

Assessment and Reporting Policy

Assessment the 'Child Side Way' involves collecting, recording and interpreting observations of the children as individuals and as a community of learners. Educators get to know each child intimately, over a diverse range of situations and over time. *Critical control points to enable this to occur are our:*

- 'small by design' **whole** school structure,
- our intentional Multi-aged grouped (MAG) classes so children remain with an educator for more than a year and deep knowledge and working relationships develop
- Learning Team Approach where all core educators have regular interaction and knowledge about each child across the school and a team approach is activated
- triangle learning structure consisting of the child, the family and the educators involved in planning, exchanging information, LTD (Learning Team Debriefs), implementing curriculum and assessing distance travelled and progress (e.g.- through real-life assessment Big Picture Education Australia BPEA exhibitions)
- the integrated shape of the day and the week
- expert teaching team- advisory educator approach BPEA, educator pedagogy (Reggio Emilia, BPEA, EYLF...), differentiated learning focus, responsive teaching
- intentionally developed independent, cohesive, community learning culture (Child Side) within a physical learning environment that acts as another educator (Reggio Emilia approach, Montessori principles)

How is children's learning monitored and assessed?

Monitoring and assessing is an integral part of the learning–teaching process and is not a separate activity. The information gathered is used to:

- Build a wide and deep picture of a child's learning and development across the spectrum and within the context of the child and school opportunities
- Celebrate and acknowledge each child as an individual and within a phase of development eg: Early Childhood, Middle Childhood, Early Adolescence (school based + informed by WA Curriculum framework Phases of Childhood development + by current brain research + educator professional experience), to focus on their capabilities and points of need (PON)
- Pin point to where the child is at in relation to progress, utilising 3 lenses- i.) Personal progress, ii.) Progress compared to Child Side School expectations, iii.) Australian Curriculum year level expectations (Standards of Achievement)
- Assess whether progress is being made, if it is acceptable level and rate of progress, if it is chequered progress. Monitor the distance travelled for each individual. Make targeted observations and enquiries (consult parents, levels of attendance, physical health- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, previous school progress if applicable) if progress is not deemed satisfactory and make informed decisions about the next steps.
- Plan for future learning, including resources, setting up the physical in/outdoor learning zones, excursions, accessing outside 'knowledge and skills through 'living books' to enable and enhance learning, accessing specialist knowledge and help eg: Dyslexia Speld Foundation, UWA Child Development Team
- Give direction to conversations with the child, parents, other core educators (all educators' have regular education engagement with ALL children over each week) and other professional support personal we may engage with eg: school psychologist, school health nurse

- Record point-in-time judgments using the personalised curriculum plan and report on these.
- Ensure intentional teaching points and key concepts and skills are being addressed.

Monitoring, assessing and reporting on children's learning has a number of stages.

1. Gathering evidence of children's learning

Educators monitor and assess by gathering information and evidence throughout the year, generally from children's everyday learning activities and from specific targeted tasks. They:

- Observe and gather evidence regarding Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the EYLF outcomes (in particular, Outcome 1. Children have a strong sense of identity, Outcome 3. Children have a strong sense of well-being and 4. Children are confident and involved learners) in relation to specific children and children new to the school.
- observe and gather evidence about children's levels of engagement
- observe and interact with children as they learn (side by side, facilitator's role)
- record and document targeted and significant observations
- talk with children about their learning
- set criteria through curriculum areas, year level expectations and with the children and gather evidence according to these criteria
- help children identify what they have learnt and still need to learn
- gather the things children produce during their learning and reflect on them, including with the children
- comment on children's learning progress in relation to the curriculum and to their own prior work samples and understandings
- document group learning conversations (floor-books) which often contain individual children's learning theories in order for their theory repair and 'voices' to be traced and acted upon
- consult and utilise any year level work samples provided by the Australian Curriculum to help make judgements about expectations
- have formal and informal discussions with parents and professional colleagues
- use professional reading to support and develop their expectations and make informed reasoned decisions
- consult the senior educator and learning team to gather further information
- access and gather professional learning through AISWA in specialised areas e.g. ICT or grammar to develop programmes to support individual children or a group area of need
- access and gather specialist help for strategies to help specific children with learning challenges eg: processing, executive functioning, working memory...
- visual documentation - photos

Educators notice, reflect and respond as they interact with children. They also collect, modify, consult, reason, apply and document according to need and purpose, the priority always being the interactions with children and responses to children's learning. Responses are immediate or within the next appropriate session/task relevant to the modification and level of adjustment required. Educators engage with learning as well as direct it according to the shape of the day.

