

Home–Nursery diaries 0–2s

Sharing information with parents is key to a good partnership and essential to developing a shared understanding of a child's individual learning and development.

Wellholme Park Children's Centre, Calderdale does this in many ways, including arranging open events, having an 'open door' policy and a welcoming environment, operating a key worker system, having flexible settling-in procedures and running joint activities for parents and children.

In addition, the Centre has developed and introduced a Home–Nursery diary system that has proved very beneficial to the two-way communication necessary to building up strong relationships between parents and staff. When parents and staff share regularly what they know about a baby or young child in this way, they are more effective in supporting and planning for future development.

The diary is an attractively presented, A5 ring binder file, with the child's photograph on the front. The diary pages have the key worker's input on one side with details about the child's day in the nursery.

The information includes the food and drinks the child has had, sleeping times, nappy changes and activities they have shown an interest in and enjoyed. In addition, there are details about the child's general well-being, which may include notes on whether they have been happy and settled, discontented or ill in any way.

“Isabel had great fun playing at nursery today. She particularly enjoyed our musical instrument session and splashing in the water with her friend Bethany.”



“Ben really enjoyed the bubble machine and laughed and giggled as the bubbles kept coming. He bounced up and down with excitement.”

“Grace spent a good length of time in the sensory area. She sat at the light box putting different objects on it.”

Could you share with parents observations on:

- what gets a baby or young child interested and involved?
- vocalisations, early words and language development?
- early mark making/ construction attempts?
- preferred music, songs, rhymes and books?

This information can be shared verbally with parents but it can, most importantly, go home with them at the end of the day. The diary is generally taken home in a book bag, which is easy to carry and keeps it tidy, although some parents choose to read the diary and leave it at the Centre.

Once parents get the opportunity to look at the diary, they can complete the parent feedback section, if they wish. The reverse of each page has space for parents to fill in any comments they would like to make in return, or their own observations from home. Some parents have included photos of outings they have been on, which are welcomed.

It is made clear to parents that there is no pressure for them to record anything. The diaries are simply an additional way of ensuring that all those involved in the care and education of babies and young children have information that will help make the child's experience at the Centre enjoyable. The process also helps to create continuity between the home and Centre in order to enhance learning and development in these crucial early years.

Parents return the diary to the Centre when their child next attends. The diary is read by the key worker who will follow up any queries and comments or note any particular needs and interests the child might have.

The diaries are then kept in accessible boxes in the nursery, for convenience in terms of updating, or referring to them for information. There is a commitment to complete diary entries with relevant details every day in order to promote positive communication and good relationships between key workers and families.

“Ben had a lovely weekend. He spent some time with grandma, which he loves. He is still trying hard to crawl but not quite managing.”

“First steps taken Sunday by Grace, nothing since then, though. I think her teeth are still cutting through again as her sleep is interrupted and she has had hot cheeks. Quite grizzly at times, watch out!”

