



The Learning Institute

Why work together? Partnership working between parents and carers and schools

Overview

Parents and carers play a crucial role in supporting their children's learning, and research shows that levels of parental and carer engagement are consistently associated with better academic outcomes. This CPD explores the reasons why partnerships between parents and carers and schools are so important, the barriers that can stop it being effective, and some of the strategies and activities that can address these barriers.

Target audience

Any staff working within a multi-disciplinary context

Duration

Approximately 1 hour

The Learning Institute provides opportunities for individuals and communities through high quality education, training and research programmes that challenge personal barriers and promote social inclusion. To find out more, please get in touch.



Introduction

There are many situations where you may be working with parents/carers for the benefit of the children that you support. This CPD will help you understand why parental and carer engagement is so important.

Objectives

- understand why parental and carer engagement is so important.
- explore some of the barriers to successful engagement.
- examine the term 'hard to reach' and whether it is useful.
- explore practical ways for school and parents and carers to work together effectively

Resources

Pen and paper for note taking

Internet access to following:

- How to involve hard-to-reach parents: encouraging meaningful parental involvement with schools [report summary], available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340372/how-to-involve-hard-to-reach-parents-summary.pdf
- *Are parents ever hard to reach?* [blog post], available at <https://blog.optimus-education.com/hard-to-reach>
- *Overcoming Ten Common Barriers to Parental Engagement* [blog post], available at <https://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/blog/parental-engagement/>
- *Involving Parents in Pupils' Learning* [video], available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=3x1wE-JfGXk

Task 1: Why work with parents and carers?

Spend a few moments thinking about this question and noting down your own ideas.

Then, read the quotes below and for **each** of them; highlight **one** key reason for working with parents and carers. How do these compare with your own thoughts?

“Parents are the first and on-going educators of their own children”

National Improvement Hub, 2019

“Successful schools are those where parental engagement is at the centre of the school ethos as opposed to being at the periphery.”

Education Endowment Foundation, 2018

“When parents and schools interact closely together they share information among themselves and this information-sharing helps families to better understand the schools and schools to understand the families.”

Bojuwoye, 2009,p.463, cited in Campbell, 2011

“Parents are an important component within the school system, to which headteachers and teachers must be responsive. Policy-makers expect parents to be active partners who have influence over school decision-making and participate in school activities and governance.”

Addi-Racah & Ainhoren, 2009, p.805, cited in Campbell, 2011

“All forms of positive parental interaction with school are important and can have a positive impact on children’s learning, behaviour and attendance.”

Education Endowment Foundation, 2018

Task 2: What are the barriers to successful partnerships between parents and carers and schools?

Access the summary of the National College for Leadership’s report entitled *How to involve hard-to-reach parents: encouraging meaningful parental involvement with schools* (Campbell, 2011, available at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340372/how-to-involve-hard-to-reach-parents-summary.pdf)

You may have come across the term ‘hard to reach’ parents, which is used throughout this report. Take a few moments to reflect on what this term means to you, and then compare your thoughts with the definition in **Section One** of the report; *What do school leaders mean by hard-to-reach parents?*

Now access the blog post *Are parents ever hard to reach?*, written by Dr Janet Goodall, author of the 2017 book *Narrowing the achievement gap: parental engagement with children’s learning*, available at <https://blog.optimus-education.com/hard-to-reach>. Why does she argue that this term is unhelpful? How far do you agree with her?

Go back to the summary of the report (available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/340372/how-to-involve-hard-to-reach-parents-summary.pdf) and read **Section Two: Barriers to Parental Engagement**)

What barriers to parental engagement are identified here? How far do you agree with them?

Finally, access the blog post *Overcoming Ten Common Barriers to Parental Engagement*, available at <https://www.creativeeducation.co.uk/blog/parental-engagement/>. How many of the barriers suggested here overlap with the report? What different ones does the blog suggest and how far do you agree with them?

Task 3: How can these barriers be addressed?

Access the video *Involving Parents in Pupils' Learning* produced by Young Minds [approx. 8 mins], available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3x1wE-JfGXk>.

Before you watch it, list any strategies or activities you are aware of to support parental and carer engagement. Think about your own setting and, if relevant, your own experiences as a parent or carer.

As you watch the video, add to this list and identify the reasons parents and staff feel these strategies and activities benefit children.

Look back at your work in task two on barriers to successful partnerships between parents and carers and schools. How might these strategies and activities address these? Think particularly about parental self-esteem and previous negative experience of education.

Reread the two blogs from task two, and look at the table in **Section Three** of the National College for Leadership Report, headed *Categories of strategies to improve parental engagement*.

Select **five** strategies or activities from these sources that you believe would most help address the barriers identified in task two.

Task 4: Reflection on learning

Note down your responses to the following questions:

- What knowledge did I already have that has been refreshed by this CPD?
- How has this CPD developed my knowledge and understanding?
- How can I apply what I now know to my practice?

Sources

Campbell, C. (2011) *How to involve hard-to-reach parents: encouraging meaningful parental involvement with schools*. Available at <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/12136/1/download%3Fid=156367&filename=how-to-involve-hard-to-reach-parents-full-report.pdf> (Accessed: 1 July 2020)

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