



Engaging and involving working parents

Many parents of early years children work, often full time. Engaging and involving these parents can be difficult. As practitioners you may only see working parents for a few minutes at the beginning and the end of the day before they rush to work or rush home.

The top tips below will help you to start getting your working parents on board.

- Personal contact is the best way to build a relationship with parents. Try to have a conversation each time a parent comes to your setting, however brief. These chats can become invaluable for information sharing.
- Write notes for parents about their child's day, for example, which activities he or she took part in and how the activities could be followed up at home.
- Start an achievement diary to which the setting staff and parents contribute when the child has achieved something either at home or in the setting.
- If this is too time consuming, write a newsletter which could be given out to *all* parents and includes ideas for activities that families could do outside of the setting.
- Take an interest in parents' jobs and use it to your advantage! You could invite parents into the setting, in uniform if appropriate, to talk to the children about what they do.
- Hold storytelling sessions outside of office hours, for example, after work or at weekends. Model story-sharing or the use of story sacks to help parents become more confident.
- If you provide breakfast for children, why not parents too? On special occasions like St. Patrick's Day and Halloween you could invite parents into your setting to share a coffee and some conversation with you and with their child.
- Set up a mini library in your setting for parents to borrow books to share with their child at home. It could be in the foyer or somewhere else that is easily accessible. You could also set up a library of other useful props such as toys or story sacks. Once the parents are inside the setting choosing a book with their child it might provide you with more of an opportunity to talk to them and build up a relationship.

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

