

Parental Involvement At Day Care

Contributed by Fiona H Lohrenz
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{bot_wrgoogle}This mutual cooperation allows both parties the opportunity to share effective methods and ideas regarding working with individual children. The day care experience for all concerned is enriched by this listening, respecting and valuing of each other's knowledge. The parents can learn so much about the socialization and interaction of their child from the carer whilst passing on their family values and beliefs to the day care. Opportunities for communication should be provided both formally and informally and information sharing should be ongoing.

Staff assessment in the area of working and communicating with parents may be required in order to maximize the effectiveness of this sharing process. In order to maximize the effectiveness of this sharing process assess your staff and their abilities in the area of working and communicating with parents. Support your staff so that they feel encouraged to participate in this process. Consider your current timetable and staffing levels – do these currently allow for time to be spent with parents and any subsequent follow ups? If parents have particular interests or areas of expertise e.g. storytelling or music encourage them to share it with the children as a kind of guest speaker.

You should have a complaints procedure in place that allows parents to air their grievances easily and without feeling judged. You should be seen as open, friendly and professional and as such, should view complaints as constructive criticism and a means to improving the quality of your day care service. Thank parents for bringing issues to your attention and deal with the problem immediately. It is important to have a complaints procedure in place so that staff are empowered to deal with certain issues whilst management step in for more serious incidents. Perhaps have a suggestion box where parents are welcome to offer suggestions/criticism anonymously.

Your orientation and settling in procedure should facilitate parental involvement from the outset. You can encourage positive interaction by forming a parents committee so that they have allies and a collective voice. Parents need a daily point of contact regarding their child so integrate a key worker system into your day care. Use your notice board or a newsletter to provide information about weekly scheduling and activities. In order to avoid any misunderstanding or confusion you should share daily information both verbally and in writing. It is a great idea to have a website and a blog where parents can leave comments and you can update everyone regarding day care activities. You can include a staff page on here with photos and information.

Parental involvement in your day care can potentially provide you with untold resources heretofore untapped. Parents will be encouraged to give back if they feel valued and supported. Opening up channels of communication and sharing can avoid many misunderstandings and conflicts that are borne out of lack of information. A friendly, welcoming and open day care should be your ultimate goal. An all inclusive day care is a happy day care.

Fiona Lohrenz drew on her 10 years experience of running a day care to found ChildCareOnly.com and produce a 'How to Start a Day Care Business' DVD guide: www.startchildcare.com Fiona can be reached at her website: <http://www.childcareonly.com>