

Observing a child's development in the EYFS Prime Areas of development - Questions to ask yourself, colleagues, and parents.

"Where a child appears to be behind expected levels, or where a child's progress gives cause for concern, practitioners should consider all the information about the child's learning and development from within and beyond the setting.... From within the setting practitioners should particularly consider information on a child's progress in communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development." (Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice 2015 section 5.28 - Identifying needs in the Early Years.)

When you have a concern about an individual child it is useful to discuss their development with their keyperson, SENCo, other colleagues and parents. This gives a more rounded perspective of the child and their abilities in the prime areas of learning. Please see example prompts below that you may wish to consider as part of these discussions:

- Has the child attended an Early Years setting or toddler group before?
- Has the child had hearing problems or had a hearing check?
- Does the child have English as an additional language?
- Are there any factors to be considered from the home environment e.g. recent move, new siblings, illness?
- Are there any concerns about the child's receptive or expressive communication in the setting or at home?
- Does the child prefer alternative means of communication such as using gesture or signs or visuals?
- Are there any concerns about the child's social interaction with adults?
- Do they play with other children?
- What type of play does the child engage in e.g. solitary, parallel or co-operative?
- Does the child engage in messy play or imaginative play?
- Is the child aware of the routine of the setting or are they unsure about what is happening around them?
- Is the child readily engaged in activities of their choosing?
- Can they cope with change e.g. changing between activities, transitions from home into the setting and home again?
- Do parents feel their child is excessively shy, sociable, confident, easily distressed?
- Does the child have any difficulties with co-ordination and balance?
- Does the child have difficulty holding and manipulating objects?
- Is the child aware of their body in relation to the space around them?
- Do they bump into objects or fall over frequently?
- Does the child appear accident prone?
- Has there been any involvement from Health visitors, GP or other professionals?

Following these discussions, you will then be able to decide what specific observation and assessments you need of the child. You can then agree with the parents the type of support required and implement individual targeted plans where appropriate.