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cyfnod sylfaen 3–7 foundation phase

Foundation Phase Child Development Profile Guidance



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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
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Foundation Phase Child Development Profile Guidance

- Audience** Headteachers, teachers, practitioners, governing bodies of maintained schools and practitioners and management committees in the non-maintained sector in Wales; local education authorities; teacher unions and school representative bodies; church diocesan authorities; national bodies in Wales with an interest in education.
- Overview** This guidance supports practitioners in their observation of children throughout their formative years, when learning develops more rapidly than at any other time. Through careful observation and interaction with children practitioners are able to encourage them in their development along a learning continuum. The guidance should not be viewed in isolation; it should be planned for across the curriculum.
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Introduction

The Foundation Phase is a distinct curricular stage within the curriculum for Wales – a phase with its own separate character. It is tailored to suit the needs of young children while complementing and promoting learning at Key Stage 2.

The Foundation Phase is planned as a progressive curriculum that spans four years (36–84 months) to meet the diverse needs of all children, including those who are at an earlier stage of development and those who are more able. Throughout their formative years, children’s learning develops more rapidly than at any other time. However, progress is not consistent and children may go through both periods of rapid development and periods when they seem to regress. A curriculum for young children should be appropriate to their stage of learning rather than focussed solely on age-related outcomes to be achieved.

Practitioners should acknowledge prior learning and attainment, offer choices, challenge children with care and sensitivity, encourage them and move their learning along. Through careful observation and interaction with children, practitioners should focus on their achievements and development along a learning continuum. Observation is an integral part of the planning process. Future planning is based on their prior attainment and current achievements.

Observation and assessment enables practitioners to:

- know the individual child and highlight the child’s strengths, interests and needs
- identify the plan for the child’s progress
- highlight the child’s strengths and abilities across all areas of development and intelligences
- provide a graduated response and specific help to children whose progress is not adequate and who may be on the continuum of special educational needs (Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales)
- inform children, staff, parents/carers of children’s achievements and the next steps in their learning
- identify, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum provided
- inform transition/transfer during the Foundation Phase, as well as between the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2.

Areas of Learning

Children's skills and knowledge are planned across seven Areas of Learning. Through appropriate learning and teaching approaches children should be making progress with their developmental skills. Many of the skills should be planned across the curriculum and Areas of Learning. The seven Areas of Learning are:

- Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity
- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills
- Mathematical Development
- Welsh Language Development
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- Physical Development
- Creative Development.

Practitioners should have knowledge of children's development in the key areas of child development. Children should be observed and assessed and future learning planned, taking account of the skills that are essential to children's development.

Observations and evaluations undertaken throughout the year should result in an overall judgement on children's progress, which should be recorded at least once a term or on transfer if a child moves to another setting/school.

The developing child

During the Foundation Phase children are rapidly acquiring new skills. They acquire these skills at different rates and must be encouraged to develop at their own unique, individual pace. They develop a sense of their own identity and have increasing capacities for language and enquiry. Children require a wide range of experiences both to support their emotional, social, intellectual and physical development, and to help them make sense of their own immediate world and the wider world around them.

Throughout the Foundation Phase children have an increasing ability to plan and monitor their own activities, and their developing awareness of themselves as learners becomes evident. They learn in their own way and the direction, speed of learning and growth will fluctuate from day to day. As children learn new skills they should be given opportunities to practise them in different situations, across all Areas of Learning, and to reflect on, evaluate and consolidate their learning.

Practitioners must understand how children develop and plan an appropriate curriculum that takes account of children's developmental needs and the skills that they need to develop in order to become confident learners. All aspects of child development are important and should be considered as interlinked. Account also needs to be taken of barriers to play, learning and participation caused by physical, sensory, emotional, communication or learning difficulties.

It should be acknowledged that children as young as 36 months are very much at the early stages of their development. The experiences that the children have had before entering the setting/school need to be recognised and considered. It is essential that children have access to a variety of media in order to express themselves creatively, and also have ample opportunities to apply their imagination in a purposeful way. As children learn new skills they should be given opportunities to plan their learning, practise their skills and transfer them to different situations across all Areas of Learning, as well as opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their learning. In all aspects of their development, children's own work should be respected, valued and encouraged for its originality and honesty.

To support their different developmental stages throughout the Foundation Phase children need:

- practitioners and environments (indoors and outdoors) that support and challenge their widening interests and encourage them to develop their thinking
- practitioners who observe, assess and plan carefully for their developmental needs
- practitioners who encourage and extend conversations
- practitioners who provide good role models
- opportunities that support their development as independent, confident learners
- opportunities to work collaboratively
- opportunities to follow routine and unfamiliar activities, as well as opportunities to be involved in new and challenging tasks
- opportunities to be creative through access to a variety of media that allows them to express themselves and apply their imagination in a purposeful way
- opportunities to work cooperatively with their peers and to have time to sustain their interest in activities
- opportunities to keep pace with and challenge their physical coordination and development.

Using the Child Development Profile Guidance to support observations and assessments

Practitioners should use the following information to make valid judgements/assessments:

- the Skills sections of the seven Areas of Learning in the *Framework for Children's Learning for 3 to 7-year-olds in Wales*
- the guidance documents produced to support the curriculum
- the *Skills framework for 3 to 19-year-olds in Wales*
- the information contained in this guidance concerning children's skills and progress in the key areas of child development.

Using all the above information practitioners should record the relevant progression and skills in each Area of Learning as and when it has been achieved.

It is for the settings/schools to decide on what procedures they use to gather and collate the information. An example of how the information may be recorded can be found in the *Observing Children* guidance. This information should be used to inform future planning and for recording children's progression along the learning continuum.

Personal development

Personal development focuses on the children's awareness of themselves and the development of their self-help skills. Throughout the Foundation Phase children acquire and develop skills in the following ways:

- they demonstrate an increase in their independence in self-care, from being toilet trained-through to taking responsibility for personal hygiene
- they move from needing help and support to dress and undress to becoming completely independent when dressing themselves
- they move from eating with their fingers to developing sophisticated eating habits
- they settle in to the setting/school routine and become able to cope with changes to their personal routines.

The following is guidance on specific key developmental areas relating to personal development.

Self-help skills

This area focuses on children's increasing ability to feed and dress themselves, and to become more sophisticated in their personal hygiene. Practitioners should observe children's ability to manipulate zips, buckles, buttons and laces when dressing, and whether or not children cooperate with an adult if they need assistance to dress. They should also observe whether or not the children are able to indicate the need to use the toilet. Practitioners should also observe children's ability to use a variety of utensils and whether or not they are able to help themselves to food.

Body awareness

This area focuses on children's personal health development, including their increasing knowledge of nutrition and personal safety. Practitioners should observe children's increasing knowledge of healthy foods and nutrition, as well as observe whether or not they are willing to try new foods and whether or not they eat a wide variety of foods. Practitioners should also evaluate children's knowledge about their bodies. It is important that children are aware of issues regarding their safety.

Independence

This area focuses on the ability of children to become independent. Practitioners should observe children's interactions/independence with the environment, and how they cope with separation from their parent/carer (for example how they arrive and depart), as well as how they react to being responsible for their own possessions. They should also observe how children meet and cope with their personal needs, whether or not they know when to ask for assistance, how they cope with expected daily routines such as lunch, and how they cope with taking responsibility for their own self-organisation.

Activities that allow observation and assessment of children's personal development include:

- daily routines such as arriving and departing the setting/class and taking responsibility for taking home and returning resources such as reading and library books
- food preparation and cooking
- role play with a variety of 'dressing up' clothes and materials for children to experiment with
- recording (in different ways) whether foods are healthy or not, beginning with sorting, progressing to graph work involving the different content of different foods (for example the amount of salt they contain)
- discussing health and safety issues during small group circle time.

The table below features stages of development in the area of personal development, and the broad age ranges relating to each stage.

Personal development

Age	Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)
18–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is aware of toilet needs and will ask to go (sometimes assistance is needed). • Assists with dressing/undressing. • Often uses two hands to drink from a cup, sometimes with spillage. • Plays by themselves, often near a familiar adult/child.
24–30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually remains dry during the day. • Takes off own coat. • Is able to eat using a spoon. • Is able to drink from a cup. • Is keen to try out new experiences. • Sometimes becomes frustrated when having difficulty making themselves understood. • Is beginning to play alongside other children but may be reluctant to share toys/resources with them.
30–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is toilet-trained. • Puts on a coat. • Will attempt to tidy up under direction. • Can concentrate on short-term activities. • Is beginning to demonstrate some patience when waiting for own turn.
36–48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses toilet unaided. • Washes and dries hands without support. • Is able to pour a drink with little spilling. • Is beginning to take responsibility for choosing and putting away own toys and resources. • Is beginning to take turns along with sharing toys (can be inconsistent).
48–60 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes responsibility for personal hygiene. • Dresses themselves (except for laces, ties and some fastenings). • Can demonstrate some control over own emotions. • Enjoys cooperative play when assisted by an adult.

Age**Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)****60–72 months**

- Can entertain themselves for longer periods of time.
- Knows own likes and dislikes.
- Demonstrates empathy to others when they are sad.
- Enjoys cooperative play and understands the importance of waiting and taking turns.

72–84 months

- Is independent with regard to personal hygiene and dressing.
- Is able to use a variety of utensils.
- Takes responsibility for tidying resources/equipment used by themselves and others without being asked.
- Can be quite self-critical of own work at times.
- Can demonstrate leadership skills when working with others.

Social development

Social development focuses on children's social interactions and relationships with their peers and adults. Throughout the Foundation Phase, children acquire and develop skills in the following ways:

- from beginning to use verbal and non-verbal cues to communicate, to holding a substantial conversation with another child or an adult
- from beginning to understand adult boundaries, to an early understanding of how behaviour can be related to consequences and on to developing a good understanding of fair play and an understanding of rules
- moving from sharing when encouraged, to becoming sociable and well balanced and showing a caring attitude towards others
- moving from playing alone in a focused manner to playing cooperatively with their peers
- from interacting and playing appropriately with peers and adults, to initiating relationships/friendships with peers and moving on to forming friendships that are very important to them
- from beginning to participate in familiar songs and rhymes, through being able to listen to a short story to being able to concentrate and listen to a longer story.

The following is guidance on specific key developmental areas relating to social development.

Social interaction skills

This area focuses on children's social interaction skills with their peers and adults, and how well they cope with conflict. Practitioners should observe how well children cooperate with other children, whether or not they initiate conversations/interactions and how long they sustain these interactions. Practitioners should also observe the respect children show the different adults with whom they interact, such as parents/carers, dinner supervisors and visitors.

Cooperative skills/collaborative learning

This area focuses on children's cooperative skills which include helping one another, taking turns and sharing. Practitioners should observe how children function as a member of a group, as well as their ability to understand their relationship with others and how they help and respond to the needs of others. Children should demonstrate respect, as well as understand and value differences in people.

Interactions with the environment

This area focuses on children's social interactions with their environment and its resources. Practitioners should observe and assess how respectful children are of the environment indoors and outdoors and how well they care for animals/plants. They should also observe whether or not children are aware of, and support, recycling and sustainability activities within their environments.

Activities that allow observation and assessment of children's social development include:

- role play – caring for others/turn taking
- cooperative play, such as sharing construction materials and board games
- caring for the environment – looking after plants/materials, tidying up appropriately
- small group circle time – sharing likes and dislikes, as well as stories, and discussing rules and why there is a need for them
- cooperative working, such as designing posters to highlight a specific rule or a recycling scheme
- games that develop turn taking from working in pairs to working within a small group of five or six children.

The table below features stages of development in the area of social development, and the broad age ranges relating to each stage.

Social development

Age	Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)
18–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays in parallel. • Greets familiar adults/peers when prompted. • Is developing a memory of where toys/objects belong. • Enjoys imitating everyday activities such as cleaning.
24–30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responds to adults requests most of the time. • Is beginning to understand how behaviour can be related to consequences. • Shares toys/objects when encouraged by an adult.
30–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays associatively. • Says 'please' or 'thank you', when reminded. • Makes choices when asked. • Participates in group time, most of the time.
36–48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays cooperatively with one child. • Enjoys joining in with others for nursery rhymes/finger rhymes and simple songs. • Plays simple group games. • Is beginning to take turns.
48–60 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeats songs/rhymes. • Is beginning to understand to ask permission to use items belonging to others. • Interacts in a socially appropriate way with peers/younger and older children, as well as visitors. • Participates in cooperative play with small groups. • Puts toys/objects away without close supervision.
60–72 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes turns and understands rules of simple games. • Asks permission to use items belonging to others. • Initiates activities in small groups. • Exhibits positive interactions in group settings.
72–84 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organises a group to participate in games/activities. • Takes responsibility for appropriate care of materials and the environment without reminders. • Cooperates with adults' requests/expectations and demonstrates self-discipline.

Well-being/emotional development

Emotional development focuses on the development of the children's self-esteem, their feelings and their awareness of the feelings of others. Throughout the Foundation Phase children acquire and develop skills in the following ways:

- from using words or complex gestures to being able to relate warmly and positively to adults and recognise emotion in others
- they move from conveying emotions through facial expressions from being able to recover from a temper tantrum and onto learning how to control their emotions and coping with disappointment
- they are able to demonstrate a variety of emotions, begin to interact with their peers and develop a caring attitude towards others
- from beginning to understand the consequences of their behaviour and showing increasing signs of positive interaction in a small group setting to being able to take turns and demonstrate appropriate self-control.

The following is guidance on specific key developmental areas relating to emotional development.

Awareness of and expressions of emotions

This area focuses on the variety of feelings and emotions that children develop and their ability to express them to others. Practitioners should observe children's ability to identify and separate emotions. As they progress, children should be helped to develop coping strategies to understand and control their emotions (for example being able to manage change in routine and in the way they use materials). Practitioners should also be aware that some children will need to be taught how to develop coping strategies through stories and role modelling.

Personality

This area focuses on the development of children's self-esteem. Practitioners should observe whether the children have positive or negative feelings about themselves. In addition they should observe gestures that demonstrate whether or not the children are happy with their achievements, and whether or not the children demonstrate anxiety when attempting something new. How the children interact with their peers and adults can help identify whether or not there are any issues, such as demanding attention or being aggressive. Independence can be closely linked with children's self-esteem, how they view themselves and their relationship with others, as well as how they tackle problem-solving activities.

Values and attitudes

This area focuses on children's developing values and attitudes such as empathy, trust and respect. Practitioners should observe children's attitudes towards other children, adults and their environment. Children should be increasingly developing their awareness of others' emotions and be sympathetic to them. Some children may require additional support in this area, for example children with ASD may need support in developing empathy.

Emotional well-being

This area focuses on children's emotional development and is linked closely to the area focusing on personality. Practitioners should observe and assess whether the children are open and receptive to their environment, as well as new activities, situations and people, or are wary and reluctant. Practitioners should also assess whether or not children are happy and enjoying themselves, and how they integrate with their peers, adults, their environment and resources.

