

Data submission lock for scale points 4-8

Background

The data submission lock for scale points 4-8 prevents practitioners entering the attainment of scale points 4-8 for a child before scale points 1, 2 and 3 are attained. It ensures data submissions are accurate and consistent with the developmental nature of scale points 1, 2 and 3.

The data submission lock was originally introduced in version 3 of the eProfile¹ software (then known as EYEprofile) in the academic year 2008-09.

Context

The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA) requested this lock in eProfile as a result of its concerns about increasing instances of scale points 4-8 being recorded for a child without prior attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3 in that assessment scale.

The EYFS profile handbook states that scale points 1, 2 and 3 are developmental steps leading to the attainment of scale points 4-8². This is the typical pattern of attainment that applies to the overwhelming majority of children. Exceptions to this pattern are only found in circumstances where a child has complex special educational needs.

Scale points 4-8 are not hierarchical and can be attained in any order. They describe the child's attainment of the early learning goals. This attainment reflects a child who is at a later stage of development than a child attaining scale points 1, 2 or 3.

The practitioner should use professional judgement (referencing QCDA exemplification³), to decide which attainment band (either scale points 1, 2 and 3 or scale points 4-8) best describes an individual child's attainment for that particular scale. This will ensure that the information passed to the year one teacher gives an accurate picture of that child's attainment.

This judgement should be based on evidence of whether a child has attained a scale point (or not). It should not be influenced by the desire to reward a child for their achievements during the reception year.

Further information regarding scale points 1-3 can be found in the QCDA guidance note *EYFS profile scale points 1-3* (June 2009).

Review of 2008-09 process

The data submission lock preventing input of scale points 4-8 without prior attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3 was introduced to establish why practitioners and/or local authorities were increasingly recording a pattern of development that was not consistent with the principles of the EYFS profile.

In order to record attainment of scale points 4-8 without prior attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3, local authorities had to request a password from QCDA to unlock eProfile, and provide evidence that their request was justified.

The step by step process for requesting the password was as follows:

- where a practitioner felt a child had attained one or some of scale points 4-8 without the prior attainment of 1, 2 and 3 in a particular scale or scales, they discussed this initially with their local authority moderation manager

¹ eProfile is an electronic system funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) for the collection and submission of EYFS profile data by practitioners

² See EYFS profile handbook 2008, page 5

³ QCDA exemplification consists of written examples within the EYFS profile handbook 2008, pages 26-82 and the video clips available to download or stream from www.qcda.gov.uk/eyfsp

- if the moderation manager also agreed this was an exception, a request for the password was submitted to QCDA on a standard QCDA template within a set time period
- the request was logged by QCDA and the moderation manager was contacted for an in depth discussion regarding the attainment of the child concerned
- a decision was made by QCDA and this was communicated to the moderation manager. This decision was final and no further discussion was entered into.

QCDA received 159 requests for the password to unlock the eProfile between 27 May and 19 June 2009. Of these requests, 13 were approved (8%). All 13 related to children with complex special educational needs.

Process from 2009-10 onwards

The process for requesting the password to unlock data submission software will work in the same way as it did in 2008-09. That is, if the moderation manager agrees with the practitioner (after discussion) that there is an exception, they will apply to the QCDA for the password to unlock scale points 4-8 in a particular scale. Further information regarding this process, including the dates during which requests will be considered, will be sent via eUpdate to all EYFS profile moderation managers early in the summer term.

A selection of frequently asked questions and some examples of the decision making processes that followed requests to unlock eProfile follow, to further illustrate the supporting principles.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is there a lock on the entry of scale points 4-8?

Scale points 1, 2 and 3 are developmental steps prior to the consideration and attainment of the early learning goals (scale points 4-8). The typical pattern of development of a child would show attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3 prior to 4-8. The developmental nature of scale points 1, 2 and 3 is fundamental to the EYFS profile, as it was previously to the foundation stage profile. The lock has been added to data submission software

to reinforce this message and to ensure that this principle is applied consistently by practitioners and local authorities.

