How can an Early Years setting encourage Parental Participation

Research Report

Judith Betts . June 2009
## Table of Contents

Research Report 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Issues</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis of research data</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1 Literature Search</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

This researcher is the manager of a charity owned pre-school situated in a purpose built setting attached to a primary school. This researcher has a team of ten practitioners working with children from two to five years old during term time, extended to seven years old during breakfast club and holiday club. This researcher has worked in the setting for five years.

METHODOLOGY

The pre-school was inspected by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) in May 2009 which listed the steps to be taken to further improve the early years provision as, “The registered person should: share information with parents about children's learning and offer support for extending learning in the home” (2009:3). This researcher hoped by using this as the basis of her project and the question, “How can the pre-school support parental involvement in children’s learning?” that her knowledge of parental Involvement and supporting learning in the home would improve, finding out how efficient the strategies in place are working and if parents would like more. Clough and Nutbrown (2007) recognize that all researchers need to develop the ability to see their topic in new ways so they can transform their current knowledge. Furthermore this researcher wants to use the results to improve practice in her setting as this researcher agrees with current research that involving parents in their children’s learning is beneficial in children’s development and learning improving both cognitive and social outcomes (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997, Margaret McMillan 2004, Sylva et al 2004). The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (EYFS) states

Close working between early years practitioners and parents is vital for the identification of children’s learning needs and to ensure a quick response to any area of particular difficulty (2008:10).

Additionally, Siraj-Blatchford et al(2002) and Sylva et al (2004) found that it appeared settings which encouraged continuity of the learning between the
setting and home achieved better cognitive and social outcomes. Siraj-Blatchford et al, also states that

*In the home environment the parent is able to start with the child's previous knowledge resulting in an interactive partnership, the child then becomes responsible for the direction of their learning, with the parent being a source of information as required.* (2002:89)

This researcher looked at all methods of collecting information deciding against using interviews because of her relationship with the participants. This researcher wanted the participants to be able to give frank answers without worrying about being judged. Interviews are also time consuming or can be subject to bias, (Bell 2005) Observations are more often used for first hand evidence collection when dealing with the responses of children or adults within a setting or activity (Roberts-Holmes 2005) Feeling that neither of these were appropriate this practitioner decided to use a semi-structured questionnaire using some open ended questions and some needing a yes/no answer, Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2007) say when doing a site specific case study, qualitative, less structured, open ended questionnaires can capture the specificity of a particular situation.

This researcher gave all parents the opportunity to be involved but with no pressure to do so. Consequently ensuring the method was “fit for the purpose” for this research project BERA (2004:11). This researcher looked at using the first five questionnaires that came back with signed consent forms, however because these parents are likely to be already involved in the setting this researcher wanted to include parents who are not quite so fervently involved. This researcher decided by using the first ten questionnaires would include a wider sample.

**ETHICAL ISSUES**

This researcher created an information sheet informing the parents of the purpose of the research, their involvement and how the questionnaire results would be used including who would view the results. Blaxter et al (2001) suggests having a clear agreement with your research subjects, gaining informed consent and agreement about the uses of the data. The information sheet advised participants of their right to withdraw at any time, that their answers would be kept confidential and their anonymity maintained throughout
the research (British Educational Research Association BERA 2004). Sapsford and Abbott (1996) state that confidentiality is a promise not to identify or present information in an identifiable way. To have your personal details splashed across a research project in an identifiable form is very intrusive.

