

14 tips for developing a passport to enrichment

1. Why a passport?

Consider what is it you are trying to achieve with a passport. The general principle of creating a rich set of experiences for all children and young people is an important one but the approach works best when settings give real thought as to its purpose. E.g. is it to support vocabulary development, to respond to a gap in experiences for a particular group, to create a shared set of experiences for a whole class, to develop resilience, etc.

2. Develop it with children, young people, families and the wider school community

The very act of developing a passport supports home/school/community discussions and co-working. It shows value for the whole school community and means that the resulting document already starts from a point of being owned by the community as a whole (rather than an often middle class, top down, assumed set of important experiences.)

3. Take care not to reinforce the value set or cultural capital of one group

So, for example, 'visit an opera' is loaded. For those whose families do this already it becomes an easy tick so those children aren't stretched. For those who never do it risks becoming another sign that they 'don't belong'. Whereas visit a type of musical performance that you have never visited before becomes a challenge for all children.

4. Don't underestimate the value of the 'basics'

When we interviewed children lots of them, of all ages, wanted the passport to include things that many may take for granted. E.g. to have opened a bank account, to know how to get a bus, to be able to sit unaided etc. It is easy to dismiss these as 'lacking ambition' but to do so misses the real challenges these present for some children.

5. Be inclusive

'Climbing a tree' is not possible for all children but 'taking a managed risk in nature' is, and 'have fun in nature' is more accessible in language. Sutton Trust and others are clear that extra-curricular activities can widen rather than narrow the outcome gap so ensuring access for all is key. Our work on [cultural inclusion](#) shows the challenges in the culture and arts sector alone – this is reflected across most enrichment activity, so care on access around disability and other groups with additional challenges essential.

6. A whole school approach

Any approach to enrichment and extra curricula activity should be part of a whole school approach. Models such as the [LOtC Mark](#) provide useful frameworks for schools wanting to take a strategic approach to learning outside the classroom.

7. Partnerships are all

Schools may be the point of universal access – i.e. they can signpost, support and prompt children. But they cannot deliver it all. This isn't just a resource issue. It is in part a skill issue – some of these things require skills that teachers won't have. But it is also that the very point of a passport to enable

children and families to develop relationships and connections outside of schools. Charities reflect a core of part of the resource available to schools and many have funding to offer free or subsidised support for many of the things that are likely to appear on passports.

8. The passport should allow for progression

Map progression of experiences over the years - from activities supported by school or parents to increasing independence; from those on school grounds to local community to further afield. So if for example increasing independent travel and adventure is an aim then start with activities on school grounds, move to camping on school site, progress to stays in local settings and work towards residential in say the local national park before moving to a group run trip like Duke of Edinburgh Expeditions and onto independent travel. What are the outcomes of your passport and how will these progressively grow?

9. Link to opportunities to do more

If one of the purposes of the passport is to give children tasters then look at how to provide opportunities for them to have the full meal. Develop – as many schools already do – partnerships with sports, culture and arts, adventure, social action etc. that children can hook into if they liked an experience.

10. Make it affordable

Schools can use the passport to ask local businesses and charities for support. Ideally every activity on the list should be no cost – this doesn't just mean entry fees. It means travel, transport, equipment etc. Many children won't have a rucksack for residential for example, or wellies for a walk, or craft stuff to 'make something'. It is really easy to overestimate the resources that families have to draw on. The work by Child Poverty Action Group Scotland is really important on the '[Cost of the School Day](#)'. I was struck by discussions with a parent for whom buying glue for a school project meant she had to walk to work for 2 days.

11. Don't make assumptions about barriers

Cost can be a barrier to enrichment for many. But it is much more complicated than that. A passport is a start and a stimulus. But for many the barriers are multiple. Don't assume it's because parents don't care – it's hard to take your child to an art gallery if you feel overwhelmed in them yourself; it's challenging to find time to go to beach if you are working 6 part time jobs. This from [Kids in Museums](#) is one of many good pieces on barriers to participation.

12. Evaluate impact on children with children

If you were using tool for example to develop communication skills reflect with children on whether it did this. What are your pre and post measures? If it was about encouraging independence what can they do now that they couldn't before. Encouraging children and young people to see the value of these activities for their own personal development is a key factor in whether they might continue them themselves.

13. Celebrate success

But not for ticking all off – rather for progressing. A passport is a tool not a competition – it should inspire not demotivate by adding to perceptions of failure. Use the celebration event to bring in the local community.

14. Have fun

It would be easy to make this another 'to do'. But in truth developing a 'passion' for something – almost anything – is itself enriching. Encouraging moments of awe and wonder are a core part of a school's purpose.

View the original blog: <https://everychildshould.uk/passport-an-entitlement-to-enrichment/>