



Wilston
Nursery

Parent Partnerships

An Early Educator's Guide

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What's inside?

You can click on a chapter to go straight to that page.
Just click the Family logo at any time to come right back to this page.

1. Contributors page

2. Why are parent partnerships so important?

3. Parent partnerships are essential

4. How to create better parent partnerships

5. How to create a parent community: a case study

6. How to support learning at home

7. Take parent partnerships digital



In this guide you will hear from:



Sue Cowley, Early Years consultant and trainer

Sue Cowley is a presenter, teacher trainer, and author of 30 books on education and parenting. A qualified early years teacher, she has taught in early years settings, primary and secondary schools in the UK and overseas, and has also worked as a supply teacher. She's written articles and columns for a wide range of publications, featured in numerous education videos, and was a regular presenter on Teachers TV. Sue now combines her writing work with working internationally as a trainer and presenter in schools, early years settings and other organisations.



Sue Asquith, Early childhood consultant

Sue is an award-winning international early childhood consultant. Her experience in the early years sector began in 1998 as a registered childminder and since she has for the Department for Education and with charities such as PACEY, ICAN, Communication Trust and NDNA. She has been writing and delivering accredited and non-accredited training courses since 2002, which can be delivered online or face-to-face to your staff team. Sue also delivers key note speeches, training and assessing internationally. Her book, *Self-Regulation Skills in Young Children*, was published in April 2020.



...and from:



Michele Barrett,
Executive head teacher of Vanessa Nursery School
& Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre

Michele is the Executive Head Teacher of federated nursery schools Vanessa Nursery School & Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre and has a master's degree in education. She has worked in nursery schools since 2000 and has been the head teacher at Randolph Beresford and Vanessa nursery since 2010, where she is very proud of the inclusive approach to learning and care provided. Michele is passionate about early learning, child development, and inclusion, with a deep interest in working with families that have children with special educational needs 'to make sure that the world is their oyster'. Michele is also an advocate for the Early Years workforce and their expertise being taken seriously and respected by their educational peers.



Maisie Darling,
Holistic education and childhood consultant

Maisie is a multi award winning and OFSTED registered founder & director of early years provision and childhood consultant with 25 years successful experience in the field. Maisie's progressive consultancy work recognises and respects a child or young person's education as a holistic experience rather than a compartmentalised period of learning. She works within the context of all forms of education holistically - home learning, schools, early years settings and beyond. Maisie's work is authentically inclusive of all families and neurotypes, SEND, and emotional and behavioural needs.

Why are parent partnerships so important?

As practitioners, it is tempting to believe that we are the ones who make all the difference – that we do most of the work in terms of learning and development. In reality, though, children spend far more time at home than they do in our settings. It is crucial that we offer our support, to help make all their experiences as beneficial as possible.

Why focus on parent partnerships?

Amongst other things, creating strong parent partnerships:

- Help children settle well into your setting.
- Enable you to support parents who would [like help with their child's home learning.](#)
- Allow you to gather feedback to support a cycle of self-improvement.

When we think about parent partnerships, it's important to keep in mind this healthy reminder from the 2000 Foundation Stage Guidance - ["Parents are children's first and most enduring educators."](#)

What's a parent?

In this guide, by 'parent' we mean any adult who cares for the child. This includes: foster/adoptive parents, other family members, carers, and so on. Children are part of many kinds of families and this guide is to help you include, encourage, and partner with them all.

"When practitioners work well together with their families, they're doing a better job of supporting the children's care, learning, and development."

- Sue Cowley





The long-lasting effects of strong parent partnerships

Creating parent partnerships is a long-term project, but it can really pay dividends, even when a child has long since left your setting.

“The wooded area where we hold our weekly forest club is on a piece of land owned by one of our ex-parents, and I still work as a volunteer on our preschool management committee, even though both my children are now at secondary school.” - Sue Cowley

Invite, include and involve your parents, and you may end up with much more than you had bargained for!

“The most important thing is that we all have a really positive relationship. There’s no judgement here. We’re all going through things, there’s no such thing as perfect parenting. It’s just about communicating effectively, being honest and well-intentioned, so we all know what’s going on for that child. This enables us to serve families as well as we can, together as a community, with due regard for best safeguarding and welfare practices, of course.”

