

The National Strategies

Working with parents and carers

The National Programme for Specialist Leaders of Behaviour and Attendance

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Note: For the sake of brevity, 'child' and 'children' will be used to refer to both children and young people in this topic.

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Session leader information

Aims

- To develop strategies to promote parental involvement
- To consider a range of parenting and parents as first teachers (PAFT) programmes
- To develop strategies to promote positive relationships with 'hard to reach' parents
- To consider effective strategies to promote parental engagement
- To design and try out parent and carer workshops

Learning objectives

- Considering leadership styles and understanding the qualities and skills required for effective leadership of behaviour and attendance in a range of roles and contexts
- Reflecting on their own leadership styles, skills, behaviours and values
- Reflecting on how the learning process is affected by group and peer learning
- Evaluating and evidencing the outcomes of work-based activities
- Developing a theoretical understanding and knowledge of leadership in B&A and how it influences practice
- Reflecting on how the application of the ideas explored in this programme can act as a driver for change

Session outline

Previous session	Review of work-based activities	10 minutes
Overview	Working with parents and carers	10 minutes
Preparatory reading and activity		
	Discussion of the reading and preparatory activity	
Activities		1 hour 45 minutes
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Leading programmes on positive parenting2. Working effectively in partnership with parents3. Parents as first teachers4. Working with 'hard to reach' parents	
Session review		
Selecting work-based activities		20 minutes
Forward look		5 minutes
	Total time	2 hours 30 minutes

You might want to adapt these activities or use alternative materials to help you meet the particular needs of the group.

Overview

This topic will provide an opportunity to consider a number of different approaches that schools and other educational settings can use to involve parents and carers positively in promoting good behaviour and full attendance. The topic includes consideration of approaches that aim to address the needs of all parents, including those of children with special educational needs (SEN) and those from minority ethnic groups, through work-based activities. The topic also considers how settings can promote involvement through offering workshops on positive parenting and exploring the potential of parents as first teachers.

You might want to adapt these activities or use alternative materials to help you meet the particular needs of your group.

You could use **slide 3** to introduce the session.

Preparatory reading and reflection

Suggestions

Read through the preparatory text carefully and make brief notes on aspects that interest you.

In addition, group members will find it useful to read Chapter 7 'Parents', Chapter 8 'Support and Guidance for Pupils and Parents' the report of Learning Behaviour: The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline. This publication can be downloaded or ordered online at www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications.

Search using reference 1950-2005DOC-EN.

Questions for reflection and discussion

- What are some of the barriers to effective partnership 'working with parents' in your setting?
- What is working well, in your setting, to promote positive relationships and effective partnerships with parents?
- Identify key factors for success and the role of the specialist leader in contributing to this success.
- What examples are you aware of where the potential of parents as educators is successfully exploited? How do you feel this could be developed further?
- What do you feel are the key factors for successful work with parents and carers and how could the role of the specialist leader contribute?

Any notes you make should be brought to the session.

Introduction

A child's background is still a greater determinant of their future success than their innate ability. Parents and the family are the biggest influence on a child's development and life chances.

This is what Beverley Hughes MP, Minister of State for Children, Young People and their Families said at the Teacher Training Agency National Conference, 'The Children's Agenda – Implications for initial Teacher Training', on 12 July 2005. In suggesting the importance of the influence and involvement of parents and carers in the development and future well-being of every young person, she was also aware that the services into which children, young people and families come into contact can also make a huge difference.

Increasingly, schools and other educational settings are taking forward practice developed by children's centres and the Sure Start programmes. These were one of the formative influences in the *Every Child Matters* initiative. Parents are seen as essential partners, with formal education, of the five outcomes for children, enshrined in the Children Act 2004.

Children's centres, and schools designated as extended, take responsibility for helping parents into work by providing access to training and wrap-around childcare. Others see parents as a direct and valuable resource for enhancing the curriculum and are increasingly using parents' knowledge, skills and experiences to provide a richer and more varied curriculum for children.

Parental involvement is best facilitated by focusing on what they can contribute and how they themselves can grow and develop. The degree of informality especially, but not exclusively, around children's centres can make these settings more open to parents, particularly to those parents whose children may have social, emotional, behavioural or attendance difficulties. The informality can allow relationships based on trust to develop, so that more structured and targeted support can be both requested and offered.

There is a need to recognise that the sustainable improvement of behaviour and attendance is only likely to occur if schools work in partnership; parents and carers are crucial to this partnership.

We have to ask the question: *Can the above stages in a young person's development be achieved if parents are not working in partnership with the educational establishments?* The Government clearly believes that parental involvement at every stage of a young person's life is crucial to their development and there is significant research that suggests that parental involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement. Kathleen Cotton and Karen Reed Wikelund, in their study on *Parental Involvement in Education* (6), suggest that the more intensely parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the achievement effects. Very interestingly, they state that this holds true for all types of parental involvement in children's learning and for all types and ages of children and young people.

The importance of involving parents and carers is based on an understanding that this relationship is key to improving educational standards. Specialist leaders will need to have knowledge of the ways in which this can happen in educational settings and be skilled in all aspects of working with parents and carers.

At present, educational settings work with parents and carers in a range of different ways. In this reading it is suggested that this work falls in three broad areas:

- at a whole-school or setting level for all parents and carers;
- with specific groups of parents and carers;
- with the parents and carers of individual children and young people who may be experiencing difficulties.

These areas are discussed below.

At a whole-school or setting level for all parents and carers

This first area covers those efforts an educational setting makes when it seeks to involve parents generally in the life of the school, for instance, through participation in governing bodies, parent associations and consultation groups. The focus and quality of written communications designed for parents and carers will have a significant influence on parent and carer involvement.

Learning behaviour: The Report of the Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline, 2005 states:

It is our experience that most parents and carers try to work with schools.

We think that what is required is a variety of ways of working with parents and carers. Firstly, good communication between the school and the home is essential so parents and carers

understand, agree, and actively support the school in the maintenance of good behaviour and attendance.

The report also describes the need for schools to engage in the development and implementation of home–school agreements covering areas such as the school’s behaviour policy, homework, uniform and attendance.

Activity 2 of this topic, and the resource that accompanies it, provide an opportunity to explore whole-school or setting issues in greater depth.

The introduction of primary and secondary social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) offers another opportunity for involving and supporting parents and carers. SEAL provides resources for involving and working with parents and carers, to help them support the development of social and emotional skills in their children.

With specific or targeted groups of parents or carers

Schools and other educational settings have increasingly involved parents and carers in work to support their children through specific programmes. Transition is a good example, in particular the move from primary to secondary school. Another aspect is that of supporting parents as first teachers (PAFT), in which parents work in partnership with teachers to support the learning in particular areas of the curriculum, such as mathematics or literacy.

Schools with significant proportions of children from minority groups have established projects and programmes to increase the involvement of parents and carers who may, for a variety of reasons (both practical and psychological), have found it difficult to engage with the educational setting.

Work-based activity 2 provides an opportunity to consider this area more fully.

Parent support and family learning are areas in which schools can effectively engage and involve parents. Support and guidance may be offered to all parents or for particular parents whose children may have particular needs. The National Children’s Bureau (2004) published a highlight summary entitled ‘Group-based parenting programmes and reducing children’s problem behaviour’ that summarises the research into the effectiveness of such programmes. This report identifies two main types of parenting programme. (You can find more information about family learning at: www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Family_Learning.)

- 1. Behavioural approaches** aim to teach parents how to change events leading up to the problem behaviour, using social learning techniques such as positive reinforcement, negotiation and finding alternatives to punishment. During group sessions, parents learn how these techniques can be implemented; they practise newly acquired skills at home.
- 2. Relationship approaches** aim to provide parents with new skills in listening to and communicating with their children and to teach an understanding of behaviour in the context of relationships.

Common features of both types of programme are that they encourage parents to:

- engage with their children in problem situations
- help their children to deal with their feelings

- listen more effectively
- provide children with clear, descriptive and positive feedback
- negotiate with their children and find alternatives to punishment
- encourage their children to be autonomous and take responsibility
- reflect on their own experience of being parented.

If early interventions such as parenting programmes have good outcomes for both children and parents, benefits accrue over the longer term. It becomes harder to intervene successfully with older children and adolescents, as their behaviour may become deeply entrenched.

In a systematic review (Barlow 1999), it was found that group-based parenting programmes are effective in changing parenting practices and improving behaviour in young children. Work-based activity 1 Resource A gives more information. All studies in this review focused on parent training programmes for three- to ten-year-olds whose primary problem was behavioural. The review found that, compared with no treatment or waiting-list control groups, parenting programmes produced significant improvements in parent-reported child behaviour.

Furthermore, improvements were sustained at six months and at one, two and three years. Independent observations of children's behaviour also showed evidence of change, although the improvement was slightly less than suggested by parents' reports. This is thought to be because parent training programmes improve parents' tolerance of children's behaviour.

Behavioural programmes consistently produced the biggest changes in children's behaviour. The structure, processes and teaching techniques of the programmes varied between the studies; it is therefore difficult to know which combination is most effective with which groups. Of the behavioural programmes, Webster-Stratton's videotape modelling programme has been the most rigorously evaluated and consistently shows good results. There is a lack of rigorous study of relationship programmes, with the exception of parent effectiveness training (PET). The available research tends to focus on changes in parental attitudes and behaviour rather than their effectiveness in producing behavioural changes in children.

Although there has been a rapid expansion in the number of group-based parenting programmes, there is no framework for systematic provision nor for a quality-assurance structure. There is a range of programmes delivered through local authority or voluntary organisations across different sectors. Currently, there are no standards for parent educators. Consequently, little evidence is available about the role of parent educators' attitudes and competencies in determining the outcomes of particular programmes.

The average drop-out rate for parenting programmes is about 28 per cent; drop-out rates are higher among mothers reporting high levels of stress and in poorer families. Parents of children who have more severe conduct disorder symptoms and more delinquent behaviour, and parents within ethnic minorities, are less likely to complete parenting programmes.

One area where it has been recognised that parents and carers have a valuable contribution to make is in supporting the development of children's social and emotional skills. Some programmes that have been evaluated include The Nurturing Programme developed by the Family Links organisation (www.familylinks.org.uk) and the Webster-Stratton Programme. A

useful source of reviews is to be found on the Young Minds website:
www.youngminds.org.uk/professionals/policy-and-knowledge/resources.

With parents and carers of individual children who may be experiencing difficulties

These difficulties may take the form of specific social, emotional, behaviour or attendance problems.

An issue commonly recognised is that of engaging and involving 'hard to reach' parents. Some parents and carers may be keen to help and support their children but lack the confidence or skills to do so. Other parents may initially engage with the setting but drop out, their needs may not be met or they may not have the practical or social support they need to continue.

Consequently, many schools put significant effort into promoting the involvement of these parents and carers. Specialist leaders will need to emphasise this aspect of their role, for example, by:

- arranging support that addresses parental emotional and social needs, for example, stress reduction, aromatherapy, counselling support;
- developing 'positive news home systems', for example, letters or postcards home, regular phone calls to report on positive progress (not just when there is a crisis), personal dialogue and reporting systems;
- making home visits to build the confidence and positive relationships that will encourage parents to become more involved;
- coordination of multi-agency support to build professional relationships with 'hard to reach' parents, facilitating access and regular contact with parents, for example, through learning mentors, home-school liaison officers, local authority (LA) psychology and support services, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) workers.

Learning Behaviour: The Report of The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline makes a number of recommendations about what schools might do to increase the involvement of parents and carers who are 'hard to reach', or who would like to have greater positive involvement but do not have the skills or the personal reserves to be effective.

Parenting contracts:

We are aware that increasingly there are parents and carers who turn to the school for help in managing their children. Some parents and carers may describe their children as being 'out of control'. Supporting these parents and carers is demanding of staff time, but important. Our observation is that where schools can support parents and carers who are anxious about their children, there is a more consistent approach between home and school in promoting positive attitudes towards learning, attendance and behaviour.

The report goes on to say:

For some parents and carers, information or a home-school agreement will not be sufficient to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities. They may need targeted needs-based support and intervention which can be provided through a voluntary parenting contract. This is a two-sided formal agreement between the parent and the school or local authority, in which each sets out what they will do to improve the pupil's behaviour or attendance at school.

Parenting orders:

A very small number of parents may not be willing to exercise their parental responsibilities properly. This can result in their child being denied their right to educational opportunities, and perhaps the chance of becoming a full member of society. When this situation occurs a parenting order may be the most appropriate way to ensure the interests of the child are protected.

A parenting order is a civil order imposed by a magistrate's court. It requires a parent to attend a parenting course for up to three months and to comply with any other requirements specified in the order for up to twelve months.

The report suggests that schools – not just local authorities – should be allowed to apply for parenting orders and that an exclusion should not be a necessary precursor to such an order.

Finally, the report gives a significant amount of attention to the role and merits of Pupil Parent Support Workers (PPSW). Their intended role is to 'secure engagement of the community generally, with emphasis on those pupils and parents in particular need of support'. These workers will also support the *Every Child Matters* (ECM) agenda of ensuring schools meet the outcomes of health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and economic well-being.

Activities 2 and 4 provide opportunities to discuss these and other issues more fully.

The report goes on to explore in detail the nature of the role of PPSWs (both in school and outside of it), liaison with support agencies, their role in exclusions and how this role could vary from one setting to another and in a manner determined by the setting.

For more information on this consult Learning Behaviour: The Report of The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline:

www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance/about/learning_behaviour.cfm.

Summary

As can be seen from this brief section, there are many ways in which educational settings can involve parents and carers. These strategies range from involvement for all parents and carers, at a general level, to partnerships between those parents and carers of children whose behaviour and attendance is causing significant concern.

Specialist leaders in behaviour and attendance will need to gain an overview of these approaches and the acquisition of skills to develop or maintain those aspects particularly relevant to the behaviour and attendance of the children in their setting.

Preparatory activity

Working with parents – parent perceptions

Suggestions

Arrange to meet with a range of parents whose children are experiencing behaviour and attendance difficulties. Ask about their experiences of working in partnership with your setting, both in general terms and in relation to any specific problems. As you explore these issues with parents try to place yourself in their shoes.

- What issues might emerge from assuming this parental perspective and how does your setting respond to these issues?

In addition, to enable you to consider issues relating to parental involvement further, you may wish to explore one or more of the following websites.

Parents as First Teachers (PAFT) for use in school (www.continyou.org.uk) gives information on the Share project designed to promote parental involvement at Foundation Stage and at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

How to engage parents in transferring these links to school (www.familylinks.org.uk) gives information on how social and emotional skills can be developed at home, including whole-school staff and local communities.

Strategies for engaging the 'hard to reach' parents and carers, sustaining parental engagement with school 'working with parents':

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/familyandcommunity/workingwithparents

Guidance on sourcing and commissioning resources and providing parenting provision programmes:

www.dcsf.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance/guidance/ParentingProvision/index.cfm

Activity 1

Leading programmes on positive parenting

(30 minutes)

Purpose

- To raise awareness of the potential barriers to successful implementation of parenting programmes and to consider ways in which these barriers might be overcome

Resources

- Resource A: *Evaluating a parent programme*

You will also need your notes on the preparatory reading.

