# Government of South Australia LogoSACE Board Logo2024 Child Studies Subject Assessment Advice

Overview

Subject assessment advice, based on the 2024 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.

The Subject Renewal program has introduced changes for many subjects in 2025, and these are detailed in the change log at the front of each subject outline. When reviewing the 2024 Subject Assessment Advice, it is important to consider any updates to this subject to ensure the feedback in this document remains accurate.

# School Assessment

Teachers can improve the moderation process and the online process by:

* thoroughly checking that all grades entered in schools online are correct
* ensuring the uploaded tasks are legible
* uploading the tasks for each assessment type as one file.

Assessment Type 1: Practical Activity

At least one practical application must be undertaken individually. The remaining practical activity or activities may be undertaken individually, in pairs, in groups, or as a whole class.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* investigation and critical analysis (research task) and/or problem-solving (action plan)
* practical application
* evaluation.

The more successful responses commonly:

* demonstrated a nuanced analysis of the assigned topic or issue
* utilised a diverse range of valid sources to substantiate arguments in research tasks, incorporating relevant subject-specific terminology
* employed an appropriate higher order vocabulary in written tasks
* consistently acknowledged and referenced sources in accordance with established citation systems
* successful research tasks employed contemporary sources, often referencing government websites and peer-reviewed articles
* identified issues within action plans directly tied to practical tasks
* presented well-structured action plans and evaluations, clearly aligned with specific features of the assessment design criteria
* provided a range of captioned images directly addressing the processes undertaken in completing practical task offered clear and detailed annotations for photo evidence, with a variety of images for each Practical Application performance standard
* incorporated practical tasks seamlessly related to the research or problem-solving activities
* evaluated processes by explaining responses, rationale, and outcomes
* evaluated the impact of technology on the health and well-being of children
* responded to contemporary tasks that engaged students effectively
* used fewer issues, allowing effective utilisation of the word count
* worked within the prescribed word count, avoiding unnecessary pages of tables and information
* responded adeptly to the set task, enabling meaningful discussion and research
* executed practical tasks at an advanced skill level, catering to a clear audience
* ensured that evaluations were intricately linked to the assessment criteria
* provided detailed responses to tasks, incorporating relevant and credible sources, including primary and secondary sources
* demonstrated proficiency in selecting and analysing relevant quotes
* maintained clarity and conciseness in practical evidence, aligning with performance standards
* considered the area of study throughout the task, linking back to it consistently
* demonstrated evidence of Practical Applications (PA1, PA2, PA3) through detailed descriptions and photos
* references were consistently relevant to the task focus, enhancing the credibility of the analysis and were recent
* included a range of factors closely related to child development in the action plan
* developed action plans with clearly identified factors, ensuring these are discussed thoroughly
* linked back to the area of study and highlight factors that were important in the decision-making process
* targeted the specific features being assessed.

The less successful responses commonly:

* limited or superficial photo evidence was observed for Practical Application
* stated decisions in action plans without adequate justification
* less successful action plans did not identify relevant issues before decision-making
* fell significantly below the word count, lacking sufficient detail in responses
* used informal language, preventing in-depth analysis
* research primarily consisted of sharing facts
* contained excessive "clutter" in the form of recipes, appendices, and numerous tables
* extended the work beyond the word limit with the inclusion of graphs and tables
* included practical work photos without clear explanations of how they met performance standards
* evaluations lacked connection to E3 and/or E4, with students recounting practical experiences without tying them back to research or action plans
* included irrelevant information, and tasks unrelated to child studies
* contained research tasks which were deemed too complex or covered too many components within the 500-word limit
* some responses focused on personal opinion rather than demonstrating analysis
* overreliance on overseas sources, when addressing local issues, was noted
* lists of dot-pointed issues lacked discussion or failed to identify specific factors impacting problem-solving in action plans
* lacked evidence of Practical Application
* included practical tasks not specific to the health and well-being of children
* an abundance of specific features to address in evaluations hindered students from producing "insightful" or "in-depth" responses
* focused on the technology used rather than evaluating its impact on the health and well-being of children was observed
* inconsistently or incorrect use of terminology hindered the clarity and quality of the response
* presented evidence that was vague or irrelevant, did not directly support the points being made or align with the task requirements
* had confusion between the practical evidence criteria of using technology for the practical task and the evaluation criteria requiring discussion of the impact of technology on child development
* were poorly structured responses, with ideas presented in a fragmented or unclear manner
* contained limited links to the area of study to guide the topics or direction
* limited discussion of factors/issues, often listing them or talking about research without linking it to the task given.

Assessment Type 2: Group Activity

Students work in groups to plan, organise, and implement action to meet a teacher directed challenge that focuses on the health and wellbeing of children. A group activity must relate to a specific area of study from the subject outline and consist of:

* group decision-making
* a group practical application
* an individual evaluation report.

For this assessment type, students provide evidence of their learning primarily in relation to the following assessment design criteria:

* problem-solving
* practical application
* collaboration
* evaluation.

