

The Shared Learning Newsletter

Learning families, healthy communities

ContinYou's family learning conference, held at the NEC in Birmingham on 31 January, successfully attracted over 150 delegates from a variety of organisations.

The theme of the conference was embedding and sustaining family learning to create motivated and achieving communities.

The event included a wide range of informative and inspirational speeches and workshops, as well as opportunities for all the delegates to

'Duncan Fisher really helped me think about involving fathers in our work on family learning as much as we engage mothers.'

network over a warm winter lunch of sausage and mash!

The annual Share Awards, presented at the conference (see overleaf), celebrated the hard work and success of individuals, families, organisations, tutors and local authorities taking part in the Share family learning programme.

'A great day, thanks!'

One of the highlights of the day was the inspiring workshop 'Engaging fathers and male carers', facilitated by Mary-Ann Riddle of Dumfries and Galloway. Comments from delegates who attended the popular workshop ranged from 'fantastic' to 'the most inspirational workshop I have ever been to' and 'this has re-enthused me about the work'.



The event was a great success, receiving lots of positive feedback from delegates, who appreciated the opportunity to 'Share' good practice.

'Chris Edwards was inspirational.'



The National

For the fourth year running, ContinYou's Share Awards have recognised the exceptional achievements of parents/carers, family learning practitioners and local authorities in promoting family learning. The 2006 winners of the Share Awards were invited to the annual national family learning conference, held at the NEC in Birmingham, where they received a framed certificate and a cheque for £500.

Share Adult Learner Award

**Winner: Debbie Johnson,
Doncaster**

Debbie thinks that the most important skill she has learnt by being involved in Share is patience. She also thinks that you must let your child make mistakes along the way, but praise them for all of their fantastic work and effort. Debbie feels she has had two life-changing experiences from being involved in Share – her confidence has grown enormously, which helped her to go into further education; this, in turn, encouraged her to become a teaching assistant. Debbie's experience with Share has led her to run her own Share group within the school where she works, to help other parents see the benefits of Share.



Share Family Award

**Winner: The Bluck Family,
St Helens, Merseyside**

Vicky Bluck attended every weekly family learning session at Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School with her 5 year old daughter Cody. Cody's grandmother, father, and older brothers Billy and Adam all attended sessions too. The family found that learning with Cody was fun; they also learnt a lot about modern school life and got to know Cody's teacher better. The skills they developed included how to take Cody's ideas and put them into practice, and how to listen to her better.

Share Awards



Share Local Authority Award

Winner: Isle of Wight

The local authority sees the promotion of family learning as very important to supporting island families. The Family Learning Service within the Adult and Community Learning Service of the LA funds a part-time Share co-ordinator (a tutor from the FE college is currently seconded to the post), who trains school and children's centre staff in delivering Share, and then visits them to provide further support. The co-ordinator runs a tutor support

network, and issues a termly newsletter sharing best practice and new ideas. The LA holds an annual picnic for all families involved in Share from around the island. Last year this was held at a primary school and 60 families attended. A circus skills workshop was offered, and the event provided an opportunity for families and tutors to jointly celebrate family learning.

Share Tutor Award

Winner: Pauline Jones, St Helens, Merseyside

Pauline's weekly family learning session at Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School draws in parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents to work alongside reception class pupils. It has become a big part of their lives, as they have so much fun and see direct benefits to the children's development and attainment. The number of participants has increased each year, and Share has greatly enhanced school-home links. The activities Pauline provides in her Share sessions include: parenting skills; first-aid; helping children with their homework; and coping with teenagers.



Share Organisation Award

Winner: Robin Hood Infant and Nursery School, Bestwood Park, Nottingham

The school embedded its Share programme in a whole-school approach, and held a special family learning session for one hour every week. This provided parents with creative and fun opportunities to work and learn with their children. Each session offered a focus of special interest, free coffee and a raffle, practical family learning activities, and packs of resources to take home. Among the many benefits experienced by the school and families were: increased parental involvement; improved school-home links; increased attainment levels for pupils, parents developing new skills; and parents gaining awareness of their child's development.

Share at Heaton St Barnabas

After attending the Share facilitator training, Nancy Hutchinson, from Heaton St Barnabas' Primary School in Bradford, discussed with the headteacher and assistant headteacher which year groups would benefit from the Share programme.

Year 3 was selected, and a focus on numeracy and literacy chosen. Nancy spoke to Year 3 teachers to find out what they would be covering in the curriculum during that half term, and the Share sessions were planned.

'In numeracy we looked at fractions, measurements, collating and interpreting data, and odd and even numbers, and in literacy we focused on developing story writing, changing verbs and writing instructions', says Nancy.

After speaking to the Year 3 children and sending letters home to inform parents about Share, the programme was fully booked within a few days, and a waiting list was compiled of other parents wishing to access the programme. A crèche facility was available onsite and, with everything in place, the Share programme began on 7 November 2006, running for six weeks until 12 December 2006.



The Share group began with a discussion with the parents about the importance of role play in the development of their children's learning; then the parents went on to design their own box file, using craft materials to depict themselves and their family. The children joined the group for the last 30 minutes to help their parents decorate their box, and during discussions on fractions two

chocolate cakes were cut into sections as a learning aid!

Over the weeks the parents realised they had forgotten how much fun cutting and sticking was! Parents also learnt about a range of different resources at home which would help their child learn. After the course, the parents were presented with certificates at a Key Stage 2 special assembly.



Parents said:

'It has given me loads of ideas I can do at home.'

'I've really enjoyed this course, and learnt a lot about learning through having fun.'

'The course was very good and full of fun; the best part was working with the children.'

'It has given us ideas of things to do with our children even when we are busy.'





It's that time of year again...

time to fill in the annual review form and let us know all about the Share groups running in your area.

We've enclosed a hard copy of the form. This can also be downloaded or completed on the Share website at www.continyou.org.uk/share.

Please could you fill in the form and return it to Paula Woodall at ContinYou by 29 June 2007.

All responses received on time will be entered into a prize draw for three winners, each receiving £50 worth of Share materials. Winners will be announced in the next edition of the *Shared Learning* newsletter.

Oldies and Learners

Elaine Rangecroft has been running two Share groups at Lake View Primary School, Mansfield. She calls the first group she set up her 'Oldies' and the second group her 'Learners'. She says: 'Recently, the Oldies have managed to attain OCN accreditation

in two units and I would like to share their achievement by showing a picture of them receiving their certificates. The Learners are already showing great potential, and will join the Oldies in registering for the next unit for OCN accreditation.'

Sharing success

Lyn and Lisa from Rowley View Nursery in Darlaston, Walsall, deliver Share to parents on a fortnightly basis.

'We thought we would share with everyone the great success of our dough workshop, says Lyn. 'We decided one week to deliver a dough workshop to parents and their children from the nursery and people of the local community.

'We held our workshop at the local church hall so that we could accommodate a larger number of people. We provided a crèche for the children for the first hour. This enabled us to talk to the parents and run through the process, including language used and praise, and so on. The children

had a lovely time playing and then joined their parents.

'The second part of the workshop involved both the children and their parents. They made three different types of dough together, adding glitter, beads, rice, colourings, and so on. They all really enjoyed themselves and asked for more creative workshops where they could work together!

'It was heart-lifting to see parents and children learning and having fun together. This gave parents the confidence to be creative with their child – and the confidence to access other workshops and courses that we provide. The children were deeply engaged in the activity and relished the one-to-one attention from their parents.'



Buddy Badger

Aidan Whitfield, aged 5, joined the Foundation Stage Share group with his mum, Ashley, when he started school in September.

Aidan attends Wargrave Primary School in Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, and he especially likes Mondays when his mum comes into school to do Share.

He loves the part of the weekly session when everyone stands in a circle and passes the group's badger round.

Before Christmas Aidan and Ashley went on the Share website and entered the 'Name the badger' competition with the name Buddy.

As reported in our last newsletter, Aidan won and was presented with a Share badger puppet.

His mum says 'Buddy the badger is virtually glued to Aidan – he eats with him, watches TV with him, and sleeps with him.'

'Aidan was thrilled with his prize and I could tell he felt really special when he came home from school on Friday with Buddy.'



Hints and tips

Useful websites

SparkleBox: www.sparklebox.co.uk

This website aims to share successful teaching ideas and resources with practitioners across the UK, and the world. It provides free and very low-cost tools for teachers to download and use straightaway.

Talking Point: www.talkingpoint.org.uk

ICAN, the children's communication charity, has expanded Talking Point – its information website to support children's communication development, as part of Make Chatter Matter Month.

Under5s: www.underfives.co.uk

An educational website with lots of free downloads and links to other relevant sites.

DirectgovKids: www.direct.gov.uk/kids

This colourful website offers a fun and engaging way to teach young pupils (aged 5 to 11) about democracy. It has lots of online activities and educational games linked to citizenship. The aim is to encourage young people to think for themselves as responsible citizens.



