

Support to literacy and numeracy through family learning

Share is a very flexible, fun, hands on approach to family learning, parenting and involving parents in their children's learning. It aims to improve family relationships, the partnership between parents and their child's school, the educational attainment and achievement of children, self-esteem, confidence, parents' motivation and social interaction within the community. It is used in over 100 other local authorities, and is supported by the national charity, Continyou.

Share is not a course - it is flexible collection of activities/resources. It works on the basis of having trained facilitators who work with small groups of parents/carers, who in turn work with their children on the activities. The sessions are devised so that parents can attend as few or as many as they like, and do not need to commit to a set amount of weeks.

As well as literacy and numeracy, the materials also deal with the issues that most concern parents, such as behaviour and development; bullying; and personal safety.

Share need not be limited to parents / carers – other successful pairings might be a grandparent working with grandchildren, sisters working with brothers, aunts/uncles working with nieces/nephews, childminders working with children in their care, and so on.

Initial training of facilitators from a variety of multi-agency backgrounds was undertaken in September and use is now being made of the materials:

- A drop-in based in a local library has used Share resources to engage with young mothers and provide activities for them to try at home with their youngsters. The drop-in is supported by extended services colleagues, working both out of children's centres and in and around schools.
- Family Outreach staff based at Children's Centres are using the resources on a one-to-one basis with families. One innovative example is providing support to a mother in hospital, which provides a positive, constructive focus for when her children visit.
- A young parents group at the Children's Centre is using the resources alongside other approaches. Children's Centre colleagues are also using Share in parenting work, and plan to use them in a fathers-only group
- The resources have enhanced existing family and parenting work run by adult and community learning at our Open Learning Centre.

The flexible nature of the resources has been appreciated by everyone using them – both in group and one-to one work. Health resources have proved to be the most useful and popular so far, but the materials on behaviour, bullying and safety are to be introduced.

There is a terrific opportunity for groups to start in schools. A facilitator will be needed, but your Area Steering Group has agreed to fund the initiative, so there is no charge for individual facilitator training and resources to enable the sessions to run. If you feel that parents of your school might benefit from participation in Share activities please contact your Extended Services Area Co-ordinator who will endeavour to identify a facilitator to work with them.

If you feel that you would like someone at your school to be trained as a facilitator, please liaise with your Area Co-ordinator. If you have, or decide to pursue the idea of a Family Liaison Worker, this person would be ideally suited as a facilitator.

For further information contact:
Graham Symonds, Extended Services Co-ordinator

01344 – 354067

Graham.symonds@bracknell-forest.gov.uk