



Argyll and Bute Early Years Service

Developmental Milestones Tool Report

August 2015



Introduction

In March 2014, EYC Workstream 3 members met with Childcare and Education Workers and Managers from a range of different settings across Argyll and Bute. The group was asked to consider Stretch Aim 3 and associated questions:

‘90% of all children within each CPP have reached all of the expected developmental milestones at the time the child starts primary school, by end-2017’.

- How can we take Stretch Aim 3 forward in Argyll and Bute?
- How can we ensure that developments do not conflict with other national priorities –eg. ELCC National Practice Guidance – ‘Building the Ambition’ and GIRFEC?
- How can we align our work with developments within Workstreams 1 and 2?
- How will we measure progress?
- How will we gather data?

Development

The working group initially looked at how other CPPs were addressing Stretch Aim 3, and as a result, investigated different resources for supporting children reach their developmental milestones. In addition to this, consideration was given to consultation of practitioners who requested greater guidance and support around effective ELCC provision. Initial findings were:

- There had to be a shared understanding of what we aim to achieve
- We should create an agreed set of developmental milestones for everyone to work towards
- Develop a process which could be absorbed into ELCC settings without being seen as an ‘add-on’, but further enhances ELCC provision.

After discussing findings and analysing data, the working party decided to develop a tool which used a similar approach to the wellbeing indicator tools being developed and implemented within Workstreams 1 and 2:

Wellbeing Indicator Tools – Workstreams 1 and 2

The wellbeing indicator tools were developed to build on an ‘asset based’ approach – working with families to provide the best start for babies and children. The tools were structured around the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators:

- Safe
- Healthy
- Active
- Nurtured
- Achieving
- Responsible
- Respected
- Included

A series of questions were listed within each of the wellbeing indicators listed above, and families were asked to grade themselves 1-10 against these questions. By working together with their named person, families were able to address any areas which they were concerned about.

Argyll and Bute Developmental Milestone Tool - Workstream 3

It was agreed to incorporate the GIRFEC wellbeing indicators within the Developmental Milestone Tool, as this enabled a ‘common thread’ to run through provision for families from pre-birth – children aged 5.

Each of the milestones are developed under the ‘umbrella’ of the wellbeing indicators, and practitioners can record progress within each child’s milestones through their ‘Personal Learning Plan’.

Developmental Milestones

- Social/ Emotional/ Behavioural
- Gross Motor
- Fine Motor
- Sensory/ Cognitive
- Speech & Language/ Attention
- Vision
- Hearing

