



The CIRCLE Participation Scale

The CIRCLE Participation scale should only be used in conjunction with the accompanying information in the module 'Inclusion in Practice: The CIRCLE Framework (Secondary).'

The CIRCLE Participation scale should not be used in isolation from this guidance.

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Using the CIRCLE Participation Scale (CPS)

Most learners progress well with good standard teaching practice within an inclusive classroom. However, some learners may require further support to enable them to participate fully in school life. Participation in school life is the focus of the CIRCLE Participation Scale.

The CIRCLE Participation Scale (CPS) is a tool which has been designed specifically to assess and measure participation in school life.

Participation in school life

To participate in school life learners must be able to, for example: attend school and move around the premises; communicate and work cooperatively with others; access and understand curricular material; follow school rules and routines; engage in school related roles and responsibilities; and organise themselves to study and complete assigned tasks. Some learners require support to do this.

Learners' participation is influenced by a combination of environmental factors (i.e. the physical environment, social environment and structures and routines) and learner specific factors (i.e. their motivation and specific skills). When learners experience high levels of unproductive stress or are unable to participate in school, they tend to have poorer outcomes than their peers. It can be challenging to work out how different aspects of the puzzle are impacting on a specific learner. The CPS can support this.

What is the CIRCLE Participation Scale (CPS)?

The CPS is a measure of participation in school life. It has been designed as an initial assessment to give an overview of a learner's strengths and potential areas for development.

It assesses the physical and social environment, structures and routines, motivation and skills in the following areas:

Attention and Concentration, Organisation and Planning, Motor Skills, Social, Emotional and Relationship Skills, and Verbal and Non-verbal communication.

Why use the CPS?

- The CPS will help you identify and record the learner's strengths and where support and strategies or further specific assessment should be targeted.
- It provides a baseline assessment which will allow you to record and measure progress. This may be particularly useful for evidencing the needs of 'looked after' learners (see p. 115, The Additional Support for Learning Act 2004 amended 2009).
- The CPS provides an easy to use simple visual profile of the learner which can support information sharing and discussions with others.
- It can be used to inform referral when support from others is required.
- It can be used to support personal reflection.
- The completed CPS will direct you to the relevant pages of the resource containing the specific supports and strategies for that learner profile.

Completing the CPS

The CPS asks you to read a set of statements and for each to consider and 'score' the response which is most accurate for the learner you are assessing:

4	Strongly supports school participation / Observed almost all of the time
3	Supports school participation / Observed most of the time
2	Interferes with school participation / Observed some of the time
1	Strongly interferes with school participation / Observed hardly any of the time

The scale helps to assess factors that support or interfere with participation in school life and/or the frequency with which it applies to the learner.

The learner doesn't have to be present when you score the CPS, but please try to complete it soon after you have seen them (preferably on the same day) while you have a clear impression of their ability.

You can complete the CPS by yourself or in consultation with others. Please try to answer all the questions. Ensure that you write the learner's name and the date of completion at the top of the page and sign it for future reference. The views of the learner themselves can also help inform the assessment process.

Existing supports and strategies

The CPS should be completed with current supports and strategies which are routinely used with that learner in place. Document these and how they are currently used in the notes section on the back of the CPS. If you are unsure if existing supports and strategies are effective, it might be useful to carry out focussed observation of the learner with and without the supports and strategies in place to determine the difference.

Considerations when completing the CPS

We know that learners respond differently in different contexts and that this may vary from day to day and even throughout the day. It can therefore be useful to observe the learner in a variety of circumstances over several days and then to use your professional judgement to decide which 'score' gives the most accurate overview of the learner. Also consider the previous 4 weeks as a reference period. Discussions with colleagues who are also involved with the learner might help to clarify your thoughts. In some circumstances it might be useful to ask these colleagues to complete the CPS separately and then to meet to compare results, discuss any discrepancies and to agree a team score for the learner based on this.

Examples of current and previous schoolwork, review of any reports and discussions with the learner's previous teachers may also be useful when completing the CPS.

Reflect on any discrepancies in the learner's performance and try to consider why this might be the case - was there anything different which could have accounted for this? If their performance

is consistently different in a particular context try to identify which factors are making the difference.

The views of the parents/carers and the learner themselves can also help inform the assessment process, though it is recognised that the learner might respond differently outside the school.

Repeating the CPS

You can repeat the CPS as often as required. It can be useful to repeat it at the beginning of each term to evaluate the impact of any supports and strategies that have been introduced.

Analysing and interpreting the results

Once you have completed the CPS, take time to go through the categories looking for patterns in how you have scored the learner. You can do this on your own or in collaboration with colleagues who know the learner.

Look for categories where you have given a score of 4 or 3 - these show areas of strength where things are currently working well. It is important to highlight these, as well as identifying areas of need. Categories where you have given a score of 1 or 2 highlight areas that restrict or inhibit the learner's participation in school life and may require development. Consider if these findings were what you expected and reflect on ways in which you may be able to tap areas of strength to address areas of need.

For some learners the CPS might highlight needs in one particular skill area e.g. Attention and Concentration. Within the module you access this information in Section 5.

The table below gives the pages within the downloadable PDF resource – CIRCLE Framework (available in Section 9) where you will find supports and strategies for that particular skill area.

The Secondary CIRCLE Framework (downloadable PDF)

Attention and Concentration Skills P. 71

Organisation and Planning Skills P. 75

Motor Skills (Posture and Mobility, and Dexterity and Manipulation) P. 79

[NB: For further information on developing bilingual learners refer to the appendices (see P. 125) and local EAL guidance. The appendices also contain further ideas for supporting learners with Mental Health Concerns (see P. 121).]

