on one leg while swinging the other leg reveals the developmental acquisition of balance and coordination required to stand and kick a large ball.

Coordinating the body and limbs in relation to other moving objects introduces a further level of demand, as in the capability to [catch an object such as a large ball or beanbag by clutching between the arms and the torso \(4a\)](#). This is a complex action and it is to be expected that the catching action will include clutching the ball or bag to the body. Increased skill in coordinating hand and eye is in evidence when a child is able to [catch a small ball with the hands \(5a\)](#). In this development of the catching skill, it is the hands that do the catching, cupping and clutching to enclose the ball away from the body, with wrists and elbows flexed.

Movement across the ground or floor with whole-body balance and coordination is required for a child to be able to [skip to a rhythmic beat or music, using alternate feet \(6a\)](#). Similarly complex is the movement required when a child [jumps backward with two feet together \(6b\)](#). This will need to be accompanied by a swinging of the arms.

The coordination of the whole body using the arms to balance and the legs to spring from the ground is required for a child to be able to show the ability [to jump and turn in mid-air \(7a\)](#). Even more complex is children's capability to coordinate all the large muscles of the body in a balanced manner when their centre of gravity is high, as seen when they [apply these motor skills to specialised activities of sport and play \(7b\)](#), such as cycling, roller skating or ball games.

1a

Walks competently and is able to start and stop safely

Children achieving this Description of Behaviour are able to walk unaided. Some objects such as chairs or other conveniently placed furniture may be used as supports when they start or stop walking, but the walking itself should be without support.

How, where and when to assess

This behaviour is likely to be revealed frequently and might therefore be assessed at any time or place, indoors or outdoors.

Examples

- Bethan got up unaided from the floor and walked confidently but carefully, without holding on to anything, towards the water activity. She was able to stop safely when she reached her goal.
- An adult helped Harry out of his chair, following which he walked across to the large cars without holding on to anything. He stopped at the large cars and the adult helped him on to the seat of one of the cars.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to walk unaided links with elements of Outcome 1 as it shows children are developing increasing control over large body movements. As they make further progress in this Developmental Area, they will demonstrate the increasing control and coordination required as part of Outcome 2.

Creativity: Children's sense of their bodies' potential for creative movement in space can be promoted by encouragement to move imaginatively to music. Their capability to respond by joining in or moving to the music is included in Creative Development Outcome 1.

1b

Picks up small objects using fingers and thumb in opposition

Children coordinate the finger and thumb in a pincer grip to pick up small objects. This capability is a significant development from the earlier mode of gripping with the palm and fingers.

How, where and when to assess

Children will have many opportunities to pick up small objects during the day, either in continuous provision or during snack and meal times, both indoors and outdoors.

Examples

- Megan held each peg between her thumb and first finger in a pincer grip and carefully placed the peg into one of the holes. Incidentally, Megan demonstrated her capabilities to recognise colour and coordinate her motor skills with her developing visual skills so that she could select and place the blue pegs adjacent to each other.
- At snack time, Will used his finger and thumb to pick up small pieces of cheese and placed these in his mouth.
- Anwen and the adult were pleased she had signalled a need for the toilet. The adult offered her the sheet of stickers so that she could choose one of the stickers as a reward for her success. Anwen carefully peeled a sticker from the sheet and pressed it onto her sweater.



Progress towards outcomes: Children demonstrate the ability to 'perform more than one action and move in different ways' (Outcome 1), for example through using fine motor coordination skills to pick up small objects.

Creativity: Children's successful manipulation of a variety of small materials and resources, such as glitter, beads, and buttons, which they use imaginatively to create their own collages and artefacts, is consistent with aspects of Outcome 1.

2a

Jumps with two feet together off the floor

In meeting this Description of Behaviour, children must reveal sufficient whole-body coordination to jump up and down off the floor with two feet together. The jump may be on the spot or jumping forwards. (Children should be helped to learn to jump and land on their toes, so that the spring absorbs the impact.)

How, where and when to assess

Children may be observed as they move around the setting. Perhaps as they are coming down stairs they may jump off the bottom step with both feet together. In the play area, they may jump from low fixed equipment or into puddles on wet days. Action rhymes may also be planned in which children have the opportunity to jump, possibly as a group activity.

Examples

- Outdoors, Beccy jumped on the spot, both feet clearly raised off the ground. She used her arms and whole body to help to keep her balance and to ensure she didn't fall over.
- During a Circle Time game 'Who can...?', Gwyn jumped off the floor with both feet together and his knees bent.
- During the action song 'Five Speckled Frogs', Jay could 'jump into the pool', with both feet together and his knees bent.



