

Early Adopter School - How do I baseline children under the new framework?

Words of advice directly from Dr Julien Grenier

Firstly, think carefully about the purpose of what you are intending to do. I imagine at this stage you might want to know a few key things:

- Who is settling in well?
- Who is struggling?
- Who is playing and making friends?
- Who is finding that hard?
- Who is talking/communicating?

Then, think about what you are going to do with this information? Again, I imagine it might be to prioritise which parents you need to talk to as a priority because you need to get to know their children: understand their interests and strengths, and any difficulties

Also, whilst it is good to look at children's transition documents, you need to prioritise which ones to look at first.

You will also need to discuss how children are getting on as a team and again focus on any early concerns.

I would recommend that the best assessment in the early days of reception will look at:

- Children's confidence and well-being
- Play
- Interaction
- Communication
- Physical development and self-care

This should include parents and child voice.

For those children you have early possible cause for concern, liaise with those parents and find out more about their children through close observation.

Give children time to settle in.

Pull all this information together with a top level view, for example, what you are noticing about the children's communication and general development, prioritise children who may need extra help, any cohort issues such as specific groups or gender balance. Reflect on what you are noticing about children post-lockdown.

Consider what adaptations (if any) your curriculum needs in light of children's lockdown and other recent life experiences. There is no need for 'data' here. There is no need to 'track progress'. In fact, any 'data' like that will be very unreliable.

You will easily be able to see progress (or lack of) by looking back at those starting points. See how children have grown in their communication, or physical confidence and skill for example.

Ofsted do not want baseline data. They have made that clear. They will expect to see how schools establish children's starting points and then make good use of that assessment information. Filling gaps is not a good way to ensure children build their learning over time. That is clearly stated in the new development matters. The revision clearly focusses on what is best for children and signals an end to assessment and tracking with levels.

Useful support

Tapestry Online Learning Journal (Published 21st September 2020)

Youtube clip showing a 'checkpoints' not 'checklist' approach to using development matters (3.43 minutes long).

<https://youtu.be/J2jxPnPRZu4>

Youtube full webinar (19.24 minutes long).

<https://youtu.be/rshr-l66jQA>