Facilitator's notes

Allow a few minutes for the group to look at Resource A: *Evaluating a parent programme*, which will support this activity.

Ask the group to work in pairs and to choose a particular school or setting to be the focus for the discussion. Choose a target group of parents, for example, parents of children who may:

- be at risk of exclusion
- be experiencing attendance difficulties
- be involved in bullying
- need support to develop social and emotional skills.

Consider together any potential barriers that would need to be overcome if an effective parenting programme were to be implemented for your chosen group.

List the barriers under the following headings.

Engagement Recruitment Implementation Maintenance Evaluation

Each pair should work together to explore and discuss the barriers noted under each heading, then give feedback to the group.

Next, participants work with a different partner to generate solutions that would help to overcome one or more of the barriers under each heading.

As a whole group, review the range of solutions generated by each pair and explore the role of the specialist leader in leading the development of programmes for parents.

Activity 1 Resource A

Evaluating a parent programme

Grimshaw, R. and McGuire, C. (1998), National Children's Bureau

Grimshaw and McGuire examined, in depth, the views of parents that had attended open-access parenting programmes, which are programmes designed for any parent to think about and discuss their own approach to bringing up children. The parents were invited to say what they expected to get out of such a programme. The most frequently mentioned outcomes were:

- group outcomes, such as comparing individual experiences with other people
- better relationships with their children
- greater knowledge, for instance, in terms of child development and health
- emotional benefits such as less anxiety and more confidence.

When asked to envisage what they thought were the most desirable outcomes for their children, the most frequent replies were:

- improvements in the parent–child relationship, such as changes in behaviour and understanding;
- changes to children's emotions, such as their being happier or more confident;
- particular aspects of their children's needs, such as being healthy, making educational progress or meeting special needs.

Grimshaw and McGuire also examined the accessibility of programmes and the experiences of attendees and drop-outs, asking about what it was like to be in a group.

Accessibility

Generally, there appeared to be little awareness of parenting programmes beyond parent-craft and antenatal classes. This seems to indicate low public awareness of parenting programmes generally. The most likely source of awareness regarding the programme was through the efforts of professionals in publicising posters. Three main elements appeared to motivate parents to attend:

- parents trying to break the mould of parenting set in their own childhood
- to gain access to support from other parents
- a spirit of openness to ideas.

Obstacles

The majority of parents that attended did not report any obstacles. Where obstacles did occur, they were likely to be related to feelings about the course and practical difficulties. These feelings were related to stereotypes about themselves or others, for instance, not wanting people to think they were bad parents or their reactions to the course presenters or facilitators. Parents were unhappy about the possibility of meeting a 'pasta-eating mother-earth type'. Parents preferred the facilitators of the programmes to be professionals and, preferably, professionals who were also parents.

The parents that dropped out reported problems in the timing of programmes or a lack of childcare. Others wanted specific advice about their own children with significant problems. Difficulties in understanding also led to people for whom English is an additional language dropping out.

An additional piece of research in this area, by Sue Millar and Kay Sambell (2003), into what parents felt they needed in terms of parenting programmes identified three different forms of support.

- The **dispensing model**: the parent asks, 'What can I do to change my child?'
- The **relating model**: the parent asks, 'How do I feel about this situation?'
- The **reflecting model**: the parent asks, 'Why is this happening?'

The dispensing model

This is a view that parenting support should develop ways of dealing with the child. Effective support is seen as changing the child. Within this view the child is seen as a 'problem' and approached accordingly.

In this conception of learning, parents focused upon the content (what) of learning. They valued knowledge and prized information highly. The prime motivation for seeking support was to find out how to deal with the child; this tended to be when there was a perceived problem with the child.

- *'I think I came along (to the family centre) at first...to try to get Jake to mix: he's a bad mixer.'*

The support required tended to be seen in terms of 'experts', although the information and advice could come from a professional or a knowledgeable other, who is perceived as best placed to 'deal with' a child's problems.

- *'I've always turned to a teacher for advice, or a doctor.'*
- *'I needed to know what to do if your daughter comes in at 13 or 14 and says she's pregnant.'*
- *'What to look for if you think your child's taking drugs.'*
- *'You never get taught how to lift a disabled child.'*

It is significant that parents' concepts of learning in this category valued clear advice that 'told them what to do' and how to handle the child, who is perceived as a 'problem'. This relates to a banking concept of knowledge, with the educator dispensing advice that is taken up and followed in an unreflective manner because of the perceived competence of the person dispensing it.

The relating model

This model views parenting support as helping the development of the parent. Effective parenting education is seen as focusing on the needs of the parents and validating them in their role.

Here, parents highly prized environments in which they felt listened to or in which they could communicate their views, anxieties and feelings. This was a matter of recognising and

acknowledging their difficulties. The focus was upon parents' views of themselves, and how these could be developed or supported in positive ways.

- *'They don't just do things for children, it's for us.'*
- *'To give us a break.'*
- *'We've got more confidence in ourselves.'*
- *'It's just they'll listen and take a bit of time to build your confidence.'*
- *'They took an interest in me.'*

Here, parents seemed to be focused upon taking a step back, to have space and time to focus on the processes (how) of parenting, and valued learning that helped them to place their parenting into some sort of frame of reference.

- *'You could have a chat and make sure you're all right.'*

Often parents expressed a view that this level of learning was not likely to happen in formal, official contexts.

- *'You've got to feel that you're not just another client: that people really care, and are taking an interest in you as a person.'*

Learning from others' experience was important, which meant that sources were informal and educators needed to be parents themselves.

- *'It's important to see that other people are going through the same thing. It's a big comfort to know that you're not on your own.'*
- *'Knowing I'm not the only one and that other people have the same problems.'*

Motivation tended to emanate from parents having their personal needs met and there were frequent references to sympathy.

- *'Having someone to talk to, it's picked me up.'*
- *'She saved my bacon, gave me a hug.'*

In the relating model, parents talked extensively of the importance of not feeling judged. They talked of feeling validated and recognised for the work that they were doing, of being able to be open and honest about the challenges they were facing and to get these into some sort of perspective by seeing that they were not the only ones to face these situations. They were enabled to reframe the problems as real but 'normal', to be expected, as part of what they increasingly felt was being acknowledged to be a tough and challenging role. This seemed an important aspect that allowed them to explore the 'how' of their parenting.

The reflecting model

This model views parenting support as critical reflection on and understanding of parent-child relationships. Effective parenting education develops in the parent an understanding of the interactional nature of the parent-child relationship and the reasons that might underpin this.

In this conception of support, parents' descriptions show a strong meaning – orientation. They focus upon the intention to develop understanding, thinking, reflection – the 'why' of parenting. This might involve exploring and trying to understand one's values, assumptions and attitudes.

- *'It's about the attitudes of parents. If you educate the parent you educate the children. And that's what I think this (parenting initiative) is about.'*

Here, connections and ideas are valued which help reveal or illuminate parents' relationships with their children. The approach to learning is underpinned by an effort on the part of the parents to make sense of their children's behaviour in the context of the situation, of which they are a part.

- *'You (were asked to) think of something the kids have done that you think they shouldn't have. Then take a step back and think about it. How would you react?'*

The key characteristics of this concept of learning are the emphasis on thinking, understanding and asking oneself questions (as opposed to expecting someone else to provide the answers as in the dispensing model).

- *'I thought, well, how do you broach that (issue with a child)?'*

Activity 2

Working effectively in partnership with parents

(20 minutes)

Purpose

- To reflect on current practice in working with parents and to consider how engagement with parents could be developed further
- To identify factors that promote (or are barriers to) the parental involvement of specific minority groups

Resources

Resource A: *Enhancing partnership with parents*

Suggestions

Work with a partner from the same setting, or type of setting, if possible. In pairs, take on the following roles, taking turns in each role. Allow a few minutes for preparation for each role.

Role A Specialist leader responsible for the coordination and development of the partnership between the educational setting and parents

Role B Parent of a child experiencing some behavioural or attendance difficulty or from a particularly vulnerable group

The specialist leader should work to convince the parent how the educational setting involves and supports parents. Use Resource A: *Enhancing partnerships with parents* to support you in this role. The parent should aim to suggest *at least two* ways in which the specialist leader could improve how the setting works with parents.

Activity 2 Resource A

Enhancing partnership with parents

Whole-school/setting issues

- Is there a whole-school policy on parental liaison and involvement?
- Are there designated roles for developing parental involvement?
- Is the environment welcoming to parents (attractive entrance, displays, seating areas)?
- Is information accessible? (Display of who's who?)
- What regular opportunities are there for parental involvement (parent evenings, home visits, focus groups, adult education classes, parent rooms, family learning activities, breakfast clubs, parent and volunteers in classes)?
- What facilities are there to support emotional (angry or upset) parents?

Communication

- Are parents made to feel welcome and valued?
- Is there regular 'good news' going home, giving positive feedback to parents on their children's progress?
- Are there translation facilities or alternative communication methods for parents who have English as an additional language, or have literacy difficulties?
- How easy is it for parents and carers to contact key staff if they have a concern?
- Are all parents clear about school terminology and procedures, for example, homework?
- Is there a prominent parent and carer notice board and/or regular newsletter?
- Are there displays of work and timetables for activities, in prominent positions?

Encouraging involvement

- What opportunities are there for parents to become involved in their children's learning and in general school life (for example, classroom volunteers, assemblies, adult classes, family learning, class meetings which focus on family issues – grandparent histories, family 'treasures')?
- What access is there to family literacy and other basic skills projects?
- Are there home-learning projects?
- Are parental skills and interests used in developing children's learning?
- Are there school or class calendars with suggestions for home or community activities throughout the year?
- Are there home–school agreements?
- Is there a parent resource and information base?
- Are there toy and book libraries?

How do you involve the local community?

- Are children's work and projects displayed in local shops, supermarkets, libraries, medical centres?
- Is there involvement in local festivals, celebrations and community events?
- Is there community representation within school, for example, governors and focus groups?
- Is there representation at local forums?
- Are local issues used for curriculum work?
- Are local facilities used for visits and project work?
- Are there links to local businesses and voluntary organisations?
- Is there integration of local initiatives, for example, parenting groups, SureStart?
- Is there a local centre for adult education opportunities?
- Are volunteer activities encouraged in the life of the school?
- Is there involvement in community charity events?

The behaviour and attendance programme

- Are there established opportunities for parents to become involved?
- Can parents concerned with behaviour or attendance issues easily access key personnel and vice versa?
- Are there easy opportunities for parents to register their concerns about their children?
- Are there opportunities for easy day-to-day communication, for example, home-school books, postcards home, regular phone calls, school-gate encounters?
- Are there people within school who can easily build up trusting and non-threatening relationships with parents and carers, for example, learning mentors, home-school liaison officers, parent advisers?
- When parents come in to school, is there a comfortable and welcoming environment in which you can engage them in conversation, offer them hospitality?

Extended services

- What services are provided to parents by local authority or voluntary services and organisations, for example, Child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), Social Care, Community Safety, counselling?
- What access is there for parents to information about security, housing, benefits and employment services?
- What do voluntary agencies provide for parents, especially those at risk of social exclusion?

Activity 3

Parents as first teachers

(30 minutes)

Purpose

- To consider the ways in which parents support the development of the social and emotional skills of their children

Resources

- Resource A: *Primary National Strategy Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) – learning outcomes*
- Resource B: *Secondary National Strategy Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) – learning outcomes*

Suggestions

Work in pairs or threes, using Resources A and B to help you identify the ways in which parents can support their children to develop social and emotional skills.

- What are the skills parents (and staff) need to support this work?
- What information or knowledge will parents need to support the work of the educational setting in using the SEAL resources?

Work in pairs to devise a checklist of the leadership issues raised in developing a particular role, for example, as a parents' partnership coordinator.

Share the responses as a whole group.

Work in small groups to identify ways in which a specialist leader could develop each of the following aspects of work with parents.

- To build on the skills and strengths of parents in supporting the development of social and emotional skills in their children through activities at home
- To support parents in their understanding of the ways in which the educational setting helps children to develop the social and emotional skills that promote positive behaviour for learning
- Working with parents, using the SEAL resource, for example, family SEAL as part of a whole-school approach
- Helping parents to develop understanding and particular social and emotional skills so that they can act as effective role models for their children
- Contributing to the development of a strong and positive partnership with parents
- Working with local authority services and voluntary organisations to develop the role of parents as first teachers

Activity 3 Resource A

Primary National Strategy Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) – learning outcomes

Self-awareness

Self-awareness enables children to have some understanding of themselves. They know how they learn, how they relate to others, what they are thinking and what they are feeling.

They use this understanding to organise themselves and plan their learning.

*(Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years
– Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)*

Knowing myself

- I know when and how I learn most effectively.
- I can take responsibility for my actions and learning.
- I feel good about the things I do well, and accept myself for who and what I am.
- I can recognise when I find something hard to achieve.

Understanding my feelings

- I can identify, recognise and express a range of feelings.
- I know that feelings, thoughts and behaviour are linked.
- I can recognise when I am becoming overwhelmed by my feelings.
- I know that it is OK to have any feeling, but not OK to behave in any way I feel like.

Managing feelings

In managing feelings, children use a range of strategies to recognise and accept their feelings. They can use this to regulate their learning and behaviour – for example, managing anxiety or anger, or demonstrating resilience in the face of difficulty.

*(Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years
– Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)*

Managing how I express my feelings

- I can stop and think before acting.
- I can express a range of feelings in ways that do not hurt myself or other people.
- I understand that the way I express my feelings can change the way other people feel.
- I can adapt the way I express my feelings to suit particular situations or people.

Managing the way I am feeling

- I can calm myself down when I choose to.
- I have a range of strategies for managing my worries and other uncomfortable feelings.
- I have a range of strategies for managing my anger.

- I understand that changing the way I think about people and events changes the way I feel about them.
- I can change the way I feel by reflecting on my experiences and reviewing the way I think about them.
- I know that I can seek support from other people when I feel angry, worried or sad.
- I know what makes me feel good and know how to enhance these comfortable feelings.

Motivation

Motivation enables learners to take an active and enthusiastic part in learning. Intrinsically motivated learners recognise and derive pleasure from learning. Motivation enables learners to set themselves goals and work towards them, to focus and concentrate on learning, to persist when learning is difficult and to develop independence, resourcefulness and personal organisation.

*(Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years
– Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)*

Setting goals and planning to meet them

- I can set a challenge or goal, thinking ahead and considering the consequences for others and myself.
- I can break a long-term plan into smaller achievable steps, plan to overcome obstacles, set success criteria and celebrate when I achieve them.

Persistence and resilience

- I can choose when and where to direct my attention, concentrate and resist distractions for increasing periods of time.
- I know and can overcome some barriers to my learning, such as feelings of boredom and frustration, and know when to keep trying or try something different.
- I can bounce back after a disappointment or when I have made a mistake or been unsuccessful.

Evaluation and review

- I know how to evaluate my learning and use this to improve future performance.

Empathy

Being able to empathise involves understanding others; anticipating and predicting their likely thoughts, feelings and perceptions. It involves seeing things from another's point of view and modifying one's own response, if appropriate, in the light of this understanding.

*(Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years
– Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)*

Understanding the feelings of others

- I can recognise the feelings of others.

- I know that all people have feelings but understand that they might experience and show their feelings in different ways or in different circumstances.
- I can understand another person's point of view and understand how they might be feeling.

Valuing and supporting others

- I value and respect the thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values of other people.
- I can be supportive to others and try to help them when they want it.
- I know that my actions affect other people and can make them feel better or worse.

Social skills

Social skills enable children to relate to others, take an active part in a group, communicate with different audiences, negotiate, resolve differences and support the learning of others.

*(Excellence and enjoyment: learning and teaching in the primary years
– Learning to learn: progression in key aspects of learning)*

Belonging to a community

- I feel that I belong to and am valued in my class, school and community.
- I understand and accept my rights and responsibilities in school, and know how I can take responsibility for making the school a safe and fair place for everyone.

Friendships and other relationships

- I know how to be friendly – I can look and sound friendly, be a good listener, give and receive compliments and do kind things for other people.
- I recognise 'put-downs' and know how they affect people, so I try not to use them.
- I can make, sustain and break friendships without hurting others.

Working together

- I can work well in a group, cooperating with others to achieve a joint outcome.
- I can tell you what helps a group to work well together.

Resolving conflicts

- I can resolve conflicts to ensure that everyone feels positive about the outcome.

Standing up for myself

- I can be assertive when appropriate.

Making wise choices

- I can solve problems by thinking of all the options, identifying advantages and disadvantages, choosing a solution and evaluating it later on.
- I can make a wise choice with work or behaviour.

Social and emotional aspects of learning: guidance

© Crown copyright 2005 DfES 1378-2005 Social and emotional aspects of learning: guidance
Primary National Strategy

Activity 3 Resource B

Secondary National Strategy Social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) – learning outcomes

Self awareness

Knowing myself

1. I know that I am a unique individual and I can think about myself on many different levels (e.g. physical characteristics, personality, attainments, attitudes, values).
2. I can identify my strengths and feel positive about them.
3. I can identify my current limitations and try to overcome them.
4. I recognise when I should feel pleased with, and proud of, myself and am able to accept praise from others.
5. I can identify what is important for me and what I expect from myself, taking into account the beliefs and expectations that others (e.g. friends, family, school staff) have of me.
6. I can reflect on my actions and identify lessons to be learned from them.
7. I can make sense of what has happened to me in my life and understand that things that come from my own history can make me prone to being upset or angry for reasons others may find difficult to understand.

Understanding my feelings

8. I know and accept what I am feeling and can label my feelings.
9. I understand why feelings sometimes ‘take over’ or get out of control and know what makes me angry or upset.
10. I understand that the way I think affects the way I feel, and that the way I feel can affect the way I think, and know that my thoughts and feelings influence my behaviour.
11. I can recognise conflicting emotions and manage them in ways that are appropriate.
12. I can use my knowledge and experience of how I think, feel, and respond to choose my own behaviour, plan my learning, and build positive relationships with others.

Managing my feelings

Managing my expression of emotions

13. I can express my emotions clearly and openly to others and in ways appropriate to situations.
14. I understand that how I express my feelings can have a significant impact both on other people and on what happens to me.
15. I have a range of strategies for managing impulses and strong emotions so they do not lead me to behave in ways that would have negative consequences for me or for other people.

Changing uncomfortable feelings and increasing pleasant feelings

16. I know what makes me feel good and know how to help myself have a good time (e.g. to feel calm, elated, energised, focused, engaged, have fun) – in ways that are not damaging to myself and others.

17. I understand how health can be affected by emotions and know a range of ways to keep myself well and happy.
18. I have a range of strategies to reduce, manage or change strong and uncomfortable feelings such as anger, anxiety, stress and jealousy.

Motivation

Working towards goals

19. I can set goals and challenges for myself, set criteria for success and celebrate when I achieve them.
20. I can break a long-term goal into small, achievable steps.
21. I can anticipate and plan to work around or overcome potential obstacles.
22. I can monitor and evaluate my own performance.
23. I can look to long-term not short-term benefits and can delay gratification (for example, working hard for a test or examination now to get a good job or into further/higher education later).
24. I know how to bring about change in myself and others.

Persistence, resilience and optimism

25. I can view errors as part of the normal learning process, and bounce back from disappointment or failure.
26. I can identify barriers to achieving a goal and identify how I am going to overcome them.
27. I can choose when and where to direct my attention, resisting distractions and can concentrate for increasing periods of time.

Evaluation and review

28. I can use my experiences, including mistakes and setbacks, to make appropriate changes to my plans and behaviours.
29. I have a range of strategies for helping me to feel and remain optimistic, approaching new tasks in a positive frame of mind.
30. I can take responsibility for my life, and know how to help myself believe that I can influence what happens to me.

Empathy

Understanding others' thoughts and feelings

31. I can work out how people are feeling through their words, body language, gestures and tone and pay attention to them.
32. I understand that people can all feel the same range of emotions, but that people do not necessarily respond in the same way to similar situations, and that different people may express their feelings in many different ways.
33. I can see the world from other people's points of view, can feel the same emotion as they are feeling and take account of their intentions, preferences, and beliefs and can feel with and for them.

Valuing and supporting others

34. I can listen empathically to others, and have a range of strategies for responding effectively in ways that can help others feel better.
35. I can show respect for people from diverse cultures and backgrounds, and for people with diverse interests, attainments, attitudes, and values, and I am interested in, enjoy and celebrate differences.
36. I understand the impact of bullying, prejudice and discrimination on all those involved, am moved to want to make things better for them and can use appropriate strategies to do so.
37. I can support others who are experiencing personal problems.
38. I recognise and take account of my feelings of empathy and act on them by considering the needs and feelings of others.

Social skills

Building and maintaining relationships

39. I can communicate effectively with others, listening to what others say as well as expressing my own thoughts and feelings.
40. I can take others' thoughts and feelings into account in how I manage my relationships.
41. I can assess risks and consider the issues involved before making decisions about my personal relationships.
42. I can make, sustain and break friendships without hurting others.

Belonging to groups

43. I can work and learn well in groups, taking on different roles, cooperating with others to achieve a joint outcome.
44. I understand my rights and responsibilities as an individual who belongs to many different social groups, such as my friendship group, school class, school, family, and community.
45. I can achieve an appropriate level of independence from others, charting and following my own course while maintaining positive relationships with others.
46. I can give and receive feedback and use it to improve mine and other people's achievements.

Solving problems, including interpersonal ones

47. I can use a range of strategies to solve problems and know how to resolve conflicts with other people, such as mediation and conflict resolution.
48. I can monitor the effectiveness of different problem-solving strategies and use my experiences to help me plan my behaviour in the future.
49. I have strategies for repairing damaged relationships.
50. I can be assertive when appropriate.

Social and emotional aspects of learning: guidance

Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) for Secondary Schools: Guidance booklet
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Activity 4

Working with 'hard to reach' parents

(25 minutes)

Purpose

- To consider ways of engaging 'hard to reach' parents

Suggestions

Jane Barlow and Sarah Stewart-Brown identified the following conclusions from their analysis of parents' perceptions of the usefulness of parent support groups.

(You can find the abstract for this research in work-based activity 1 Resource A: *Understanding parenting programmes: parents views.*)

- Support from other parents
- The mirroring of concerns by other parents
- Working in partnership with parents
- A reduction in feelings of guilt
- The importance of self-nurturing
- Regaining feelings of control
- Increased capacity to think about matters calmly
- Increased feelings of empathy and ability to identify with their children
- Recognising the reasons for children's behaviour
- Recognising factors relating to one's own childhood

In small groups, think of some of the 'hard to reach' or 'difficult to work with' parents that you have tried to engage and support. Identify the three most important items from the list above that would resonate with these parents.

Next, for each of the three items, think of one practical way in which you could support it; for example, for the first item, you might suggest instigating a 'buddy' system to encourage less-confident parents to come along to a meeting.

Come back together as a whole group and discuss your priorities and practical steps. Record these on a flipchart and build ideas for practical things you could do to develop your links with 'hard to reach' parents.

The preparatory reading described three recommendations from the learning behaviour report www.dfes.gov.uk/behaviourandattendance/about/learning_behaviour.cfm now incorporated in the Education and Inspection Act 2006, Chapter 2 www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/educationandinspectionsact/index.shtml

- Parenting contracts

- Parenting orders
- Pupil parent support worker

Work in three groups. Each group should choose one recommendation.

Explore the implications of this, in detail, for the educational setting in which you work. Come together as a whole group to discuss the implications of these three approaches for the specialist leader.

Signposts to NS B&A Core Day materials and B&A Toolkit

If you have a particular interest in this topic and would like to explore further reading or opportunities for work-based activities, you may find the following links to NS B&A Core Day materials and the B&A Toolkit helpful. They can be found through <http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/97231>

NS Behaviour and Attendance Study and Training Materials – key points

The Core Day materials and the Toolkit explore widely the implications of working with parents and carers. They include many activities aimed at developing joint working and several sections of the Toolkit offer support aimed directly at parents.

The relevant issues that are discussed in the materials are:

- establishing effective structures for involving parents and carers;
- working partnerships with parents and carers to audit current practice and shape future policy;
- the effective use of praise and reward;
- statutory requirements with regard to informing parents and carers;
- the involvement of parents and carers in dealing with cases of bullying;
- the role of agencies other than schools in working with parents and carers.

NS Behaviour and Attendance Study and Training Materials – support for work-based activities

The following sections explore ways of developing and improving the involvement of parents and carers. Participants undertaking work-based activity 1 may want to make use of some of the ideas contained in these sections of the Core Day materials and the Toolkit.

B&A Toolkit 1: Leadership and management

Section 1, *Values, principles and practice*, outlines the importance of sharing values and principles with parents and carers.

Activity 2.2 *Involving the whole school community* provides an activity designed to involve the whole school community, including parents and carers, in policy development.

These materials will support participants undertaking work-based activities 1, 2 or 3.

B&A Toolkit 2: Everyday policies, rewards, sanctions and the promotion of positive behaviour

Section 5 *Involving parents/carers in successful partnership* focuses on involving parents and carers in successful partnership, including activities on effective communication and sustaining improvements in behaviour.

These materials will also be useful for participants undertaking work-based activities 1, 2 or 3.

B&A Toolkit 5: Pupil support systems

Activity 1.2, *Listening to parents and carers*, provides a structure for discussion with parents and carers. Activity 2.3, *Working with parents and carers*, looks at systems in school from the perspective of a parent or carer.

These materials will support participants undertaking work-based activities 3 and 5.

B&A Toolkit 6: Classroom behaviour – parent focus

This toolkit explores how parents and carers can support their child to be ready to learn, including preparing their child for return to school after absence and supporting with coursework.

These materials will support participants undertaking work-based activities 4 and 5.

B&A Toolkit 8: Curriculum

Section 2, *Social, emotional and behavioural skills for learning*, contains advice – with staff learning activities – for building on social and emotional skills learned in the primary school. It pre-dates the current SEAL materials.

This unit would be useful for participants undertaking work-based activities 3 and 5.

B&A Toolkit 9: Attendance – parents focus

Unit 9.3PC, *Preparing my child for return to school after an extended absence*, contains advice for parents – with learning activities – in supporting their children through this difficult transition.

The unit would be useful for participants undertaking work-based activities 5 and 6.

The following activities are examples of work-based activities you could undertake. You may choose to use existing work to consolidate impact, or extend activities you are already being asked to do. You may undertake your own activity if it is relevant to the topics and your context.

Work-based activity 1

Improving parental involvement

Purpose

- To reflect on knowledge of key features of effective parental involvement
- To develop skills in working with parents and staff to improve parental involvement

Resources

- Resource A: *Understanding parenting programmes – parents' view*

Audience

All group members

Use of expert

None is required.

Links to the learning process

Practical application
Feedback and reflection
Embedding the experience

Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced in Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

Notes

- You should ensure that when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other study materials you have studied.
- You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice and record your reflections as you go along

Before you begin this activity you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

You will need to review Resource A: *Understanding parenting programmes – parents' views* to refresh your background knowledge.

Establish a parent focus group to help you devise a questionnaire designed to elicit views and perceptions of the current level and quality of parental involvement in your setting.

With this group, agree a set of relevant questions. You might also choose to interview a range of parents, including representatives of those who are 'hard to reach'.

You might include questions relating to current satisfaction with the level and type of involvement and other questions designed to find out how your setting could improve.

Use the information gathered to develop and implement an action plan aimed at improving the level of parent involvement with your setting as part of a whole-school approach.

Evaluate the effectiveness of this, using a further stakeholder group.

At the end of the work-based activity you should meet again with senior colleagues to discuss the impact this activity has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

Outcomes

- Establishment of focus groups and development of questionnaire survey complete
- Development of action plan
- You will have developed:
 - skills in designing and analysing questionnaire data and in consulting with parent groups
 - further skills in effectively communicating with parents and colleagues.

Reporting

- Notes from focus group meetings
- Questionnaire and analysis of data
- Notes from meetings with stakeholders
- The action plan and its relationship to whole-school or setting development

Work based activity 1 Resource A

Understanding parenting programmes – parents' views

Primary Health Care Research and Development 2001, 2: pages 117–130, Jane Barlow and Sarah Stewart-Brown Health Services Research Unit, Institute of Health Sciences, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK

This paper describes a pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of a school-based parenting programme combining the use of both affective (related to feelings) and behavioural strategies. In this paper we describe the intervention, its evaluation and a summary of the quantitative information gathered. The three pre-eminent ways in which parents appeared to have benefited from this particular programme included:

1. the support they received in their parenting role from other parents, including a mirroring of problems;
2. the regaining of a sense of control in the parental role, in part through an increase in their capacity to think about matters calmly, and also through the provision of new tools with which to do the job of parenting;
3. an increased ability to empathise and identify with their children, and a better understanding of the factors that motivate children to behave in particular ways.

The capacity to think about matters calmly and the ability to empathise and identify with children appeared to be important factors in the reduction of inappropriate and unhelpful parenting practices, such as shouting and smacking. It is suggested that empathy in particular is central to effective parenting and that these results support the suggestion that there is an important added benefit for parents from programmes which combine behavioural and affective strategies focusing on feelings, relationships within the family, and the parents' own experience of being parented. The limitations of the data are discussed with reference to reliability and validity, and the need for further research using grounded theory with other groups of parents.

Key words: parenting; parenting programme; qualitative evaluation

Work-based activity 2

Improving the involvement of parents from minority ethnic groups

It is wrong to assume that minority ethnic groups experience disproportionate behavioural or attendance difficulties. Close family structure and strong values often mean that the converse is true. However, it is also true that minority ethnic groups suffer from a disproportionate amount of economic disadvantage, poor housing and racism. In some groups, exclusions are disproportionately high and attendance can be variable. Involvement of parents of such 'at risk' groups can have powerful positive outcomes.

