



Cumberland
Council



Completing the Early Years Developmental Journal 'At a Glance' guidance

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How do you ensure that children with SEN are making the same amount of progress as other children?

The Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years (Chapter 5 Early years providers, pg. 79) states:

5.1 All children are entitled to an education that enables them to:

- Achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, and
- Become confident young children with a growing ability to communicate their own views and ready to make the transition into compulsory education

5.2 Providers of early years education, that is all early years providers in the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors that a local authority funds, are required to have regard to this Code including the principles set out in Chapter 1.

5.3 The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is the statutory framework for children aged 0 to 5 years. All early years providers must follow the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS and the learning and development requirements, unless an exemption from these has been granted.

5.4 Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. These arrangements should include a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEN. The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point, and then making effective provision, improves long-term outcomes for children.

5.5 All those who work with young children should be alert to emerging difficulties and respond early. In particular, parents know their children best and it is important that all practitioners listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children themselves.

The Developmental Journal supports practitioners to:

- Record, support and celebrate children's early development and to identify areas where additional help may be needed.
- Understand the steps of development to meet a child's needs, plan small steps for their progress, enable appropriate interventions and focus on target setting.
- Share the child's learning in the setting with parents, seek the parent's views, celebrate the achievements the child makes and discuss how parents can support their child at home.
- Develop the child's My Early Years SEN Support Plan and to plan effective outcomes and next steps for the child based on small steps in development.
- Work in partnership with parents and other professionals. The Developmental Journal is a useful tool for focusing the discussion around agreeing shared goals so that everyone working with the child is focused on the same development priorities.

The Developmental Journal can support parents to:

- Notice more about their child and understand the importance of what their child is doing as they learn new things.
- Share what they know about their child and understand what practitioners may be looking for and how they think about development.
- Discuss how things are going, ask questions and know what to do next to help their child.

How to complete the Journal

The Developmental Journal should be completed on an ongoing basis by the practitioner who knows the child best in discussion with their parents.

The Developmental Journal includes behaviours that most typically developing babies and children show from when they are born until around 5 years of age. These behaviours are categorised into four Areas of Development which are:

- **Personal, social and emotional development** - Focuses on how children learn who they are, what feelings they have, how they behave and how their relationships develop. It's also about developing selfcontrol.
- **Communication** - Children communicate with other people in many different ways – for example, by looking, pointing, smiling and talking. This area also includes how babies and children pay attention to other people and listen to them, as well as how they understand and use language themselves.
- **Physical development** - This aspect of development focuses on how children develop their ability to move their bodies, hands, feet and fingers, and use their senses and movement to explore the world. It also includes self-help skills like feeding, dressing and hygiene.
- **Thinking** - Babies are learning, right from the moment of birth. It may not be that obvious at first, but babies and young children accumulate knowledge at an astonishing rate. Understanding the world is greatly helped by lots of experiences and discussion about things that are going on around them. Thinking also involves the ways in which children learn to do things that they want to do. This is particularly important where the solution is not immediately obvious as it involves working out what they need to do, how things work and thinking through the possibilities.

The four Areas of Development are sequenced in 14 Developmental Steps and are closely linked with the Prime Areas of Learning from the EYFS.

Most children, with or without a special educational need or disability, will pass through the Developmental Steps in order, but they may at times be further ahead in one Area of Development compared to other Areas.

Progress through the Steps will vary depending on the child's particular needs.

Completing the Developmental Profile (front sheet)

The Developmental Profile enables you to see the pattern of the child's progress over time.

It helps you to see at a glance the areas in which the child is making good progress and those areas where the child needs more support.

It is completed every few weeks and summarises the information which is recorded on the Steps sheets.

- Write the child's name and date of birth and note the child's age in months next to this.
- Once the child has achieved most of the items for a Step, enter the date in the relevant box on the front sheet. Use evidence from parents about the child's skills at home and your knowledge of the child in the setting when making your judgement.

Recording progress using the Areas of Development sheets

- At each Step in each Area of Development, a Key Indicator has been chosen. These items have been chosen because they are particularly important for children's development. These are shown in bold in the Journal.
- Use the Key Indicators to decide where to start. Find the Step that best represents the child's current developmental level and use this as a starting point. You may need to use different Steps for the different Areas of Development.
- For each item listed for a Step, there are two columns that are used to record the things that you see the child doing:
- Date the achieved column when you see the child doing something often and with confidence in a number of different situations, e.g. in different rooms or with different toys, in conversation with different people.
- When the child has completed most items in a Step date this on the Developmental Profile (front sheet).
- Some children may not be able to show a specific Key Indicator behaviour, but may be able to do things that are equivalent, for example by communicating in a different way. If this is the case note the achievement as an alternative to the Key Indicator. If there is a particular reason why a specific Key Indicator is not relevant for the child, it is fine to show a Step as 'completed' once the other items have mostly been achieved.

What to do if progress seems to get stuck

Sometimes it may be that a child is not moving to the next Developmental Step in one or more area. If this is the case, there are several things that practitioners can do:

- Talk to the parent to find out what they think.
- Think about backing off from a particular activity for a while.
- Choose a different area from the four Areas of Development to concentrate on.
- Think about what is happening around the child. Have their interests changed?
- Have there been changes in their environment?

The Cumberland Early Years Developmental Journal is available via the SEND tab on the Early Years website at: legacy.cumberland.gov.uk/childrenservices/childrenandfamilies/cfis/earlyyearsandchildcare/supportforearlyyearsandchildcareprovision.asp

Adapted from:

How to Use the Early Years Developmental Journal:

<https://www.ncb.org.uk/resources/all-resources/filter/early-years/how-use-early-years-developmental-journal>

Practice Guide to the Early Years Developmental Journal
oro.open.ac.uk/38105/1/EYDJ%20practice%20guide.pdf