

Cognition and Learning Needs Guidance

| Threshold Descriptors Overview | |
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| Threshold 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child’s developmental profile may broadly show the following level of delay/emerging need: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At 2 years functioning at or below emerging 16-26 months - At 3 years functioning at or below emerging 22-36 months - At 4 years functioning at or below emerging 30-50 months - At 5 years functioning at or below emerging 40-60 months • Cognitive abilities broadly lie within age-related expectations as evidenced by EYFS ages and stages, however the child may be easily distracted and require prompts to remain on task, may need adult encouragement to remain engaged in play and/or may struggle to concentrate on adult-directed activities (more than would be expected for a child of that age range and observed over time). |
| Mild | |
| Threshold 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MILD but persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress despite a range of interventions and quality first teaching, implemented over time and reviewed regularly. • Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child’s developmental profile may broadly show the following level of delay: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At 2 years functioning at or below developing 8-20 months - At 3 years functioning at or below developing 16-26 months - At 4 years functioning at or below developing 22-36 months - At 5 years functioning at or below developing 30-50 months • Some mild learning difficulty/delay, shows some difficulties with conceptual understanding. • Some difficulties with engagement in learning experiences. • Easily distracted and requires prompts and adult intervention to remain on task. • May need some adult encouragement to remain engaged in adult initiated play. • Struggles to follow adult directed activities within a small group where child has chosen the activity. |
| Mild - Moderate | |

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| Threshold 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MODERATE persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress despite a level of focused intervention and implementation of advice and recommendations from external agencies and the provision of quality first teaching, implemented over time and reviewed regularly. • Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child’s developmental profile may broadly show the following level of delay: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At 2 years functioning at or below emerging 8-20 months - At 3 years functioning at or below emerging 16-26months - At 4 years functioning at or below emerging 22-36 months - At 5 years functioning at or below emerging 30-50 months • Differentiated work and targeted support with conceptual understanding, and reasoning across the EYFS needed. • Very uneven profile of early learning skills that requires a balance of small group and additional adult support. • Demonstrates some difficulties learning basic concepts and retaining them over time despite targeted support. • Limited and/or repetitive play skills, these persisting despite targeted support. • Displays some difficulties with imaginative play unless supported by an adult. • Experiences some difficulties following adult led routines and structure. |
| Threshold 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIGNIFICANT persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress despite significant levels of focused intervention and implementation of advice and recommendations from external agencies and the provision of Quality First teaching, implemented over time and reviewed regularly. • Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child’s developmental profile shows at least the following broad levels of delay: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At 2 years functioning at or below developing 0-11 months - At 3 years functioning at or below developing 8-20 months - At 4 years functioning at or below developing 16-26 months - At 5 years functioning at or below developing 22-36 months • Moderate to severe learning difficulties, showing significant delay in problem solving/reasoning skills. • Limited and restricted play skills which are persistent despite targeted support. • Within the extremely low range on standardised assessments of cognitive ability and requires an individualised curriculum and substantial individual adult support. • Experiences persistent difficulties learning basic concepts and retaining them over time despite targeted support. • Displays persistent patterns of repetitive play. |

Threshold 5

Severe

- **SEVERE persistent difficulties** and is not making expected progress despite significant levels of focused intervention and implementation of advice and recommendations from external agencies and the provision of quality first teaching, implemented over time and reviewed regularly.
- Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child's developmental profile shows at least the following broad levels of delay:
 - At 2 years functioning at or below emerging 0-11 months
 - At 3 years functioning at or below emerging 8-20 months
 - At 4 years functioning at or below emerging 16-26 months
 - At 5 years functioning at or below emerging 22-36 months
- Severe learning difficulties and global delay, affecting self-help and independence skills.
- Cannot independently access play experiences.
- Tendency to withdraw from group learning activities which is severely impacting on learning.
- Requires intensive support to enable the child to engage with learning.
- Severely limited and restricted play skills which are persistent despite targeted support.
- Within the extremely low range on standardised assessments of cognitive ability and requires an individualised curriculum and substantial individual adult support.
- Experiences persistent and significant difficulties learning basic concepts and retaining them over time despite targeted support.
- Displays persistent patterns of repetitive play.
- Functions at a level that requires considerable and specialised interventions and adaptations to the EYFS.