Activities that allow observation and assessment of children's emotional development include:

- small group discussions on different emotions
- individual or group work that encourages children to discuss and record their feelings in a variety of ways, such as pictures and written work of happy/sad/excited, etc.
- situations that demand perseverance until they feel a sense of fulfilment
- cooperative activities such as sharing resources and turn taking
- problem solving in situations such as those involving moral dilemmas
- cooperative/collaborative activities such as working in pairs and small groups.

The table below features stages of development in the area of emotional development, and the broad age ranges relating to each stage.

Emotional development

Age	Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)
18–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is beginning to demonstrate some independence when exploring. • Shows care for a favourite toy. • Uses facial expressions to indicate different emotions. • While playing prefers to be near a familiar adult.
24–30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses words/gestures to communicate the need for attention. • Sometimes will have a tantrum when frustrated, but is learning that some behaviour is unacceptable. • Is beginning to investigate activities based on own needs and interests. • Expresses emotions through pretend play.
30–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates warmly and positively to familiar adults. • Is aware of own feelings and emotions and is beginning to identify these in others. • Is beginning to interact with peers.
36–48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to recover from a temper tantrum. • Is beginning to understand the consequences of own behaviour. • Recognises emotion in others. • Will separate from parent/carer without any reluctance.
48–60 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows increasing signs of positive interaction in small groups. • Will support, comfort and help other children when they are upset. • Can take turns and demonstrates appropriate self-control.
60–72 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows a caring attitude towards others. • Recognises and can express own feelings appropriately. • Respects others and values own and others' achievements. • Is supportive and helpful to others in small groups. • Demonstrates increasing flexibility and acceptance when coping with change.
72–84 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands that it is possible to have, and often demonstrates, control over own emotions. • Has begun to form significant personal friendships. • Understands that people have different preferences, views and beliefs and has an understanding of how to appropriately relate to others morally and ethically.

Cognitive development

Cognitive development is the development of the mind. It focuses on children's thinking and understanding, imagination and creativity (including problem solving/reasoning/concentration/memory). As children learn new skills they should be given opportunities to plan their learning, practise their skills and transfer them to different situations and across all Areas of Learning; then to reflect on and evaluate their learning. Throughout the Foundation Phase children acquire and develop skills in the following ways:

- from beginning to see things from their own point of view (egocentric) they move on to seeing things from other children's/ adults' points of view
- from scribbling to drawing a person with a head and a couple of other body parts and then are able to draw a detailed person
- from experimenting with colour and colourful objects to being able to match one colour on to naming and matching most common colours
- increasing their concentration span in a variety of contexts
- through using their imagination in play, children develop the skills in using objects to represent other objects (symbolic)
- as their imagination skills develop, they are also developing and extending their ability to express themselves and make decisions
- their problem-solving skills move from trying out a few solutions until they solve a problem on to initially identifying a problem and then coming up with specific solutions to solve it
- from being able to complete a simple inset puzzle, through to continuing a sequence or pattern on to creating their own sequence or pattern
- from showing an interest in books, writing and numbers through developing the skills and strategies to engage in reading activities, to the stages of emergent writing and work with numbers (such as ordering/addition/subtraction/multiplication)
- from experimenting/handling a range of materials and resources, children acquire the ability to use non-standard and standard measures and understand the concepts of size, quantity, shape and position

- their skills of sorting and classifying develop and are extended by participating in a variety of activities
- they demonstrate the skills of how to experiment and investigate in different ways and are able to explore different materials and the world (environment) around them.

The following is guidance on specific key developmental areas relating to cognitive development.

Independent thinking

Children should be given opportunities to develop independent thinking through choosing activities, and exploring materials and toys from a very early age, without adults directing them all the time. Behaviour that indicates children are thinking independently includes instances where they observe how to complete an activity or how something works and then attempt it without direction. Children might also indicate independent thinking in instances where they try different solutions to solve problems. Children's imagination and creativity can be supported and extended through opportunities to sequence and extend events and stories.

Solving problems

Practitioners should observe how competent children are at solving problems and whether they attempt different strategies or are too dependent on adults to direct them. Practitioners should observe whether children are confident and happy to approach new activities or become quickly frustrated and distracted. Children should be encouraged from a young age to solve problems and to find different solutions. Their confidence will increase and they will be happy to tackle new activities. Also, as children's skills increase they will be able to draw on previous experiences when attempting new activities and solving problems.

Developing concepts/schema

This area focuses on how children acquire simple or complex concepts through using and understanding experiences and knowledge. Practitioners should observe children's ability to use their own ideas and experiences to identify colour and shape, in the development of number concepts and their understanding of spatial awareness and relationships.

Developing memory skills

The memory is the part of the brain where information is collected, saved and later retrieved. Initially information has to be taken in and understood; it is then saved and recalled when needed. All of these processes are needed for learning to take place. It is essential that the skill/concept to be learned is both at an appropriate level and relevant for the child. Also, it should relate to prior learning and sometimes it will be necessary for the child to repeat/use the skill/concept in a variety of contexts for the knowledge to be collected and saved in the memory. Practitioners should observe children's ability to recall familiar objects and their ability to sequence past events, as well as how they visualise objects, events or people from the past.

