

3. Methods of Engagement

There are different ways that a service can engage parents, these are known as ‘methods of engagement’. These methods can range from telling parents about a service to giving parents the responsibility for running part of the service. Each of the different methods brings about **different levels of empowerment for parents.**

Information	Communicating with parents about the service E.g. telling parents what is available and/or planned; providing feedback about the service's effectiveness, consultation results, decisions etc.
Education	Providing opportunities for parents to learn how they can promote their child's development E.g. raising parents' awareness, developing parent's skills and knowledge, supporting and challenging parent's behaviours and/or attitudes.
Consultation	Asking parents to comment or express views E.g. seeking opinions about a document, idea or policy
Involvement	Ensuring parents have an influence on decisions and are part of the decision making process E.g. parents have a role in finding solutions, endorsing and agreeing decisions
Partnership	Working together as equal partners to carry out work or run parts of the service E.g. parents and staff running parts of the service together, involving parents in providing support for other parents.
Devolved power	Handing over power and control to parents E.g. giving a group of parents' sole responsibility for the contents and production of a monthly newsletter.

What parents tell us about Parental Engagement

Parents tell us that **all of the methods of Parental Engagement described above are welcomed by them.** They also tell us that the **key to successful Parental Engagement is personal relationships.**

“We get together as a group and come up with ideas to help improve the service – we have a newsletter for parents which was the parents idea and I produce it”

“They have a box – like a suggestion box you can put any ideas or queries in”

“Volunteering opportunities within a service, sitting in on meetings and interviews for staff....”

“I helped to run a conference for parents and workers to come together”



[See Aiming High Case Study as an example of methods of Parental Engagement](#)