- Maisie Darling



Parent partnerships are essential

We've covered why working closely with parents is a good idea, but it's also necessary. Both the EYFS and Ofsted state clearly that you must work in partnership with parents to support the children in your care. Here's what they have to say...

The EYFS says:

- Children benefit from a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.
- The learning and development requirements of the EYFS define what providers must do, working in partnership with parents and/or carers, to promote the learning and development of all children in their care, and to ensure they are ready for year 1.
- Parents and/or carers should be kept up-to-date with their child's progress and development and the key person must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home.
- Throughout the early years, if a child's progress in any prime area gives cause for concern, practitioners must discuss this with the child's parents and/or carers and agree how to support the child. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.

→ [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#)



Department
for Education

Ofsted says:

- The provider must demonstrate how they will work in partnership with parents, carers and others.
- Inspectors will explore how well providers work with parents to promote children's attendance so that the children form good habits for future learning.
- Practitioners share information with parents about their child's progress in relation to the EYFS. They help parents to support and extend their child's learning at home, including how to encourage a love of reading. - Grade descriptors for the quality of education - Good
- Strategies for engaging parents are weak and parents do not know what their child is learning or how they can help them improve. - Grade descriptors for the quality of education - Inadequate

→ [Early years inspection handbook for Ofsted-registered provision](#)



How to create better parent partnerships

We've made the case for parent partnerships and let's face it, you probably knew all that anyway. So now for the big question - how do you actually create and maintain parent partnerships at your setting? These 4 steps can help you out, from working out where you are now to maintaining those key relationships long term.

1. Evaluate where you're at

To know where you need to improve in your parental partnerships, you need to have an idea of where you are now.

Consider how you communicate with parents and how often, by asking yourself:

- Have you found out their preferred communication method(s)?
- Do you discuss the information you (statutorily) 'need' to share with parents/carers?
- Do you give examples of the things you'd like to hear from them – like what their child is doing at home?
- If you use an app or online system to share information with parents, consider making this part of their induction. Show them where to download the software/apps and help them to navigate the system and perhaps to make their first upload.

- You will intuitively be thinking of what you'll be doing next to support and plan a child's learning journey. Consider how you share this information with parents/carers. In turn, how do parents communicate their thoughts on what's next for their child with you?

Communication between early years settings and parents has always been a vital part of effective practice.

It's fair to say that effective two-way communication can be a challenge, and sharing information can be time-consuming. Communication, therefore, needs to be as effective as it can possibly be in order to work.



"To promote and support parent partnerships, it can work well to give your parents some key tasks to do with their children when they drop them off at the setting. For instance, in our setting part of the morning routine is for parents to help the child put items in the show and tell box, choose a new picture book together, and support the children in finding their name in the box and adding it to the 'milk' or 'water' board for snack time."

- Sue Asquith



Here are a few tips for you to evaluate your current communication, and some resources to better it:

- Really consider your communication methods and find out the communication preferences of parents and carers. Ofsted do not have a preferred method. In fact, Ofsted have a clear message "do it for the children, not for Ofsted". Consider how much information you're giving and how it is shared.
- Be sensitive as to how much information parents actually want. Some parents will find it difficult to see, read or hear about what they are missing whilst their child is in childcare. Others will want every single detail! Take this into account when thinking about how you communicate.
- Documents such as '[What to Expect, When](#)' can be really helpful to share with parents to discuss children's development. It also gives examples of how adults can support children at each stage, helping you and parents to plan your support.

Rethink your morning routine.

When you take a step back and really consider your morning routine, is it as welcoming and inclusive as it could be for all your families?

- Are communications sent out in all the languages used by your community?
- Are 'welcome' posters inclusive for everyone?
- Look at your setting through the eyes of someone seeing it for the first time – does it feel warm and welcoming? It is easy to process all the key information, or is there too much going on at once?

2. Get it right from the start

Sue Cowley explains that the first step in working with parents and carers is getting to know each other as well as possible.

- **Home visits**

Home visits can play a crucial role at the start of the relationship. When you see the child and family in their home, this gives you an insight into their lives. It also allows you to share information about your provision, and parents may feel more able to ask questions or raise concerns when they are in their own environment.

Take along some photos of your setting, and some toys for the child to play with while you talk to the parents – this will help the child to have a sense of familiarity when they start in your provision. You can also assist the parents in completing any registration paperwork if they would like.

- **The transition into the setting**

Working on your parent partnerships is particularly important when the child first starts at your setting. Both children and carers may be nervous about transition – for many, this is the first time they have been apart for any significant amount of time.



“At our setting, we encourage parents to stay and play for as long as they want to – we understand that it is not just the child who may find the transition difficult. In some settings, the size or layout of the provision may make this difficult to do. In these instances, think about [ways you can communicate how well the child is settling in to parents, particularly if they are anxious.](#)”

- Sue Cowley





“The idea is that we don’t talk about the children in front of them. The child’s key worker can receive the child seamlessly and plan effectively for them. Then, at the end of the day, staff send photos and a Daily Diary of what the child did at nursery back to the parents. This continuous circular communication means the child is ‘held’ in mind and held physically in our care at all times, in a ‘team around the child’ approach.”

- Maisie Darling



3. Ensure a two-way flow of information

Parent partnerships have to be two-way, so Sue Cowley explains how to promote a two-way flow of information.

- **A two-way dialogue**

Maintain and build on these early bonds you create by ensuring that there are lots of opportunities for two-way communication and dialogue.

From newsletters to parent consultations, from coffee mornings to stay and play sessions – you cannot think of these as a time-drain. They’re a vital contribution to a growing sense of partnership. Look for ways to involve all members of the family in your communication – in particular, look for ways to engage dads as well as mums, and grandparents too.

- **Gathering feedback from questionnaires**

To ensure the flow of information goes from parents to practitioners and back again, it works really well to use regular feedback questionnaires. In this way, parents can give input about anything that might need changing at your setting, and you send out the message to parents that you want to hear from them. You might also use a ‘suggestions’ box for parents to offer their ideas.

- **Or, put it in the contract!**

At [Maisie Poppins nursery](#) in London, parents agree to share information with the setting as part of the contract.

Every morning, [parents or carers are requested to write a message](#) through Family about what’s going on for their child, before they attend their session. This is what the founder, Maisie Darling, calls the ‘parent handover’ and is a requirement by contract for attending.

4. Create a relationship of ongoing support

Sue Cowley explains that to create genuine partnerships, both parents and the setting need to be supportive and open

- **Don't just communicate 'at' your families**

It can be surprisingly hard to develop parent partnerships in which all members feel equally valued and have equal input. If we are honest with ourselves, the flow of information and instructions does often tend to flow in one direction, right?

A good example of this might be in your monthly newsletter, which can so easily turn into a series of requests – label clothes, pick up children promptly, pay bills on time – you know the drill. Make sure that you always find space in your communications to be supportive, rather than simply nagging. To develop real and lasting partnerships, it is important that you are not doing things 'to' your families, [but working with and alongside them](#). When you offer support, just remember that there is a fine line between helping parents and patronising them.

- **Giving Parents a Helping Hand**

Sue Asquith explains that the recent [Royal Foundation research findings](#) about the Early Years included how 'feeling judged can make a bad situation worse, with seven out of every 10 parents feeling judged by others, and almost half (48%) saying this negatively affected their mental health'. Loneliness was also highlighted.

- **We need to be mindful of a few things here:**

- Babies do not come with an instruction manual, and some parents may need to ask questions to build their confidence.
- Parents should not be expected to have masses of prior knowledge about child development in order to have a child (having a baby is not like applying for a driving license!)

- Every family is unique with their own pulls on their time and energies. We need to recognise that and offer support where it's needed.
- New parents might not have access to ante or post-natal groups or know where to access information/support.

It's important for Early Years practitioners to acknowledge these points, and identify which families may need a helping hand. Some parents just need reassurance, and the chance to ask questions without external judgement. Consider an 'open door policy' for parents to contact their key person with any questions, this may mean adjusting and offering parents the options to ask questions via a messaging app or a video call.