2. Organising evidence about children's learning

Educators and children organise evidence of learning in a variety of ways.

They may:

- organise selected pieces of work (final products and drafts) to analyse and unpack elements with the child and/or learning team debrief (with senior educator and parent) in relation to progress against their prior personal work samples, school indicators and Australian Curriculum (AC) expectations or for a clearly defined task eg: Exhibition Files.
- organise selected examples of learning behaviours and approaches for evidence of general capabilities etc.
- organise selected examples of practical applications (the **process**) of learning as evidence to analyse. These maybe documented in educator daily work pads or child's personalised learning plan.
- organise criteria based evidence from integrated units of study into targeted curriculum areas
- organise effective strategies and information relevant to specific children into personalised learning plans and IEPs
- organise educator gathered information and consider professional judgements regarding levels achieved in NAPLAN.

3. Interpreting evidence of children's learning

Educators interpret the evidence of children's learning to inform daily planning and to make overall judgments about how far children's learning has progressed and whether this is acceptable in terms of: individual expectation, school expectation, AC expectations taking into account:

- what is assessed must directly relate to what children have had an opportunity to learn
- acknowledging the diversity of children and each individual's life circumstances (prior and current). Educators consider the contextual influences on student outcomes
- recognising and acknowledging the diverse bodies of knowledge, backgrounds and approaches of all children and acknowledging the different impacts this will have on each child's level of processing, understanding and application of the SAME information/situation/experience/task (everyone brings to and takes away different aspects at their point of need).
- different assessment conditions e.g.: NAPLAN (highly unfamiliar testing conditions/multi-choice approach- children MUST have opportunity for preparation), open conditions (having access to others and resources/materials, opportunities for discussion, drafting, conferencing, working with others i.e: real world conditions, familiar daily conditions for all children) and supervised conditions (be undertaken individually, be an unseen task, be completed over a set block of time, have specific/set requirements)
- that the work is authentic to each child/learner, particularly where children have access to electronic resources or when they are working collaboratively or when parents engage side by side (educator needs to consciously determine the elements that are authentic to each child).

Evidence is gathered in different ways to meet different purposes.

1. For curriculum planning within classroom

- a. Intellectual conversations with children, individually, in small groups and whole groups
- b. Reflective conversations with children about their work, their behaviour, their interests, their goals, their obstacles, their solutions, their personal qualities and effort, their theories...
- c. Daily planning and reflective sessions with individuals and groups of children using proformas/frameworks where applicable eg: What we know, what we want to know, how can we find out...? Framing central questions with the group/individuals to define their investigation and research in context to curriculum content (if applicable) and required skills and processes.
- d. Observations during a task how child is processing information, using the skills required, their ability to use BPE 5 learning goals of ER, SR, QR, PQ and communication.

