

Parental engagement and family learning

Workshop programme

- “Hard to reach families or hard to reach schools?” - brief presentation followed by group activity
- Refreshment break
- “How do you know you are making a difference?” - brief presentation followed by group activity
- Here is something I will do differently ...
- Closing remarks

Parental engagement and family learning

Hard to reach families or hard to reach schools?

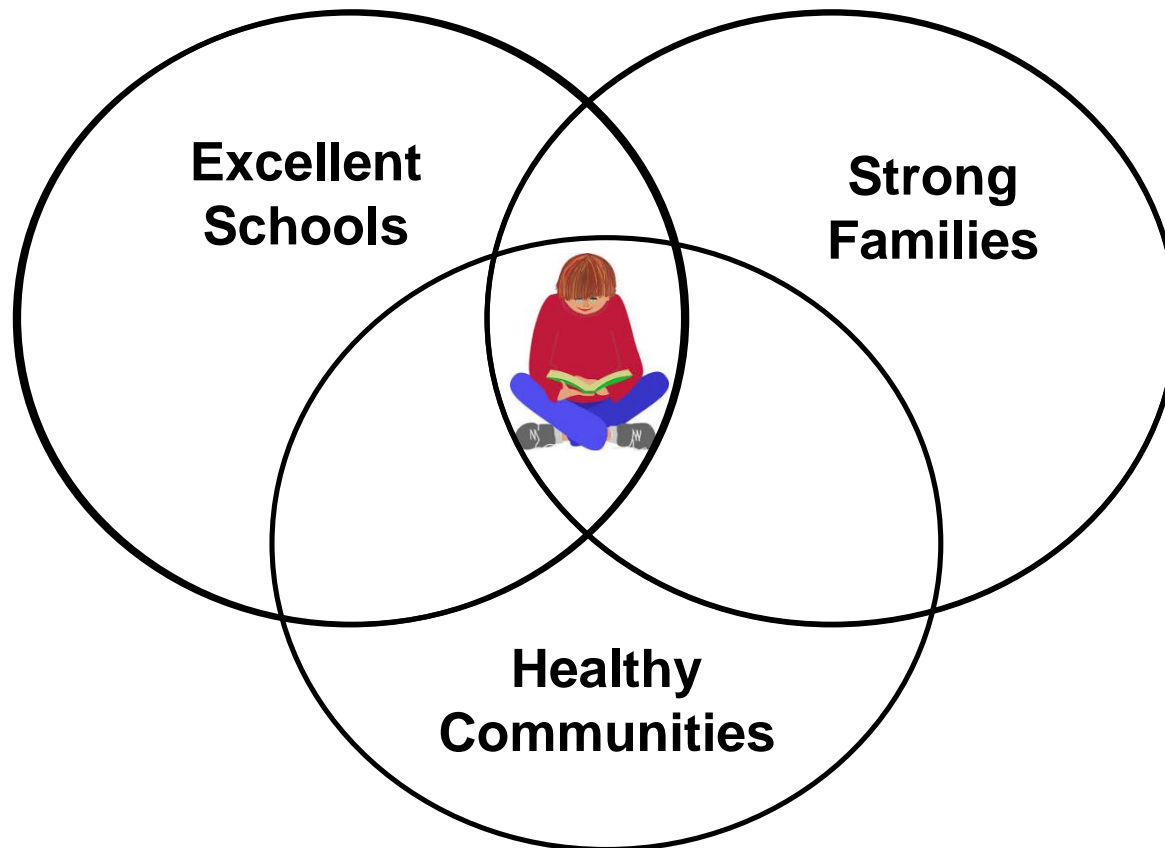
Challenges for families

- Work, family issues, money problems
- Confidence
- Health issues
- Language and literacy
- Own experience of school and education
- History and culture
- Don't understand how they can engage

Challenges for school

- Building relationships takes time
- Perceptions and assumptions
- Pressure of work
- Established practices and structures
- Creating change in working practice and culture
- Changing personnel at school
- Keeping up the momentum

Overlapping spheres of influence – a shared endeavour



A change of culture

- Understand difference between involvement and engagement
- Implement co-production approaches
- Need to find different and new ways to help parents / families support their children's learning
- Acknowledge existing good practice from parents as well as schools

What are the solutions?

- Look at parental engagement or partnership as an improvement activity to be planned, evaluated and improved through learning
- Engagement with families is more than a series of events through the year (e.g. parents' nights, transitions evening, school concert)
- Ensure parents are part of the decision-making process – importance of co-production

What are the solutions?

- Need to build respectful and trusting relationships before talking about learning
- Focus on collaborative approaches and understanding of learning as a shared endeavour
- ‘Nothing about me without me’

Questions for discussion

1. How do we support our Parent Council to be inclusive and represent the wider Parent Forum?
2. What does parental engagement look like? What does parental involvement look like?
3. How do we work with the local community to reach out to families? Examples: third sector, community groups, local businesses.
4. *Parental engagement in supporting learning in the home is the single most important changeable factor in student achievement.* If this is true, what needs to change?

Parental engagement and family learning

How do you know you are making a difference?

What is evaluation?

- Evidencing impact
- A process, not an event
- Evaluating parental engagement is a key component of school improvement
- Establish through SMART goals

Not just about bums on seats!

- Build evaluation into planning
- Recognise that parental engagement often requires softer evaluation
- Feeling something is beneficial is not evidencing impact
- How do you know your work is making a difference to families and young people?

