



Ensuring Quality Standards in Work with Parents in England

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Introducing myself

- President of the International Federation for Parenting Education
- Previously Chief Exec ParentingUK
- Former Director of Adult Education in an inner London borough
- 5 children; 4 grandchildren
- Irish



In the beginning.....

- Individual support from child psychologists
- Mostly US or US influenced group-based programmes patchily provided in England
- 1998 ParentingUK Training Group opted for National Standards; long process to develop
- 1997 Labour government
- The Home Office (Dept of Homeland Security) ...Parenting Orders
- By 2005 universal and targetted provision



What Parents? What services?

- Support for “bad parents” only or routine age-related interventions?
- Peri-natal, toddler stage, pre-or primary school, adolescence
- Fathers, mothers and others
- Separating parents, parents in prison, adopting parents
- School-based preparation for relationships and parenting(proposed 2010 Field report)



Policy drivers in England

- Every Child Matters 2003; Every Parent Matters 2007
- Local Parenting Plans required; parents consulted
- Offer decided by 150 local Parenting Commissioners and 9 Regional Parenting Leads
- Access to help for parents via Children's Centres (0-4) and Extended Schools (5-16)
- Parent Support Advisers in schools
- Branded programmes only in some areas e.g. FIP; PEIP; David Olds; Matt Sanders; Webster-Stratton;
- Health service policy document 2004, National Service Framework Children Young People and Maternity Services endorsed parenting support
- NICE endorsement 2006 "effective and cost effective"




National Academy for Parenting Practitioners launched 2007

- 3-way approach: evidence-based programmes; generic training; support and information
- Developing the research evidence
- Toolkit for Practitioners: 100+ programmes; 93 Academy rated www.commissioningtoolkit.org
- Free training for practitioners offered through local commissioner structure



Two-pronged approach to ensure quality

- Select evidence-based programme
- Practitioners trained in the programme owners' requirements but also with generic skills and knowledge and supervision and support
- City and Guilds levels 3/4 training(www.cityandguilds.com)
- Qualifications and Curriculum Framework
- (Distance-learning model and development of open source generic programmes considered.....)



Development of National Occupational Standards (NOS) for Work with Parents: December 2004 – April 2005

- Mapping of the Parenting Education and Support Sector 2001
- Steering and Expert Reference Groups
- Key job roles identified; competencies based on key job roles
- Principles and Values identified
- Developed in parallel with the NOS for Family Learning
- Enable transferability between job roles
- Revised 2010



Principles and Values

- Parenting education and support should reflect the rights of the child set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) ratified by the UK in December 1991
- Practitioners work in partnership with parents at all times
- Mothers, fathers and those in a parenting role are acknowledged as having unique knowledge and information about their children
- Good practice requires reflection and a continuing search for improvement



Principles continued

- Children are the responsibility of the wider society as well as their families
- Work with Parents should be non-judgmental and anti-discriminatory and should seek to empower by building on and valuing parents' existing strengths, knowledge and experience



Principles continued

- Parenting education and support should be available to, and practitioners should engage with, all those in a parenting role
- Gender, cultural diversity and different needs must be respected; entitlement, quality and inclusiveness are of fundamental importance to those who work with parents
- Anyone who works with parents should have specific training for that purpose



NOS Benefits

- Opportunity for the parenting education and support sector to determine common standards
- Reduce inconsistency and variability of practice
- Contribute to staff support, training and staff appraisal
- Job descriptions
- Northern Ireland model of organisation compliance



Standard 318 Developing Training Sessions for individuals and groups

- Aims and objectives
- Methods of delivery
- Use of technology
- Identifying resources
- Delivering training sessions
- Evaluating
- Knowledge and understanding



Impact of the Standards

- Raised awareness of number and variety of people working with parents
- Increased demand for appropriate training
- Tension between medical “dosage” model and adult learning
- Different levels of need require different training
- Supervision and continuing professional development
- In a climate of child protection concerns, potential to use Standards to validate service provider organisations



Review of the Standards 2010

- Standards owned by Children's Workforce Development Council, a sector skills council
- Consideration of location of this area of work..... adult or child workforce...?
- Training and Development Agency for Schools /Support Workers in Schools
- National Qualifications Framework- includes Work with Parents qualification



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