



**Save Childhood  
Movement**

From knowledge to pathways  
**changing the dialogue**



## **DESCRIPTION**

A collaborative movement of people who are concerned about UK societal values and child wellbeing

## **VISION**

A caring, equitable and values-based society where child wellbeing lies at the heart of policymaking

Launched in London April 2013

Focused on the foundational early years of human development

In the process of becoming a charity

Multi-disciplinary team of 40 expert advisors

Early Years Education Group and Alliance

Nature Matters Alliance

National Children's Day UK

Active Facebook and Twitter pages

Members network

Newsletter list



Celebrating the rights & freedoms of children



## **The movement is..**

1. interested in the natural developmental rights and freedoms of young children and whether these are being compromised, especially in relation to the UNCRC
1. focused on challenging approaches and policies that are
  - a) not evidence-based
  - b) go against expert opinion and advice
  - c) lack democratic process and support
2. Interested in joining up the dots between early developmental pressures and later child and adult health and wellbeing
4. Interested in helping to strengthen and network existing groups in order to clarify core messages and better protect the rights and wellbeing of young children.



## THE SCM FLOURISH PROGRAMME 'Valuing Childhood'

### Three Strands

#### UNDERSTANDING THE CHILD

SCM Advisory Board

SCM Advisory Groups  
(Vital Beginnings, Early Years Education,  
Parenting, Children and Nature, Children and  
Media, Digital World, Expressive Arts)

Wellbeing Research

Values Research

Inequality Research

National Council on the Science of Human  
Learning and Development



Evaluating and guiding  
policy-making

#### MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

Child Wellbeing Impact  
Assessment Tool (CWIAT)

CWIAT Published Reports  
(for all new child related policies)

Online Values Surveys  
International Values Education Collaboration

Neurological screening tool  
(on school entry + annual)

Playing with Big Ideas

New forms of assessment



Developing a new  
Science of Learning  
to underpin future policy-making

#### PROMOTING WELLBEING

Flourish web portal

Supporting campaigns and projects

National Children's Day UK

Developing parent and teacher  
networks, forums and conferences

'Heart of a Child' Wellbeing Programme

Strategic Collaborations

Films and documentaries

Magazine & Books



Finding new solutions

## **In the UK (and particularly England)**

We live in a culture that has primarily focused on what children learn  
i.e a core body of knowledge  
**(the content/results)**

Rather than how and why children learn  
i.e. their motivations, values and dispositions  
**(the context/processes)**

Policymakers also prioritise desirable outcomes, with a significant bias towards certain subjects

Rather than a values-based approach based upon the holistic development of the whole child

performativity v creativity (Bob Jeffrey)

Individualisation and competition  
v inclusion and democratic values

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Nordic approach</b>	<b>Pre-school approach</b>
Central or de-central approach	A broad central guideline stressing inclusion and democratic values, with local development of the curriculum by the teachers and the parents	Centralised development of the curriculum, stressing autonomy of the child and competition between the children.
Focus of the work	Focus on broad developmental goals and living together in a learning community of educators and peers: the competent child	A focus on learning standards, teachers, classroom environment, preparation for school. Children can or cannot read
Pedagogical strategy	Broad orientations rather than prescribed outcomes: play, music, arts, project work, interaction with peers and nature. The own learning strategies of the child are respected.	Often prescriptive: clear targets and outcomes, detailed competencies.
Educational goals	Individual goals for each child are set with unobtrusive, developmental assessment	Assessments and sometimes testing required
Learning focus	Culturally valued 'topics of learning' privileged, taking into account the interest of the child. A holistic development of the child, which includes aspects like physical, arts, social etc.; attention to social values.	Teaching subjects privileged
Focus on the child versus focus on pre-set standards	A growing focus on individual language and oral competence... and much 'play' reading and writing.	focus on competence in the national language, oral, phonemic... with some formal skills in writing and reading

**John Bennett, Starting Strong, 2007**





### **CORE AIM**

to see the introduction of developmentally appropriate and evidence-based policymaking for the early years

### **OBJECTIVES**

re-establish the early years as a unique stage in its own right - and not merely a preparation for school

protect young children's natural developmental rights and freedoms

prevent baseline testing

reinstate the vital role of play

an English informal, play-based, learning rich and developmentally appropriate Foundation Stage until the end of Key Stage 1



# Saying no to Baseline Assessment

## UNCRC Developmental rights

- **Article 3:** The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.
- **Article 5:** The Convention does not take responsibility for children away from their parents and give more authority to governments. It does place on **governments the responsibility to protect and assist families** in fulfilling their essential role as nurturers of children.
- **Article 29 (Goals of education):** Children's education should develop each child's personality, talents and abilities to the fullest.

## Best interests of the child?

Significant move away from carefully developed holistic and formative measures that prioritise the best interests of children and families, to a focus on school performability/accountability

The DfE have specified that the majority of the assessment '... must be clearly linked to the learning and development requirements of the communication and language, literacy and mathematics areas of learning from the EYFS, appropriate for children's age and experience at the start of reception and must demonstrate a clear progression towards the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum in English and mathematics.'

