

# NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENT/CARERS/FAMILIES.



Consider ways of supporting parents/carers/families new to the school so they can get to know each other, develop their own support networks and begin to develop a sense of belonging to the school community. (Effective Transition for parent/carers; document 20.1-20.6 the Transition Audit)

Activity	Suggestions on how to put the activity into practice	Possible socially distanced versions
<b>Stay and play session</b>	<p>Invite small groups of parent/carers (about 4-6) and their children to a play session in the garden. This may be children and parent/carers from one key group.</p> <p>Encourage parent/carers to talk to one another.</p> <p>Suggest they arrange times to meet as a group at a local the park.</p> <p>Provide a member of staff available to talk to the parent/carers.</p>	<p>Chairs arranged two metres apart for the parent/carers.</p> <p>Reduce the number of parent/carers and children according to space available.</p> <p>Children could have the option of using the indoor area while their parent/carers stay outside.</p>
<b>Getting to know each other session for parent/carers</b>	<p>The session could be facilitated by the Headteacher, EYFS leader or class teacher during non-contact time.</p> <p>Invite a small number of parent/carers at a time so that they do not feel overwhelmed by a larger group. This could be parent/carers who have children in the same class or key group.</p> <p>Send a personal invite using the parent/carers preferred name.</p> <p>Arrange the seating informally and if possible, use low soft chairs.</p> <p>Provide space for push chairs and toys for toddlers.</p> <p>Offer appropriate refreshments.</p> <p>Greet parent/carers at the door using their name.</p> <p>Use a range of gesture and visual prompts to include and engage all parent/carers including those with English as an additional language</p> <p>Try and 'buddy' parent/carers who you know speak the same language or have similar interests.</p> <p>Consider a focus for the session. For example, encourage parent/carers to talk about how their child has settled in school or provide copies of 'What to expect when' and loan them to the parent/carers.</p> <p><a href="#">What-to-expect-in-the-EYFS.pdf</a></p>	<p>Offer suitable refreshments in the mud kitchen area, chairs arranged two metres apart.</p> <p>A member of staff models examples of how children play in the mud kitchen and how this supports learning.</p> <p>Parent/carers can try some of the activities, provide some resources for each parent/carers to use.</p> <p>Offer adaptations for parent/carers to try mud kitchen type ideas with their child in the park or their garden.</p>
<b>Introduce parent/carers to each other</b>	<p>Leaders to be available for parent/carers by being present at drop off and collection times.</p> <p>This facilitates parent/carers being able to chat informally them to Leaders.</p> <p>Leaders and Teachers may notice those that do not seem to socialise and perhaps connect them with another parent/carers who they know has a child in the same class or, in the case of parent/carers with EAL, speaks the same language.</p>	<p>Greet parent/carers outside and follow the school's safety procedures.</p>



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<b>Focussed activity events</b>	<p><b>Book Party or workshop</b> – invite a small number of parent/carers and their children.</p> <p>Set up a room or small area with either story sacks or several copies of the same book and resources that will enable interactive play.</p> <p>Provide a range of creative materials so that parent/carers can work with their child to make a zig zag version of the focussed book.</p> <p>Start by reading the book to the parent/carers and children so that story telling is modelled for the parent/carers.</p> <p>Parents/carers can look at/read the book to their own child and play with the resources.</p> <p>The facilitator can support engagement with the interactive activities.</p> <p>Once the children go back to their class encourage parent/carers to stay for refreshments.</p> <p>Provide a leaflet about how to read and share stories and loan a copy of the book so that it can be shared at home.</p> <p><b>Mark making and early writing party</b> – organise this event in a similar way to the focussed book event.</p> <p>Set up the room with a range of mark making activities for everyone to explore.</p> <p>Talk to the parent/carers one to one and explain how each activity can help early writing development.</p> <p>Provide a ‘take away’ bag which has writing resources to use at home.</p> <p>Pupil Premium funding could be used to support these events.</p> <p>Encourage parent/carers to stay for refreshments and ask them to contribute to an evaluation display.</p> <p><b>Maths day</b> – this could be planned in a similar way to the above or take place in the classroom.</p> <p>Maths activities are set up in the indoor and outdoor learning environments, parent/carers are invited to support their child with the activities while staff talk to them individually about the mathematical learning involved in each activity.</p> <p>Encourage parent/carers to stay for snack with the children and other parent/carers.</p> <p><b>Forest school activities</b> – invite small groups of parent/carers to work with the school’s forest school leader. This may take place in a local wood.</p> <p>Share ideas that parent/carers can use with their children when visiting local parks and woodland areas.</p>	<p>All these activities can be adapted so that they can take place outside with a reduced number of people.</p> <p>Provide resources for each family to use.</p>