- e. Educator summaries of individual and group conversations.
 - f. Observations of children to ascertain dispositions and habits of mind.
 - g. Observations of child's work samples (while they are working) to ascertain conceptual understanding and level of skill- sharing these observations with senior educator and making decisions about where to 'go' next.
 - h. Discussing the 'quality' of the work in relation to – the individual child, school expectations, year level expectations (if applicable) both with the child at the time and later with senior educator.
 - i. Referring to AC year level work samples (if provided) and where relevant.
 - j. Stepping children individually through their work, visually scaffolding the steps to meet the task criteria or learning goals. Observation of child's understanding of process, skills required (at the level required), PQs to complete series of tasks
 - k. Entry point observations
 - l. Information from families and/or previous schools
 - m. Recommendations from specialist support (e.g. school psychologist)
 - n. Physical, learning or curricula areas or resources that need reinvigoration- EYLF in action pg 95 Reflective practice action plan, pg 184 Environment assessment
2. For tracking outcomes across the school and year to year
- a. Term overviews/reviews of the curriculum
 - b. Curriculum audits
 - c. Individual Vertical Tracking document
3. To communicate children's learning
- a. Learning Logs, learning experiences made visible by educators and sent to each family regularly (weekly/fortnightly)
 - b. Work samples of children's thinking (graphic conversations)
 - c. "Working walls" for exhibitions
 - d. Big Idea Memory Book as a Learning Log – incorporate editing skills
 - e. Resource files (middle childhood)
 - f. Products and models
 - g. Children's documentation of processes
 - h. Exhibitions and presentations to other children, parents, extended family, community- refer to ANSN proforma Section 1- Identifying Desired results, Section 2- determining acceptable evidence, Section 3 – Planning learning experiences and Instruction.
 - i. Summative reports to families
 - j. Personalised portfolio prepared by children with family and educator input, with evidence of children's interests and achievements outside of school (years 6 and 7) using Big Picture Education criteria.
4. To determine the extent to which children are progressing
- a. Individual accountability – contributions to intellectual dialogue, social dynamics, changes in thinking or effort in independent or group work
 - b. Assessing with the child/group their quality of work, effort, communication of conceptual understandings against prior work and/or set criteria and expectations/codes of conduct.
 - c. Personalised anecdotal observations –e.g.: where individual maybe struggling, making miscues, repeating mistakes, fundamental gaps in conceptual or skill base, lack of effort, interest, reasoning, stagnation... processes individuals use to problem-solve, reason, collaborate, connect, 'aha' moments, sustained effort, practical applications, ability to work independently...
 - d. Use of manipulatives during maths (fraction blocks, place value games..), spelling (word sorts etc), grammar- creating sentence using verb/noun etc cards... enables educators to visibly see child's thought processes.
 - e. Learning area summaries
 - f. Tracking of children's activities/learning against scope and sequence charts (Australian Curriculum) or progress maps (Curriculum Framework) - personalised curriculum profiles.
 - g. Rubrics

- h. NAPLAN
- i. FMS checklists
- j. First steps developmental continua in reading and writing, maths
- k. Mathletics
- l. Khan Academy
- m. Words Their Way database

5. To identify children who may need additional support:

- a. Literacy priority target for all children.
- b. Observations while children are working (small by design philosophy enables educators to work with individual children)
- c. Response to parent concerns and/or prior school reports
- d. Individual assessment through scheduled experiences, specifically morning work
- e. Point of Need (P.O.N.)
- f. Core assessment tasks
- g. Entry point family interviews
- h. *Timely intervention (if child been with us from the earliest stage of schooling or ASAP when identifying need.) First Tier- high quality evidence based classroom teaching for all students. Second tier- intervention (PON) provided ASAP after identification with experiencing difficulties that cannot be effectively addressed by the classroom educator and parents alone. Recommendation about most effective time to begin tier two interventions is around the beginning of year 2 (high incidence of over and under identification if earlier)- however classroom educators will have observations that target particular children more closely from much earlier on. (DSF).
- i. Key Components of literacy assessed at any age for children who show signs of struggling and not making reasonable progress (educator professional judgement) – phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, text reading, vocabulary and comprehension. Specific analysis in blending sounds to form words (reading) and segmenting sounds (spelling). Focus on ‘automaticity’ – analyse poor decoders and/or dysfluent readers. Synthetic phonics approach specifically targeted to those identified. (Gemma Boyle, DSF Literacy and Clinical Services)
- j. Access to resources and strategies for educators and parents through AISWA- inclusive learning and other agencies such as Bunbury Child Health Occupational Therapists and their school based programmes or DSF- Dyslexia Speld Foundation. Working with specialists eg: UWA Child Development Team, Language for Life Literacy Clinics, Sonic Hearing. Contacting specialists such as Maggie Dent for resiliency advice (Maggie is a mentor to our school). Parents have attended courses through AISWA, DSF and had personal contact with Maggie Dent on school recommendations.
- k. Australian Early Development Index- AEDI
- l. Tests undertaken by psychologists alongside educator professional reading after analysis.
- m. Literacy net for certain individuals

In general terms, underachievement is widely recognised as a discrepancy between potential and performance (Reis & McCoach, 2000). One of the most useful and commonly cited definitions of underachievement is that of Whitmore: ‘Underachievement has been simply defined as school performance judged to be significantly below the level expected, based on some reliable evidence of potential for higher achievement’ (Whitmore, 1987, p. 1). Underachievement is widely recognised as a substantial discrepancy between potential and performance. This may be a result of an individual’s circumstance (background and current), specified and unspecified learning difficulties, disengagement (common when entering early adolescence or when social issues dominate or when academic rigor is lacking OR too learning is unscaffolded.)

