

Children's starting points

When a child first in your care it is important that you find out as much as possible about them from their parents and anyone else who knows them well such as their key person at their other setting, other agencies with whom their family work etc.

Once you have all this information, you will already have an idea about the type of activities, games, outings, family experiences etc they have enjoyed previously and you will be able to think about planning which will capture their attention and challenge their learning and development while they are with you. This will allow you to start planning for the child from day 1 – which is what Ofsted inspectors are looking for...

During their first weeks in your care, you will be relaxing into the new routine and getting to know the child really well. You will also be jotting down settling in notes to share with parents and making your initial observations about their current learning and development. It is impossible to show how much progress a child is making during their time with you if you do not know their starting points first.

A 'starting points' document will show -

- Child's name and date of birth
- Comments from the child's parents about their child's learning and development at home so far
- What the child likes – does not like – how they play – what they can do – what they can't do yet
- Notes from other settings the child attends or professionals who work with the child if appropriate
- The child's 'voice' - if they are old enough to contribute – about what they like / don't like
- Photos of the child and if possible their artwork, mark making, models etc to help you get a picture of what the child can do before they start in your care
- The child's learning and development (briefly) against all the areas of learning of the EYFS, focussing on the prime areas for the little ones until they are well established. Here are some more guides to help you -

<http://www.childmindinghelp.co.uk/freeresources/Free%20downloads/7areasoflearninganddevelopment.html>

<http://www.childmindinghelp.co.uk/freeresources/Free%20downloads/6areasoflearning.html>

NOTE - it is really important that you talk about children's current learning and development at home (using parent friendly language) and include parents notes in your initial observations and individual planning – this is a key Ofsted inspection area.

- Ideas for how to extend the child's learning and development over the next few weeks and months – the child's next steps / individual planning / possible lines of development (PLODS). These plans should then be shared with the child's parents so they can follow up activities at home.

Once your starting points are in place and noted against the Early Years Outcomes guidance you will continue to gather evidence through ongoing observations to show how the child' is making progress towards the Early Learning Goals in the EYFS.