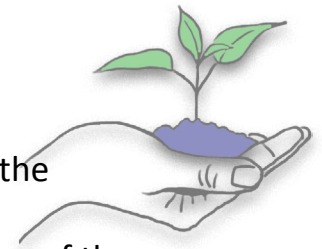




Early Learning and Childcare National Practice Guidance: 'Building on the Ambition'

'The crucial role practitioners play in supporting children's ELCC and in recognising the impact practice can have cannot be underestimated. In order to do this effectively practitioners need to have some understanding of the pattern of development of young children from birth to 5. It is important to know how children develop and learn from the beginning, how they are developing at any point in time, and how they might develop and learn in the future.'

Implementation – Where Should I Begin?



Certain key elements need to be in place for successful implementation of the Developmental Milestone Tool:

1. Practitioners need to develop an awareness and shared understanding of the **principles supporting 'Developmental Milestones – 3-5 Years'**
2. Practitioners need to develop awareness and shared understanding of the **GIRFEC process** and how this is used in the Early Years.
3. A range of strategies need to be in place to promote and support child and parent involvement in the **learning journey**.
4. Practitioners need to develop consistent methods to ensure quality observations are used effectively to **assess progress and achievement**.
5. A programme of moderation activities needs to be planned to identify next steps for practitioners in terms of **planning, practice and standards of achievement**.
6. An effective method of communication and collaboration with partner agencies (such as the child's health visitor) needs to be in place to ensure the **needs of each child are being met** effectively.

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 of selected targets added to the PLP – this is a process which should be familiar to you 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 development needs.

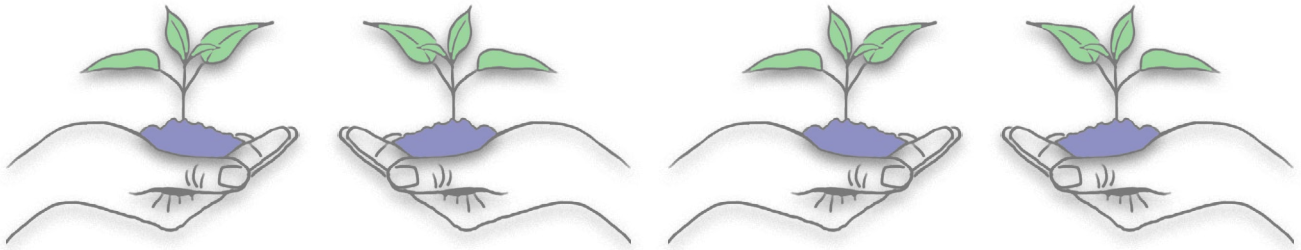
Over time, each practitioner gets to know the children in their care very well. This knowledge, combined with a sound understanding of the developmental milestone statements, will help practitioners identify specific areas of need within the developmental milestones for each child. Judgements on each child's progress will then be firmly based on targeted evidence and through professional dialogue with colleagues.



Progress with 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.

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 each milestone (the bits and pieces you have filed for each child) should be used by practitioners in conjunction with the relevant milestone 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.



Key Message on Assessment - taken from the Argyll and Bute Assessment Toolkit

- **Assessment should be part of our everyday practice and involves everybody:** practitioners, parents and most importantly, the child
- **We use assessment to inform us of next steps:** every day, or when we need to check key aspects of development and at times of transition
- **Builds capacity in practitioners to make professional judgements based on professional dialogue:** Assessment requires a variety of approaches which will provide a range of quality evidence. Assessment and moderation are integral to each other
- **Is informative and is based on the whole child:** Assessment has many purposes, the most important of which is to support the child in his or her development.

Communication and Collaboration – Parents, Practitioners and Partners

Before implementing the toolkit, it is essential that the following elements have been put in place:

- Practitioners are clear and confident about how they are going to take the Toolkit forward
- Parents are clear and confident about how the Toolkit is going to be used to support their child on their learning journey
- Parents are aware of the role they can play within the use of the Toolkit – partnership working
- Partner agencies have an understanding of how the Toolkit will support each child's progress within their developmental milestones
- Children have an awareness of how the Toolkit will help them in their learning journey.



Implementation of the Toolkit

The best advice with any new development is to start small and build upon success - when everyone is ready for the next step. Individual settings will know their needs best. A model for your consideration is set out below.

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 targets and opportunities are planned and developed.
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 review sheet should be completed to record relevant and appropriate next steps for each child.
8. Evidence of progress and achievement is shared with the 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. Practitioners will be required to liaise with the named person (usually the health visitor) to share progress within each milestone
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.

The Developmental Milestone Toolkit promotes effective moderation practice as outlined in the Argyll and Bute Assessment and Moderation Toolkit.

It will take time to move towards transformational change within a setting. All of the above can only be achieved given time and effort. The end result will be, however, a setting where practitioners are collaborating, discussing, moderating regularly and are empowered - thus creating the right conditions for meeting the needs of the children in our care to give them the best start in life.