This researcher agrees with the interpretivist belief of research (Roberts-Holmes 2005) wanting the “true voice” of the participants (Hughes 2001). However being aware that holding the position of manager in the pre-school could cloud the answers given by the participants, this researcher assured anonymity however explained that finding their questionnaires, should they wish to rescind their involvement would be difficult as the consent forms would be kept separate to the questionnaires. According to Roberts-Holmes (2005) it is the principles and values which a researcher holds that inform the whole research project. Participants were also asked to sign a consent form, all parents were given these forms along with the questionnaire sheets so they could make an informed judgement about taking part in the research away from the setting without feeling coerced (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2007). The information sheet also explained how the information collected would be shared with the parents and be used to inform practice BERA (2004:10). Furthermore Lancaster and Broadbent (2003) say it is ethically important to feedback the results of the research to the participants

This researcher gained permission to undertake the research through both the setting gatekeeper (Who allowed this research to be based in this researchers setting) and the college gatekeeper who checked to make sure this research was ethically acceptable (Roberts-Holmes, 2005), Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2007:123) Gatekeepers may wish to avoid, contain, spread or control risk and therefore may bar access or make access conditional. This researcher realizes that looking at the first ten questionnaires which came back, itself may be bias as these are likely to be parents who to a certain extent are already involved with the setting. Cohen, Mannion and Morrison (2007) say a small convenience sample results in negligible generalizability but validity can be increased with the minimizing of bias. Being aware of bias helps to recognize the signs and help to avoid this. However this researcher felt the information gained would be valuable for improving this researchers knowledge and the setting’s practice, by looking at these results current strategies would be improved and additional strategies devised for all parents to be implemented September 2010.
ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA

This researcher began to analyse the data when ten questionnaires that included signed consent forms came back to the setting. This researcher asked a total of fourteen questions which participants answered. The open ended questions allowed the participants to shed light on how involved they are in their child’s learning (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2007).

When asked how pre-school shared information? Only three of the ten participants were aware of the website, with one mentioning Learning Journey’s and no one suggesting daily diaries, however most participants used these. Four participants said information was shared orally or face to face. Eight out of ten mentioned Newsletters.

All ten participants were consistent in knowing who their Key Person or buddy was with nine finding them easy to talk to, however five participants felt that they would like to know more about what their children were doing day to day. Five participants went on to say that they only know what their children are doing through the day because their children tell them. This would seem to indicate that the setting is not passing on the right information to the parents. This could indicate the need for many strategies in order to relay the information to everyone (Whalley 2007).

Only four participants knew what their children’s Learning Journey was, five participants have looked at their child’s Learning Journey. One participant indicated this but had stated not really knowing what it was in the previous question. This seems to indicate that Key People are not managing to have meaningful conversations with parents in which they could pass on this information, showing the need to work on this relationship (Lindon and Lindon 1997). The majority of the participants had a good knowledge of learning in the home, the participants were from varied backgrounds which seems to agree with EPPE (2004) finding that it is what parent’s do with their children rather than who they are makes the real difference.

None of the participants have been involved in their children’s learning in the setting. Five participants stated time/commitments as a reason for not being involved in the setting. Zellman (1998) concluded that although parental involvement contributes to positive child outcomes this seems to come from parent’s enthusiasm and positive parenting styles. Six participants would like more time to talk to their Key People. This would be a way of starting to
encourage more involvement by persuading the participants into the setting at times when their children are attending. This would be a way that they could see for themselves what their children are doing. Additionally creating an opportunity to talk about what the participants are doing with their children away from the setting. Six participants said they tell the pre-school about what their children have been doing away from pre-school, with three of these stating only sometimes. Four of the participants have used open evenings and key person meetings with nine using daily diaries. Only four participants have used their child’s Learning Journey however all ten participants would like to take their children’s Learning Journey home. Parents already have the opportunity to do this although this information does not seem to have been passed on to most participants. This may show that some of the strategies are working well with others less. All participants are interested in the suggestions at the end of the questionnaire. This indicated that the participants are happy for other strategies to be implemented (Whalley 2007).

