



## SUPPORTING PARENTS SINCE COVID - A CHILDMINDERS PERSPECTIVE

### INTRODUCTION

Effective parenting is key to healthy child development. Within the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) parental engagement refers to settings which involve parents supporting their child's learning and having a positive effect on learning (or education). The seventh key feature of effective practice within the Development Matters guidelines is partnership with parents, it encourages us, as child carers, to maintain a strong respectful partnership with parents, giving them clear information on their child's progress which in turn can have a significant impact on the child's learning.



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### INTENT


Parents keen to be involved in their child's learning often look to family or friends for help and support. Since covid I have found many first-time parents are struggling with basic concepts, such as nighttime routines, toileting, promoting independence and behaviour. As early year professionals, we are in a unique position to **offer support to these parents**, to help guide them and answer any questions or concerns they might have, in a caring constructive manner.

### IMPLEMENTATION

I hold a good rapport with all my parents and always ensure to have a quick catch up at drop off and collection to fill them in on their child's day, thus maintaining a healthy two-way relationship. It is also useful as we chat about where the child is at in terms of developmental milestones and current interests. Within my setting I also use a **two-way diary for each child**, this tells the parent what we have been doing each day and can be useful to flag up any concerns myself or the parent might have.

I observed child P in the woods one day not long after he started at the setting. He was nervous to go on any of the equipment and grunted at me to help, reaching out his arms to be picked up. Once home I used his **diary to flag this up** and later that week spoke to his mum. She told me he had become quite clingy at home and she was unsure how to proceed. I spoke to her about standing back and allowing him to have a go himself, I also found a useful article on independent play and not being too involved all the time, to allow independence to flourish.





In another example, child B's mum spoke to me as her child was awake in the night, coming down to watch television, having milk and cuddles. I set up a meeting and spoke to her and dad at length.

**Together we came up with a solution**, by having a structured bedtime routine, and consistent parenting between them, which in turn led to a better night's sleep for all involved.

Where necessary I also do **home visits**. On one occasion, I visited a child from my setting at his home, as he was exhibiting unusual behaviors. The aim of this visit was to have an **in-depth chat** with the parents as well as to have a chance to **observe the child in the family surroundings**. This helped ascertain whether the behavior was consistent between home and setting.

## IMPACT

Building a **two-way relationship between parents and the setting** will benefit not only the setting, but the parents and the child too. It is this **teamwork** that can bring about results and put an end to certain issues that can get blown out of proportion.

I have noticed that Child P who was over reliant on his mum is **now more confident and generally happier**. Not only is he more confident with his climbing skills but it has impacted other areas too. He is now able to go and play alone in the setting as well as at home and his mum has reported that it has made a huge difference to family life. She also mentioned that she will transfer the skills she has developed to her second child.

Child B's parents appreciated the work I put in and although she still wakes sometimes at night her **parents are now more confident**, working together to settle their child.

## SUMMARY

In summary, the better the partnership between the parents and the secondary caregiver, the more **efficient the child's learning outcomes** will be. By offering support and guidance to the parents, it allows them to feel better equipped with the skills needed to manage their child's behavior. By taking the time to **build the parents' confidence**, regarding parenting, it can reduce stress in the family home and have a significant impact on the child's future success.

*'Parental engagement in early years education is consistently associated with children's subsequent academic success'*

*EEF.*