

# Early Assessment Review (EAR)

The *Early Assessment Review (EAR)* is a process that will support you when you have a new child starting - it enables you to swiftly build a clear picture of their developmental level.

This process is crucial for you as the practitioner as you have the responsibility to establish **positive relationships**, whilst planning an **enabling environment** and effective learning experiences for each **unique child**.

The EAR should only be used when a child first attends the setting. Once your knowledge of the individual child deepens, you should then use *Development Matters/Early Years Outcomes* to inform your planning.

It is recommended that this process is completed within 6 weeks of the child starting. This is irrespective of how many sessions the child attends. It is possible to complete the EAR process quicker than this however, especially for children who attend on a full time basis.

In order to complete this process you will need the following:

- An EAR grid (fig. i)
- a copy of the “Individual Progress Tracker” (fig. ii)

**Early Assessment Review (EAR)**  
A prompt for making observations of babies and young children at different developmental stages

0 - 11 months	8 - 20 months
<b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoys the company of others and seeks contact with others from birth (MR)</li> <li>• Uses voice, gesture, eye contact and facial expression to make contact with people and keep their attention (SC + SA)</li> <li>• Shows a range of emotions such as pleasure, fear and excitement (MF+B)</li> </ul> <b>Communication and Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fleeting attention - not under child's control, new stimuli takes whole attention (L+A)</li> <li>• Starts to understand contextual clues, e.g. familiar gestures, words and sounds (U)</li> <li>• Communicates needs and feelings in a variety of ways including crying, gurgling, babbling and squealing (S)</li> </ul> <b>Physical Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turns head in response to sounds and sights (M+H)</li> <li>• Reaches out for, touches and begins to hold objects and explores them with mouth (M+H)</li> <li>• Responds to and thrives on warm, sensitive physical contact and care (H+SC)</li> <li>• Expresses discomfort, hunger or thirst (H+SC)</li> </ul>	<b>Personal, Social and Emotional Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks to gain attention in a variety of ways, drawing others into social interaction. May be wary of unfamiliar people and new situations (MR)</li> <li>• Learns that own voice and actions have effects on others - e.g. pointing with eye gaze to make requests, and to share an interest (SC+SA)</li> <li>• Growing ability to soothe themselves and co-operate with caregiving experiences, e.g. dressing; beginning to understand “yes”, “no” and some boundaries (MF+B)</li> </ul> <b>Communication and Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pays attention to dominant stimulus - can be easily distracted; has strong exploratory impulse (L+A)</li> <li>• Understands and responds to single words in context and familiar phrases - e.g. “Where’s Mummy?” (U)</li> <li>• Uses sounds and single words in play; creates personal words as they begin to develop language (S)</li> </ul> <b>Physical Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sits, crawls and takes first few steps independently (M+H)</li> <li>• Picks up small objects between thumb and finger or by using a whole hand (palmar) grasp when making random marks (M+H)</li> <li>• Open mouth for spoon, holds own bottle or cup and grasps finger foods (H+SC)</li> <li>• Can actively co-operate with nappy changing; starts to communicate urination, bowel movement (H+SC)</li> </ul>

Fig. i EAR grid

**INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS TRACKER**

NAME:	Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Communication and Language	Physical Development	Literacy	Mathematics	Understanding the World	Expressive Arts and Design
DATE OF BIRTH:	Making relationships	Listening and understanding	Moving and handling	Reading	Writing	Numbers	Shapes, space and measure
9-11	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering
Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure
12-20	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering
Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure
21-30	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering
Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure
31-40	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering
Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure
41-50	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering	Entering
Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing	Developing
Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure	Secure

Fig. ii Individual Progress Tracker

## How do I use the Early Assessment Review (EAR)?

(The EAR grid should NOT be used as a tick list or hi-lighted for each individual child - it is a prompt for practitioners only)

- Refer to the EAR grid (fig.i) containing *Development Matters/Early Years Outcomes* statements relating to the ages and stages (these statements have been specifically chosen as key indicators)
- Find out the chronological age of the child (e.g. 18 months)
- Find the most relevant column(s) for this age of child on the EAR grid (In the case of an 18 month old child, this could be either 16-26 months, or 8-20 months) and read through the *Development Matters/Early Years Outcomes* statements
- During the first few days/sessions the child attends, observe and note down key information and begin to relate this to the *Development Matters/Early Years Outcomes* statements within the EAR
- Use learning and development information from parents/carers, other providers (if applicable) and your own initial observations of the child. Begin to decide which statements best reflect this child's developmental level
- If you feel the statements in the age appropriate columns do not reflect the child's developmental level, you can then track backwards and forwards, reading statements in other columns
- As soon as possible and within 6 weeks decide on the most appropriate age and stage for the child's level of development. Ongoing observation and assessment in the future will clarify your initial judgements (Refer to Card 2 – Observational Assessment as Daily Practice)
- Record and date the most appropriate age and stage for the child in each area of learning on the *Individual Progress Tracker* (fig.ii). This is the child's starting point. Decide whether the child is entering, developing or secure within the age/stage band.

**The *Individual Progress Tracker* will be a crucial document which will clearly evidence each child's progress from their starting points.**

Once this process is complete you will then be able to plan more effectively across the areas of learning within the EYFS for this child from the very start of their time with you. As time passes, your range of observations will grow, as will your knowledge and understanding of the individual child's level of development and their next steps within the EYFS. Your planning and assessment will continue to broaden as you gain a true holistic view of the child across all areas of learning and their aspects.

*Sharing this knowledge with parents/carers is essential as the key person "must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home."*

*Statutory Framework for the EYFS (1.10)*

### **Leaders and Managers need to ensure that:**

- they check the accuracy of initial judgements
- the EAR is completed within the first 6 weeks
- the procedure detailed overleaf is followed effectively
- any children at risk of developmental delay are identified and support is in place
- they are able to give an accurate account of the starting points of groups of children (e.g. by age, by room, by gender) and can describe how this knowledge has informed the provision