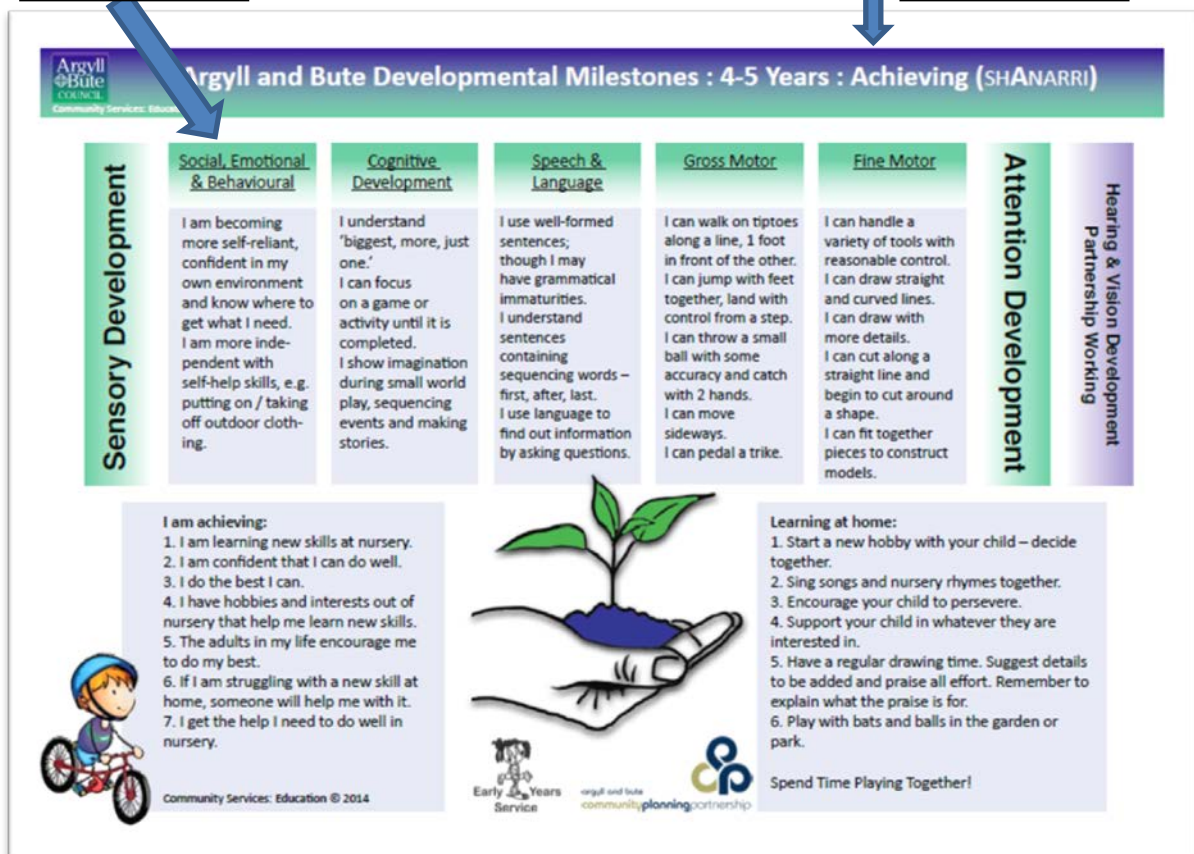


Wellbeing Indicators

- Safe
- Healthy
- Achieving
- Nurtured
- Active
- Respected
- Responsible
- Included

Developmental Milestones

Wellbeing Indicator



Argyll and Bute Developmental Milestones : 4-5 Years : Achieving (SHANARRI)

Sensory Development	Social, Emotional & Behavioural	Cognitive Development	Speech & Language	Gross Motor	Fine Motor	Attention Development	Hearing & Vision Development Partnership Working
I am becoming more self-reliant, confident in my own environment and know where to get what I need. I am more independent with self-help skills, e.g. putting on / taking off outdoor clothing.	I understand 'biggest, more, just one.' I can focus on a game or activity until it is completed. I show imagination during small world play, sequencing events and making stories.	I use well-formed sentences; though I may have grammatical immaturities. I understand sentences containing sequencing words – first, after, last. I use language to find out information by asking questions.	I can walk on tiptoes along a line, 1 foot in front of the other. I can jump with feet together, land with control from a step. I can throw a small ball with some accuracy and catch with 2 hands. I can move sideways. I can pedal a trike.	I can handle a variety of tools with reasonable control. I can draw straight and curved lines. I can draw with more details. I can cut along a straight line and begin to cut around a shape. I can fit together pieces to construct models.			

I am achieving:

1. I am learning new skills at nursery.
2. I am confident that I can do well.
3. I do the best I can.
4. I have hobbies and interests out of nursery that help me learn new skills.
5. The adults in my life encourage me to do my best.
6. If I am struggling with a new skill at home, someone will help me with it.
7. I get the help I need to do well in nursery.

Learning at home:

1. Start a new hobby with your child – decide together.
2. Sing songs and nursery rhymes together.
3. Encourage your child to persevere.
4. Support your child in whatever they are interested in.
5. Have a regular drawing time. Suggest details to be added and praise all effort. Remember to explain what the praise is for.
6. Play with bats and balls in the garden or park.

Community Services: Education © 2014

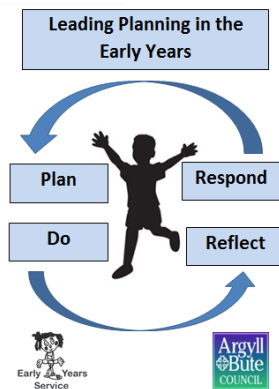
Early Years Service | Argyll and Bute Community Planning Partnership

Spend Time Playing Together!

There are overviews similar to the one above for each of the 8 wellbeing indicators, with each one listing relevant developmental milestones. The toolkit is designed to be flexible and to be used in a variety of different settings and circumstances. It provides a framework to underpin the development of each child’s Personal Learning Plan. Each Wellbeing Theme Sheet can easily be slotted into each child’s PLP with evidence (photos, comments) of achievement and next steps within selected targets added to the PLP – this is a process which is familiar to practitioners when

using the PLP to identify next steps in learning. Using the toolkit in this way will ensure each child's PLP will be relevant to their individual developmental needs, and will also complement progress within the Early Level of Curriculum for Excellence. Progress within targeted developmental milestones will be shared with parents and children through their PLPs and through dialogue. This process will help to promote a shared understanding of achievements and clear next steps for all families, children and practitioners.

Currently in Argyll and Bute, practitioners are encouraged to make use of the 'Plan Do Reflect Respond' model of planning to ensure learning experiences are appropriate and meet the needs of every child, in line with Curriculum for Excellence – Early Level. The Developmental Milestone Tool should be used in exactly the same way – through observation and shared dialogue practitioners can plan to meet the needs of each child within their developmental milestones. As evidence of progress is gathered, practitioners can meet with colleagues to identify appropriate next steps for the child.



The toolkit is not a 'tick sheet' for practitioners to use individually for assessment purposes but rather a focus for quality professional dialogue. Evidence of progress within relevant milestones should be used by practitioners in conjunction with the related wellbeing overview as the basis for professional dialogue, to reach a shared understanding of what has been achieved and what still needs to be developed. This is a very different process from a 'tick sheet' but one which will deliver more, as practitioners through using the toolkit, will not only be assessing children's developmental milestones but sharing good practice and improving their skills, which in turn will lead to positive changes for all.