CONCLUSION

The pre-school where this researcher works, runs an open door policy where parents are able to come in at any time without an appointment. Looking at the questionnaire results participants are not really aware of this. One of the reasons participants gave for not being involved was not being asked. This would concur with what Hoover-Dempsy and Sandler (1997) say about the third construct of parental involvement and giving parents invitations, demands and opportunities to be involved. These invitations could be in the newsletters and on the website as an ongoing opportunity to be involved in the setting. This research showed that participants would be interested in all the suggestions made to extend parental involvement and support for learning in the home indicating that Whalley (2007) and the Pen Green team are right to see any involvement as positive however small. Department for Schools and Families looked at engaging parents stating;

\[ \text{Parental engagement is a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools. Where parents and teachers work together to improve learning, the gains in achievement are significant.} \]

(2007:25)

Even though all the participants knew who their Key Person or buddy was and that they found them easy to talk to, five participants did not feel they knew enough about their child at the setting. Lindon and Lindon suggests
Parental partnership should be seen as any other partnership and needs encouragement to make it work. Practitioners should reflect on how they talk to parents. Do they talk to all parents or just the ones they feel easy talking to? Do they approach parents all the time or only when there is a problem? (1997:24)

Analyzing the results this researcher has questions for the practitioners in the setting, are we talking to the parents about the right things? (Lindon and Lindon 1997.) The questionnaire findings indicated that information is not being passed on to the participants this can be easy to rectified by using Key People to disseminate the information. It may be advantageous for the Key People to have some training around how to talk to parents and what information they should be passing on.

This small scale research project takes into account the views of ten parents who attend this researcher’s setting and cannot be seen as a generalized view of all parents of young children (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2007). All of these participants have the same goal in wanting the best care and education for their children. Most of the participants were aware of the importance of learning in the home though some are unaware that the setting can support them with this. The Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework (2008) talks about parents and families being central to a child’s well-being and practitioners should share information and offer support for extending learning in the home. This research has shown that most of the participants involved in this project are aware that reading with the child, teaching songs and nursery rhymes, painting and drawing, playing with letters and numbers, visiting the library, teaching the alphabet and numbers, taking children on visits and creating regular opportunities for them to play with their friends at home all constitute examples of being involved in their children’s learning. The participants indicated their interest in having a children’s book lending opportunity with some wanting to know more about learning in the home. Department for Schools and Families states:

Parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people through supporting their learning in the home rather than supporting activities in the school. It is their support of learning within the home environment that makes the maximum difference to achievement. (2007:6)

Although only ten participants were used for this research all parents were given a questionnaire. This researcher is going to use the information from all the questionnaires when looking at changing strategies within the setting. This
will help to improve the provision for all the parents involved with this researchers setting. Finch (1985) states researchers have a duty of trust placed on them to use data appropriately, not least for the improvement of the condition of the participants.

Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years REPEY(2002) and The Effective Provision of Preschool Education EPPE(2004) both looked at home learning and support for parents. EPPE(2004) results indicated that programmes which directly promote activities for parents and children to engage in together are likely to be most beneficial for young children. EPPE (2004) also found that where parents involved in activities with children promoted both social and intellectual development in all the children involved. The participants answers show some of the strategies already in place are working with limited results, most participants have used the daily diaries with half attending open evenings and all participants have show interest in the new ideas suggested, Some of these were indicated by Hobart and Frankel (2003) as ways of encouraging parental involvement. This seems to agree with Whalley (2007) and the Pen Green Team who do not distinguish between types of involvement as they see any involvement as positive however small. The biggest issue is the children’s Learning Journey’s; this has been an issue since the setting changed the name to aline them with current terminology, most of the participants would like more access to these and some still do not know what they are. The Key People do not seem to be communicating to the parents about these. Indicating that the partnership between parents and key people needs extra encouragement Lindon and Lindon (1997)

This researcher would like to look at this area in other ways perhaps by finding out what other practitioners think about supporting parental involvement in children’s learning. This researcher would like to know if practitioners believe they are giving parents the information and opportunities to be involved in children’s learning. Alternatively a small number of parents could be invited to interviews in order to gain a more in depth opinion. This would have to be random as the questionnaires are anonymous. The greatest challenge is to give all parents the confidence and opportunity to become involved (Pugh and De’ath 1989). Doing this project has helped this researcher see that gaining information in this way can help to improve the practice in place additionally.
the information gained will be incorporated into the settings self evaluation form to help show how the findings will inform practice.
REFERENCES


Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997)-Why do parents become involved in their children’s education? Accessed 13/04/10 (web link)


OFSTED Inspection Report for Fulford Preschool (2009) Available from 
http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_reports/display/(id)/245629. >Accessed 13/04/10 (web 
link)
Pugh, G. and De'Ath, E. (1989) Working Towards Partnership in the Early Years, 
London, National Children's Bureau, London.


