

The Shared Learning Newsletter

Active citizenship through family learning

Gill Morris, Development Manager Parental Support and Family Learning at ContinYou, reports on FACE IT!, a European project that aims to promote active citizenship through family learning.

'FACE IT! offers training and materials for family learning programmes aiming to promote and develop active citizenship and participatory democracy.

'The training package has been developed by experienced partners from the UK (including ContinYou and Campaign for Learning), France, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia and Romania.

'The project provides the opportunity for the pooling of experience and the expertise of various international organisations, so that existing models of family learning or active citizenship can be adapted and developed to target the individual needs of audiences that extend across Europe.

'I recently attended a five-day training seminar, hosted by the Clare Family Learning Project in County Clare, Ireland. The event was aimed at practitioners and community-based tutors working in a lead role in family learning within their organisation; participants came from all the countries involved in the project.

'It was a great opportunity to share expertise in family learning and active citizenship. We all came away with 'almost-planned' programmes that we can incorporate into our existing practice. So, watch out for some new additions to the Share programme!

'This training seminar was the second of three similar events – the first was held in Slovenia in September and the third is to be held in Marseilles in January. The outcomes from the three international events will be combined with outcomes from additional national training events and programmes and disseminated at an international conference in Iasi, Romania, in June 2008, which I have been invited to.

'Here, representatives from regional, national and international fields will be able to showcase their own practice, and discuss, agree and disseminate good practice in the delivery of active citizenship and participatory democracy through family learning and other informal adult learning approaches.'

Visit www.faceitproject.org to find out more about FACE IT! To read a longer version of this article, visit www.continyou.org.uk/share.



Increasing parental involvement, raising standards

Increasing parenting support and parents' involvement in their children's learning is an integral part of the extended schools strategy in Suffolk – and of the 'core offer' of extended services to be accessed through all schools by 2010.

Suffolk's Share County Co-ordinator, Siobhan Arundel, and her extended services colleagues, see Share as a vital tool in enabling them to raise standards in schools by increasing parents' involvement in their children's learning and development. Since 2004, Siobhan has worked hard to establish the Share programme across the county as a key strategy to improving the quality of parental involvement.

Initially, the focus of the Share programme was on summer-born reception children in primary schools and Year 5 children in middle schools. However, some schools have now extended delivery to cover all year groups, and others have built Share into their annual plans.

Methods of delivery include weekly groups, activity sessions during the school day and in the evening, and holiday challenges. Schools have

offered resources for particular sessions, for example, the use of a school's woodland for nature sessions. So far, feedback from all parties involved in the Share programme has been excellent.

Siobhan and the team are now using Share to help improve outcomes in schools of concern. They have also identified three schools at different stages of Share, and have designed a tool to:

- help measure impacts and outcomes which can be directly, or indirectly, related to the implementation of the Share programme
- identify how Healthy Share activities map on to the healthy schools criteria and increase the school's chances of becoming accredited
- map how Healthy Share activities can contribute towards the school's self-evaluation form (SEF) and the Every Child Matters agenda.

To read a longer version of this article, visit www.continyou.org.uk/share.



Sing Up

Sing Up is the Music Manifesto's national singing programme for primary school-aged children in England. The £10 million government investment aims to ensure that good quality singing is central to young children's lives – in primary school, in the home and in the wider community. The programme is being produced by a consortium led by Youth Music with Abbott Mead Vickers, Faber Music and The Sage Gateshead.

With funding from Sing Up, ContinYou is liaising closely with clusters of schools developing innovative, singing-based extended schools provision, and working to capture examples of good practice up and down the country. Song can:

- be a vibrant and positive start to the day through singing-based breakfast clubs, and after-school singing clubs
- be a valuable tool to help children with speech and language difficulties improve their communication skills
- bring communities together, and engage parents
- help us to identify with our own culture and to explore the culture and identity of others
- be used as a way to engage the disengaged, reach out to those families who can be hard to reach, and help to narrow the gap in pupils' achievement.

Free Sing Up magazine

Please register to receive the new free *Sing Up* magazine at: www.singup.org/registration.

Please email info@singup.org if you would like further information about the programme.

Involving men as fathers

Involving fathers in the delivery of services is high on the government's agenda and is referred to in numerous documents, including Every Child Matters and Every Parent Matters. ContinYou is offering an interactive 'taster day' that aims to increase awareness of the issues involving men when delivering services. This seminar, which can be delivered at your venue, is suitable for all children's services personnel and anyone working with parents.

To find out more, email gailyn.groves@continyou.org.uk or visit www.continyou.org.uk/involvingmen.



Share in Bracknell Forest

Extended schools co-ordinator Graham Symonds reports on parenting and family learning in Bracknell Forest.

'Multi-agency colleagues are trialling a variety of approaches to parenting and family learning to inform the council's emerging parenting strategy, and to ensure that there is a wide range of appropriate strategies at universal, targeted and specialist levels of need.

