

Help for early years providers

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Get help to improve your practice

Working in partnership with parents and carers

Find out why working with parents is so important and how to do this well.

The benefits of good relationships with parents and carers

Research shows that involving parents and carers in their children's learning is the most important factor in enabling some children to do well regardless of background.

Working in partnership with parents and carers is central to the early years foundation stage (EYFS). The relationship might begin with them visiting your setting. This will help inform you how to sensitively settle the child.

Put them first by inviting them to share all they can about themselves. Find out about their family and community culture, and personal histories. Ask about what they expect from you as a childminder or your nursery. Value parents and carers as children's first educators. Give them the opportunity to contribute to the whole of their child's journey at your setting.

Invite parents and carers to be with you if possible as you settle their child. They can then trust in the way you respond to their child and see how you personalise their child's learning. It's about working together to share knowledge, understand children's interests and discover how best to support their learning.

Communicating with parents and carers

Offering a range of opportunities for parents and carers to become involved in their children's learning is important. Consider how you will overcome any barriers they

may have to working in partnership. For example, their own experiences of nursery, separation, language, culture and different values.

Other ways to involve parents can include:

- daily chats with key persons
- time for the child to settle in
- viewing film of their child so they can continue their child's learning at home
- attending a workshop on different areas of learning
- going on trips with you
- home visits
- volunteering
- phone calls home
- community projects
- documenting their personal histories
- being parent governors or steering group members

Sharing information

Parents and carers want to be involved in their children's learning. They will often ask for information to be shared with them. They like to see videos or photos of their child too.

If you're sharing information use it as an opportunity to set up a two-way dialogue with parents and carers about their child's learning. You could share observations of the child learning something new in nursery. Exchange observations with parents and carers of their child deeply involved at home. For example, if a child becomes interested in lining things up in the nursery then this could indicate an interest in number or positioning. To share this information with parents enables them to offer something similar in the home environment which will further the child's development and learning.

However, sharing information should not become a tracking exercise and you should not let this lead to creating unnecessary paperwork.

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