Creating a parent community: a case study

Parent partnerships usually mean those between you, as an educator, and the parents of the children in your care. However, parents also benefit from communicating and collaborating with one another. Creating a community of parents and caregivers around your setting can support parents and provide a forum for questions and suggestions.

A child-led parent community

Pat Tomlinson runs a toddler group, Bright Sparks, and uses an online community to keep parents engaged and connected. Pat's collaborative approach to parent partnerships was the key to building these connections, so here's how you can do it too.

As lockdown set in, back in 2020, Pat saw Early Years settings and toddler groups take to interactive videos as at-home online resources. She jumped on the bandwagon and started filming her own.

But these weekly activities didn't just excite children and parents – they created a bridge between individual parents and the group as a whole. This created a ripple effect through the group, as parents started to post and discuss what activities they'd done on their group chat. By simply giving parents and children that little snippet or resource, it inspires them and gives them new ideas.

"We read a story one week called 'Baby goes to the park' and I planned some activities around it. I then had countless parents messaging saying their children were asking to go to the local park and find 'what was in the story' after the session."

- Pat Tomlinson, Bright Sparks Toddler Group



Confidentiality is Key

If parents feel safe to share their thoughts and personal experiences, they'll be more likely to connect with other parents around them. At Bright Sparks, parents understand that there is a confidentiality aspect to the group.

If the group doesn't offer an environment where parents feel like they can trust others around them, they'll never open up for [fear of being judged](#). Pat acknowledges that it's easy for parents to split off into different groups, and this doesn't always foster a feeling of confidentiality and openness. Building that trust may take some time, but it's absolutely worth it.

Offering support builds parent's confidence, and in turn their self-esteem – they feel confident and able to make suggestions and bring questions as they know that other parents are there to help, support and chat to.

This is where your group can maximise its potential. It's not just about providing resources for children – it gives parents a safe space to discuss topics free from judgement. Having a secure environment to discuss



Here are Pat's top tip for creating an online parent community:

- **Make a plan:** Pat sits down and maps out exactly what's going to come a couple of weeks ahead. *"The parents really appreciate this, as they know exactly what's happening each week,"* she says. This gives the group structure, and gives the children things to look forward to each week when they can discuss what's coming.
- **Let the parents decide:** When the group starts to chat and upload pictures of what they've been up to, it sparks ideas and parents start suggesting activities. Pat adores this, telling me she just sits back and acts as a facilitator while watching parents throw ideas around and connect with each other. It inspires her, and inspires parents to introduce new themes and stories while building stronger relationships with each other.
- **Make it personal and don't over-edit:** *"I make mistakes all the time!"* Pat confesses. But that's what makes it real. Pat pops on and off screen while filming her activities, and to her it makes it more personal. She compares it to being 'in the parent's living room' when she's on the big screen and says to children *"I'll be right back!"* This isn't a blockbuster film production – it's a way of bringing the the children and parents together, and being real and authentic is a big part of that.

Tips on Encouraging Parents

Getting parents to engage in online group discussions and form these partnerships with settings (and each other) can be slightly tricky, so below are some of Pat's top tips for encouraging parent participation:

- Involve all the parents:** Not all parents will want to engage in the same way, and that's completely okay. Some will be more reserved, or reluctant to share. Ensuring they know they're involved and giving them that opportunity is what matters. Even the parents who don't engage often will still often leave comments and react to others, according to Pat.
- Create a sharing atmosphere:** *"Half of the time, the ideas don't even come from me! I'm just the facilitator,"* Pat laughs. Parents inspire parents – with photos uploaded and activities that their children enjoyed, having a sharing community is the best kind of inspiration. It's comforting to others knowing that everyone is struggling a little right now, and can act as a little spark of creativity.
- Don't overwhelm parents:** Pat only gives 'little snippets'. Giving parents too many resources can be overwhelming, as they don't know where to start. If they're overwhelmed, they'll be less likely to do the activities or report back on how they went. Giving them a taster that they can then build on is a whole lot better than giving them too much.

If you're already using Family for your setting, you'll know that we actually have [handy features to communicate with parents](#). You can message them directly, and have the option of posting pictures, videos and updates to all parents at once! We wanted to make it as easy as can be for you to build those connections.



