

INTRODUCTION

Every Family Matters sessions were delivered in secondary schools over a three week period in November. This was the second year of delivery for a two year pilot scheme, financed by the DCSF.

The purpose of the pilot is to explore ways of helping parents with the issues they may face when their child moves from primary to secondary school. This document shows the comments and interactions from the 10 secondary schools involved and the post delivery evaluation by the team.

FORMAT

Lewisham's sessions were delivered by facilitators from the borough's Extended Services team and The Children's Society Genesis Project. They worked in partnership with theatre group Make Believe Arts (MBA) to present a four part programme.

Part One: Welcome, icebreaker exercise using 'smiley faces' and short presentation by facilitator emphasising the continuing importance of parents/carers to children's attainment during secondary school whilst acknowledging the barriers parents may face.

Part Two: After an icebreaking exercise MBA present a series of short sketches. The actors play two different families, the first a single parent with a primary school aged child and a boy in Y7, the second a two parent family with one child. Each sketch presents, with humour, a issue or problem that can occur when a child moves from primary to secondary school – Dad's involvement, child leaving the house on time in the morning, coping with the changing relationship between parent and child, worry about child coping and making friends, homework, etc.

Part Three: The audience are encouraged to comment on what they have seen, either by offering advice to the families about ways they have coped with similar situations or, if brave enough (and many were), taking an actor's part in the sketch and, by acting differently, changing the outcome.

Part Four: The facilitator talks about the help and advice that is available in Lewisham and nationally for parents and encourages them to take away a pack detailing this - followed by an opportunity for questions. There is a quick evaluation using the smileys, then thanks and close.

SUMMARY

Overall the programme was a success. School staff commented favourably on the events:

"The workshops were lively, engaging and very well received. Parents felt able to discuss problems without it being personalised to their family or their child. I would like to offer it every year if funds were available to do so".

Erica Pienaar, Headteacher, Prendergast School

"I felt that the workshop considerably enhanced our work in engaging the parents of our year 7 pupils. The children enjoyed their afternoon session, which was important. However of equal value was the way in which parents were given the opportunity to explore challenging issues in a safe, non-judgemental manner that was at the same time relaxed and enjoyable. We hope to build on this event by offer further workshops and would appreciate any assistance you are able to offer".

Olga Matthews, Deputy Head, Catford High

"We were very impressed by the workshop. The issues were very relevant and were tackled in a humorous way which drew out the main discussion points very well. The parents liked the event very much and we would definitely like to repeat it if possible".

Mike Sullivan, Deputy Head, Forest Hill

"I think we work so hard in making the transition from primary to secondary school as smooth and positive for the students it is great that the focus of the 'Every Parent Matters' evening was the parents. We tend to forget how traumatic it can be for them.

The performance was so clever as the delivery was amusing, fun and entertaining but sent a constructive message with each scenario. It was enjoyed by all. The feed back from parents that attended was all positive".

Moya Quinn, Head of Year 7, Bonus Pastor

Parents too found the sessions enjoyable and informative. Their comments are listed on the pages following, according to which school's session

"This is a fantastic service - why hasn't it been done before?"

"I really enjoyed the drama sections - I was amazed how much I had in common with the other parents here"

"Great fun"

CATFORD HIGH SCHOOL

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The workshop was perfect. Actors were as real parents. I realised that I am not only one going through these difficulties. This workshop made me think deeper about how to solve situations, bad habits, how to make myself listen to my children. Advice was very right and useful. Thank you very much> I would like to be involved somehow, but I am not sure if I will cope with time management (Rita Zeliionkiene) – Smiley face”

“Very formative, very beneficial, I could identify with some of the scenes, very well presented, thank you, God bless, KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK! – Smiley face”

“Positively happy – Smiley face

“I felt that this was a very informative and helpful workshop – Smiley face”

“Very good performance, very informative production, role play very good, good involvement of the audience – Smiley face”

“I feel that this workshop has been very interesting and extremely helpful with regards to both the communication of learning of children and parents. I am young woman and not yet a parent but will most definitely take in the account the situations which may be encountered once I have my children and they move the transition from child – young adult. Thank you – Smiley face”

“I thoroughly enjoyed the evening it was excellent. It made me think very carefully about the way in which I speak to my son. Very well acted out, very well organised everyone involved. Very nice!! Well done. Thank you very much (Emma Garber – Jai Mckinlays mum) – Smiley face”

PRENDERGAST

“What a great performance. You all have given me ideas of how to manage my children’s homework time. Great!”