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* ensuring alignment between the task design and the specific performance criteria being assessed (e.g., PS3 is not assessed in group tasks)
* avoiding over-assessing evaluations; focus on a reduced number of key features to maintain clarity and depth
* reflecting on the level of scaffolding provided to students, as excessive scaffolding (e.g., requiring an aim, decision, evolution of decision, and evaluation of practical) may restrict students' ability to generate authentic, independent responses
* designing tasks that encourage critical thinking and autonomy while ensuring students have a clear understanding of the performance criteria.

The more successful responses commonly:

* utilised a diverse array of photos, screenshots, tables, or planning sheets as evidence of collaboration, accompanied by detailed annotations
* employed sub-headings to clearly indicate where performance standards were addressed, incorporating images of the practical component. Wrote concisely, using formal language, and included all components of the task
* selected topics conducive to fostering productive group discussions
* formed groups comprising of more than two students, featuring a significant practical component that allowed meaningful contributions from everyone. Utilised a planning document clearly showcasing evidence of assigned responsibilities
* demonstrated collaboration consistently throughout the task, from the group plan to the practical. Showcased practical skills, discussed in evidence pages, and supported by comprehensive evaluations that directly related to the task and area of study
* presented clear and concise writing, providing specific evidence supporting collaboration in the group setting­
* exhibited a well-structured and logically flowing response
* demonstrated evidence of active participation in group decision-making. Utilised various means such as mind-maps and tables to communicate evidence of group decision-making
* presented clear evidence of collaboration, including screenshots of planning conversations between students. Addressed collaboration as an integral aspect of group decision-making
* responded to tasks offering multiple opportunities for students to showcase leadership
* provided evaluations encompassing the student's individual performance and the group's collaborative efforts
* implemented effective strategies for task allocation among group members
* focused on ways in which the health and well-being of children would benefit. Involved students actively working with children, allowing for relevant and insightful evaluations
* demonstrated strong connections between the task requirements, research, decision-making processes, and the practical components of their work
* effectively incorporated collaborative discussions into evaluations, aligning with C1 and C2 performance standards
* provided clear evidence of collaboration through group plans, practical activities, and detailed evaluations
* included assessments that emphasised group collaboration over individual action planning
* actively engaged in collaboration, with well-documented group decision-making processes
* presented clear and elaborated evidence of their contributions and outcomes, ensuring transparency and depth in their work.

The less successful responses commonly:

* recounted tasks or processes without evaluating their effectiveness
* included food-related tasks not focusing on healthy initiatives or choices, hindering the establishment of a link to specific features related to the health and well-being of children
* lacked evidence of collaboration
* presented as action plans rather than group decision-making plans
* relied on a single photo of a group as evidence for collaboration
* presented a lack of photographic evidence, and the word count was not adhered to
* had minimal practical evidence and did not discuss how performance standards were met
* teacher provided headings, limiting evaluation ability
* did not provide sufficient evidence of participation in the group and collaboration
* had limited links to the area of study to guide topics or direction
* limited discussion of factors or issues
* task construction and delivery were overly scaffolded, limiting student voice and individual work expression
* provided recount or description rather than evaluation
* implementations were often basic and presented as a list without justification
* did not demonstrate a clear connection between group decisions and the overall purpose of the task
* submitted excessively wordy responses that did not align with the features outlined in the performance standards
* divided writing responsibilities among group members, resulting in fragmented responses that lacked cohesion and reflected insufficient communication and collaboration
* did not provide evidence of effective group decision-making or collective problem-solving within the task.

# External Assessment

Teachers can elicit more successful responses by:

* encouraging students to explore a broader range of topics beyond commonly chosen themes such as technology use, to promote diverse perspectives and deeper engagement with different subject areas
* suggesting use of clear and appropriately sized fonts to ensure investigations are easily readable and meet presentation standards
* supporting students in developing skills to validate sources and critically analyse information to reduce the likelihood of presenting inaccuracies as facts.

Assessment Type 3: Investigation

It is encouraged for students to cultivate original and innovative ideas during their investigation. The key steps in the investigation process include identifying a pertinent contemporary issue concerning the health and wellbeing of children, framing this issue as a research question or hypothesis, establishing a connection between the investigation and a specific area of study, clearly defining the scope of the inquiry, analysing information for relevance and appropriateness while ensuring proper acknowledgment of sources, evaluating the evidence collected, and finally, rigorously analysing the findings to draw pertinent conclusions.

It is anticipated the teacher will offer support and feedback to guide the student throughout the investigation.

Teachers are tasked with providing students with opportunities to develop the necessary skills for conducting the required research. Assessment of ICA1, ICA2, ICA3 and E4 will be conducted.

