



EARLYTRACK · SOUTH AFRICAN GRADE R RESOURCE

The Grade R Assessment Toolkit

A Complete Reference for South African Teachers and Principals

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This toolkit is a companion to the blog post: "Grade R Assessment South Africa — What Teachers Must Know About CAPS, Rating, and Report Writing" — earlytrack.co.za/blog

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This toolkit is a companion to the blog post at:

earlytrack.co.za/blog/grade-r-assessment-south-africa-caps-report-writing

How to Use This Toolkit

This document is designed to sit on your desk, open on your phone, or printed and pinned above your work area during every Grade R reporting cycle.

Everything in this toolkit is aligned to the CAPS Grade R curriculum as defined by the Department of Basic Education. It is written specifically for South African Grade R teachers — not adapted from international resources.

1

Term-by-Term Assessment Planner

What to observe each term, what evidence to collect, and what the CAPS subsections require in Terms 1 and 2.

2

Weekly Observation Log

One printable page per learner. Fill in one observation per week. By Term end you have 10 evidence points per child.

3

The Full Comment Bank

72 comments across Home Language, Mathematics, and Life Skills at all four CAPS rating levels. Replace [name] and personalise.

4

Comment Quality Checklist

Seven questions to ask before you submit any comment. Two minutes per report. Significantly improves quality.

5

Parent Communication Guide

Scripts for difficult rating conversations. Before the report, during the query, and following up in Term 3.

6

DBE Inspection Readiness

Exactly what inspectors check, what to keep on file, and the three questions they always ask. Be ready at any time.

TOOL 1

The Term-by-Term CAPS Grade R Assessment Planner

Assessment focus: Establishing baselines across all three subjects.

HOME LANGUAGE

- Can the learner follow a simple one-step instruction?
- Does the learner make eye contact and respond during group conversations?
- Can the learner name familiar objects in their home language?
- Does the learner show interest in books and storytelling?
- Can the learner distinguish between a letter and a number when shown separately?

MATHEMATICS

- Can the learner count a small group of objects by pointing to each one?
- Does the learner sort objects spontaneously during free play?
- Can the learner recognise any numerals 1-5?
- Does the learner use positional language (inside, outside, on top, under)?
- Can the learner match one object to one other object (one-to-one correspondence)?

LIFE SKILLS

- Is the learner settling into daily routines without distress?
- Can the learner identify their own belongings?
- Does the learner participate in physical activities?
- Does the learner show curiosity about the environment?
- Can the learner name basic body parts?

CAPS SUBSECTIONS — TERM 1

Home Language T1: Listening and Speaking, Phonological Awareness. Mathematics T1: Numbers Operations & Relationships (counting 1-10), Patterns Functions & Algebra (physical patterns), Space and Shape (2D shapes).

Recording priority: Establish a baseline observation note for every learner by Week 4. One sentence per subject area is enough. You are looking for starting points, not conclusions.

This is a formal assessment term. Report cards go home at the end of Term 2.

Assessment focus: Demonstrating progress from Term 1 baselines. Gathering sufficient formal evidence across all three subjects to justify every rating.

What your evidence must show by end of Term 2:

- At least one formal observation record per learner per subject
- **Rating 4:** Multiple examples showing consistent exceeding of the CAPS Grade R skill
- **Rating 3:** One or more clear examples of the skill demonstrated as expected
- **Rating 2:** Evidence of the skill beginning to emerge — attempt visible, not yet consistent
- **Rating 1:** Documented evidence of opportunities offered and skill not yet shown

Term 2 record-keeping minimum:

- Observation checklist per subject, completed and dated
- At least two work samples per learner (drawings, mark-making, cutting, or similar)
- Brief written note on any learner rated 1 or 2, explaining what support is in place

CAPS SUBSECTIONS — TERM 2

Mathematics T2: Number Sentences (addition and subtraction using objects), Data Handling (sorting and grouping). Home Language T2: Reading and Phonics (letter-sound relationships), Writing (mark-making and emergent writing patterns).

Report deadline: Week 9 = comment-writing. Week 10 = principal review and approval. Reports must not go home on the last day of school.

TERM 3 — Recovery and Deepening

Assessment focus: Supporting learners rated 1 or 2. Deepening for 3s. Extending for 4s.

Rated 1 in Term 2: Design 2–3 specific activities per week. Record responses. Communicate with parents now — do not wait until Term 4.

Rated 2 in Term 2: Identify the barrier. Is it confidence? Language? Fine motor? Create small-group opportunities rather than waiting for whole-class moments.

Rated 3 in Term 2: Maintain momentum. Term 3 is where many teachers slow their observation. Keep recording.

Rated 4 in Term 2: Extend the skill to higher complexity. A learner counting to 10 in Term 2 should be working toward 20 in Term 3.

TERM 4 — Formal Assessment Term (Assessment 2)

FORMAL

Assessment focus: End-of-year achievement across all 98 CAPS Grade R skills.

Critical: Term 4 ratings must reflect current observed ability — not averages of Terms 1–3. A learner rated 1 in Term 2 who has since progressed must receive a 2 in Term 4.

School readiness note: Term 4 reports are often the first document a Grade 1 teacher reads about their incoming learner. Write the comment with that reader in mind.

- Updated observation records from Term 3 available to inform Term 4 ratings
- Formal evidence for any rating of 4 — multiple examples required
- Written next steps for any learner rated 1 or 2, with a Grade 1 readiness note

TOOL 2

Weekly Observation Log Template

TOOL 2: Weekly Observation Log Template

Print one copy per learner at the start of each term. Keep it on a clipboard. Fill in one observation per week. By Week 10 you have 10 reference points per child — report writing becomes editing, not creating from nothing.

LEARNER OBSERVATION LOG — TERM ____

Learner name: _____

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

Term dates: _____

		What I observed	Date	Rating indicator
1	Home Language			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Mathematics			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Life Skills			NS / Emerging / Achieved
2	Home Language			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Mathematics			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Life Skills			NS / Emerging / Achieved
3	Home Language			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Mathematics			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Life Skills			NS / Emerging / Achieved
4	Home Language			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Mathematics			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Life Skills			NS / Emerging / Achieved
5	Home Language			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Mathematics			NS / Emerging / Achieved
	Life Skills			NS / Emerging / Achieved

Continue for Weeks 6–10

End-of-term summary (complete before writing report comments):

Home Language overall: _____

Mathematics overall: _____

Life Skills overall: _____

Key strength to highlight: _____

Parent conversation needed? **Yes / No**

What Counts as an Observation Note?

A good observation note is specific, behavioural, and dated. It does not need to be long.

The test: could another teacher read your note and understand exactly what the child did or did not do, when, and where? If yes — it is a good observation note.

✓ Acceptable observation notes

"Counted 8 blocks correctly during free play, pointing to each one. Week 3, outdoor area."

"Could not follow two-step instruction during ring time. Responded to one-step only. Week 5."

"Named circle, square, and triangle correctly when shown mixed shapes during construction. Week 7."

"Retold story from Monday's reading in correct sequence to a peer during free time. Week 4."

✗ Not acceptable as evidence

"Did well in Maths this week."

"Seems to be improving."

"Good participation."

"Struggled today."

EARLYTRACK

EarlyTrack's Professional plan includes voice-to-text observation capture in both English and Afrikaans — built directly into the Grade R skills framework. Teachers speak observations hands-free during the day. EarlyTrack transcribes, stores, and links each observation to the relevant CAPS Grade R skill automatically.

TOOL 3

The Full Grade R Comment Bank

72 ready-to-adapt comments across all three subjects at all four CAPS rating levels. Replace [name] and add one specific detail from your own observations.

TOOL 3: How to Use This Comment Bank

Every comment in this bank is a starting point, not a finished product. Replace **[name]** with the learner's first name. Adjust pronouns (he/she/they) as needed. Add one specific detail from your own observation notes to make the comment individual.

The comment that contains one thing from your own observation of that specific child is always more powerful than any template — even a very good one.