'The Share approach is recognised as being an effective, early intervention in preventative work, and has been used on a trial basis since September 2007 by a variety of multi-agency colleagues. The flexible nature of the Share resources has been appreciated by everyone using them – both in group and one-to-one work.

'Health resources have proved to be particularly useful and popular. Share Plus training is going to take place to support staff who work with parents in local authority, private, voluntary and independent settings, Homestarts, traveller and ethnic support groups, drop-ins, and so on.

'Examples of approaches used so far include the following:

- A drop-in based in a local library has used Share resources to engage with young mothers, and to provide activities for them to try at home with their children. This facility is supported by extended services colleagues, working out of children's centres and in and around schools.
- Family outreach staff based at children's centres are using Share resources on a one-to-one basis with families. One innovative

example is supporting a mother in hospital, providing a positive, constructive focus for when her children visit.

- A young parents' group at the children's centre is using the resources alongside other approaches. Children's centre colleagues are also using Share resources in parenting work, and plan to use them in a fathers-only group.
- The resources have enhanced existing family and parenting work run at an open learning centre.'

To contact Graham Symonds, call 01344 354067 or email Graham.Symonds@Bracknell-Forest.gov.uk.

Hints and tips

Useful websites

National Literacy Trust – www.literacytrust.org.uk

This website gives a reminder that 2008 is the National Year of Reading. It also provides information about the Family Reading Campaign and competitions that are free to enter.

BBC – www.bbc.co.uk

The BBC is supporting the Family Reading Campaign through a competition involving families writing their own story about the characters Max and Lara and friends, created by the BBC RaW team.

Young Minds – www.youngminds.org.uk

This is a national charity committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people. They provide advice, training, campaigning and publications.

Metabody – www.metabody.co.uk

This website gives useful advice on healthy eating and exercise.

Useful publications

Fathers' involvement in their children's education, NFPI, 2005

This report is full of case histories that will inspire people who are aiming to engage fathers in schools or in family learning. The report considers the form fathers' involvement takes, reasons for involving them, barriers to involvement, and the general principles of involving fathers. It is a must-read for researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

Special offer – £17.50 + pp
(normal price – £21.50 + pp)

To place an order, phone 024 7658 8470, email publications.sales@continyou.org.uk or visit www.continyou.org.uk/shop.

Fathers and family support: promoting involvement and evaluating impact, NFPI, 2004

This report provides an updated review of what is known about the role of fathers in relation to their families and family support interventions. It examines evaluation techniques that family support programmes can use to assess their impact on fathers. Practitioners and policy-makers will find this report a key contribution to creative thinking about engaging and working effectively with fathers.

Special offer – £12 + pp
(normal price – £13.25 + pp)

To place an order, phone 024 7658 8470, email publications.sales@continyou.org.uk or visit www.continyou.org.uk/shop.



What's new

Championing children, families and communities: putting their needs at the heart of your work

ContinYou's annual conference 2008

Hilton Metropole, Birmingham

18 to 19 March 2008

This unique conference will share innovative examples from across the UK of people, projects and organisations that are putting children, families and communities at the heart of their work. It will highlight for managers, planners and practitioners how policies and practice can connect together across boundaries to maximise outcomes for all. This conference is aimed at all those involved in delivering services for children, young people and families.

For more information and how to book, please email chantelle.peat@continyou.org.uk, phone 024 7658 8476 or visit www.continyou.org.uk/news_and_events.

Sign up to Schools ETC

Schools across the UK are exploring new ways of extending services. *Schools ETC* brings all the latest news, views and advice from leading practitioners and good practice in this field.

It is designed for all those involved in parenting support and family learning, study support/out-of-school-hours learning (oshl) activities, childcare, health, social care, and so on.

An individual subscription costs just £40. To find out more about *Schools ETC*, visit www.continyou.org.uk/subscribe/schools_etc, call 020 8709 9904 or email subscriptions@continyou.org.uk.



Forthcoming Share materials

The Share team are currently updating the Share Foundation Pack to include guidance for using the activities with pre-school children. They are also producing ideas for using the materials with children with special educational needs (SEN). See www.continyou.org.uk/share for more information.



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!

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Website: www.continyou.org.uk/share

Diary dates

Share Approved Trainer Training 2008

Venue: Coventry
Dates: 2 and 3 April 2008

Preparing for Partnership with Parents (P4PP) – free training!

Venue: Lincolnshire
Dates: 28 to 30 January 2008

Share Plus – free training!

Venue: Kent, Thamesmead
Dates: 22 and 23 January 2008

Venue: Oxfordshire
Dates: 28 and 29 January 2008
11 and 12 February 2008

Venue: Surrey
Dates: 3 and 4 March 2008

Venue: West Sussex, Crawley
Dates: 13 and 14 March 2008

Deadline for awards extended

The Share awards celebrate the outstanding achievements of those involved in the programme.

If there is someone in your share group who you would like to nominate for an award, please visit www.continyou.org.uk/shareawards and download a nomination form.

The deadline for receiving completed forms has been extended until **11 January 2008**.

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