

Working with families through the Extended Services Agenda



'Connect 5': The Inter-relationships between Young People, Families, Education, Careers and their World: Aimhigher Lancashire 3rd National Conference, 2007

This information sheet presents key messages from a workshop that brought together practitioners involved with Lancashire's Family Learning and Extended Services Agenda (ESA). Both link closely to Every Child Matters whose five outcomes are

1. Be healthy
2. Be safe
3. Enjoy and achieve
4. Make a positive contribution
5. Achieve economic well-being.

To attain these outcomes it is hoped that all schools will offer access to core extended services by 2010. With a third of secondary and half of primary schools by 2008. The *core extended services* include:

1. All year Quality childcare, from 8am-6pm to be provided on site or through local providers.
2. A varied menu of activities.
3. Parenting support
4. Swift and easy referral to specialised support services
5. Community use

Workshop facilitators:

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Workshop Context:


The Extended Services Agenda has many advantages for families. They can help parents/carers bring about a positive transformation of schools, by placing them at the heart of children's learning. This will lead to greater access to high quality, stimulating environments and coordinated services. Moreover, the extended services agenda is primarily focussed towards children at primary level, as statistics show:

- 4.1 million Children live in poverty
- 2 million children go without at least two things they need such as 3 meals a day, toys or adequate clothing
- 2/3 of head of households in social housing are unemployed
- 16% of all children live in households where no one works
- 40,000 girls under 18 become pregnant each year


- Infants born to fathers in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations have infant mortality rates over 70% higher than those in professional or managerial positions
- Around 10% of children between 5 and 15 years of age experience some form of mental disorder

This workshop gave participants an opportunity to hear about what the ESA had to offer, how they could get involved and it also gave them the freedom to suggest possible alternative approaches towards attaining parents/carers to get involved. Furthermore, it provided them with the opportunity to discuss amongst themselves their own experiences and difficulties whilst attracting parents/carers to certain activities/workshops and brainstorming collectively solutions for these problems.


TOP TIPS & KEY ISSUE


 **Think creatively about how to make use of different funding streams** – think about ways in which HE and FE can contribute to current government agenda. For instance, think about how funding for skills for life (basic skills) can be used to work with parents who have both basic skill needs and a desire to support their son or daughter in making an informed choice about higher education.

- ✓ A financial numeracy session focusing on grants and loans for HE
- ✓ A literacy session on using indexes using prospectuses and alphabetical order using subjects studied at university, or graduate careers

 **Work collaboratively with schools** to achieve both the extended services commitment to work with parents / guardians and the Aimhigher goal of raising aspirations and awareness of parents / guardians. Consider how Aimhigher activities or materials can be embedded within parent supporting activities delivered within extended services.

- ✓ information sessions for parents at key transition points especially transition to secondary school
- ✓ parenting programmes run with the support of other children's services and family learning sessions
- ✓ family learning sessions to allow children to learn with their parents. Parental involvement is one of the most important factors in a child's educational achievement. Moreover, an added bonus to family learning is that engagement in family learning could also lead adults into further learning.
- ✓ School website of information about local and national sources of information, advice and support.

 **Learning from the extended services approach** – one of the strengths, at least in theory is that extended schools agenda emphasises flexibility when reaching out to its target audience and the community as a whole. For example, joint partnerships between the schools and other venues within the community that may be willing to open their halls in helping their local schools / children / parents/carers (i.e. Local Churches, Mosques, Community Centres).

 working with primary aged pupils through activities. Aimhigher collaboration between different groups of staff e.g. Aimhigher practitioners and institutional experts can be very effective.

It is important to constantly revise your work and decipher whether it has been effective in reaching your objectives.

Focus upon HE and FE as a long term vision and investment


Recognise and work with different definitions of 'progression'

Aim to bring the Aimhigher agenda to primary needs

Try and have representatives from the community and governing bodies


 Aimhigher Lancashire Families Website The Every Child Matters - Change for Children


 <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/aims/>

 To recognise the role of parents in achieving the ECM agenda, see Every Parent Matters.

 <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/parents/>

FURTHER READING:

 Information Sheet 3 - Working with Parents to improve access into HE for disabled students

 Briefing Sheet 3- Engaging parents within a school setting to address parental concerns on accessing HE

 Aimhigher Lancashire Families Website

Aimhigher Lancashire Families website includes a selection of Briefing Sheets, conference Information Sheets, Staff Development Activities that allow staff to explore in more detail ways of engaging families through school and the community voluntary sector

 <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/reap/families/index.htm>


Prepared on behalf of Aimhigher Lancashire



For other Information Sheets

This is one of 5 Information Sheets prepared following the 'Connect 5' Aimhigher Lancashire National Families Conference. For further details see:

<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/reap/families/Conference07.htm>

For further information about working with families, or copies of other resources, contact:

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<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/projects/reap/families/Conference07.htm>