These 72 comments cover all three Grade R subjects at all four CAPS rating levels: Outstanding (4), Achieved (3), Partially Achieved (2), and Not Yet Achieved (1).



EARLYTRACK

EarlyTrack's AI comment generator uses these comments as its foundation. Teachers rate each Grade R skill on the four-level numeric scale. EarlyTrack generates a contextual, evidence-based comment in English or Afrikaans as a starting draft. Teachers review and personalise. The blank page is replaced with a starting point.

HOME LANGUAGE

Rating 4 — Outstanding Achievement

COMMENT 4.HL.1

"[Name] is an enthusiastic and articulate communicator. During group discussions this term, she consistently initiated conversation, asked thoughtful questions, and used vocabulary well beyond what is expected for Grade R. She retells stories with clear sequence, expressive language, and added detail. [Name] is ready to take on the reading and writing challenges of Grade 1 with real confidence."

COMMENT 4.HL.2

"[Name] demonstrates outstanding language development for Grade R. He correctly identifies beginning sounds in unfamiliar words, retells multi-step stories in sequence, and uses language to negotiate, explain, and persuade during peer interactions. His love of stories and books is evident every day in the classroom."

COMMENT 4.HL.3

"[Name] has shown exceptional growth in listening and speaking this term. She follows complex multi-step instructions without support, contributes detailed responses during carpet time, and has begun to identify some written words in our classroom environment. A confident and capable communicator."

COMMENT 4.HL.4

"[Name] consistently exceeds Grade R expectations in Home Language. He leads storytelling during play, uses full sentences with accurate vocabulary across multiple topics, and shows strong early phonics awareness. He is independently beginning to connect letters to their sounds and identifying them in environmental print."

Rating 3 — Achieved

COMMENT 3.HL.1

"[Name] communicates confidently in group and one-to-one settings. She follows two-step instructions, participates actively during ring time, and retells familiar stories with good sequence and detail. Her vocabulary continues to grow. [Name] is on track with all CAPS Grade R Home Language skills this term."

COMMENT 3.HL.2

"[Name] listens attentively during teaching activities and responds appropriately to questions about stories and discussions. He is beginning to identify the beginning sounds in familiar words and shows growing interest in books and print. Strong, steady progress across Grade R Language skills this term."

COMMENT 3.HL.3

"[Name] participates meaningfully in class discussions and demonstrates good listening skills. She can retell the key events of a familiar story in correct sequence and uses expanding vocabulary to describe her experiences and surroundings. A confident communicator for this stage of Grade R."

COMMENT 3.HL.4

"This term, [name] showed strong all-round development in Home Language. He engages readily with books, contributes to discussions with relevant and thoughtful responses, and is beginning to identify some letter-sound relationships in familiar words. All Grade R Language skills are on track."

Home Language — Partially Achieved & Not Yet Achieved



HOME LANGUAGE

Rating 2 — Partially Achieved

COMMENT 2.HL.1

"[Name] is developing her listening and speaking skills. She participates in small group discussions with encouragement and is beginning to follow two-step instructions with support. We are continuing to build her confidence in larger group settings through structured activities. At home, reading together daily and discussing the story will make a real difference this term."

COMMENT 2.HL.3

"[Name] shows interest in books and listening activities. She is beginning to identify some familiar words in the classroom environment. We are focusing on letter-sound awareness through songs, rhymes, and daily phonics activities. Encouraging [name] to notice letters and sounds in her name and in her environment at home will support her progress."

COMMENT 2.HL.2

"[Name] communicates his needs and responds to simple questions during daily routines. He is working on following verbal instructions that involve more than one step, and we are using picture support and repetition to strengthen his understanding. Conversations at home about daily experiences will help build his vocabulary and listening skills."

COMMENT 2.HL.4

"[Name] is developing his ability to retell stories and events in sequence. He can describe what happened in a story with some support from picture cues. We are working on building his narrative language through regular storytelling activities. Reading simple books together at home and asking 'what happened first? what happened next?' will strengthen this skill."

Rating 1 — Not Yet Achieved

COMMENT 1.HL.1

"[Name] is still settling into our Grade R routine and has not yet demonstrated the listening and responding skills expected at this stage. We are focusing on building her comfort in the classroom environment through small-group work and one-to-one interaction. This is a developmental starting point, not a cause for concern. We will monitor her progress closely and communicate with you regularly."

COMMENT 1.HL.3

"[Name] communicates her needs informally but has not yet participated consistently in structured language activities during ring time or group discussions. We are creating low-pressure opportunities for her to contribute — using her name, her interests, and familiar topics to draw her in. Please let us know if there are any home-language differences or recent changes at home that may be relevant."

COMMENT 1.HL.2

"[Name] has not yet shown the ability to follow simple verbal instructions during group activities. We are providing additional one-on-one support and using visual cues alongside spoken instructions to help build his understanding. At home, giving clear, simple one-step instructions and waiting for a response — without repeating — will help him practise this skill."

COMMENT 1.HL.4

"[Name] has not yet demonstrated phonological awareness skills expected at this point in Grade R, including identifying beginning sounds in familiar words. We are working on this through daily songs, rhymes, and structured sound activities. At home, singing nursery rhymes — especially ones that play with rhyme and sound — is one of the most powerful ways to build this foundation."

1 2 3 4 MATHEMATICS

Rating 4 — Outstanding Achievement

COMMENT 4.MA.1

"[Name] demonstrates outstanding mathematical thinking for Grade R. She counts reliably to 20, identifies numerals to 10, and accurately uses more/less and before/after language when comparing groups. This term she began extending patterns independently and explained her reasoning clearly to peers. A genuinely gifted mathematical thinker at this stage."

COMMENT 4.MA.2

"[Name] consistently exceeds Grade R Mathematics expectations. He counts forward and backward from various starting points, sorts by two attributes simultaneously, and identifies and extends complex ABCABC patterns independently. His ability to explain mathematical reasoning in words is particularly impressive for this stage of Grade R."

COMMENT 4.MA.3

"[Name] shows exceptional confidence and accuracy in all areas of CAPS Grade R Mathematics this term. She accurately counts and groups objects to 20, identifies shapes in the environment and names their properties, and uses measurement language precisely in everyday contexts. [Name] approaches mathematical challenges with genuine enthusiasm."

COMMENT 4.MA.4

"[Name] has demonstrated outstanding progress in Grade R Mathematics. He independently constructed a patterned sequence using three variables during a free-play activity, counted all members of the class correctly, and used one-more/one-less reasoning without any prompting. His number sense is well ahead of Grade R expectations."

Rating 3 — Achieved

COMMENT 3.MA.1

"[Name] demonstrates strong Grade R Mathematics skills. She counts objects reliably to 10, identifies basic shapes by name, and sorts collections by colour and size. During ring time, she confidently answers counting questions and uses number language accurately. All Grade R Mathematics skills are on track."

COMMENT 3.MA.2

"[Name] engages confidently with daily Mathematics activities. He counts to 10, recognises numerals to 5, and correctly extends simple ABAB patterns. He is beginning to use measurement language such as big/small and long/short in context. Good, steady progress across all Grade R Mathematics skills this term."

COMMENT 3.MA.3

"[Name] participates actively in all Grade R Mathematics activities and demonstrates the expected skills for this stage. She sorts and groups objects by one attribute, identifies common 2D shapes, and counts a group of up to 10 objects accurately by touching each one. On track with CAPS Grade R Mathematics."

COMMENT 3.MA.4

"[Name] shows consistent competence across the Grade R Mathematics skills this term. He correctly identifies numerals to 5 in various contexts, groups objects by shared properties, and describes spatial relationships using positional language. A reliable and engaged mathematician for his age."

1 2 3 4 MATHEMATICS

Rating 2 — Partially Achieved

COMMENT 2.MA.1

"[Name] is developing her number sense. She counts objects reliably to 5 and is working on accurate counting to 10. We are weaving counting into daily routines — stairs, chairs, snack items — to build familiarity without pressure. At home, counting objects during everyday activities will make a real difference."