Purpose

- To reflect on knowledge of key features of effective parent involvement with parents from minority ethnic groups
- To develop skills in working with parents and staff to improve parental involvement

Resources

- Resource A: *Reflecting on personal interaction style to promote successful cross-cultural school-home partnerships*

Audience

Any school-based group members

Use of expert

You do not need to use an expert for this session although you may find it useful to consult community leaders.

Links to the learning process

Practical application
Feedback and reflection
Embedding the experience

Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced in Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

Notes

- You should ensure that when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity you refer to any other study materials you have studied.
- You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice and record your reflections as you go along.

Before you begin this activity you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Identify minority ethnic parent groups and interview a representative sample of parents from these groups to identify what your school or setting does well in involving parents. Elicit the views of parents on areas for further development.

At the end of the work-based activity you should meet again with senior colleagues to discuss the impact this activity has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

Outcomes

- Establishment of representative groups of parents
- Presentation for SMT including recommendations
- You will have developed:
 - skills in consulting with parent groups
 - skills in effectively communicating with parents and colleagues
 - your knowledge and understanding (through reading Resource A)
 - skills and understanding in communication with parents from a minority ethnic group.

Reporting

- Copies of presentations
- Written evidence of impact on pupil outcomes through work with parents and carers, such as improved attendance or out-of-class referrals

Work-based activity 3

Improving the involvement of parents of children with special educational needs (SEN)

Purpose

- To reflect on knowledge of key features of effective involvement of parents of pupils with SEN
- To develop skills in working with parents and staff to improve parent and carer involvement

Audience

Any group members

Use of expert

You do not need to use an expert for this session, although you might find it helpful to consult the SENCO.

Links to the learning process

Practical application
Feedback and reflection
Embedding the experience

Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced in Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

Notes

- You should ensure that when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other study materials you have studied.
- You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice and record your reflections as you go along.

Before you begin this activity you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Identify a group of parents whose children have special educational needs. Alternatively, parents may be from vulnerable groups or have children in danger of exclusion.

Review a selection of SEN statements, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) or Personal Support Plans or Programmes (PSPs), observe a range of meetings and interview parents about their perceptions of these meetings. (These might be from SEN reviews, PSP meetings, etc.)

Interview parents present at these meetings. Make arrangements to interview any parents who are absent from the meetings. Find out their perceptions of:

- how included in the process they felt;
- how much value was placed on their input;
- how much, and what type of support they had received to enable them to contribute effectively;
- what else could be done.

Analyse the information, then design and implement staff development opportunities aimed at improving the effectiveness of these meetings.

Evaluate the effectiveness of the training by interviewing parents about their perceptions of the meetings following its implementation.

At the end of this work-based activity you should meet again with senior colleagues to discuss the impact this activity has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

Outcomes

- You will have developed:
 - skills in consulting with parent groups
 - further skills in effectively communicating with parents and colleagues.
- Parents and children make full contributions to SEN meetings.
- Contributions of parents and children are evident in plans produced.
- Parents and children report improved satisfaction with the process of the meeting.

Reporting

- Observation and interview notes
- A copy of the staff development opportunity, including staff evaluations of its usefulness

Work-based activity 4

Researching parent programmes

Purpose

- To research the range of available parenting programmes and consider the key features of successful programmes
- To develop skills in creating a directory of locally accessible parenting programmes

Audience

Any group members

Use of expert

None is required.

Links to the learning process

Practical application
Feedback and reflection
Embedding the experience

Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced in Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

Notes

- You should ensure that when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other study materials you have studied.
- You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice and record your reflections as you go along.

Before you begin this activity you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Research parenting programmes that are being used in the local community by liaising with local authority, voluntary and statutory agencies.

You will find it helpful first to 'map' any parenting work that is taking place in your setting and to discuss this work with those delivering the programme and their clients. Visit websites (see references) to explore other practice.

In partnership with providers, develop and publish a directory that summarises the main features of these programmes, including how outcomes may be evaluated. Explore how parents can access such programmes through your setting and how this information can be effectively shared with parents.

At the end of this work-based activity you should meet again with senior colleagues to discuss the impact this activity has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

Outcomes

- You will have developed your knowledge of local parent programmes.
- A directory of local parenting programmes will be published.
- Feedback from partnership groups shows an increase in awareness and in programme uptake.

Reporting

- Notes from research and meetings with providers
- Pro forma for describing programmes
- The parenting programme directory
- Evidence from partnership groups of an increase in awareness and in programme uptake

Work-based activity 5

Parents as first teachers (with an emphasis on social and emotional skills)

Purpose

- To develop skills in developing, facilitating and evaluating a programme for parents and carers as first teachers

Audience

Any group members

Use of expert

You do not need to use an expert for this session but you may find it useful to consult someone with experience of PAFT programmes.

Links to the learning process

Practical application
Feedback and reflection
Embedding the experience

Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced in Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

Notes

- You should ensure that when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other study materials you have studied.
- You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice and record your reflections as you go along.

Before you begin this activity you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Identify a colleague in a school who is interested in developing a parent as first teachers (PAFT) programme, with a special emphasis on working with the parents of children with attendance, social and emotional or behavioural difficulties.

Find out about programmes published by parents as first teachers (PAFT) and select one that seems appropriate to develop along with your colleague.

Implement and evaluate this programme, according to its stated aims and to achieve the outcomes valued by parents. (You will find it useful to refer to the preparatory reading.)

At the end of this work-based activity you should meet again with senior colleagues to discuss the impact this activity has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

Outcomes

- You will have developed skills in working collaboratively with colleagues to develop and implement a parenting programme.
- The programme achieves its stated aims and parents report satisfaction with other planned objectives.

Reporting

- Copies of the programme outline and session plans
- Copies of pre- and post-programme measures related to the stated aims of the programme
- Results from parent surveys

Work-based activity 6

Reviewing policy and practice for dealing with angry, upset or aggressive parents

Purpose

- To review and develop policy and practice in relation to current recommendations for managing angry, upset or aggressive parents

Audience

Any group members

Use of expert

None is required.

Links to the learning process

Practical application
Feedback and reflection
Embedding the experience

Links to other study topics

Your completed portfolio will need to meet the Portfolio Evaluation Criteria that are introduced in Study Day 2. To help in presenting your evidence, make sure that, when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other relevant NPSLBA topics you have studied. For example, even if your cluster group didn't choose to work through a particular topic, you may have read the materials associated with that topic yourself. You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice when undertaking a work-based activity and record your reflections as you go along.

Notes

- You should ensure that when planning, completing and writing up your work-based activity, you refer to any other study materials you have studied.
- You can use the theory in those materials to inform your practice and record your reflections as you go along.

Before you begin this activity you should meet with senior colleagues to agree protocols.

Read the relevant sections of *Learning Behaviour: The Practitioners' Group on School Behaviour and Discipline*, especially Chapter 7, *Parents*, Chapter 8, *Support and guidance for pupils and parents* and *Principle and Practice: What Works in Schools*, sections 48 to 52.

The report makes five recommendations for schools:

- Ensure that reception and other support staff and teachers are trained, so that they are welcoming and have the skills to deal with difficult parental conversations.
- Have clear and well understood procedures in place for dealing with distressed and angry parents.

