

Getting to Know Your Learner

A reflective guide for parents starting out in home education
You know your child. This helps you understand them as a learner.

You know your child better than anyone. But knowing your child as a person and understanding how they learn best are two slightly different things — and figuring out the second is one of the most valuable things you'll do in your first term of home education.

There are no right answers here. Fill this in at the start, and revisit it after a few months. You'll be surprised how much your answers change.

THE BASICS

CHILD'S NAME

AGE / YEAR GROUP

WHY ARE WE HOME EDUCATING? EG. SCHOOL REFUSAL, SEN, ANXIETY, BULLYING, FAMILY CHOICE...

ENERGY & RHYTHM

WHEN ARE THEY MOST READY TO LEARN? EG. MID-MORNING, AFTER LUNCH...

WHEN ARE THEY LEAST AVAILABLE? EG. FIRST THING, LATE AFTERNOON...

HOW MUCH STRUCTURE DO THEY SEEM TO NEED?

- Lots — they like knowing what's coming
- Very little — they follow their own rhythm
- Some — a loose shape to the day
- Not sure yet — still figuring it out

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■ HOW THEY LEARN

HOW DO THEY TAKE IN INFORMATION BEST? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reading / being read to | <input type="checkbox"/> Watching / video |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Doing / hands-on | <input type="checkbox"/> Listening / audio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talking it through | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing it down |

HOW DO THEY WORK BEST?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> With me there, guiding them | <input type="radio"/> Independently, with check-ins |
| <input type="radio"/> In short bursts with movement breaks | <input type="radio"/> For longer stretches when engaged |

■ WHAT LIGHTS THEM UP

WHAT ARE THEY GENUINELY INTERESTED IN RIGHT NOW? DON'T FILTER FOR 'EDUCATIONAL' – ALL INTERESTS ARE VALID STARTING POINTS

WHAT HAVE THEY ALWAYS BEEN GOOD AT, OR PROUD OF?

SUBJECTS THEY ENJOYED AT SCHOOL?

SUBJECTS THEY STRUGGLED WITH?

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WHAT SHUTS THEM DOWN

WHAT TRIGGERS STRESS, ANXIETY OR SHUTDOWN FOR THIS CHILD? EG. TIME PRESSURE, BEING WATCHED, LOUD ENVIRONMENTS, TOO MANY CHOICES...

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WHEN THEY'RE OVERWHELMED? KNOWING THE SIGNS EARLY MEANS YOU CAN STEP IN BEFORE IT ESCALATES

SENSORY & PHYSICAL NEEDS

DO THEY HAVE ANY SENSORY SENSITIVITIES? (TICK ALL THAT APPLY)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sound / noise | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing / textures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Light | <input type="checkbox"/> Smell |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Movement / stillness | <input type="checkbox"/> None identified |

WHAT THEY NEED FROM ME

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO THEY RESPOND BEST TO? EG. ENCOURAGEMENT, SPACE, CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS, LOTS OF CHECK-INS, HUMOUR...

WHAT HAVE I FOUND MAKES THINGS WORSE, EVEN WHEN WELL-INTENTIONED? EG. PUSHING TOO HARD, HOVERING, COMPARING TO SIBLINGS OR SCHOOL PEERS...

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■ LOOKING FORWARD

WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE FOR THIS CHILD AT THE END OF THEIR FIRST TERM? NOT ACADEMICALLY – WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU BOTH FEEL GOOD ABOUT HOW IT'S GONE?

ONE THING I WANT THEM TO FEEL ABOUT LEARNING BY THE END OF THIS YEAR:

ONE THING I WANT TO FEEL ABOUT HOME EDUCATION BY THE END OF THIS YEAR:

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■ COME BACK TO THIS

This worksheet is most useful when you revisit it. What you think now will change — and that's a good thing. Set a reminder to come back to this after your first term and notice how your answers have shifted.

■ FIRST TERM REFLECTION – FILL THIS IN AFTER TERM ONE

WHAT SURPRISED ME MOST ABOUT HOW MY CHILD LEARNS:

WHAT I GOT WRONG IN MY ORIGINAL ANSWERS – AND WHAT I KNOW NOW:

WHAT I'D TELL ANOTHER PARENT WHO IS WHERE I WAS AT THE START:
