

Waltham Forest Early Years Guidance

STEPS Assessment

The purpose of this guidance is to support schools and early years settings in completing the STEPS Assessment.

What is the STEPS Assessment?

- The Developmental Journal, devised by the DfE, enables practitioners to record, support and celebrate children's early development and to identify areas where additional help may be needed.
- In Waltham Forest we call the Developmental Journal, STEPS.

How do I use the STEPS Assessment in my Early Years Provision?

- The STEPS Assessment should be completed on an ongoing basis by the practitioner who knows the child best in discussion with their parents/carers.
- The assessment tool includes behaviours that most typically developing babies and children show from when they are born until around 5 years of age.
- These behaviours are categorised into four areas of development:
 - Communication and Language



- Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Thinking

- The four Areas of Development are sequenced in 14 Developmental Steps and are closely linked with the Prime Areas of Learning from the EYFS.
- Most children, with or without a special educational need or disability, will pass through the Developmental Steps in order, but they may, at times, be further ahead in one Area of Development compared to other Areas.
- Progress through the Steps will vary depending on the child's particular needs.

Completing the Developmental Profile Summary Sheet

- The Developmental Profile enables you to see the pattern of the child's progress over time. It helps you to see, at a glance, the areas in which the child is making good progress and those areas where the child needs more support.
- The Developmental profile should be completed termly and summarises the information which is recorded on the Steps sheets.

Completing the STEPS Assessment

- **You must start at the child's chronological age and work backwards. You should not start at Step 1.**
- If working with a child who is 36 months old, you need to look at Step 12, read the key indicator and decide if the child is achieving this Step. If not, read Step 11 and so on.
- Once the child has achieved most of the items for a Step, enter the date in the relevant box.
- At each Step in the Areas of Development, a Key Indicator has been chosen. These items have been chosen because they are particularly important for children's development. These are shown in bold in the Journal/STEPS.
- You may find the child is at different Steps for the different Areas of Development.
- Some children may not be able to show a specific Key Indicator behaviour but may be able to do things that are equivalent. For example, by communicating in a different way. If this is the case note the achievement as an alternative to the Key Indicator. If there is a particular reason why a specific Key Indicator is not relevant for the child, it is fine to show a Step as 'completed' once the other items have mostly been achieved.

What to do if progress seems to get stuck

- Sometimes it may be that a child is not moving to the next Developmental Step in one or more area. If this is the case, there are several things that practitioners can do:
 - Talk to the parent/carer to find out what they think.
 - Think about backing off from a particular activity for a while.
 - Choose a different area from the four Areas of Development to concentrate on.
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- Think about what is happening around the child. Have their interests changed?
- Have there been changes in their environment.

Further information and guidance

- The Waltham Forest STEPS handbook and webinar, which support this guidance can be found on the [SEND Passport](#).
- The full DfE Developmental Profile can be accessed [here](#).

If you have any questions regarding the STEPS Assessment, please speak with your allocated Area SENCO or Early Years SEND Advisor, or contact: SENDEYFS@walthamforest.gov.uk



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