

COLLEGES NURSERY AND FAMILY CENTRE
PARENTS AND STAFF WORKING TOGETHER
“Parents are children’s first and most enduring educators”
Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage 2000

Children’s earliest learning takes place in their homes and communities. We, as practitioners, are building on a natural process of education, which is already established. In any setting, children will come from a variety of backgrounds and will have a range of experiences.

When parents and practitioners work together successfully in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child’s development and learning.

Research has shown that children are happier and achieve more effectively, when parents and staff work together, sharing views on how to support and extend children’s learning and when parents are deeply involved and interested in their children’s achievements. Parents therefore play a critical role in their child’s education.

“A successful partnership needs a two-way flow of information, knowledge and expertise”
Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance 2000

Some of the current structures to share information are:

- information from parents/carers about their child at an initial consultation meeting
- daily contact and dialogue
- individual special books, set up by parents and staff as the child starts nursery
- progress records, available for parents to contribute to and to enable them to follow their child’s achievements at nursery

Nursery staff not only enjoy sharing with parents, what their child has been doing at nursery and hearing about what they do at home but this information is crucial in forming a more complete picture of the child’s interests and progress.

We start the partnership process by:

- making home visits to get to know the family better
- inviting parents to a new parents evening to share information about our centre
- encouraging parents and their child(ren) to visit regularly before they start at nursery
- ensuring sensitive, flexible and well-thought-out settling in procedures to support the child in making a secure start at the centre
- setting up an initial meeting for each parent to tell us about their child so that staff have a sound foundation on which to base future plans for the child’s continuing care and education

These kinds of procedures allow child and parents to build confidence as they begin to become familiar with the building and routines as well as getting to know each other better.

Other key features of a successful two-way partnership throughout a child’s time at Colleges are:

- the development of shared responsibility, regular information, understanding, mutual respect and dialogue, which allow continuity of learning between home and nursery
- the valuing of all parents through opportunities to collaborate and share their expertise
- the vital part played by parents in their child’s past, present and future education is recognised and explicitly encouraged
- the knowledge and expertise of parents and other family members are used to support learning opportunities in the setting
- practitioners use a variety of ways to keep parents fully informed about the curriculum, such as brochures, displays and videos as well as informal discussion
- relevant learning activities and play activities, such as sharing books, games and storybags, are continued at home. Experiences such as visits, trips and celebrations at home can be used to develop learning in the nursery

We welcome ideas and suggestions for new and more effective ways to improve the partnership between families and the Centre.

Reviewed April 2007