COMMENT 2.MA.2

"[Name] can identify some basic shapes and correctly groups objects by one attribute with guidance. He is developing his ability to sort independently and to apply more than one sorting rule. We are focusing on providing structured sorting activities each day. Sorting household objects by colour, size, or type at home will reinforce this skill."

COMMENT 2.MA.3

"[Name] is beginning to extend simple ABAB patterns with support. She recognises that patterns repeat but needs a prompt to continue them independently beyond two cycles. We are practising pattern extension daily through physical movement, sound, and object activities. Clapping patterns or foot-stamping sequences at home are a fun way to build this skill."

COMMENT 2.MA.4

"[Name] is developing his mathematical language. He uses some number words but does not yet use more/less, before/after, or positional language consistently. Using this language naturally at home — 'the cup is in front of the plate,' 'you have more grapes than me' — will help him hear and use it with confidence."

Rating 1 — Not Yet Achieved

COMMENT 1.MA.1

"[Name] has not yet demonstrated consistent counting to 5 with one-to-one correspondence. She touches objects while counting but does not consistently assign one number word to each object. At home, counting small groups of objects — up to three or four items — while pointing to each one will build this foundation."

COMMENT 1.MA.2

"[Name] does not yet identify numerals 1-5 consistently when shown separately. We are exposing him to numerals through his daily environment — his name badge, our date chart, classroom labels — and through games that pair numerals with quantities. Pointing out numbers in the environment at home will support this skill without it feeling like a lesson."

COMMENT 1.MA.3

"[Name] has not yet demonstrated sorting skills using a single attribute. She groups objects together but does not yet apply a consistent rule. We are scaffolding sorting activities with verbal cues: 'let's put all the red ones here.' We are monitoring closely and will share an update with you at the end of next month."

COMMENT 1.MA.4

"[Name] does not yet extend a simple pattern when the beginning is provided. He watches patterning activities with interest but has not yet attempted to continue a sequence independently. We are focusing on physical pattern work — clapping, movement, alternating actions — as a first step. This is a skill we will be working on consistently across Term 3."

LIFE SKILLS

Rating 4 — Outstanding Achievement

COMMENT 4.LS.1

"[Name] demonstrates outstanding well-being and independence for Grade R. She consistently manages her belongings without prompting, follows all routines independently, and has taken on a gentle leadership role in helping new learners settle in. Her emotional regulation and self-awareness are well ahead of Grade R expectations."

COMMENT 4.LS.2

"[Name] shows remarkable creativity and self-expression. This term he set up a detailed imaginary scenario during dramatic play, directed peers with clear instructions, and created artwork that showed intentional design and storytelling. His creative thinking, language, and social skills are developing together at an impressive level."

COMMENT 4.LS.3

"[Name] demonstrates exceptional curiosity and investigative thinking during Beginning Knowledge activities. She asks multi-step 'why' and 'how' questions, tests her own ideas, and connects new information to things she already knows. This term she led a class discussion about how plants grow after observing one near our window wilting. Exceptional scientific thinking for Grade R."

COMMENT 4.LS.4

"[Name] moves with confidence, coordination, and control during all Physical Education activities. He demonstrates outstanding gross and fine motor development, follows complex movement sequences, and supports peers who find activities challenging. A natural physical confidence that will serve him well in Grade 1 and beyond."

Rating 3 — Achieved

COMMENT 3.LS.1

"[Name] is settling confidently into Grade R routines. She manages her belongings, follows daily routines with minimal reminders, and engages positively with peers. She participates in physical activities with enthusiasm and is developing good body coordination. All Grade R Life Skills expectations are being met."

COMMENT 3.LS.2

"[Name] engages meaningfully with Beginning Knowledge activities. He shows curiosity about the natural world and the community, asks relevant questions, and makes connections between classroom learning and his own life. A consistent and engaged Life Skills learner for this stage of Grade R."

