

Demonstrating effective partnerships with parents and the community

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Why engagement with parents and community matters

- Gain better understanding of child's needs and development
- Support home learning
- Support parents to access financial support and engage in work or study
- Engagement with the community supports sustainability
- And... it is an important part of Ofsted's evaluation framework

Increasingly recognised in policy agenda

Graham Allen MP review on Early Intervention:

“A workforce development framework could establish training and salary structures which recognise the challenge and importance of early years staff and especially staff engaging with multi problem families. Training in parent engagement would also be appropriate.”

Increasingly recognised in policy agenda

Frank Field MP review of poverty and life chances:

“Ofsted should continue to report on schools and childcare settings’ engagement with parents. This is a particularly key area, for which settings should consistently be held to account.”

“Children’s Centres should seek to include parents’ representation on their governance and decision-making bodies.”

EYFS review

- Tickell Review of Early Years Foundation Stage is considering the scope of regulation, learning and development requirements and assessment arrangements
- New system in place for September 2012
- Department for Education sought parents' views
- Daycare Trust recommended making EYFS more parent-friendly – our evidence suggest low awareness
- Early indications suggests Clare Tickell wants EYFS to be written in a way that both parents and practitioners can understand

What inspectors evaluate

- Quality of setting communication with parents
- Extent to which setting takes account of parents' and children's views and how well they are involved in decision making
- Extent to which setting enables parents to support and make decisions about their children's learning, well-being and development

What they will look for

- Parents and children's views being sought and acted on
- Parents provided with good quality information about the provision
- Parents informed about their children's achievements and progress
- Parents encouraged to share what they know about their child
- Parents given opportunities to be involved in supporting children's learning and development

How are providers doing?

- On engagement with parents, 12% of providers were outstanding, 51% good and 36% satisfactory. Apart from quality of self-evaluation, this is the lowest number of outstanding/good of all the areas that Ofsted's evaluates
- Information provided was not sufficiently focused on children's individual learning and development
- Communication often informal and oral , with no use of records or other communication tools
- Parents do not have access to information about child's assessment
- Parents not consulted about child's progress at home or able to contribute to child's assessment
- Parents' views not taken into account as part of self-evaluation

Figures from Sept 09-August 2010, Ofsted Annual Report 2009/10

Ofsted find that parental engagement is key to success

Those providing outstanding early years education and childcare have a number of strengths in common:

- **Strong partnerships with parents and other agencies**
- High level of understanding of how children develop
- They reflect fully on their practice to identify areas for improvement

What outstanding engagement looks like

- Support for child's learning and development is genuinely shared
- Parents provide detailed information on child, to be used alongside observations to plan next steps for learning and development
- Parents kept informed in range of ways eg diaries, texts, emails, records
- Staff give parents ideas for activities and games

Ofsted Annual Report 2009/10

Childminders

- “Outstanding childminders in deprived areas forge strong relationships with the families of children who attend their settings. In turn, their parents are often more able to respond to someone they trust as a friend rather than to someone in authority. These outstanding childminders provide good role models for families and show that every child can succeed.”

Ofsted Annual Report 2009/10

How to engage with hard to reach groups

- Treat each family uniquely and tailor communications
- Identify barriers to engagement
- Use a range of methods of communication
- Use accessible language ('we looked at what they did' rather than 'conducted an observation')
- Ensure that negative messages don't dominate
- Work with other agencies eg Sure Start, Jobcentre Plus
- Offer opportunities for wider community – eg fun days
- Culture of openness and commitment from management

A case study

- Daycare Trust worked with London Early Years Foundation, UK's largest childcare charity and social enterprise with 21 settings
- Conducted survey of parents, focus groups and interviews to identify
- Focus groups with staff to identify good practice and barriers to engagement
- Project identified high levels of satisfaction and practical areas for improvement

Comments and questions

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