Progress towards Outcomes To meet this skill, children show the improved balance and coordination which is one of the features of Outcome 2. Later, children will begin to use this achievement of balance and coordination across an increasing range of activities as their physical development progresses towards Outcome 3.

Creativity: Moving in various ways to act out their ideas about music, images or stories is a feature of Creative Development Outcome 2, when they might be expected to interpret different stimuli by moving in different ways.

2b

Makes pressing actions using one or more fingers to control toys and other objects

Children use one or more fingers to press buttons and keys. These precisely controlled movements will enable children to make things happen, as in pressing the buttons on a phone to get a ringtone, the keys on a keyboard to select music or pictures, or pressing a button so that a box opens. Clicking a computer mouse also meets this Description of Behaviour, bearing in mind that the emphasis is on the finger action rather than the ICT element.

How, where and when to assess

Throughout continuous provision there will be opportunities for children to demonstrate control by pressing buttons on a variety of resources such as cameras, toys or computers.

Examples

- Aled pressed the button on the phone to speak to the 'doctor'.
- In role play, Jen pressed the button on the toy kettle so that she could make coffee for the customers in her café. The kettle made a boiling noise.
- Olivia clicks the mouse key to select her favourite music.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to coordinate the movement of their fingers to make contact with a switch is illustrative of improving coordination and control of finger movements, which in the future will be used in combination with some of the skills described in Outcome 2.

3a

Stands on one foot for two seconds or more

This behaviour requires whole-body balance and refers to children acting independently, without adult or any other support. Extending the arms may help children maintain their balance in order to stand on one foot. (This capability is needed in order to step up onto or to step over a low object, when the body weight has to be borne momentarily on one foot.)

How, where and when to assess

Action rhymes might be used to encourage a group of children to move in particular ways as directed by the practitioner. In such circumstances, the capabilities of a whole group might be assessed all at once.

Examples

- The adult asked the children to make specific movements when the music stopped. She was able to decide whether or not each child could stand on one leg and hold the position for two seconds. Faith and Mollie raised their legs to show their skill. William raised his heel off the ground but did not demonstrate the capability.
- During the action rhymes 'Dingle Dangle Scarecrow' and 'Hokey Cokey', Hu stood on one foot confidently to 'shake' his other leg.



Progress towards outcomes: Increasing control and coordination, characteristic of Outcome 3, enables children to perform this basic physical skill. Later, as they make progress towards aspects of Outcome 4, they will be able to hop forwards.

Creativity: Children might create different body shapes as part of their descriptions and observations of animals, etc., as well as in response to music – a capability linked with Creative Development Outcome 3.

3b

Holds a pencil or crayon with fingers and thumb in tripod grip

The tripod grip is achieved when children use three points of contact to hold a crayon, pencil or other implement in a controlled manner for mark-making. Usually the grip uses the thumb and first two fingers of the preferred hand and should be used without hesitation or needing the encouragement of adults. When the behaviour is established as habitual, it is found useful and becomes the preferred method of fine control for the child.

How, where and when to assess

Throughout continuous provision areas, children will have opportunities to use pencils, crayons and felt-tipped pens. The skill of using a tripod grip need not be confined to drawing areas. In role-play situations, children might make lists or draw their ideas and observations.

Examples

- Kerys used a tripod grip to hold the crayon she used to decorate the edges of the menu she had created for the café.
- Bethan held the pencil confidently in a tripod grip to 'write' her name on the top of her drawing for Dad.



Progress towards outcomes: Being able to grasp and have good control of a pencil or crayon held in a tripod grip is associated with some of the increasing control and coordination that characterise Outcome 3.

4a

Catches an object such as a large ball or beanbag by clutching between the arms and the torso

When playing outdoors or in large spaces, children will throw and catch objects. They will stand with arms extended and wait for the big ball or beanbag to be thrown towards them. To meet this Description of Behaviour, they may catch the object with their hands or may 'trap' it between their arms and their bodies. As long as the object does not fall to the ground it has been 'caught' and the Description of Behaviour met.

How, where and when to assess

Continuous provision may include baskets of balls and a throwing area. Adults may initiate a game in which skill at catching the ball is observable. Practitioners should observe how children stand and use their upper body to trap the ball once it reaches them. Other children may need to be aware of balls in the air.

