



Schools and Parents in Partnership..... challenges and opportunities

Wednesday 06 June
Royal College of Pathologists, London



SCHOOL – PARENT PARTNERSHIPS?

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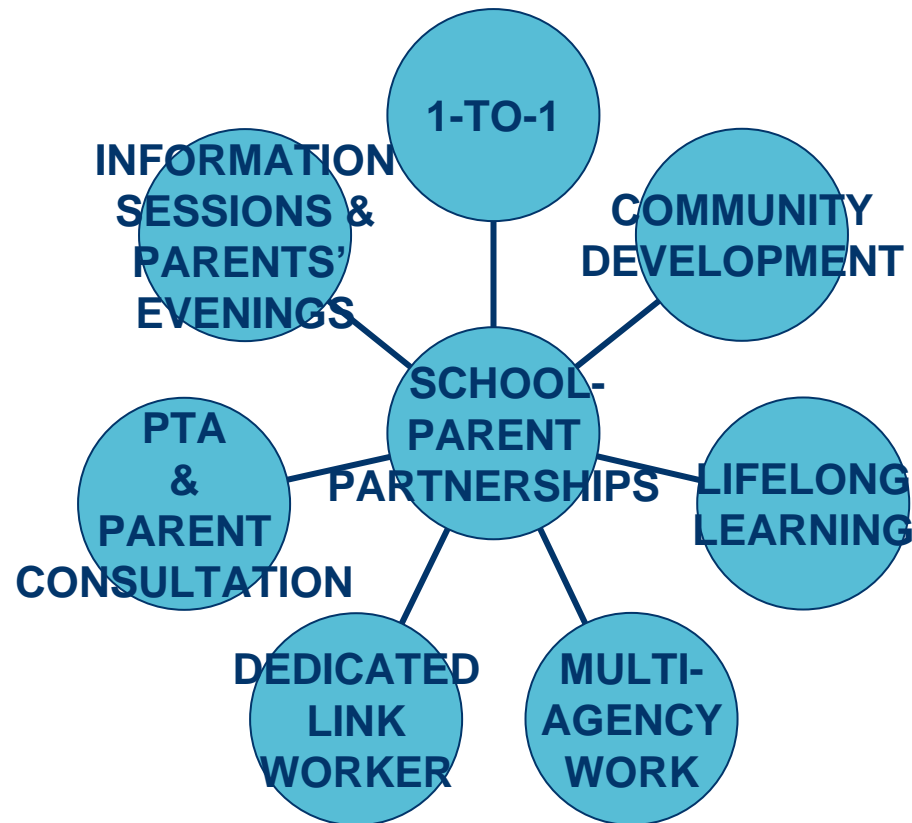
SCHOOL-PARENT PARTNERSHIPS?

- to explore established and innovative ways of schools working with parents and families
 - to explore the commonalities and differences in the perspectives of parents, children and school staff
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- Five schools
 - Three secondary & two primary
 - Three urban & two rural
 - Four with a mix of ethnic origin
 - One with 90% minority ethnic population
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- Two schools planning to build stronger links with parents
 - Three with established links with parents and planning to build on existing strengths
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- Total of 123 interviews
 - 54 parents in five discussion groups
 - 57 children and young people in five discussion groups
 - 12 staff through individual interviews
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PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

- Communication & consultation
 - Meeting other parents
 - Transition, especially into secondary school
 - Parents' associations don't reach the majority of parents
 - Parents, carers and grandparents can contribute to the school community
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Quotes from parents

“Once parents come through the door and see it’s a laid-back atmosphere within the school, then you’re half-way there.” (mother, primary school)

“I’ll sit there for about ten minutes while they tell me about school and their friends and what’s happened. It’s fun sometimes, but sometimes it goes on and on and on.” (father, primary school)

“I’ve got four children.....we want more of a working relationship than a partnership really.” (mother, secondary school)

CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE

- Parents provide support and help when it's needed
 - Parents interested in school
 - Busy parents keep in touch by mobile phone
 - Parents need more updating on school systems
 - Children would like more 'cheering on' from parents
 - Children would like to swap places with parents for the day
 - Parents can be embarrassing
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Quotes from children & young people



“I think school is the only place if you want to reach your dreams, you can start from going to school, learn about it and then you got to try harder and you can get what you want.”
(secondary school student)

“You could have a day when you swap places with your parents and they have to do all the work and everything.”

“...they could tell us all the answers.”

“...they’d see what other children do and how much strain it is.”

(primary school children)

STAFF PERSPECTIVE

- > Further development to support parents
 - > School & community culture and priorities
 - > Wide variation in knowledge of parent support and parenting programmes
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“When I established the dad’s group here...a good friend of mine and a headteacher, he said to me, “What’s this, you’ve got a dad’s group?” I said, “That’s absolutely right...he said, “Why do you want to bother with a dad’s group? Haven’t you got enough trouble with the mothers?”

Headteacher, primary school



“ There are some parents whose children are, they really are facing exclusionsand so you’ve got to try and get that message across that actually this is a problem.....I’m trying to get support for you but then where do I go with it because there’s very few groups that are able to do that and one of the ideas that I had was somehow trying to get the parents to support each other for parents.....but I don’t think we’ve got the culture for that yet, I don’t think we’ve got the forum for doing it.”

Deputy head teacher, secondary school



“ Well I would say if another school’s thinking about starting something like this, then to go for it. Cos initially you haven’t got the ideas there, once you start meeting, the ideas just come and one thing leads to another. And then like three years down the line you’ve got you know, you’ve got your little team to carry on doing stuff that the teachers need doing, but haven’t always got time to do. And it’s nice to feel that the parents can be asked to do things.....You just need someone with enough confidence to say, “Well come on, do it.”

Parents’ group volunteer co-ordinator, primary school
