

Progress Matters: Reviewing and enhancing young children's development

Professional development meetings 1 and 2



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The websites referred to in these materials existed at the time of going to print.

Please check all website references carefully to see if they have changed and substitute other references where appropriate.

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Progress Matters: Reviewing and enhancing young children's development

Professional development meetings (PDMs 1 and 2)

The material in these PDMs is intended to support quality improvement on the theme of early assessment. The aim of the PDMs is to enable Early Years consultants (EYCs) to help practitioners identify children's starting points and their next steps in learning. These suggestions for continuing professional development (CPD) will need to be tailored to meet the specific needs of the participants. These PDMs are part of a suite of materials; refer to page 30 of the Early Years Quality Improvement Support Programme (QISP), reference: 00669-2008BKT-EN, for further details about PDMs and CPD.

Resources

PDM 1

- Handout 1: Training presentation and notes
- Handout 2: Progress Matters – implementation
- Handout 3: Learning log
- Handout 4: Action plan

PDM 2

- Handout 5: Training presentation and notes
- Handout 6: Example progress summary form

Objectives of the PDMs

To help EYCs, including School Improvement Partners (SIPs) and School Improvement Advisers, leaders and managers, to understand that they have a key role to play in improving quality through assessment by establishing systems, supporting staff, and analysing information to:

- track progress for individual children, and use that progress summary to identify next steps and communicate with others;
- involve parents and partner professionals in understanding and supporting children's progress;
- ensure the accuracy of ongoing evaluation of children's progress;
- use progress information to support transitions as children move on into other settings, whether nursery, school or Key Stage 1;
- compile progress summaries for groups of children, and identify any gaps in learning for individuals or groups;
- plan and implement changes to meet identified needs.

Introduction

These PDMs build on the sessions presented at the National Strategies (NS) summer 2009 EYC events, in reviewing and enhancing young children's development. They are designed to support EYCs, leaders and managers in promoting effective practice in settings to ensure that all children make the progress to which they are entitled throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Facilitators may wish to extend the PDMs as part of a rolling programme of professional development. The PDMs are intended to develop the skills and confidence of EYCs, leaders and managers in monitoring children's progress.

Audience

PDM 1:

EYCs

Primary consultants

School Improvement Partners

PDM 2:

Primarily for leaders and managers, however, as stated in the presentation notes of PDM 1, EYCs may wish to undertake PDM 2 as a follow-up.

Training notes

These materials take the form of two slide presentations, with notes pages and associated handouts, and are for guidance only. The slide presentations will be available online at www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies. Facilitators may wish to adapt these to meet their local needs.

It is essential for trainers to familiarise themselves fully with all the Progress Matters: Reviewing and enhancing young children's development reference: 00217-2009BKT-EN, available from www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies, search on the reference number. Participants will need to bring the handbook to the training session.

Keeping a learning log and devising an individual action plan are important aspects of the CPD process. Therefore, this PDM includes details of suggestions for the format of these documents (Handouts 3 and 4).

Timings

Each PDM has been written to be presented flexibly but, ideally, should be delivered as three-hour sessions.

Key points for both PDMs

1. The overwhelming evidence from research shows that high-quality early learning and care are essential to give children the solid start they need to achieve better outcomes in school and beyond. Monitoring children's progress is integral to high-quality early learning, development and care.
2. Children learn best when they are healthy, safe and secure, when their individual needs are met and when they have positive relationships with the adults caring for them. The welfare requirements are designed to support providers in creating settings which are welcoming, safe and stimulating, and where children are able to enjoy learning through play, to grow in confidence and to fulfil their potential.
3. Reviewing the progress of individual children throughout their time in the EYFS, and using those reviews to inform how best to support children's further development, is a key priority to be implemented by all leaders and managers in their settings.

EYFS Statutory Framework, page 19

PDM 1

The trainer delivers the presentation slide show for PDM 1, which consists of two sessions (Handout 1).