Examples

- Siwan was able to catch a large ball in a classroom game by trapping it between her arms and her body.
- The group of children stood in a circle and threw the ball to each other. As they caught the ball they took turns to describe their favourite foods. Lottie held out her arms and caught the ball, holding it between her arms and her chest.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to send and receive an object a short distance is one of the elements of Outcome 3. As they progress, they will send the ball safely over longer distances making more use of the available space.

4b

Threads beads on a string

Children need to hold the string in one hand and thread the end through a bead held in the other hand. They may rest the bead on the table to thread from the side. Alternatively, they may thread the string down or up through the hole if the bead is held with the fingers. Three beads at least should be threaded, independently of an adult, to confirm this Description of Behaviour being met.

How, where and when to assess

The setting will need to provide a variety of beads and strings for children to use for threading. If children are using small beads or making necklaces, practitioners will need to be aware of safety issues and the need for supervision.

Examples

- Rees independently threaded more than 10 beads on a lace to make a necklace for a member of staff.
- Sarah threaded 15 beads to make a crown for the 'Sleeping Beauty' play that the children were intending to perform.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to thread beads is one of the elements of Outcome 3. As they progress in their development, children might be expected to show a capability to perform a wider range of fine motor skills involving a range of materials and resources across different contexts.

5a

Catches a small ball with the hands

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children should demonstrate that they are able to catch a small ball with their hands alone. To catch with the hands, flexing of the shoulders, elbows and wrists will be required, with the arms slightly outstretched away from the body. When catching with the hands, children will not need the additional support of clasping the object to their bodies.

How, where and when to assess

Practitioners may observe children playing with small balls indoors or outdoors. The setting will need to have small foam and rubber balls (about the size of tennis balls) available for children to play with while this Description of Behaviour is being assessed. Adults may need to initiate a catching game, perhaps involving one or more children.

Examples

- Dai was partnered with a child of equal catching and throwing ability. He was able to catch the small rubber ball thrown to him using his hands only and was able to do so as the distance between him and his partner gradually increased to about four metres.



Progress towards outcomes: The development of this simple skill, which might be as a result of working alone initially and then with a partner, forms part of Outcome 4. The capability to catch a small ball with two hands is, in combination with a range of other capabilities, a feature of Outcome 5.

5b

Uses scissors to cut around a simple irregular shape

The shape to be cut out should be irregular rather than a simple square or circle, so that it is not capable of being cut in a single cutting line. Children should hold the scissors in their preferred hand and the paper in the other. The line of the cut should follow the outline of the shape, with some over- and under-cutting acceptable provided the overall result is that the shape has been followed.

How, where and when to assess

This capability can be observed in free or focused activity in areas where scissors are available. Left-hand scissors should be available for those who need them. The safe use and handling of scissors should be emphasised.

Examples

- In the workshop area, Bronwen cut around a picture of a penguin to produce the image she needed in a clearly recognisable form. When cutting, she held the paper in one hand and cut independently with the other.
- Elspeth has cut around the irregular shape on the card so that she can make luggage labels for the airport role play. She carefully followed the red line of the irregular shape, only occasionally cutting over the line.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to cut out basic shapes using scissors is one of the elements of Outcome 4. As they progress in their development, children might be expected to demonstrate increasing precision in their cutting skills, cutting out pictures and the more difficult shapes that feature in Outcome 5.

Creativity: Engaging children in open-ended activities to explore materials provides opportunities for skilled and safe use of tools to manipulate two- and three-dimensional resources, expected as part of Creative Development Outcome 4.

6a

Skips to a rhythmic beat or music, using alternate feet

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children should skip using alternate legs with fluency and controlled regularity, following an externally provided rhythm. The rhythm may be clapping, music or some other regular beat. They should not fall over or stumble. There is no requirement to use skipping ropes.

How, where and when to assess

This capability may be observed indoors or outdoors as children move around the setting or during planned music and movement or other action games, with or without footwear.

Examples

- Anwyn, along with the other children in the group, skipped in the hall, in time to the music, freezing her movement (as required by the activity) when the music stopped.



Progress towards outcomes: Some of the discrete skills used in combination to meet this Description of Behaviour include components of Outcome 4. Children are able to stand and run on tiptoes, hop on one foot and move in a variety of ways. To meet the Description of Behaviour, these combined movements should be performed with fluency and control.

Creativity: Developing their skills and linking and repeating some of their imaginative movements is relevant to Creative Development Outcome 5 and later Creative Development Outcome 6, when their novel movements begin to show fluency and control.