How to support learning at home

Supporting home learning is not only of benefit to the children, it also empowers parents. The EYFS says that a child's key person "must seek to engage and support parents and/or carers in guiding their child's development at home," so let's look at some strategies you can use to do just that.

Why home learning matters

There has been plenty of work done on the importance of home learning in the early years, and all of it makes a very strong case for the crucial role it plays in a child's early development.

- [Increased learning opportunities at home](#) have been shown to have a positive effect on literacy and numeracy attainment at school.
- A positive home learning environment is [even more important than parent occupation, education or income](#).
- Home learning environments impact school readiness and [a good one will improve independence and creativity once at school](#).
- Parents are ready. In the latest government survey, [more than a third want to do more](#) to support their child's learning at home.

What's more, it's a [statutory requirement of the EYFS](#) to support children's learning at home. To ensure you're supporting children's home learning, you first need strong parental partnerships.





What do parents need to know?

1. The importance of play

Many parents can try to be too academic with their children's learning in the early years, giving them activities or trying to work with them on things that they're not ready for. Instead, you need to educate them on the importance of play.

2. How to interact

Taking the time to explain the best way to interact with their children is crucial in order to encourage their confidence and communication potential. Interactions are the cornerstone of a quality home learning environment. Try to cover ideas like:

- Using a wide vocabulary wherever possible
- Using open-ended questions – and waiting for the child to answer
- Being positive and encouraging
- Giving children choices

3. The developmental stages

In surveys, many parents have noted that they struggled to understand age-appropriate activities at different stages of their child's development. It's a good opportunity to show them through the EYFS and help to give some context to the way you approach child development.

How can you help improve a child's home learning environment?

Now that you know what parents need to know, it's time to work out how to tell them.

1. Assume that every parent is interested

This should be your starting point. What seems like a lack of care can often be more simply a difference in communication style or a lack of confidence.

You can start by asking parents how they'd like to hear from you. It might be weekend or evening visits, or even taking the time to go to their home. They might prefer online communication, email, newsletters or just good old face-to-face contact.

2. Use your key workers

The key worker relationship is so crucial to children, but it can be a great link with parents too. Why not make the person dealing with the child every day the full-time contact person for the family too?

3. Open up your training

If you want parents to be more clued up on the finer points of child development, why not invite them along to your staff training? You don't need to front the costs if parents are willing to contribute, but it can be an invaluable way of getting interested parents to understand more about the ways children grow.

4. Loan out resources

When children have a particular toy or book they're fascinated with, why not loan it out to the family for the weekend? It will help to give more continuity to the child's development and improve parent understanding of what goes on during the week. It might feel like a gamble to start loaning out precious equipment, but it's better to start with trust.

5. Let parents contribute observations

Sharing observations of children's progress [through an online system](#) or paper learning journals is one way to engage parents with the background of what's going on with their child's development.

But why not flip it around? Seeing what's going on at home is important too and [an online system that allows for parent observations](#) is a great way to encourage this.

6. Social Events

[Nursery events are a great way of growing relationships](#) with parents. Stay and play sessions, coffee mornings and summer parties are all good ideas to get parents more involved in the day-to-day life of your setting.

Finding activities to involve fathers should be a focus too, as they are often far less likely or able to attend.

Further Reading about home learning

We thought we'd share with you a few of the best pieces that we found while researching this topic.

