

Newsletter 9 – November 2007 Starting School Project

Half-term is here and for most of us it is a welcomed break, a good time to recharge your batteries and prepare for the busy time leading up to Christmas.

Before we start I would like to share some positive feed back with you that we received after our last newsletter, from one of the trainers at 4Children:

Janet and team,

Thank you for this.

It has been a pleasure and very stimulating to be able to make a contribution in delivering training for the Starting School project and I look forward to the second round.

Sandra Shears, Consultant

If you still haven't confirmed your places at one of the training events in November, please do so by contacting keating@familyandparenting.org Further, if you need any guidance or have any queries regarding the submission of your action plan, please don't hesitate to contact us on johansson@familyandparenting.org

Reflecting on and Drawing Inspiration from a School Session

Dear all

Just a quick note about our 1st TIS session in our schools.

Blackburn the Redeemer school - 6.00pm onwards last night.

We used the school hall as we had received over 30 replies for attendance, in fact 38 parents attended, including 12 dads.

As the parents came in the school hall they sat down to some music & watched the whiteboard screen showing a presentation with lots of images of their children in their classrooms having a great time. It was a real ice breaker & put the parents at ease.

The school had chosen the theme of the session to be healthy eating, with the emphasis on teaching their children to use a knife & fork properly.

We gave a brief outline to the session, discussed a few 'ground rules' & then did some 'pair' work to start off with. This was a really useful exercise. The parents were asked to write down on post its (anonymously) any fears, thoughts etc they had about their child starting school. We then collected them in & stuck them into subject groups on the wall. The Foundation stage leader then went through the subjects & answered many of the worries / concerns, the main ones being, not

making friends, not knowing where the toilets are, getting too tired, not sure what to put in their lunch boxes etc.

Gill then talked through the fact sheet that we had tweaked and gave some suggestions on helping their children. The session ended with a Q & A, giving out of factsheets to the parents followed by refreshments & informal networking & completion of the evaluation sheets.

Every completed evaluation sheet was very positive. The parents all liked the opportunity to find out what everyone's fears / concerns were, they enjoyed the pace of the session, the timing was good & the opportunity to talk afterwards. All in all a very successful evening.

The only down side was the crèche facilities. The invite we sent out to parents did not specifically ask for the age of the children requiring the crèche & by the time we had all the relevant data, it was too short notice to arrange enough crèche workers. Gladly though we managed with the children going into their classroom with one of their teachers & enjoying themselves in their familiar environment. Erica did a sterling job entertaining a toddler whilst his mum took part in the session!

I am looking forward to the upcoming sessions in other schools & hope they go as smoothly as this one

Thanks to everybody who made this work so well.

Jayne Graham – Education Development Officer/Blackburn with Darwen City Council

Getting Involved – Parents DVD ref; 0725-2004GDVD – is now available to order free of charge for all secondary schools and middle deemed secondary schools

Please call for your copy!

Prolog telephone number **0845 60 222 60**

For a taster click link below!

<http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/webchatsinterviewsvideos/gettinginvolvedshortfilm/>

Sustainability

By inviting school staff to the 2 day training event local authorities are ensuring that the sessions will be embedded in the schools and this will provide continuity and the schools will continue to develop and integrate this area of work, as part of the extended schools core offer.

Web Forum – Have your say!

Please use the web to reflect your opinions, ideas and experiences of the Starting School Project, these will be collated as background information at this year Lessons Learnt Event in the end of November!

What were the obstacles that had to be overcome to offer Starting School Information sessions to parents in schools?

What were the challenges and how did you meet those challenges?

What were the outcomes from running the information sessions for parents?

What are the opportunities created by offering the information sessions for parents?

What are the benefits to school/parents/working practice?

What good practices have been put in place?

What would be your key messages to your colleagues?

Which lessons have been learnt?

<http://www.familyandparenting.org/forum>

If you experience any problem when registering please don't hesitate to call Sanna on 0207 428 7757

Please have a look at the 'updated Action Plan Template' in order help you submitting yours, **before the 11th January!!**

[Template Action Plan](#)

NAPP – National Academy for Parenting Practitioners

<http://www.parentingacademy.org>

Good parenting is the heart of children's wellbeing and development. The Academy works to transform the quality and size of the parenting work force across England so that parents can access the help they need to raise their children well.

Why the Academy has been set up

Increasingly, parenting practitioners are seen as part of an emerging 'parenting profession', and are expected to meet high standards of training and quality.

Despite this, there is still a great variation in the quantity and in the quality of support available to parents. Services differ from one area to another and between different practitioners

In 2006, the Government announced its [plan](#) to establish a National Academy for Parenting Practitioners. The move was part of its Respect agenda, which aims to improve outcomes for young people and to reduce anti-social behaviour. It wanted the Academy to be a national centre for excellence in parenting, and for it to be responsible for driving up the standard of parenting services.

Three leading organisations in parenting research, training and policy were selected to establish the Academy on a consortium basis: the [Family and Parenting Institute](#), [Parenting UK](#) and [King's College, London](#).

The Academy will be launched in October 2007.

We recognise that many parenting practitioners already have valuable skills, based on their training and experience from related sectors. We want to build on these skills, to share best practice and ensure that all practitioners are appropriately trained to work with parents.

Our initial priorities are to gain a better picture of approaches that currently exist across England, to meet immediate training needs, and to bring together current knowledge of what works best.

We will then develop our training programme to meet the sector's needs and reflect the latest research findings, instilling a culture of continual learning and development in the parenting profession.

Last but not least I would like to introduce and welcome my new colleague Sarie, who is taking over from Marie to work on the training programme!

Thank you and kind regards,
Sarie and Sanna

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