

Additional guidance on completing foundation stage profile assessments

Who should use this guidance?

This guidance is for local authorities (LAs).

LA advisers should:

- use this supplementary guidance to update their knowledge and understanding of the foundation scale profile (FSP) in order to ensure accurate and reliable outcomes
- ensure its dissemination and use amongst all settings and practitioners
- ensure its use during briefings, updates and training.

FSP moderators should use this guidance to:

- support evidence trialling of FSP scale points during moderation meetings
- ensure consistency of judgements during external moderation visits to settings.

Purpose of the FSP

The primary purpose of the FSP is to provide year 1 practitioners with reliable and accurate information about each child's level of development at the end of the foundation stage. This will enable them to plan an effective, responsive and appropriate curriculum that will meet their needs. Judgements need to be made through interpreting a range of evidence gained predominantly through observation of the child in self-initiated contexts. This process of collecting information about children's learning is a critical part of the assessment process and is vital in order to ensure that the judgements made against the 13 scales produce data that is accurate and reliable.

Settings

Headteachers and managers should draw on this supplementary guidance to quality assure FSP outcomes in their setting.

Practitioners should use this guidance to:

- inform their approach to assessment and evidencing FSP judgements
- review the consistency and accuracy of their final FSP judgements.

The *Implementation and moderation of foundation stage profile 2006 – annual monitoring report* stated:

There is still a propensity among some practitioners to view the FSP as a stand-alone initiative rather than a means of reflecting on effective pedagogy and influencing provision to support learning journeys. There is also a need to develop and support more creative and innovative approaches that focus on the process of assessment and how this process relates to making judgments for the FSP.

The NAA is aware that inappropriate approaches to assessment and the need for the clarification of specific scale points continue to be an issue. Inconsistent judgements undermine the reliability of FSP data and affect the capacity of LAs to measure and meet their early years outcomes duties. The NAA has produced this additional guidance to assist LAs, moderators and practitioners to review their approach and implementation of FSP assessment and ensure that outcomes are accurate and nationally consistent. This guidance supplements information in the *Foundation stage profile handbook*.

This document supplements existing national guidance and supports practitioners and moderators. It also provides clarification of the 12 scale points for which practitioners frequently seek additional guidance.

Finalising FSP judgements

In order to make consistent and accurate judgements, practitioners need to use valid and consistent evidence to inform their assessments as stated in the *Foundation stage profile handbook*:

To complete the foundation stage profile... by the end of the reception year, you need to record each item that the child has achieved in each scale. Each point should be considered separately. For each scale point, the judgement made should represent your assessment of the child's typical attainment, in the sense that while a child's behaviour may vary somewhat from day to day and from context to context, the assessment made is the best description of the child's achievement.

FSP guidance on the process of assessment is that evidence is collected as an ongoing process through:

- the practitioner's knowledge of the child
- information from a range of contributors
- observation of self-initiated activities
- collection of anecdotal significant moments
- focused assessments.

When making a judgement for the FSP, practitioners should draw on at least 80 per cent of evidence from knowledge of the child, observations and anecdotal assessments, and no more than 20 per cent of evidence from adult-directed or focused assessments.

Judgements are made through assessing behaviour that is demonstrated consistently and independently in a range of situations. This behaviour will need to demonstrate the child's confidence and ownership of the specific knowledge, skill or concept being assessed.

No supplementary assessments are required in addition to completing the FSP nor is there any expectation that they should take place.

Evidencing judgements

Practitioners and FSP moderators also need to be aware that the definition of evidence is any material, knowledge of the child, anecdotal incident, result of observation or information from additional sources that support the overall picture of the child's development. There is no expectation or requirement that such evidence is always formally recorded or documented. Although practitioners may choose to record specific evidence in order to secure their own judgements, it is their final assessment of the child, based on all the evidence they have (documented or not) that informs their completion of the FSP and it is this judgement that is moderated by the LA.

Much of the existing guidance refers to observing children in independent or self-initiated activities as a critical way in which evidence is collected and judgements made on what children really know and can do.

Definitions

Assessment – the *Early years foundation stage guidance* of March 2007 states: 'Through observing children and by making notes when necessary, practitioners can make professional judgments about children's achievements and decide on the next steps in learning. They can also exchange information with parents about how children are progressing.' (Practice guidance glossary, page 7)

An **observation** (in the context of making a judgement for the FSP) is the practice of watching and listening to a child as they engage in an activity and demonstrate specific knowledge, skills and understanding. Sometimes these can be very short and can occur as part of another activity and practitioners may be observing children alongside their ongoing interaction. Sometimes observations may be longer and are the result of targeting a scale / scale point or child to gain specific information.

An **independent activity** is an activity completed by a child without support and may be adult directed or child initiated.

A **self-initiated activity** is an activity wholly decided on by the child itself and is the result of an intrinsic motivation to explore a project, or express an idea. In doing this they may make use of a variety of resources and demonstrate a complex range of knowledge, skills and understanding.

