

Script

I'm Molly Neal, parent engagement officer

I'm going to focus on parent relationships, because I think this is something we can really strengthen before the inspection.

As a practitioner, a big part of my role is building and maintaining positive relationships with parents, and making sure we are working in partnership with them. This includes sharing information about the child, listening to parents, and making sure they feel involved in what we are doing in the setting. It's not just about giving information, it's about having a two-way relationship where parents feel comfortable to talk to us.

This is important because parents know their children best, so the information they give us helps us support the child more effectively. It also helps the child feel more secure, because there is consistency between home and the setting.

My role is also guided by legislation and frameworks. For example, Care Inspectorate Wales states that we need to work in partnership with parents and use their feedback to improve practice (CIW, 2022). The National Minimum Standards also say we should share information with parents and respect their views (Welsh Government, 2017). And within the Foundation Phase, parents are seen as partners in their child's learning, so we should involve them in that process (Welsh Government, 2019).

There is also theory behind this, like Bronfenbrenner, who explains that children are influenced by both home and the setting, so those need to be connected to support development and wellbeing (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In practice, we already do some of this. For example, we speak to parents at drop-off and collection, we share information through newsletters and notice boards, and we update them on their child's progress through observations. We also gather feedback through conversations or questionnaires.

However, I don't think this always works for everyone. Some parents don't have time to talk, some don't read written information, and some may not feel confident to share their views, so communication is not always consistent or inclusive.

So as practitioners, part of our role is to adapt how we communicate and find better ways to engage parents.

One thing we could introduce is a digital app, which would allow us to share updates, photos, and observations in real time. This would support parents who can't always attend the setting and also allow them to share information from home, making it more of a two-way partnership.

We also need to move away from just quick conversations and offer more structured check-ins, so parents have proper time to talk about their child and share any concerns.

Another issue is how we run parent evenings. At the moment we usually only offer one time slot, which doesn't work for all families, especially if parents are separated. This means not all parents are getting the same information. So we could improve this by offering more flexible options or different ways to share information.

Also, some parents may wait until parents evening to raise concerns, which means we might not be supporting the child as early as we could. So improving day-to-day communication would help with this.

We could also introduce more stay-and-play sessions, so parents can come into the setting and see how children learn through play, which helps them understand what we do and builds stronger relationships.

Another idea is to organise an open evening. We could set up activities for parents and children, have information stalls about development or routines, and even invite

parents to share their own skills or small businesses. This would make the setting feel more welcoming and build a stronger sense of community.

We also need to make sure our practice is inclusive. This means using clear language, different ways of sharing information, and supporting all families so they feel able to engage.

We should also be asking for feedback more regularly, so parents feel their opinions are valued and we can continue to improve.

To evaluate this, we can use feedback, questionnaires, and reflect on how engaged parents are, which is something CIW expect.

I also think consistency between staff is really important, because parents need to have the same experience no matter who they speak to.

So overall, my role as a practitioner is to build strong relationships with parents, adapt communication to meet their needs, and create opportunities for them to be involved. By improving this, we can support children more effectively and go into the inspection feeling much more confident.

Part 2

In Part 1 I looked at parent relationships and how they could be improved before an inspection. At first I thought this was quite a simple topic because we already communicate with parents every day. But when I actually sat down and thought about it properly, I realised that just because communication is happening, it does not mean it is working well for everyone.

For example, in the setting we speak to parents at drop off and pick up, we send newsletters, and we share information about children's progress. At first I saw this as good practice and thought it showed we were doing what we should be doing. But when I reflected on it more, I realised that this type of communication does not include everyone.

Some parents are always rushing, so they don't really stop to talk. Some parents don't read newsletters or might not even notice them. Also, some parents might not feel confident speaking up or asking questions. So even though we are communicating, it is not always effective or inclusive. This links to inclusive practice, where settings should adapt to meet the needs of all families (Welsh Government, 2017).

This made me realise that quality is not just about having systems in place, it is about how well those systems actually work. This links to inspection, because Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW, 2022) do not just look at what we say we do, they look at how effective it is and whether we are improving.

I also realised that parent relationships are really important for the child, not just the setting. If we are not working properly with parents, we might not fully understand the child's needs, routines, or any concerns. This can affect how well we support them. This links to Bronfenbrenner (1979), who explains that children are influenced by both home and the setting. If those are not linked, it can affect development and wellbeing.

In Part 1 I suggested a few ways to improve this. One of the main ideas was using a digital app. I think this would help because parents could see updates, photos, and information at any time, not just when they come into the setting. It would also allow parents to share things from home, which helps us understand the child better. This also links to partnership working with parents (NSPCC, 2021).

However, I also understand that not all parents may have access to this or feel confident using it. So this would need to be introduced carefully, and support would need to be given if needed. This shows that improvements need to be planned properly and reviewed.

An idea I suggested was having more structured check ins with parents. At the moment, most conversations are very quick, and parents might not feel like they can say everything they want to. By giving parents more time, they may feel more comfortable sharing concerns or asking questions. This supports strong parent partnerships, which improve outcomes for children (NDNA, 2021).

The parent evening example was something that stood out to me the most. At the moment, there is usually only one time slot. This does not work for all families. For example, if parents are separated, one parent might not be able to attend. This means they are not getting the same information, which is not fair and not inclusive practice.

I also realised that some parents might wait until parent evening to bring up concerns. This means that support for the child could be delayed. So communication should not just happen at set times, it should be ongoing and consistent.

I suggested things like stay and play sessions and an open evening. I think these ideas are important because they are more relaxed and less formal. Parents can come into the setting, see what we actually do, and feel more comfortable. The open evening idea could include activities and information stalls, and even allow parents to share their own skills or small businesses. This would help build a stronger sense of community and belonging.

This links to the Foundation Phase (Welsh Government, 2019), which states that parents should be partners in their child's learning. By involving parents more, we are supporting this approach and improving outcomes for children.

Another important thing I thought about is inclusivity. Not all parents are the same, so we should not expect them to communicate in the same way. Some parents may need simpler information, some may prefer verbal communication instead of written, and some may need more encouragement to get involved.

I also realised how important consistency is between staff. If different staff communicate in different ways, it can confuse parents and affect trust. So part of quality is making sure everyone is working in a consistent and professional way.

When I think about quality assurance now, I understand that it is not just about inspection. It is something that should be ongoing. Things like asking for feedback, using questionnaires, and talking to parents regularly all help us understand what is working and what needs to improve.

CIW expect settings to show that they are improving over time, not just staying the same (CIW, 2022). So reflection is a key part of practice.

I have thought more about my role as a practitioner in all of this. At first I focused more on the ideas, but now I understand that my role is really important in making these changes actually happen.

As a practitioner, part of my role is to make sure I am approachable and that parents feel comfortable speaking to me. If parents do not feel comfortable, they are less likely to share information, which can affect how well we support the child.

I need to make sure I am communicating clearly and in a way that suits different parents. For example, some parents may prefer quick conversations, while others may

need more time or different ways of communication. This links to inclusive practice (Welsh Government, 2017).

Part of my role is listening to parents and taking their views seriously. It is not just about giving information, but also about responding to what parents say. This helps build trust and stronger relationships.

I need to reflect on my own practice. For example, if I notice that a parent is not engaging, I should think about why and what I could do differently. This could be changing how I communicate or giving more opportunities for involvement.

This also links to quality assurance, because improving practice is not just the responsibility of the setting, but also individual practitioners. CIW expect practitioners to reflect and improve their practice (CIW, 2022).

I need to work as part of a team. If all staff communicate differently, it can confuse parents and affect trust. So part of my role is to make sure I am consistent and follow the same approach as the rest of the team.

Another important part of my role is supporting parents to be involved in their child's learning. This links to the Foundation Phase (Welsh Government, 2019), where parents are seen as partners in learning.

I have realised parent relationships can actually affect the child's outcomes. Before this, I knew it was important, but I didn't really think about how much of a difference it makes day to day.

If parents feel comfortable talking to us, they are more likely to share information about the child, like changes at home, behaviour, or any concerns. This means we can respond quicker and support the child properly. If that communication is not there, we might miss important things.

I also think it links to early intervention. If a parent shares a concern early, we can put support in place straight away instead of waiting until it becomes a bigger issue. This is better for the child and can prevent further problems.

This also links back to working in partnership with parents, because it shows that when we work together, we can support the child more effectively. Guidance such as the EYFS also supports this idea of working closely with parents (DfE, 2021).

Overall, this has made me realise that improving parent relationships is not just about communication, but about improving outcomes for the child as well.

Overall, this task has helped me understand that improving parent relationships is not just about adding new ideas, but about making sure communication is actually working for all parents. It also helped me realise that quality is about continuous improvement, not just meeting basic standards.

In the future, I would focus more on adapting communication to different parents, making sure everyone feels included, and using feedback to make changes. I would also make sure that all staff are consistent in how they communicate.

This task has helped me understand that strong parent relationships can have a positive impact on both the child and the setting and that improving this area can help achieve better outcomes overall.

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