

How to use the Early Years Inclusion Development Tool

When requesting support from the Early Years Inclusion team, we will ask for accurate assessment levels for children. You can use this Development tool to highlight where children are working within the Prime Areas to be able to give a 'best fit'. This is also required if you are applying for SEN and Inclusion Funding (SENIF). You can find out more about SENIF and the criteria

here: <https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/advice.page?id=DIKPJS9vcCM>. If you use a different tool or assessment system, please ensure that you can still provide us with the age or stage the child is currently working at within the Prime Areas, it is helpful to also gather assessment across all areas of learning. **Assessment: Checking what children have learnt. (Development Matters, Revised 2023)**

Assessment is about noticing what children can do and what they know. It is not about lots of data and evidence. Effective assessment requires practitioners to understand child development. Accurate assessment can highlight whether a child has a special educational need and needs extra help. The Observational checkpoints at the end of each section help monitor a child's progress closely so you can make the right decisions about what sort of extra help is needed.

Child's Name:
Date of assessment:
Age of child in months:

Prime Areas		Best Fit Assessment										
Personal, social and emotional development	Self-regulation	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	61-66
	Managing self	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	61-66
	Building relationships	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	61-66
Communication and language	Listening, attention and understanding	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	61-66
	Speaking	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	61-66
Physical development	Gross motor	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	61-66
	Fine motor	0-6	7-12	13-18	19-24	25-30	31-36	37-42	43-48	49-54	55-60	61-66

Early Years Inclusion Development Tool

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development: Managing Self

0-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25-30 months	31-36 months	37-42 months	43-48 months
• Communicates physical needs such as hunger, thirst, discomfort or tiredness through movement, behaviour, facial expression, or vocalisation. • Anticipates familiar care routines and responds to consistent interactions from familiar adults. • Participates in feeding experiences by opening their mouth for feeding or showing readiness for food and drink. • Engages in sensory and physical experiences that support exploration and wellbeing.	• Cooperates with familiar care routines such as dressing, feeding and nappy changing. • Holds or reaches for a bottle, cup, food or objects of interest. • Begins to participate in feeding independently using hands, fingers or emerging use of utensils. • Explores toys and resources within familiar routines and environments.	• Actively participates in dressing and personal care routines. • Communicates awareness of wet, uncomfortable or changing physical states through their preferred method. • Demonstrates a growing sense of self and may show a desire to do things independently. • Feeds and drinks with increasing control, accepting a variety of familiar food and drink experiences.	• Participates in self-care routines such as handwashing, dressing and personal hygiene with adult support. • Communicates needs and preferences during daily routines. • Begins to recognise situations where support is needed to remain safe. • Demonstrates increasing independence in familiar routines and environments.	• Shows a growing desire to complete familiar tasks independently. • Participates in dressing and undressing and may manage some clothing items independently. • Communicates personal needs, wants and choices using their preferred method of communication. • Recognises familiar routines and expectations and may seek support when these change. • Begins to identify and access familiar resources needed for activities.	• Shows increasing confidence in managing everyday routines with support as needed. • Requests assistance appropriately when tasks become difficult or unfamiliar. • Demonstrates pride and satisfaction in achievements and growing independence. • Uses familiar routines, visual supports or environmental cues to complete tasks.	• Manages many aspects of personal care within familiar routines with increasing independence. • Communicates personal needs, feelings and wellbeing effectively using their preferred communication method. • Demonstrates awareness of boundaries, expectations and safety within familiar environments. • Uses resources, adapted equipment or personalised supports to participate successfully in daily activities when required. • Welcomes encouragement and may undertake simple responsibilities within familiar settings.	• Participates independently in a range of personal care and self-help tasks appropriate to their developmental stage. • Demonstrates increasing responsibility for managing their own needs within familiar environments. • Uses strategies, supports or adaptations to access routines successfully and confidently. • Recognises when support is needed and seeks help appropriately. • Shows confidence when engaging in new experiences whilst drawing on familiar routines and supports.
/4	/4	/4	/4	/5	/4	/5	/5

Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Self-Regulation

0-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25-30 months	31-36 months	37-42 months	43-48 months
• Responds to comforting touch, familiar voices and physical closeness. • Shows a range of emotional responses through movement, facial expression, vocalisation or behaviour. • Begins to calm with support from familiar adults through holding, rocking, singing or other preferred soothing experiences. • Reacts to the emotional tone of familiar people.	• Uses familiar adults, objects, routines or sensory experiences for comfort and reassurance. • Shows excitement, enjoyment or distress during interactions and experiences. • Begins to explore the environment whilst checking back with familiar adults for security. • Starts to respond to simple boundaries and expectations within familiar routines.	• Communicates frustration, excitement, discomfort or distress through behaviour, movement, vocalisation or their preferred method of communication. • Demonstrates increasing awareness of familiar routines and expectations. • Requires adult support to regulate emotions following changes, interruptions or unmet needs. • Begins to recover from moments of distress with support from familiar adults.	• May alternate between seeking adult support and showing independence. • Uses familiar objects, activities, people or sensory experiences to support regulation. • Starts to anticipate familiar routines and transitions. • Shows growing awareness of cause and effect within everyday situations. • Begins to respond to simple support strategies that help them manage emotions or transitions.	• Seeks comfort, reassurance or sensory support when dysregulated. • Communicates a range of feelings through words, signs, symbols, AAC, behaviour, movement or facial expression. • Begins to tolerate short periods of waiting during motivating activities with adult support. • Shows awareness of familiar boundaries and routines. • Begins to recognise experiences, people or activities that help them feel calm and secure.	• Begins to identify and express feelings in ways that are meaningful to them. • Accepts support to manage turn-taking and waiting during shared activities. • Is developing an understanding that some things belong to them and some belong to others. • Begins to recognise the impact of actions and words on others. • Moves between familiar activities with adult support and visual, verbal or environmental cues where needed.	• Uses familiar strategies to support emotional regulation with decreasing adult support. • Begins to label or communicate some emotions in themselves and others. • Responds to the feelings, needs and perspectives of others within familiar situations. • Participates in turn-taking and cooperative activities with peers and adults. • Demonstrates growing flexibility when routines change with appropriate preparation and support.	• Identifies and communicates a range of emotions using their preferred method of communication. • Uses agreed strategies to regulate emotions and behaviour with increasing independence. • Waits, shares and takes turns in a range of familiar situations. • Adapts behaviour in response to familiar expectations and routines. • Demonstrates resilience by returning to activities following disappointment, challenge or change, with support when required.
/4	/4	/4	/5	/5	/5	/5	/5

Personal Social and Emotional Development: Building Relationships

0-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25-30 months	31-36 months	37-42 months	43-48 months
• Responds to familiar people through movement, facial expression, vocalisation or changes in attention. • Enjoys close physical contact and shared interactions with familiar adults. • Shows awareness of others through looking, listening or orientating towards them, Participates in early back-and-forth interactions such as smiling, vocalising or copying simple expressions.	• Shows preference for familiar adults and seeks interaction with them. • Seeks attention through movement, gesture, vocalisation, eye gaze or their preferred communication method. • Uses a familiar adult as a secure base from which to explore people, activities and environments. • Begins to engage in shared interactions and anticipates familiar social games.	• Shows interest in the activities and presence of other children and adults. • Participates in simple shared experiences with familiar adults. • Plays alongside others and increasingly tolerates shared spaces and resources. • Begins to initiate interaction through gesture, movement, reaching, vocalisation or other communication methods.	• Seeks to involve adults in activities, interests or to meet a need. • Shows awareness when others are participating in the same activity or experience. • Joins small group activities with support from familiar adults. • Demonstrates emerging awareness of the needs and feelings of others through their interactions and behaviour.	• Demonstrates interest in peers through observation, shared attention, gesture, sign, symbols, AAC or spoken language. • Begins to approach activities where other children are already engaged. • Participates in pretend and shared play with familiar adults and peers. • Shows preferences for particular people, activities or friendships.	• Seeks out others to share experiences, interests and play. • Demonstrates affection, trust and connection towards familiar adults and peers. • Initiates and responds to social interaction using their preferred communication method. • Engages in small-group activities with increasing confidence and participation.	• Participates in cooperative play with peers and adults. • Initiates interactions and helps sustain shared play experiences. • Responds to the communication, actions and ideas of others within play and everyday experiences. • Demonstrates a growing understanding of belonging within familiar groups and communities.	• Develops meaningful and trusting relationships with preferred peers and adults. • Maintains reciprocal interactions through their preferred communication method. • Participates confidently in familiar groups whilst respecting the needs and perspectives of others. • Demonstrates growing awareness of friendship, cooperation and shared experiences.
/3	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4

Personal, Social, and Emotional Development**Observation Checkpoint:**

At around 7 months, does the baby respond to their name and respond to the emotions in your voice?

