These principles are drawn from, and are evident in, good and effective practice in early years settings. They come from the discussions and feedback from the NAA conference, from existing documents and are based on the EYFS materials.

Record-keeping must be meaningful and have a purpose. ‘Records are about getting to know the child and what the child needs.’ They should be shared and used to support the growth and development of the child. They must be understandable to partners in the child’s development including parents and other practitioners.

The task of keeping records must be manageable and sustainable. Practitioners should be realistic about the amount of information they collect and the systems they create. These need to be manageable as part of day-to-day practice.

Records must capture the range of children’s attainment, achievement and progress. They will show the starting points and development points across the areas of learning.

- Show children’s starting points and progress across the areas of Learning and Development
- Include information on all areas of learning, as well as Literacy and Mathematics, and take account of well-being, involvement and a range of different achievements.

Records will reflect the individuality of every child and the diversity of their backgrounds. Children have different capacities, interests and competencies and it is necessary to reflect this diversity in the type of records kept. Greater detail will be evident for one child in a particular aspect that is not necessary for another.

- Although they may have the same format, the content and the balance of commentary on different areas of development may vary to reflect the different priorities for development and learning of each child.
- A child’s achievements may not be typical of the same age band in every area of learning.

All significant participants in children’s development and learning should contribute to the information-gathering. This will involve a wide range of people, including parents and children.

Records should be shared with the child. This is a statutory requirement of the Early Years Foundation Stage and will continue to be so for the EYFSP.

Assessment, record-keeping and demonstrating progress are inextricably linked: each is dependent on the effectiveness of the others. Recurrent themes of good practice across all settings and sectors collected by the participating LAs relate to ensuring that processes of assessment, record-keeping and demonstrating progress are effective. This is evident when the processes: are focused on enhancing the learning of individual and groups of children; involve all concerned parties, including parents and children; are undertaken by contributors informed about early childhood learning and development; create a well-rounded picture of a child’s attainment; provide judgements based on observation-led evidence; recognise the individuality of each child and the diversity of children.

Work in this field should be underpinned by the values of honesty and integrity. It concerns itself with the welfare of children and is focused on helping them develop and learn as effectively as possible.