

## Appendix 3: Involving young people and parents/carers in the training

It is unlikely that there will be young people and parents as participants in this training because it is aimed at those professionals working towards a qualification to work with children and young people in various sectors. However, because this training is focused on the rights of children and young people, their involvement and that of their parents in the delivery of the training might be worth further consideration. The guidance that follows here is reproduced from the introductory session for the UNCRC training and you might want to focus on the elements that discuss the involvement of children, young people and parents/carers in the delivery of the training rather than as participants in the training.

There are UNCRC training packages available that have been specifically written for children and young people and this training has been written for practitioners. However, involving young people, either as participants or to be invited to share their experiences with the training group, should still be part of the thinking for this course. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) states that:

“Any child or young person has a right to express their views and have them given due weight in decisions affecting them dependant on their age and maturity. The UNCRC sees participation as a right rather than a privilege or something that has to be earned”.

It is important for this training to support what it promotes through its actions – therefore, the involvement of young people should be a key part of the thinking and planning for this training.

In addition, wherever possible and whenever parents/carers want to be involved, it is important to ensure that they too have access to this training. There are a number of advantages to involving parents/carers – they bring an added dimension to the training and they are often the key to ensuring children and young people’s rights are respected and enacted.

There are a number of benefits that young people and parents/carers can gain from being involved in this training:-

- They get the same information in the same way as the practitioners they will be or already are working with – this puts them in a stronger position in terms of what they know about their rights
- They have a sense of ownership and investment in the UNCRC implementation process and will have a stronger stake in promoting it
- They can gain transferable skills and increase their confidence and self esteem

However, it is not always easy to make training such as this inclusive so that young people and parents/carers can see its relevance to them and can become involved easily. There may be barriers to their inclusion that need to be considered and overcome, as much as possible, in the early planning days.

The kinds of questions you might need to consider in terms of the barriers and their reduction might be:-

- Physical – is the venue accessible (particularly for young people, parents/carers and practitioners who have additional needs) and does it have a range of accessible amenities?
- Resources – are the materials that accompany the course easy to read and provided in a way that is accessible for the individual?
- Attitudes – will the other training participants accept the involvement of young people and parents/carers or will they be reluctant to welcome them and be open with them? And how can you deal with issues around this?
- Lip-service – is the involvement tokenistic, not taking valuing the contributions they can make and hence will they feel as if their time is being wasted?
- Communication – is the language being used accessible, are you using jargon, are you assuming prior knowledge, are you assuming a level of intellectual functioning?

To promote the involvement of young people and parents/carers in the training and to reduce the barriers to their involvement there are three key elements contributing to the training event that you will need to consider – Preparation, Venue & timing and Approach to the training.

- **Preparation**

Preparation applies to you as a trainer, to the parents/carers and young people and to the other training participants. If you want to ensure that your training offers parents/carers and young people an effective training experience and attracts them to want to access the training in the first place, then it is important to involve them in the planning stages. The following would be useful:-

- Actively involve a parent/carer and young person representative in all the planning stages for the training, especially in ensuring they understand the aims for the day and can advise on the approach to take to advertise the training to other parents/carers and young people.
- Have a well-defined, systematic strategy in place to recruit a wide range of young people and parents/carers, advertising widely but appropriately and making sure that details about the training are clearly targeted at the desired participants.
- Make sure that their inclusion is not tokenistic – carefully plan how and why they are involved and make sure you provide information about this – ask young people and parents/carers what would help, act on it and tell them how you have changed what you do as a result of their contributions – their involvement needs to count.
- Be clear about the nature of the involvement: are the parents/carers/young people to be speakers, participants, or facilitators?
- Allocate a specific resource to parents'/carers' and young people's involvement to cover out-of-pocket expenses.
- Make sure parents/carers and young people are aware from the start that expenses can be paid – out-of-pocket expenses might include travel, telephone, childcare etc.
- Ensure that all participants are aware of the nature of parent/carer/young person involvement and the need to support them to enable participation – this could be done as part of the publicity materials for the course.
- Treat the event as a project and have a detailed project brief available to all involved in the planning and delivery.
- Decide whether the event is open to all/any parents/carers and young people or whether it is by invitation only.

- Before delivering the training, think of ways you could adapt the activities that you are doing to suit the requirements of the young people and parents/carers that you are working with.

- **Venue and timing**

- Careful thought is needed to ensure optimum attendance – canvass parents/voluntary organisations/young people's views about timing and venue.
- Check the venue beforehand to ensure that it is accessible and easy to reach.
- Check whether parents/carers will have time to drop off/pick up their children from school
- Find out whether young people are likely to have any travel problems and try to ensure you provide a venue and timings to avoid that
- Find out whether the venue easily accessible by public transport or whether other travel arrangements be made, eg car sharing
- Explore whether a weekend or evening event would increase potential participation
- Find out whether it's worth pursuing the provision of on-site childcare.

If young people or parents/carers are to be speakers:

- Make sure they are clear about the purpose of their input
- Give them detailed information about the training so that they are aware of what other trainers will be covering and what participants will get out of their contributions
- Make sure that others involved, trainers and participants, are aware that the young person/ parent/carer will be speaking
- Find out if they have they spoken in public/trained before and if they haven't make sure you do some preparation with them to build their confidence
- Give them the opportunity to rehearse the content they will be delivering with someone else
- Introduce them to the group in a way that makes the importance of their contribution clear but that focuses on what they want the group to know about them
- Find out if they would like to use technology and if they need support to do so
- Discuss with them whether they can stick to the time they are allocated and if they want to take questions or not

After the event:

- Make sure you leave time at the end of the day for further questions, if the young people, parents/carers are participants; and if they are trainers give time for a debrief at the end of the training
- Clarify how and if they would like any feedback, if they are presenters and how they will give feedback if they are participants
- They might appreciate a formal written thank you for their involvement.

- **Approach to the training**

An inclusive approach to the training delivery, thinking about the language you use and the activities you offer is very important. There are a number of things you can do to increase the chances that they will feel included:-

- Make sure that the language used at training events is young person and parent/carer-friendly and does not include too much practitioners' jargon
- Some of the activities in the training may raise issues around conflict of rights and rights violations – you will need to ensure you monitor this carefully and make sure that the language used, the points raised and the issues uncovered are handled sensitively and that they do not put the young people or parents/carers in a difficult position, feeling uncomfortable.
- You will need to make sure, at the beginning of the training delivery, that you set clear ground rules/principles or a working agreement, that includes issues of confidentiality and respect and that is clearly explained so that all participants understand and accept it.
- Make sure that the activities delivered during the training are suitable for the young people and parents/carers represented in the training group.
- It is crucial that young people are enabled to participate safely.