Tring Stepping Stones Pre-School.

Establishing children’s starting points, Observation and Assessment of Children.

When children start at the setting they arrive at different levels of learning and development. In order to help them settle and make rapid progress it is important that they are provided with care and learning opportunities that are suited to their needs, interests and abilities. This means establishing and understanding their starting points and whether there are any obstacles to their learning so that teaching can be catered to the “unique child”

The aim of establishing a child’s starting point is to ensure that the most appropriate care and learning is provided from the outset. Starting points are established by gathering information from the first contact with the child’s parents and during the settling in period. Staff do not ‘wait and see’ how the child is settling before they begin to gather information.

The Key Person is responsible for establishing their key children’s start points by observation of the child during settling in visits, discussion with the child’s parents, building on information that has been gathered during registration. The key person must make a ‘best-fit’ judgement about the age band the child is working in referring to Development Matters or Birth to Five Matters. If the initial assessment raises any concerns that extra support may be required then the procedures in Supporting children with SEND is followed.

Observation will be carried out by staff on all children during their time at preschool. These observations are recorded in the child’s learning journal and are used to inform next-steps for the child’s continuing development.

Observations may be ad hoc when we see a “wow” moment such as a child doing something for the first time or learning a new skill or more detailed observations. We also record speech quotes for the learning journal.

Where appropriate, we carry out more detailed weekly observations. We will observe children learning through play and achieving new skills. All written observations must have a clear purpose and tell us something new about the child’s learning and development. We record both what we see and what we hear and will include a “what next” if appropriate. These “what next” activities are then added to the weekly planning.

Artwork created by the children and photographs of activities they have enjoyed or taken part in will be included in the Learning Journal along with observations and comments to show what they have learnt, their development and style of learning.

Each term, the Key Person will complete a Unique Summary Report which will outline what the child has been doing and what they have learnt during that term. Staff will also complete a 2-year progress check on their key children.

Students or staff in training who are required to carry out observations of children as part of their course will ask for permission from parents to include their child in the observation. Confidentiality would be respected at all times and the children would be referred to by their initials or as “child 1” etc, no Christian or surnames would be used.

Staff meet each half term to review key children, the observations made on the children are used to inform planning and to ensure the individual child is supported and is reaching his or her full potential at pre-school.

Learning journals are sent home once per term for the parents to look at and share with their child. If necessary, they can be sent home more frequently e.g. in instances where both parents work and a childminder or nanny takes and collects the child from pre-school. This helps the parents to feel more involved with pre-school and to share in their child’s experiences. We encourage parents and carers to add to the learning journal with photographs of places they have been, activities, family gatherings or wow moments which we then share with the children and add their comments once the learning journals are returned to preschool. This home-school link helps the Key Person to share in the experience with the child and learn more about the children’s interests and family life outside of preschool.

When the child moves on to nursery, school or another setting, the learning journal (including all reports) will either be passed directly to the setting (in the case of local school nurseries/reception classes) or given to parents to pass on to the new setting. The school will then return the learning journal to the parent or carer at the start of term. It is hoped that the notes and records will be useful and a lovely reminder of the time the child spent at pre-school. Some observations and records will be kept at pre-school for 3 years.

**Adopted at a meeting of:** Tring Stepping Stones Pre-School

**Held on**:

**Date to be reviewed: December 2024**

**Signed on behalf of the management**

**committee:**

**Name of signatory:**

**Role of signatory:**

**Signed by staff indicating they have read and understood policy:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Staff name** | **Staff signature** |
| Lucy Brittain |  |
| Nicola Poulton |  |
| Nicola Reynolds |  |
| Kim Smith |  |
| Jo Davis |  |

2012 review changes – added this statement- the date is entered against each learning goal we have observed and the observation is stuck in the child’s scrapbook. Once we have noted 3 dates against a goal it is highlighted off on the development matters sheet..

“Next steps” are recorded on the observations arrow stickers, these are then stuck into the child’s scrapbook and the key worker refers to these to assist in developing their key children. Once the next step has been completed a date is entered on the note in the scrapbook.

Questions given to the parents during their child’s first term asking how they’ve settled in/what they like playing with etc.

May 2013 review- lots of changes made- added the tracker,

7 areas of learning,

what nexts,

no longer need to see something 3 times we need to know that they can do something consistently and independently.

Unique summary observation sheets

2 year checks

September 2014 review- removed the statement about sending home a questionnaire after the childs been with us for half a term.

Added in star moments

October 2016 – changed references to scrapbooks to learning journals. Removed reference to wow board. Changed some wording to reflect that we are looking for children to move on in their learning rather than achieving goals.

October 2017 – no changes

October 2018 – no changes

November 2019 – no changes

December 2020- Learning Journals weren’t sent home as often due to coivd-19. We emailed or handed out all two year checks to parents (instead of meeting parents) who then sent written feedback.

October 2022- taken out references to highlighting sheets as this is no longer a requirement by ofsted (although we still do them)

We don’t link the observations in the learning journal to the 7 areas of learning anymore,

Dec 2023 – added new section from PSLA about Establishing Children’s starting points. Changed some wording to reflect new procedures –removed section about displaying a poster when students are doing observations as we no longer do this, added that we seek parental permission.