Session 1: An introduction to Progress Matters: Reviewing and enhancing young children's development and familiarisation with the guidance

Session 2 Progress Matters: Reviewing and enhancing young children's development – implementation

Learning-log entry

Time for reflection and for participants to make notes in their learning log (Handout 3) and develop their action plan for further learning and development (Handout 4).

Follow-up session

Trainers can suggest to participants that as a follow-up they may wish to explore the e-learning module. Alternatively, this could be delivered as a training session, using Progress Matters PDM 2.

PDM 2

Progress Matters e-learning

The trainer delivers the slide presentation for PDM 2, which consists of one session (Handout 5). It is important that facilitators give approximately 5 minutes' discussion time to each of the slides, which are screenshots from the e-learning module.

Follow-up session

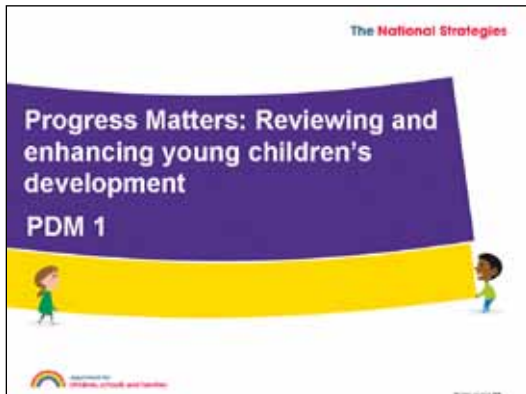
It would be desirable that participants undertake the e-learning module as a piece of self-study.

Learning-log entry

Time for reflection and for participants to make notes in their learning log (Handout 3) and develop their action plan for further learning and development (Handout 4).

Handouts

Handout 1: Training presentation and notes for session 1



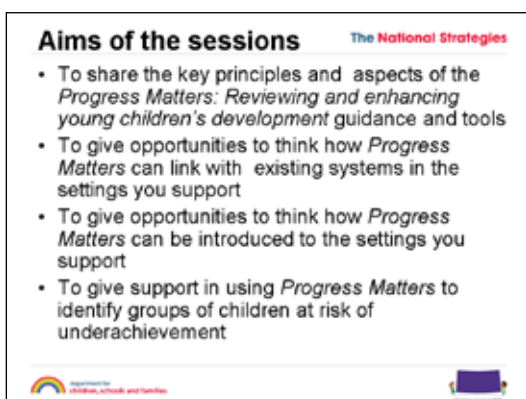
Welcome, introductions and domestics.

Allow 10 minutes for slide 2.

The focus for this training will be the following strands of the Early Years Consultant five areas of expertise:

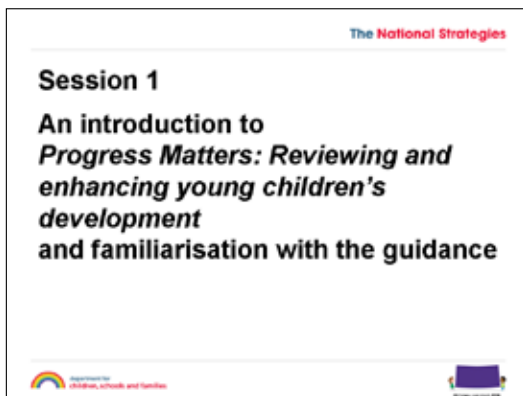
- supporting progress, learning and development
- securing high-quality environments for learning and development
- strengthening leadership for learning and development (refer to EYC handbook (reference 00127-2008BKT-EN), pages 12–14.

It is important to keep making the links with the areas of expertise and the fact that this training is for EYC CPD.

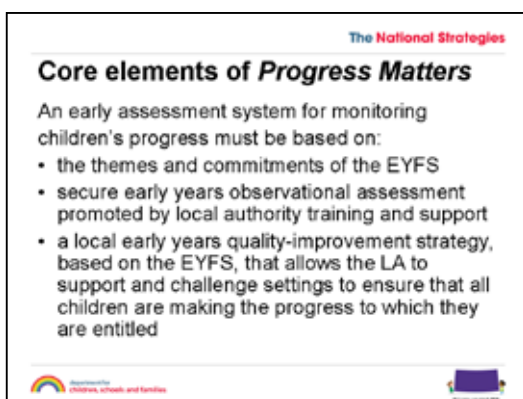


Talk through the aims of the sessions.

