

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS*

Anne Bishop

For the purpose of this presentation the term 'parents' has been used to refer to parents and carers, including grandparents, siblings and other family members who may take on this role.



Aims of the session

- Understanding the benefits of strong parent/ carer partnership.
- Gaps between current practice and evidence
- Understand how trust will foster parent and carer partnership.
- Know the skills and techniques needed to create safety and collaboration within difficult conversations.
- Implementation of recommendations



Research

Research shows that involving parents and carers in their children's learning is the most important factor in enabling some children to do well regardless of background.

Currently, fewer than 10% of teachers have undertaken Continuing Professional Development (CPD) specifically on parental engagement. Schools should provide specific training and support for staff on how to engage with families effectively

(Working in partnership with parents and carers, DfE 2011)



Parent views

85% of parents want to play an active role in their child's education

Parent kind- Parent voice report survey

For parents in mainstream schools, the extent to which the school understands their child's SEN is the single most important factor driving their overall view of the support provided

SEND Futures report, Sept 2024



SEND Voices



Our lived experience: an animated series



<https://rbwm.afcinfo.org.uk/pages/local-offer/information-and-advice/involving-families-and-young-people/our-lived-experience-an-animated-series>

comparing approaches

Family Involvement

vs.

Family Engagement

A school striving for family involvement leads with its mouth



Identifies projects, needs, and goals, then tells parents how they can contribute

Goal is to serve clients



A school striving for family engagement leads with its ears

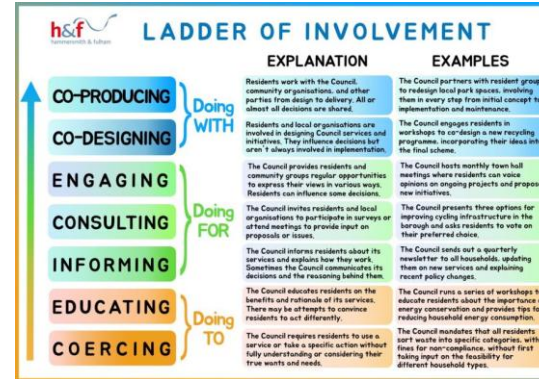


Listens to parents and what they think, dream, and worry about

Goal is to gain partners



achieving for children



Parental engagement

What do we mean?

Learn more and start engaging at kidsburgh.org/topic/parents-as-allies



source: Ferlazzo, L., & Hammond, L.A. (2009). Building parent engagement in schools. ABC-CLO.

Barriers

Time

Communication

Parents own experiences

Parents being unsure of what they have to offer

Media perception

Lived experience of parents of children with SEND



Welcome To Holland
by Emily Perl Kingsley
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I am often asked to describe the experience of raising a child with a disability - to try to help people who have not shared that unique experience to understand it, to imagine how it would feel. It's like this.....

When you're going to have a baby, it's like planning a fabulous vacation trip - to Italy. You buy a bunch of guide books and make your wonderful plans. The Coliseum. The Michelangelo David. The gondolas in Venice. You may learn some handy phrases in Italian. It's all very exciting.

After months of eager anticipation, the day finally arrives. You pack your bags and off you go. Several hours later, the plane lands. The flight attendant comes in and says, "Welcome to Holland."

"Holland?!?" you say. "What do you mean Holland?? I signed up for Italy! I'm supposed to be in Italy. All my life I've dreamed of going to Italy."

But there's been a change in the flight plan. They've landed in Holland and there you must stay.

The important thing is that they haven't taken you to a horrible, disgusting, filthy place, full of pestilence, famine and disease. It's just a different place.

So you must go out and buy new guide books. And you must learn a whole new language. And you will meet a whole new group of people you would never have met.

It's just a different place. It's slower-paced than Italy, less flashy than Italy. But after you've been there for a while and you catch your breath, you look around.... and you begin to notice that Holland has windmills....and Holland has tulips. Holland even has Rembrandts.

But everyone you know is busy coming and going from Italy... and they're all bragging about what a wonderful time they had there. And for the rest of your life, you will say "Yes, that's where I was supposed to go. That's what I had planned."

And the pain of that will never, ever, ever, ever go away... because the loss of that dream is a very very significant loss.

But... if you spend your life mourning the fact that you didn't get to Italy, you may never be free to enjoy the very special, the very lovely things ... about Holland.



Engaging parents

A parental engagement strategy should be integrated into a whole-school approach to parental engagement.

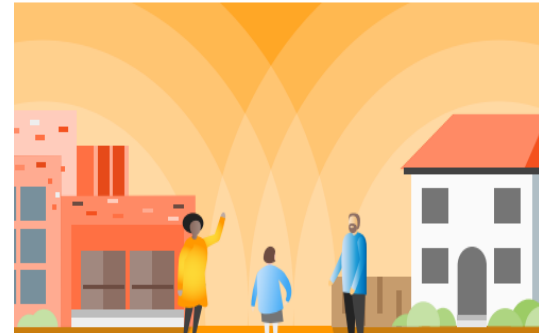
(DfE, 2011)