Data Collection and Analysis. London: Sage

Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) Norwich: DfES Publications

Publications

Publications LTD
Appendix 1 Literature search

Literature Search
Parental Involvement

27 November 2009 • Judith Betts
Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Search</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Literature Search

How can the setting encourage Parental Participation

This practitioner works in a charity run preschool situated in a purpose built setting. This practitioner is the Manager with a team of ten practitioners. The preschool takes children from two to five years during term time; the age group is extended to seven years during breakfast club and holiday club.

Looking at the setting and where the practice may be improved this practitioner decided to look at parental participation and how to encourage this. The idea that parental involvement in children’s learning is not a new one. Margaret McMillan (2004) was among the first to say parental involvement was important although this was predominantly the mother she did recognise the role of the father. Bruner (1980) and Hobart and Frankel (2003) noted that parents needed to be encouraged to feel that they can have a large and expert hand in raising their children. However previously in 1931 the Hadow report was insistent that a practitioner involvement in children’s education was essential and parent’s lacked the knowledge around health and hygiene to manage without help (Fitzgerald 2004). This meant that the ideal at the time was good parents supported the roles of the practitioners. The Plowden report 1967 was the first time the government acknowledged the role of the parent’s in a positive way. The report recommended schools work with parents. One of the ways was contact with children’s homes to keep parents informed about their child and school. See appendix 1. Cunningham and Davis (1985) suggest Midwinter’s (1973) common principles to guide improvement between school and home, looking at it like a public relations exercise. See appendix 2. Only the last of these principles involves parents directly stating involving patents in parent associations, common events and home activities in relation to learning (1985:145).

Scott (1990) suggested that parental involvement was a political catch phrase of the 1980s used by all sides but underpinned by a particular view of the family however by their conceptualisation of the family and not reality, families did not react in the way expected. McCarthy and Kirkpatrick (2005) suggest that models for enhanced parental participation can fail because of constructual constraints which lead to over representation of some groups and under representation of others. This may be what Scott meant when criticizing the political education policies of the 1980s.
The 1985 white paper Better Schools emphasised the importance of home/school link, looking at how parents can support children with their school work. The Education Reform Act 1988, the Children’s Act 1989 and the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001 placed a legal responsibility for all professionals looking after children to work in partnership with parents. During the 1990s Parental Involvement was recognised as a main factor in school improvement and effectiveness Reay (2005). From September 2001 all OFSTED registered childcare settings had to adhere to standard 12 which stated that the registered person and all staff have to work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of all children. This has now been replaced with the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework which states

> Close working between early years practitioners and parents is vital for the identification of children’s learning needs and to ensure a quick response to any area of particular difficulty. Parents and families are central to a child’s well-being and practitioners should support this important relationship by sharing information and offering support for extending learning in the home. (2008:10)

Zellman (1998) concluded that although parental involvement contributes to positive child outcomes this seems to come from parent’s enthusiasm and positive parenting styles, parent involvement schemes could be more effective if they focus on these underlying constructs. In practice there are many reasons parents are less involved. E.G Work commitments, confidence and knowledge are some mentioned in research.

