



Introduction

The Scottish Government by way of the Early Years Collaborative has an ambition:

'To make Scotland the best place in the world to grow up in by improving outcomes, and reducing inequalities, for all babies, children, mothers, fathers and families across Scotland to ensure that all children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.'

In order to achieve this aspirational ambition, every local authority in Scotland has been given three main aims:

1. To ensure that women experience positive pregnancies which result in the birth of more healthy babies
2. For 85% of all children within each CPP (Community Planning Partnership) to reach all developmental milestones at 27-30 month review
- 3. For 90% of all children within each CPP to reach all developmental milestones as they enter primary school**

This Tool will focus on the third aim – to enable children to achieve their developmental milestones by the time they start primary school.

This may now present the reader with the following questions:

- I'm a childcare and education worker / head teacher/ manager – what has this got to do with me?
- I already have more than enough to focus on within my setting – I don't need another new initiative
- How does this connect with Curriculum for Excellence?
- What are developmental milestones?

Practitioners from across Argyll and Bute have come together to try and address these issues. Our aim has been to create a tool that will support the development of milestones within and outwith your setting, whilst ensuring that the process is manageable and relevant.

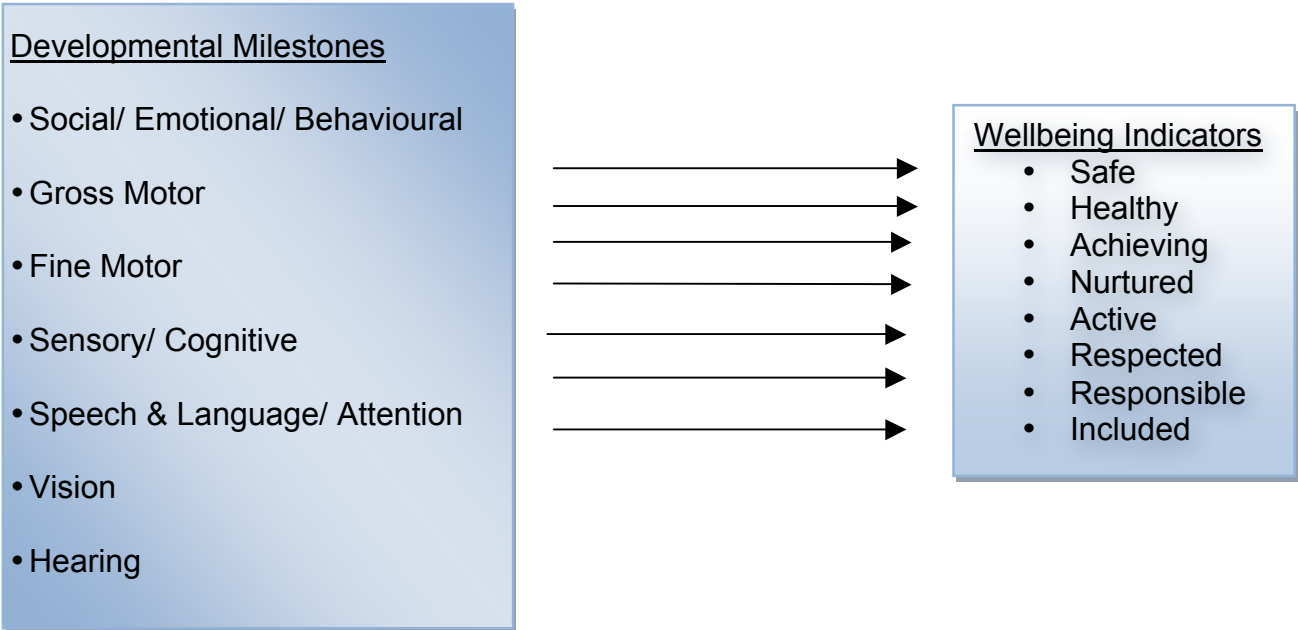
What are developmental milestones?