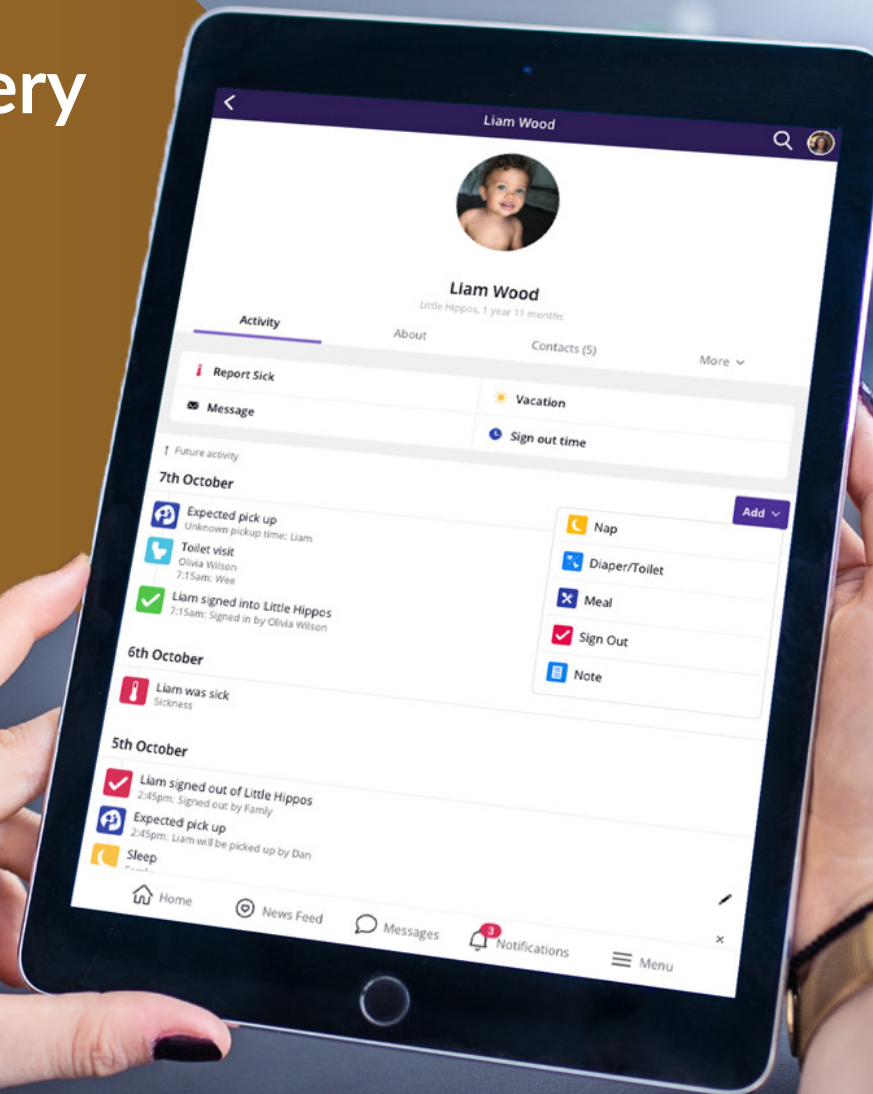
- A [great overview of some of the studies](#) and what really matters with HLE.
- A helpful rundown of [seven key activities you can share with parents](#) to help stretch a child's mind and why they matter.
- Research from a consortium of charities displaying [actionable information written especially for nurseries](#) on how to improve HLE at your setting.
- Direct advice on how to [better support the Home Learning Environment](#) including a list of take-home activities and case studies from nurseries that use them.
- A research piece from Action for Children all about the effect of a positive home learning environment in the early years and the effect on outcomes for children.



It's time for better nursery management software

See how easy it is to use Famly by signing up for a free demo today:

famly.co/demo 



Take parent partnerships digital

Having software that lets you access all of a child's information not only makes your life easier, but it strengthens the bond between you and the parents. Parents can update and change important information easily and you can share what's going on in a child's day at the click of a button. Building trust and open communication isn't always easy, but making sure you're both up-to-date at all times is a perfect place to start.

Don't talk about children over their heads - do it digitally!

"Sharing with parents must be for the children's benefit", says Michele Barrett, Executive Head Teacher of Vanessa Nursery School & Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre.

Don't talk about children's personal care routines over their heads - that's what platforms like Family are for.

Vanessa Nursery and Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre mold their parental communications around respect for the children.

"When children are here, this is their space," explains Michele.

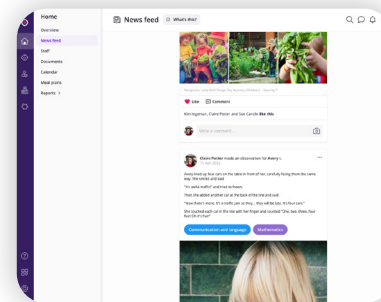
The settings share a weekly post for parents on the News Feed in Family, with a brief overview of what the children have been doing, but young children listen to everything, so take the time to think about how you feed back about their individual day.