6. To evaluate the effectiveness of learning opportunities, environments and experiences
- a. Observations, collections of works of 'excellence' by children (communication of ideas, conceptual understandings etc) and school devised 'indicator' statements appropriate for phases of development- 2012/13 goal. What quality of work do we expect from a child (who has been with us since K) when they leave the Early Childhood Phase- end of Year 2/3? What baseline skills do we, as a school, expect them to have in core areas, life skills and EYLF outcomes?
 - b. QIP + School Improvement Plan- known as Child Side Continuity and Cohesion Plan
 - c. Observations of long term learning, children applying knowledge and skills across different scenarios and making skills and knowledge useful a long time after intentional teaching sessions.
 - d. Observations about children taking ideas and making them happen e.g. enterprise day committee, the cubby community, maintenance, crazy paving- 'real' learning inspired by educators but sustained and completed entirely by children- self motivation.
 - e. Observation of level of interest, amount of use, quality of conversations and interactions within an intentional experience and/or specifically designed physical learning environment zone. EYLF proformas.
 - f. Feedback from families that children are taking ideas home and wanting to use themⁱ.
 - g. The specific language and terminology children use to describe, explain, engage, create, implement independently especially for ICT, Big Ideas, Mathematics and Science.

“ Assessment for learning is the process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go and how best to get there. ”

Assessment Reform Group (2002)

ⁱ 'External' resources added to assessment and evaluation

Educators consider the following elements when designing learning experiences, monitoring, assessing and reporting:

Connection and challenge

Learning experiences should connect with students' existing knowledge, skills and values while extending and challenging their current ways of thinking and acting.

- Enable students to make connections across learning areas through integration, as well as making connections to what they know and to the wider world.
- Enable students to explore different behaviours, values, languages, cultures and social practices both directly and through investigations.

Action and reflection

Learning experiences should be meaningful and encourage both action and reflection on the part of the learner.

- Enable students to take increased responsibility for their learning by explicitly modelling goal setting and self reflection.
- Provide feedback to students as a basis for future learning.

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- Enable students to relate new learning to what they already know, adapt it for their own purposes and translate their thoughts into actions.

Motivation and purpose

Learning experiences should be motivating and their purpose clear to the student.

- Enable students to negotiate a curriculum that meets their needs
- Encourage higher-order thinking skills
- Use a wide range of technologies and different forms of communication and representation

Inclusivity and difference

Learning experiences should respect and accommodate differences between learners.

- Take into account the interests, cultural backgrounds, learning styles and ability levels of students
- Include activities which require group planning, decision making and interaction with people inside and outside the classroom

Independence and collaboration

Learning experiences should encourage students to learn both independently and from and with others.

- Engage students in shared activities and conversations with other people, including family members and people in the wider community
- Encourage collaborative and independent learning, sensible risk taking and explicit teaching of social skills

Reporting to families:

Reporting is based on professional judgements being made using dependable evidence in comparison to:

- Achievement standards** in the Western Australian Curriculum.
- WA Curriculum Framework Progress maps:** for learning areas not as yet provided for by the WAC.
- School expectations:** Child Side School has always considered children's milestone achievements in light of what is considered reasonable for a child in that stage of development to demonstrate, given brain research which defines age-stage learning as having 'windows' in which certain indicators and milestones are feasibly expected to be evidenced. These 'windows' have acceptable time frame variations across years such as 'witnessed' at the differing rates when children learn to sit up, crawl, walk and talk. Age-stage variance is taken into consideration in-line with national standards, phase of development indicators and personal knowledge of each child. This helps determine the course of action undertaken by educators and parents if, when and how to intervene (at a remedial or extension level).
- Individual Expectations:** the progress made by each child, their 'distance travelled' over the particular reporting period taking into account each child's starting points and milestones. We also consider the opportunities and provision they have had in which to demonstrate 'movement/progress' and whether it is prudent to undertake a different course of action for that child. Educators work with the senior educator and determine the level of adjustment required within the general classroom context to meet that child's point of need (PON). Contextual influences are always considered as part of the child's journey.

