

INTERPRETING THE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The purpose of assessment

Assessment plays a fundamental role in enabling us to support children to make progress at a pace that is appropriate to them, ensuring they are supported and challenged accordingly.

It should contribute to developing a holistic picture of the child – their strengths, the ways in which they learn and their areas for development – for discussion as part of professional dialogues with parents/carers, colleagues and other settings regarding the child's development and to inform next steps in learning and teaching.

Assessments should not be used

- ✓ to form a one-off judgement
- ✓ as a series of tasks
- ✓ as an exercise to complete a tick list

Making progress

We should use the five developmental pathways – belonging, communication, exploration, physical development and well-being – to inform our planning of learning experiences that support children's progress.

We should provide opportunities for children to develop the cross-curricular skills (literacy, numeracy and digital competence) by offering consistent and extended opportunities to practise, repeat and embed learnt skills.

Assessment is essential to enable us to support children in making progression at a pace that is appropriate for them, ensuring that they are supported and challenged to do so.



Assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings



- [Assessment arrangements for funded non-maintained nursery settings](#)

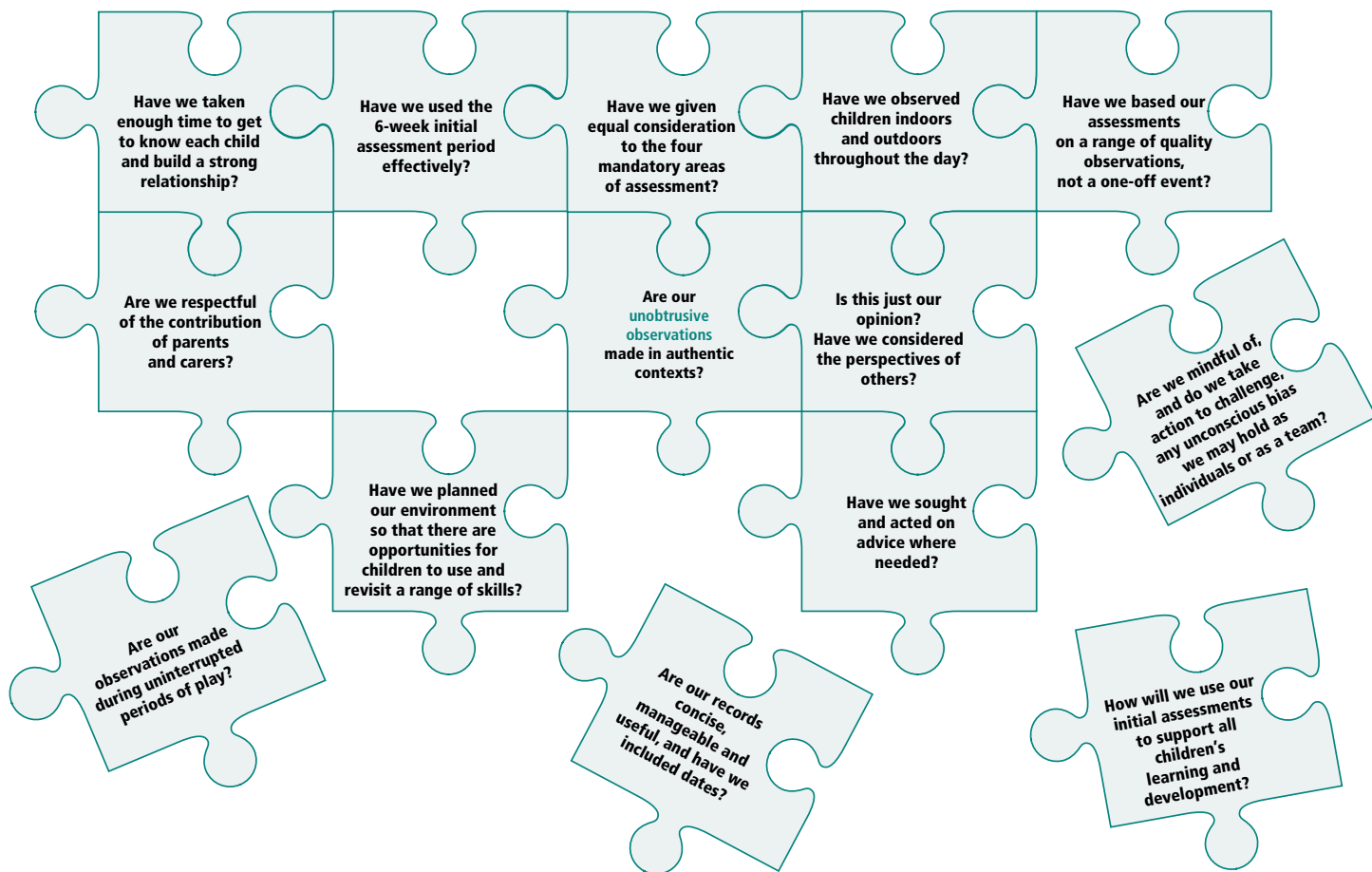
Initial assessments

The initial assessment must be conducted within six weeks of the child starting funded nursery education. We should include and make use of our observations and information from parents and carers, colleagues and other settings. This will help us to create a picture of each child’s unique skills and knowledge, alongside their culture and background.

Our observations should record children’s progress over time against the curriculum on offer, including, but not limited to, children’s well-being (to include social and emotional development, and physical development), and their skills, knowledge and capabilities in literacy and numeracy.

