



## IMMEDIATE

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### Campaign coalition launches critique of new Government test for four-year-olds – Labour backs it

At a meeting hosted by Shadow Early Years Minister Tracy Brabin this morning, parents, teachers and educational experts from the More Than a Score coalition will expose the flaws in the Government's latest plans to test very young children, and call for the proposal to be dropped.

The More Than a Score dossier *Baseline Assessment: it doesn't add up* shows that the Government's plans are statistically uninformed and educationally damaging.

**Tracy Brabin MP** said: "I'm pleased to be able to host so many passionate early years experts in Parliament and welcome the new 'Baseline Assessment: it doesn't add up' research document. I believe children learn through play and creativity, not just through examinations, that's why it's great More than a Score is leading on this important work."

**Nancy Stewart from TACTYC, the Association for Professional Development in the Early Years**, said: "The proposal to test 99% of four-year-olds in 2020 is based on the false premise that the knowledge and skills of a four-year-old can be accurately measured. But few statisticians believe this, and no research has demonstrated a strong link between attainment measured at four and later progress."

**Elaine Bennett from Keeping Early Years Unique**, said: "Baseline testing is a pointless and expensive exercise which threatens children's mental health at a crucial time in their development; a time where they are starting school, settling into new environments and making new relationships. It is irresponsible and unethical to put children in this position and to reduce them to a number when they have been in existence for 48-60 months. The danger is that their score will see them grouped by ability from the very beginning."

**Madeleine Holt from the parents' organisation Rescue our Schools**, said: "Parents are becoming far more aware that their children are being over tested. The new test would steer the teaching of four-year-olds towards an excessive focus on numeracy and literacy. Parents wanted a broad curriculum for their children, not one that is organised around narrow tests."

**Mary Bousted, Joint General Secretary of the National Education Union**, said: “Baseline assessment has everything to do with finding new ways of holding schools accountable and nothing to do with supporting the learning of children. The government could do far more for children’s education by lifting them out of poverty than by spending £10 million on tests in which few education experts have any confidence.”

More than a Score will now take its campaign to parents and to schools.

Take a look at the latest short video from More Than a Score explaining why Baseline testing for 4 year olds is wrong

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8ENv3C\\_Etg&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R8ENv3C_Etg&feature=youtu.be)

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**Press Contact: Madeleine Holt, More than a Score. 07711 796262**

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