Developing classification skills

Children should be engaged in a range of progressive activities that enable them to develop their skills of matching, sorting and grouping, as well as their skills of identifying relationships. These skills should become more sophisticated as the children become more confident and use prior knowledge to tackle more challenging activities.

Activities that allow observation and assessment of children's cognitive development include:

- sorting and matching
- mapping
- playing with jigsaws, puzzles and patterns, as well as sequencing activities
- problem solving, for example as found in certain CD-ROM games or everyday dilemmas
- predicting the end results of stories and activities
- role play that enables children to use their imagination when acting out events that they have been involved in, to imitate people that they know and to invent new characters and situations
- using mark-making materials to encourage creativity and imagination
- exploring and investigating the inside and outside environments
- handling and discussing different materials/resources, for example feely bags
- activities that allow discussion about seeing something from a different perspective or viewpoint
- classification activities, including those involving graphs and data.

The table below features stages of development in the area of cognitive development, and the broad age ranges relating to each stage.

Cognitive development

Age	Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)
18–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to follow one direction. • Can recognise an object in a picture. • Enjoys opening and removing objects from boxes. • Matches simple shaped blocks into matching boards/balls.
24–30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows inquisitive interest in surroundings by opening things/ looking into boxes. • Counts two objects. • Understands the concepts of 'big'. • Remembers where toys are kept.
30–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands concept of 'one' when asked for one. • Can match one colour. • Asks questions about surroundings. • Copies an example by placing object in a row. • Completes a simple inset puzzle.
36–48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows inquisitive interest in materials/environment by verbalising many questions, such as 'Why?', 'How does it work?', 'Where does that come from?' and 'What makes it go?' • Is beginning to understand the concept of time – remembers events in the past and can anticipate events in the future. • Can sort objects into simple categories. • Has an understanding of the concept of 'empty'.
48–60 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands concepts of 'one' or 'more'. • Has increased memory skills. • Is able to sort objects into groups. • Is able to give reasons and solve problems. • Has an understanding of daytime and night-time routines. • Is beginning to understand the value of coin.

Age

60–72 months

Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)

- Understands concept of 'one less'.
- Produces drawings with detail.
- Arranges objects in order from smallest to largest and/or is able to communicate reasons for grouping objects in a certain way.
- Can identify which is 'bigger'.
- Is beginning to think in a more coordinated way, and can hold more than one point of view.
- Can extend the sequence of events in a logical way.

72–84 months

- Understands conservation of number including zero.
- Recognises negative numbers especially in the context of temperature.
- Enjoys the challenge of experimenting with new materials.
- Is confident enough to tackle new mathematical and scientific concepts.
- Understands how to tell the time.

Language development and communication skills

As children learn a language it is essential that they have opportunities to acquire and develop their skills. Language is made up of different forms and skills which include speaking and listening, reading, writing, thinking and observation. The tone of a voice is a powerful form of communicating meaning. Some children may use alternate systems to the voice such as signing.

Non-verbal communication also takes on different forms such as facial expressions and gestures/body movements (shoulders slouching and eye contact). Throughout the Foundation Phase, children acquire and develop skills in the following ways:

- they understand that speaking and listening is a two-way process moving from asking and answering simple questions to using a variety of words such as 'Who?', 'What?', and 'When?', listening to others and responding appropriately
- they use their voice, facial expressions, gestures and body movements with increasing control to communicate their needs, ideas and respond to stories and poems and discussing activities
- they initially enjoy playing with sounds, words, share their stories before moving onto enjoying jokes, riddles such as tongue-twisters and becoming confident readers
- they move from using short, simple sentences to speech and comprehension becoming well established. They become competent in using complete sentences consistently
- as they mature they are able to distinguish the difference between reality and fantasy and are very expressive in their storytelling, speech and writing
- as they develop they move through the different stages of emergent writing and their drawings become more sophisticated (links very closely with cognitive development)
- they develop an awareness of relating present events to being able to talk about the past, present and future, with a good sense of time.

The following is guidance on specific key developmental areas relating to language and communication development.

Receptive language skills

This area of language development focuses on children's understanding of concepts in stories, rhymes and songs, their ability to follow directions/instructions, and how they respond to adults and their peers. Practitioners should observe how children exhibit their understanding of concepts, how they follow directions/instructions and their reaction to others communicating with them. As children's skills and concepts develop, practitioners should increase and extend the level of challenge within activities and in the stories, rhymes and songs planned for the children.

Expressive language skills

This area of language development focuses on children's ability to express their feelings, needs, ideas, etc. Practitioners should observe how clearly children are expressing themselves, their fluency and how well they are being understood.

Non-verbal communication skills

This area focuses on non-verbal indicators that enable communication to be interpreted. Non-verbal communication indicators include:

- body gestures
- body posture
- facial expressions
- eye contact
- signing
- symbols
- drawing.

Practitioners should be aware when observing children that non-verbal indicators can replace and extend speech, as well as demonstrate an attitude or express emotions.