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Allow up to 2 hours for this session, including a coffee break.



An early assessment system must be based on:

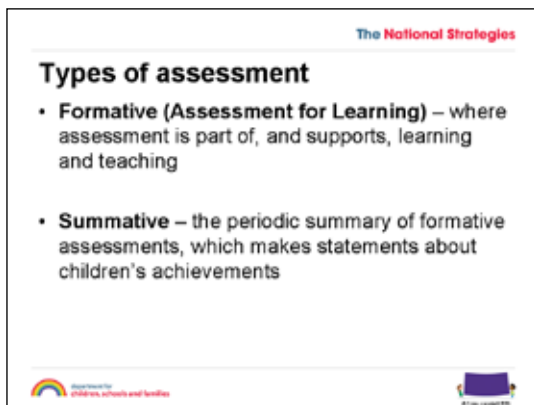
- the themes and commitments of the Early Years Foundation Stage;
- good early years observational assessment, promoted by appropriate local authority training and support;
- a local early years quality improvement strategy, based on the EYFS, that allows the local authority to identify settings in need of support and to focus Early Years consultants' work.

This is because all approaches to early assessment must conform to the statutory requirements of the EYFS.

Participants are **not** recommended to use Development Matters as a checklist.

Stress that Progress Matters is a document for leaders and managers. It is guidance that contains a national tool for monitoring children's progress and signposts to other tools developed by LAs. There is an expectation in EYFS that leaders and managers will monitor children's progress – see Progress Matters page 2.

Before looking at the document, we are going to consider some key aspects of observation and assessment,



The EYFS Practice Guidance talks about these types of assessment.

Formative assessment includes all the information practitioners know about the children, as well as any recorded evidence in photos, information from home, observations, and so on.

Summative assessment does not include as much individual detail about the unique child, but plays an important part in supporting children's learning and development.



In the EYFS, understanding how children are learning depends on our ability to '**Look, listen and note**'. This has been an area of focus of training and support for many LAs in embedding EYFS in settings.

Today we are going to examine the process of how we look at children's learning, how we understand what we see and what we do with our conclusions, in order to support learning, development and children's progress across all areas.

Ask an open question:

Look carefully, and say what you see in this picture.

Take a few comments or suggestions from participants.



It is very unlikely that people will have described what they see, but instead will move ahead to say what they think it is, or what it reminds them of.

It is important not to make them feel tricked – they have actually acted in an intelligent way, as humans do seek meaning in their experiences of the world, which is what they will have done here.

Compare to this cycle. **Observation** is just looking and describing – and how often do we jump to conclusions without the open description of what the child actually did or said, putting our own meanings on too quickly, without tuning into the child's actual experience?

The **process of assessment** is where we think about what it means. Then we go on to **planning**, in order to support the learning.

This process happens every day, many times a day, as we interact skilfully with children to support their learning, not just as a formal planning process, whether daily, weekly or less often.



This process really is understanding and responding to children's learning and development on a day-to-day level.

Many practitioners are developing skills in using this level of looking at and supporting learning and development.

We are not going to focus on this process today, but it is important that we understand that it is fundamental, and the basis of other levels.



Another way of looking...

Summative assessment involves standing back from the moment-to-moment, context- dependent interactions and experiences, to look at the whole child, across all areas of learning and development.

Effectively, it is stock-taking to see where the child is.



This is an important step, to give perspective to what we know about individual children.

We may know a lot of detail about a child's learning in a particular area of interest that the child pursues, and that we support and extend. But what about other areas?

We know the child is learning through experiences, but is the learning and development roughly in line with what would be expected for a child of that age?

Are there areas of learning and development that are advanced, or where progress is slower?