At the end of the initial six weeks we should collate and summarise the assessment information and share it with parents and carers. It is important that the information we share is easy to understand, clear and free from jargon. This information may be shared verbally, via digital platform, face to face and/or in written format.

Key points to consider when undertaking initial assessments



Ongoing assessment arrangements

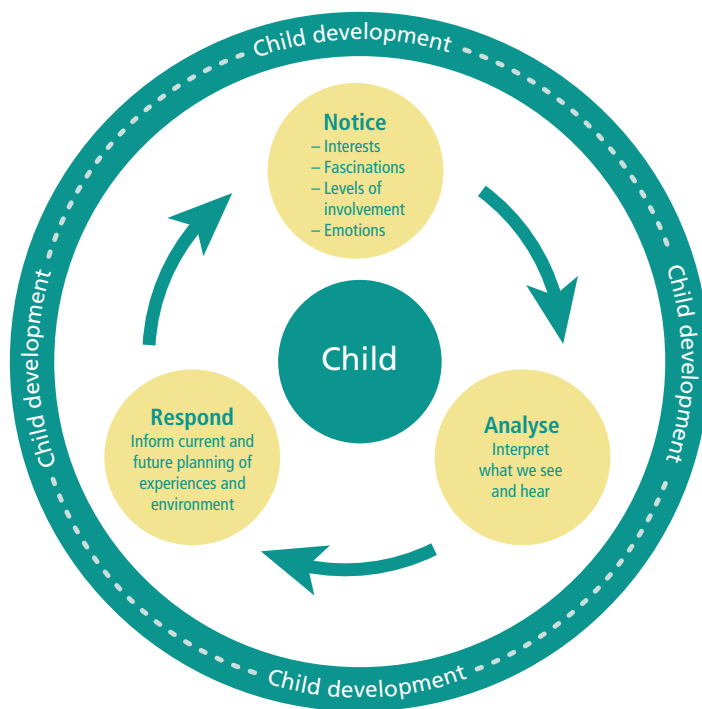
We should share our ongoing observations regularly to create a strong connection with parents and carers. We use our continuous observations to note the ways in which children learn and develop. We should observe children throughout the day, indoors and outdoors, in solitary and collaborative play. These contexts help us to build a holistic picture of the child and how they respond in a range of situations and with different people.

There are a number of ways we can use observation to inform our planning and support our understanding of children's learning and progress over time. These include:

- spontaneous observations of something significant
- observations for a specific length of time and over a period of time, e.g. story time, when the children enter in the morning, etc
- observations that assess developmental progress
- planned observations on identified aspects of learning and development, e.g. building a tower, holding a paint brush, problem solving, etc.

The information should be used to:

- celebrate children's learning
- provide information for supporting children's progress, which may include revisiting, consolidating or challenging learning
- inform planning for learning and teaching, including any extra support or challenge required for every child to reach their potential
- involve parents and carers in their child's learning and development
- communicate with key partners



The role of observation – Notice, analyse and respond

The process of 'notice, analyse and respond' should be part of our day-to-day decision-making when considering when and how to respond to children's learning. Observations can be spontaneous or planned. During our assessments we analyse and respond to the progress made by the children.

We should consider the children's well-being by observing:

- what children are interested in or curious about
- how and where they use resources and spaces
- how they communicate and interact with others

Notice

We should take note of children's levels of confidence, resilience, independence and competence and any significant changes to these. Children may respond differently to some practitioners and in different situations. We should ensure that we approach our observations with an open mind and that we are willing to share observations with others to discuss what we see and hear objectively. These professional discussions should provide comprehensive observations of individual children.

Analyse

As we observe, we should interpret what we see and hear, and decide whether the observation is significant and therefore noteworthy. We should consider whether we have learned something new about the child or whether it has reinforced something we already know. As we interpret what we have seen and heard, we should consider what it could mean for a particular child, in relation to their:

- increasing knowledge
- skill development
- concept development
- preferred schemas or schematic learning (repeated patterns of behaviour)
- dispositions to learning in different situations and environments
- progress or any difficulties they may be experiencing

When we reflect on this analysis, it should be rooted in our knowledge of child development, as well as the child's developmental, linguistic and cultural background. There will be times when we act on our observations instantaneously as we notice teachable moments. Should there be an unexpected or unplanned occurrence or experience, we may take the opportunity to talk to the child to understand what was of interest to them, and how we can further develop this experience.

Respond

Based on our analysis of our observations, we can make decisions about what to do next to support children's progress. This may include decisions about whether and/or how to interact; whether to make adaptations to the indoor or outdoor learning environment, and how to enrich experiences further.

If we decide to, or are invited to join in or support play, we may choose to model a skill, offer a resource, introduce vocabulary, use open questions to support thinking, or engage in sustained shared thinking on something of interest to the child.

Allowing children time to wallow in their learning during periods of uninterrupted play will support them to consolidate and refine their thinking and understanding. We should make the most of children's interests and fascinations within the environment and experiences to engage them authentically in their learning.

Summary

Observational assessment should:	Observational assessment shouldn't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • capture what children can do and how they learn • contribute to building a holistic picture of the child and understanding the progress made over time • form part of day-to-day practice • be unobtrusive • include analysis of our observations • inform learning and teaching • be meaningful and useful • be a shared responsibility • include the perspective of the child and their parents or carers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on perceived gaps in learning • categorise or label children • be a one-off event or a series of tasks • interrupt authentic learning and play • be used solely as an accountability measure • be separate from learning and teaching • be onerous and time-consuming • be the responsibility of one adult alone • be completed in isolation