

Take your partner

Key to the Door – ‘Drop-in’ session
(young parents’ progression sessions)



Case study template

Max: 500 words

Case Study Title: Reading Project – Take Your Partner

Pilot LA/provider: Key To The Door - 'Drop-in' session

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Introduction:

The objectives of the project are:

- To test the attitudes to, and experience of, reading amongst groups of emergent adult readers and gather good practice showing successful approaches to encouraging and maintaining reading, especially amongst those with lower literacy levels.
- To provide opportunities for adult readers to access formal literacy programmes/courses where appropriate.

Description/Outline of activity, process, etc

The 'drop-in' sessions take place every Wednesday, a crèche is provided but the young parents have to make their own way there. It is open to any former Key To The Door participants as the idea behind this group was that there was an identified gap between the support that young parents get through specific programmes and the support that they require back in their own communities and that this gap in services may be contributing to the poor progression rates of the young parents. Various services are offered from outside agencies; Threshold housing support, Job centre plus, Smoking cessation, Family planning and Sexual health screening every week.

We began by talking to the young parents informally about reading at home and we discovered that many families did not see reading as a priority, not having time to fit it into their busy schedules. We also found out that a large number of families were not members of their local library or if they were had not visited in the last year or so.

Also with the majority of the young parents having very young babies/toddlers they didn't see the need in reading to their children yet 'as they don't understand it'.

We went on to discuss how everyone does fit reading into everyday life but doesn't realise it;

- Newspapers/magazines
- Letters
- Forms to fill in
- Online social networking sites – Facebook, msn, emails
- Leaflets/pamphlets
- Sending and receiving text messages

Immediate and longer term impact

We discussed how in a session we ask the trainers to write up work onto the flip chart so it can be typed out later and handed back to everyone, so we overcome the pressure of reading and writing with more verbal group work. But within this setting young parents are encouraged to stand up and read/write comments from the group discussions onto the flip chart themselves with everyone helping and sharing with spelling and/or reading words. With this approach its aim is for young parents to see reading as a fun, sharing experience and to engage in co-operative learning and use each others skills to improve everyone's literacy levels.

Key factors for success

Through KTTD groups we have found the best way to engage young parents is through personal contact with them. So with this in mind we encourage young parents to play with their children, be part of their learning, promote the importance of reading and show the impact reading can have on individual children and families. At the drop-in it is a great opportunity for young parents and staff to work together and as an organisation we can really see the positive effect it has on individual children and likewise the parent.

All the sessions were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, biscuits, fruit juices, tea and coffee. Whilst the young parents filled in the questionnaire we created a mixture of discussion and individual contact to suit all needs and interests.

Bringing the discussion to a close we emphasised that this KTTD session should be used by its young parents to enjoy reading and writing and to listen and discuss things in a confidential space that allows for mistakes.

Key challenges

We asked the young parents if they wanted to join the local library and handed out membership forms, that we had collect from the main library, so that they had the information there and then. Leaflets regarding the local libraries was also handed out with handouts on *'Encouraging reading – hints and tips for parents'* (from WikiReadia site). And *'Top reading tips from the National Literacy Trust'*.

We will ask the young parents in four weeks time if any have joined and if not give help in doing so!

Next steps

We have ordered *Quick reads* material so that the information is at hand and if they haven't enjoyed reading in the past may find something that they might enjoy now.

We are going to try a 'Book share/swap' where young parents can bring in unwanted books and swap them for another within the group.

Other additional information**Quotes from parents or practitioners:** *(these will go in a separate box)*

*"I'm going to try and go to the library with my son. It's not that far to walk."
"I don't mind asking to spell words once I know that person."*

"I don't read with my daughter, but we look at picture books together and talk about them."

Photos available (please circle/delete as appropriate): YES NO

Photos need to be high resolution, at least 300 dpi

NB: All photography requires a model release form for signature by each subject, or their parent / guardian in the case of children.

The Reading for Pleasure suite of materials:

- CPD modules: Reading for pleasure in a number of contexts
- Storytelling: CPD unit with lesson ideas
- Families, Learning and Storytelling: Using archives for community cohesion
- Take Your Partner: Engaging emergent adult readers
- Technology and Reading: How to use blogs, wikis, iPods and e-books to promote reading
- Putting two and 2 together: Creating a bridge between literacy and numeracy learning
- Resources for libraries: Guidance on how to engage families to read for pleasure