
ENGAGING WITH BLACK AND MINORITY ETHNIC FAMILIES

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*What do we mean by engaging families
in services?’*

What do you understand by engagement?

Consultation:

Consultation is listening to parents, taking their views.

Consult – to ask advice from (someone); to have regard for a person’s feelings, interests , but here

“ People seeking the views will have the ultimate power”.

Participation:

Participate- to take part, be or become actively involved, or share (in)

“ Process that involves building capacity and empowering of those involved “.

Engagement / Involvement:

Overall term for parents to be included in the decision making process, at any level.

‘What do we mean by sustained engagement?’

- ***Building relationships***
 - ***Knowledge shared both ways***
 - ***Ongoing and respectful dialogue***
 - ***Support of staff to maintain their connection with a given community over time.***
 - ***True partnership – parents’ part of the decision making process***
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METHODS FOR PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

In service planning:

- **Parent forums**
- **Parent representatives on working groups**
- **Parents as community facilitators**
- **Peer research**

In service delivery:

- **Involvement in governance- steering group members, involved in selecting manager and key staff**
 - **Working for the service - volunteering, parent liaison work**
 - **Evaluators**
 - **Parent Champions**
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PARENT CHAMPIONS

- ❑ **The Parent Champion project supports parents to be advocates in their communities to inform parents about childcare services and encourage them to take-up formal childcare.**
 - ❑ **Peer led approach.**
 - ❑ **Access hard to reach parents in the heart of the community.**
 - ❑ **Being part of the community enables them to overcome barriers such as lack of trust in services.**
 - ❑ **Role model- share positive experiences allay fears and concerns and encourage take-up; empower other parents.**
 - ❑ **Increase general awareness about local services; provide information in format and language relevant to the community.**
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THE PARENT CHAMPIONS PROJECT

- **Pilot project was funded by DCSF and managed by Daycare Trust.**
 - **During the 6 month trial 12 parents became Parent champions**
 - **Based on their work 1809 parents found out more about childcare and 75 began using childcare.**
 - **Daycare Trust ran the project with delivery organizations in three London boroughs.**
 - **Currently running a project in Manchester**
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WHO ARE THE PARENT CHAMPIONS

- **The Parent Champions come from diverse BME backgrounds.**
 - **Some were studying and some were full time mothers.**
 - **Recruited through community networks and organizations**
 - **Recruited because of they were friendly, approachable , aware of childcare issues and had good knowledge of their community**
 - **Induction and training**
 - **Regular monitoring and support**
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“ I feel so happy that I can help mums in my community. There are so many things and activities that they can do, but they just don't know about it.”

“In the beginning I wasn't sure and was a bit nervous. Now I feel so much better. I feel I have done something good and useful. I really feel happy and bit more confident now.”

Parents' experiences of childcare

- Formal childcare – new concept
 - ***“In our Somali culture the family looks after the children. We don’t want outside people to take of our children.”***
 - Lack of knowledge and understanding of services
 - ***“I wish I knew about the FIS and the help I could have got with the crèche last year. I couldn’t do my course because I didn’t know what to do with my 1 year old baby. “***
 - Perception that childcare is for working parents
 - Many BME mothers not considering any kind of employment
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DIFFICULTIES FACED BY PARENT CHAMPIONS

- **Suspicion; lack of trust**
 - **Perception - bad experience of council services put some parents off FIS**
 - **Resist the idea of childcare**
 - **Cultural issues- husband's not keen for the women to go out**
 - **Close knit community- bad news spreads quickly**
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OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT:

Community and Parent Champions

- Contacted and spoke to over 300 BME 'hard to reach' families.
- Families from a range of diverse backgrounds were contacted by the Parent Champions
- Referred about 180 families to FIS
- Accessed childcare services and other services like school places for children.

“I feel happy now. The families trust me. When they see me they hug me and thank me for helping them out. I feel I have achieved something.”

Bangladeshi women as community facilitators

- **Project designed to empower Bangladeshi women to undertake consultation and advocacy for their community.**
 - **Partnership project with Local Authority and community organisation.**
 - **Accredited training provided to group of Bangladeshi women.**
 - **Training- basic research methods, interviewing/group discussion skills, ethical issues, consultation methods, how local authorities work (structures and mechanisms), process of service planning and delivery, role of consultation.**
 - **Women worked closely with two council departments to get first hand experience.**
 - **Organised consultation meeting for various council departments.**
 - **Community resource.**
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Points for Reflection

- Do all practitioners know their community and the families within them well?
 - Do all practitioners know which sectors or social groups of the community they are not working with effectively?
 - What systems are in place to monitor the level and quality of engagement with families from different family contexts and life experiences?
 - Do practitioners involve parents in analyzing what works and what does not work in terms of engaging families?
 - Do practitioners find ways of talking to parents who are not engaged in services to understand
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