

About learning journey files

It is not a requirement of the EYFS to have a file and call it a 'Learning Journey'. However, there is a lot of information you must retain about every child in your provision and most childminders and early years colleagues keep it in a file and call it, for want of something better, a 'Learning Journey'.

Learning Journey files must contain -

- Details about the EYFS and where parents can find more information.
- The child's personalised routine – updated when it changes.
- 'Starting Points' information from parents along with initial observations by the practitioner to introduce the child and say what they can do / say when they first start in the provision.
- Observations and assessments of learning (linked to early Years Outcomes) – from inside, outside, outings, other settings and home.... and during adult led and child initiated activities.
- Individual / next steps planning.
- Repeated activities eg pre-school child writing their name to show that the child is learning well and getting better at things. Don't forget to go back to previous next steps planning to show progress.
- A copy of Early Years Outcomes and evidence that the child is making good progress – some sort of tracker (but not a tick list) using Early Years Outcomes as a guide.
- Comments from the child – written by the child or the practitioner including their words where possible.
- Comments from parents – be careful about creating boxes and pages for parents to complete if they are not normally forthcoming or if they are reluctant to write in English. Ask questions instead and write the information for them – use a different coloured pen maybe to highlight 'notes from home'.
- Information from other settings the child attends – if the other setting is not forthcoming, take a photo of the front of the building, add a photo of the child's key person and get information where you can using wall displays and newsletters. Talk about how you are linking in with planning from the child's other setting in your observations / assessments / individual planning.
- Ideas for children's learning at home – regardless of how you feel about this one, you will not be complying with the requirements of the EYFS if you do not include information about activity ideas you have shared with home.
- Information about children's participation in group activities – if you do group planning include info about what the child has done and record their learning.
- 2 year progress check (between 2 and 3 years of age).
- Information about the child's learning characteristics.
- Moving on / transition report at the end of the child's time with you.

The child's voice - the child should have access to their Learning Journey file – not to scribble all over it but to look through it with an adult and add their 'voice'. The will also enjoy adding photos and copies of their drawings and mark making.

The parents voice - the Learning Journey file should also be shared regularly with parents and their comments must be added on request. Beware sending them all home at the same time – you will not have evidence for Ofsted if your files are not on your premises!

Learning journeys – ideas for pages

I love looking at other peoples' Learning Journey files and seeing the type of things they include. Here are some of the good ideas I have picked up on recently that I will be adding to our Learning Journey files here at Knutsford Childminding...

- Introductory photo of each key person at the front with a little bit of blurb about what we are looking forward to doing with the child.
- 1 page header for each season, coloured in by the child – as a starter for a new season / term including seasonal / weather pictures and some of the activities you will be covering with them. There is a spring poster which would work well as a header here - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/independentchildminders/737236926297717/>.
- 1 page of overview planning for each month – some general activity ideas (differentiated for each child) that we can share with parents.
- More children's pages –
 - This is me
 - I can write / draw / paint
 - Wow! Cut out speech bubbles using colourful paper
 - At home I have / this is my house... sister... dog...
 - During the holidays I...
 - Photos of the child at home doing family activities and on outings – ask parents to email the photos and print them here
- Lots and lots of child comments / feedback – talking about what they have enjoyed doing and their favourite things in the provision.
- Pages for special days /weeks you have celebrated / marked with the children – they can be pretty much the same for each child and include words and photos of children's artwork and crafts – with EYFS links to their learning.
- Pictures / stickers which will help the child to focus on what their Learning Journey is about – rather than lots of words and nothing visual.
- Bold headers and stickers / little pictures to make the pages look attractive.
- My first / last day special sheet of memories.
- Mix it up a bit – post it notes, clouds, speech bubbles, wow moments etc – keep it interesting.
- Reading / book focus –
 - This week we have been reading...
 - We did these activities...
 - We learned about...
 - Link to the EYFS
 - Ideas for learning at home...
 - What the child said about the activities...
- Motivational stickers chosen by the child to brighten up their pages – especially on children's artwork and photos of their crafts.