# Democracy?

There has been widespread opposition to the idea by those actually working with young children

A DAYNURSERY.CO.UK POLL SHOWED THAT **98%** OF THE RESPONDENTS WERE AGAINST THE IDEA OF BASELINE TESTING

- Of 1,063 responses to the DfE's question, in its July "consultation" as to whether the principles of that paper were right, 57 per cent said no, with only 18 per cent in favour. **Yet the thrust of the proposals are unchanged.**
- Some 51 per cent replied that there should not be a baseline check at the start of reception, against 34 per cent in favour, with the detailed concerns of expert groups not even mentioned. **Yet it is happening.**
- Similarly, 73 per cent of consultees came out against allowing schools to choose from commercially available baseline assessments, compared to 12 per cent in favour. **Again, it is happening.**
- And 68 per cent said that if the baseline assessments were to happen, they should not be made optional, against 19 per cent who said they should. **They are being made optional.**

Warwick Mansell NAHT Blog on the primary assessment consultation

## IT DIDN'T WORK IN 1997?

Baseline testing was introduced by the Labour government in 1997 and was then withdrawn in 2002 as unworkable

## IT DIDN'T WORK IN WALES?

The Welsh government tried to bring in an on - entry assessment for children of 3-4 entering the Foundation Phase (their approach to 3-7 year old education). After a significant investment in a pilot project and then an All Wales roll out it had to be withdrawn due to the adverse feedback of teachers. What the review found was that the first 6 weeks on entry into school was spent observing the children and scoring them according to abilities. Headteachers consequently ended up having to brief parents in Welsh schools about why their 3-4 year old children were scoring the equivalent of 18 months olds on some areas of learning.

9<sup>th</sup> April 2012

“The NUT was delighted when the Education Minister in Wales Leighton Andrews conceded that he, and his department, had made a mistake with the introduction and implementation of baseline assessment for primary schools. The Child Development Assessment Profiles (CDAPs) were time consuming, ill-thought through and denied children and teachers’ essential teaching time.”



## Enormous differences in child ages and life experience

“The difference between 4-year-olds and 5-year-olds as a percentage of life experience is one fifth - which equates to testing a 10 year old against an 8 year old and finding the 8 year old ‘wanting’ in some way. Or even finding a 20 year old lacking in adult life skills as compared to a 25 year old, or, at the other end of the scale, expecting a healthy 80 year old to be no different in any way to a healthy 64 year old.”

**Dr Pam Jarvis, Leeds Trinity University**

## Significant incentive for schools to 'game' the baseline

### Government's own Assessment Reform Group (ARG) response

*“Its principal objection to the idea is that teachers would have an incentive to bias pupil results downwards, in order to show pupils making more progress afterwards.”*

[www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/blogs/warwick-mansell](http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/blogs/warwick-mansell)

## Encouragement of notions of fixed ability

### The Cambridge Primary Review

*“Notions of fixed ability would be exacerbated by a baseline test in reception that claimed to reliably predict future attainment. This could lead schools being unambitious in relation to children with low baseline assessment scores.”*

*<http://cprtrust.org.uk>*

## **Compromises EYFS Profile data**

The tests will be **statistically invalid** and will compromise the good work already achieved through the EYFS Profile data.

The loss of the Profile data will **undermine the Study of Early Education and Development (SEED) project**, introduced by the government to track children's progress, and will damage current work with colleagues in the health and social services who make use of the EYFS Profile in bringing together services for children and families.

**It will also compromise the longitudinal data** needed for the government to assess the impact of the Early Years Pupil Premium.

# The Commercialisation of Assessment

Establishing children's developmental stage on entry to school will play a crucial role in helping teachers intervene at the earliest opportunity. By identifying a pupil's emerging literacy and numeracy levels teachers will be able to gauge their strengths and needs in these core areas. This in turn will support the ongoing progression of each pupil and allow teaching and learning to be tailored accordingly.

## Our Reception Baseline assessment

GL Assessment is currently in the process of developing a fully standardised Reception Baseline assessment for pupils aged 4-5 years:

- It is a one-to-one assessment
- It is delivered on two tablets – one for the pupil and one for the teacher
- Teachers control the audio, the test progression and are responsible for recording the answers of the pupil
- The assessment is oral/picture-based, with full-colour illustrations
- It is divided into two parts; 'core' and 'extended', The core measures literacy, language and numeracy, whilst the extended measures non-verbal ability.

Below is a screenshot from the assessment. The teacher's tablet is on the left; the pupil's tablet is on the right. The teacher taps the question audio icon and then the pupil answers the question by tapping on the answer. Their answer is then recorded on the teacher's tablet.



GL Assessment

# Massive pressure on schools to sign up quickly.

We are introducing a baseline assessment in reception year, the [reception baseline](#), to improve how we measure primary schools' progress.

Government-funded schools that wish to use the reception baseline assessment from September 2015 should sign up by the end of April. In 2022 we'll then use whichever measure shows the most progress: your reception baseline to key stage 2 results or your key stage 1 results to key stage 2 results.