Pugh and De’ath describe five categories of partnership to help practitioners to evaluate their partnership. See appendix 3. This practitioner agrees that not all parents and carers have the time or confidence to be involved in the setting but thinks there is more scope for them to be involved in their children’s learning at home. Are parents aware that reading with the child, teaching songs and nursery rhymes, painting and drawing, playing with letters and numbers, visiting the library, teaching the alphabet and numbers, taking children on visits and creating regular opportunities for them to play with their friends at home all constitute examples of being involved in their children’s learning. This practitioner has strategies in place to encourage parental involvement E.G Daily diaries, Learning Journey’s, Open door policy and flexibility with meetings. This practitioner wants to discuss with parents if these strategies work for them and find out what parents would like in place if they do not.

Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years REPEY (2002) and The Effective Provision of Preschool Education EPPE(2004) both looked at home learning and support for parents. EPPE results indicated that programmes which directly promote activities for
parents and children to engage in together are likely to be most beneficial for young children (2004:25). The research also found that where parents actively involved in activities with children promoted both social and intellectual development in all the children involved. REPEY (2002) found that it appeared settings which encouraged continuity of the learning between the setting and home achieved better cognitive and social outcomes. REPAY also states that in the home environment the parent is able to start with the child’s previous knowledge resulting in an interactive partnership, the child then becomes responsible for the direction of their learning, with the parent being a source of information as required. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) research showed that parental involvement has a positive effect on children’s achievement across social classes and all ethnic groups. The parental involvement this report looked at was from good parenting to participation in school full list see appendix 4.

There have been many research projects that looked into whether parents being involved in children’s learning at home is beneficial, some of the shorter research projects claim that social class and maternal qualifications can make a difference to the level of achievements gained from parental involvement in their child’s learning as these groups are less likely to become involved. Izzo et al (1999), DCSF(2007). This is in contrast to the longer EPPE project which stated that the learning environment was more important for intellectual and social development than parental occupation or social standing, what parent’s do with their children rather than who they are made the real difference. Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (2008) shows that levels of parental involvement vary among parents, for example, mothers, parents of young children, Black/Black British parents, parents of children with a statement of Special Educational Needs are all more likely to be very involved in their child’s education.

There are many views of parental partnership / involvement Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) called it a catch all term to describe various activities some of which revolve around the home. Cunningham and Davis (1985) state that parents being involved in activities such as fundraising, helping in classrooms and parent / professional associations as not really participating but reacting to the needs of the professionals. This practitioner agrees with this to a degree but understands the need for this relationship because of the settings charity status and being owned by a parent committee. Lindon,J. Lindon,L (1997) suggests that parental partnership should be seen as any other partnership and needs encouragement to make it work. Practitioners should reflect on how they talk to parents. Do they talk to all parents or just the ones they feel easy talking
to? Do they approach parents all the time or only when there is a problem? Good settings should take parents opinions into account when able and make changes where possible. Hobart. Frankel (2003) suggest many ways for involving parents see appendix 5. They also suggest ideas for a welcoming atmosphere, Appendix 6. These suggestions could be looked into to see what can be implemented to improve parental involvement however not all suggestions may be possible in this practitioners setting. Hoover-Dempsy and Sandler (1997) looked at why parents become involved looking at three major constructs. First what parents believe about what they should do in their children’s education, Second their sense of success in helping their children to succeed and Third invitations, demands and opportunities given to them from schools or care providers. This seems to indicate that there should be several opportunities for involving parents.

Whalley (2007) and the Pen Green Team do not distinguish between types of involvement as they see any involvement as positive however small. This is a valuable bit of incite. This practitioner feels there are more ways that parents can be involved in their children’s learning that does not necessarily mean they have to spend time in the setting. The Pen Green team has some parents each year that have not been involved however hard they tried. There were some very family specific reasons for this. This practitioner aims to give families every opportunity and the flexibility to be involved. What works for one family may not work for another each family needs equal opportunity for involvement. Practitioners may need more training on involving parents and how to see each family as individual. Department for Schools and Families (2007) looked at engaging parents stating;

> Parental engagement is a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools. Where parents and teachers work together to improve learning, the gains in achievement are significant.

