

What can Childcare Providers do?

The likelihood of sustained parental involvement and support will increase when parents are informed, enjoy their involvement, have choices, do things that interest them, and feel successful & competent in their efforts.

Providers can:

Acknowledge that all parents are different and may want to become involved (or not!) in different ways

Compile a Parents' Handbook that would be translated into the first language of parents in the service.

Provide a parents notice board on general issues and a newsletter sharing diaries/portfolios of children's work & daily events

Develop a childcare policy which recognises parents as the primary educators of their children

Display staff photos and job titles

Ensure a sensitive "settling-in" process for both children and parents

Maintain an open door policy

Make staff available at drop-in and collection times to chat with parents

Share positive feedback on children's play and behaviour



Dublin City Childcare Focus Group

The group was formed in 2001. Under the auspices of Dublin City Community Forum, it is comprised of Community Childcare Providers, Private Childcare Providers and Parents accessing both Community and Private Childcare services. The aim of the Focus Group is to encourage two-way communication between childcare providers and parents and Dublin City Childcare Committee. The Focus Group meet once a month in the Civic Offices

Terms of Reference

To promote quality in regard to childcare issues

To promote parental participation through the development of parents' networks

To ensure active links and representation on the Dublin City Community Forum

To link with the Dublin City Childcare Committee regarding key policy issues.

To liaise with local childcare resource centres.



Dublin City Childcare Focus Group

Civic Offices, Block 4, Floor 1

Wood Quay

Dublin 8

Tel (01) 2223259 Fax (01) 2222162

e-mail: community.forum@dublincity.ie

Website: www.dublin.ie//childcarefocusgroup

The information in this leaflet, which was compiled by Geraldine French (Childcare Consultant) reflects the views of participants who contributed to a workshop hosted by the Dublin City Childcare Focus Group on the topic.



Dublin City
**Childcare
Focus
Group**

Parental Participation in Childcare Practical Ideas for Parents & Providers

What is Parental Involvement?

Why is it important?

What can parents do to get involved?

What can providers do to involve parents?

What is Parental Involvement ?

The involvement of parents, guardians and carers is regarded as an integral part of good practice in early childhood services. This involves establishing a good relationship between the parents and the service providers, based on a shared sense of purpose and mutual respect.

Just as all parents are different, parental involvement can take many forms. One parent may offer to help on outings, another may choose to stay in regular telephone contact, while a third may volunteer to sit on the management committee. It is important that providers accept the level of involvement that each parent is comfortable with.

Parental Involvement in childcare provision can be an effective way of building support for the staff and the service. The more parents know about a service, the more positive the working relationship will be.

It is important to remember the positive impact that a good relationship between provider and parent will have on the child.

Some principles around Parental Involvement include:

Acknowledgement that different views about the roles of parents and providers may need to be explored and discussed

Respect for children and their parents as individuals

Respect for the different ways that parents have of loving and caring for their children

The Benefits of Parental Involvement

- Greater sharing of information between parents and workers
- Parents spending more time in the childcare setting
- Family values and beliefs being understood and taken account of by the provider
- Parents improving their knowledge of parenting and child development generally
- Parents being valued for bringing their knowledge and skills to the childcare setting
- Parents feeling more confident about negotiating their children's later education
- Greater harmony between the home and the service which minimises confusion for the children



- The involvement of parents improves children's performance and motivation and increases parental confidence and aspirations.
- A recognition that parents and staff bring different skills to caring and educating young children.
- Through involvement everybody will learn to respect and value each other, to listen and be open to new ways of co-operating.

What can parents do to get involved?

Assist in painting and decorating work in the childcare facility

Consider joining a parents committee if they are available

Donate and recycle materials for art and craft projects

Fundraise by assisting and offering ideas

Help with outings or picnics

Make time to chat with the staff regularly, remembering to celebrate or comment on positive aspects of the service and care, as well as challenging issues

Make / Record stories on tape

Share particular knowledge of different cultures e.g. customs, food

Share stories and photos from home with providers so that they can relate to the child as part of a family and community

Share a talent e.g. cooking, music

Take time to read policies and contribute to the parents' notice-boards

Try to attend whatever celebrations/parties are organised throughout the year

Volunteer for a specific activity or just spend a morning joining in the fun!