



**Qualifications  
and Curriculum  
Development  
Agency**

---

# **Early years foundation stage profile**

*4–8 lock report 2009/10*

---

January 2011

QCDA/11/5541

# 1. Introduction

## Background

The data submission lock for scale points 4–8 in the early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile prevents practitioners entering the attainment of scale points 4–8 for a child, before scale points 1, 2 and 3 are attained. It ensures data submissions are accurate and consistent with the developmental nature of scale points 1, 2 and 3.

The data submission lock was originally introduced in version three of the eProfile<sup>1</sup> software (then known as EYE profile) in the academic year 2008/09. Additional software systems included the lock for the summer 2010 submission of EYFS profile data.

The data submission lock was introduced to establish why practitioners and/or local authorities were increasingly recording a pattern of development that was not consistent with the principles of the EYFS profile.

## Context

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) requested this lock as a result of its concerns about increasing instances of scale points 4–8 being recorded for a child without prior attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3 in that assessment scale.

The *EYFS profile handbook* states that scale points 1, 2 and 3 are developmental steps leading to the attainment of scale points 4–8.<sup>2</sup> This is the typical pattern of attainment that applies to the overwhelming majority of children. Exceptions to this pattern are only found in circumstances where a child has complex special educational needs.

Scale points 4–8 are not hierarchical and can be attained in any order. They describe the child's attainment of the early learning goals. This attainment reflects a child who is at a later stage of development than a child attaining scale points 1, 2 or 3.

---

<sup>1</sup> An electronic system funded by the Department for Education for the collection and submission of EYFS profile data by practitioners.

<sup>2</sup> *EYFS profile handbook* 2008, page 5.

The practitioner should use professional judgement (referencing QCDA exemplification<sup>3</sup>), to decide which attainment band (either scale points 1, 2 and 3 or scale points 4–8) best describes an individual child's attainment for that particular scale. This will ensure that the information passed to the year 1 teacher gives an accurate picture of that child's attainment.

This judgement should be based on evidence of whether a child has attained a scale point (or not). It should not be influenced by the desire to reward a child for their achievements during the reception year.

Further information about scale points 1–3 can be found in the QCDA guidance note [EYFS profile scale points 1–3](#) (June 2009).

## 2. Review of 2009/10 process

---

<sup>3</sup> QCDA exemplification consists of written examples in the *EYFS profile handbook* 2008, pages 26–82, and video clips available to download or stream from [www.qcda.gov.uk/eyfsp](http://www.qcda.gov.uk/eyfsp).

In order to record attainment of scale points 4–8 without prior attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3, local authorities had to request a password from QCDA to unlock the data collection software, and provide evidence that their request was justified.

The step-by-step process for requesting the password was as follows:

1. Where a practitioner felt a child had attained one or some of scale points 4–8 without the prior attainment of 1, 2 and 3 in a particular scale or scales, they discussed this initially with their local authority moderation manager.
2. If the moderation manager also agreed this was an exception, a request for the password was submitted to QCDA on a standard QCDA template to a dedicated QCDA email address within a set time period.
3. The request was logged by QCDA and the moderation manager was contacted for further information regarding the request if necessary.
4. A decision was made by QCDA and this was communicated to the moderation manager. This decision was final and no further discussion was entered into.

QCDA received 59 requests for the password to unlock the software between 7 and 22 June 2010 (a 63 per cent reduction compared to the 159 requests received in 2008/09). All of these requests related to the eProfile software. Of these requests, three (5 per cent) were approved (compared to 8 per cent in 2008/09). All three approved requests related to children with complex special educational needs.

### **Process from 2010/11 onwards**

The process for requesting the password to unlock data submission software will work in the same way in 2009/10. That is, if the moderation manager agrees with the practitioner (after discussion) that there is an exception, they will apply to QCDA for the password to unlock scale points 4–8 in a particular scale. Further information about this process, including the dates during which requests will be considered, will be sent to all EYFS profile moderation managers early in the summer term.

## **3. Frequently asked questions**

The following selection of frequently asked questions gives examples of the decision making processes that follow requests to unlock the software. They illustrate the supporting principles on which such decisions are based.

### **Why is there a lock on the entry of scale points 4–8?**

Scale points 1, 2 and 3 are developmental steps prior to the consideration and attainment of the early learning goals (scale points 4–8). The typical pattern of development of a child would show attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3 prior to achieving scale points 4–8. The developmental nature of scale points 1, 2 and 3 is fundamental to the EYFS profile, as it was previously to the foundation stage profile.