Gathering Data

Data related to each child's progress within their developmental milestones is collected in December and June of each year by managers and sent to the Early Years Service. This data allows the authority to evaluate progress against the National Stretch Aim 3, as stated in the first paragraph. In addition to this, it gives managers valuable data around how each child is doing and whether patterns of concern are emerging. The Early Years Service is also able to use the data at a locality level to target professional development activity and resources. The data is also useful for other agencies to target support – eg. psychological services, health, speech and language. The Early Years Service will only share data relating to locality areas. Data relating to individual settings will remain confidential unless permission is given by parents and the manager to share data.

What does implementation look like?

1. Practitioners focus on one Wellbeing Theme. E.g. 'Healthy'
2. Through professional dialogue and a shared understanding, practitioners will become clear about the key developmental aspects of the milestones which sit under 'Healthy'.
3. With their children, appropriate opportunities are planned and developed within the context of their learning environments at that time.
4. Over a period of time, the child is observed frequently and evidence of progress is gathered.
5. Colleagues meet to carry out a moderation exercise to ensure a shared understanding of progress is reached for each child.
6. The group uses the relevant overview from the toolkit to evaluate evidence of progress as the basis for their moderation discussions.
7. The moderation sheet should be completed to record relevant and appropriate next steps for children who have not met these milestones.

8. Evidence of progress and achievement is shared with each child and parent through the PLP and next steps are identified.
9. Throughout this process, parents are included and encouraged to contribute to their child's progress within each milestone in their child's PLP.
10. From time to time, practitioners will be required to liaise with the named person (usually the health visitor) to share progress within developmental milestones
11. A 'snapshot' of progress within the developmental milestones will be submitted to the Local Authority in December and June. Local Authority units will be able to submit information through SEEMiS and Partner Provider units can submit information to the Early Years Service for collation.

How have we tested the Developmental Milestone Tool?

The overall aim for implementation of the developmental milestone tool is :

'100% of all ELCC settings in Argyll and Bute will report on developmental milestone progress for each 3 and 4 year old child by end of December 2015'

This was an extremely aspirational aim for the project, and as a result it was decided to break it down into smaller aims, which would lead to achievement of the 'big aim'. The working party recognised that in addition to providing practitioners with the developmental milestone tool, training would be vital to ensure there was robust testing of the tool and successful implementation. Therefore, the second, smaller aim was:

'100% of all ELCC registered settings in Argyll and Bute will participate in Developmental Milestone Tool training by the end of June 2015'



Mid Argyll Developmental Milestones Training Day – March 2014

As of June 2015, 96% of ELCC settings in Argyll and Bute had at least one member of staff attend localised Developmental Milestone Tool training and dates are in the diary for training of the 3 remaining settings in August 2015. As part of the training, practitioners looked at what they were going to test through using the tool:

- **Ease of Use** – in order for the tool to work well within a busy ELCC setting, the tool had to be easy to use and flexible to meet the varying systems and structures within each setting. It must not be seen as an 'add-on'.

Aim: *80% of practitioners will score '3' for 'ease of use' by end of June 2015*

- **Impact on child** – the tool had to support meeting the needs of each child – if there was no impact on meeting needs, then the tool was not fulfilling its aim. Therefore practitioners were encouraged to test whether the tool was having an impact on helping them meet the needs of their children

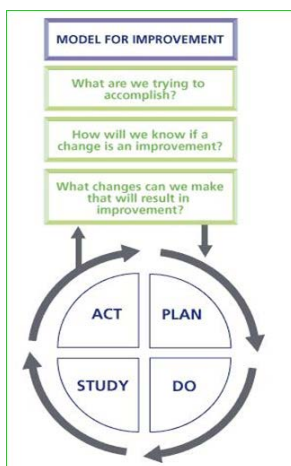
Aim: *80% of practitioners will score '3' for 'impact on child' by end of June 2015*

- **Building capacity** – practitioners were voicing a lack of confidence in both the developmental milestones of a young child and the wellbeing indicators. Therefore practitioners were being asked to test whether the tool helped them to become more confident in their knowledge of both the developmental milestones and the wellbeing indicators. This also pulls together effective practice recommendations within ‘Building the Ambition’.

Aim: 80 % of practitioners will score ‘3’ for ‘building capacity’ by end of June 2015

- **Parental Engagement** – parental engagement is an important component in effective, high quality ELCC provision, and is a vital element within the Developmental Milestone Tool. Practitioners were asked to test how effectively they engaged parents within the use of the tool.

Aim: 80% of practitioners will score ‘3’ for parental engagement by end of June 2015



Testing the Tool

The Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) process tested each of the above key elements within the Developmental Milestone Tool in settings across Argyll and Bute. As the tool was scaled up across the local authority, practitioners were asked to test the tool within each of the four aims and give a score between 1 and 3 for each aim every week for a period of 6 weeks. Practitioners were also asked to write down comments about what they noticed through using the Tool each week—this helped the working group to STUDY the data and to identify what improvements could be made to the tool to ensure it was more effective.

Testing Scale

- 1– The Tool has had no impact
- 2– The Tool has had reasonable impact
- 3– The Tool has had very good impact

Through effective testing, practitioners were able to contribute to improving the tool and sharing effective practice with other colleagues.

Developmental Milestone Tool Data

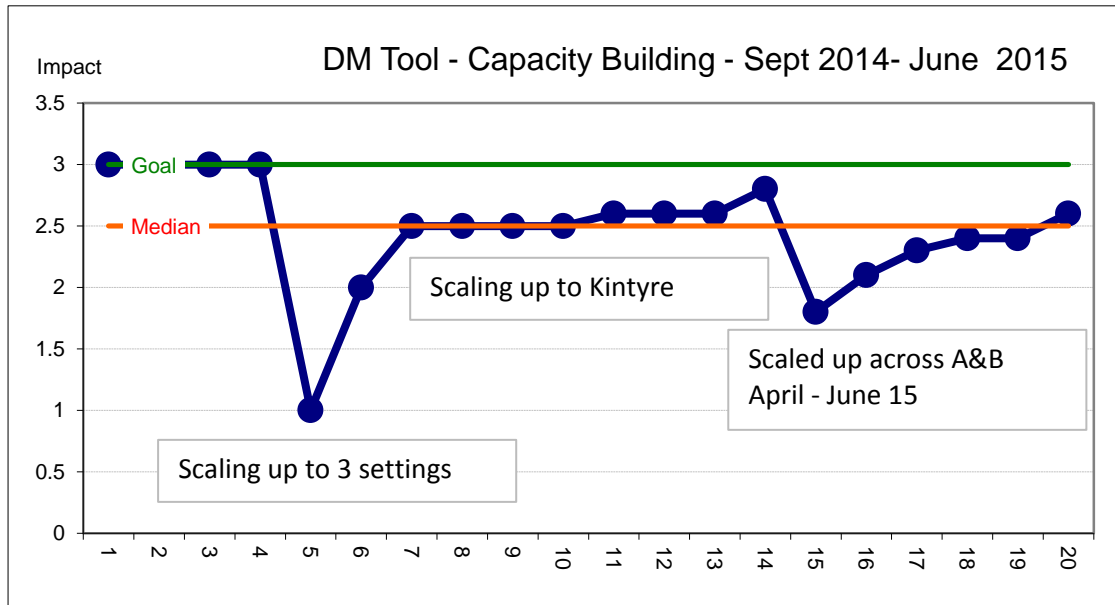
The testing period began in September 2014 and was completed by the end of June 2015. The process followed the Model for Improvement methodology – starting small with one setting and one practitioner, then the tool was tested with an additional 3 settings. At this point the developmental milestone tool was tested in the Kintyre area of Argyll and Bute as part of a population segmentation project called ‘The Kintyre Family Pathway’. Training was delivered to Kintyre practitioners – representing the 7 ELCC settings in the Kintyre area, and testing began in January 2015. Using learning from each of the test cycles, the tool was scaled up to the 4 localities in Argyll and Bute between March and June 2015.

Each run chart below shows data gathered for each of the 4 aims throughout the test period:

80% of ELCC settings in Argyll and Bute will score 3 for 'capacity building' by the end of June 2015

5 out of 13 settings scored 3 for 'capacity building' by end of June 2015 – 38%

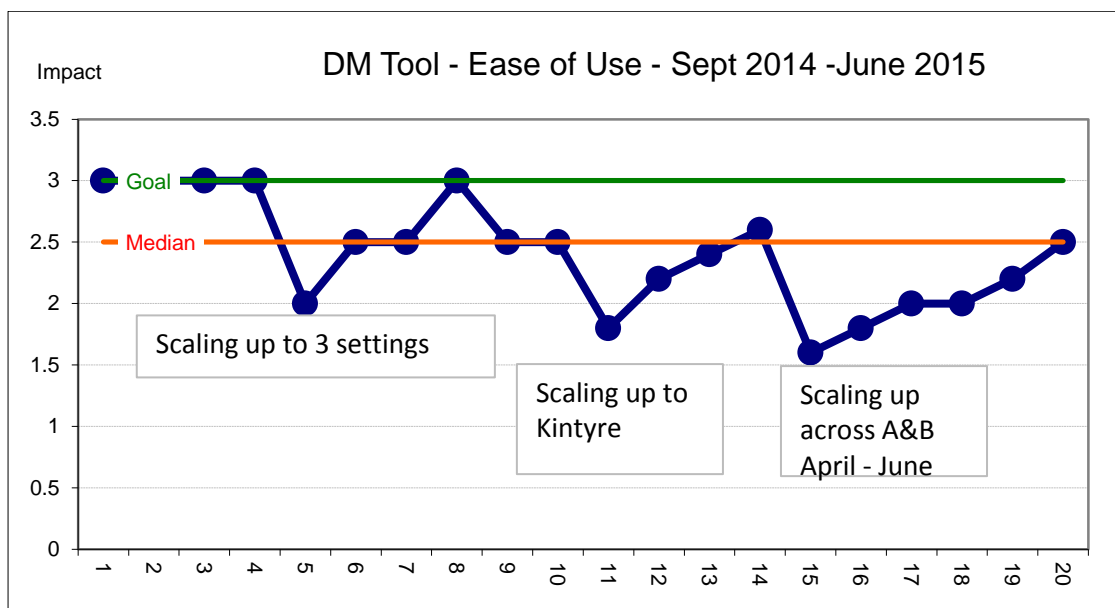
12 out of 13 settings scored 2 or above for 'capacity building' by end of June 2015 – 92%