Auditory skills

This area focuses on children's ability to identify, discriminate and demonstrate awareness of differences in noises and sounds. When observing and assessing children practitioners should note the children's ability to repeat/copy a rhythm and how accurately they are able to deliver messages/directions (which become more complex as the children's skills develop). Practitioners should also consider the children's ability in retelling stories they have been told, and their ability to remember word and number sequences, as well as sounds from different instruments.

Oracy

Speaking and listening are skills that support children's cognitive development and their making progress in the other literacy skills of reading and writing. Children need many opportunities to speak and listen with adults and other children. They need to learn a wealth of vocabulary and sentence structures which they can use in a variety of situations spontaneously. When appropriate, it is also important that children are encouraged to look at the person to whom they are speaking and listening.

Speaking

Speaking involves children producing sounds, and making progress in developing the ability to speak for different purposes and to different audiences. Good role models will engage children in discussions so that they can develop their thinking and understanding of their experiences, and develop a wide and varied vocabulary. Through being involved in quality speaking-and-listening activities, both spontaneous and planned, children should become more confident and willing to contribute. These experiences will also develop the skill of controlling the voice to match the audience and activity.

Listening

Listening is an intricate and complicated skill that children need to develop and practise. Listening does not come naturally to all children and therefore adults must provide opportunities for children to develop their listening skills. Some children may need to learn how to listen. In the noisy environments that children live in today it is essential to ensure that children have opportunities to develop and enhance their listening, concentration and thinking. Through participating in listening activities, children should be able to differentiate between sounds.

Reading

Early literacy is best promoted through meaningful and real contexts of learning and a print-rich environment. Children do not learn to read in isolation from the other skills of speaking, listening and writing. 'Learning to read' should be fun and should not be rushed as it is special and unique to all children. Many factors can influence when children are ready to read. These can include children's previous linguistic and social experiences, developmental readiness (auditory, visual and speech development), as well as intellectual and emotional development.

Writing

Children should have plenty of opportunities to make marks and write in meaningful activities. Through participating in purposeful writing tasks, children will develop and improve their written skills as they move along the learning continuum. Although there are stages of writing that the children progress through, it is important to note that even if they are at the stage of mark making, they are still able to write for a variety of purposes. At all stages of development children's work should be valued and displayed.

Activities that allow observation and assessment of children's language development and communication skills include:

- role play and drama
- imaginative play, for example puppets/small world materials
- reciting poems, rhymes, etc.
- retelling stories/sharing personal news
- using interest tables/displays
- working collaboratively towards a specific purpose/goal
- playing with feely boxes and story sacks
- sequencing and matching cards and language games
- playing with jigsaws and puzzles
- reading a variety of fiction and non-fiction books selected according to interest and ability of children
- undertaking different reading activities such as shared and modelled
- making big books, as well as individual and class books
- using CD-ROM programs
- reading labels around the setting/school
- mark making/using modelling materials
- lacing/threading beads
- pattern making
- emergent writing indoors and outdoors (according to ability) for a range of purposes such as:
 - recounting
 - expressing personal feelings
 - description
 - prediction
 - letters/invitations
 - expressing imagination
 - relating information
 - poems/rhymes
 - persuasion
 - explanation
 - reports
 - narrative.

The table below features stages of development in the area of language development and communication, and the broad age ranges relating to each stage.

Language development and communication skills

Age	Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)
18–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follows simple commands and directions. • Can name a few objects in a picture. • Uses two words to indicate need/desires. • Makes marks on different materials.
24–30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can understand many more words than they can speak. • Responds to first name. • Uses three-word sentences. • Is beginning to listen to and follow stories that are read aloud. • Is beginning to 'draw' (mark making) with preferred hand.
30–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers simple 'Where?' and 'What?' questions. • Uses four-word sentences consistently. • Often misses link words. • Joins in with nursery rhymes. • Is beginning to follow stories from pictures and differentiates between print and pictures. • Tries out a variety of instruments to make marks and shapes on paper or other appropriate material.
36–48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has established speech and comprehension but with some immature pronunciations and unconventional use of grammar. • Asks a variety of questions using the words 'Who?', 'What?', 'Where?', 'When?', 'Why?', etc. • Sings songs and rhymes. • Is beginning to recognise the alphabetic nature of reading and writing. • Handles a book as a 'reader' and talks about its content. • Understands that written symbols have sound and meaning.

Age

Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)

48–60 months

- Uses complete sentences consistently.
- Listens to others and usually responds appropriately.
- Is beginning to use tenses and conjunctions.
- Tells stories but sometimes confuses fact with fiction.
- Is beginning to appreciate and have fun with jokes and riddles.
- Recognises familiar words in simple texts, and when reading aloud uses knowledge of letters and sound–symbol relationships to read words and establish meaning.
- Demonstrates an understanding of how sentences work.
- Is beginning to understand the different purposes and functions of written language.

60–72 months

- Is beginning to recognise patterns in the way words are formed.
- Speaks in a group and will ask questions.
- Initiates or participates as a speaker and listener in a variety of structured and unstructured situations using language extensively.
- When reading simple texts is generally accurate.
- Shows understanding and expresses opinions about major events or ideas in stories, poems and non-fiction.
- Communicates meaning in writing.
- Uses appropriate and interesting vocabulary showing awareness of the reader.
- Often develops ideas in a sequence of connected sentences.