6b

Jumps backward with two feet together

To meet this Description of Behaviour requires whole-body coordination and balance. In order to be able to jump backwards, children need to be able to bend the knees to push up off the floor, with feet together, propelling themselves backwards, bending the knees when landing. Children must keep their balance throughout. This activity is best conducted with adult supervision to avoid children coming to any harm.

How, where and when to assess

This movement is not always observable in everyday continuous provision. It may be necessary to use action songs or games to encourage children to reveal their capability.

Examples

- Elin demonstrated during a game of 'Simon Says' that she could jump backwards confidently in a stable manner without losing her balance.



Progress towards outcomes: To meet this Description of Behaviour children will show the physical control, confidence and awareness of space that are reflected as part of Outcomes 4 and 5.

Creativity: Children can explore the different ways their movement skills might be linked together to create novel routines for dance and – if a sound dance mat is used – for music. Moving towards planning such movements might be expected as part of Creative Development Outcome 6.

7a

Jumps and turns in mid-air

To show the capability required by this Description of Behaviour, children must show simultaneous control of the muscle groups of different body parts, coordinating complex movements of the torso and limbs in balance to execute the movements safely. This happens when they run and jump in the air to change direction as part of ball games. They should be able to control these movements and not fall over or stumble. Knees should be bent when taking off and landing. Adult supervision is advised.

How, where and when to assess

This kind of sequence of movements may be observed as children participate in team games that involve moving across large areas and getting into positions to catch or move a ball. Practitioners may choose to invite children to demonstrate this manoeuvre as part of a group movement game or activity.

Examples

- A group of children worked together to create a dance. They put several different movement patterns together and filmed each other to help them improve. Robert showed part of the dance in which he coordinated and controlled the movements of his whole body so that he could link a series of movements in which he left the floor and then changed direction in mid-air.
- Kerys was playing netball with her friends. She was able to gain possession of the ball by moving and jumping.



Progress towards outcomes: The linked actions of jumping and turning in mid-air resonate with achievements within Outcome 5 – part of which requires children to repeat movements and improve their skills so that actions have a clear form. With development, children begin to show the fluency, control and improved tension featured in Outcome 6.

Creativity: Creating repeated sequences of simple movements might be expected as part of Outcome 5. The planning and sequencing of novel movement is a feature of Creative Development Outcome 6.

7b

Applies motor skills to specialised activities of sport and play

To meet this Description of Behaviour, children will show the capability to coordinate all the large muscles of the body in a balanced manner when their centre of gravity is high. This may be when balancing to ride a cycle, using roller or ice skates, skateboards, or walking along a narrow board.

How, where and when to assess

These coordinated skills may be observed as children move around outdoors and as they arrive and leave the setting. Opportunities to engage with specific equipment such as bicycles (without stabilisers), skates, etc., are required. Adult supervision is advised.

Examples

- Jamie arrived at school with his mum. He rode his bike around to the cycle park.
- Vicky brought in the roller skates she had received for her birthday and showed the other children how she was learning to skate.



Progress towards outcomes: With increasing strength and agility, children will apply their developing motor skills to sport and play. Included in Outcome 5 is the capability to ride a two-wheeled bicycle.

7c

Ties shoelaces, a bow or a knot in string

Children will reveal fine-motor coordination using both hands in meeting this Description of Behaviour. The tying of laces should be independent of adult support. Tying a bow in a ribbon or a knot in string will show evidence that the Description of Behaviour has been met.

How, where and when to assess

This capability may be observed indoors or outdoors as children put on shoes, tie bows in dolls' or one another's hair, make collaborative collages or use reef knots – perhaps to tie bundles of sticks or harvested vegetables in the forest school.

Examples

- Mikal was so proud of his new lace-up shoes that he learned to tie the laces all by himself within one day.
- Alys tied up her doll's hair with a length of red ribbon. She needed an adult to hold the doll's hair but she tied the knot alone.
- A group of children collected bundles of wood for fences for the forest school. Megan used both hands to tie string tightly around the bundles. She made a bow that would keep the string fastened while she carried the bundles back to school.



Progress towards outcomes: The capability to tie a single knot, which is included in Outcome 4, is a step towards the development of increased fine motor coordination required to recognise the need for and tie secure bows and knots. The capability to perform some difficult fine motor skills is one component of Outcome 5.

Creativity: Children's imaginative exploration of different resources, tools and techniques (expected as part of Creative Development Outcome 6) encourages the autonomous use of fine motor skills.

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