Extended services workshops for schools and clusters

- How can extended services and activities be used to raise standards and achievement?
- How do you integrate extended services into school improvement plans (as a school and as a cluster)?
- How do you know extended services and activities are making a difference?
- How do you ensure that monitoring and evaluation of extended services are integral to the school's self-evaluation process?
- How can you use evidence from your evaluation to write self-evaluation form (SEF) statements?

ContinYou is offering a series of bespoke workshops that aim to address these issues. The workshops offer a practical approach to integrating extended services into school improvement plans, with an emphasis on self-evaluation and impact.

Please visit www.continyou.org.uk/extendedservicestraining for further details.

Win £2,000 with Schools ETC!

Members of the Schools ETC network are eligible to enter the Schools ETC Award for a chance to win up to £2,000 to support the development of extended services in their school.

Each year the Award has a different theme. This year it is being offered to schools that are **actively working to support community cohesion**. Schools that apply for the Award and meet all the criteria will:

- receive a certificate of recognition
- have the opportunity to use the Schools ETC Award logo on their stationery
- receive advice on how to publicise their Award
- have an opportunity to win either £2,000 (first prize) or £1,000 (second prize).

The deadline for applying is 29 June 2007.

What is community cohesion?

A cohesive community is one where:

- there is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities

- the diversity of different backgrounds and circumstances are positively valued
- those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities
- strong and positive relationships are developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

Here are some examples of ways in which your school/organisation could take a central role in breaking down barriers between young people and creating cohesive communities:

- encourage participation of parents and community in the school
- develop activities aimed specifically at pupils with particular needs (such as refugees, travellers and under-achieving groups)
- provide or participate in community sporting events
- organise or participate in regular inter-cultural events aimed at promoting good community relations
- link with schools with different racial/religious mixes for activities/events
- integrate Catholic and Protestant pupils through study support or extended activities
- provide extra support for children/families of refugees or asylum seekers



- provide extra-curricular citizenship activities
- partnerships between faith schools and secular schools
- outreach work to families in different communities
- link with supplementary schools.

For an application form, visit www.continyou.org.uk/schoolsetc, call 020 8709 9932 or email deirdre.de.barra@continyou.org.uk.

Diary dates

Share approved trainer training

Venue: Coventry
Dates: 3 and 4 October 2007

Share facilitator training

Venue: Bradford
Dates: 10 and 11 May 2007
11 and 12 June 2007

Venue: Stockport
Dates: 16 and 17 May 2007
21 and 26 May 2007

Venue: Wandsworth
Dates: 1 and 22 June 2007

Generic facilitator training

A three-day programme – various dates

Email: info.coventry@continyou.org.uk

Quality learning certificates

The following schools have received the Share quality learning certificate for the excellent work they are doing with families:

- St James Primary School, Walsall
- Broadlea Primary School, Isle of Wight

Save money!

The price increase for Share materials, scheduled for April 2007, has now been put back until June 1 2007 – so get your orders in now and save money!

What's new

A very warm welcome to Gaye!

ContinYou welcomes Gaye Warwick to the Family Learning Team. Gaye has previously worked for the YMCA as project manager (working with young offenders), and with the PEEPUL Centre in Leicester (empowering the local community through access to sports, health and fitness, along with training opportunities).



Gaye has joined ContinYou to work alongside Gill Morris on the Early Learning Partnership Project (ELPP), while also developing other family learning programmes.

Revamp of Share resources

We are planning to revamp some of the Share materials (memo pads, pens, diary, bag, badge, Foundation Stage binder, logos, and so on).

We would appreciate it if you – the users of our materials – could take a few minutes to give us feedback on our ideas. To download a short questionnaire, please visit: www.continyou.org.uk/uploads/documents/doc_1147.doc.



Free facilitator training!

The DFES has awarded ContinYou funding for 30 sessions of facilitator training (Preparing for Partnership with Parents) in the East Midlands, West Midlands and East of England, and 24 sessions of Share Plus training in the South East and Yorkshire and Humberside, over a twelve-month

period. This training is aimed at the early years workforce, that is, those working with children aged 1 to 3.

If you would like further information, please send your details to bipun.lord@continyou.org.uk.

The Shared Learning Newsletter is primarily for practitioners and parents/carers taking part in Share. It is also useful for agencies or individuals who wish to find out more about how Share works in practice. We welcome articles, examples of activities, photographs and comments for inclusion in the newsletter. It is published termly and information needs to be sent in eight weeks before the end of term. We look forward to hearing from you!

For further information, contact:
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continyou
Building learning communities

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