

Mr Heath,

I believe you are the correct person to direct this email towards. However, if this is different, please forward it on to the necessary personnel in your organisation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and your team for all that you have done to support the development of my son.

This evening I had a meeting with my child's key worker at his pre-school. We have always been happy with the provision they offer, and when we have these meetings, they allow us to look at his log book, which tracks his achievements. It takes the form of a scrap book, with photographs of him and explanations of his key learning. It is a wonderful read for my wife and I. Whilst I feel an immense sense of pride when reading it, I am not entirely sure how his development fits in with expected progress/guidelines. Tonight, that has all changed. In addition to the log book, we were shown a print out of a wheel that essentially gave us a snapshot of where he is with development in a range of areas. The staff told me your organisation was responsible for the wheel and gave me the web address, and hence the email!

We have been told by friends that work in early years, that the framework by which pre-schools and nurseries monitor and track progress of the children in their care is a nightmare to follow/understand. This can be true for people that work in the sector...not to mention parents! Our son's key worker explained that this wheel has been completed during observations of his play and is directly linked to the early years framework. We were shown the wheel which made it really easy to see what stage of development he is at in several different areas. We also were handed a report printout that stated what he has recently demonstrated and where they think his next development steps might be.

While it feels like only five minutes ago he was born, September brings with it a major event in his short life...starting school. I am sure that every parent shares the same anxieties about their children starting school and wonder if their child is well prepared. Well, this evening, anxieties have been replaced with anticipation. I am actually looking forward to him starting school as the wheel shows that he is already demonstrating the levels of development in communication and language and behaviour, social and emotional development that a child is expected to demonstrate by the end of their reception year. He is slightly below this level in physical development and some 'specific areas' but this is of no concern to us.

We have always asked 'will our boy be able to deal emotionally with the challenges that starting school brings?'. He took a long time (18 months) to manage the transitions of drop off and pick up at pre-school without tears. Now I know he has what it takes to give himself every chance of settling into school, make new friendships with children and staff and take it all in his stride (although I realise there is no guarantee of this happening). If this can be achieved, then he should make good progress.

I really feel like they know my child (almost better than me!) which reassures me that they also care about who he is and that they do what they can to allow him to thrive. They tell me that they can give this information to his new school, so they too can know him in as much detail as the pre-school does. Again, this means so much to us as we feel the better the staff know and understand him, the happier he will be and the more he will enjoy his learning.

We were told that the wheel has many functions including seeing notes taken from observations and even pictures and video that link to various areas of the framework. They are even planning on giving parents access to this wheel as it is online. Is this true? Even if not, the impact of just seeing my child in this style is brilliant.

Thanks again,

Parents of a child at Welton Free Rangers