Developmental milestones are the building blocks of how we grow, develop and achieve our potential. There are 9 main milestones which should be developed in the Early Years across Scotland:

- * Social
- * Emotional
- * Behavioural
- * Attention
- * Speech & language
- * Gross motor
- * Fine motor
- * Vision
- * Hearing

'The Early Years Collaborative is stating that the same 9 developmental areas (social, emotional, behavioural, attention, speech & language, gross motor, fine motor, vision, and hearing) as those being assessed at a child's 27-30 month review should be assessed at the time the child leaves pre-school / starts primary school.' *Early Years Collaborative Guidance*

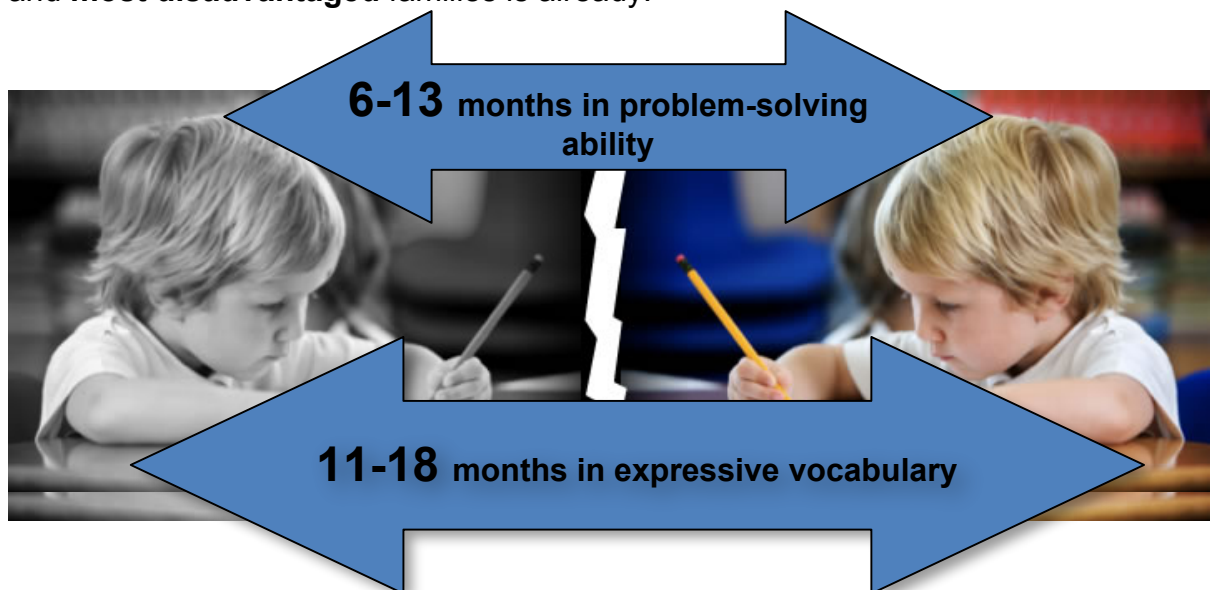
Argyll and Bute practitioners have created a tool to develop milestones for 3 to 5 year old children within each of the GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) Wellbeing Indicators –



Through consultation with other agencies, it was agreed to group some of the national milestones together – eg. social/emotional/behavioral, as well as add sensory and cognitive to the list as these milestones were deemed to be a useful early indicator of support required for some children.

What has this got to do with me?

In Scotland today, at **age 5**, the gap between children from the **most advantaged** and **most disadvantaged** families is already:

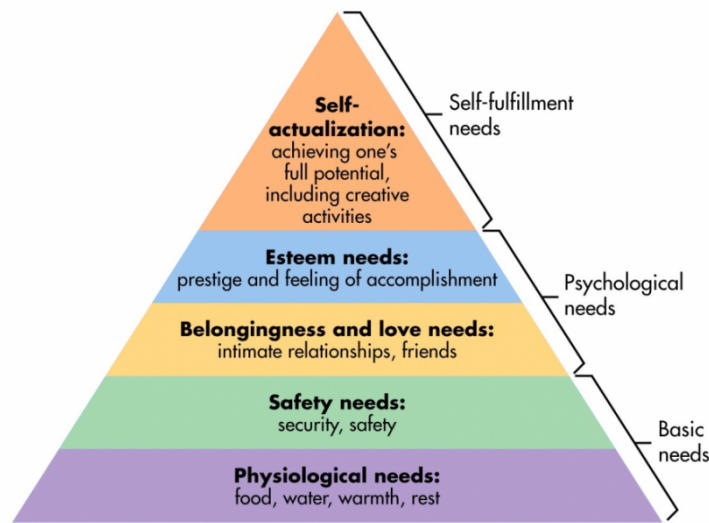


The gap persists through primary and into secondary stages and leads to a huge difference in qualifications (and opportunities) by the time young people finish their schooling.

If we invest in the Early Years, we can make the biggest difference to a child's life chances.

"It is easier to build strong children than repair broken men"- Frederick Douglass

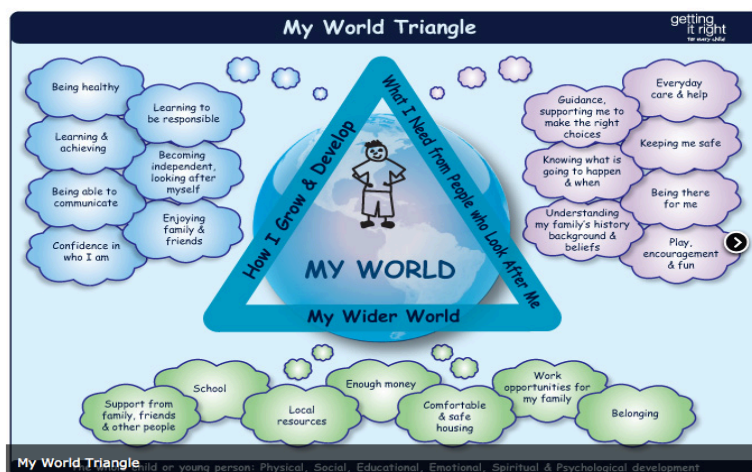
If we look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, it is clear that unless a child has his or her basic needs met, chances of reaching full potential are limited:



To put this into context, a child who comes to your setting who consistently does not have any breakfast, or finds it difficult to build relationships, will not be in the best place to learn.

By focusing on a child's developmental milestones, the ELCC setting, home and the child are able to work together to ensure the child's needs are being met and he or she is ready to learn.

This can be seen from the GIRFEC (Getting it Right for Every Child) 'My World' Triangle-



From time to time, some of our children will need additional help to reach some of their milestones and we may need input from other agencies. This is where we can use the GIRFEC process to help us get the right support for every child at the right time.

The GIRFEC approach is designed to be flexible enough to support all children and families whatever their need, whenever they need it. It is about responding in a meaningful, supportive way, working with parents wherever possible. It takes into account that everyone involved with the family has an important part to play and puts the wellbeing of children and families at the heart of any support. To do this eight indicators of wellbeing are used: safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. These are often referred to using the acronym “SHANARRI”. These indicators represent the basic requirements that all children need to grow and develop. They are used in the planning process for any child in need to ensure the best possible outcomes for children to improve their life chances and wellbeing.

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How does this connect with Curriculum for Excellence?

At the heart of Curriculum for Excellence sits the Four Capacities:

- Successful Learners
- Confident Individuals
- Responsible Citizens
- Effective Contributors



If we look closer at the Four Capacities, we can see the capabilities and attributes, which describe all the qualities which every child needs to achieve his or her potential.

