

'Parents and the home environment they create are the single most important factor in shaping children's well-being, achievements and prospects.'

Alan Johnson – Every Parent Matters DCSF 2007

The Unique Child

- The Key Person links in with the children's home life prior to entry
- The 'All about me' record (or similar) is completed with parents/carers and is regularly revisited so that practitioners can effectively plan to meet the interests and needs of individual children
- Links between the child's home and setting are used to support transition, learning and development e.g. bringing items from home to the setting
- Parents/carers are encouraged to provide information about the child's cultural, linguistic and ethnic background

Positive Relationships

- Information is offered to parents/carers on how they can support their child's learning and development e.g. effective interaction, encourage self care, toilet training strategies
- Parents/carers are aware of the setting's learning, teaching, inclusion and behaviour policies including the importance of outdoor play
- Parents/carers are invited to help their child settle during times of transition
- Parents/carers are invited to attend outings and be involved with activities within the setting
- Parents/carers are signposted to relevant services e.g. Family and Adult Learning opportunities, Family Support, Health Services
- A parents' notice board is kept up to date with relevant information e.g. planning, menus, themes, resources required
- Parents/carers are invited to express their views on the education and care provided e.g. questionnaires, suggestion box, forums
- Fathers are encouraged to be involved in specific events

Enabling Environments

- The environment is welcoming for all parents/carers e.g. appropriate greetings, signs in different languages, graphics, comfortable seating areas
- Parents/carers are invited to provide artefacts linked to the children's activities
- A range of multi-cultural resources are used throughout the setting e.g. traditional costumes in the role play area, dual language books, images of cultural diversity and disability
- Practitioners regularly include parents/carers and encourage them to contribute to their child's learning

Learning and Development

- Parents/carers are invited to stay and help their child settle in and participate in their child's learning
- Activities are focused on the children's family, cultural and linguistic backgrounds
- Practitioners regularly communicate with parents/carers e.g. before/after sessions to exchange information about their child's progress
- Parents/carers are encouraged to regularly contribute to their child's assessments and profiles
- Parents/carers are invited to play an active role in the meeting of their child's additional learning and development needs e.g. being involved in individual learning plan meetings

Leadership and management

- Management support practitioners in taking time to gather information from the parents/carers about their children
- Parents/carers are regularly informed about the EYFS curriculum and any changes to organisation and management
- Annual parent questionnaires/verbal surveys are arranged to find out parents' views and to follow up with any appropriate action
- EYFS policies and procedures are made accessible to parents
- Parents/carers are encouraged to be members of a management committee or work as volunteers within the setting
- A parents/carers network or forum is promoted which may support new parents and help with issues

A few tips...

- Hold an event targeting fathers and male carers e.g. gardening activity, Dad's and Lad's kick around, building Lego towers
- Have an informal event for parents and practitioners to get to know each other
- Invite parents to come and share a story or sing with the children in their first language
- Invite parents to talk to the children about a cultural celebration, significant event, work experience
- Find creative ways to keep parents regularly updated e.g. email, text, website
- Ask parents/carers to contribute to themes and topics or become involved in projects - you may end up with a wealth of resources

Further Information

We have provided shortcuts to these documents on the EYFS page of our Publications section at www.childrenscentres.org.uk

EYFS Resources - Positive Relationships (CD Rom/web), DCSF 2007
www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/eyfs/site/2/index.htm

Parents as Partners: Playing and Learning Together DVD (Ref:00671-2007DVD-EN), DCSF 2007
<http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/113036>

Parents, Early Years and Learning (accredited practitioner training), National Children's Bureau 2007
www.peal.org.uk/training.aspx

Resources to help parents support children's early learning, National Literacy Trust
www.literacytrust.org.uk/talktoyourbaby/resourcesparents.html

Parents (Resource links for parents, including 'Helping your child to learn'), Directgov
www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents/index.htm

For further information visit www.childrenscentres.org.uk
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