If in addition to needs in one particular skill area the CPS also shows a score of mainly 1 or 2 in one of the other categories (i.e. physical or social environment, structures and routines, or motivation) this will indicate which group of strategies to target within that skill area. For example, for a learner who scores mainly 1 or 2 in both the Attention and Concentration and the Structures and Routines categories, turn to the relevant page and focus on the supports and strategies in the middle column - Establishing Structures and Routines.

It is possible that a learner has more of a mixed pattern. In this case look for the skill area where there is the lowest total score and begin by looking at that section to see if the outline of the needs corresponds to those encountered by the learner. If so, try implementing some of the supports and strategies suggested in that skill area. If not, then consider whether one of the other low scored skill sections might be the actual 'cause'. For example, a learner with Verbal and Non-verbal Communication needs may have low scores for Social and Relationship skills, but by focussing supports and strategies on the former skill area, this will improve the latter. Your skills and judgement in interpreting the results and identifying and addressing the underlying needs are key to supporting participation in school life.

Next steps

The dated CPS provides a measure of how the learner is at a point in time and directs you towards the appropriate supports and strategies to consider using within this resource.

It is important to schedule a date to repeat the CPS (e.g. the following term) to assess the impact of the chosen input and make changes as required.



Learning Environment: Physical		
a	Classroom space is suitable and engaging for learner (consider accessibility, furniture, layout)	1,2,3,4
b	Playground is suitable and engaging for learner (consider safety, accessibility, play)	1,2,3,4
c	Common areas (e.g. corridors) are suitable for learner (consider accessibility, safety, signage)	1,2,3,4
d	Required tools or equipment have been identified and are available/accessible to learner	1,2,3,4
e	Sensory elements of classroom space have been considered for learner (e.g. noise, light, clutter)	1,2,3,4
Learning Environment: Social		
a	Peers include learner in class activities	1,2,3,4
b	Peers include learner in play/recreation activities	1,2,3,4
c	Relevant school staff recognise and understand learners' needs	1,2,3,4
d	Relevant school staff pro-actively provide support to meet learners' needs	1,2,3,4
e	Family circumstances allow learner to participate fully at school	1,2,3,4
Structures and Routines		
a	Learner is aware of and adheres to normal school routines	1,2,3,4
b	Learner is able to move between tasks, activities and/or classes during school day	1,2,3,4
c	Learner copes well with changes to routine or patterns	1,2,3,4
d	Learner meets relevant school staff expectations	1,2,3,4
e	Learner is involved in extra roles/activities in school (e.g. clubs, or after school)	1,2,3,4
Motivation		
a	Learner is aware of own skills and abilities	1,2,3,4
b	Learner seeks challenges or new activities and is optimistic about success	1,2,3,4
c	Learner shows curiosity and willingly engages in activities	1,2,3,4
d	Learner shows enthusiasm for activities at school	1,2,3,4
e	Learner shows pride in their achievements	1,2,3,4
Attention and Concentration		
a	Learner remembers information and instructions	1,2,3,4
b	Learner stays focussed throughout an activity	1,2,3,4
c	Learner starts activities and keeps going until they are finished	1,2,3,4
d	Learner maintains a consistent pace when participating in class activities	1,2,3,4
e	Learner works towards achieving specific goals when required	1,2,3,4
Organisation and Planning		
a	Learner chooses tools and materials and uses them as they are intended	1,2,3,4
b	Learner notices problems and if needed changes actions during activities	1,2,3,4
c	Learner keeps themselves and their workspace organised	1,2,3,4
d	Learner remembers items needed for day	1,2,3,4
e	Learner completes tasks in correct sequence	1,2,3,4

Name:			
Class /Subject:		D.o.B	
Date of Scoring:			
Person scoring			
Highlight one answer for each question Try to answer all questions			
4	Strongly supports school participation / Observed almost all of the time		
3	Supports school participation / Observed most of the time		
2	Interferes with school participation / Observed some of the time		
1	Strongly interferes with school participation / Observed hardly any of the time		
Posture and Mobility			
a	Learner stays balanced while walking, running or playing	1,2,3,4	
b	Learner sits well positioned at desk for duration of activities	1,2,3,4	
c	Learner moves around classroom as required	1,2,3,4	
d	Learner moves around wider school environment as required	1,2,3,4	
e	Learner is well co-ordinated when completing tasks	1,2,3,4	
Dexterity and Manipulation			
a	Learner can effectively manipulate smaller items (e.g. pencils, scissors)	1,2,3,4	
b	Learner can draw/write at a level appropriate for their developmental level/level of ability	1,2,3,4	
c	Learner has good hand-eye coordination	1,2,3,4	
d	Learner uses both hands well at same time	1,2,3,4	
e	Learner uses appropriate force and speed during manual activities	1,2,3,4	
Social, Emotional and Relationship			
a	Learner socialises with classmates and gets along with peers	1,2,3,4	
b	Learner has a consistent group of friends	1,2,3,4	
c	Learner engages in appropriate conversations with peers and staff	1,2,3,4	
d	Learner cooperates with peers on class tasks or recreational activities	1,2,3,4	
e	Learner seems happy, included and calm	1,2,3,4	
Verbal and non-Verbal communication			
a	Learner demonstrates understanding of body language (e.g. eye contact, expressions)	1,2,3,4	
b	Learner speaks clearly and changes volume as needed	1,2,3,4	
c	Learner verbalises their thoughts, ideas and questions appropriately	1,2,3,4	
d	Learner understands spoken communication	1,2,3,4	
e	Learner understands written communication (e.g. from board)	1,2,3,4	

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Name:			
Class /Subject:		Date of Birth	
Date of Scoring:			
Person scoring			

Use this space to record supports or strategies in use during the CPS assessment (e.g. a sit and move cushion, fidget supports etc.)

Use this space to record any other comments regarding the CPS score (e.g. specific variations in performance etc.)