"I could think of nothing worse at the end of a lovely day at nursery, standing next to the legs of your parent and key person while they discuss how you went to the toilet," says Michele.

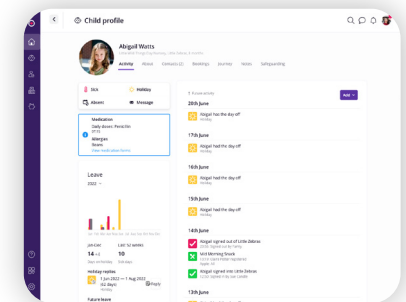
Children's care routines can be added in Family, meaning practitioners can focus on sharing the real highlights of a day, or letting children do this themselves.

Michele says that Vanessa and Randolph Beresford parents often ask what they can do at home to support their children, so they use the "What's next?" box in observations, to give them manageable pointers or activities to try at home, as well as letting parents know what they'll be doing at the setting.

"It's nice for parents to see the areas of learning, but not the age bands," Michele says, *"as that can be demoralising, or worrying."*



News Feed in the App



Care Routine features

Why online communication is best for parent engagement

- Better communication with parents is key to having happier parents, providing a better level of care to children, and creating a whole host of advocates who will sing your praises across the town.
- So why would you rely on poorly timed phone calls, snatched conversations at pick-up time, and forgotten letters crumpled at the bottom of a backpack?
- We think that [online communication is the best way to improve your parent engagement](#). And here are 10 reasons why you should too:

1. It's where your parents are

We're going to start with a simple one - parents are online. Well, we all are these days. But talking to people where they are is the key to getting their attention and creating a two-way dialogue. You have access to people at all times during the day, and whether you're using messaging services, email or texts, you can get information to people easily and start conversations at any time. The best part? They can access everything right from their pockets.



2. No more lost letters

There's nothing sadder than a carefully written newsletter or permission form, sat forlornly crumpled up at the bottom of a child's bag. Or left in the bottom of the car footwell after being hastily thrown into a parent's hands at pick-up time. But the same can't be said for online communication. As we've already mentioned, this is partly because you're speaking to people where they are. But it's also about having everything accessible at all times, so that they can choose to save it and read it later when they have the time.

3. Keeping Ofsted happy

Parent engagement is one of the more woolly concepts that Ofsted evaluates nurseries on (and this is Ofsted, so that's saying something). But there's no doubt that they do take into account the extent to which you work in partnership with parents when they're assessing your setting. As a result, having some clear-cut examples of how you encourage two-way communication with parents is really important, along with how you take steps to encourage further child development outside of the nursery. And having these details online and easily accessible makes displaying this to Ofsted significantly easier.

4. Find information easily

Can't find that note from your last meeting with Amelia's parents? Struggling to remember whether you let David's mum and dad know about the trip next week? Problem solved. When you're keeping your communication online, you can easily pull up old messages and conversations, and keep on top of everything that you've sent. What's more, you have some back-up if you need to show proof that you've made parents aware of something, or asked for certain permissions.

5. It's all in one place

This follows on from the last point we made. Keeping all your communication in one place sure does make your life a lot easier. Rather than scattered notes from every snatched conversation or phone call, along with messages and the odd homing pigeon, half the job is compiling all this into one neat to-do list. With online communication, everything you need is right there at your fingertips.

6. Save time on chasing parents

One thing many nurseries worry about with online communication is that it will actually take up more of their time. But this simply isn't the case anymore. There's a certain amount of parent communication that is absolutely necessary every day, and being able to quickly message or email a parent, rather than spend half an hour trying to get them on the other end of the phone, could save you hours. Add on the possibility to send automatic messages and reminders, and you're saving yourself hours on the phone every month.

7. A chance to be visual

One of the nicest things about online communication is that it's much easier to be visual. While you need to make sure that [all of your pictures are safe](#) when you're sharing them online, parents just love being able to see pictures of their little ones during the day, and what they're doing. Compared to a weekly newsletter with a few pictures of other people's children, online communication really opens parents up to being able to feel involved and present in their child's day. Just another way to bring them closer to the nursery.