80% of ELCC settings in Argyll and Bute will score 3 for 'ease of use' by the end of June 2015

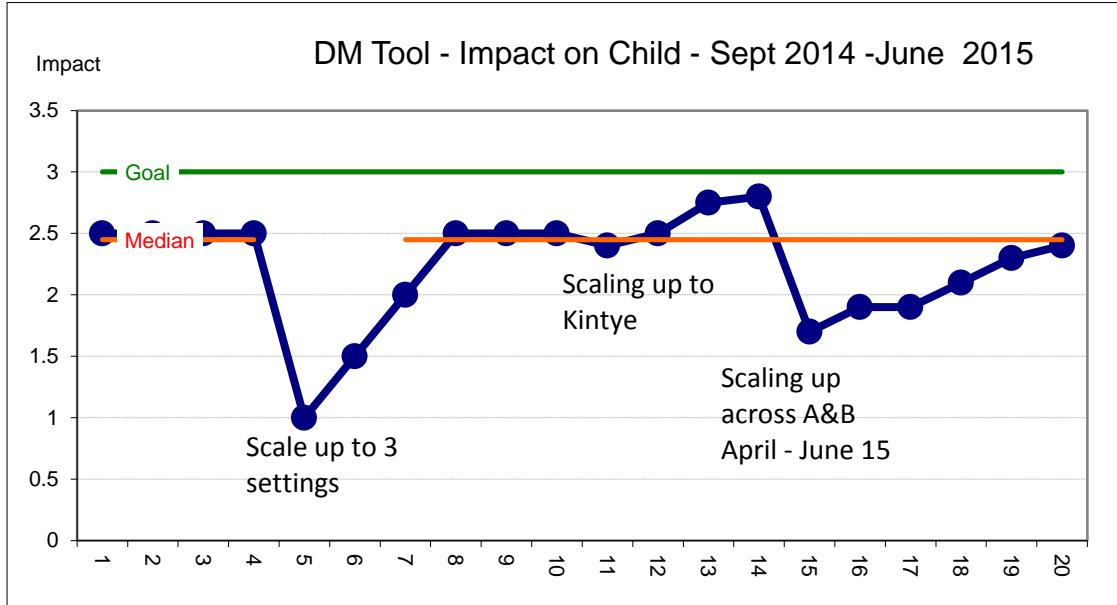
6 out of 13 settings scored 3 for 'ease of use' by end of June 2015 – 46%

11 out of 13 settings scored 2 or above for 'ease of use' by end of June 2015 – 85%



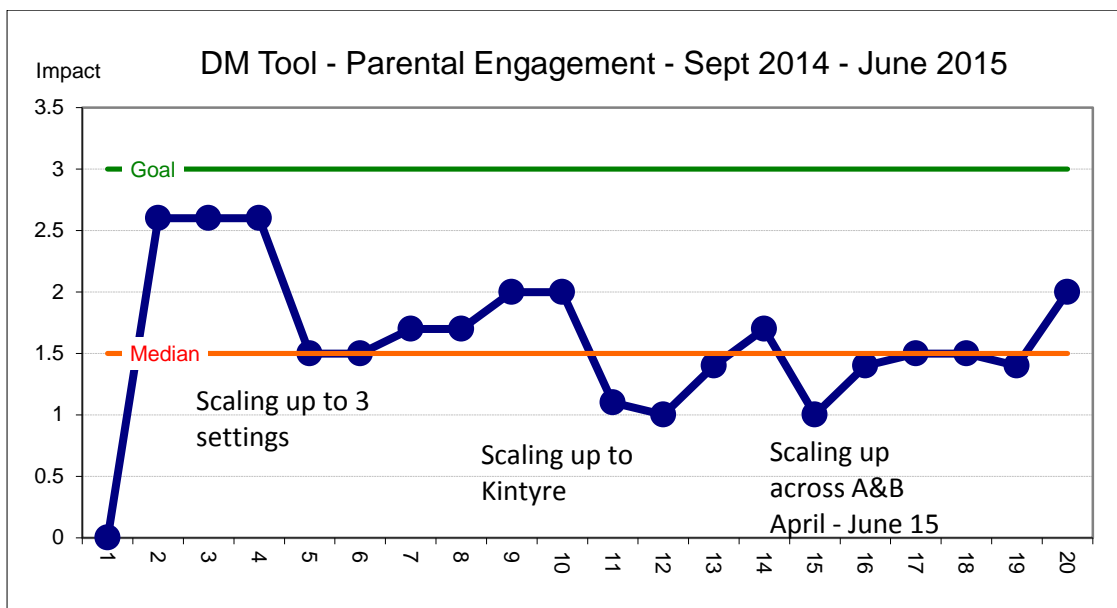
80% of ELCC settings in Argyll and Bute will score 3 for 'impact on child' by the end of June 2015

