

Take your partner

Key to the Door – TOYS (Training Opportunities for Young Parents Scheme)



Case study template

Max: 500 words

Case Study Title: Reading Project – Take Your Partner

Pilot LA/provider: Key To The Door – TOYS

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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

Include why/how was it useful and who was involved, for example:

- Training Opportunities for Young Parents Scheme (TOYS) is a personal development programme for teenage parents who are isolated in the community, have little or no family support and are not accessing any services. The young parents are referred to the project mainly through their health visitor, who hopes they will attend the group and build up their skills and self esteem helping them to be more confident parents in the future. The TOYS course runs for two sessions a week over a 13 week period. The main barriers to young parent's participation are childcare and transport so the course offers door to door transport and onsite crèche facility.
- The course is split up into three units:
 1. Practical aspects of parenting and family life
 2. Personal issues and development
 3. Personal effectiveness and learning skills

The units cover issues affecting the every day life of the young parents with sessions including, Parenting, play, housing support, drugs/alcohol awareness, sexual health and contraception, domestic violence assertiveness, communication and presentation skills.

We use alternative learning methods that are young person cantered, so young parents don't feel as though they are back at school but feel comfortable relaxed and listened to. Each group member is given a folder to build up a portfolio by collecting notes, handouts, leaflets, booklets, publicity and programmes. Furthermore, the portfolios are used to write up personal evaluations of the sessions and to agree what the learning outcomes were.

Some members of the groups do not feel comfortable or able to produce a written evaluation. In these cases, we encourage the participants to offer verbal feedback through group discussion.

The informal follow up sessions are extremely useful to generate group and individual discussions concerning the effectiveness of the programme as a whole, individual learning and progression, and their future hopes, desires and aspirations.

We also offer feedback and evaluation through art as another alternative way for the young parents to express their feelings and experiment in other ways it backs up the more formal training sessions. It gives the group the opportunity to chat and share problems and solutions whilst creating artwork. The participants build up there own personal scrap books. These can include anything they feel relevant. This is a good tool to use for discussion and to identify any personal issues the young parent may have.

The TOYS group used in 'Take Your Partner' were a new group who had only met three times.

Immediate and longer term impact

The group members were quite unsure about filling in the questionnaires and were asked if they wanted to do them individually or as a group discussion. They decided that they should be read out by a worker and they could have a chat and write their own answers down. They had to be persuaded to take part as they were expecting to be judged because they don't read.

We highlighted that they read all the handouts given to them on the course and that they read and filled out various paperwork before the course started. Many of the parents are regulars on face book and other social network sights they see this as reading and were made up with themselves that they actually did read.

This group will be monitored throughout its duration and we will revisit the questionnaires towards the end of the course in March 2009 to see if any significant changes have been made. (i.e. what was achieved, outcomes for parents/carers, children, practitioners, the setting, etc)

Key factors for success

- Young parents have realised you don't have to read books to read.
- Raised awareness of varieties of reading materials.

Key challenges

- For the parents to be more confident and encourage their children to read books.

Next steps

Any developments since the activity described or plans for future developments? For example:

- We are going to introduce a library corner for young parents to borrow books.
- We are going to try to introduce books and stories sessions to the TOYS programme.

Other additional information

For example, any website, resources particularly reading material that you have found really useful in engaging learners ,did they read aloud, drama , plays events etc where they have used the reading skills etc

Please include a list of any reading material that you have bought / chosen to use with the group.

- Brightly coloured, pictorial materials.
- Internet

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

"I thought I was thick at reading but I do it everyday on Facebook."

"I am going to read a story to my baby every night, he's only eight months now but it will still make him smile hearing my voice even if he doesn't understand."

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