8. Providing better care

So we've said that the key to online communication is easier and more regular two-way communication with parents. So how does this affect the children? Well, one clear way is the way in which you can provide better care for them. For one, you're able to build a better picture of what home life is like for the children, understanding their preferences and any issues or problems they have. What's more, parents can better understand what's happening within the nursery, and you can contribute more to a discussion on how they can carry on their child's development at home.



9. Build better parent partnerships

One great positive of smoother parent communication is the extent to which they become a part of your nursery's community. Traditional modes of communication can feel a little impersonal in comparison to the more regular, personalised messaging that comes with online communication. In combination with face-to-face time, you can end up building the strongest parent partnerships possible. Their support can make it a whole lot easier to [plan events for parents](#), and you can also use their help on [any nursery trips you go on](#). What's more, they can play a huge role in the word-of-mouth marketing you get in the local area.

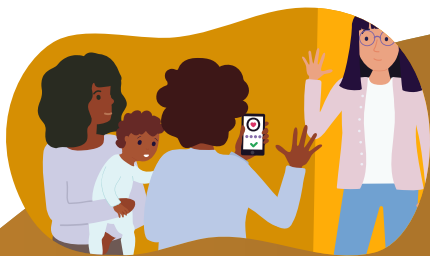
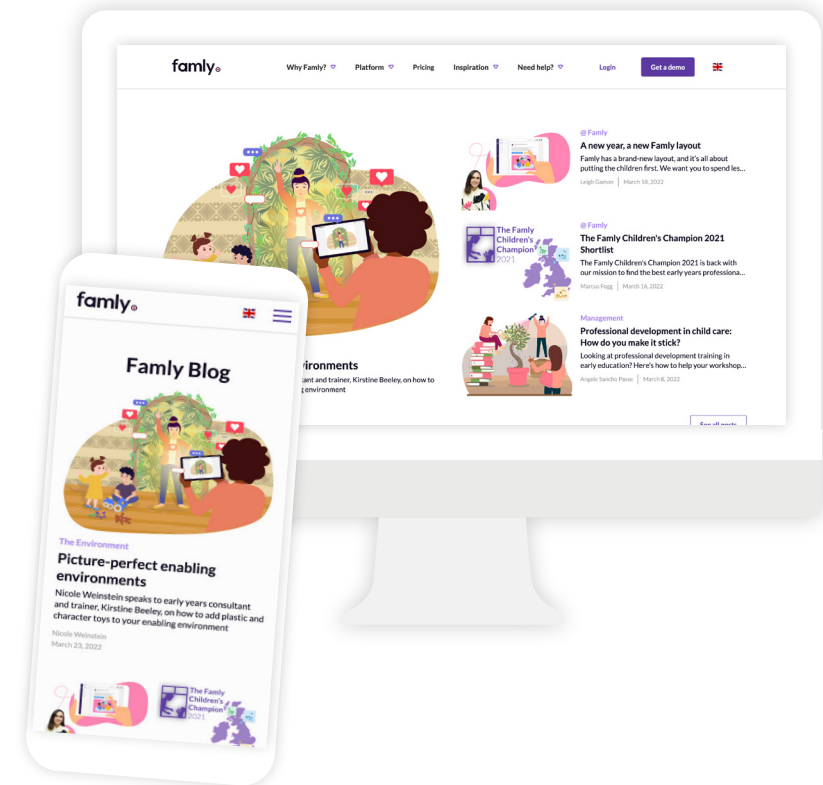
10. Get better feedback

Nurseries who turn a blind eye to any problems that parents might have are destined for difficulty. There's no doubt that you can't address every single parent concern and request, and you probably shouldn't try. But having better two-way communication channels is absolutely essential to understanding what's going right and what you could be doing better to improve the service you offer and improve the lives of the children you look after. And taking it digital is a fantastic tool in making that happen. Whether that's instant messages, automatic reminders or in-app News Feeds, taking it online makes giving and receiving feedback that much easier.

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