




ASSESSMENTS IN THE EARLY YEARS ARE DIVERSE AND ESSENTIAL

A/ What is an assessment in the IB PYP Early Years?

In the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Programme (PYP), an assessment in the early years focuses on understanding how young learners acquire and apply knowledge, concepts, and skills in meaningful ways. It emphasizes continuous, formative assessment to support children's holistic development.

 Knowledge	 Conceptual understandings	 Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facts/information • Topics • Disciplinary ideas/skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big/main ideas • Lasting information • How ideas connect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies • Processes • ATL/ Learner profile*

In the PYP, we are responsible for **developing ongoing assessment** to measure what students know, understand, and can do at various points in an inquiry. Our goal is to measure **current understanding and document progress** towards goals we have set connected to these success criteria.

**The learner profile should not be "graded", however progress and growth should be monitored*

(What Do We Assess in the IB PYP, <https://www.toddleapp.com/learn/blog-post/what-do-we-assess-in-the-pyp/>, 7th March 2025)

At Aoba-Japan Bilingual Preschools, teachers collaborate with children to discuss and create meaningful assessments. Children are naturally in charge of their learning process. In addition to ongoing assessments, which are set up as learning activities, individual projects, or group projects, summative assessments may be conducted in the form of products that visualize students' own reflections, or they may be implemented as special school events such as field trips, three-way conferences, exhibitions of work, or student-led presentations.

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B/ Various assessments at the A-JB group campuses (Some learning activities may be different among campuses)

On-going assessments

1. Work exhibition (visual thinking routines)

Learning in the early years is a consequence of thinking. This allows children to understand their thinking process. It can provide teachers with information on which our curriculum planning should be based to understand children's thinking processes and reasoning. It can also help us identify developing theories or

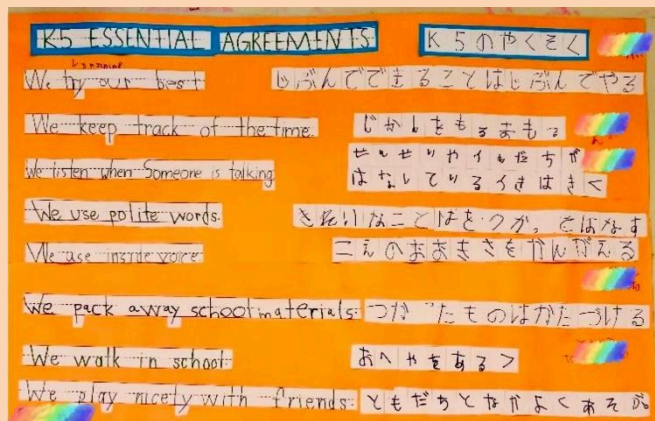
hypotheses children are formulating as they build their understanding, allowing teachers to further extend and expand their inquiry rather than simply 'correcting' their thinking.



K4/2024: How we express ourselves

Central idea: We communicate in many ways to express, respond, and react in different cultures.

The children chose their favourite countries or the countries where they had the opportunity to live before. They created posters to introduce spotlights on those countries.



K5/2024: How we organize ourselves

Central idea: Everyone handles a variety of roles in different communities.

The children discussed and developed these essential agreements, which they believed were necessary when we were playing and learning in a community.

By making children's thinking visible, teachers capture valuable out-of-the-box ideas and connect them in meaningful ways to ongoing learning experiences that reflect children's emerging interests and connections to the curriculum.

2. Individual/ Group projects

PYP focuses on child-centered agencies and transdisciplinary units. The children are encouraged to discuss and decide on learning activities they want to develop and research to understand units deeply. Whether these activities are completed individually or in a group, teachers act as consultants who guide children through transdisciplinary units, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.



K5/ 2024: Who we are

Central idea: Friendships enrich our lives and require nurturing in order to develop.

The children requested to conquer Mt. Takao as a group project. They believed their friendships could be strengthened while helping and supporting classmates on the way to the top of the mountain.

K3/ 2024: How we express ourselves

Central idea:

We use different ways to express ourselves in order to convey our message to audience.

