

Parents play a central role in making decisions about their child's care and, in order to help achieve good outcomes for children, practitioners must strive to build a strong and positive relationship with them. This partnership becomes most successful when based on clear two-way communication, where both parties value and support the input of the other in helping to nurture the child's learning and development.



Context of Mulberry Academy Shoreditch

Free School Meals	686 students	47.91%
Medical Condition	347 students	24.23%
In Care	2 students	0.14%
SEN Needs	258 students	18.02%
English as Additional Language	853 students	59.57%



There are over 52
languages spoken
by families at
Mulberry Academy
Shoreditch



1. Ask parents to participate in decisions

Whenever possible, invite parents to participate in decisions which affect not only their child, but the setting as a whole. Give parents the information they need to form an opinion, listen to their input and feed back on the decision you've reached.



2. Communicate often

Provide parents with as much information as possible about what's going on in your setting and any events are coming up in your calendar. In your newsletter, you could even suggest conversation points so parents can ask their children about what they're learning.



3. Ensure language is no barrier

If you can't speak a parent's native language and their grasp of English is weak, seek the services of someone in the community who can act as a translator when you have meetings together. Although language can be a difficult barrier to overcome, it will mean the world to parents that you're doing whatever you can to connect with them in this way.



4. Learn their names

It sounds obvious, but find out how parents like to be addressed (Mrs. Smith, Catherine, Cathy) and take the time to learn how to pronounce their names correctly. There are few things more insulting than repeatedly calling someone by the wrong name, even if it's done accidentally!



5. Try not to make assumptions

Be careful not to make assumptions about parents' lifestyles. For example, don't assume a mother is, or isn't, married or even that she's married to a man! Ask open-ended questions to get the information you need to confirm what you do (or don't) know. This will save having to have an embarrassing conversation later on and potentially getting off on the wrong foot!



6. Invite parents to share their skills, culture or traditions

Give out a survey at the beginning of the year to find out what skills, knowledge and interests parents have. With this information, you're armed with a wealth of resources which could tie in neatly with the themes you're exploring at your setting. Many parents would be thrilled to be asked into the setting to speak with the children about something they're specifically learning about.



7. Thank them for their involvement

Perhaps in your newsletter, thank parents for all the ways they're currently helping your setting and how this is impacting on the lives of the children. You could also suggest ways they can get involved and support their child's learning at home?