- Ensure staff receive professional external training, from local authorities or other agencies, in managing and dealing with people's anger.
- Ensure parents and carers hear from the school when their children are doing well so that the first contact is positive. There is a greater willingness to work with the school when the parent or carer believes the school has the pupil's best interest at heart.
- Allocate sufficient resources to allow the school to communicate effectively with parents and carers; and take advantage of new technology such as emails and mobile phones to improve communications with parents and carers. This should not replace personal contact.

Undertake a review of your setting's practice with respect to these five recommendations by talking to:

Colleagues

Parents

Children

Also review your settings policies and handbooks and induction practice, especially for 'front of house' staff.

Write up your conclusions and recommendations and present them to the senior management team.

At the end of the work-based activity you should meet again with senior colleagues to discuss the impact this activity has had within your workplace.

You should record the key points from this conversation.

Outcomes

- You will have:
 - increased your knowledge of national recommendations and applied them to your setting;
 - developed skills in managing parents in highly charged emotional situations
 - developed your communication skills in working with parents and in finding solutions to problems.
- Parents and carers report a more positive experience of coming into school.
- There is better attendance at parents' meeting and evenings.
- The number of aggressive incidents is reduced.

Reporting

- Report to your setting's senior management team.

References

Barlow, J. (1998) 'Parent-training programmes and behaviour problems: findings from a systematic review', in Buchanan, A. and Hudson, B. L. (eds) *Parenting, Schooling and Children's Behaviour*, Ashgate, pages 89–109

Barlow, J. (1999) *Systematic Review of the Effectiveness of Parent-Training Programmes in Improving Behaviour Problems in Children aged 3–10 years*, University of Oxford, Health Services Research Unit

Barlow, J. (1999) 'What works in parent education programmes', in Lloyd, E. *Parenting Matters*, Barnardo's

Barlow, J. and Stewart-Brown, S. (2001) 'Understanding parenting programmes: parents' views' in *Primary Health Care Research and Development 2001*; 2: pages 117–130

Collins, J. 'Are you talking to me? The Need to Respect and Develop a Pupil's Self-Image' in *Educational Research* vol 42 pages 157–166 (2000)

Grimshaw, R. and McGuire, C. (1998) *Evaluating parent programmes*, National Children's Bureau

Miller, S. and Sambell, K. 'What do parents feel they need? Implications of parents' perspectives for the facilitation of parenting programmes' in *Children and society*, volume 17 (2003) pages 32–44, published online 25 July 2002 in Wiley InterScience (www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI: 10.1002/CHI.726

National Children's Bureau (2004) Highlight no. 211 Group-Based Parenting Programmes and Reducing Children's Behaviour Problems.

Richardson, J. and Joughin, C. (2002) *Parent-training Programmes for the Management of Young Children with Conduct Disorders: Findings from research*, Gaskell

Smith, C. (1996) *Developing Parenting Programmes*, National Children's Bureau

Webster-Stratton, C. (1990) 'Long-term follow-up of families with young conduct-problem children from pre-school to grade school', in *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* 19. 144.9

Webster-Stratton, C. (1999) 'Researching the impact of parent training programmes on child conduct problems', in Lloyd, E. (ed.) *Parenting Matters: What works in parenting education?*, Barnardo's

References to support inter-sessional activities

The Advisory Centre for Education (www.ace-ed.org.uk) has available a wide range of publications including *The Communicating School and Home-School Policies; a practical guide*.

Al-Hassan, S. and Gardner, R. (2002) *Involving immigrant parents of students with disabilities in the educational process*, in *Teaching Exceptional Children*, May/June, 2002, describes techniques for encouraging the involvement of immigrant parents in the education of their children.

Francis, J. (2004) 'Strength in Numbers' in *Care and Health Magazine*, February 4–February 18, 2004, describes a new approach to parenting support within culturally diverse communities.

Lupi, M. H. and Tong, V. M. (2001) 'Reflecting on Personal Interaction Style to Promote Successful Cross-Cultural School-Home Partnerships' in *Preventing School Failure* Vol 45 no.4 Summer 2001, describes self-reflection on and the development of cross cultural communication.

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/parentalinvolvement contains examples of good practice in working in partnership with minority ethnic families.

National Family Parenting Institute (www.familyandparenting.org/) contains guidance on listening to minority ethnic parents and the Parent Information Point project aimed at providing information and parenting tips and linking up parents with one another and local services.

www.continyou.org.uk gives information on the Share project to involve parents in their children's learning at Foundation Stage and at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Parents have the opportunity to gain accreditation for what they learn as they support their children's learning.

Reviewing examples of effective programmes

National Children's Bureau (www.ncb.org.uk) Highlight no. 211 'Group-based parenting programmes and reducing children's behaviour problems', is free to members.

Francis, J. (2004) 'Strength in Numbers' in *Care and Health Magazine* February 4–February 18 2004, describes a new approach to parenting support within culturally diverse communities.

The Racial Equality Foundation (www.reu.org.uk) has information on the 'Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities' parent programme for use in culturally diverse communities.

www.parenting-forum.org.uk is an umbrella body for those who work in supporting parents.

Strategies for engaging hard-to-reach parents/carers, sustaining parental engagement with school

www.teachernet.gov.uk working with parents, contains a range of illustrative projects about good practice.

Awareness of cultural norms

Al-Hassan, S. and Gardner, R. (2002) *Involving Immigrant Parents of Students with Disabilities in the Educational Process Teaching Exceptional Children* May/June 2002, describes techniques for encouraging the involvement of immigrant parents in the education of their children.

www.standards.dfes.gov.uk parental involvement, contains examples of good practice in working in partnership with minority ethnic families.

National Family and Parenting Institute www.familyandparenting.org/ contains guidance on listening to minority ethnic parents and the Parent Information Point project aimed at providing information and parenting tips and linking up parents with one another and local services.

Parents as first teachers

www.continyou.org.uk gives information on the Share project to involve parents in their children's learning at Foundation Stage, and at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Parents have the opportunity to gain accreditation for what they learn as they support their children's learning.

www.familylinks.org.uk gives information on how emotional literacy can be developed by children and their carers together, including whole-school staff and local communities. The family links programme has been evaluated by: Barlow, J. and Stewart-Brown, S. (2001) 'Understanding parenting programmes: parents views', in *Primary Health Care Research and Development Vol 2* pages 117–130. *The Parenting Puzzle* by Candida Hunt can be obtained from this site. This book is based upon the Family Links Parent Nurturing Programme. It aims to help parents to develop their positive behaviour management skills and the emotional literacy of their children.

For further study

www.incredibleyears.com for Carolyn Webster-Stratton approaches

www.family-action.org.uk previously Newpin services, managed by National Newpin, have been transferred to the Family Welfare Association (FWA), a national charity providing a wide range of support services for some of England's most vulnerable families. It is now called Family Action.

www.familyandparenting.org/ National Family and Parenting Institute, 0207 424 3460

www.parentinguk.org Parenting UK (formerly Parenting Education and Support Forum), 0207 284 8370

www.parentlineplus.org.uk Parentline Plus, 0808 800 2222

www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA102 The National Institute for Clinical Excellence Health Technology Appraisal on parent-training/education programmes for children with conduct disorders

What Works for Children? (www.whatworksforchildren.org.uk) is a collaboration between Barnardo's, University of York and the Child Health Research and Policy Unit, City University, funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/Schoolslearninganddevelopment/SpecialEducationalNeeds/DG_10016184 Information on groups and organisations who can provide support for parents of children with special educational needs (SEN), including parent partnership.

Acknowledgements

Extract from *Promoting cultural competence through teacher assistance teams*, Craig, S. et al, *Teaching Exceptional Children* 32(3) 2000, pp. 6-12 © 2000 by The Council for Exceptional Children. Reprinted with permission.