Threshold 1 - Cognition and Learning

| Child's Presentation | Assessment and Planning | Teaching and Learning Strategies/ Curriculum and Interventions |
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| <p>Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the developmental profile may broadly show the following level of delay/emerging need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 2 years functioning at or below emerging 16-26 months • At 3 years functioning at or below emerging 22-36 months • At 4 years functioning at or below emerging 30-50 months • At 5 years functioning at or below emerging 40-60 months <p>Cognitive abilities broadly lie within age-related expectations as evidenced by EYFS ages and stages, however the child may be easily distracted and require prompts to remain on task, may need adult encouragement to remain engaged in play and/or may struggle to concentrate on adult-directed activities (more than would be expected for a child of that age range and observed over time).</p> | <p>Setting to liaise with the family/carer and gather information relating to the child.</p> <p>Discussion re family engagement with supporting agencies.</p> <p>Setting to supplement usual systems of assessment and planning with additional observations, and across a range of contexts e.g., outdoors, lunchtime. Progress to be monitored for at least 2 terms.</p> <p>Termly/half-termly (as appropriate) review of child's progress in relation to the EYFS.</p> <p>Good use of Quality First teaching with close reference to the EYFS developmental profile.</p> <p>Use of Early Support Developmental Journal as best practice to support small step approach to learning.</p> <p>Possible attendance at more than one setting must be taken into consideration.</p> <p>Consider early referral to SALT where understanding is identified as a difficulty.</p> <p>Use of the ECAT assessment can identify areas of specific need in SLC which are linked.</p> | <p>Emphasis on providing an enabling environment inside and outside with developmentally appropriate resources. Use of photographs and child's learning journal alongside adult observation and assessments to enable monitoring.</p> <p>Effective differentiation of activities, in terms of adult engagement, levels of language and visual prompts, to enable learning at a level appropriate to the child.</p> <p>Any planned interventions involve the parent/carer, child, SENDCo and key person.</p> <p>Use of Quality First teaching and monitoring through EYFS levels.</p> <p>Flexible grouping strategy to focus adult support where needed.</p> <p>Continuous provision enhanced, directed and targeted.</p> <p>Implementation of reasonable adjustments to the EYFS environments and curriculum.</p> <p>ECAT/ICAN strategies.</p> |

Threshold 2 - Cognition and Learning

| Child's Presentation | Assessment and Planning | Teaching and Learning Strategies/ Curriculum and Interventions |
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| <p>Presentation to be considered in line with child's age and appropriate developmental stage.</p> <p>MILD but persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress despite a range of interventions and quality first teaching, implemented over time and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child's developmental profile may broadly show the following level of delay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 2 years functioning at or below developing 8-20 months • At 3 years functioning at or below developing 16-26 months • At 4 years functioning at or below developing 22-36 months • At 5 years functioning at or below developing 30-50 months <p>Some mild learning difficulty/delay, shows some difficulties with conceptual understanding.</p> <p>Some difficulties with engagement in learning experiences.</p> <p>Easily distracted and requires prompts and adult intervention to remain on task.</p> <p>May need some adult encouragement to remain engaged in adult initiated play.</p> <p>Struggles to follow adult directed activities within a small group where child has chosen the activity.</p> | <p>As Thresholds 1 plus:</p> <p>SENDCo involved in ongoing observation as EYFS profile shows child is not making expected progress towards age-related expectations.</p> <p>Support plan with SMART targets in place, if moving to SEND support level from quality first teaching, otherwise continue with EYFS developmental records. Supervision and monitoring of the support plan by SENDCo. Professionals to be involved in the termly review process.</p> <p>Clear assessment relating to IMPACT of the intervention strategies to guide next steps.</p> <p>Setting to liaise with parent/carer.</p> <p>Referral to SALT.</p> <p>Involvement of Area SENDCo.</p> <p>Consider referral to 0-4 Referral Meeting. Begin to collate relevant developmental evidence.</p> | <p>Emphasis on providing an enabling environment inside and outside with developmentally appropriate resources. Use of photographs and child's learning journal alongside adult observation and assessments to enable monitoring of progress.</p> <p>Increased differentiation of activities and materials to reflect developmental and language levels, and a focus on implementing key learning outcomes from support plan.</p> <p>Planned interventions involve parent/carer, child, SENDCo, key person and other professionals.</p> <p>Clarity on support given at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous provision • Enhanced • Targeted <p>Flexible grouping strategy, evidenced in support plan, to focus adult support where needed.</p> <p>Additional adult support may be required for some activities (group and individual), and to implement support plan targets or EYFS targeted areas.</p> <p>Access to ICT and specialist equipment/materials.</p> <p>Implementation of reasonable adjustments to the EYFS environments and curriculum.</p> <p>Staff training needs are addressed.</p> <p>Specific interventions e.g., BLAST & TALKBOOST.</p> |

