

Appendix 2

The achievement continuum

10 developmental stages	Stage characteristics	Stage descriptor
1. Encounter	Characterised by presence and reflex responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners are present during an activity or experience. Any participation is fully prompted by facilitators. Learners may remain passive or they may resist. For some learners, being able to tolerate a shared activity may, in itself, be significant. Learners may show simple, reflex responses to encounters but it will be difficult to tell if any learning has occurred.
2. Early Awareness	Characterised by fleeting attention and inconsistent responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners begin to show that they are aware of activities and experiences. They may notice, fleetingly focus on or attend briefly to an object, event or another person. Learners may have periods when they appear alert and ready to focus their attention on certain people, events, objects or parts of objects. They may begin to respond, although not consistently, to what is happening.
3. Interest	Characterised by more consistent and differentiated reactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners begin to show interest in people, events and objects. They respond more consistently to familiar people, events and objects. Learners begin to give reactions that show that they can tell the difference between specific people, objects, places and events in their surroundings.
4. Supported participation	Characterised by co-operation and engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners accept supported participation. They co-operate with shared exploration. Learners engage in activities. They participate in shared activity, although their responses may be supported by staff or other learners.

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5. Active involvement	Characterised by recognition, anticipation and proactive responses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners begin to be proactive in their interactions. They may actively strive to reach out, join in or comment in some way on the activity itself or on the actions or responses of other people. • Learners recognise familiar people, events and objects. They may acknowledge familiar sequences of events and communicate consistent preferences and affective responses.
6. Development	Characterised by remembered responses and intentional communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners begin to develop and refine actions and reactions, often by trial and improvement. They remember responses over short periods of time. • Learners begin to communicate intentionally. They seek attention through eye contact, gesture or action. They request events or activities.
7. Exploration	Characterised by concentration, recall and observation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners begin to explore materials in increasingly complex ways. They concentrate for longer periods and participate in shared activities with less support. • Learners remember responses over more extended periods and participate in shared activities with less support. Learners remember responses over more extended periods. They observe the results of their actions with interest.

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8. Initiation	Characterised by established responses and conventional communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners begin to initiate activities. They may respond to options and choices with actions or gestures. They greet known people and use emerging conventional communication. • Learners maintain established responses over increasing periods of time and anticipate more and more known events. They actively explore events and objects for more extended periods.
9. Consolidation	Characterised by the formation of skills, knowledge, concepts and understandings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners gain, strengthen or make general use of skills, knowledge, concepts or understandings that relate to their experience of the world around them. They are aware of cause and effect and know that certain actions produce predictable results. • Learners apply potential solutions systematically to problems. They use single words, gestures, signs or symbols to identify or request familiar objects or to communicate about events and express their feelings.

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10. Application	Characterised by the application of skills, knowledge, concepts and understandings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners apply their skills, knowledge and understanding to a range of familiar experiences. They carry out simple tasks in familiar settings and are able to engage in familiar, straightforward routines, anticipating some of the stages. They are aware of cause and effect and are able to anticipate the effects of a range of familiar actions. They can review activities, identifying what they enjoy and what they don't. • They are able to access appropriate sources of help when carrying out routine activities. • Learners can apply knowledge or skills used in one familiar activity to another familiar activity, using this ability to solve simple problems. • Learners can speak or otherwise communicate in simple exchanges and discussions, make requests, ask questions and make statements. They can listen and respond to requests and follow single-step instructions.