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Templates

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Key Activity 2: The learning walk

The learning walk is an addition to the inspection day activities. Previously, providers or their representative would give the inspector a tour of their setting. This was mainly to help the inspector find their way around the setting throughout the day. However, with the framework showing a reduction in the time of the leader and manager's meeting and a stronger focus on the quality of education in the setting, the learning walk plays a huge part in 'setting out your stall' for the day.

Some providers approach the learning walk as though it is a tour of the setting, or as they would undertake a show-round for parents. However, if used effectively, the learning walk is the perfect opportunity for you to talk to the inspector about all the hard work that you and your team are doing, and to illustrate this in action throughout your setting. The learning walk can last anywhere from an hour to all day.

Some inspectors will carry out their learning walk as soon as they arrive. This allows them to gain a clearer picture of your setting and staff. It also gives the staff team an opportunity to be introduced to the inspector, hopefully putting them at ease.

Before the learning walk

As a manager and leader, it is completely normal to feel extremely nervous about the learning walk, especially as it usually happens very early on in the inspection day. You may still feel anxious and be running on adrenaline. There are some key

ways that you can prepare for your learning walk to reduce your stress on the day.

- Plan the route that you will take with the inspector. Focus on all areas of the setting - not just the rooms where the children are based
- Practice your learning walk by taking a walk around your setting. Think carefully about what you want to say and make notes on your intention for children and their families in each area of your setting
- The learning walk should literally be a walking evaluation of your setting's environment, practice and successes
- Try to relax. The inspector is not trying to catch you out - they just want to get a feel for you and your setting.

Template 1: Learning walk may help you with conducting a learning walk.

During the learning walk

Remember that the purpose of the walk is for you to showcase your setting and to illustrate how you reflect on and evaluate your practice. It is important to talk about what your intention for learning is in each room and how you implement that intention.

Make sure you give the inspector the whole picture. The Early Years Inspection Handbook, lays out the aim of the learning walk as an opportunity for the provider to discuss their 'aims and