COMMENT 3.LS.3

"[Name] participates confidently in creative activities and expresses herself through art, music, and movement. She uses craft materials with purpose, takes creative risks, and shares her work with the class. Good development across all Grade R Life Skills domains this term."

COMMENT 3.LS.4

"[Name] demonstrates good physical development across all Grade R Life Skills PE activities. He participates actively in movement and outdoor play, follows safety rules, and coordinates his movements well for his age. On track with all Grade R Life Skills expectations."

Life Skills — Partially Achieved & Not Yet Achieved

LIFE SKILLS

Rating 2 — Partially Achieved

COMMENT 2.LS.1

"[Name] is developing her independence in daily Grade R routines. She manages some self-care tasks confidently but still needs reminders for others. We are focusing on one routine at a time and celebrating each small success. Practising packing her own bag and preparing for the next day at home will help build her confidence and independence."

COMMENT 2.LS.2

"[Name] participates in creative activities when prompted and is beginning to initiate them in free-play time. He is developing his use of art materials and is starting to name what he has created. Providing open-ended art materials at home — paper, crayons, old magazines to cut — and following his lead without directing the outcome will nurture this aspect of his development."

COMMENT 2.LS.3

"[Name] is developing her awareness of the natural world and community. She engages with Beginning Knowledge topics when they connect to her personal experience, but is still building her ability to describe or explain things she has not directly encountered. Regular conversations at home about what she sees in her community — buildings, vehicles, people's work — will expand her world knowledge."

COMMENT 2.LS.4

"[Name] participates in physical activities with growing confidence. He is developing his gross motor coordination and is beginning to manage basic physical challenges — climbing steps with alternating feet, catching a large ball — with support. Unstructured outdoor play, climbing, and ball games at home are the most effective way to build physical confidence at this age."

Rating 1 — Not Yet Achieved

COMMENT 1.LS.1

"[Name] has not yet consistently demonstrated the self-care and routine-management skills expected at this stage of Grade R. She requires significant support during transitions and daily tasks. We are working on building her confidence and independence one step at a time, starting with tasks she finds most manageable. Please let us know if there are any factors at home that may be relevant."

COMMENT 1.LS.2

"[Name] has not yet initiated or engaged consistently with creative activities during free-play time. He watches with interest but has not yet joined in independently. We are creating low-pressure invitations to create — leaving materials out without instruction and leaving him free to explore at his own pace. This is about building psychological safety, not skill, at this stage."

COMMENT 1.LS.3

"[Name] has not yet demonstrated awareness of community roles and the natural environment as expected for Grade R Life Skills. We are introducing these topics through familiar, personal connections — her own home, her family's work, the street she lives on — to build a foundation from what she already knows."

COMMENT 1.LS.4

"[Name] has not yet demonstrated the physical coordination and body control expected for this stage of Grade R. We are providing structured daily movement opportunities to build his gross motor development. We would recommend discussing this with your GP or occupational therapist at your next visit, simply to get a professional perspective on whether any additional support might be beneficial."

TOOL 4

The Comment Quality Checklist

Seven questions to ask before you submit any Grade R report. Two minutes per comment. Significantly improves every report that leaves your school.

TOOL 4: The Comment Quality Checklist

Apply this checklist to every comment before submitting any Grade R report. It takes two minutes per comment.

1 Does this comment tell the parent something the rating cannot?

If the comment says the same thing as the number — yes/no, achieved/not achieved — it adds nothing. The comment must add evidence: what you saw, where you saw it, and what it means.

Yes, the comment adds information the rating does not contain

2 Is the comment specific to this individual child?

Could this comment apply to any learner in your class with a name swap? If yes, it needs more specificity. The comment should reflect your actual knowledge of this individual child.

Yes, this comment could only apply to this specific learner

3 Does the comment contain an observable behaviour?

Not a feeling, not an impression, not a generalisation — a specific behaviour. What did the child do or say? Where? When? The NCF and CAPS both specify that assessment is based on watching and listening, not judging or inferring.

