



Re-introducing the **ELOM 4&5** **Targeting Tool**

*Helping early learning programmes prioritise the children
who need the most support*

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What is ELOM 4&5 Targeting Tool (ELOM TT)?

This short-form tool is derived from the well-established ELOM 4&5 Years Assessment, part of the broader ELOM suite developed to measure early childhood development in the South African context. The ELOM TT is a **five item** version of the ELOM 4&5 that can be administered in about **15 minutes**. It is intended to identify children who are falling far behind in their development and who are, therefore, most likely to benefit from targeted support - whether that means a specific intervention, a referral to social support services, or closer attention in the classroom.

Why was it developed?

Not all early learning environments have the resources to conduct full developmental assessments. While the full ELOM 4&5 tool remains the gold standard for comprehensive population-level child outcomes measurement, there was a clear demand for a version that could be used more flexibly and frequently - especially for identifying individual children or small groups who may need support. The Targeting Tool fills this gap. It provides ECD programme staff and specialist service providers with a rapid and reliable way to:

- **Flag children who are developmentally vulnerable**
- **Support targeted intervention planning**
- **Inform programme placement, remedial support or referral decisions**

What does it NOT do?

It is important to note that the ELOM TT is **NOT** intended to identify children with intellectual or other forms of disability. And the term “falling far behind” should **NOT** be understood as implying that the child has or is at risk for a disability. However, some children whose scores fall into this band would likely have a disability. If this is indicated by experience in the early learning programme daily setting or raised by a caregiver, the child would need to be assessed on an appropriate disability screening tool, and possibly, referred to an expert in developmental assessment. It is also important to remember that the ELOM TT is not just a short version of the full ELOM 4&5, and will not give you a statistically valid measure of child outcomes for a group of children like the full assessment can.

How does it work?

Rigorous statistical methods were followed to identify one item from each of the five ELOM developmental domains that is most strongly associated with being at risk of not being able to reach the expected standard. In other words, one item from each domain that can reliably detect whether children will fall into the Falling Far Behind band on the full ELOM 4&5. Table 1 shows which item from each domain is included in the ELOM TT. The full details on how these items were selected and additional reliability statistics can be found in this technical report.

Table 1: ELOM 4&5 domains and items included in the targeting tool

ELOM 4&5 domain	ELOM 4&5 domain
Gross Motor Development	Item 4: Bean bag catch non-preferred hand
Fine Motor Coordination and Visual Motor Integration	Item 6: Draw a triangle
Emergent Numeracy and Mathematics	Item 9: Counting in classes
Cognition and Executive Functioning	Item 15: Pencil tapping
Emergent Literacy and Language	Item 19: Expressive language: self-awareness

When and how should it be used?

The ELOM TT is ideal for situations where quick identification is needed to guide programme or service decisions. It is especially useful for:

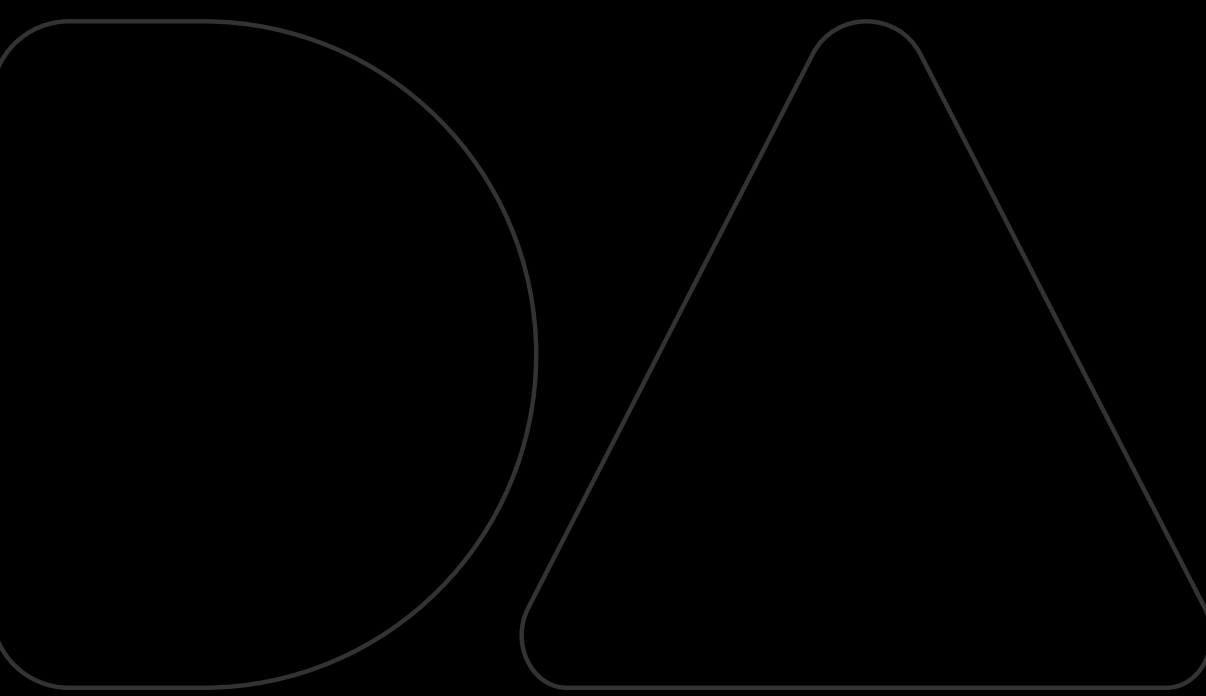
- **NGOs or ECD providers** wanting to enrol or refer children into programmes based on need.
- **Practitioners** wanting to decide which children to refer for further assessment.

Importantly, the tool is not a diagnostic assessment. It does not replace comprehensive developmental screening nor the full ELOM 4&5 Assessment, especially where detailed individual reports or population-level monitoring is required. Rather, it complements existing tools by enabling **rapid, focused decision-making**.

Conclusion

In early childhood, timing matters. Identifying children who are falling far behind - and doing so early - can change the trajectory of their lives. The ELOM 4&5 Targeting Tool gives practitioners and organisations a simple but powerful way of doing just that.

If you're working to ensure every child has a fair start, this tool can help you focus your efforts on the children who may need it most. If you would like to find out more about the ELOM TT or think it might be a good fit for your organisation, have a look at our [website](#) or apply [here](#).



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