

Achieving **EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS**



**A Strategy and Toolkit
for developing effective
partnerships between
schools, parents/carers
and communities**

Effective Partnerships with Parents (EPPa) provides a structure to help schools to meet the new challenges of working with parents and the local community.



Southgate Publishers Ltd,
The Square, SANDFORD,
Crediton, Devon EX17 4LW
Tel: (01363) 776888
Fax: (01363) 776889

e-mail:
info@southgatepublishers.co.uk
website:
www.southgatepublishers.co.uk

- Much of the administration is undertaken by parents
- Parents are in a key position to identify and implement projects to meet the needs of local people to help them support children's learning.

How Does the EPPa Strategy Work?

An 'Action Team' is formed, chaired by a parent, parent governor or parent community member. Initially the parents are likely to be 'the usual suspects' but as the Team evolves, 'harder to reach' parents become engaged and often take key roles.

- Action Teams members will include representatives from parents, school staff (including a senior teacher), governors and the local community.
- The EPPa Action Teams is a management group established to identify, develop and implement projects that promote more effective home-school-community partnerships. It is not a complaints tribunals or merely a discussion forum. The projects are identified following consultation with the school's stakeholders.

Because Action Teams are independently constituted community groups, they are able to apply for funding to grants and trusts for substantial sums of money to help with their projects. The role of the Action Team is to:

- Talk to as many people as possible and, through surveys and questionnaires, find out what is working and what are the challenges
- Decide priorities and make a plan
- Share out the tasks with other volunteers
- Carry out the projects
- Evaluate projects and decide the next steps.

Engaging parents and the community using EPPa

Action Teams are at the heart of parent and community involvement in EPPa schools. This means that schools become more aware of how to meet the needs and challenges that many parents face. Action Teams identify these and then offer appropriate support. EPPa is not prescriptive. It develops and improves on existing good practice in line with the school management plan. Schools face significant challenges if they are to integrate parents and communities in the way envisioned by government initiatives. Developing new partnerships to produce interagency working for the benefit of all children and families should include parents as key 'network actors' from planning to implementation. They are in a position to support schools that face a difficult juggling job as they keep focused on raising standards whilst simultaneously engaging parents and community for longer-term gains.

EPPa Action Teams have demonstrated that they can contribute significantly by:

- **Using links** that education, health and social services personnel have with children to avoid duplication and maximise resources.
- **Disseminating** leaflets and information about learning opportunities for parents and families, using libraries, health centres, grocery stores etc.
- Hosting one-off **community events** such as fun-days (e.g. multi-cultural activity days, music events and environmental awareness/recycling projects).
- Organising community **support programmes** (e.g. lunch club for elderly residents, nursery provision and family learning workshops).
- Ensuring (through close working with families) that **interpreters** are available, the school site is open, warm and welcoming for parents. Language and format of publications is respectful of the needs of all.
- Actively **recruiting** parents, carers and advisors from the local community with first-hand knowledge to support others and promote inclusion.
- Offering a **variety of involvement** so that parents and carers can be involved in their local school EPPa Team and influence what it undertakes.
- Empowering parents through projects that offer **basic skills** and similar training that help them to assist their child and provide good role models.
- Accessing **training for volunteers** and providing schools and communities with a strong volunteer base.
- Giving schools a truer picture of how they are perceived by parents and the community and aiming to promote a **positive image of the school** in the community.



'We live in an area with enormous cultural diversity and the EPPa Action Team promotes projects that help parents see that we can all really contribute and make a difference.'

Parent Action Team member

The Award

The Award element is an optional part of the EPPa scheme. It is designed to be challenging but achievable by any school wanting to show commitment to partnership with parents and the community. To achieve the Award schools will have to show that they have set up a constituted, parent-led Action Team, and provide details about two projects, chosen in consultation with parents, the school and community. These two projects will need to demonstrate successful work with volunteers and show that they have engaged more parents and children in learning. There is comprehensive guidance in the Toolkit about the Award and how to achieve it.



Inviting Families In

Full of practical advice about organising successful family learning events. Includes funding, promoting the events, evaluation, learning progression. Case studies relate to seven themes – environment, healthy living, sport and fitness, local life, dads and lads, arts and crafts, world cultures.

Rachel Johnstone, 48 pages, £10.95

Volunteers in Schools

Manual to help schools to develop an effective strategy for recruiting and managing volunteers. Accompanying CD contains model documents for schools to adopt/adapt, including a volunteer policy, handbook for volunteers, questionnaire and other useful documents.

Jean de Rijke, 16 pages + CD, £13.95

EPPa Toolkit

The toolkit consists of a sturdy box (in which to keep all documentation), a manual and a CD which contains a wealth of materials to ensure that EPPa can be adopted and put into practice as quickly and easily as possible.

£40.00 including postage



CD Contents include:

- Model constitution
- Questionnaires and audit forms
- Evaluation form
- Project planning
- Detailed funding advice
- Sources of funding
- Case studies
- Sample letters
- PowerPoint presentations for staff, governors and parents
- Volunteers policy and handbook
- Optional Award ... and much more.

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Please send me: _____ copy(ies) of **EPPa Toolkit** £40.00 including postage. _____
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