



Education and Culture DG

Lifelong Learning Programme

TITLE	Importance of the education partnership with parents
Time	30 minutes
Equipment	OHP, laptop, handout
Description	<p><u>Step 1:</u> Trainer initiates reflection phase: What is your perception of parents? How do you handle working with them? Do you see parents as <i>partners</i> or <i>team members</i>? What are the good aspects of working together with them? What tends to be difficult? And difficult for whom? What would you like to change about the way you deal and work with parents? What do you understand by “education partnership”? What do you see as the benefits and what are the disadvantages of regarding parents as partners and treating them as such?</p> <p><u>Step 2:</u> Trainer input Discussion of different approaches to <i>working together in partnership</i>, and regarding parents as <i>special network partners</i>. The trainer should also explain that many studies have already indicated that this topic is beset with difficulties.</p>
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the meaning of <i>partnership</i> when working together. • Pick up on the variety of approaches. • Make it apparent to the participants that there are a variety of ways of looking at this and understanding it. Compare these different perspectives with those represented in the team: do they coincide or do people only think they coincide? How can we deal with the different perspectives?
Reflection	<p>The trainer might pick up on how the team members deal with the different perspectives amongst themselves. This might serve to illustrate the discussion culture in general within the team. The trainer can highlight plurality in the discussion as a strength, and show that a team does <i>not</i> have to fall apart as soon as differences of opinion occur. On the contrary, it could be regarded as a commendation for the team, since people who can see more in a situation might possibly understand the overall situation better. What is important in a situation of this kind is how the team handles the different perspectives. Moderation is important to allow the different perspectives to stand, rather than standardising them all. (<i>This also touches on a topic which we will focus on later, i.e. team dynamics. So the trainer can pick up on this situation later.</i>)</p>

Barriers	This is an emotional topic, especially as “education partnerships” are much talked about, in other words it is assumed that parents will be regarded as “equal partners on the same level”. It is difficult to have a different opinion here and give reasons why it is sometimes difficult to regard parents in this way and thus involve them. It is important during this step to signal openness, in other words that different perspectives are welcome and are valued.
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