This research looked closely at parental engagement rather than what they called involvement saying that Parental involvement can encompasses a whole large range of activities in and around school many of which are not connected to learning and have little impact on pupil achievement. This shows the inconsistency of the terminology around parental participation and involvement. Terms seemed to be interchangeable through the search carried out.
CONCLUSION

This practitioner has decided to narrow the research question from How can the setting encourage Parental Participation to How can the setting encourage parent's involvement in their children’s learning?

Although there is dispute about how accurate the research findings into the benefits of parental involvement in children’s learning, everyone agrees that when parents are involved children have higher academic attainment. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) states across a range of studies there has emerged a strong conclusion that parental involvement in child and adolescent education generally benefits children’s learning.

There are many reasons why parents are less involved in the setting, from work commitments to lack of confidence. This practitioner needs to look at how the current parent involvement strategies are working and what other strategies can be introduced thinking about each family individually rather than as a whole. Are parents aware of what they do for their children away from the setting may be involvement in their children’s learning? This practitioner feels the parents need to be consulted to find out what they want from the setting. This practitioner strives to improve the two way communication between the setting and parents and feels that addressing this issue would be a valuable way of accomplishing this.

The findings of REPEY Siraj-Blatchford et al(2002) Showed learning activities at home are more closely linked with cognitive attainment in the early years. Settings which encouraged continuity between themselves and home consistently achieved better cognitive outcomes. This appears to be associated with what parents do with their children away from the setting or what children initiate with their parents.
REFERENCES


Department for Children’s Schools and Families (DCSF) (2008)-The accessed 11/11/09


Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) - The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support And Family Education On Pupil Achievement And Adjustment accessed 19/11/09 (web link)


Nelson Thornes LTD


[http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst;jsessionid=LQJMdcpkkVHBqNQDb6Z2TyrYm5s3BPCzvhPj7z5W3wCh1YsqsiH!1447894544!-368539431?docId=97807523](http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst;jsessionid=LQJMdcpkkVHBqNQDb6Z2TyrYm5s3BPCzvhPj7z5W3wCh1YsqsiH!1447894544!-368539431?docId=97807523) accessed 10/11/09
Appendix 1

Plowden report

Recommendations

130. (i) All schools should have a programme for contact with children's homes to include:

(a) A regular system for the head and class teacher to meet parents before the child enters.
(b) Arrangements for more formal private talks, preferably twice a year.
(c) Open days to be held at times chosen to enable parents to attend.
(d) Parents to be given booklets prepared by the schools to inform them in their choice of children's schools and as to how they are being educated.
(e) Written reports on children to be made at least once a year; the child's work should be seen by parents.
(f) Special efforts to make contact with parents who do not visit the schools.
(ii) The Department of Education and Science should issue a booklet containing examples of good practices in parent-teacher relations. The Department should inform themselves of the steps taken by authorities to encourage schools to foster good relations.

\[1967:48\]

Appendix 2

Common Principles to guide improvement of home school liaison. Midwinter (1973) argued that this should be seen as a public relations exercise and suggested four phases:

• PUBLICATION: the purpose of this is to present parents with information on philosophy and aims. Activities and how the school functions generally.

• EXPOSITION: Opening up the school to public view through easier access and the use of educative and social functions, such as exhibitions, plays and gymnastics, art and craft displays.

• SITE IMPROVEMENTS: Ensuring that the school looks attractive and provides space for parental activities.

• INVOLVEMENT: Involving parents directly in the education process by having parent associations, communal events and home activities in relation to learning.

\[1985:45\]

Appendix 3

Pugh and De’ath describe five categories of partnership to help professionals working with children under 5 evaluate their partnership these are:
• Non-Participation: Active non-participation-Parents cannot be involved because of work commitments and passive non-participation, where parents would want to be involved but lack confidence.

• Support: parents support the setting by fundraising, attending events and promoting the good name of the establishment. They reinforce learning at home.

• Participation: parents volunteer to help on outings or on a regular basis in the establishment.

