



Evidence-Based Intervention Template: Engagement Model

1. Introduction

The Engagement Model is a statutory assessment framework designed to support pupils working below the level of the national curriculum, particularly those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). It replaces P scales 1–4 and focuses on how pupils engage in learning rather than the outcomes alone.

2. Purpose of Intervention

The intervention aims to assess and promote meaningful engagement in learning through five key areas: Initiation, Persistence, Anticipation, Exploration, and Realisation. It supports personalised learning and helps educators identify effective strategies to improve pupil participation and progress.

3. Target Audience

This model is intended for pupils with significant learning difficulties who are not engaged in subject-specific learning. Typically, this includes children with PMLD or severe autism, but may also be relevant for any pupils with special educational needs working at pre-key stage standards.

4. Who Can Deliver the Intervention

The Engagement Model can be implemented by:

- Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- SENCOs
- Educational Psychologists
- Therapists and other multi-agency professionals
- Parents and caregivers (as part of co-production or a coordinated approach)

5. Session Structure

Sessions should be flexible and tailored to the pupil's needs. A typical session may include:

- A calm and predictable start routine
- Opportunities for sensory exploration
- Structured activities that encourage persistence and anticipation (e.g. these could be child-led and/or adult-led or guided activities)
- Time for reflection and feedback

Sessions should be observed and recorded using the five areas of engagement.

6. Frequency and Duration



Sessions should be regular and consistent to allow for meaningful observation.

Recommended frequency:

- 3–5 times per week
- Duration: 15–30 minutes per session, depending on pupil stamina and engagement levels. This may need to be adapted based on the needs/developmental stage of the pupil.

7. Key Principles

- Focus on the quality of engagement, not task completion
- Use multi-sensory and motivating materials
- Create a low-arousal, distraction-free environment
- Celebrate small steps of progress
- Record observations using the five engagement indicators
- Involve pupils in choosing activities where possible

8. Training and Implementation

Staff should receive training on:

- Understanding the five areas of engagement
- Observational techniques and recording methods
- Using the Engagement Profile and Scale

Implementation should be monitored through regular team discussions, pupil progress reviews, and co-production with families.

9. Evidence and Outcomes

Research shows that the Engagement Model:

- Enhances understanding of how pupils learn
- Supports personalised curriculum planning
- Improves staff confidence in assessing progress
- Promotes inclusive practice and meaningful learning experiences

10. Pupil Feedback

Indirect feedback through observation, behaviour and pupil engagement has noted the strengths-based, flexible and personalized approach of the model. This has been reported to enhance pupil engagement, enjoyment and relationships through the child-led approach.

11. Further Information and Resources

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-engagement-model>
- Engagement Model training videos (available via local authority SEND services)
- Contact your Educational Psychology Service or SENCO for support



- [Reynolds Cross School - Engagement Model Guidance](#)