



Feedback from Small Group Work PEAL Accreditation Awards Event - 26th September 2008

This is a rough write-up of Paul Cutler's (a PEAL trainer and Assessor) handwritten notes during the group discussions.

What has changes? What do you do differently now?

Talking to parents every afternoon - making a point to do this. Using the discussions to give and receive feedback, the parents told us more once we had established regular contact, broke the barrier with parents.

Giving handwritten reports makes things personal, less cut and paste, and the parents responded better to them.

Developed a British Sign Language toolkit to use with children and parents - created Velcro picture cards with the relevant sign - involved all parents and children in the project - sent picture cards home - parents began producing own cards about aspects of their lives - enabled the setting to welcome new children with special needs.

Tea parties with children and their parents - children help cook a tea and make a personal invitation to the parents to join them at the setting - built in to an afternoon session.

Adding a parents pages in the records of achievement - included pictures, activity sheets, photos and stories of taking the centre mascot home. Centre observed a real improvement in quality of relationships with their parents. Parents start to see staff 'as human too'.

Providing guidance and support for activities parents can do with their children at home - keep it simple, build on strengths and empower.

Created a regular newsletter to send home to parents.

Established a rhyme time - parents formally invited to attend - emphasised the importance of rhymes with very young children - many parents did not know rhymes - don't assume that parents know how to singing songs and rhymes - provided materials to help parents - supported Traveller community to get involved using verbal traditions - used the session to model writing observations together with the parents.

Produced laminated guidance cards on different games parents can play with their children at home - provided a space on the cards for parent feedback and new ideas - also provided briefings to parents on some of the

latest trends and interest e.g who Stephanie and Lazy Town are and how this fits with encouraging exercise.

Meet and greet staff on the front doors of the centre.

Child minders developing the confidence to broach more subjects including home learning - sharing experiences and building trust.

Finishing tuning PEAL activities to use in my setting.

Using Dad's names on parent's rota and on invites increase participation of men by over 20% in my setting.

Changed our parent's prospectus to address parents issues better and emphasise home learning.

Our setting saw a 50% increase in relationships and parental contact after PEAL.

More tuned in to how we signpost and collecting better resources for parents on a range of other services.

Using email and texts now to contact parents as well as more traditional methods.

We have put all our children's information in one place now to help parents access it more easily.

Child minders adopted parent diaries - we ask "what do you need to know to be involved in your child's learning" - we use the diaries once a week as this is most realistic and achievable.

Reviewed all our existing work with parents in our setting.

Worked with parents to clarify each others expectations of each other - parents and professionals being clear about roles and what they bring to a partnership - we have made material clearer, increased communication with parents, kept things simple and recognised that our role is to support parents and not cause them 'more stress' which was one concern voiced by parents about how we had worked with them in the past.

Key Learning for People on the Process of PEAL and Accreditation

Need face to face contact with other learners and with mentors - support groups and get-togethers would be helpful.

One group of child minders got frustrated with lack of contact from assessor - most dropped out - group needed more support, encouragement and nurturing to be confident in their abilities to learn and grow.

Lots of reliance on technology - email and computers - and some of us don't feel confident in this area or do not have access to the resources.

Collating all our material and notes difficult and time consuming.

Distractions during the process from our setting and other life issues.

Past NVQ experience built expectations of this process that turned out to be quite different and not as structured.

Difficult to decide which info is relevant when putting together for reflective diary and case study.

Good to get frequent feedback during the process from mentor.

Very useful to have the PEAL booklet during the work.

Reading new PDF files not easy online or on the computer - paper is better.

Materials were clear and good - but important to explain the assessment journey more clearly at the start.

My progress was delayed by slow responses of mentor / assessor.

Appreciated quick feedback - within 24 hours.

One assessor burdened students with their own issues and problems - not helpful.

Forgot to use all the great resources on the PEAL website and forum.

Paul Cutler
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