

# What is Ferre Laevers

Professor Ferre Laevers and his team from the University of Leuven in Belgium, underwent a year long intensive training programme to develop and understand this unique approach to assessment in the Early Years.

Professor Laevers studied, developed and produced an assessment system called POMS – A Process-Orientated Monitoring System for the Early Years. This assessment system looks at two crucial areas of a child's development:

- **well-being** of a child
- **Involvement** of a child.

Ferre Laevers believes this is key to their ability to learn and progress effectively, enabling each individual child to reach their potential.

These two areas are focused on looking at each individual child's well-being and the levels of involvement they display in their learning. Through identifying where the children are in these two areas and then tailoring our approach to each individual child's learning needs, Ferre Laevers believes that the optimum conditions will be created for developing the huge potentials that every child is born with.

## **What is the Aim of the Assessment system?**

The aim of the POMS assessment system is to be used alongside existing assessment systems that look at all areas of developmental progress for children's learning, and to identify areas of support in the 2 key areas that may be required to enable them to progress effectively and to achieve.

**Well Being-** Ferre Laevers believes that when children have high levels of well-being they will display the following;

- Children in a state of well-being feel like 'fish in water'. The prevailing mood in their lives is Pleasure: they have fun, enjoy each other's company and feel o.k. in their environments.
- They have an open and receptive attitude towards their environment.
- They are spontaneous and feel comfortable in all sorts of situations, truly being themselves.
- A state of well-being is more likely to occur when the child has self-confidence, self-esteem, assertiveness, resilience and is well in touch with his own feelings.
- A child displaying high levels of well-being is a child whose basic needs are being met. These basic needs are crucial to their ability to engage and make the connections they need to be able to learn. If any of their basic needs are absent then they can very quickly become disengaged as their basic needs will overtake their ability to learn.

### **Basic needs include:**

- Physical needs –i.e. food, drink, warmth, movement, rest and sleep.
- Affection – giving and receiving love and affection.
- Safety – To feel safe and secure in a predictable, orderly environment and to be able to trust and rely on others around them.
- Recognition – To have a sense of belonging and to feel accepted, valued and respected by others around you.
- Feel - To feel competent, to know that you are capable, skilful and sometimes talented and to be able to respond to challenges.
- Meaning to life and moral values – To desire to be a good person and satisfy ethical standards. To feel connected to the people around you, your community and nature.
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**Involvement :** Ferre Laevers believes that when children have high levels of involvement they will display the following (Involvement is what we observe when children are intensely engaged in an activity). Characteristics of involvement are:

- Extreme concentration, uninterrupted attention, being totally absorbed, unaware of time.
- A high level of motivation, interest, fascination and perseverance.
- An intense mental activity, vivid sensations and an embodied sense of meaning.
- Deep satisfaction stemming from the fulfilment of the exploratory drive.
- Operating at the very limits of one's capabilities, the 'zone of proximal development'.

With all these characteristics demonstrated, Ferre Laevers believes that this is the indicator where deep-level-learning truly happens, leading to sustainable development.

Ferre Laevers created a 5 point development scale for both Well Being and Involvement which is the scale we now use to identify the levels that individual children are operating at within their learning.

Through careful observations the whole team at Little Tinkers are now involved in monitoring and assessing these levels for cohorts of children. All children are assessed on point of entry, importantly the assessment occurs after half a term to allow the children to settle and create a true picture of where their levels are.

We believe by implementing the Ferre Laevers assessment approach in our Little Tinkers Preschool settings this further supports the children in developing their learning and enhances the learning environment.