“A very good and worthwhile evening – spot on and what a relief to know that others are going through the same things”

“Very interesting and relevant – I hope you get funding to continue this imaginative project.”

“It’s a wonderful play and we learnt a lot from it. We feel now that other parents go through the same experiences as we do. This issues explored were very important and sharing our experiences will help us to deal with some of the issues better in the future.”

“I feel this should be repeated every year.”

“Very enjoyable performances. Managed to encourage parent participation. Powerful learning tool. Wish could have been involved when first daughter (new Y10) was in Y7.”

“Something you may want to add – that in Yr 6 children are geared to SATs and nothing else once the SATs are complete they do no real schoolwork. By the time they start secondary school in September they have had a three month break and it is very difficult for some children to get started again with the school routine.”

“This was an excellent portrayal of the issues affecting families and children in their transition to secondary school.”

“It’s helped to normalise our experience as parents and to feel less isolated.”

“A very good evening, well worth coming to. Interesting acts, points and brought out the realities which we are going through. People must come and see what they have missed. All parents’ needs were demonstrated tonight.”

Deptford Green

“Enjoyed the issues raised though felt a little on the spot – how about a child who never shuts up!”

“Have alternative time for sessions i.e. afternoon as well as evening”

“Very informative – I would love for my son to have seen it and get involved too.”

“This session highlighted the factors that may affect a child’s behaviour and attitude to school life. I really relate to a lot of the issues raised. Very well done and realistic.”

Crofton

“The evening was enjoyable – well done to all.”

“Very interesting”

“I thought the drama was kept real – it was funning, entertaining and delivered a message”

“It was good for parents to give their views on the children’s education and give suggestions on how to improve the school”

“Very well done – I enjoyed it”

Addey and Stanhope

“It was a good experience and good to see from both sides of the situation”

“Very interactive session allowed me to see that other parents have the same issues. Gave me different ways of dealing with certain situations. Session should be conducted with pupils to show them their behaviour. Pupils could give their views as to how they would deal with situations.”

"The course was very informative. Saw myself in many of the scenes. Will recommend to others."

"What we had today was very good. I wish it will continue."

Northbrook

"A very enjoyable productive evening! Tackled difficult topics in a fun yet constructive way. Keep up the good work."

"Excellent play. Really enjoyed the different scenarios and the opportunity to participate and discuss how things could be done differently. Thank you and well done."

"It was very good, need to do more of this, very mind opening."

Sedgehill

"This was a very helpful presentation – Smiley face"

"Evening went well, very supportive, makes me analyse the issues that was brought up. Being able to hear other parents opinions was very encouraging – Smiley face"

"It has been a brilliant evening, I am glad I came well organised and realistic – Smiley face"

"The role play aptly describe everyday life – battle against technology and organising the children to achieve success – Smiley face"

"Thanks for the lovely evening. Every parents evening should be interactive like that, great, congratulations – Smiley face"

"It was a very helpful session about us parents. It should be held more often – Smiley face. The programme is very encouraging, keep it up – Clifford Soyviko's mum – Smiley face"

"Very helpful, lots of food for thought – Smiley face"

"The evening was very interesting, I would not change anything as it cover most aspect of issues as a teenager and the way they behave – Smiley face"

"It was really funny just like my house especially in the morning. – Smiley face"

"It was good to share problems with other parents & know we are not alone in the problems of homework and getting the children to school – Smiley face"

"A very interesting, informative & interactive evening – Smiley face"

"Evening really eventful, I think it was a great idea for parents, There are situations that as parents we can't deal with, so this was beneficial. There should be more evenings like this – B Chetty-Sterling (70) – Smiley face"

“Found it very entertaining and could really relate to a lot of it. Made me look at a few things different and maybe could understand my daughter a bit better – Smiley”
face

Yr 8-7 parent, very good comment. It was very good and enjoy, I enjoy it a lot – Smiley face & It reminded me when I was going to school, I was bullied by other children, I was afraid to fight back, I was always afraid of school through bullied by wicked children – Sad face (**note** this parent spoke to me (Clifton) afterwards stating that she is so glad she came and that this is the first time she had spoken about her negative school experiences, remembering what school was like for her she hopes will put her in a better place to help her children. Throughout the forum session this parent was very vocal with lots to say and contribute.

On average 40-45 parents attending