

III Involving parents and carers



DVD Chapter 9

Length: 19 mins

Summary

Refugee parents talk about their experiences on arrival in the UK and how their children's schools made them feel welcome and involved. At a project based at a primary school in London, parents get support to access services and are involved in regular workshop and information sessions. At a primary school in Glasgow, parents and children work together in puppet-making workshops and a gardening project. At a primary school in London, parents attend English classes and coffee mornings. The home-school support worker has an important role in building links between families and the school.



“Although our primary focus is the children, their welfare and their achievement and integration, there's still a recognition that a child doesn't exist in isolation, that it's a family and that you can't really have an impact on a child's life unless you are actually thinking about and working to support the whole family.”

Aims

- To consider the role of schools and other settings in promoting the integration of parents, carers and families.
- To consider some of the barriers to being involved that refugee parents and carers experience.
- To identify ways of developing support for refugee parents and carers.

Activity 1: DVD Chapter 9

Duration: 30 minutes

What you need

- **SHARED Futures** DVD
- Copies of Resource 16

What to do

Watch Chapter 9 of the DVD. After viewing, encourage participants to share their initial thoughts and reflections.

Then invite them to identify some of the approaches that the settings have developed and some of the successful outcomes.

Give out Resource 16. Ask participants to consider some of the ways that schools and other settings support refugee parents and carers and assist them in becoming part of the community. Use the information in Resource 16 to support the discussion.

Activity 2: Barriers to involvement

Duration: 30 minutes

What you need

- Copies of Resource 17

What to do

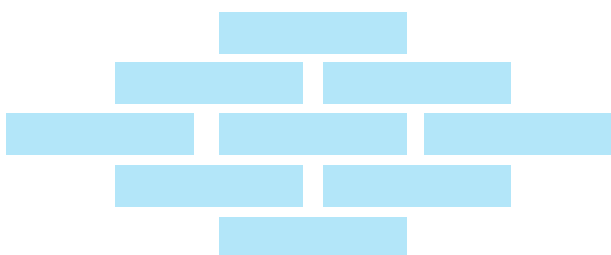
Prepare sets of the 'Barriers to involvement' cards (Resource 17). Ask participants to work in small groups. Give a set of the cards to each group.

Invite each group to consider some of the barriers to involvement that refugee parents and carers may experience in their particular setting. Each group must select nine factors that they consider to be the most important barriers. Then they should arrange and rank the barriers cards in a 'Diamond 9' formation (see example below), with the most important factors towards the top, and the least important towards the bottom.

Diamond 9

With reference to their diamond, invite participants to identify one way that their setting might increase the involvement of refugee parents and carers.

Ask each group to share their responses to the 'Diamond 9' activity, and their suggestions for developing further work, with the whole group.



Useful resources

Translated letters for schools
www.primaryresources.co.uk/letters

Welcome Booklet CD-Rom
www.mantralingua.com

Salisbury WORLD:
Involving refugee parents in school life
www.salisburyworld.org.uk/involvingparents.php

Home from Home:
A guidance and resource pack for the welcome and inclusion of refugee children and families in school
www.salisburyworld.org.uk/home-from-home.php

Resource 16



TO BE USED WITH 'Involving parents and carers'

Involving refugee parents and carers

- Settings that support refugee children are often one of the first points of contact their parents and carers have with the host community.
- Going to school re-establishes normal daily routines.
- A friendly and supportive welcome can establish trust and good relationships.
- Schools and youth settings provide opportunities for parents and carers to rebuild social networks.
- Schools and youth settings are well placed to understand the complex needs of many families. Signposting to other services and agencies can help parents access specialist support when needed.
- Support for parents is part of the core offer of extended services in schools.
- Opportunities for volunteering can support parents' and carers' access to education and employment.
- Parental involvement in a child's schooling is a key factor in a child's progress and attainment.



Resource 17



TO BE USED WITH 'Involving parents and carers'

'Barriers to involvement' cards

They may be unable to communicate in English.	They may be unfamiliar with education systems in the UK.
They may come from a culture where there is no tradition or expectation of parental involvement.	They may not have been consulted about their needs.
They may feel anxious about trusting people.	They may be unaware of what the school or the other setting can offer.
There may be no information available in their own language	They may be under stress and pressure because of their asylum application.
There may not be an effective system in the school for welcoming families who are new arrivals.	They may be worried about other issues such as money, health, housing and employment.
The school or other setting may not be well informed about their culture and experiences	They may have young children and need support with childcare.
The school or other setting may not be aware of local agencies and services that can help refugees.	The programmes and activities on offer may not meet their needs.