5 out of 13 settings scored 3 for 'impact on child' by end of June 2015 – 38%
11 out of 13 settings scored 2 or above for 'impact on child' by end of June 2015 – 85%



80% of ELCC settings in Argyll and Bute will score 3 for 'parental engagement' by the end of June 2015

2 out of 11 settings scored 3 for 'parental engagement' by end of June 2015 – 18%
8 out of 11 settings scored 2 or above for 'parental engagement' by end of June 2015 – 73%



Qualitative Data – Staff Comments – April – June 2015

There are too many comments to list below for each week of testing, but comments typical of the opinions and feelings of practitioners have been selected and included below:

Week 1

‘Pasted toolkit into children’s Learning Story books as a visual reminder of what we aim to achieve together. Several of the areas had already been achieved by both age ranges. Thinking back historically, the toolkit would have been very useful to some parents to highlight their children’s needs in some areas.’

‘Cascaded’ the DM sessions to rest of staff. Initial feelings are that it is a bit overwhelming and we need time to digest. It’s time consuming to get up and running, but when using it we are spending less time than old PLP. All parents have received paperwork – no comments. Most children not commenting on their learning – lots more encouragement needed.’

‘Decision taken not to involve parents until staff have a complete grasp of the toolkit. Staff have found it a useful tool.’

Week 2

‘Discussed good level of engagement in PLPs – parents increasingly writing comments relating to children’s learning and / or milestones. Decided to use “safe” as next focus with Beach Schools in mind’

‘Sent home Learning Stories with explanation of what the toolkit was about. Waiting for feedback!’

‘There were questions regarding how to track the achievements. The moderation exercise was useful. We are planning to include DM moderation as a standing item on staff meetings so that all children will be covered on a regular basis. The toolkit highlights areas for support/extension.’

‘We have been looking at the Active Milestone - working on den building, walking and taking part in more physical challenges during our Active Learning Outdoor Day. This made us more aware of how the children were interacting in physical activity and also team work while building the den.’

Week 3

‘Good variety of activities both outdoor and indoor. More focus on milestones and Wellbeing indicators. No formal meeting, but I can see children fully engaged, very happy.’

‘It is focusing our goals and links to outcomes’

‘Some of the parents had no comments to make but some said they found it a useful guide to things they could do at home with their children. Others found it reassuring that their children were reaching their milestones within age range. One parent was perhaps taking the age range a little too literally, so perhaps a small explanation along with the toolkit to say that a few months either side of a given age is still within the developmental milestone is needed.’

‘This week we sent a letter to parents and a copy of the Parents’ Guide to DM. We thought it would have been helpful if EYC could produce a generic letter regarding the aim of the Milestones. We created a comments box for parents to place questions/concerns. However, from experience we know this time of year is not a good time to introduce new initiatives as we are already asking parents to feedback to us on our Maths Challenge and our in-house emergent writing

initiative. We know the best way to engage will be during a workshop scenario which we intend to do next session.'

'Parents asked for leaflet. Staff able to have professional dialogue on next steps.'

Week 4

'Discussed whether we need to send end of year reports home. Is this necessary- what does it add when we have been providing such detailed feedback. ELCC using DMT in tandem with Building the Ambition to write reports- high level of professionalism.'

'Comments at parents' evening regarding milestones:

"Whatever you are doing it is working as I noticed C was able to walk away!" (from arguing with another child) – led to fruitful discussion around how C is meeting milestones.

Discussion around starting school for another child with a February birthday- used the DM overview as a prompt. Focused the discussion really well and provided a safe way to raise issues regarding child's development. Also able to use DMs to raise issue of referral to Speech and Language.'

'Having had time to reflect on the toolkit's use for planning activities and resources to offer the children, I think it is a good tool to aid confidence that I am meeting all of the children's key areas of developmental needs and learning.'

'Planning session - Took one theme and discussed our understanding . It was decided to ask parents for some feedback on how they felt now the milestones were part of the Personal Learning Plans. The decision was taken to send the folders home for parents to look at with a feedback sheet to fill in and to add Developmental Milestones on to the agenda for the upcoming Parents' Group meeting. Staff felt it would be useful to see the 2-3 year old milestones.'

