

Thinking Again about Assessment

[What if children designed assessment practices...](#)  click on the link to access the YouTube Presentation

	<p>“What if Children Designed Assessment Practices?”</p> <p>Reflection and Discussion points to accompany the presentation.</p>
	<p>“In the moment”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Allow time to watch and notice their play - what is their play telling you? - Do your routines allow you to make the most of spontaneous moments? Are there barriers? - Do you plan small group activities that help you really focus on individuals? - How confident are practitioners in responding ‘in the moment’? What could be done differently? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to respond and enhance their play by truly engaging with them, and being ready for where this may lead. - The impact that this may have – such as sustaining interest and skill progression. - How your ratios and key person systems enable this to happen.
	<p>“How do we know a child is learning?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tune into them by watching and listening – how can you use the Characteristics of Effective Learning (CoEL) to understand the way in which they are learning, and take this into account when planning to support their progress and development? - Engaging in conversation helps practitioners to understand what the child is thinking. - Is the child displaying high levels of involvement? The Leuven scales can help with this. - How are they demonstrating their progress – skills, knowledge, engagement? Consider their starting points. - In what context do you feel the child learns best? With peers, adults, indoors, outside, in particular areas of the environment, for example. - Can practitioners see them using their skills in different contexts or for different purposes? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How the information you are gathering will affect your curriculum design - How observing and analysing will help to extend and deepen a child’s learning (Sustained shared thinking and co-constructed learning, scaffolding) - Whether practitioners know what development and progress you might expect for a child. How can managers be sure of this? - How will their knowledge of child development add to their observations of children and help identify strengths and areas for support/possible SEN.

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	<p>“What are the signs that a child is thinking?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does the child like to investigate and explore? How well do they focus and concentrate? - Are there opportunities for them to try things out and re-visit resources or stimuli? - Does the child ask questions? <p>“Dancing around a ballroom”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do key persons understand that a child’s learning is not linear nor at a consistent rate? - Are staff members confident in understanding the different stages of learning – experiential to abstract for example - In what ways are you able to support the level they are at now? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your focus in how they learn versus what they learn. - How you ensure children are given time to think. How could you make sure this happens? - How leaders and managers can understand practitioners’ knowledge of child development, and how this could be supported further. (e.g. Learning walks, training audits, supervisions, professional discussions)
	<p>“How does a child do things?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observe their preferred activities, resources, and environment. - Do they demonstrate particular patterns of play or learning styles? - Are they happiest when playing alone, with an adult or in small groups? - Are there skills that need support in order for them to progress? - Do adults notice children’s CoEL, and how they approach experiences? Do they explore and investigate, think deeply, persevere and concentrate? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Once we understand <i>how</i> a child learns, then practitioners are better informed with planning for the child. - The ways you respond by changing and adapting what is provided – including adult support.
	<p>“What additional support can you provide?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At what point would additional support be provided? Why? - What form would this take – adult support/resources/professional advice? - Have you provided opportunities and time for the child to consolidate, re-visit and practice? - Are you confident that you have provided what the child needs now – their stage of development? - Are there any adjustments that would support them to access the curriculum? - Do you have some concerns about the child’s progress? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is it ‘just today?’ Are they hungry/tired/distracted? - If, and when to make referrals or plan focused interventions.

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	<p>“Are you playing with me?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do staff know when to watch and when to join in – what are the clues? What are the risks? - Are practitioners able to genuinely engage in the child’s play? What does this look like? - Consider where this play may lead – predict and prepare. - Can practitioners pick up on non-verbal cues from the children – and tune into their needs and wants? - In what ways can practitioners model and extend the play? Do they pose and model questions such as “What do you think would happen if...”? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a setting philosophy of play, and sharing this with parents and carers - The different types of play and how this may link to stages of development – particularly how children play together. - Whether staff support the children’s play equally well indoors and outside
	<p>“Are you talking to me?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider how adults talk to the children – what form does this take? Directional, two-way, conversational, narrative? - Do adults use open-ended questions? - Are practitioners able to interact with the child and extend their language and vocabulary in real and meaningful situations? - Do the children have something to talk about? Provocations, stories, and experiences? - Do you allow time for children to think and respond? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Non-verbal children, and the skills needed such as being ‘in the moment’ with the child, making eye contact, body language, allowing time for the child to respond. - Is your setting a communication friendly space? Where does talk happen most? Could this be extended? How? - How familiar stories and rhymes help with repetition and learning. - Being tuned into children, needs and interests, based on knowing the children well - Adult understanding of the stages of language acquisition
	<p>“Managing Assessment”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do leaders and managers support their staff to continue to develop their skills and understanding of how children learn? - Are the observations focusing on children in their play? - Is time set aside for discussions with key persons about the children? - How do leaders and managers keep an overview and monitor assessments, provision, and children’s progress?

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	<p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion with staff to review their assessment systems, how useful they are and how they could be improved, in line with the revised EYFS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o if assessments are balanced and proportionate, taking into account staff time. o knowing when supplementary assessments could be used, and additional records needed. o whether the assessments are achieving what is needed – if they are useful and making a difference. - What recording is needed. This may depend on the child’s needs, staffing, and size of the setting. - Accessing our fully subsidised cpd courses for prime areas. www.suffolkcpd.co.uk - Providing a staffroom guide to child development – such as Mary Sheridan’s ‘Birth to Five Years’ (2014)
	<p>“The Impact of Assessment”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How are your assessments making a difference to the child? How do you know? - Are practitioners able to reflect on their observations and use their knowledge to enhance the curriculum and teaching in the setting? - Do your expectations on assessment allow time for staff to be with the children and involved in their play? - Is learning fun? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What you say ‘yes’ to and how risk taking is responded to and encouraged - Aspects of provision that may not inspire practitioners. How can this be given a new lease of life, so it becomes enjoyable for all?
	<p>“Professional Judgement”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are practitioners able to talk confidently about children they support, and know their strengths, progress, and development? - Do your assessments focus on what is useful, needed, and what you want to know and find out about – rather than assessing for evidence? - What steps have you taken, or can you take to ensure the parents can share their views on their child’s experiences, development, and progress? <p>Think about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Practitioners ‘telling the story’ of their key children. What were their starting points and how did they know these? Where are they now? And what did you do/provide to get them there? What next? This could help to build confidence in how well they know each child. - Giving prompts to parents to help gather information that would be helpful.

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