Clarification of tricky scale points

Area of learning	Scale	Point	FSP statement	Notes	What do children need to demonstrate in order to attain this?	Cross-reference scale point evidence
PSED	SD	7	Understands that people have different views, cultures and beliefs that need to be treated with respect.	This scale point refers to the understanding that other children may have a different life experience from them, think differently about some things, believe different things (such as supporting different football teams) and that this is not a matter for conflict, that no one is right or wrong.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of differences, for example different kinds of music, food, art, ways of celebrating, clothes, languages, customs, stories and songs. Being able to express likes, dislikes and preferences in a sensitive way. 	PSED SD 8 PSED ED 6 KUW 6
PSED	SD	8	Understands that s/he can expect others to treat her or his needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect.	As a development of PSED SD 7 a child should not accept that they are wrong or inferior because they are different, and should be comfortable and secure with their own experiences and home circumstances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are able to share their experiences and beliefs because they trust the positive reaction of adults and other children. Children identify themselves with specific resources, materials and displays in a positive way. 	PSED SD 7 PSED ED 6 KUW 6
PSED	ED	6	Has a developing respect for own culture and beliefs and those of other people.	As with PSED SD 7 and 8, this scale point makes a judgement on the child's confidence with their own experiences and the understanding that this may be particular to them. It also focuses on the understanding and acceptance that other children's experiences may be significantly different. Critical to this scale point is the notion of respecting other experiences and beliefs even when they are significantly different.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A child can talk about and express examples of their own cultural experiences and has a willingness to share this with adults, peers or the class group. A child can recognise other children's different cultural experiences and shows interest, which is expressed sensitively. 	PSED SD 7 PSED SD 8 KUW 6

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Area of learning	Scale	Point	FSP statement	Notes	What do children need to demonstrate in order to attain this?	Cross-reference scale point evidence
CLL	LCT	7	Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking, ideas, feelings and events; exploring the meanings and sounds of new words.	<p>This scale point is in two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the thinking out loud of describing an activity and the use of language to plot or suggest developments the noticeable use of new and specific vocabulary in appropriate contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is able to describe processes, events and scenarios, describing what they have done, are doing / going to do. They incorporate new vocabulary and phrases into their everyday activity role play and self-initiated activities. 	
CLL	LSL	4	Links sounds to letters; naming and sounding letters of the alphabet.	<p>To attain the scale point children need to be able to name and sound more letters than not.</p> <p>Children need to be confident in letter naming and sounding in a variety of situations, especially self-initiated activities.</p> <p>Children must demonstrate the ability to name and sound letters of the alphabet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children need to be able to accurately link the letter shape with its sound and name. The letters required should represent more letters than not, and focus on those commonly used in their names and frequent words in the environment (such as shop names, logos and signage). 	
CLL	W	8	Begins to form captions and simple sentences, sometimes using punctuation.	<p>This scale point makes a judgement on the child's ability to write confidently in short sentences, captions and labels, sometimes using simple punctuation. The judgement rests on whether or not the child is confident to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> write for different purposes use simple punctuation especially in the context of self-initiated activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are confident to write in a variety of forms, for example lists, letters, cards and stories. They will choose to do this independently, often in the context of role play and for a self-defined purpose. The punctuation required is the confident use of full stops and capital letters at the beginning of sentences. 	

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Area of learning	Scale	Point	FSP statement	Notes	What do children need to demonstrate in order to attain this?	Cross-reference scale point evidence
MD	C	6	In practical activities and discussion, begins to use the vocabulary involved in adding and subtracting.	This scale point refers to addition and subtraction. The child needs to do both and have a clear concept of both in order to attain the scale point.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The child responds to provision that takes advantage of stories, songs and situations that require addition and subtraction. ▪ The child consistently talks about more, less, adding and taking away. Language used by the child demonstrates their understanding and thinking out loud. 	
MD	C	7	Finds one more or one less than a number from 1 to 10.	The interpretation of this scale point rests on the child's understanding of basic addition and subtraction and that the real or imagined removal or addition of objects affects the total number appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Has a concept of number that enables them to talk about more/less in everyday situations and self-initiated activities. 	MD C 6
KUW		5	Asks questions about why things happen and how things work. Looks closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change.	<p>This scale point is in two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ making a judgement on the child's inquisitive and exploratory approach to different phenomena ▪ making a judgment on the child's ability to comment on similar or different features of different aspects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The ability to draw on their experiences to develop lines of enquiry, predict outcomes, make links in their observations and ideas and use this to discuss similarities and differences, patterns and changes. 	KUW 6

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Area of learning	Scale	Point	FSP statement	Notes	What do children need to demonstrate in order to attain this?	Cross-reference scale point evidence
KUW		6	Finds out about past and present events in own life and those of family members and other people s/he knows. Begins to know about own culture and beliefs and those of other people.	This scale point is in two parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the child's understanding of time and how things and people, including themselves, change over time understanding that different people have different experiences and different beliefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child can talk about and express examples of their own cultural experiences and have a willingness to share this with adults, peers or the class group. The child can recognise other children's different cultural experiences and shows interest, which is expressed sensitively. 	PSED SD 7 PSED SD 8 PSED ED 6 KUW 5
CD		7	Uses imagination in art and design, music, dance, imaginative and role play and stories. Responds in a variety of ways to what s/he sees, hears, smells, touches and feels.	The attainment of this scale point rests on the child's ability to draw from all the named forms of expression. Children attaining this point will use a range of ways to develop and express their imaginative thinking and ideas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children use techniques and knowledge to own and transform them to create their own ideas and outcomes in a variety of ways that include all types of expression at different points in time. 	
CD		8	Expresses and communicates ideas, thoughts and feelings using a range of materials, suitable tools, imaginative and role play, movement, designing and making, and a variety of songs and musical instruments.	The attainment of this scale point rests on the child's ability to select what they consider to be the most appropriate means of expressing ideas, thoughts or feeling. Children attaining this scale point will use all the named materials and processes at different points in time and dependent on the response required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children are able to use different modes of expression to clarify, explore and communicate ideas and feelings. 	PSED ED 4

PSED – personal, social and emotional development
SD – social development
ED – emotional development

CLL – communication language and literacy
LCT – language for communication and thinking
LSL – linking sounds and letters
W – writing

MD – mathematical development
C – calculating

KUW – knowledge and understanding of the world

CD – creative development