successful learners	confident individuals	responsible citizens	effective contributors
<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enthusiasm and motivation for learning • determination to reach high standards of achievement • openness to new thinking and ideas <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use literacy, communication and numeracy skills • use technology for learning • think creatively and independently • learn independently and as part of a group • make reasoned evaluations • link and apply different kinds of learning in new situations. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-respect • a sense of physical, mental and emotional well-being • secure values and beliefs • ambition <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relate to others and manage themselves • pursue a healthy and active lifestyle • be self-aware • develop and communicate their own beliefs and view of the world • live as independently as they can • assess risk and make informed decisions • achieve success in different areas of activity. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect for others • commitment to participate responsibly in political, economic, social and cultural life <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop knowledge and understanding of the world and Scotland's place in it • understand different beliefs and cultures • make informed choices and decisions • evaluate environmental, scientific and technological issues • develop informed, ethical views of complex issues. 	<p>attributes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an enterprising attitude • resilience • self-reliance <p>capabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • communicate in different ways and in different settings • work in partnership and in teams • take the initiative and lead • apply critical thinking in new contexts • create and develop • solve problems

There is a very strong link between the attributes and developmental milestones – some of these attributes are listed below-

- Self respect
- A sense of physical, mental and emotional wellbeing
- Resilience
- Self reliance
- Enthusiasm and motivation for learning

By creating firm foundations through the developmental milestones and attributes, the capabilities listed within the Four Capacities will be developed, as will the experiences and outcomes.

The Developmental Milestone Toolkit also incorporates significant aspects of learning within literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing. It also contains a range of outcomes and experiences from other curricular areas.

The importance of the contribution that ELCC can make to this process cannot be underestimated in this context. We know that intervening early for those children and families who need it most makes a positive difference. There are strong connections and links between the SHANARRI wellbeing indicators and the principles of *Pre-Birth to Three, Rights of the Child, Relationships, Responsive Care and Respect*. These in turn link to the four capacities of *Curriculum for Excellence: Successful Learners, Responsible Citizens, Confident Individuals and Effective Contributors*.

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What will the Tool look like in an Early Learning and Childcare setting?

Every child who begins their Early Learning and Childcare experience will be unique – bringing with them experiences, skills, likes and dislikes. It is our duty to ensure our settings meet the needs of every child in our care.

Services for young children need to:

- Be child-centred, acknowledge children’s views and actively involve children in meaningful ways in everyday decisions in the ECEC setting.
- Offer a nurturing and caring environment.
- Provide appropriate spaces to play and learn with a range of possibilities for children to develop their present and future potential.
- Be responsive to children’s changeable interests and demands.

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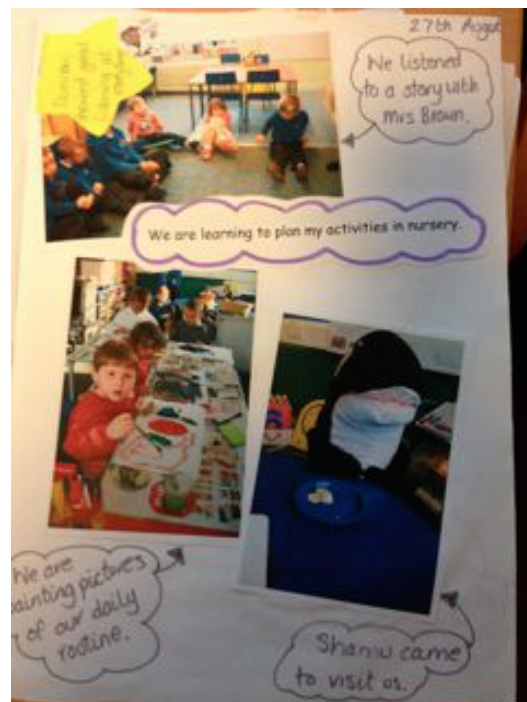


Just as we recognise that every child is different, we must also recognise that they progress at different rates, within different areas. Therefore within our practice, it is vital that we provide the most appropriate support and challenge at the most appropriate time within each child's learning journey.

Progression is often uneven across different aspects of development. This is to be expected and is quite natural. Understanding this helps to provide experiences, opportunities and interactions which are more developmentally appropriate. Accepting and appreciating that this uneven pattern of development is how children develop and learn will give practitioners the confidence to make changes that will provide the best ELCC experiences.

