

Thursday 5th December 2019

GROUND BREAKING APPROACH TO RECORDING PROGRESS OF CHILDREN WITH SEND

[Tapestry](#), the online learning journal used by thousands of nurseries and schools, has developed a new assessment tool to help teachers and nursery managers to assess the progress of children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). *Cherry Garden Branch Maps* is a ground-breaking tool which has been created in partnership with London-based Cherry Garden School, a special school which caters for children aged two to eleven years who have severe and complex learning needs.

Cherry Garden Branch Maps is the culmination of four years' work and **provides a much more granular approach to capturing the development of children with SEND**. This is because it allows small developments to be easily recorded and celebrated. Most importantly, it enables early years teachers to log lateral progress as well as linear progress. This is essential in SEND because progress can be as much about applying a learnt skill in a different context, as it can be about learning new skills.

Children's progress is captured online in the form of cherry trees or flowers and they have one for each main curriculum area. Children with the most profound needs have a flower with interactive petals which grow as a child gains understanding, and, importantly, deepen in colour to record a child's lateral progress. Those children with less severe needs have their progress represented through leaves which are added to the tree as they secure their understanding of different topics. When a parent or practitioner clicks on a leaf or petal they can access the observations made for that child.

Stephen Kilgour, who worked at Cherry Garden School for 11 years and was Deputy Head, developed Cherry Garden Branch Maps. He is now SEND advisor and Outreach Teacher at Tapestry, and said:

"It can be hard to record the small steps of progress made by a child with special educational needs. The outcome of this is that children with SEND can appear to be 'trapped' at one level for months on end, when they have actually achieved a great deal. Cherry Garden Branch Maps is designed to solve the problem because it captures progress regardless of the route a child's learning takes."

Dr Helen Edwards, co-founder of Tapestry said:

"It is essential that the progress of every child can be celebrated and shared with parents and carers. So, we were delighted to collaborate with Cherry Garden School when they approached us to help. The resulting Cherry Garden Branch Maps is already getting very positive feedback from staff, parents and carers, and we're looking forward to Tapestry customers using it to capture the achievements of children with additional needs."

Funding for children with Special Needs is linked to an Education Health Care plan which is often not finalised until a child is much older in primary school (Key Stage 1 or 2). This means early years practitioners and teachers often support children with special needs without receiving any additional funding. As well, recruiting SEND specialists can be a challenge so staff may be inexperienced. Cherry Garden provides a flexible, easy to use approach that can help to build confidence in staff members and ensure progress and growth is captured effectively. It was designed to provide practitioners with a more thorough understanding of the milestones you would expect to find in a very young, typically developing child.

The fully interactive version of Cherry Garden Branch Maps is available free of charge to all Tapestry subscribers. For those who aren't subscribers, there is also a printable version which is **free to download**. For more information visit: <https://tapestry.info/features/cherry-garden.html>

ENDS -

For more information contact: Anna Pedroza, anna@pedrozacommunications.co.uk 07813 938 020

Notes to editors

About Tapestry

Tapestry is an online learning journal which enables educators to capture children's learning and development throughout the day.

Tapestry has been developed by Foundation Stage Forum Ltd, an educational technology company which was founded in 2012 and is based in Lewes. Tapestry has more than 17,000 accounts and is used in more than 40 countries.

Using sophisticated digital technologies, Tapestry is changing the way children's learning journeys are recorded in early years education also helping practitioners to use their time as effectively as possible. Tapestry is also transforming the way parents and carers stay in touch with what their young children are doing throughout the day and helps to strengthen the link between young children's development at home and in their early years setting.

Tapestry is the brainchild of technologist Steve Edwards and his early years practitioner wife, Dr Helen Edwards. They are deeply involved in the early years sector and previously created the successful Foundation Stage Forum which has more than 30,000 members. Tapestry is also a sponsor of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Childcare and Early Education.

For more information visit: <https://tapestry.info>

About Cherry Garden School

An Outstanding special school for children aged two to 11 years old. The school is located in Southwark, London and has 72 children.

For more information visit: <http://www.cherrygardenschool.co.uk/Our-School>