We need to summarise to see this bigger picture.

'Regular intervals' could refer to half-termly, termly, quarterly or what is right for the setting. (Try to elicit this from the audience.)

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Then we step back even further.

At this level we are looking at the child in relation to others – to the cohort in the setting, to subgroups in the setting (boys/girls, language, ethnicity), to the community, to the LA and to national data at the end of reception.

This helps us to see patterns of progress that help point the way to how we can better support children's learning.

Could ask participants what is meant by transitional before talking through the slide, e.g. what points of transition?



The sections of **Progress Matters** can be understood by how they link to the levels of looking at learning and development.

All the material in the booklet is aimed at leaders and managers, and their role directly and in supporting practitioners in their setting to use these levels effectively.

The first two sections of Progress Matters link to the day-to-day, formative cycle of observation, assessment and planning.

The next two sections link to the levels of summarising and using summary information to support progress.



Ask participants to look at Appendix 1 in Progress Matters, which illustrates these sections and includes prompts to focus on the role of the leader in relation to these.

Give time for participants to look through booklet. (10 minutes or so)

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Activity

- Look at the allocated section (section 1, 2, 3 or 4) plus section 5 (everyone to look at this).
- Summarise the key points.
- What might the challenges be for practitioners?
- Whole group gives feedback and takes part in discussion.






Allocate each table a section (sections 1–4) of *Progress Matters* to read in depth, summarise the key points and discuss the challenges for practitioners. This will be fed back to the whole group at the end. Then look at section 5. The group looking at section 4 will also need to consider appendix 2.

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Session 2

Progress Matters: Reviewing and enhancing young children's development – implementation



Allow 50 minutes for this session.

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Implementation planning

Consider the possible challenges for leaders, managers and practitioners.

- What are the development areas for your settings?
- What are the implications as you support and challenge staff in settings?
- Discuss the questions on Handout 2.

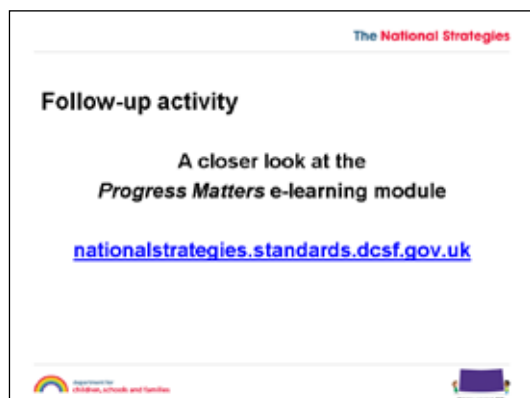
Consider the overarching questions on the slide and then, in small groups, participants discuss the questions on Handout 2.

1. What materials do you use to support a) leaders and managers and b) practitioners in determining children's starting points and monitoring their progress?
2. Do you need to review these in the light of the Progress Matters guidance?
3. If so, in what way(s)?
4. How do you plan to encourage leaders and managers to use the Progress Matters principles?

The whole group takes part in feedback and discussion of key issues.

They produce a summary of key points from the sessions.

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As a follow-up activity, participants may choose to explore the e-learning module. Alternatively, the e-learning module could be delivered as a training session, using Progress Matters PDM 2.

Handout 2: Progress Matters – implementation

1. What materials do you use to support a) leaders and managers and b) practitioners in determining children's starting points and monitoring their progress?
2. Do you need to review these in the light of the Progress Matters guidance?
3. If so, in what way(s)?
4. How do you plan to encourage leaders and managers to use the Progress Matters principles?

Handout 3: Learning log

What is a learning log?

A learning log is a personal log, record or journal of your own learning. Therefore, it is a document that is unique to the owner and cannot be 'right' or 'wrong'. A learning log helps you to record, structure, think about, reflect upon, plan, develop and evidence your own learning. It is not just a diary or record of what you have done but an account of what you have engaged in, learned and critically reflected upon. One of the most important elements will be your conclusions about how what you have learnt is relevant to you and how you will use the new information, knowledge, skill or technique in the future.