Yes, the comment describes a specific observable behaviour

4 For a rating of 1 or 2 — does the comment include a next step?

A low Grade R rating without a support plan leaves a parent with anxiety and no direction. One sentence explaining what the school is doing, and one suggestion for home, closes the loop.

N/A (rating is 3 or 4) *Yes, a practical next step is included*

5 Is the language appropriate for a parent who is not a teacher?

Parents do not need CAPS terminology. Avoid: "phonological awareness," "one-to-one correspondence," "gross motor coordination" — unless you immediately explain what they mean in plain language.

Yes, the language is clear and parent-friendly

6 Is the comment two to four sentences?

Shorter than two sentences is rarely specific enough. Longer than four sentences loses parents. Two to four sentences is the sweet spot.

Yes, the comment is 2-4 sentences

7 | Would you be comfortable if this comment was read aloud at a parent meeting?

This is the ultimate test. If you would be uncomfortable — because it is vague, because it is copied, because the evidence does not exist — revise it before it goes home.

Yes, I stand behind every word in this comment

TOOL 5

The Parent Communication Guide

Scripts and strategies for handling difficult conversations about low Grade R ratings — before, during, and after the report goes home.

TOOL 5: The Parent Communication Guide

A Grade R report with a rating of 1 or 2 will generate parent questions, and sometimes parent anxiety. How you handle these conversations determines whether parents become partners in their child's development — or adversaries.

Before the Report Goes Home

For any learner you are rating 1 in two or more subjects: Do not let the report be the first communication a parent receives about concerns. Send a brief note home before the report, or request a 10-minute conversation. The report should confirm what the parent already knows — not be the first time they hear about it.

SCRIPT — PRE-REPORT PHONE CALL

"I wanted to chat before [name]'s report goes home. There are one or two areas where I'm going to be giving [name] a 1 this term, which means we haven't yet seen the skill in the classroom. I want you to hear it from me directly, not just read it on the report. It doesn't mean there's a problem — it means we've identified where to focus our support. Can I tell you what we're doing and what you can do at home?"

During a Parent Query Conversation

WHEN A PARENT ASKS WHY THEIR CHILD RECEIVED A 1

"A rating of 1 means that across the term, in our structured activities, I haven't yet seen [name] demonstrate this skill consistently. It doesn't mean she can't do it — it means I haven't observed it in the way CAPS requires me to report. Here is what I have seen, and here is what I am going to do differently this term to give her more opportunities."

WHEN A PARENT IS UPSET ABOUT A LOW RATING

"I completely understand why this feels concerning. What I want you to know is that every rating in this report is based on what I actually observed — not a guess, not an impression. A 1 or a 2 is not a verdict on [name]. It is a starting point. And the most important thing on this page is not the number — it is the next step, which I have written here."

WHEN A PARENT COMPARES THEIR CHILD TO A SIBLING OR PEER

"Every child follows their own development timeline, even within CAPS. The Grade R framework gives us a common standard to measure progress against, but the purpose is to support [name]'s individual development — not to rank children against each other. What matters is that we're watching carefully and we have a plan."

After the Report — Following Up

Make contact at least once before the end of Week 4 of Term 3. You do not need to call — a brief note works:

SCRIPT – TERM 3 FOLLOW-UP NOTE

"Quick update on [name] — she showed me this week that she can [specific behaviour]. I am going to build on this next week with [specific activity]. If you notice anything at home, please let me know."

This one message does three things: it shows the parent you are watching, it celebrates a small win, and it keeps the channel open.

TOOL 6

DBE Inspection Readiness Checklist

What inspectors look for, what to keep on file, and the three questions they always ask. Be ready at any time of year.

TOOL 6: DBE Inspection Readiness Checklist

A DBE inspection of your Grade R class may include a review of your assessment records. This checklist tells you exactly what to have in order — and what to keep in place throughout the year.