Week 5

'Care Inspectorate very happy with Developmental Milestones and way we are using them. Further training arranged with EYS for in- service days.'

'We feel more confident using the DM and completing the DM Progress sheet is not as daunting as we first thought.'

'Children taking much more ownership of their learning and discussing 'what's next' with myself. Discussion took place regarding looking at the milestones for children with ASN. The moderation exercise helps to provide a focus for discussion.'

Week 6

'Tracking sheets will be passed onto Primary 1. Some staff a little anxious about using SEEMIS (ELCC

'Next step as a staff is to evaluate the impact which DM has had on learning and teaching.'

'Really in the swing of things now with this – parents and children seem to enjoy.'

'Parental feedback was mainly positive and parents could see how the milestones were being integrated into the daily working of the nursery. Some parents were concerned that it could be an additional workload in terms of paperwork for the staff. Staff not entirely happy with how the milestones were fitting into the PLPs and felt it could become quite cumbersome. This will be looked at in June with a view to adapting the PLPs for next session.'

‘Discussing how to document evidence for all the children once milestones implemented! (PLP)
I would appreciate further training to clarify further questions that have arisen from this trial.’

‘Continue to struggle with whole thing – more training required.’

‘Over all I have seen a huge difference in parental involvement. The children have been more ‘proud’ and taking ownership of their learning and this has made my job easier and more enjoyable. Due to the time of year the toolkit was introduced and the nursery being busy throughout, myself and my manager did not feel it would have been fair or manageable to have all staff using it when we were finding our feet with it. Now I have used it for more than a term, I am more confident in introducing it to my co-workers and together we can build on it (hence the reason I have not had meetings each week). I feel it’s beneficial for all our children especially those where there are some areas for concern and I feel it is a good way to get background from the health visitor.’

‘The Milestones are now part of our day to day working life. We find the terminology is simple and easy to use. The weekly moderation meetings help us to see the strengths and specific areas where some children may need a little extra support. It also helps to promote individuality within the learning. However, we have not had much parent engagement within the toolkit. We will continue to try and improve this as we go.

What Does the Data Tell Us?

Poor return in data – only 22% of settings returned data by the end of June 2015. Feedback from settings informs us that practitioners found it difficult to test a new system / process due to settings being extremely busy with end of term activities.

Aims were not met –practitioners were asked to test the tool within 4 areas-

- Ease of use
- Impact on child
- Capacity building
- Parental engagement

Each of the aims failed to meet their target of 80% scoring 3 within tests. Consideration should be given to low numbers participating, testing during the last term of the session and duration of testing – practitioners’ feedback indicated that they needed longer to build confidence in using the tool.

Ease of Use

Practitioners initially found the tool overwhelming – there were too many elements to it and it appeared to be complicated to use. However, as practitioners became more confident in its use, they found it much easier and more helpful. They valued the simplicity of the language and how it pulls other areas of priority altogether. Key to successful implementation was an understanding of how the tool should be used and support from the manager. Several settings have asked for follow up training, as they required further clarity on how the tool should be used.

Impact on Child

Once again as confidence in the tool grew, practitioners found it increasingly useful to meet individual needs. Practitioners had a focus for observations and professional dialogue – moderation meetings were key in providing peer support. Practitioners reported that the tool helped them to identify needs which may have been missed. In addition to this, practitioners found the tool useful when discussing needs with parents. The shared language helped everyone to look at how children’s

needs were best met. There are concerns around how aspects of the tool are being used – despite an emphasis on the tool not being used as a tick sheet, there are settings who are using it in this way. Some settings are not going into enough depth with each milestone - aiming for coverage as opposed to depth of learning. More work needs to be done in this area.

Capacity Building

The data shows that the majority of practitioners valued the use of the tool to give them confidence in engaging with the developmental milestones of a young child, as well as the wellbeing indicators. Some practitioners stated that whilst they already felt confident in the milestones and wellbeing indicators, the tool was a useful reminder of these key areas, and helped them to remain focused. A very few practitioners felt that the tool was patronising for both practitioners and parents. Managers welcomed the opportunity to use the tool as a basis for professional dialogue within staff meetings and found that the level of dialogue increased through increased use of the tool.

Parental Engagement

Many of our settings were reluctant to engage parents with the tool until the teams felt more confident in its use. Therefore quantitative data is fairly limited for parental engagement and scoring is low. Qualitative data shows that some settings embraced the opportunity to engage their parents and tried different ways to further engage their parents in the learning process. Ideas ranged from DM home link booklets to alterations to PLPs to include parental comments on children's DM progress. Most settings would welcome further ideas on how to engage parents when using the tool.

Moderation Meetings

Settings were also asked to record whether they had held a moderation meeting each week. On average 77% of settings held a moderation meeting each of the 6 weeks tested. This is positive data which shows that the majority of settings met to discuss progress within the milestones. Practitioners and managers valued the meeting time and everyone agreed that the focused meeting helped to focus practitioners on children's progress within developmental milestones and to identify effective next steps.