Once you have started a learning log you will find it a valuable and useful tool to help structure and think about your learning.

How do I 'do' a learning log?

Try to write something down after every new learning experience. You could use an A4 pad ring binder of paper, or keep a notebook especially for the purpose.

Consider:

- what you did;
- your thoughts;
- your feelings;
- how well (or badly) it went and why;
- what you learnt;
- what you will do differently next time.

On a regular basis, review what you have written and reflect upon it. Be honest with yourself. Ask yourself questions such as the following.

- Have I achieved anything? If so, what?
- What progress have I made?
- Have I put any theory into practice?
- How does what I have been learning lead to me becoming better at a skill?
- How can I use this to plan for the future?
- How can I use this to plan new learning?

You will find that how you view something (your perception of it) changes over time. It is rarely that skills suddenly develop, or improve overnight. Learning new knowledge and applying it, within a skills context, usually takes time, effort and perseverance. A learning log will help you to become more aware of how you learn, what learning tasks you enjoy (and what you do not enjoy) and of your emotional and cognitive (thought) processes.

At first it may seem difficult to start to reflect upon your own learning critically. Over time, you will find that it becomes easier. The more often you practise the skill of self-reflection then the easier it will become.

Is there a 'best' or 'correct' way of producing a learning log?

There is no right or wrong way of keeping a learning log. There are three key questions when engaging in the process of producing a learning log.

- Am I being honest with myself?
- Is this a useful process for me?
- Is this helping my own process of learning?

How can keeping a learning log and developing the skill of critical self-reflection help me?

Again, that depends very much upon you. Some people will get more out of producing a learning log than other people will. Research has identified that reflection can help people to change. Some of the changes that have been identified are listed below.

(Adapted from Miller, C., Tomlinson, A., Jones, M., *Researching Professional Education*, 1994, University Of Sussex)

Changes associated with reflection

From →	To
Accepting	Questioning
Intolerant	Tolerant
Doing	Thinking
Being descriptive	Analytical
Impulsive	Diplomatic
Being reserved	Being more open
Unassertive	Assertive
Unskilled communicators	Skilled communicators
Reactive	Reflective
Concrete thinking	Abstract thinking
Lacking self-awareness	Self-aware

Keeping a learning log

You could use the following questions as a basis for entries in your learning log.

- What did I do?
- How do I think or feel about this?
- What did I think about but not say (or what did I want to say but did not)?
- How well (or badly) did it go?
- What did I learn?
- What will I do differently next time?
- How will I do it differently next time?
- What have I achieved?
- What have I learned about myself?
- How have I put any theory into practice?
- How does what I have been doing lead to me becoming better at a particular skill?
- How can I use this to plan for the future?
- How can I use this to plan new learning experiences?

The Learning Log is based on *Learning Log or Learning Journals* by A. G. Holmes. www.hull.ac.uk/php/cesagh/. Used with kind permission

Handout 4: Action plan

As for a learning log, there is no set way of developing an action plan. The format below is only a suggestion; you may choose to adapt this to meet your own needs. The priority and targets can be informed by any audit of knowledge, skills, practice and provision you undertake or by your learning log. As with the learning log, you will need to reflect on and review your action plan regularly.

Date:	Priority	
	Target	
	Actions	
	Resources	
	Timescale	
	Short-term progress indicators	
	Success criteria	
Review date:		

Handout 5: Training presentation and notes for session 2

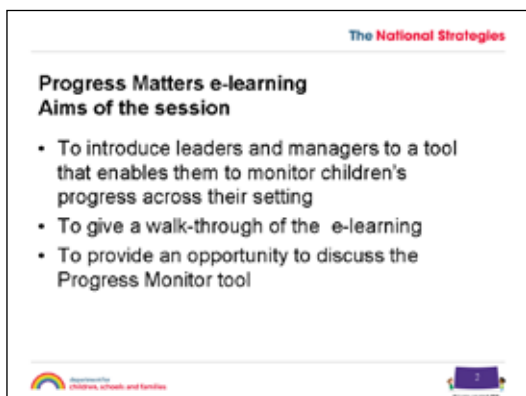


This PDM requires a 3-hour session.

