

NCCA Primary Mathematics Toolkit – Support material

Additional Support Pathways for the Primary Mathematics Curriculum

What are the Additional Support Pathways?

The Additional Support Pathways (ASP) is a tool that is designed to support teachers to provide for more individualised and inclusive learning experiences for children with additional needs. It provides a lens through which to conceptualise and recognise the kind of learning experience which are most appropriate for these children as they engage with Learning Outcomes in the curriculum.



Benefits for the child

Each child is an individual with a unique set of strengths that needs to be nurtured. The ASP recognises and attends to the diversity among children in the classroom. By aligning the child's learning experience with their individual strengths, needs and interests; children can experience more success, challenge and enjoyment in their learning. The ASP also support continuity and progression for children as they transition between classes and into post-primary.

How teachers can use the ASP

The ASP allows the teachers to look at (breaks down) the learning experience in greater detail to identify varying levels of cognitive demand for the child. Each of the seven pathways describes how children might access, engage with and demonstrate their learning as they work towards a Learning Outcome.

The pathways are displayed sequentially, however, given the diverse ways that children learn, these should not be interpreted as a conventional linear path of development. A child may be at 'attending' in some areas of mathematical learning and 'responding' in others.

The 'experiencing' pathway can present a challenge to teachers in assessing whether or not the child has experienced mathematical learning rather than being 'merely present' in the lesson/activity. The stimulus or activity to engage with their mathematical learning should be intentionally chosen in the context in which planned and incidental teaching and learning take place. Any signs of 'noticing' should be noted and used to inform planning for future mathematical experiences and activities. For instance, a stimulus such as a sound, if presented continuously, may not be noticed by a child with profound needs or may cause him or her to 'shut down' in order to block it. By using an on-off pattern, where a stimulus is presented and removed several times, it becomes easier for the adult to determine whether the child has noticed it or not.

Additional Support Pathways

Experiencing

The child is present during a learning activity. They are exposed to and/or aware of the learning environment. They are beginning to acclimatise to the learning environment such as objects, people, sounds and other sensory experiences.

Attending

The child becomes attentive to and/or engaged with the learning activities presented by changing gesture, posture, vocalisation, eye gaze, movement etc. They are acclimatised to the learning environment.

Responding

The child demonstrates capacity to actively or purposefully take an interest in the learning environment. They begin to indicate likes, dislikes or preferences. They actively respond to a learning activity with or without support.

Initiating

The child shows curiosity about the learning environment. They actively and independently seek opportunities to engage with and/or influence that environment.

Acquiring

The child demonstrates that knowledge, a concept or a skill is being learned. They explore and participates in the learning

Becoming fluent

The child moves towards fluency and accuracy in familiar learning contexts. They independently and consistently demonstrates recall mastery of the skill/concept/knowledge learned.

Generalising

The child transfers and applies learned skills, knowledge or concepts to familiar and unfamiliar contexts.