

## Online Learning Journeys

Although it may not always look that way, the nursery day is carefully planned to give a balance of adult-led and child-led activities. We try to adapt the planned activities to individual children in order to reflect their particular skills, interests and development needs. This means that the staff constantly need to notice what each child is doing, to record this and to think about what it means and what the next steps should be. The staff record their “observations” in what is known as a “learning journey” which is a collection of different documents prepared by the staff to provide a picture of a child’s development under various areas of learning such as Physical Development, Communication & Language, etc.

While there is a statutory need to record and monitor progress, we also need to ensure that this process doesn’t get in the way of actually interacting and playing with the children - nobody wants to see the staff following children around with clipboards!

Most nurseries evolve a system based on post-it notes, supplemented by occasional photographs and art-work by children, interspersed with observations made by staff members including notes of relevant conversations or comments made by a child. These are kept in our paper learning journeys and are shared with you at various points during the year.

This works well enough but is also quite limited. If you want to see how your child’s speech has developed, how much better would it be to be able to listen to a series of recordings over a period? And wouldn’t it be so much better if you, as parents, could contribute your own photos, observations and thoughts to the learning journey record, rather than it coming exclusively from the nursery?

In Tiny Toes we use a system called eyLog (for **e**arly **y**ears **L**og) which allows staff to capture a photo, a video clip or a voice recording as well as written notes using a tablet computer and to assign this to one or more children. These observations from staff members are then uploaded to a secure web-based learning journey to which you as a parent would also have access to! Welcome to the world of online learning journeys!

We believe that using online learning journeys will allow both a rich body of evidence to support our partnership with parents and to help us plan for individual children’s development, and of course a wonderful keepsake for you to share with your child.

The technology also supports a daily record, especially for the under 2-year olds, of food, milk, and nappy changes. By logging these as they occur, we can ensure that up-to-date information is always available to parents. This will also free up staff to talk to you more about your children, rather than just reciting a list of “inputs and outputs”!!

As a parent you will quite rightly have questions about the security of such an online system.

To begin with, the tablets that are used to record the observations are supplied with a custom “firmware” in which all applications, except for eyLog, have been removed. This ensures that the tablets cannot be misused - for example, it is not possible to access Facebook or websites or to send any e-mail messages from the tablets.

No data is stored either on the tablets or on the nursery computer. As soon as an observation has been recorded and uploaded to the eyLog server, it is automatically deleted from the tablet.

All data is held in encrypted form and is accessed subject to a secure login and password. The only people who can access a child’s learning journey are the relevant nursery staff (manager, room leaders, key persons) and the child’s parents.

In our opinion, the application not only permits a richer learning journey than its paper equivalent, but also offers a more secure way to record and share these learning journeys. We are excited by this new approach to sharing learning journeys with you.

The eyLog website (<https://eylog.co.uk>) has more information as well as a list of FAQs. Please have a look to find out more about this exciting development.