

Children's Centre Case Study Template

Name of worker and date completed:
L. H. - 8.08.2011
Children's Centre / Local Authority:
Netherton Park Children's Centre, Dudley
Content:
<p>Parent Carer Volunteers</p> <p>Background</p> <p>We hoped to enable parents/ carers to experience a range of family learning and volunteer opportunities which would enable them to identify and/or further develop their own learning needs and skills, thus promoting their self esteem and confidence in all areas from parenting and relationships to future education and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Needs</p> <p>Through anecdotal discussion, assessment of local need and evaluation of services, a number of parents identified their own learning need, if they were to adequately support their children through their education or to gain the basic qualifications for accessing employment. There were also those parents who identified that they wanted to 'give something back' or who wanted to maintain links with the service after their child had moved onto school.</p> <p>Priorities and Aims</p> <p>Parental volunteer engagement in services offers opportunity for greater understanding of the reasoning which promotes service delivery and can thus enable more informed parental opinion. Our parent/carer volunteers are also included in training opportunities and in the planning and evaluation of services, developing their insight and opportunity to offer informed comment with regard to the value of services and their proposed outcomes, as they are received. Thus better informing our evaluations and helping to ensure that we offer an equitable and robust service to the families we serve.</p> <p>Parent volunteers also act as role models for their peers, ensuring ongoing and sustained parental involvement and engagement with families across the community.</p> <p>Many parent volunteers have gone on to gain qualification and paid employment with the centre.</p> <p>Actions</p> <p>Parents are encouraged to become volunteers and are managed by the family services manager. After satisfactorily completing the appropriate checks, they are offered induction into the workplace and thereafter regular supervision which considers the appropriateness of their role and responsibilities and any support / training and development needs which may be identified through this process.</p>

Outcomes:

X, a resident of the local community, would acknowledge that when she left school further education, albeit what she aspired to, was not an option for her. She is the parent of three grown up children all of whom attended Netherton Park Nursery. Once the three were at school she became a volunteer at the nursery and was supported to undertake training courses, then to complete her Nursery Nurse qualification and was later successful in gaining employment within the nursery. X has held a number of posts during the changes of nursery/ family centre and nursery/children's centre and is now a very skilled and valued outreach worker.

X continues to review and develop her own learning and holds Level 4 Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS) and has also completed Level 1 & 2 Counselling skills to better inform her understanding and competence in working with families. She takes great pride in delivering family learning, she encourages and enables parents and volunteers to aspire and to succeed, and she actively promotes parents to ensure they are meeting their children's best interests.

Impact Evaluation:

Assists in extending and maximising service delivery.

Opportunity to develop CC staff that know and understand their communities.

Offers insight and encouragement to other parents and carers regarding the opportunities which may be open to them.

Can assist in improving employment aspiration and opportunities within the locality.

Whilst there are no direct costs in relation to volunteers being paid for their input into group services, there is a cost in relation to; ensuring they are appropriate candidates, that they have the necessary skills for their role, the supervision of their role within the setting and in identifying and meeting their training needs.

However, all of this is usually negated by the value of the volunteer contribution to the service and in their personal and often professional development.

Why it works?:

We have a very welcoming environment which is important for everyone using the centre.

We value our service users, their input and involvement and have a genuine commitment to assisting and enabling their further development.

Many of our volunteers have been parents/grandparents/carers of children who have received a service from the centre, which gives them insight to the nature of the service and a commitment to ensuring children and their families continue to receive the best possible service.