

Foundation Years Learning Walks



Unique Child

Positive Environments

Positive Partnerships

Routines and Rhythms

Interaction and communication

Play and exploration

Investigation and discovery

Learning and Development

Parental Involvement

Foundation Years Learning Walks

The Early Years NETWORKS discussed the use of Learning Walks as a way of evaluating their provision and practice. It was clear that a lesson observation was not always appropriate in the foundation years, and it was far more effective for observers to carry out Learning Walks at different times during the day to get an in depth picture of the quality of provision and practice.

However visitors did not always know what to look for or what to ask.

Each Learning Walk should have a clear focus but could be carried out by the Leader, Head teacher, Inspector, Advisory Board, parent, peer or even a group of children (KS2) The 20 minute walk might include brief observations and an informal discussion with a child or adult. In this booklet we have provided a simple format for recording your Learning Walk. We have included prompts on what to look for and what questions to ask. The purpose of the Learning Walk is to identify opportunities to improve and so observers are encouraged to record a suggested opportunity at the end of the walk.

The completed Learning Walks will provide leaders with different perspectives on the quality of their foundation years which can then support their self evaluation and plans for improvement. The booklet is provided as a starting point, as you become more confident in evaluating your own and each other's practice you will develop and extend the walks.

An early years NETWORK can be effective in enabling setting/centres/schools to support each other and work together. Staff teams are encouraged to reflect and evaluate their provision, articulate how and why they work in this way and take part in professional dialogue about what works well, and what could be improved.

The format can be adapted with your own logo and tailored to needs.

Joint Learning Walks can be arranged as part of the Blink process. Leaders/Heads/Supervisors have an opportunity to carry out a shared observation with an Early Years Associate from NET giving you an opportunity to rehearse the process, and the confidence to train others.

Contact louise@nationaleducationtrust.net for more information.

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Unique Child

Children are fully engaged

Children's learning is visible

Children are seen making progress

Children move around independently with confidence

How do adults support children's individual needs?

(Focus : EAL/SEN/GRT/BME/vulnerable groups)

Are clear and consistent boundaries demonstrated and expectations reasonable?

How is each child's learning and development supported through all experiences?

How is each child's learning and development documented?

Are there reasonable spaces that fit with children's rhythms and to give opportunities for a wide variety of experiences? (snack time, quiet areas, space to move freely inside and outside)

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Positive Environments

Observation, assessment and planning informs practice

Every child is accepted, valued, supported and challenged.

Children learn across the centre/setting - inside, outside, in groups, individually

A sense of community is actively promoted, discussed and explored

How are observations used to assess children's learning?

How are observations and assessments used to inform planning?

How are individual children's needs met? (Case study of SEN/EAL/additional needs)

Are all children engaged, focused, motivated and interested in learning across all areas, inside and outside?

What is the child's perspective? Invite a child/group to show you round.

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Positive Partnerships

All children's and adults engage in positive interaction and communication

Parents are accepted, valued, supported and challenged.

The professional team works closely with colleagues in education, health, social care and voluntary services.

Every child is supported by a key person

How do adults interact and communicate with children and parents?

How are parents involved, supported and engaged in their child's learning and development?

How are individual children's needs met through partnership with other professionals?
(Case study : SEN/EAL/Additional needs)

Are staff trained in early language development? What is the procedure if a child is causing concern?

Are staff trained in early emotional development? What is the procedure if a child is causing concern?

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Routines and Rhythms

Children move with confidence and independence

Plans for the session are clearly communicated to children and adults

Routines and rhythms are well understood by children and adults

Children are learning to be flexible, adapt to change and to be resilient

How do children move around the centre/setting/school? Can they access resources?

How are timetables, plans and routines communicated to children? To parents?

How are individuals supported with more structured routines? Case Study: Child with SEN/Additional Needs.

How are children learning to be resilient and how is this documented?

How are children supported with toilet training/personal care?

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Interaction and Communication

Children interact with other children and adults

Children engage in verbal and non verbal forms of communication with confidence

All adults value the importance of early language development

Children at risk of delay are identified, supported and monitored.

How do children interact with other children and adults around the centre/setting/school?

What forms of communication are used by adults? By children?

How are individuals supported with early language development ? Case Study: Child with SEN/Additional Needs.

How are parents encouraged to support early language development? Case study: Child/family at risk of language delay.

How are children at risk of language delay assessed, monitored and reviewed ?

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Play and Exploration

Children learn through play and exploration

Children's learning through play and exploration is well documented and understood

The environment and resources provide good opportunities for play and exploration

Adults are actively engaged in play and exploration alongside the child

Are children actively engaged and learning through play and exploration?

How are adults supporting and challenging children's learning through play and exploration?

How are individuals supported to learn through play and exploration? Case Study: Child with SEN/Additional Needs.

How are resources selected, presented and made accessible ?

How are adults supported, trained and challenged to reflect on children's learning and development ?

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

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Name:

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School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Investigation and discovery

Children are encouraged to be curious, interested and motivated to learn

Planning, environment and resources reflect the interests of children

Fiction/reference books are available and accessible across all areas of learning

Children are engaged in thinking, talking and problem solving

Where are the opportunities for investigation and discovery?

How are these opportunities recorded in planning?

How are individuals supported and challenged to extend their investigations?

How are children supported and challenged to carry out research following a 'discovery'?

How do adults support and extend the language of investigation and discovery?

How are children encouraged to build on their experience, existing knowledge and skills?

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Learning and Development

There is evidence of children learning across seven areas of EYFS

The themes and principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage are well understood

There is a strong emphasis on delivering high quality early education

Parents are engaged and supported to understand their child's learning and development

Does the environment supports learning across all seven areas of EYFS:

Communication and language?

Physical Development?

Personal, social and emotional development?

Mathematics?

Literacy?

Understanding the world?

Expressive Arts and Design?

Is there evidence of all children learning and making progress across all seven areas?

Do adults have a good understanding of how young children learn?

Do parents have a good understanding of how children learn?

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Parental Involvement

Parents are accepted, valued and engaged in the centre/setting/school

Systems for effective communication are in place

Parents are able to contribute and get involved in children's learning

The quality of the home learning environment is enhanced by the setting/centre/school

How are parents welcomed at the beginning/end of the session?

How are parents kept informed about their child's learning and development?

Are there opportunities for parents to volunteer, contribute and participate?

Case Study: Parental involvement

How has the home learning environment for one child been improved by the work in the setting/centre/school? Case Study: Child with additional needs.

How are parents views collected and used to influence provision and practice?

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date:

Foundation Years Learning Walks

Focus:

What do we expect to see?

Look, listen and note:

Opportunity:

Name:

Role:

School/Centre/Setting:

Date: