

## Sharing records with parents

Sharing children's progress with parents, on a regular basis, helps develop a shared understanding of a child's individual learning and development.

We know that the more regularly parents and practitioners engage in a genuine two-way dialogue, the greater the impact it has on a child's progress.

At **Thomas Coram Children's Centre**, parents receive written reports on their children's learning and development regularly, but these are complemented by ongoing easy-to-access portfolios.

These portfolios are large display books that provide an attractive, visual record of a child's time in the setting. They include observations, drawings, paintings, early writing, photographs, and written narratives of children's play and talk.

In this way, a child's progress is made very clear and can be celebrated by child, parent and practitioner alike. Other settings have developed similar 'record of achievement' boxes or books.

This type of record can be kept out in the main nursery area, where it is easily accessible to parents and children to look through at any time.

They can be annotated with comments in which practitioners explain the learning significance of what the child has achieved or said. References to the *Early Years Foundation Stage* (previously *Birth to Three Matters and Foundation Stage*) can be made as appropriate, see the PEAL Reader for full references.

Children take great delight in sharing their records, with other children, their families and practitioners. They become active participants in gathering examples of work and discussing with practitioners which items to include.



Children can be encouraged to look back, reflect and recall just how much they have changed and learned over time. The portfolio becomes a real source of pride, helping to build self-esteem and confidence.

The portfolios can be taken home to share with the extended family. Parents know their own children very well, and can be actively encouraged to contribute valuable information to records.

Using both parent and practitioner knowledge in this way, gives a more complete picture of the child, producing a more in-depth and meaningful record of their individual strengths and progress.

Plans for future learning activities can then be matched more effectively to a child's interests and abilities.

“ She loves looking through it at home. She tells me what all the pages say, over and over again. ”

Can you ask parents to contribute to your children's records?  
They could bring, for example:

- photographs of their children playing
- sticky notes recording what their child said or did
- verbal and recorded observations
- children's drawing and mark-making
- learning stories – see Stop! Look! Listen!



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