Classroom Evidence File — keep updated every term

- A dated observation log for every learner — at least one entry per week per subject
- At least two dated work samples per learner per term (drawings, cutting, handwriting, or similar)
- Completed observation checklists for formal assessment terms (Term 2 and Term 4)
- Evidence file organised by learner name, not by subject or date
- Any photographic evidence printed, dated, and filed (or stored digitally with dates visible)

Assessment Records

- Final ratings for all 98 CAPS Grade R skills, recorded per learner
- Written comments for all learners rated 1 or 2, explaining support in place
- Record of report card dates — when reports were completed, approved, and sent home
- Approval record — who reviewed reports before dispatch (usually the principal)

Planning Documents

- Term plans showing which CAPS Grade R skills were targeted in each week
- A record of any intervention activities planned for learners rated 1 or 2
- Parent communication record — notes or copies of any conversations about concerns

The Three Questions Inspectors Always Ask

QUESTION 1

"Can you show me the evidence you used to assign this rating for this learner?" If your answer involves pulling out a completed observation checklist with the learner's name and a specific date — you are in a strong position. If your answer is "I remember from class" — you are not.

QUESTION 2

"What support plan is in place for this learner who received a 1?" Have a specific answer: "In Term 3, I am running a small-group counting activity three times per week, and I have shared a home activity guide with the parent." Not "we are working on it."

QUESTION 3

"When did the parent receive this report, and did they acknowledge it?" Keep a record of report dispatch dates. If you use a digital parent portal like EarlyTrack, this is tracked automatically. If you send paper reports, keep a signed receipt or a note of the date.

EARLYTRACK

Every assessment action in EarlyTrack is logged automatically — who rated, when it was submitted, who approved, when the report was delivered, and when the parent viewed it. If an inspector asks for records, you have them. The audit trail is built in.

EARLYTRACK

EarlyTrack's Grade R assessment module is designed to make every tool in this document faster and easier to use in practice. Here is how each tool in this kit maps to a feature in EarlyTrack.

Observation Log

Built into EarlyTrack as a voice-to-text daily observation tool. Teachers speak observations hands-free during the day. EarlyTrack transcribes, stores, and links each observation to the relevant CAPS Grade R skill automatically.

AI Comment Generator

Teachers rate each Grade R skill on the four-level numeric scale. EarlyTrack generates a contextual, evidence-based comment in English or Afrikaans as a starting draft. Teachers review and personalise. The blank page is replaced with a starting point.

Quality Checklist Built In

EarlyTrack requires 100% skill completion before submission is allowed. Principals review every comment before any report reaches a parent. Nothing leaves the school without a second set of eyes — the checklist is enforced by the workflow.

DBE Audit Trail

Every assessment action is logged automatically — who rated, when submitted, who approved, when delivered, when the parent viewed it. If an inspector asks for records, you have them. Nothing needs to be compiled by hand.

Explore the complete Grade R assessment module:

earlytrack.co.za/features/grade-r-assessments

Start a free 14-day trial — no credit card required:

earlytrack.co.za/auth/signup

Full Professional access · Standard plan from R299/month · Cancel anytime

THE GRADE R REPORT COMMENT FORMULA

Pin this above your desk during report writing

STEP 1

Context

"During morning ring..." / "In the construction corner..." / "During our outdoor session..."



STEP 2

What the Child Did or Said

"[Name] counted 12 objects correctly, pointing to each one." / "[Name] said: 'look, they go from big to small.'"



STEP 3

What It Demonstrates

"This shows developing number sense." / "This demonstrates growing phonological awareness."



STEP 4

Next Step or Encouragement

Rating 1 or 2: what the school is doing + one home suggestion. Rating 3 or 4: encouragement + what comes next.

COMPLETE EXAMPLE — RATING 3, MATHEMATICS

"During our Thursday sorting activity, [name] correctly grouped 20 blocks by colour into four distinct piles without any prompting. This shows confident sorting ability and strong Grade R Mathematics classification skills. We will be extending this next term by sorting by two attributes at once."



EarlyTrack

Preschool management software built for South African schools

GRADE R ASSESSMENT MODULE

earlytrack.co.za/features/grade-r-assessments

START YOUR FREE 14-DAY TRIAL

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