All levels are taken into consideration when making educational decisions relevant to each child, their personalised curriculum plan, each educator's Phase of Development planning across a MAG (multi-aged group) setting and PON (point of need intentional teaching) during implementation AND when reporting.

1. Why are we reporting to parents?

- a. Focus on child as an individual
 - i. Know each child – sense of individuality
 - ii. How they approach their learning, engagement and participation
 - iii. Competencies and capabilities
 - iv. Social/emotional beings
 - v. Academic Achievement
 - vi. Progress
- b. Reflection/Validate what we do in both the short and long term
- c. Inform parents
- d. Up skill parents – what IS literacy, numeracy, etc. Help parents support child at home, one-on-one
- e. Legal requirement to show personal progress across all subject/learning areas in relation to:
 - i. School expectations- phase of development indicators
 - ii. Year level achievement standards (AC)
 - iii. Expectation/achievement levels.

2. How do we report to/inform families?

- a. *Parent and educator involvement in individual morning work* – families able to participate in morning program and ask for help or more information should they require it. The educator in the morning is available as a 'consultant' should parents choose to utilise them, this would otherwise be unavailable to families if doing 'homework.' This is optional for parents, it is their choice whether they engage at this time or at home at their convenience to routinely provide their child one-on-one time to practise, revise, consolidate spelling, reading, maths. We provide 'First Steps- Parents as Partners' hand outs during the year. Educators engage with child and parent at PON (point of need) and on request.
- b. *Point of Need (PON) updates* – informal conversation with families about small educational issues, progress, ways families can provide continuity, a 2 way communication process
- c. *Learning team debriefs* – called by educators or parents to discuss concerns or areas of interest. Paves the way for accessing any specialist help if required for individuals.
- d. *Exhibitions and focused Learning Conversations* – criteria based presentations by children of their Big Ideas, which may involve hands on parent/child activity (age-appropriate). Provides children with another audience and includes children in the educational accountability process.
- e. *Learning logs* – regular descriptions of group learning, with photos and intentional teaching input and focus, purpose is to help families constructively engage with child in conversations about their work or to participate with them if they have been absent from school.
- f. *Written report*
 - i. 'Your child as a learner' (educator reflection about evidence of learning outcomes – BPEA, EYLF, General Capabilities, Habits of Mind) about the child as a learner (their chequered or spiked achievement profile, positive and realistic, using 'can do' language, using specific examples not just generalities) and may include:
 1. Sense of individuality – work habits
 2. Self-awareness
 3. Self-management

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4. Personal interests
 5. Challenges
 6. Big Picture 6 As
 7. How they approach their learning
 8. Competencies and capabilities
 9. Social/emotional awareness and management
 10. Attitude/Effort
- ii. Learning focuses
 1. General capabilities – snapshot of the child’s capabilities (from the AC)
 2. Big ideas – description of this term’s unit (general for all learners), personal comment and progress information
 3. Curriculum areas – progress information, using a five-point scale
 4. Comments related to academic achievement (from morning work, skill builders, learning conversations, big ideas)
 5. Child reflections
 - iii. Final comment – what we are doing to support the child’s development, what families can do at home
 - iv. Parent feedback form
- g. *Written reports (K/Foundation)*
- i. ‘Your child as a learner’ - educator reflection about evidence of learning outcomes – BPE, EYLF, General Capabilities (the child’s chequered achievement, positive and realistic, using ‘can do’ language, using specific examples not just generalities)
 - ii. Tracking progress in integrated learning – using relevant documents
 - iii. Final comment – what we are doing to support the child’s development, what families can do at home
 - iv. Parent feedback form
- h. *Home portfolios* – family responsibility to collect evidence to showcase their child’s “at home and out of school” passions, commitments, achievements (e.g. sport, music, language, drama, cooking). School Reports can only indicate what is demonstrated at school even though we know that many of our children are engaging at a high level over a number of years in particular areas out of school. At school we are unable to offer opportunities for children to show us their skill level and passions such as in a second language, speed skating, acrobatics, football, cricket, drama, swimming or musical accomplishments and even travel experiences. However these are just as valid and as important to children and families and we encourage parents to document, collect and celebrate these as ‘guardians’ of their children’s life experiences. BPEA encourages learners, families and educators to seek and acknowledge the learning outside of school and make bridges and connections with school learning.

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