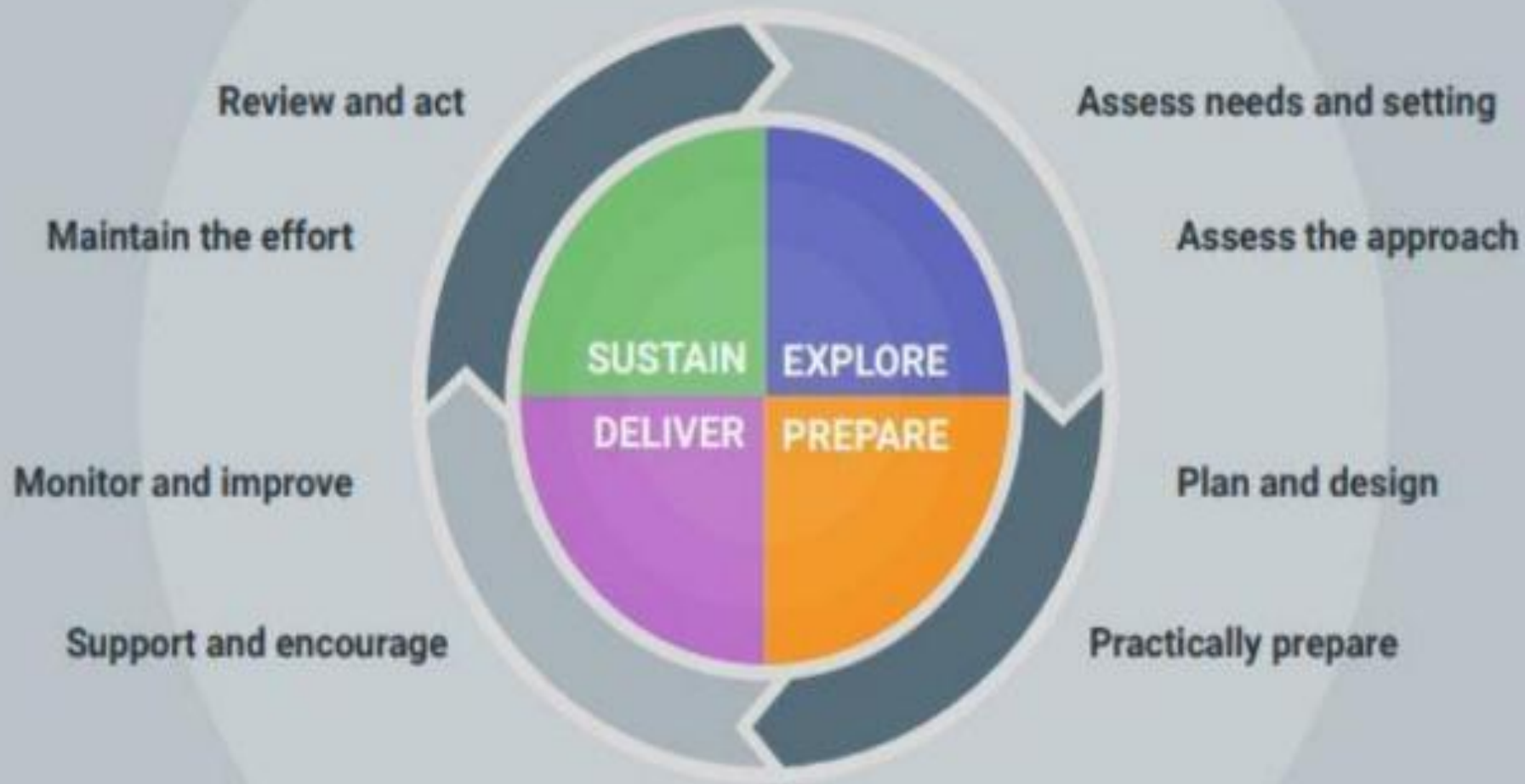


Recommendations

- Critically review how you work with parents
- Provide practical strategies to support learning at home
- Tailor school communications to encourage positive dialogue about learning
- Offer more sustained and intensive support where needed

WORKING WITH PARENTS TO
SUPPORT CHILDREN'S LEARNING
Guidance Report







Explore: Critically reviewing aims and current approaches

- Talk to parents who are less involved about what support they would find helpful.
- Audit communication methods
- Do current methods focus on building parents' efficacy? They are equal partners and can make a difference.
- Do the staff and parents have a shared priority to deliver the best outcomes for their children?
- Stop activities which don't have clear benefits



Audit: Current communication methods

	Individual information	Class/ Year group info	School wide	Community	Other
Method					
Frequency					
Other					

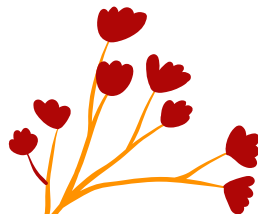
Reflect upon your school's existing approach to parental engagement:

What is working well, and what is not?

How do you know?

Do you know what support parents/carers need the most?

What are the opportunities and the barriers?





Prepare: Establish effective home-school links

- Learning at home
- Home-school communication
- Parent/Carer workshops and activities
- In-school activities such as school plays
- Collaborative goal setting
- Prepare staff through CPD
- Informal relationship building





Positive practice

- Be honest
 - Resolve differences straight away
 - Listen- actively
 - Show care and curiosity
 - Build relationships
 - Reframe 'hard to reach'
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Sustain: Review and act

What have we learnt about our families

What feedback did we gather?

How can we adapt and plan for future opportunities?



Managing difficult conversations

‘Clear is kind, unclear is unkind’ Brené Brown

Prepare the conversation
Gather the facts
Be honest
Consider sentence starter
Clear end goal

Resources and further reading

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/182508/DFE-RR156.pdf
- <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/new-guidance-for-schools-on-engaging-parents>
- <https://nationalparentsurvey.com/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-futures-longitudinal-study-discovery-phase>
- <https://www.kidsburgh.org/parents-as-allies-designing-for-family-engagement-globally-and-locally/>
- https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/production/eef-guidance-reports/implementation/a_schools_guide_to_implementation.pdf

Questions?

anne.bishop@achievingforchildren.org.uk