Summative Data

The ELCC settings in Kintyre were asked to submit Pre5 children's progress within their developmental milestones to 'Click and Go' (Seemis) by the end of June 2015. This enabled the DM working group to study how effective this process was before scaling up authority wide in December 2015.

Developmental Milestones listed were:

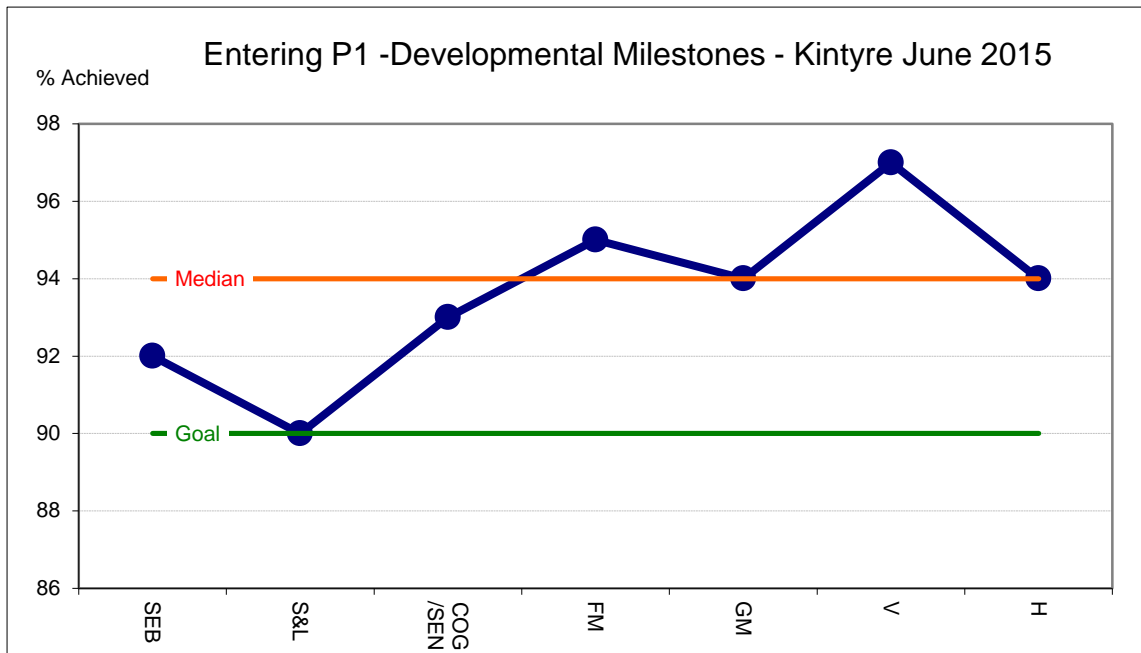
- Social, Emotional and Behavioural
- Speech and Language
- Cognitive and Sensory
- Fine Motor
- Gross Motor
- Vision
- Hearing

Each setting had made use of the 'Developmental Milestone Tool' to varying degrees to support children and families from January to June 2015.

Six out of the seven settings submitted developmental milestone data to Seemis for every child starting primary one in August 2015 – totalling 88 children.

85% of children starting primary 1 in August in the Kintyre area of Argyll and Bute have achieved all of their expected developmental milestones.

The graph below outlines the percentage of children who have achieved individual milestones:



What does the data tell us?

- Data is consistent with the national picture
- 97% of children have achieved 5 or more of their expected developmental milestones
- 91% of children have achieved 6 or more of their expected developmental milestones
- Less than 94% (median) achieved Social, Emotional & Behavioural, Speech & Language and Cognitive & Sensory milestones

Points to consider

- Practitioners are still building a shared understanding of each of the developmental milestones
- Practitioners have requested further training around the DM Tool
- The system for collating milestone progress is new to practitioners and will require further testing before being scaled up to Argyll and Bute wide (December 2015)
- Data will become even more robust over time as practitioners become more confident in the milestones and the processes used to gather data.
- P1 teachers will require awareness raising / training around Developmental Milestones for children entering P1 who have not yet met their milestones

Next Steps for the Developmental Milestone Tool in Argyll and Bute

- Ensure DM progress for each child has been shared with their P1 teacher – leading to meeting individual needs timeously (joint working with Workstream 4?)
- Dates are set in August for Pre5 practitioners for further developmental milestone tool training across Argyll and Bute
- Include P1 teachers in DM training
- Further refine Seemis tool to collate relevant milestone data more effectively – August 2015
- Investigate how P1 teachers are meeting the needs of those children who did not achieve their milestones in Kintyre area – (Workstream 4?) August - October 2015
- Test all four aims again in Argyll and Bute settings - October 2015.



Argyll and Bute Early Years Service
Developmental Milestone Tool Data – June 2015



Kathleen Johnston – Education Officer Early Years
August 2015