Welcome, introductions and domestics.

Allow 10 minutes for slides 1 and 2.

It is important that facilitators allow approximately 5 minutes' discussion time for the slides that are screenshots from the e-learning module.





Present a quick overview of how the course is broken down.

The course introduces the processes of monitoring children's progress.

1. As you can see, the first step is the gathering of information that supports observational practice and parental involvement, as well as the involvement of other settings children may attend.
2. Next, an example is given of how to summarise this wealth of information and observational evidence.
3. The user is then shown how to enter the summary information into the Progress Monitor tool. The e-learning takes the user through the Progress Monitor tool, step by step, so that they can become confident users themselves.
4. Finally, the user is taken through examples of what to do with the tool once the information is added. This is the module that has the most time allocated to it because it's essential to recognise that the gathering of data is only half the story. It's how this is put to use that can make a difference to children's learning and development.



The process

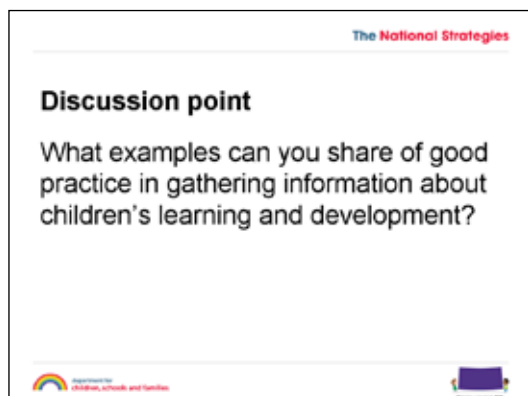
Throughout the e-learning, the user is shown whereabouts they are in the process of gathering information, making this into a summary, adding the summary into the Progress Monitor tool and then analysing and using the information for children's learning and development.



Step 1: Gathering information

In monitoring children's progress we rely on the wealth of information that is gathered about a child.

In the e-learning, this is presented as a child's profile book or learning journey. This is just one example of a method of gathering information, observations and evidence. The important point is that the information includes all the rich sources of observational evidence, child and parental contributions and input from other professional colleagues that goes into helping us to form professional judgements about children's learning and development.





Step 2: Summarising information

Participants look at and discuss Handout 6: Example Progress Summary form.

The information needs summarising, for this wealth of information to be useful in seeing the progress children make over time.

In the e-learning there is an example Progress Summary form (reproduced in Handout 6). A blank one is available for downloading and using.

Practitioners can use a Progress Summary form to capture their knowledge of children, interpreting from their profile books (or other ways of recording information, observation and evidence) and expressing this in terms of the development bands for each area of learning.



Progress summary form

This shows part of a progress summary form, filled in for our example child.

Ask participants the key question:

'What are the issues for you in introducing a progress summary form in your setting?'



Progress summaries

Leaders and managers will need to decide how often it would be appropriate and useful, within their particular setting, to capture children's learning and development into a progress summary.

In the e-learning the users are asked to play the role of a practitioner and, using the information from our example child, try filling in a progress summary form, which they are then able to compare with one that has already been completed. The e-learning enables leaders and managers to go through each step of the process, giving them confidence to deliver this within their own settings.



Step 3: Monitoring children's progress

In the e-learning, our example leader, Freya, is reviewing the progress summary forms for all the children, but finds it difficult to spot patterns and is not easily able to monitor how a group of children are progressing in the setting. It is suggested that she needs a tool to see the bigger picture, which can help her reflect on the progress the children are making and how well the setting is meeting the needs of particular sub-groups of children.

The Progress Monitor tool is introduced.



Progress Monitor tool

The Progress Monitor tool is an Excel™ spreadsheet. The front screen takes the user through the process of entering data and viewing charts.

In the e-learning, the user is guided through each of the steps required to enter a new child.