72–84 months

- Is steadily developing literacy skills.
- Talks fluently and with confidence.
- Can pronounce the majority of the sounds of own language.
- Tells a story without the need for support material such as a picture, etc.
- Reads independently, using appropriate strategies to establish meaning.
- Shows an understanding of the main points and talks about significant details.
- Produces writing that is often organised, imaginative and clear.
- Uses main features of different forms of writing appropriately.
- Chooses words for variety, interest and effect.

Physical development

Physical development focuses on increasing the skill and performance of the body. Physical and cognitive developments are closely linked, especially during the early years. Problems with a child's physical development can be an indication that the child may have some learning difficulties. Physical development can be divided into gross motor skills and fine manipulative skills. Throughout the Foundation Phase, children acquire and develop their skills in many ways.

Gross motor skills

The development of gross motor skills starts with the young baby controlling head movements and then, moving downwards, controlling other parts of the body:

- from being able to pedal appropriately sized wheeled toys children become confident in negotiating an appropriate pathway/route when riding a wheeled toy
- from catching a large ball, children's skills and confidence progress to the point where they can catch a small ball and become involved in group/class games and activities
- as children's coordination improves, they progress from the early skills of skipping to becoming confident in the art of skipping, as well as being able to run, hop and skip on their toes
- as their gross motor skills develop children become confident in walking and balancing along a bench or line.

The following is guidance on specific key developmental areas relating to gross motor physical development.

Locomotor skills

Locomotor skills refer to the children's ability to move from place to place. This movement could include crawling, walking, running, jumping and climbing. These gross motor skills need to be nurtured so that coordination and balance, along with strength and stamina, can develop and progress.

Non-locomotor skills

Non-locomotor skills refer to the children's ability to bend, turn, twist, stretch and sit. Practitioners should note how well the children are able to manipulate their bodies, for example when using their arms/legs.

Body/space awareness

This section focuses on the awareness children have in relation to their bodies in spaces and in relation to objects. Practitioners should observe whether when sitting or working in an area children have an awareness of their own bodies in relation to other children or objects.

Activities that allow observation and assessment of children's gross motor skills include:

- riding wheeled toys (two-wheeled/three-wheeled)
- using climbing frames
- using soft play shapes
- balancing along benches and lines
- skipping/playing with hoops
- playing with balls/beanbags (various sizes)
- building with large construction materials.

The table below features stages of development in the area of physical gross motor development, and the broad age ranges relating to each stage.

Physical development: gross motor skills

Age	Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)
18–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks competently and is able to start and stop safely. • Runs carefully but has difficulty when trying to avoid obstacles. • Can climb, turn around and sit in an adult’s chair.
24–30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumps with both feet off the floor. • Can stand and kick a large ball. • Can push and pull large objects when walking.
30–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stands on one foot momentarily. • Pedals appropriately sized tricycle. • Climbs over objects and obstacles.
36–48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balances on one foot for 4 or 5 seconds. • Catches a large ball/beanbag. • Can manoeuvre around obstacles making wide turns while running or riding tricycles. • Usually enjoys climbing on frames and supporting own body weight.
48–60 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumps over a small obstacle. • Catches a ball/beanbag in hands, arms flexed. • Pedals a tricycle around sharp corners and obstacles. • Demonstrates improved coordination, for example when negotiating obstacles or playing ball games.
60–72 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walks up to and kicks a ball. • Jumps a moving rope. • Throws a ball with close accuracy. • Jumps backward. • Stands on tiptoes.
72–84 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jumps and turns in mid-air. • Bounces ball with one hand and catches with two hands. • Can hop on either leg. • Balances competently over an upturned bench or across a log.

Fine manipulative skills

The development of children's fine manipulative/motor skills begins within the centre of their bodies and moves out. Through appropriate development children will eventually be able to undertake fine and intricate movements:

- from beginning to hold a pencil, crayon, paintbrush and making a mark to holding a pencil, etc., correctly and forming recognisable letters and words
- from basic handling of an ICT mouse to be able to manipulate it sophisticatedly
- from building simple towers (4–6 blocks) children's dexterity increases to enable them to use scissors, thread beads and use small apparatus
- children's confidence and coordination develops and they become confident and demonstrate dexterity with fine manipulation in a variety of contexts.

The following is guidance on a specific key developmental area relating to fine motor physical development.

Hand–eye coordination

This area focuses on the children's increasing ability in the development of their hand–eye coordination. The eyes direct the movements of hands and fingers. Using this skill, children are able to manipulate objects, as well as to draw/write and use scissors for cutting. Children's visual skills are developed through activities that enable them to follow patterns/pathways, and through following moving objects.

Activities that allow observation and assessment of children's fine manipulative skills include:

- mark making, progressing to creating evenly sized letters
- posting shapes
- threading various sizes of beads/weaving
- playing with jigsaws and puzzles (differentiated for ability)
- playing with building materials (blocks of various sizes)
- playing with small world materials
- making collages
- painting, from using chunky brushes to using fine brushes
- modelling
- using complex construction kits
- cooking and food preparation.

