

Waltham Forest Early Years Guidance

STEPS approach

Assessing and monitoring developmental progress for children (0-5) with additional needs or disabilities.

What is STEPS?

The STEPS approach has been developed for use in Waltham Forest. It is based on the DfE Early Support Developmental Journal and Early Years (EYFS) Developmental Journal.

Early Support was a National Programme funded by the Department for Education. It aimed to improve the way that services supported disabled children. It played an integral role in coordinating and bringing together key professionals from across the education, health and social care sector to support the transition and implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms.

Early Support

for children, young people and families

The Developmental Journal uses a numerical small 'steps' approach to monitor developmental progress for children with identified or emerging Special Educational Needs/Disability (SEND). Using this approach improves practitioner knowledge of developmental stages.

There are 14 STEPS, *which can be linked to both typical developmental 'norms' and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) ages.*

EYFS Statutory Assessments- Step 10 is of particular relevance for (typical) developmental progress and health assessments when a child is 2 – 2 ½ years old.

Step 14 is of particular relevance to the Foundation Stage profile that is completed when children start school.

STEPS- Developmental Journals for assessment and monitoring.

Developmental Step	Typical development age-range	EYFS stage
Step 1	0-3 months	0-11 months
Step 2	2-5 months	0-11 months
Step 3	4-7 months	0-11 months
Step 4	6-10 months	0-11 and 8-20 months
Step 5	9-13 months	8-20 months
Step 6	12-16 months	8-20 months
Step 7	15-19 months	8-20 and 16-26 months
Step 8	18-22 months	16-26 months
Step 9	21-25 months	16-26 and 22-36 months
Step 10	24-31 months	22-36 months
Step 11	30-36 months	22-36 and 30-50 months
Step 12	35-41 months	30-50 months
Step 13	40-51 months	30-50 and 40-60 months
Step 14	50-60+ months	40-60 months

The Early Years Developmental Journal Record adopted the EYFS- 3 Prime Areas of Learning.

Personal Social & Emotional, Communication & Language and Physical. The Developmental Journal (STEPS approach) also monitors under **Thinking**, to reflect the importance of cognitive skills. It incorporates the problem-solving and reasoning skills that underlie so much of a child's early development.

Why is STEPS important?

Using the Developmental Journal (STEPS approach) in Early Years settings, enables the SENCO, teachers and practitioners to use a graduated approach to assess, monitor and plan for children with developmental concerns or delay.

STEPS- Developmental Journals for assessment and monitoring.

The ethos of Early Support and the Journal is to be child and family centered, working in partnership with professionals. It permits continuous monitoring of children's development and celebration of the things children **can do**.

The aim is for the Early Years Developmental Journal Record to supplement the EYFS without replicating it. Some of the Early Years Developmental Journals 'items' are also present in the EYFS Development Matters and these items are indicated with an icon in the main Journal and by the initials 'EYFS' in the Early Years Developmental Journal Record.

The Early Years Developmental Journal also links with the PCHR (red book) enabling parents and practitioners to observe and record developmental progress in more detail.

Assessment in the Early Years is important as it informs the decisions staff make when teaching and caring for children. Assessments should always bring about benefits for the child and should be age and ability appropriate. Methods of assessment should recognize that children need familiar contexts and environments to demonstrate their capabilities.

Planning the provision to meet the child's aspirations and agreed outcomes, enables the practitioners to evidence progress, level of ability, including plateau's or regression. Regular reviews support development progress in small steps. The aim of the Early Years Development Record is to help practitioners plan for individual children to achieve their full potential.

Using the STEPS approach effectively.

It is recommended that practitioners attend the half-day workshop delivered by the SENDsuccess Outreach Team. STEPS training is also part of the LBWF SENCO Passport.

Using the approach effectively requires a knowledge of the EYFS and Childhood Development.

Each identified child has a developmental journal record. A baseline of the child's current developmental stage can be gained from looking through each STEP to seek current ability.

Practitioners select the 'highest' STEP that the child can do in each area of learning. Starting points are often in different steps for each area. It is helpful when making the initial entries/baseline to work in partnership with the family to establish development at home and in the setting.

Key indicators and Step summaries help practitioners to find the STEP that corresponds to the child's current developmental level. These can be found in the Full Journal and are used in the half-day workshop.

STEPS are marked as completed when the child has 'achieved' or is 'secure' with most of the items. This decision on progress will depend on each individual child and discussion may be needed in judging when the child has 'completed' a STEP.

STEPS- Developmental Journals for assessment and monitoring.

Some items may not be appropriate for a child due to their disability and unique profile of strengths and needs. Early Years Practitioners can identify an alternative behaviour that demonstrates the same underlying skill.

When deciding if a child has completed a STEP, it may be helpful to take a look at the items in the next STEP. If you feel that these reflect the child's current level, then it may be time to move on. Key Indicators and Step summaries are available in the full journal or at the half day work-shop.

Contact your SENDsuccess Early Years Advisory Teacher or L.B.W.F Area SENCo for the current Early Years Developmental Journal.

Enquiries@sendsuccess.org