KENNINGTON SURE START LOCAL EVALUATION

INITIAL SUMMARY – INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS – SPRING 2004

Summary

- The interview findings show good overall satisfaction with the range of drop-in/toy library/activity sessions across the Kennington Sure Start area.
- Locally trained interviewers have been successful.
- Parents express a very high satisfaction rate with all sessions surveyed.
- Parents gain a wide range of benefits from the drop-in/toy library type sessions. They feel very positively about them and value the chance to meet other parents and reduce their stress, and to see their child playing with others.
- Parents say that children gain a wide range of benefits from this type of session. Parents value the play opportunities offered their child, and the support for their child’s development, in particular the social development through interaction with other children.
- There are a number of suggestions from parents as to how services can improve, and the survey will be of value to all Sure Start service providers.

Number of parents interviewed and value of research

25 interviews with parents completed and returned about the sessions in focus.

There were one or two gaps in the questionnaires as returned by the locally trained interviewers, but they mostly yielded adequate or good information. There were some interesting comments and useful information for Sure Start managers/Board and for people running services.

Sessions attended by parents

Not much can be read into the returns about levels of parental attendance across the Sure Start programme, because the sample was so small and not representative in any way. It is encouraging however that many people knew about/attended a range of sessions, and not just one.

Parents gave comments on 11 different sessions/activities, so it is not possible to draw conclusions on how well received any one session is. The spread shows overall satisfaction with the range of drop-in/toy library/activity sessions across the Kennington Sure Start area.

Reasons for attending the session

An open question for them to say what first comes to mind. The main motivation seems to be about the child – playing, socialising. Next comes their own wish to
socialise. It is interesting how positively/explicitly people stated their interest in having a say, linked to attending the parents forum.

Overall the parents expressed a very high satisfaction level with all the sessions – 84% felt they met their needs well. None felt the session they talked about had not met their needs in any way.

Other comments give a bit more detail on what parents feel.

**Benefits for parents attending**

This section starts with questions that the researchers thought would pick up on the main benefits for parents. The overwhelming response was positive – only 12% of the 225 responses said that they had received no benefit.

On the negative side the sessions had least helped in getting information and ideas about parenting and building confidence as a parent. This reflects however the type of session surveyed. Even though only one parent discussed a positive parenting session, the activities still support parenting according to most respondents. A survey of parenting education sessions in the future should show greater benefit in this regard.

Above all parents look forward to this type of session and feel positive/happy about them.

The other important parental benefits in the view of those interviewed are:
- Helping meet parents/make friends
- Reducing stress

**What parents like**

Speaking about their own interests, parents predominantly like the social contact, meeting people and interacting. It is important that providers ensure that there is the right time and environment for parents to get the most out of sessions in this way. Parents also enjoy seeing children play, and where appropriate joining in.

The sessions are strongly perceived as reducing parental stress and reassuring them about their child’s development and their parenting.

**What parents don’t like**

Negative comments were few in number but provide some learning points for providers. The board could ask providers for their response to both the positive and negative comments.
Benefits for children

Again, the questions that the researchers thought would pick up on the main benefits for children found an overwhelmingly positive response. Only 8% of the 150 responses said that their children had received no benefit in any of the ways investigated.

Parents spoke very strongly about the benefits to children in terms of the play opportunities offered them and the support for their development. Children overwhelmingly look forward to attending.

What children like

Parents see their children benefiting from better play opportunities, and the interaction with other children. They benefit from the activities and toys and it helps children gain confidence in mixing with others. They see benefits in their child learning to share, and in communicating better.

What children don’t like

The main thing that children don’t like is going home! But again there is value in considering the few negative comments.

Suggestions for improving services

A few suggestions were made and these are summarised. Providers and the Parents’ Forum might discuss.