

9

Working with parents

Activities

Planning a literacy meeting for parents

Aim

To consider how to work in partnership with parents.

To consider how to give information to parents in an appropriate way.

What to do

Students can use the suggestions about reading and writing meetings given in Chapter 9 in the book.

Students should devise a format for a reading or writing meeting in a school and for a year group that they are familiar with. They need to consider what the aims of the session are. They also need to consider how they could reach out to parents who find it difficult to attend school events.

Suggestions for contacting all parents include putting information on the school website, e-mailing a summary of the meeting to all parents and encouraging parent governors and other parents to act as ambassadors to parents who cannot attend meetings.

Role play a parent–teacher meeting

Aim

To practise listening and talking to parents.
To learn to exchange rather than give information.

What to do

Working in pairs, students should role play a parent–teacher meeting where the focus of the meeting is the child’s experiences of language and literacy at home and at school. The parent and the teacher should talk about the child’s interests, abilities and progress. The parent should consider how he/she might help at home and the teacher should consider how she can plan to accommodate the child’s individual preferences and needs in school. The students can discuss a child who is doing very well, or is making average progress, or a child who needs support in reading and writing.

Students who are parents themselves may be able to share their experiences of parents’ meetings in school and make suggestions about how these meetings can be productive for teachers and parents.

Making links between home and school

Aim

To consider how to make language and literacy relevant to children.

What to do

Students should watch an episode of a TV programme that has been made for children. This could be *Balamory*, *Charlie and Lola* or *The Tweenies*. They should also look at the websites that accompany these programmes which are available on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies>, at comics and, if available, at merchandise related to the programmes.

After looking at the programme, the website and other material they should think of ways of using them as a starting point for language and literacy activities. They should also plan for an element of critical literacy – see Chapter 2 – in order to extend rather than just replicate what children might already know. Some suggestions for activities are given in Browne, A. (2007) *Teaching and Learning Communication, Language and Literacy*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.

Websites

DCSF: <http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk/publications>

Two helpful publications – *A Guide to Supporting Reading for Parents of primary/Secondary Children* and the *Every Parent Matters* guide – can be downloaded from this site.

Read Together, Parentzone, Scotland: <http://www.readtogether.co.uk>

This is a useful website highlighting what parents can do to help children become readers.

Links to on-line reading

Marsh, J. (n.d.) 'Parental Involvement in Early Literacy Development: Using Media Texts'.

Available at: <http://www.shef.ac.uk/education/research/oldtopics/27.html>

This article describes a project to develop literacy materials and resources which could be borrowed from nursery and used within the home to promote children's literacy development. The focus is on media texts rather than books and printed texts.

National Literacy Trust (2007) *Why It Is Important to Involve Parents in Their Children's Literacy Development* – a brief research overview. Available at: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/Parental%20Involvement%20-%20a%20brief%20review.pdf>

National Literacy Trust research on parental involvement and family literacy. Available at: <http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/Research/parentsindex.html>

Provides links to a number of articles about parental involvement in literacy and in education.

Reading Connects Family Involvement Toolkit: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/readingconnects/Family_Involvement_Toolkit.pdf

The Reading Connects Family Involvement Toolkit was written for primary and secondary schools and provides suggestions about how to reach out to families and encourage them to make their homes reading homes.