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<b>Volunteers</b>	<p>Ensure all parent /carers who volunteer have completed all the safe recruitment checks as required by the school. All volunteers should have a job description highlighting their roles and responsibilities as a volunteer.</p> <p>Parent/carers volunteers to help with small school projects such as gardening, painting a fence or repairing items in the outdoor areas. These activities could be at weekends or during the school day. Offer refreshments so that parent/carers have opportunities to socialise.</p> <p>Parent/carers volunteers could help to distribute home learning packs or books to loan. They could work in pairs, so they have a chance to talk to other parent/carers.</p> <p>Ask two parent/carers to work together to help with activities such as cooking or labelling new books.</p>	Volunteer activities would take place outside following the school's safety procedures.
<b>Knowing your parent/carers</b>	Identify parent/carers with specific skills or interests. They could be asked to share cultural traditions, cooking, or a specific skill.	Social media and video could support this activity
<b>Parent/carers champions</b>	<p>Identify parent/carers who would be willing to help to facilitate activities for parent/carers so that they start to get to know one another.</p> <p>The facilitator's maybe parent/carers who the school know well because they have an older child at the school.</p> <p>They could arrange 'play dates' at the local park or a picnic for families who have children in the same class.</p> <p>Some parent/carers may prefer an opportunity to meet in a local coffee shop after they have dropped their children at school.</p>	Many of these activities could take place away from the school with guidelines about following safety procedures.
<b>Invitation for lunch</b>	Invite a small group of parent/carers from the same class for lunch or to sample a school dinner. This could be facilitated by a member of staff or a parent/carers champion.	
<b>School assemblies for parent/carers</b>	Ask a small number of parent/carers to arrange refreshments for the parent/carers of children in the reception classes after a school assembly.	
<b>Fund raising</b>	Small groups of parent/carers can be asked to help with fundraising events or celebrations. For example, organising raffle tickets for children to take home, wrapping Christmas gifts. If a space in school can be offered for the preparation of such activities then parent/carers will have chance to talk to each other.	



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Provide information about the local community	<p>Local parks - <a href="http://www.parksherts.co.uk/parks">www.parksherts.co.uk/parks</a></p> <p>Soft play centres – <a href="http://www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk/things-to-do/east/hertfordshire/sports-and-activities/indoor-soft-play-areas">www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk/things-to-do/east/hertfordshire/sports-and-activities/indoor-soft-play-areas</a></p> <p>Family centres – <a href="http://www.hertsfamilycentres.org/family-centres.aspx">www.hertsfamilycentres.org/family-centres.aspx</a></p> <p>Libraries - <a href="http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/libraries-and-archives.aspx">www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/libraries-and-archives/libraries-and-archives.aspx</a></p> <p>Summer reading projects</p> <p>Parent/carers and toddler groups</p> <p>Activities for adults such as yoga classes, adult education</p>	
SEND	<p>Parent/carers of children with SEND value opportunities to socialise with other parent/carers who have a child with additional needs. This could be offered in school by the SENCo as well as sign posting parent/carers to local support groups.</p> <p><a href="http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/the-hertfordshire-local-offer.aspx">www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/the-hertfordshire-local-offer.aspx</a></p>	These activities can take place outside or virtually using video.
Social media	Create a Facebook or Twitter profile. You can then keep families up to date with any activities for parent/carers. Consider creating a closed Facebook group for parent/carers, one for each class.	