Why is the lock only on some data submission software? Isn't it easier if I use a different data collection system?

QCDA and the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) have approached other software providers to request that a locking mechanism is added to their programmes, following the principle of the eProfile lock. This is now taking place, with commercial software providers now putting a lock on the entry of scale points 4-8 before 1, 2 and 3.

Why should scale points 1, 2 and 3 be attained prior to scale points 4-8?

Attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3 prior to scale points 4-8 is a typical pattern of attainment. Scale points 1, 2 and 3 are developmental and reflect a child not yet working securely within the early learning goals (scale points 4-8).

What is a typical pattern of development?

A typical pattern of development in the EYFS profile would be a child attaining scale points 1, 2 and then 3 before they attained any of the early learning goals that underly scale points 4-8. Further information on this can be found in the QCDA guidance note *EYFS profile scale points 1-3* (June 2009).

Why is the password to unlock scale points 4-8 prior to the attainment of scale points 1, 2 and 3 held by QCDA and not given to local authority moderation managers?

QCDA holds the password so it can monitor the nature and level of requests. The increasing level of requests to unlock eProfile had raised concerns that moderation managers misunderstood the circumstances when this could be permitted.

It is only in exceptional circumstances that a child might attain scale points 4-8 in a particular scale or scales prior to attaining scale points 1, 2 and 3. In order to address this concern and ensure national consistency, QCDA will continue to hold the password and moderation managers will be required to submit a request for the password on a case-by-case basis.

Requests to unlock scale points 4-8: examples of the decision making process

Example 1:

Background scenario

A child is electively mute within school. The school has worked closely with parents during the year to support the child's learning. Evidence has included taped reading and linking sounds and letters sessions provided by the parents.

The practitioner has observed the child whispering to her mother during sessions in school and was able to overhear evidence of both reading and linking sounds and letters. The child communicates verbally at home and is able to non-verbally communicate her needs in school to both adults and other children.

The practitioner felt that the child had attained scale points 1, 3 and 4 on the Emotional development scale. A request was made for the password to allow the entry of scale point 4 in eProfile without the prior attainment of scale point 2.

Decision

The password was not provided as the child had only attained scale point 1.

Rationale

Scale points 1, 2 and 3 reflect a developmental sequence of attainment.

Scale point 2 'Communicates freely about home and community' reflects a child's emotional security and confidence. The fact the child chooses to communicate at home and not at school is significant to the non-attainment of the scale point.

The practitioner should not consider scale points 4-8 when the child is still progressing towards the early learning goals.

Example 2:

Background scenario

A child does not show an awareness of rhyme and alliteration; however the child does hear and say sounds, blend sounds and use his phonic knowledge to read simple words.

The practitioner felt that the child had attained scale point 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 within the Linking sounds and letters scale. A request was made for the password to allow the entry of scale points 5, 6 and 7 in eProfile without the prior attainment of scale point 2.

Decision

The password was not provided since the child is working securely within the early learning goals.

Rationale

The child is working securely within the early learning goals and will already have attained scale point 2 and should be recorded as having done so within eProfile. The practitioner should not be looking at the developmental steps (scale points 1, 2 and 3) towards the early learning goals when the attainment of the child is accurately being reflected within scale points 4-8.

Example 3:

Background scenario

Due to a medical condition (cerebral palsy) a child has no awareness of a need to use the toilet and is reliant on adult help for managing personal hygiene.

The practitioner felt that the child had attained scale points 1, 3 and 6 within the Disposition and attitudes scale. A request was made for the password to allow the entry of scale point 6 in eProfile without the prior attainment of scale point 2.

Decision

The password was provided.

Rationale

Disposition and attitudes scale point 2 'Dresses, undresses and manages own personal hygiene with adult support' describes a child's approach to being responsible for themselves.

As the child is unaware of a need to use the toilet due to a medical condition he or she is unable to attain scale point 2. This is not a developmental issue, but a medical one and will not prohibit the child from moving on to attain some or all of the scale points 4-8 relating to early learning goals in this scale.

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