



Department  
for Education

**Five  
to Twelve**

Information about the

# **British Ability Scales**



The **Five to Twelve Study** aims to understand children's early education and wellbeing as they go through primary school. As part of this we would like to use three exercises to measure your child's progress. These tasks should take around 15 minutes to complete in total. These exercises have been taken from the **British Ability Scales**, which are well respected and widely used educational tools. They are used to understand children's development.

Your child's participation in the exercises is really valuable for the study. It will help researchers understand more about how development at this early stage interacts with experiences and support at school and elsewhere, and lead to different educational outcomes and levels of wellbeing. Our interviewers have been given special training to carry out these exercises.

This leaflet explains more about the exercises and you can also ask the interviewer for more information.

Your child cannot take part in these exercises if:

- They are deaf or blind
- They cannot speak English

## What are the exercises?

### 1. Naming vocabulary

This activity concerns the names of things – that is, what we call different objects or materials. Your child will be shown some pictures and will be asked to say the name of each in turn. The pictures get harder as the activity goes on.

### 2. Memory task

This activity looks at your child's memory. The interviewer will read out a list of numbers and then ask your child to repeat the numbers, but backwards. The length of the number sequence gets longer as the activity goes on.

### 3. Picture similarities

This activity looks at the way your child analyses visual information and solves problems. They will be shown a row of four pictures and will be given a card with a fifth picture. Your child will be asked to place the card under the picture which shares an element or concept with the card. For example, the row of pictures may contain a picture of a tree and the picture on the card may be of a leaf. The item would be correct if the leaf is correctly matched with the tree. The task gets harder as it goes on.

## How the exercises will be done

These exercises will take about 15 minutes. Ideally, they should be carried out in a quiet and well-lit room, away from distractions and disruptions. If possible, the interviewer would like to sit at a table with your child to carry out the exercises. However, in order to get a true reflection of your child's ability, we would ask you to avoid interrupting the exercise or prompting your child for an answer, so that the response we record is their own. It is important that the exercises are carried out in a standard way so we can compare results across all the children in the study.



## Feedback

Our interviewers cannot give specific feedback about how your child is doing. This is because these exercises are designed to measure the range of skills that all children at around age 5-6 have, rather than the ability of each individual child. No-one will have access to data on an individual child's performance.

## Does my child have to take part?

Your child does not have to take part. The interviewer will ask you and your child whether you are happy they take part. Doing the activities is voluntary and your child can change their mind at any time. If they start the exercises, they can choose to stop at any point. Each one is relatively short, and if your child finds it too difficult, the interviewer will stop the exercise.

## Contact

If you have any questions please ask your interviewer. If you have questions after they have left, you can get in touch with the research team freephone on **0800 652 4568** or email [FivetoTwelve@natcen.ac.uk](mailto:FivetoTwelve@natcen.ac.uk). You can also visit our website [www.natcen.ac.uk/taking-part/studies-in-field/fivetotwelve](http://www.natcen.ac.uk/taking-part/studies-in-field/fivetotwelve).