Threshold 3 - Cognition and Learning

| Child's Presentation | Assessment and Planning | Teaching and Learning Strategies/ Curriculum and Interventions |
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| <p>Presenting behaviours to be considered in line with child's age and appropriate developmental stage.</p> <p>MILD but persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress despite a range of interventions and quality first teaching, implemented over time and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child's developmental profile may broadly show the following level of delay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 2 years functioning at or below developing 8-20 months • At 3 years functioning at or below developing 16-26 months • At 4 years functioning at or below developing 22-36 months • At 5 years functioning at or below developing 30-50 months <p>Some mild learning difficulty/delay, shows some difficulties with conceptual understanding.</p> <p>Some difficulties with engagement in learning experiences.</p> <p>Easily distracted and requires prompts and adult intervention to remain on task.</p> <p>May need some adult encouragement to remain engaged in adult initiated play.</p> <p>Struggles to follow adult directed activities within a small group where child has chosen the activity.</p> | <p>Observations and EYFS developmental assessment identifies on-going needs and delayed progress in relation to age related expectations. The profile may be spiky.</p> <p>SENDCo involved in ongoing observation. Profile shows child is not making expected progress despite significant levels of focused intervention and implementation of advice from external agencies.</p> <p>Referral to 0-4 Meeting for involvement of additional services as appropriate. (Portage/EY HINT/SALT/CDT/OT etc).</p> <p>Support plan with SMART targets takes account of any specialist advice and details additional adult input in relation to staffing ratios for specific time periods.</p> <p>Plan organises support in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous provision • Enhanced • Targeted <p>Interventions/strategies are assessed for IMPACT on progress.</p> <p>Assess/Plan/Do/Review process implemented.</p> <p>Consultation with, and involvement of EP to be considered.</p> | <p>Emphasis on providing an enabling environment inside and outside with developmentally appropriate resources. Use of photographs and child's learning journal alongside adult observation and monitoring assessments etc. to enable monitoring of progress.</p> <p>Increased differentiation of activities and materials to reflect developmental and language levels, and a focus on key learning outcomes from support plan.</p> <p>Differentiation may include deployment of additional adults to support planned interventions within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous provision • Enhanced • Targeted <p>Interventions and staffing ratios evidenced within support plan.</p> <p>Increased focus on specific activities and/ or use of resources, including ICT and specialist equipment/ materials/ communication aids.</p> <p>Use of Makaton, intensive interaction, and visual approaches to supporting the development of early learning skills.</p> <p>Access to ICT and specialist equipment/materials.</p> <p>Implementation of reasonable adjustments to the EYFS environments and curriculum.</p> <p>Staff will need access to specific specialist training.</p> <p>Consideration given to the 'sensory' environment and planned sensory breaks following a three-step approach: sensory activity, adult directed activity, and child led activity. Repetition of these steps to enable the child to engage effectively.</p> |

