



Running sessions for parents and carers

Read the tips below to help you run successful sessions for parents and carers.

- Greet everyone as they arrive in a friendly and personal way and make adults and children feel important.
- Have a chat to see if anyone looks “lost”.
- Discuss, celebrate and build on what they are already doing at home.
- Explain and demonstrate what you would like them to do and ask them to have a go. Most people learn best by having a go themselves.
- Encourage parents to initiate ideas by asking questions like “Do you think she’d like...?” or “Would it be a good idea to...?”.
- Support families in interacting with their children in everyday activities so that mums, dads and carers are confident in supporting their children’s developing communication and literacy skills.
- Ask those who do attend sessions what they want from the sessions and how they might be improved.
- Talk to proactive parents to get them engaged and then get them to recruit others.
- Contact your local family learning coordinator for advice and support.
- Promote your local children’s centres to parents as a key resource where they can access a range of support including parenting classes, speech and language therapy and story times.

Potential problems

- Be aware that it may take many sessions before less confident parents start to feel confident.
- Think about where the sessions will take place – is the environment comfortable, non-threatening and private?
- Make certain the activities are appropriate or the children will be restless.
- If you want to focus on reading strategies for the children with mum and dad, it may be useful to have some separate activities to occupy the children for some of the time.

For more ideas, case studies and resources which might be helpful visit the [early years page](#).