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Early Years settings have made use of personal learning plans (PLPs) to ensure the needs of each and every child are being met – working with each child to make sure learning is relevant and meaningful. These PLPs are sometimes called 'My Learning Story', or 'My Special File' –



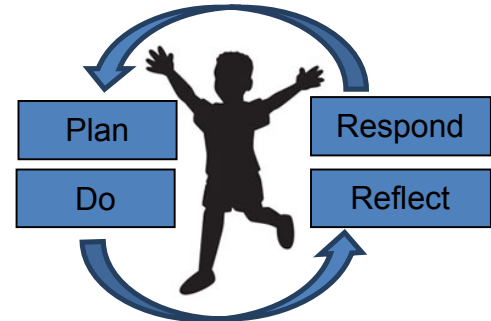
'Early years education has always been concerned with developing the personal qualities and capabilities in young children. It has thus avoided the obsession with curricular content which is characterised at later stages, especially the secondary stage. Teachers and others working in the pre-school (ELCC) sector view the promotion of cognitive skills in the context of the broader development of the whole child.' – Keir Bloomer

Thinking about the concept of personal learning plans – the sharing of learning and achievement and identifying next steps, we can see that this format would apply very nicely to a child's progress within his or her developmental milestones. Therefore, this tool will be used as part of a child's personal learning plan. The format should be easily transferrable to a wide range of personal learning planning going on across Argyll and Bute.

What do I need to do?

Practitioners are not being asked to change their practice – only to make it even more effective. Currently in Argyll and Bute, practitioners are being 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.

- **Plan** with children to ensure the learning opportunity is relevant and meets the learner’s needs
- **Do** – carry out the planned experience, facilitating learning through effective, appropriate intervention (questioning, modelling)
- **Reflect** on what has happened through observations and sharing the learning with colleagues
- **Respond** with effective next steps



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 the child within their developmental milestones. As evidence of progress is gathered, practitioners can meet with colleagues to identify appropriate next steps for the child. For more information on how to use the Toolkit, please read the ‘Implementation Guide’.

Transition

Transitions are a time or process of change and it is natural that change almost always brings uncertainty. In an ELCC setting there are several transitions we expect a child to manage, initially from home to the setting, from playroom to playroom, from person to person. It can be a frequent time of change. Transitions can also be exciting and challenging but it is still essential that these are handled sensitively, inclusively and positively. Dunlop and Fabian (2007) shows that “the way in which the first transitions are handled could potentially have a significant impact on the child’s capacity to cope with change in the short and long term”
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One of the most significant benefits of this Tool is it promotes effective communication both within and across agencies as part of the GIRFEC process. Evidence of progress for each child is gathered and next steps are identified through regular moderation meetings with colleagues. As part of this process, a transition tool (Developmental Milestone Record) is completed throughout the year and shared with new colleagues / receiving schools as part of the transition process at the end of each session. This gives receiving practitioners an instant ‘snapshot’ of each child’s progress within the milestones. They can examine evidence within a child’s PLP and talk with their former key worker and parents for more information if required.

Parental Involvement

Before you begin using this tool in your setting, please invite parents in to learn about the tool.

It is vital that parents feel comfortable with the process and actively engage in progress within the developmental milestones for their child.

If you would like a parent presentation pack, please contact the Early Years Service. There is also a parent / carer leaflet within this pack which outlines suggested activities to further support development within each of the milestones.



Conclusion

Session 2014-15 will be a pilot year for this tool, therefore it is vital that you feed back on its ease of use within an early years setting, and its impact on learning and development. If we work together to improve this tool, it will go from strength to strength and we will make a difference to every child's life chances in Argyll and Bute.

Glossary and Associated Web Links

- ELCC – Early Learning and Childcare (previously known as Preschool)
- 'Building the Ambition – National Practice Guidance on Early Learning and Childcare' - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0045/00458455.pdf>
- GIRFEC – Getting it Right for Every Child – <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>
- Early Years Collaborative (EYC) - <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/early-years/early-years-collaborative>
- CPP – Community Planning Partnership - <http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/council-and-government/community-planning-partnership>