Threshold 4 - Cognition and Learning

| Child's Presentation | Assessment and Planning | Teaching and Learning Strategies/ Curriculum and Interventions |
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| <p>SIGNIFICANT persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress despite significant levels of focused intervention and implementation of advice and recommendations from external agencies and the provision of Quality First teaching, implemented over time and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child's developmental profile shows at least the following broad levels of delay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 2 years functioning at or below developing 0-11 months • At 3 years functioning at or below developing 8-20 months • At 4 years functioning at or below developing 6-26 months • At 5 years functioning at or below developing 22-36 months <p>Moderate to severe learning difficulties, showing significant delay in problem solving/reasoning skills. Limited and restricted play skills which are persistent despite targeted support.</p> <p>Within the extremely low range on standardised assessments of cognitive ability and requires an individualised curriculum and substantial individual adult support.</p> <p>Experiences persistent difficulties learning basic concepts and retaining them over time despite targeted support.</p> <p>Displays persistent patterns of repetitive play.</p> | <p>SENDCo involved in on-going observation. Support in place from relevant external agencies in line with agency referral processes and strategies and support implemented and evidenced within support plans and review documentation often supported by Portage i.e. individual action plans, developmental journals, sensory programmes and learning profiles.</p> <p>High level modifications to learning environment and the breaking down of tasks into small steps following Portage principles within an adapted and individualised curriculum.</p> <p>Progress is closely monitored by the school/ setting and recorded using setting tracking systems in line with EYFS, and Early Support Developmental Journals. Outside agency targets and careful monitoring of IMPACT of strategies and interventions.</p> <p>Support plan with SMART targets includes specialist advice as part of a multi-agency plan.</p> <p>Termly/ half-termly review of child's progress towards outcomes/targets on individualised learning/support plan following assess-plan-do-review process. Involvement of parents/carers and key professionals.</p> <p>Consideration given to application for an Education Health and Care needs assessment on basis of levels of development and complexity of need. Next steps to be determined in consultation.</p> | <p>Emphasis on providing an enabling, accessible and adapted environment inside and outside with developmentally appropriate resources. Use of photographs and child's learning journal alongside adult observation and assessments to enable monitoring.</p> <p>Increased differentiation of activities and materials to reflect developmental levels and acquisition of early learning skills, and a focus on key learning outcomes from support plan.</p> <p>SENDCo and key worker implement advice given by external support services.</p> <p>Planning of interventions involve all advising agencies and reflect very clear multi agency strategies and approaches.</p> <p>Planned adult deployment to target support within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous provision • Enhanced • Targeted <p>Increased focus on individualised planned interventions, with regular targeted and focused adult attention and interventions for individual/group activities following specialist advice.</p> <p>Grouping strategies used flexibly to enhance learning and access to the curriculum.</p> <p>Increased focus on specific activities and/ or use of resources, including ICT and specialist equipment/ materials/ communication aids.</p> <p>Implementation of reasonable adjustments to the EYFS environments and curriculum.</p> <p>Multi-sensory approaches used to support access to EYFS.</p> |

