Case Study 3

Training

Welshtown Children's Centre is an integrated children's centre that is about to start delivering the Welsh Government's Flying Start Programme.

The manager of the centre has undertaken a skills audit of the current staff team against the Welsh Government's Flying Start Strategic Guidance and their service level agreement. She has identified a learning need for staff in relation to engaging families in their children's learning.

The manager is keen to ensure that all staff involved in the Flying Start Programme i.e. both Flying Start Family Support Workers, Nursery Practitioners working in the crèche and Health Visitors have a consistent approach to engaging families in their children's learning and development.

The manager feels that the National Occupational Standard (NOS) in the Children's Care Learning and Development (CCLD) suite **SCDCCLD0317 – Engage with families in ways that encourage them to be involved with their children's learning and development** covers all of the key elements that her staff team need to do this effectively.

She approaches a local training organisation that has expertise in childcare to design a training programme for them based on this NOS.

This case study will look at two main areas:

- What are the key performance indicators and knowledge and understanding statements that should be reflected in the training and the expected learning outcomes (Part A)

- After the training programme has been delivered how can the NOS be used to ensure that learning has taken place and is being applied in practice (Part B)

Part A

The use of the NOS to develop training programmes gives organisations the assurance that the training is relevant, structured and has clear learning goals for those taking part. By having the learning based on the required performance criteria, skills and knowledge, staff will know what is clearly expected of them and managers will have a basis on which they can measure performance and how effective the learning has been.

In relation to this case study the key areas for learning could be broken down into the two main areas – what they should be able to do following the training (1) and what they will know and understand following the training (2).

(1) What they should be able to do following the training

As with all NOS there is a broad range of performance criteria that would need to be taken into account. With this NOS there are three main overarching performance criteria that would need to be reflected:

Liaise with families about their expectations for their child

Encourage families to be involved with their child's learning and development

Review children's progress with families

Within each of these three main areas there would be a number of key performance criteria that should be reflected in the course.

Liaise with families about their expectations for their child

Communication

The training programme should provide staff with information on how to communicate effectively with both children and families in a way that is open and welcoming, and how to adopt an approach that will promote inclusion. This could include methods and techniques for doing so and how to build trust and rapport in a relationship. (P1)

Listening

Course content should cover listening skills and techniques and enable staff to develop the skills that are needed to listen to both children and their families. This would look at areas such as taking account of the age and abilities of the children and what experiences or feelings that their parents/carers may have. (P2-P3)

Ability to recognise diversity and difference

Learning should cover how to recognise the value and diversity of family structures and how these may impact on the family expectations. It should also look at how to encourage families to recognise the skills and capabilities that their child has. This could also look at areas such as cultural differences and expectations. (P4-P5)

Providing support

This would look at how to support families to access the knowledge and information that they need to know about children's learning and development and how to work with others to create a supportive environment for families to discuss their own child's needs. (P6-P7)

Encourage families to be involved with their child's learning and development

Working with families

Course content would provide staff with the knowledge to be able to work with families so that they value the importance of play and to demonstrate how it can extend children's skills and development. It should also cover how to enable families to participate in play. (P8-P10)

Identification of opportunities and potential obstacles

Learning would cover how staff could identify opportunities for families to be involved with their child's learning and development and what obstacles there may be. (P11-12)

Partnership working

This would look at how they should work in partnership with families in order to help them recognise the contributions that they make to their own child's learning and development. (P13)

It would also look at how the team work with each other to ensure a consistent approach with clarity about their own and each other's roles and responsibilities. (P7)

Review children's progress with families

Review

Learning should reflect how staff can involve families and children in the review of their progress and to how to use information to forward plan. (P14-18)

Reflective practice

All training courses should include an element of reflective practice within them. With this course it would be important that those taking part are able to reflect after the course and examine their current performance and what they may need to improve upon. They should also be given the skills to continually reflect and evaluate how they have put into practice what they learnt and how this has improved their work. (P19)

(2) What they will know and understand following training

There is a broad range of knowledge and understanding that underpins the performance criteria in this NOS but those listed below are specific and of particular reference to engaging families in their child's early learning and therefore must underpin the learning programme.