The more successful responses commonly:

* developed a meticulously formulated hypothesis or research question, facilitating in-depth analysis and enabling the student to present their investigation at a high standard within the specified word limit
* clearly articulated the significance of the chosen topic as an issue or trend and established its connection to a specific area of study
* crafted well-constructed introductions that defined the scope of the topic, offering clear direction and insight into the forthcoming investigation
* employed a diverse array of recent and credible information sources, including expert opinions from various mediums such as videos, articles, and podcasts
* made reference to and discussed information included in tables/diagrams and graphs
* maintained a consistent focus on the health and wellbeing of the child in response to each focus question
* formulated open-ended focus questions that prompted analysis, specifically tied to the health and wellbeing of the child
* when utilising graphs and diagrams, explicitly referred to and discussed the presented information
* incorporated relevant graphics that enhanced the investigation, providing a thoughtful discussion to demonstrate understanding
* analysed and interpreted results, outcomes, and conclusions drawn from surveys and/or graphs within the body of the investigation
* utilised a variety of credible sources rooted in factual research, supporting thorough comparison and evaluation
* skilfully drew relevant comparisons and contrasts between data sources
* acknowledged the expertise of sources when applicable and provided specific details regarding critical observations
* consistently referenced a diverse array of credible and highly relevant sources throughout the investigation to substantiate arguments
* integrated data and insights from expert theorists as appropriate to the topic
* demonstrated high levels of analysis, debate, and critical thinking throughout the discussion, culminating in a clear conclusion at the end of each focus question or in the overall conclusion
* concluded the discussion of the topic question or hypothesis effectively, offering clear and concise insights while evaluating any discernible patterns or data relationships
* analysed the researched information and personalised their response
* synthesised the research in their conclusions
* focus questions were open-ended, encouraging deeper analysis and exploration of the topic while staying within the word limit
* identified and considered potential biases affecting results, such as age, gender, SES, and geographic location
* had Investigations which were narrowly focused and deeply explored, avoiding broad or generalised topics, aligning with ICA1 and E4 standards for an A-band result
* Applied complex terminology appropriately and in context, enhancing the depth without unnecessary verbosity
* consistently used Australian English spelling, ensuring adherence to conventions
* assessed secondary sources for validity, noting currency, Australian focus, or the necessity of using international resources
* used a wide variety of primary and secondary data, accurately paraphrased, and contrasted/confirmed with findings from primary research
* cross-referenced sources of information, supporting validity and enhancing the reliability of conclusions
* investigations included details of interviewees’ qualifications and experience relevant to the chosen topic
* reflected diverse perspectives in findings, acknowledging multiple viewpoints and the complexity of the topic
* high-quality and relevant primary sources were identified and compared with predominantly Australian secondary sources
* evaluations were integrated throughout the investigation, rather than confined to the conclusion, demonstrating ongoing critical thinking.

*The less successful responses commonly:*

* explored subject matter that was inappropriate for the specified age group (0-8 years)
* formulated focus questions that were overly broad, restricting the student's ability to delve into the subject matter deeply
* responded to 'what' based questions (e.g. What is …….) that promoted the recounting of findings rather than engaging in analytical discussion
* recounted facts, data, or made unsupported generalisations
* relied on surveys featuring closed questions, yielding predictable responses
* presented and relied on data from surveys conducted on an inauthentic audience
* displayed a biased focus on one side of an argument due to a singular expert focus
* utilised a narrow range of resources
* produced substantial sections of work without proper acknowledgment of sources
* focused on discussion rather than addressing a genuine issue
* utilised topics which were too broad or lacked a direct link to child health and wellbeing
* focus questions were disconnected from the main question
* had no clear connection established to an Area of Study, leading to a lack of focus and direction
* misused complex terminology or overcomplicated sentences, compromising clarity and accuracy
* overly relied upon emotive language, resulting in biased or one-sided presentations of information
* included survey data from irrelevant or uninformed participants without proper collation or discussion
* presented Information densely, with limited explanation or connections to children's health and wellbeing
* used visual aids, such as graphs or images, out of context and not integrated into the writing
* used superficial conclusions, addressing some focus questions but lacking synthesis or deep analysis
* repeated sub-question findings in conclusions, without evaluating impacts or identifying trends
* findings were often presented without evaluating patterns or relationships, limiting critical analysis.

General

When formulating tasks, it is advisable to consider the individual strengths of the students and tailor the tasks to capitalise on these strengths. Additionally, there is merit in revisiting previous tasks to enhance their engagement and feasibility for the students. This entails a thoughtful redesign to ensure that tasks are not only challenging but also achievable, fostering a positive and enriching learning experience.

It is commendable that many teachers are utilising subject adjustments effectively to support their students. To further enhance outcomes:

* ensure tasks are aligned with the scope of **Child Studies** (conception to 8 years), avoiding topics outside this framework, such as contraception
* design tasks with evaluations focused on fewer performance standards, enabling students to demonstrate greater depth rather than breadth in their responses
* prioritise activities directly linked to children’s health, development, and wellbeing to maintain a clear connection to the subject’s core objectives.