The child preferred to work individually at the playdough table. He demonstrated that the facial expressions changed if he made the playdough in different shapes. The child also acknowledged his learning by sharing it with the teachers. This outcome was recorded by the teacher as a learning story to remark on his developmental milestone.



3. Community collaboration (Farm Day 🥦)

"It takes a village to raise a child." - At the Aoba-Japan Bilingual Preschool group, teachers are the bridges connecting the children with the community. We collaborate with community members around the school area to facilitate learning experiences related to



K5/ 2024: How we organize ourselves

Central idea: Everyone handles a variety of roles in different communities.

The children visit the neighbor farm every Tuesday. They listen to the lessons of living things, planting, taking care of vegetables, etc. They also share their responsibilities in the whole process.

the PYP units. The children have opportunities to take responsibility in this community and to understand and assess their learning process and knowledge.

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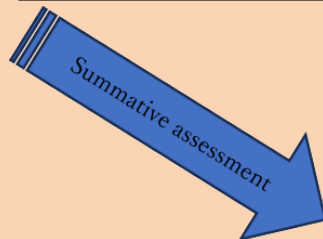


Summative Assessments

1. Excursions



K4/ 2024: Where we are in place and time
Central idea: Games and toys reflect changes over time
The children preferred to visit and observe the Tokyo Toys Museum to understand more about games and toys in Japan as well as worldwide.
The children concluded the unit by hosting the toys exhibition. They invited and guided the other classmates on how to enjoy this summative event.



Discussing and choosing locations for an excursion is interesting when teachers and children are exploring and researching the units.

To respect children's learning process and their agencies, teachers consult, guide, and listen to their inquiries to deepen the understanding of each unit.

Summative assessments are immersed in single subjects and learning skills at the end of the excursion, allowing children to reflect on the experiences they have collected from the trips.

Toys exhibition



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2. Student-led conferences (Family observation day)



K5/ 2024: Who we are
Central idea: Friendships enrich our lives and require nurturing in order to develop.
The children created a friendship bingo game and interviewed all parents at this event.



Parents are invited to attend family observation twice a year. During this time, the children are responsible for Student-led conferences. *"A student-led conference is when students invite their parents to the class to share the learning journey."* They are empowered to plan and facilitate the conferences, following their ideas related to the PYP units.



K4/ 2024: Where we are in place and time
Central idea: Games and toys reflect changes over time
The children discussed and decided which games would be introduced and guided their parents when they visited the class during the family observation week. The children had opportunities to be in charge of the event. They performed their agencies and ownerships of learning and assessing.

With guidance and support from their teachers, children select artifacts that represent the growth and process they have made throughout the year. They reflect on the significance of each item for their conference time, organize materials, and practice for the big day!

(Student-led conferences: A celebration of learning, <https://spicewood.roundrockisd.org/2017/05/19/student-led-conferences-a-celebration-of-learning/>, 12th March 2025)

3. 3-way conferences

At the end of every school year, the school facilitates three-way conferences between children, parents, and teachers, reflecting on children's progress and setting future goals/targets. Children have opportunities to look through their learning portfolios from the beginning and reflect on their learning process by implementing the strategy of two stars (developments) and one wish (goals/ targets)

Following the core values of the Aoba Educational Group for innovation, the children are encouraged to use e-portfolios and digital touch-boards while presenting their three-way conferences.



Conclusion

Assessments in the IB PYP early years are dynamic, formative, and child-centered. By assessing knowledge, conceptual understanding, and skills, educators gain insights into how young learners construct meaning and develop as inquirers. The focus is on fostering curiosity, supporting individual growth, and preparing children for lifelong learning through meaningful, play-based experiences.

Parents, teachers, and communities play multiple roles in guiding and consulting children through their learning development. We need to keep in mind that children will explore, learn, and assess their knowledge as well as abilities meaningfully when they have ***Voice – Choice and Ownership.***

References

- ❖ Carrying out an assessment: what you need to know, <https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/support-for-practitioners/send-assessment/carrying-out-an-assessment>, viewed on 12th March 2025
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