At around 12 months, does the baby start to be shy around strangers and show preferences for certain people and toys?

At around 18 months, is the toddler increasingly curious about their world and wanting to explore it and be noticed by you? Around the age of 2, does the child start to see themselves as a separate person? For example, do they decide what to play with, what to eat, what to wear? Between the ages of 2 and 3, does the child start to enjoy the company of other children and want to play with them?

At around the age of 3, can the child sometimes manage to share or take turns with others, with adult guidance and understanding 'yours' and 'mine'?
Can the child settle to some activities for a while?

At around the age of 4, does the child play alongside others or do they always want to play alone? Does the child take part in pretend play (for example, being 'mummy' or 'daddy'?) Does the child take part in other pretend play with different roles - being the Gruffalo, for example? Can the child generally negotiate solutions to conflicts in their play?

(Development Matters, 2023) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf

Communication and Language; Listening, attention and understanding

0-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25-30 months	31-36 months	37-42 months	43-48 months
• Responds to familiar voices, sounds and sensory stimuli. • Turns towards people, objects or sounds that capture their attention. • Shows awareness of interactions through changes in movement, facial expression, vocalisation or attention. • Briefly attends to songs, rhymes and familiar interactions.	• Responds to familiar words, sounds, people and routines within meaningful contexts. • Participates in familiar songs, rhymes and interactive games. • Attends to preferred activities or objects for short periods. • Shows awareness of sounds and voices within the environment.	• Follows the focus of another person's attention through gesture, movement, eye gaze or pointing. • Understands familiar words and phrases within everyday routines. • Identifies familiar people, objects or activities when named or shown. • Demonstrates understanding through actions, participation or their preferred communication method.	• Attends to familiar activities and interactions for increasing periods. • Demonstrates understanding by following familiar requests or routines with appropriate support. • Recognises familiar instructions, questions and everyday language. • Participates in stories, songs and rhymes through actions, vocalisations or other responses.	• Responds to simple instructions, including those outside everyday routines, using verbal, visual, gestural or environmental cues where needed. • Demonstrates understanding of familiar concepts such as people, objects, actions and simple positional language. • Shows awareness when people, events or objects are being discussed, including those not immediately present. • Maintains attention within motivating adult-led or child-led activities.	• Listens and responds during stories, conversations and shared activities with increasing attention. • Understands a growing range of concepts, including size, position and sequence. • Follows familiar instructions and routines with decreasing reliance on adult support. • Demonstrates understanding of people, events and experiences beyond the immediate environment.	• Responds appropriately to a wider range of questions, including who, what and where. • Demonstrates understanding of action words, positional language and everyday concepts within play and routines. • Listens and responds during one-to-one and small-group interactions. • Begins to understand simple explanations and reasons within familiar contexts.	• Attends to and follows longer instructions within familiar activities and routines. • Demonstrates understanding of a range of concepts, sequences and future events. • Uses understanding to participate successfully in conversations, play and everyday activities. • Adapts attention according to the demands of familiar situations, using support strategies when required.
/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4