Progress Monitor tool

Our example child is used.



Progress Monitor tool

After a child is added to the spreadsheet, the progress summary information is added.



Progress Monitor tool, showing some of the progress summary information entered.

Our example child is used, to show how the wealth of information in the beginning can be translated into a progress summary and then the information can be entered into the Progress Monitoring tool.

This module in the e-learning has introduced leaders and managers to a tool that will enable them to look more closely at children's progress and at how well the setting is meeting their learning and development needs.

This module has covered how to use the tool. The next module demonstrates how to analyse the information in the tool and gives examples of how to use this information.



Step 4: Analysing and using the information generated by the Progress Monitor tool

By itself, data cannot support children's progress or identify the next steps in learning.

When data is presented in a clear and systematic way, it helps leaders and managers to ask the pertinent questions and gives starting points for discussing and understanding progress and evaluating quality and impact. The Progress Monitor tool allows this to happen.



Analysing and using the information generated by the Progress Monitor tool

In the e-learning, a scenario is presented to show how using the tool can lead to questioning provision.

Our example leader, Freya, notices that fewer boys are progressing into both the 30–50 and 40–60-month development bands for creative development.

The staff look at the children’s profiles and discuss why this might be.

It may be helpful to give participants extra time to discuss this slide.



Analysing and using the information generated by the Progress Monitor tool

The staff decide to develop their provision for creative development, in particular for music and movement, in line with their observations of some of the boys’ play outdoors.

A point worth noting: to see if this has made a difference across years, two separate charts would need to be printed. At the moment it is not possible to view charts across years.

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Analysing and using the information generated by the Progress Monitor tool

When viewing the charts for the whole group (all the children in her setting), Freya also notices that there are some children who are within the 40–60-month development band for personal, social and emotional development (PSED) and problem solving (PSRN) and yet not for communication, language and literacy (CLL). Whereas she knows this is entirely possible, she does think it is worth looking at more closely.



Analysing and using the information generated by the Progress Monitor tool

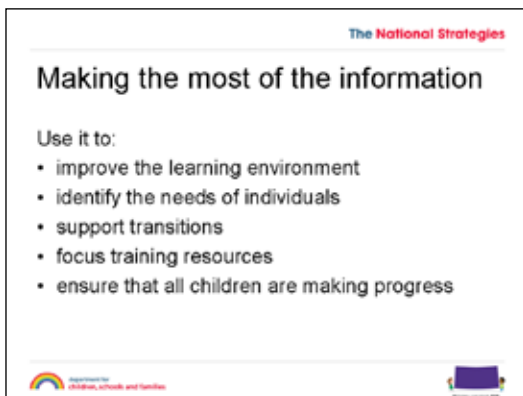
In the e-learning example, Freya uses the Progress Monitor tool to see exactly which children are working within PSED and PSRN at the 40–60-month band, and yet not for CLL. On identifying the children, she sees they are both within the same 'Key person' group and that this key person is new to the setting.

Freya decides to have a closer look by creating a sub-group of all the children in this key person's group, to see if the progress summaries entered reflect the children as she knows them. She recognises that it is possible that this practitioner is not yet comfortable using the progress summary and needs further support, or that some children might benefit from small-group work with good language role models.

Freya decides to talk to the practitioner herself to find out more. The tool has led our example leader to support a practitioner in developing provision for identified children, or to identify a continuing professional development (CPD) need.

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Summary

Through monitoring children's progress, it is possible to identify areas for improvement within the learning environment and for staff's CPD, to ensure all children make progress at their own pace, to support identification of individual needs and to improve information for transfer to other settings.

Handout 6: Example progress summary form

Child's name	
Date of birth	
Time in setting	
Date of completion	
Practitioner completing this overview	
Summary of learning and development	PSED
	Stage of development
	CLL
	Stage of development
	PSRN
	Stage of development
	KUW
	Stage of development
PD	
Stage of development	
CD	
Stage of development	

Acknowledgements

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School Improvement Partners, Leaders and managers
of early years settings

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