Connect Professional Learning

“Evaluation – Assessing the Impact of Family Engagement”

- One half-day session
- Find out how to evidence the impact of your parental engagement activities
- Evaluation toolkit is a unique resource which is only available to course delegates; to be developed as a dynamic online resource
- Includes clear examples of family engagement matched against a wide range of evaluation methodologies

Parental engagement activity: workshop

- a pupil-led event to demonstrate their learning
- a workshop for families on
 - how to support their child's learning
 - literacy/numeracy
 - health and wellbeing
 - areas of the curriculum
 - behaviour
 - school improvement

What methods of evaluation could you use?

Body map



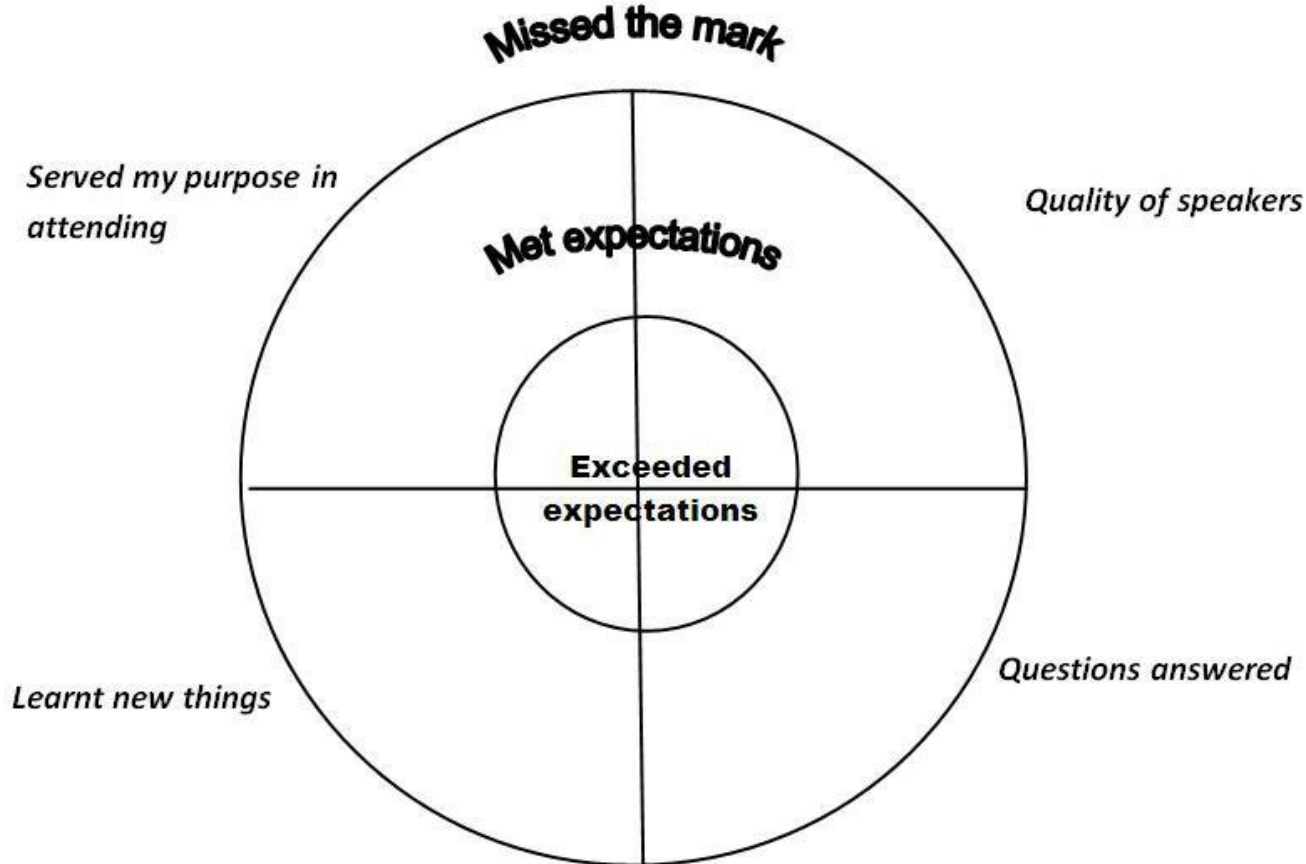
Interview

- To gauge long-term impact
- Think about asking family members, people from the community or pupils to help with this

Useful for:

- Collecting in-depth qualitative information
- In-depth discussion allowing personal exploration of the issues
- Combining different types of questions

Dartboard



Five Words

- Useful for: gathering views from people with different levels of involvement in an event or activity
- Identify five people with different levels of involvement; these people could be:
 - the main organiser
 - volunteer
 - pupil
 - parent/family member
 - member of staff
- Ask each person to sum up the event in five words

Observation

- Volunteers observe activities and record information to show impact. Think about asking family members, people from the community, pupils
- Useful for:
 - providing different types of information
 - showing how groups and individuals work together
- Can be done in different places at different times and by many people

Post-it note wall



Questions for discussion

1. How do we know parental / family engagement at our school is having a positive impact on outcomes for children and young people?
2. Who could help to evaluate family engagement?
3. Why is evaluation of family engagement so difficult?
4. How do / will we use the results from an evaluation and what would we do if it shows it hasn't made a difference?

Final thoughts

- Shift from *doing to* to *doing with*
- Have clarity about engagement as a priority
- Engaging families into learning needs to replace getting families into school
- Dispel the notion of poverty of aspiration
- Work with families where they are
- Think about small, achievable, measurable steps

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