Communication and Language; Speaking

0-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25-30 months	31-36 months	37-42 months	43-48 months
• Communicates needs, interests and feelings through movement, facial expression, eye gaze, vocalisation, behaviour or other early communication. • Responds to interactions through sounds, vocal play and turn-taking with familiar adults. • Anticipates familiar interactions and may use movement or vocalisation to continue them. • Uses different vocalisations to express comfort, discomfort, enjoyment or interest.	• Seeks interaction through vocalisation, gesture, movement, eye gaze or their preferred communication method. • Begins to recognise that their actions and communication influence others. • Uses gestures, sounds, vocalisations or emerging words to request, protest, share interest or gain attention. • Imitates familiar sounds, actions and communication used by others.	• Uses an increasing range of words, signs, symbols, gestures, AAC or vocalisations to communicate meaning. • Initiates communication to express needs, interests and preferences. • Copies familiar words, signs, sounds or phrases used by others. • Begins to communicate about people, objects or experiences that are not immediately present.	• Combines words, signs, symbols or other communication methods to express ideas, needs and experiences. • Uses a growing range of communication functions including requesting, commenting, refusing, questioning and sharing • Communicates choice between familiar options. • Uses communication during play, everyday routines and interactions with familiar people.	• Uses an expanding range of words, signs, symbols, AAC or gestures to communicate effectively. • Communicates needs, wants, opinions and preferences using their preferred method of communication. • Talks, signs or communicates about recent experiences and familiar events. • Uses communication increasingly for social interaction as well as to meet needs.	• Combines words, signs, symbols or phrases into increasingly complex messages. • Communicates for a range of purposes including sharing information, seeking help, expressing ideas and maintaining interaction. • Begins to adapt communication according to context, activity and communication partner. • Participates in simple conversations and social exchanges.	• Uses increasingly complex language, signs, symbols or AAC to share ideas, experiences and thinking. • Uses communication to explain, question, negotiate and develop play. • Retells familiar events or experiences in a meaningful sequence. • Engages in reciprocal interactions with adults and peers, responding to the communication of others.	• Sustains conversations using their preferred method of communication. • Uses communication confidently across a range of familiar situations, people and activities. • Shares ideas, experiences, plans and imaginative thinking with others. • Gives information, explanations and instructions using language, signs, symbols or AAC appropriate to their developmental stage.
/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4

Communication and Language

Observation Checkpoint:

At around 6 months, does the baby respond to familiar voices, turn to their own name and 'take turns' in conversations with babbling? At around 12 months, does the baby 'take turns' by babbling and using single words? Does the baby point to things and use gestures to show things to adults and share interests? Around 18 months, is the toddler listening and responding to a simple instruction like: "Adam, put on your shoes?"

Is the baby using speech sounds (babbling) to communicate with adults? Around 12 months, is the baby beginning to use single words like mummum, dada, tete (teddy)? Around 15 months, can the baby say around 10 words (they may not all be clear)? Around 18 months, is the toddler using a range of adult like speech patterns (jargon) and at least 20 clear words?

By around 2 years old, is the child showing an interest in what other children are playing and sometimes joins in?

By around 3 years old, can the child shift from one task to another if you get their attention. Using the child's name can help: "Jason, please can you stop now? We're tidying up".

Around the age of 4, is the child using sentences of four to six words - "I want to play with cars" or "What's that thing called"? Can the child use sentences joined up with words like 'because', 'or', 'and'? For example: "I like ice cream because it makes my tongue shiver". Is the child using the future and past tense: "I am going to the park" and "I went to the shop"? Can the child answer simple 'why' questions?

(Development Matters, 2023) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf

Physical Development; Gross Motor

0-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25-30 months	31-36 months	37-42 months	43-48 months
- Communicates needs, interests and feelings through movement, facial expression, eye gaze, vocalisation, behaviour or other early communication. - Responds to interactions through sounds, vocal play and turn-taking with familiar adults. - Anticipates familiar interactions and may use movement or vocalisation to continue them. - Uses different vocalisations to express comfort, discomfort, enjoyment or interest.	- Seeks interaction through vocalisation, gesture, movement, eye gaze or their preferred communication method. - Begins to recognise that their actions and communication influence others. - Uses gestures, sounds, vocalisations or emerging words to request, protest, share interest or gain attention. - Imitates familiar sounds, actions and communication used by others.	- Uses an increasing range of words, signs, symbols, gestures, AAC or vocalisations to communicate meaning. - Initiates communication to express needs, interests and preferences. - Copies familiar words, signs, sounds or phrases used by others. - Begins to communicate about people, objects or experiences that are not immediately present.	- Combines words, signs, symbols or other communication methods to express ideas, needs and experiences. - Uses a growing range of communication functions including requesting, commenting, refusing, questioning and sharing attention. - Communicates choice between familiar options. - Uses communication during play, everyday routines and interactions with familiar people.	- Uses an expanding range of words, signs, symbols, AAC or gestures to communicate effectively. - Communicates needs, wants, opinions and preferences using their preferred method of communication. - Talks, signs or communicates about recent experiences and familiar events. - Uses communication increasingly for social interaction as well as to meet needs.	- Combines words, signs, symbols or phrases into increasingly complex messages. - Communicates for a range of purposes including sharing information, seeking help, expressing ideas and maintaining interaction. - Begins to adapt communication according to context, activity and communication partner. - Participates in simple conversations and social exchanges.	- Uses increasingly complex language, signs, symbols or AAC to share ideas, experiences and thinking. - Uses communication to explain, question, negotiate and develop play. - Retells familiar events or experiences in a meaningful sequence. - Engages in reciprocal interactions with adults and peers, responding to the communication of others.	- Sustains conversations using their preferred method of communication. - Uses communication confidently across a range of familiar situations, people and activities. - Shares ideas, experiences, plans and imaginative thinking with others. - Gives information, explanations and instructions using language, signs, symbols or AAC appropriate to their developmental stage.
/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4

Physical Development; Fine Motor

0-6 months	7-12 months	13-18 months	19-24 months	25-30 months	31-36 months	37-42 months	43-48 months
• Explores hands, fingers and objects through movement and touch. • Reaches towards people, objects and sensory experiences of interest. • Grasps objects placed within reach and briefly maintains hold. • Begins to use both hands during exploration and play.	• Explores and manipulates objects using hands and fingers with increasing control. • Transfers objects between hands and brings objects together during play. • Uses a developing grasp to pick up, hold and release objects. • Engages in sensory and mark-making experiences using hands and simple tools.	• Demonstrates increasing control when manipulating toys, tools and everyday objects. • Uses hands purposefully during play, exploration and self-care activities. • Begins to imitate marks, movements and actions observed in others. • Coordinates both hands together during construction, play and exploration.	• Uses hands and fingers to manipulate objects with increasing precision and purpose. • Participates in self-care activities such as feeding, dressing and accessing resources. • Demonstrates increasing control when pouring, posting, stacking, turning and opening objects. • Explores mark-making using a variety of materials and tools.	• Uses hands, fingers and tools to explore, create and solve problems during play. • Demonstrates increasing control when manipulating construction materials, puzzles and malleable materials. • Begins to show a preferred hand for some activities whilst continuing to use both hands together effectively. • Uses mark-making tools to create a range of spontaneous marks and representations.	• Demonstrates increasing hand strength, coordination and control during play and everyday routines. • Uses a range of tools and resources with growing independence. • Manipulates malleable materials and construction resources to achieve intended outcomes. • Participates in creative and practical activities requiring increasing dexterity and control.	• Demonstrates increasing precision when using tools, fastenings and small objects. • Coordinates hands and fingers effectively when completing self-care, play and learning tasks. • Uses mark-making and early writing tools with increasing control and purpose. • Manipulates a variety of materials and resources to create, construct and communicate ideas.	• Uses a range of fine motor skills confidently and purposefully across everyday activities. • Demonstrates increasing accuracy and control when using tools, equipment and materials. • Uses fine motor skills to support independence in self-care, play and learning. • Accesses activities and resources using adaptations, assistive equipment or personalised approaches where required.
/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4	/4

Physical Development**Observation Checkpoint:**

Does the baby move with ease and enjoyment? At around 12 months, can the baby pull to stand from a sitting position and sit down? Can the baby pick up something small with their first finger and thumb (such as a piece of string)?

Around their second birthday, can the toddler run well, kick a ball, and jump with both feet off the ground at the same time? Around their third birthday, can the child climb confidently, catch a large ball and pedal a tricycle?

Look out for children who find it difficult to sit comfortably on chairs. They may need help to develop their core muscles. You can help them by encouraging them to scoot on sit-down trikes without pedals and jump on soft-play equipment.

(*Development Matters*, 2023) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64e6002a20ae890014f26cbc/DfE_Development_Matters_Report_Sep2023.pdf