



## How to... Help parents participate

# How to help parents participate

Parents have a huge decision to make when entrusting their children into the hands of a childcare provider. Most will need reassurance that they have made the right decision in their choice of setting - not just during the child's first weeks, but throughout their time at the setting.

As early years practitioners, you strive to build and maintain strong and positive relationships with parents, which flourish if both parties value and support each other's input in helping to nurture the child's learning and development.

**We give our top tips on how to build, strengthen and maintain your relationship with parents:**

## Ask parents to participate in decisions

Whenever possible, invite parents to have a say in decisions which affect not only their child, but the setting as a whole. What charity should we support this year? What trips could we carry out this term? How best could we spend a grant received to improve the resources at the setting? All these questions could be put to parents via a simple survey which staff can do face-to-face. Take on board their input and (most importantly) feedback on the decision you've reached. Surveys are a great way of engaging parents on a one-to-one basis and ensuring they 'have a say'.



## Ensure language is no barrier

If you can't speak a parent's native language and their grasp of English is weak, seek the services of someone in the community who can act as a translator when you have meetings together. Although language can be a difficult barrier to overcome, it will mean the world to parents that you're doing whatever you can to connect with them in this way.

## Communication is key!

Keep parents up-to-date as much as possible with what's going on in your setting and what exciting events are coming up. If you produce a newsletter, you could suggest conversation topics so parents can ask their children about what they're learning.

## Learn their names



It sounds obvious, but find out how parents like to be addressed (Mrs. Smith, Catherine, Cathy) and take the time to learn how to pronounce their names correctly. There are few things more insulting than repeatedly calling someone by the wrong name, even if it's done accidentally! You could ask parents to complete a short questionnaire when they enrol their child to find this out – you can even make it light-hearted!

## Try not to make assumptions

Be careful not to make assumptions about parents' lifestyles. For example, don't assume a mother is, or isn't, married or even that she's married to a man! Refer back to the questionnaire that they filled in when they enrolled their child and you can also ask open-ended questions to get the information you need to confirm what you do (or don't) know. This will save having to have an embarrassing conversation later on and potentially getting off on the wrong foot!

## Invite parents to share their skills, culture or traditions

Ask parents to get involved and fill out a 'skills survey' at the beginning of the year to find out what knowledge and interests they have. With this information, you're armed with a wealth of resources



which could tie in nicely with the themes you're exploring at your setting. Many parents would be thrilled to be asked into the setting to speak with the children about something they're specifically learning about!

## Thank them for their involvement



Even if you only produce a short newsletter, it's really important to thank parents for all the ways they're currently helping your setting and how this is impacting on the lives of the children. You could also suggest new ways they can get involved and support their child's learning at home, for example: when you're reading a bedtime story, ask your child to make predictions about what will happen next. This will help strengthen your child's reading comprehension.

## Don't ruin your relationship with parents over fee collection

If you struggle to recover nursery fees and want to avoid breaking the good relationships that you've worked hard to build and maintain with parents, talk to the Parenta team about Fee Planner - our fee collection service. You can transform the way your setting works by keeping your administration completely separate from the everyday care of children. As a result, you can focus on providing great childcare, without the worry hanging over you of whether parents will pay you on time this month!



If you would like to find out more about how the team at Parenta works in partnership with thousands of settings, helping them to show parents to feel more closely connected with their child, talk to us about 'Dayshare' online daily diary software. Dayshare captures all of the day's activities and allows you to give parents a detailed insight into their child's day. It can be a great talking point for parents, as at the end of each day, the child's daily diary can be shared with parents and other family members.

Call us on 0800 002 9242 or email [contact@parenta.com](mailto:contact@parenta.com)

# PARENTA SOLUTIONS



## SOFTWARE

### NURSERY MANAGEMENT - ABACUS

- Save hours by reducing planning time by 50%
- Speedy invoicing to all parents and carers in minutes
- Instant view of all financial reports
- Manage payments and track debt

### ONLINE EYFS TRACKER - FOOTSTEPS 2

- Record meaningful, detailed and essential EYFS observations
- Improve essential safeguarding and save hours of time
- Reduce your workload and spend more time with the children
- Identify at a glance each child's development pathway

### DAYSHARE

- Share every magical moment of each child's day with their parents and carers with our online diary software

### PARENT PORTAL APP

- Bringing parents and carers closer to their child's day by providing a timeline of their progress
- Download Parent Portal App on Android or iOS



## FEE COLLECTION

- We collect fees, allowing you to focus on childcare, not credit control
- Reduces stress about pay day
- Helps you eliminate bad debt from your setting
- We operate on a 98% success rate across the board



## TRAINING

Increase employee motivation and keep staff for longer within your setting by offering training – the ideal tool for you to develop your team.

Parenta courses include:

- Level 2 Childcare
- Level 3 EYE Diploma
- Level 5 Childcare Leadership Qualification
- Business Admin Levels 2 and 3
- Advanced Qualifications in Team Leading and Management

*PLUS ...* Parenta offers a free recruitment service - no fees!



## WEBSITES

- Our childcare websites generate genuine interest and leads from parents and carers
- Social media accounts – including Facebook and Twitter – help your setting's visibility
- Full website support service enables you to focus on what matters

Working together for our children

 0800 002 9242  [contact@parenta.com](mailto:contact@parenta.com)

Follow us on social media @TheParentaGroup    

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Updated: 16/01/19