

GAP IDENTIFICATION IN THE EARLY YEARS & BEYOND

It has helped to identify gaps in children's learning as it focuses on what the children can do and has helped to close the gaps through targeted interventions for those children identified

Stocks Lane Primary - Bradford
Yr. 2 Teacher & Key Stage 1 Leader

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Launchpad has helped us with progression, looking at breaking up literacy into headings to clearly identify gaps and areas of development

Holy Trinity CofE First School - Northumberland
Assistant Head & Reception Teacher

[click for more](#) 

This first newsletter is appropriate for:

- All people working and leading within the Early Years.
- People leading on Phonics, Early Reading, Writing, English or wider learning.
- SENDCos and those working with children with more specific & significant needs.
- People working within specialist provisions, be they schools, units or classes,
- People in KS1 and beyond, where there are concerns around SEND and progression

The content will outline the importance of upskilling ourselves to have a level of gap identification and gap closing capability for various reasons so that we can know:

- why a child is not meeting age-related expectations or is finding something tricky.
- that we are working on the right thing when we put things in place.
- we are closing the gap that is acting as a barrier to readiness and progression.

If you think this is of interest to you and your Team, please read on. Future topics will pick up on aspects of this introductory newsletter in much greater detail.

Click here to read what others are saying about Launchpad for Literacy

Click here to read what others are saying about Gap Identification in LfL

THE ISSUE

Without fail, we will all work with children who are not meeting age-related expectations (ARE). Many children with Speech Language & Communication skill gaps will have more specific and significant needs. We are told that the average number of children not meeting ARE in the Early Years is 50%. For some of us, the figure will be higher. For others, it will be lower. However, this is an issue for all of us in some shape or form. These skill gaps follow many older children as they move through school.



TRADITIONAL SOLUTIONS

When children are not meeting ARE, we can reach for isolated interventions that promise to fill the gap for all of our children in exactly the same way, even though nobody really understands how this promise can actually work. Or we can keep pushing an aspect of learning that a child finds tricky, giving them a diet of more and more of the same in the hope that this does the trick. In reality, we know that it doesn't.

A MORE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

As an alternative, we can upskill ourselves to understand the incremental detail and order of skill development. If we use this understanding, with our knowledge of developmental norms, we can begin to upskill ourselves to identify skill gaps which are acting as barriers. If we understand how skills work together and how they link to future or current learning, we can identify the main barrier and the essential gap we need to close. This gives us a longer-term and more sustainable solution to the issues that we face.

CLOSING GAPS

In order to close gaps, we must establish a child's level of success – what can they do? An incremental understanding of child development then allows us to set developmentally appropriate next steps so that we can close the gap, ensure progression and move the child closer towards ARE.



 Bitesize version What is the Launchpad for Literacy Toolkit?

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What is Launchpad for Literacy - Bitesize Version



Watch the Principles of Gap Identification & Gap Closing CPD if you want to find out more.

Watch on  YouTube

GAP IDENTIFICATION: LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT & CORE SKILLS

CAUSES OF CONCERN

For many children, our concerns begin with their developmental levels long before these skill gaps have become barriers to more formal learning. Some of these children will have more specific & significant needs. For these children, we need to make referrals and work with Outside Agencies. Giving ourselves gap identification capability makes referrals more specific and discussions more productive. It also allows us to put things in place for target children immediately and to ensure progression whilst we wait for other services.

We now have clear next steps for the children and a reason as to why they are struggling with their understanding. Staff also have a better understanding and rather than keeping doing more of the same we have used the toolkit to deliver focused intervention work

Home Farm Primary School
Bradford EYFS Lead

[click for more](#)

IT'S DOWN TO YOU!

Many children will not have complex needs or meet referral criteria. Their skill gaps cause an educational but not a clinical concern. Although upskilling ourselves to identify gaps is essential for both groups of children, it is particularly important here. The only people who are going to establish what such children need are you and your Team!

WHAT EXACTLY DO THEY NEED?

For both groups of children, I need to move away from a broad concern about a child not meeting ARE to a point where I know what the main gap is and what we need to work on.

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What is Launchpad for Literacy - Bitesize Version

Watch on  YouTube



Watch the Skills & Developmental Areas CPD if you want to find out more

GAP IDENTIFICATION & MORE FORMAL LEARNING

A LEADERSHIP STRATEGY

A strong developmental understanding can help us in wider ways, as children transition to more formal learning in the Early Years & beyond. Linking more formal learning with the key skills that should create a foundation of readiness and support further progression, allows Leaders and wider Teams to:

- have a systematic, bottom-up approach when preparing readiness
- identify and tackle skill gaps when there are issues with Phonics and wider literacy
- raise attainment with measurable outcomes such as GLD, PSC, etc.
- ensure children with recognised SEND or part of vulnerable group make progress.



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WHAT IS THE ACTUAL FIRST STEP?

When it comes to more formal learning, we already know that a child won't be able to blend a 5-phoneme word if they can't blend a cvc word such as 'dog.' We know that we cannot expect a child to write a story if they struggle to write a letter, word or sentence-level. However, what is the skill gap that is acting as a barrier before this apparent first step? It is this that we need to work out rather than doing more and more of what the child cannot do. What actually comes before this perceived first step?



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Watch the Skills for
Readiness & Progression

CPD if you want to find out more about the links between key skills and aspects of formal learning.



THE EARLIER THE BETTER

This understanding allows us to identify and close gaps with children who are older and who are already finding an aspect of formal learning problematic. In the future, we do not want to wait for something to become a learning issue before we start to explore and tackle the skill gaps.

A bottom-up strategy from our two-year-old provisions onwards (or from as early as possible) allows us to identify and tackle gaps as soon as possible. This is by far the best way to facilitate progress and raise longer term outcomes for our children.

Watch the Raising
Attainment CPD if you want to find out the links between skill gaps and measured education attainment.

