

Baseline Assessment

Introduction

In January 1998 the steering group of Renfrewshire's Early Intervention Language project (funded by the SOEID) set up a working group to consider approaches to baseline assessment that would help in effectively evaluating the project. Although a number of more general approaches to evaluation had been put in place for the start of the project in August 1997 time did not allow for a more comprehensive method of tracking individual children's progress at that stage.

The main aim was to develop a means of establishing a baseline assessment of individual children at the start of P1 and to track their progress through P2 and P3. With this in mind the group looked at various commercially produced materials as well as some *ad hoc* approaches from elsewhere. It was decided, however, that for our specific purpose we would be better to develop our own materials with the aim of producing an approach that:

- focused on key aspects of language and early literacy skills
- was based on up-to-date research
- would be valid at early P1 and late P3
- was relatively straightforward for staff to carry out
- was 'child friendly' but reliable
- combined elements of staff observation as well as simple test items
- allowed a compromise between objectivity for evaluation purposes and flexibility to allow staff to take account of the nature of individual responses
- was realistic in terms of time available.

In addition, while recognising that the prime purpose of the approach was project evaluation, it was hoped that the materials would prove useful for schools themselves in charting the progress of their pupils and helping to identify where problems were arising.

The developed materials are, therefore, as follows.

A. Observation schedule

1. Language i) Expressive ii) Listening/comprehension
2. Concepts of print

B. Test items

1. Phonological awareness
2. Visual matching
3. Knowledge of letters

In addition, to continue the tracking of reading progress beyond the early stages of literacy, it was decided to use a simple word recognition test.

Phonological Awareness

1.2 Rhyming

MATERIALS

Seven picture strips, each with four pictures, including one practice item.

PRACTICE

Show child the first picture strip.

Say *‘Can you find another picture which sounds nearly the same as ...?’*

Point to the first picture and say the word.

Do not give any further clues.

Say *‘Can you find another picture which sounds nearly the same as “cat”?’*

(Point to each picture and say each word.)

Lead child through the example.

‘Cat – tree – no, that isn’t the same.’

‘Cat – bed – no, that isn’t the same.’

‘Cat – hat – yes, that’s the same.’

TEST

Continue in the same way for the test items.

Score 1 for correct response

Score 0 for incorrect response

MAXIMUM
SCORE

6

Phonological Awareness

1.4 Beginning Sounds

MATERIALS

Four strips each of three pictures. Item 1 is a practice item.

PRACTICE

Place strip in front of child and ask child to name, e.g. DOG, FLOWER, MAN.

Say *'Which one starts with an "f".'* (emphasise letter sound)

'Not this one (dog) – it starts with "d".'

'What about this one (flower)? Yes it starts with "f".'

Ask child to join in. Repeat for 'm' sound as above.

TEST

Place each strip in turn in front of the child. The target sound is underlined below.

Ask which one begins with '?'. (Give letter sound.)

CHAIR	<u>D</u> UCK	SHOE
HOUSE	<u>B</u> OAT	<u>K</u> ITE
<u>S</u> OAP	DOG	<u>M</u> AN

Score: 1 for each correct word.

MAXIMUM
SCORE
3