Threshold 5 - Cognition and Learning

| Child's Presentation | Assessment and Planning | Teaching and Learning Strategies/ Curriculum and Interventions |
|--|---|--|
| <p>SEVERE persistent difficulties and is not making expected progress despite significant levels of focused intervention and implementation of advice and recommendations from external agencies and the provision of quality first teaching, implemented over time and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Using the EYFS as a guide and being mindful that every child is unique, the child's developmental profile shows at least the following broad levels of delay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At 2 years functioning at or below emerging 0-11 months • At 3 years functioning at or below emerging 8-20 months • At 4 years functioning at or below emerging 16-26 months • At 5 years functioning at or below emerging 22-36 months <p>Severe learning difficulties and global delay, affecting self-help and independence skills.</p> <p>Cannot independently access play experiences.</p> <p>Tendency to withdraw from group learning activities which is severely impacting on learning.</p> <p>Requires intensive support to enable the child to engage with learning.</p> <p>Severely limited and restricted play skills which are persistent despite targeted support.</p> <p>Within the extremely low range on standardised assessments of cognitive ability and requires an individualised curriculum and substantial individual adult support.</p> <p>Experiences persistent and significant difficulties learning basic concepts and retaining them over time despite targeted support.</p> <p>Displays persistent patterns of repetitive play.</p> <p>Functions at a level that requires considerable and specialised interventions and adaptations to the EYFS.</p> | <p>As Threshold 4 plus:</p> <p>SENDCo involved in on-going observation. Support in place from relevant external agencies in line with agency referral processes and strategies and support implemented and evidenced within support plans and review documentation often supported by Portage i.e. individual action plans, developmental journals, sensory programmes and learning profiles.</p> <p>High level modifications to learning environment and the breaking down of tasks into small steps following Portage principles within an adapted and individualised curriculum.</p> <p>Progress is closely monitored by the school/ setting and recorded using setting tracking systems in line with EYFS, and Early Support Developmental Journals. Outside agency targets and careful monitoring of IMPACT of strategies and interventions.</p> <p>Support plan with SMART targets includes specialist advice as part of a multi-agency plan.</p> <p>Termly/ half-termly review of child's progress towards outcomes/targets on individualised learning/support plan following assess-plan-do-review process. Involvement of parents/carers and key professionals.</p> <p>Complete and submit application for an Education Health and Care needs assessment on basis of levels of development and complexity of need. Multi-agency SEND support planning meeting arranged in line with EHCP assessment process.</p> <p>Continue with planned strategies and interventions in accordance with recommendations from relevant professionals as detailed within child's individualised support plan.</p> | <p>Emphasis on providing an enabling, accessible and adapted environment inside and outside with developmentally appropriate resources. Use of photographs and child's learning journal alongside adult observation and assessments to enable monitoring.</p> <p>Increased differentiation of activities and materials to reflect developmental levels and acquisition of early learning skills, and a focus on key learning outcomes from support plan.</p> <p>SENDCo and key worker implement advice given by external support services.</p> <p>Planning of interventions involve all advising agencies and reflect very clear multi agency strategies and approaches.</p> <p>Planned adult deployment to target support within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous provision • Enhanced • Targeted <p>Increased focus on individualised planned interventions, with regular targeted and focused adult attention and interventions for individual/ group activities following specialist advice.</p> <p>Grouping strategies used flexibly to enhance learning and access to the curriculum.</p> <p>Increased focus on specific activities and/ or use of resources, including ICT and specialist equipment/ materials/ communication aids.</p> <p>Implementation of reasonable adjustments to the EYFS environments and curriculum.</p> <p>Multi-sensory approaches used to support access to EYFS.</p> |

PfA Outcomes and Provision

| Employability/Education | Independence | Community Participation | Health |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Child is able to engage in aspects of real-world/role play and show developing awareness of the tasks carried out by different professionals (doctor, nurse, firefighter, police officer).</p> <p>Child is able to show interest in activities and resources within the nursery environment and will engage in aspects of exploratory, functional and sensory play, demonstrating developing understanding of the world around them.</p> <p>Child is able to show developing imagination through substitution and representation of objects within play (using a cardboard tube to represent a phone, for example).</p> <p>Child is able to begin to make meaningful choices between objects and activities.</p> <p>Child will show increased listening skills and task focus.</p> | <p>Child is able to make choices between options offered at snack and mealtimes.</p> <p>Child has an understanding of risk/safety within the home (hot pans, cooker top, boiling water etc.).</p> | <p>Child shows a developing understanding of friendships and interaction with others and will be able to name 'friends' within their nursery group.</p> | <p>Child is able to begin to recognise which foods and drinks are healthier and the importance of a healthy diet.</p> <p>Child has an understanding of the importance of self-care routines to maintain good health (washing hands, cleaning teeth, having a bath etc.)</p> <p>Child has a developing understanding that some substances are harmful to ingest or touch.</p> <p>Child has an understanding of basic feelings and emotions.</p> |

Child will have reached expected outcomes in relation to EYFS ELG (40-60 months) upon transition from Early Years to Reception, with reference to Prime Areas of Learning: literacy skills, Mathematics, Understanding of the world and Expressive Art and Design
http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/foundation/docs/devmatters_tracking_2012.doc

Provision: Please refer to detail provided within the Teaching and Learning Strategies and Curriculum/Interventions sections of the Early Years Thresholds Guidance: Cognition and Learning.