From September 2016 you'll only be able to use your reception baseline to key stage 2 results to measure progress. If you choose not to use the reception baseline, from 2023 we'll only hold you to account by your pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2.

Independent schools may use the reception baseline, but we won't collect your data.

# WHY SAY NO?

Against 'best interests of the child' principle

Against best interests of families

Costly and time-consuming

Statistically invalid

Impact on current and intended longitudinal data

Disruption of school routines

Loss of crucial teacher/child 'settling in' time

Emphasis moving from child to test

Values conveyed to child re 'what matters'

Impact on child wellbeing

Impact on parent wellbeing



# WORKLOAD



**53%** said accountability  
and Ofsted



## NUT consultation response

It is a serious step to move to a system whereby children were subject to annual formal statutory assessment from entering school until age seven. At an age when the majority of children in the best international education systems are not even part of formal primary education, it is absurd that the Government proposes the imposition of yet another test. It should rethink its position and continue to let schools determine how they assess young children on entry to Reception, for the benefit of the children's learning and not as yet another accountability measure.

## BBC Report- Jan 2015

Education is one of the biggest areas of public spending - and across the OECD it represents more than \$2.5 trillion in annual expenditure. Pressure to raise standards has prompted 450 different programmes of reform in the past eight years, says the OECD. But only about a tenth of these reform programmes have ever been tested for their effectiveness since they were launched, says the think-tank's report.

Implementation of education reforms can take 10 to 15 years - much longer than is demanded by the political cycle. It can mean that incoming ministers are under pressure to announce new policies without any clear assessment of the half-completed previous policies they are replacing.

Last week the former head of English education watchdog Ofsted, Sir David Bell, warned that attempts to raise standards in England's schools were being undermined by political interference and short-term demands of party politics.

## Joint Campaign

Open Letter  
Joint Press Release  
Joint social media campaign

TMTS Resource Page  
TACTYC Lobbying Pamphlet  
Early Education online Petition

Guidance for teachers  
Guidance for parents  
Non Compliance?

[www.toomuchtoosoon.org](http://www.toomuchtoosoon.org)





“Contrasting the idea of a one-off baseline assessment with the early years foundation stage’s assessment principles which involved considerations of the whole child across a range of contexts and over time, the proposal to test a young child in an unfamiliar situation at a transition point in their education will not achieve reliable results, is contrary to EYFS principles and is unfair to children and their parents and early years practitioners.”

The baseline would also run the risk of needlessly labelling some particularly vulnerable children, such as summer-born boys, as failures from the beginning of formal schooling - They are not failing; they are merely at a different stage in their development.”

**TACTYC**

## EPPI Review, 2009

Summative assessment by teachers has most benefit when teachers use evidence gathered over a period of time and with appropriate flexibility in choice of tasks rather than from an event taking place at a particular time. This enables information to be used formatively to adapt teaching as well as summatively.

Using the results of student assessment for high-stakes school accountability reduces the validity of the assessment, whether this is conducted by teachers or by external tests and examinations.



## British Educational Research Association (BERA) 13<sup>th</sup> Oct 2013 Letter to Michael Gove

The problems of dependability (relating to the interconnected properties of reliability and, especially, validity) of test results would apply to any attempt to create a new baseline test at the beginning of reception, so we vigorously oppose this idea. Once again, the principal objection is the incentive for teachers to bias (deflate) the assessment outcome, whilst administering the baseline assessment.

The revised EYFS Profile is a useful assessment at the early years stage. But the breadth of its compass, which is an advantage for the purpose of identifying pupils' needs, is a disadvantage for the purpose of providing a baseline for narrower national tests in reading and mathematics at KS2. Whilst certain of its sub-scales could be used, they are unable to discriminate sufficiently to provide a good baseline measure alone. Moreover, as an accountability measure, it would be undermined by pressure on teachers to bias their judgements. **We certainly would not want to see the EYFS Profile made non-statutory in favour of a new, narrow 'baseline check'.**

“In 2011, UNICEF commented that "Compared with 20 other OECD2 countries, including substantially poorer countries such as Poland and Greece, the UK came bottom on three out of six dimensions of well-being, and came bottom overall in the league table. Other indices of children's well-being have also found the UK to be doing badly."

Does subjecting every four-year old to a test when they start school seem like the best response to that?”

**Julian Grenier Blog**

National Chair, Early Education; Headteacher, Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre <http://juliangrenier.blogspot.co.uk/>

I am left wondering - yet again - if other countries bringing in major educational changes are quite as brazen in ignoring a wide range of professional, expert and on-the-ground opinion as our government in England seems to be.

Warwick Mansell, NAHT Blog

*[www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/blogs/warwick-mansell](http://www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/blogs/warwick-mansell)*

“No reform of assessment and accountability, however radical it purports to be, will adequately address the challenge of educational standards in England’s primary schools unless it also addresses the habitual failing in the way both assessment and accountability are defined and conceived.”

**Cambridge Primary Review Trust**  
<http://cprtrust.org.uk>