# 2017 Child Studies Subject Assessment Advice

## Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the previous year’s assessment cycle, gives an overview of how students performed in their school and external assessments in relation to the learning requirements, assessment design criteria, and performance standards set out in the relevant subject outline. They provide information and advice regarding the assessment types, the application of the performance standards in school and external assessments, and the quality of student performance.

Teachers should refer to the subject outline for specifications on content and learning requirements, and to the subject operational information for operational matters and key dates.

# School Assessment

Assessment Type 1: Practical Activity

The more successful responses commonly:

* had evaluations and action plans which were well structured and used specific headings to establish direct links to specific features of the assessment design criteria
* included both visual and written evidence of the practical application
* evidence included captions of images that directly addressed how the student met the performance standards
* included visual evidence of the final product
* used a variety of highly relevant sources to support arguments or view-points in research tasks
* considered the validity of sources
* demonstrated clear analysis of a topic/issue rather than just providing a recount of information
* appropriately acknowledge sources
* included practical tasks that directly related to the research undertaken
* focused on a smaller number of specific features which allowed for more detailed and insightful responses
* were produced in response to clear task design that provided students the opportunity to address the subject specific features
* responded to questions that were shaped by phrases such as *‘To what extent…?’* and *‘How significant is…?’* which provided opportunities for critical thinking and analysis.

The less successful responses commonly:

* provided a recount of the practical activity in evaluations rather than providing insightful or well-considered evaluation of the processes and outcomes
* were over-assessed, particularly in the evaluation, which prevented students from producing responses that were ‘insightful’ or ‘in-depth’
* were not appropriately referenced which did not allow the reader to interpret the credibility and reliability of the research
* included research tasks that were too complex or covered too many components within the 500-word limit, therefore not allowing students to reach ‘in-depth’ investigation
* lacked photographic or written evidence of the practical application, or the photographic evidence was not linked to performance standards through captions
* did not identify specific issues or factors impacting problem solving/decision making within action plans – these responses tended to treat this section as research rather than decision making.

*General information:*

* specific feature E2, ‘Appraisal of the impact of technology on the health and wellbeing of children,’ should relate directly to the practical application
* designing pamphlets or utilising baby simulators does not meet the requirements of a practical application
* Australian sources are recommended to support contemporary issues/topics within an Australian context.

Assessment Type 2: Group Activity

The more successful responses commonly:

* participated in group decision making rather than producing a group action plan
* provided clear, detailed evidence of collaboration (e.g. through the use of screen shots of planning conversations between students)
* addressed collaboration as part of the group decision-making
* provided an evaluation of the student’s own performance, as well as the group’s collaborative efforts
* adopted effective implementation strategies and task allocation amongst group members
* involved students actually working with a child/children which allowed for more relevant and insightful evaluation

The less successful responses commonly:

* recounted the tasks or processes performed by the individual/group rather than evaluating them and their effectiveness
* included food related tasks that did not focus on healthy food initiatives or choices, therefore making it difficult to establish a link to performance standards that relate to the health and well-being of children
* did not provide evidence of collaboration
* were written as action plans rather than group decision-making.

*General information:*

* it is appropriate for group decision-making to be communicated in creative ways, such as mind maps
* evidence of group decision-making must be included with every student’s work, not just one member of the group.

## Assessment Type 3: Investigation

Generally, a good hypothesis or research question led to the production of logical and productive focus questions, which could then be researched extensively, critically analysed, and evaluated. The topics were more varied this year and many were very well worded which set the student up for success. Questions were more refined and specific with some familiar topics taking interesting ‘slants’ to add interest and originality. This assisted the student to make perceptive and insightful judgments. (ICA 1&2)

The more successful responses commonly:

* focused on the health and wellbeing of the child in each focus question
* explained why the selected topic is an issue or trend and how it links to an area of study
* formulated well-constructed focus questions which assisted students in focusing on the topic and drawing relevant conclusions
* included well- constructed introductionsthat defined the scope of the topic and gave good direction and insight into what was to come throughout the paper
* analysed and interpreted within the body of investigation results/outcomes/conclusions that were drawn from surveys or graphs
* were based on factual research and not the student’s own opinion
* demonstrated higher levels of analysis
* utilised a variety of credible sources which supported comparison and evaluation
* accessed the ‘FoodChoices’ program in order to create their own primary research (in food-related investigations)
* relied mainly on Australian data only referring to overseas studies to support or refute statements in their counter-argument
* showed evidence of analysis, debate and critical thinking throughout the discussion, culminating in a clear conclusion
* analysed and evaluated the contemporary issue throughout the investigation rather than leaving it to the conclusion
* effectively brought the discussion of the topic question or hypothesis to a clear, concise conclusion
* addressed well-constructed questions which promoted analysis of the topic from a variety of perspectives. Particularly effective were questions that encouraged the student to evaluate and to make assessments or judgments (e.g. *To what extent…? How significant…? How important…?*) or controversial topics that had two opposing sides which created clear debate
* referred throughout to a variety of credible and highly relevant sources to support arguments, rather than just providing a reference list at the end.

The less successful responses commonly:

* addressed topics which were not appropriate to the defined age group as per the subject requirement (0-8 years)
* answered ‘what’ based questions (e.g. *What is dyslexia?*) which encouraged students to recount findings rather than analyse
* presented statistics within paragraphs instead of tables – this impacted on student word count, reducing words available for analysis
* included graphs that were illegible – in order for the marker to assess their research students need to ensure that investigations can be read when printed
* included statistics but did not analyse or interpret the information
* recounted facts/data or made unsupported generalisations rather than analysing information
* included surveys that were not relevant to the topic or provided no meaningful data
* relied on surveys that asked closed questions and produced predictable responses that did not contribute any meaningful data to the investigation
* focused on one side of an argument because of the “expert” they had interviewed
* relied on graphs and statistics to demonstrate numeracy when they were neither necessary nor relevant
* addressed statements, the answer to which was self-evident, leaving no room for debate or evaluation thus limiting analysis and discussion (e.g. *Childhood obesity is on the rise*)
* included mostly American or English data, often assuming that it applied to Australian culture
* explained the benefits to the community of their research - this is an element of Research Project and is not assessed
* did not reference appropriately or produced large sections of work without any acknowledgment of sources.

**General information:**

* many investigations were produced in small font making it difficult for markers to read
* black and white versions of graphs made it impossible for readers to interpret them, as a result they were of limited benefit to the student’s work
* writer bias became a significant issue and affected ICA1 & 2 in terms of critical analysis when students used emotional, exaggerated language more in the style of an English persuasive text
* when writing in the 10 credit program, it is even more important for questions to be well defined. It was helpful when students responded to only two focus questions to break down the investigation instead of attempting to answer three in less detail.