**Involving parents in assessment and planning**

During the Department for Education (DfE) 30 Hours Mixed Model Partnership project (the project), a number of partnerships explored views on the delivery of the extended free entitlement (EFE) via a mixed model approach by conducting parental demand surveys with local parents of children aged under four.

Parents were asked to rate the issues that were important to them if their child were to access more than one setting. The following statements were consistently rated highly by parents:

* my child’s safety is protected at all times
* my child’s relationship with key staff is not disrupted
* staff in both provisions are properly qualified
* both venues have suitable environments.

Successful mixed model partnerships will need to ensure that they address these concerns and inform parents what is in place to address them, particularly in their marketing information.

Parents may want to pass on relevant information about their child to staff as they drop them off at their nursery/pre-school/childminder and will expect staff to be able to tell them about the child’s day when they pick them up. This is fairly straightforward when a child attends one place but, if the child transfers to another provider and site during the day, the management of this communication process will need careful consideration. It is as important for the parent and is equally important for the people who work with a child in the course of the day. Without good communication, opportunities for enhancing a child’s experience will be lost and challenges a child may be experiencing will not be tackled appropriately.

All those involved in the early education of a child may want to consider the use of a daily diary that stays with the child and is kept up-to-date by staff in any settings that they attend. Such a diary should start with an initial overview of a child’s needs/likes/preferences etc and can be used to log relevant information relating to the child’s moods, sleep, food, clothing, activities, achievements, home learning ideas etc.

I relation to this, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) statutory framework[[1]](#footnote-1) states;

“*Parents and/or carers should be kept up-to-date with their child’s progress and development. Practitioners should address any learning and development needs in partnership with parents and/or carers, and any relevant professionals.”*

Providers of early education usually have periodic set times, in addition to daily feedback, when an exchange with parents takes place. In a mixed model approach, the providers involved could try and co-ordinate the set periodic meetings with parents so they can both give feedback.

Alternatively, they could use a model where one ‘key person’ takes the lead in assessing the child with input from the other providers and the lead ‘key person’ feeds back to the parents and or/carers.

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335504/EYFS_framework_from_1_September_2014__with_clarification_note.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)