The lock has been added to data submission software to reinforce this message and to ensure that this principle is applied consistently by practitioners and local authorities.

### **Why is the lock only on some data submission software? Isn't it easier if I use a different data collection system?**

Other software providers have been approached to request that a locking mechanism is added to their programs, following the principle of the eProfile lock. These changes are now taking place, with commercial software providers putting a lock on the entry of scale points 4–8 before 1, 2 and 3.

### **Why should scale points 1, 2 and 3 be attained prior to scale points 4–8?**

Attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3 prior to scale points 4–8 is a typical pattern of attainment. Scale points 1, 2 and 3 are developmental and reflect a child not yet working securely within the early learning goals (scale points 4–8).

### **What is a typical pattern of development?**

A typical pattern of development in the EYFS profile would be a child attaining scale points 1, 2 and then 3 before any of the early learning goals (scale points 4–8) are attained. Further information can be found in the QCDA guidance note *EYFS profile scale points 1–3* (June 2009).

### **Why is the password held by QCDA and not given to local authority moderation managers?**

QCDA holds the password so it can monitor the nature and level of requests. The level of requests to unlock eProfile had raised concerns that moderation managers misunderstood the circumstances when this could be permitted.

It is only in exceptional circumstances that a child might attain scale points 4–8 in a particular scale or scales prior to attaining scale points 1, 2 and 3. In order to address this

concern and ensure national consistency, QCDA will continue to hold the password and moderation managers will be required to submit a request for the password on a case-by-case basis.

## **4. Requests to unlock scale points 4–8: examples of the decision making process**

The case studies below illustrate the decision making processes which follow a request to unlock the software.

### **Example 1**

#### **Background scenario**

A child is electively mute within school. The school has worked closely with parents during the year to support the child's learning. Evidence has included taped reading, and linking sounds and letters sessions provided by the parents.

The practitioner has observed the child whispering to her mother during sessions in school and was able to overhear evidence of both reading and linking sounds and letters. The child communicates verbally at home. In school the child is able to communicate her needs non-verbally to both adults and other children.

The practitioner felt that the child had attained scale points 1, 3 and 4 on the emotional development scale. A request was made for the password to allow the entry of scale point 4 in eProfile without the prior attainment of scale point 2.

#### **Decision**

The password was not provided as the child had only attained scale point 1.

#### **Rationale**

Scale points 1, 2 and 3 reflect a developmental sequence of attainment.

Scale point 2, 'Communicates freely about home and community', reflects a child's emotional security and confidence. The fact the child chooses to communicate at home and not at school is significant to the non-attainment of the scale point.

The practitioner should not consider scale points 4–8 when the child is still progressing towards the early learning goals.

## **Example 2**

### **Background scenario**

A child does not show an awareness of rhyme and alliteration; however, the child does hear and say sounds, blend sounds and use his phonic knowledge to read simple words.

The practitioner felt that the child had attained scale points 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 within the linking sounds and letters scale. A request was made for the password to allow the entry of scale points 5, 6 and 7 in eProfile without the prior attainment of scale point 2.

### **Decision**

The password was not provided since the child is working securely within the early learning goals.

### **Rationale**

The child is working securely within the early learning goals and will already have attained scale point 2 and should be recorded as having done so within eProfile. The practitioner should not be looking at the developmental steps (scale points 1, 2 and 3) towards the early learning goals when the attainment of the child is accurately being reflected within scale points 4–8.

## **Example 3**

### **Background scenario**

Due to a medical condition (cerebral palsy) a child has no awareness of a need to use the toilet and is reliant on adult help for managing personal hygiene.

The practitioner felt that the child had attained scale points 1, 3 and 6 within the disposition and attitudes scale. A request was made for the password to allow the entry of scale point 6 in eProfile without the prior attainment of scale point 2.

### **Decision**

The password was provided.

### **Rationale**

Disposition and attitudes scale point 2, 'Dresses, undresses and manages own personal hygiene with adult support', describes a child's approach to being responsible for themselves.



As the child is unaware of a need to use the toilet due to a medical condition he or she is unable to attain scale point 2. This is not a developmental issue, but a medical one, and will not prohibit the child from moving on to attain some or all of the scale points 4–8 relating to early learning goals in this scale.