The table below features stages of development in the area of physical fine manipulation development, and the broad age ranges relating to each stage.

Physical development: fine manipulation skills

Age	Developmental stages (approximate guidelines)
18–24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a three- or four-block tower. • Turns several pages of a book. • Is able to throw a small ball. • Is able to pick up small objects.
24–30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a six-block tower. • Can rip paper in two. • Turns single pages of a book. • Is able to manipulate and explore materials.
30–36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds an eight-block tower. • Makes snips with scissors. • Is beginning to hold a pencil, crayon, and paintbrush with fingers and thumb.
36–48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can thread beads on a string. • Builds with large-pieced construction sets. • Follows a pattern with a finger or pencil. • Cuts paper with scissors.
48–60 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds a pencil correctly to form recognisable letters/numbers. • Uses scissors to cut around a basic shape. • Builds with small-pieced construction sets. • Is able to construct models using kits.
60–72 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can build a tower of bricks that is virtually straight. • Is able to write a number of letters/numbers of consistent size.
72–84 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is competent in writing skills and produces drawings that are often detailed. • Cuts out pictures from magazines/comics, following the shape of an object.

Appendix 1

Baseline Assessment

The current Baseline Assessment is administered during the first six weeks of the reception year (4 to 5-year-olds). There are 12 accredited Baseline Assessments that are used by Local Authorities across Wales at the present time. The current scales/requirements apply to the following three areas of development:

- language skills
 - Oracy A – listening and communication
 - Oracy B – listening and responding to stimuli
 - Reading
 - Writing
- mathematical skills
 - Number
 - Mathematical language, size, shape and space
- personal and social skills.

Future developments

It is proposed that an all-Wales Baseline Assessment will be developed. It is anticipated that the Foundation Phase Baseline Assessment will be administered in the first six weeks on entry into the Foundation Phase. This could be between the child's third and fifth birthday depending on when they enter the Foundation Phase.

Development of the National Baseline Assessment will commence during the academic year 2008/2009. The proposed areas of development to be observed and assessed are the same as in this guidance, which are:

- personal development
- social development
- emotional development
- cognitive development
- language development and communication skills
- physical development.

Appendix 2

Flying Start

Current position

The Flying Start initiative aims to provide good-quality childcare and education for children from two to three years of age. The quality childcare provision will focus on children from disadvantaged backgrounds, in target areas, and aim to improve their outcomes in preparation for accessing learning.

The Flying Start initiative aims to develop a strong partnership with families and other services that cater for young children, such as health. The Welsh Assembly Government has introduced the *Schedule of Growing Skills II* (or *SGS II*) (GL Assessment, 2008) pack to support early judgements and assessments of young children in Flying Start settings.

SGS II is implemented twice during the Flying Start 'period'. At the age of two it is used by health visitors with children in the home, with the parent/carer present. This diagnostic screening tool can be administered at the age of three in the setting by a health visitor with the parent/carer present, or in the home if the child doesn't attend a setting.

Future developments

The implementation of assessment at the age of three will need to be reviewed once the amended Baseline Assessment is introduced. There will also be an evaluation to measure the impact of Flying Start on children's achievements/development.

Appendix 3

End of Phase Statutory Teacher Assessment

Current position

At the end of Key Stage 1, teachers assess the level attained by each child by means of teacher assessment in each attainment target in English or Welsh, mathematics and science. The level descriptions in the national curriculum describe the types and range of performance that children working at a particular level should characteristically demonstrate.

In deciding on a child's level of attainment at the end of the key stage teachers judge which description best fits the child's performance. Each description needs to be considered in conjunction with the description for adjacent levels.

The aim is for a rounded judgement that:

- is based on knowledge of how the child performs across a range of contexts
- takes into account the different strengths and weaknesses of that child's performance
- is checked against adjacent level descriptions to ensure that the level awarded is the closest match to the child's performance in each attainment target.

Teacher assessment levels are calculated on the basis of the evidence available and not on the basis of any projections of a child's future performance.

Current reporting arrangements – Years 1 and 2

For children in Years 1 and 2 the following information should be included in an annual report:

- brief particulars of a child's progress in subjects and activities studied as part of the school curriculum, including all national curriculum subjects and religious education
- details of attendance
- details for parents/carers to discuss the report.

In addition, Year 2 children (end of Key Stage 1) should have individual results recorded in the core subjects of English or Welsh, mathematics and science, as well as:

- a brief commentary on what the results show about a child's progress – strengths and weaknesses
- a statement that the levels have been arrived at through statutory teacher assessment.

Future developments

It is proposed that the following three Areas of Learning will be those that have an outcome grade reported on as part of the end of phase statutory teacher assessment:

- Personal and Social Development, Well-Being and Cultural Diversity
- Language, Literacy and Communication Skills (English or Welsh)
- Mathematical Development.

The Welsh Assembly Government will develop exemplar materials in the form of DVDs and accompanying handbooks covering the seven Areas of Learning to assist practitioners when undertaking end of Foundation Phase assessments.