• Partnership: parents share in the running of the establishment with common aims respecting each others roles, responsibility, skills, knowledge, decision making and accountability is shared.

• Control: Parents have the final say and are accountable for the management of the centre.

(1989:47)

Appendix 4

Desforges and Abouchaar Parental involvement takes many forms including;

• Good parenting in the home,

• Including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion,

• Good models of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship;

• Contact with schools to share information;

• Participation in school events;

• Participation in the work of the school;

• Participation in school governance.

(2003: iv)
Appendix 5
Ways of involving parents Hobart and Frankel

• Ways of involving parents:
  • Helping with outings
  • School activities
  • Toy library
  • Uniform shop
  • Parent/Teacher social events
  • Workshop to make/repair toys and equipment
  • Day to day information chat
  • Notice boards
  • Newsletters
  • Concerts
  • Open Days
  • Exhibitions of work
  • Parents room
  • School assembly
  • Coffee mornings
  • Reading with children

(2003:67)
Appendix 6

Hobart and Frankel The welcoming atmosphere

- Welcoming signs in many Languages
- Posters and images reflecting our diverse society
- Photographs of staff including their names and roles
- A notice board that parents may use to communicate with each other
- Chairs for parents to use while waiting to collect their children or settling their children in.
- A space where parents can talk to staff in private
- Time to talk with parents informally before and after each session
- Respect shown to all parents.

(2003:69)

Appendix 7

Engaging Parents in Raising Achievement Do Parents Know They Matter?

1. Executive summary

- Parental engagement is a powerful lever for raising achievement in schools. Where parents and teachers work together to improve learning, the gains in achievement are significant.
- Parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people through supporting their learning in the home rather than supporting activities in the school. It is their support of learning within the home environment that makes the maximum difference to achievement.
- Many schools involve parents in school-based or school related activities. This constitutes parental involvement rather than parental engagement. Parental involvement can encompass a whole range of activities with or within the school. Where these activities are not directly connected to learning they have little impact on pupil achievement.
• Parental engagement is heavily linked to socioeconomic status, as well as parental experience of education. Parents of certain ethnic and social groups are less likely to engage with the school. Schools that offer bespoke forms of support to these parents (i.e. literacy classes, parenting skill support) are more likely to engage them in their children’s learning.

• Parental engagement is positively influenced by the child’s level of attainment: the higher the level of attainment, the more parents get involved.

• Parental engagement is viewed as a ‘good thing’ by teachers, parents and students although interpretations of the term vary. Parents view parental engagement as offering support to students while teachers tend to view it as a means to improved behavior.

• Students view parental engagement as being primarily about moral support and interest in their progress.

• Schools that successfully engage parents in learning, consistently reinforce the fact that ‘parents matter.’ They develop a two-way relationship with parents based on mutual trust, respect and a commitment to improving learning outcomes. Parents who are viewed as ‘hard to reach’ often see the school as a ‘hard to reach.’ Where schools have made concerted efforts to engage the ‘hard to reach’ parents’ evidence shows that the effect on pupil learning and behavior is positive. The research shows a consistent relationship between increasing parental engagement (particularly of hard to reach parents) and improved attendance, behavior and student achievement.

• Schools face certain barriers in engaging parents. These include practical issues such as lack of time, language barriers, child care issues and practical skills such as literacy issues and the ability to understand and negotiate the school system.

• The ERPA project has been an important catalyst for innovation and change in schools. It has encouraged schools to prioritise parental engagement and has provided them with the impetus to trial innovative approaches to working with parents.

• Schools in the EPRA project are now more aware of the importance of sustaining parental engagement and they recognise that linking parental engagement to learning is the key to securing improved pupil achievement.

• In EPRA schools located in more challenging areas, the engagement of parents was a central influence upon positive learning and behavioral outcomes.

• The EPRA network of schools is a powerful platform for enhancing and extending the work on parental engagement and raising achievement.

(2007:6)