

3. Methods of Engagement

Activity

This session plan is for the service. It can be used:

- as part of staff training
- with parents

Please take time to read the session plan, organise resources and if necessary make any changes to the session delivery style tailoring it to the audience you are using it with.

Introduction

The Government publication *Every Parent Matters (2007)* highlights the beneficial impact that good parenting and parental engagement in public services has on children's outcomes. The report also highlights the need for services to “**build effective parental engagement into service planning, commissioning and delivery**” in order to improve outcomes.

Session aims

- To increase understanding about the different ways services can engage parents.
- To develop a wider understanding about what Parental Engagement is.
- To consider different ways that a service can build positive, powerful and sustainable Parental Engagement

Resources:

- 'Methods of Engagement' Activity sheet (1 Activity sheet per pair / small group – cut into separate cards and shuffled in advance)
- 'Methods of Engagement' Fact file (1 per person)
- Video clips that accompany the “Methods of Engagement” Fact file.

Delivering the session

Ask the group members to form pairs or small groups and provide each with a set of the 'methods of engagement' cards. Ask them to match the six methods of engagement with the correct definitions and examples. Ask the group to share their answers and ensure that you correct any mistakes or misunderstandings.

Information round up

To help increase everyone's understanding about the methods of Parental Engagement, provide everyone a copy of the 'Methods of Parental Engagement?' Fact file. You can read this to the group if necessary. If internet connection is available, view the video clips that accompany the Fact file at www.parentandcarerengagement.org.uk

Session end

Come up with a list of all the different ways parents are currently engaged in your service. Take some time to consider this list and record next to each one what the method of engagement is. For example:

Parents read posters/leaflets
(INFORMATION)
Parents attend sessions
(EDUCATION)
Parents fill in evaluation forms
(CONSULTATION)

A parent advisory group informs the
management board (INVOLVEMENT)
Staff and parents write the newsletter
together (PARTNERSHIP)
Parents run a parent support group
(DEVOLVED POWER)

As a group consider if there are any of the methods of engagement that the service do not currently use and what they could do to increase the use of this method.

Photocopy this sheet and cut into 18 individual cards. Shuffle the cards and provide each pair/small group with a pack. Ask them to match the six methods of engagement with the correct definition and examples. (This sheet is in the correct order so will help you to provide the correct answers.)

Method of engagement Information	Definition Communicating with parents about the service	Example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ leaflets ▪ telephone help desk ▪ websites ▪ radio
Method of engagement Education	Definition Providing opportunities for parents to learn how they can promote their child's development	Example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ parenting classes ▪ on-line demonstrations ▪ museum or library visits ▪ role-modelling
Method of engagement Consultation	Definition Asking parents to comment or express views	Example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ questionnaires ▪ suggestions boxes ▪ public meetings ▪ telephone surveys
Method of engagement Involvement	Definition Ensuring parents have an influence on decisions and are part of the decision making process	Example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ planning meetings ▪ interest / specialist groups ▪ advisory boards
Method of engagement Partnership	Definition Working together with parents as equal partners	Example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ parents taking part in staff recruitment ▪ parents and staff training together ▪ parents and staff co-hosting a web site
Method of engagement Devolved power	Definition Handing over power and control to parents	Example <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ parent-run activities ▪ parent-led projects ▪ parent scrutiny panels