K17	How to work in partnership with children, young people, key people and others
K21	The nature and impact of factors that may affect the health, well-being and development of children and young people you care for or support
K22	Factors that promote positive health and well-being of children and young people
K23	Theories underpinning our understanding of child development and learning, and factors that affect it
K24	Theories about attachment and impact on children and young people
K25	The importance of effective communication in the work setting
K26	Factors that can have a positive or negative effect on communication and language skills and their development in children and young people.
K27	Methods and techniques to promote communication skills which enable children and young people to express their needs, views and preferences
K38	The transitions that children and young people may go through
K39	How families' expectations for children might vary according to the child's gender, religion, culture and ethnicity, background, needs and abilities
K40	How you might demonstrate that you recognise and value diverse family structures
K41	How families can access information on child development
K42	The link between parental/family expectations for their children, their own childhood experiences and knowledge of child development
K43	How you can positively reinforce parent's efforts and involvement

Expected Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes of the training programme may therefore be:

At the end of the training programme, practitioners should:

- Know how to communicate effectively with children and families
- Understand the factors that impact upon families' engagement in their children's learning
- Know how to work in partnership with each other and families to involve them positively in their children's learning
- Know how to involve families in reviewing the progress of their children and planning for the future

The implementation of this learning can then be measured in practice following the training programme. (Part B)

Part B

By using the performance criteria and skills and knowledge as a basis for the design of learning goals, managers and staff have a tool with which they can evaluate how successful the learning has been and also to measure staff's performance against.

There are range of methods that could be used to evaluate participants learning. Some of these are listed below.

Method of Evaluation	How it can be used	Example
Evaluation of training outcomes	At the end of the programme an evaluation sheet is a quick method of establishing whether the programme met the overall learning outcomes and whether participants felt that they had learnt something as a result of it.	Some sample questions for this programme could be: ***Do you feel that as a result of this programme you know how to communicate effectively with families?*** (P1,P2)
Employee self-assessment (before and after the programme)	Self-Assessment is a valuable tool for both employees and employers to use to evaluate learning. These can be used before and after a training session and give staff the opportunity to assess what their current learning needs are in the particular area and set some learning objectives and how these have improved after the programme.	Before the programme a staff member may have a learning goal where they wish to learn more about how to work with families to enable them to participate in their child's play. (P8-13) This could then be evaluated after the programme to see if their knowledge has increased and if they can now apply the theory.
Observational practice	Observation is a very practical way for employers to see if learning has taken place and whether staff are demonstrating what they have learnt to the correct standard.	Staff could be observed working with a family and a manager could assess how they are communicating with that family and whether their approach is open and welcoming and whether they are being inclusive. (P1) They could be observed to see if they can apply the techniques that have been covered in the training programme.

Continuing Professional Development	CPD is an essential part of learning and development for all staff. As a result of the training course staff could be asked to complete their CPD needs and highlight what future learning they may have as a result. This allows staff not only the opportunity to assess what they need to develop further but gives employers a tool to measure whether learning has taken place, how it was done and how this has impacted on staff.	As a result of the training a staff member may highlight that they need to learn more about the impact of transitions. (K38) By using the CPD toolkit (www.ccwales.org.uk/continuing-professional-development) the staff member and manager can plan how the learning will take place, the opportunities and support needed and once the learning has been completed how confident staff now feel.
Supervision/appraisal	Using supervision/appraisal is integral to helping staff acquire the skills and knowledge that they need for their role and is an effective means for employers to assess their performance and learning.	Supervision can take account of the above examples and can be used as a method for monitoring how staff are progressing and address any concerns that they may have. It could also be used as a method by itself to address how staff found the course, what they learnt and what future needs they have and they could be monitored regularly throughout future sessions. Having the expected performance criteria gives managers a tool to measure against and to identify any concerns.
Question and answer session	This could be used as an informal way of gauging how staff found the programme and at a general level what learning took place.	Staff could be asked a range of questions e.g. **What obstacles do you think may affect family involvement? What can be done to address these?** (P12)