

Interested in setting up a Parent Champions scheme?



What are Parent Champions?

Parent Champions are...

Parent volunteers who spend a few hours a week linking with other parents, to tell them about local childcare and other family services. Being parents, they can chat in a more informal way and share information and their own positive experiences about using local services. They meet parents in all sorts of places such as playgrounds, markets, libraries and local play groups.

They are supported by the local authority, a children's centre or a local community organisation.



The Parent Champions National Network

The Parent Champions peer-to-peer model was pioneered by Family and Childcare Trust in 2007, to reach parents missing out on information about childcare and early learning services.

The Parent Champion National Network was launched in 2012, and a new partnership with Action for Children is currently piloting the model in children's centres, with a view to national roll out.

Ongoing funding has been received from the Department of Education to enable us to support those wanting to set up schemes, and the model is evolving to reach a whole range of families beyond just early years.

How does it work?

Setting up does not have to be costly or time consuming. Here are some top tips:

- **Match your Parent Champions** as closely as possible to the groups or geographical areas you are trying to reach.
- **Go step by step** – it is better to start with a small number of good Parent Champions, which in turn will bring momentum to your project.
- **Be realistic** in what you manage.
- **Provide good support** – ensure your volunteers know that they have back up when they need it.
- **Keep careful records** to show your impact.

Become part of our Network – it's free to join!

Our Parent Champions National Network consists of Family Information Services, children's centres, other local authority teams, and charities.

Membership gives access to free support, resources, information, training and events, and small grants. There is also an online members' area, with template documents.

The Network is continually growing – we have been contacted by around half of local authority areas for advice and support. Currently 23 local authority areas are running a scheme and 17 are in the process of setting one up.



How will you benefit?

Parent Champions is a proven* and cost-effective tool for reaching families who have not traditionally accessed childcare and other services for children.

You can benefit from running a Parent Champions scheme, as it can:

For families

- raise parents' awareness of local childcare and family services, improving their children's outcomes;
- bring families into children's centres;
- allow families to be involved in the development of local services;
- work to support minority groups and their engagement in services;

For volunteers and communities

- add value to the role of volunteers;
- create a pathway to training and employment;
- increase the quality and capacity of outreach work; and

For local statutory duties

- support local authorities to achieve legislative duties, for example, identifying families who are eligible for the two-year-old offer of free childcare, and providing information to the most deprived families, and those with disabled children.

The scheme is highly popular because parents often consider word-of-mouth as the most trusted source of information.

* In 2012 a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of the Liverpool project showed a return of almost £13 on every pound invested.



Parent Champions in Lambeth

The scheme in Lambeth has been active since March 2013. It started with 15 parent volunteers and was given advice and training by Family and Childcare Trust.

Lambeth uses Parent Champions to reach families in the Coldharbour Ward who are eligible for the free two-year-old childcare places - a majority due to the high levels of deprivation. The Parent Champions were specifically chosen for their communication skills, knowledge of the area and diversity.

The scheme also allowed parents the chance to talk to local authority decision-makers about how services for families could be improved. Their understanding of their community's needs provided great suggestions for actions the local authority could take to improve people's health and wellbeing.



How do I start a Parent Champions Scheme?

Visit our website for more detailed information:
www.familyandchildcaretrust.org/parentchampions

Contact us to discuss your project and how we can help you to develop it.

- **Deborah Brodie, Project Manager**
deborah@familyandchildcaretrust.org
or 020 7940 7512
- **Renata McGrath, Project Assistant**
renata@familyandchildcaretrust.org
or 020 7940 7534

The Family and Childcare Trust is the charity created from a merger of Daycare Trust and the Family and Parenting Institute. Together we bring over 40 years of experience in campaigning and research into family life and childcare.

The Family and Childcare Trust works to make the UK a better place for families. Our vision is of a society where government, business and communities do all they can to support every family to thrive. Through our research, campaigning and practical support, we are creating a more family friendly UK.

Want to find out more?

Family and Childcare Trust

2nd Floor, The Bridge
81 Southwark Bridge Road
London
SE1 0NQ

Call us
020 7940 7510

Visit our website
www.familyandchildcaretrust.org

Email us
info@familyandchildcaretrust.org

Follow us on Twitter
[@FamChildTrust](https://twitter.com/FamChildTrust)

September 2014

Registered charity no: 1077444
Registered company number: 3753345
VAT registered: 833 0243 65
All rights reserved. © Family and Childcare Trust 2014

