

Case study | Newly Arrived Families

Engagement & Empowerment

From engagement to participation to facilitation – This case study is about the journey of a newly arrived family and how their involvement with the St Albans Heights Primary School Hub has impacted on their emotional wellbeing.

What was the challenge?

Engaging families is a challenge that Hub Coordinators recognise, embrace and wholeheartedly work to overcome. Engaging families with limited or no English language skills can be even more difficult. Despite having bi-lingual workers who speak Vietnamese, Arabic and Dinka we have a range of different ethnicities at our school. A family who are asylum seekers on community based detention orders recently enrolled at our school. Mother was described by her case worker as extremely depressed and with poor English.

What worked? What didn't?

The Hub Coordinator continued to engage informally with the mum for a couple of months encouraging her to attempt English and providing feedback that her language was comprehensible.

After three months the mum agreed to attend the Parents Group meeting in the Hub and began attending weekly. The group supported and encouraged Mum in her English language use and when we were talking about our individual strengths and skills, Mum indicated she had been a personal trainer in her country of origin. Mum now facilitates a Parents Exercise Group each Thursday and there is a demand for a second class.

“I was feeling very lonely and depressed and now I feel like I have a role in my community. My children have noticed I am happy now”



Your advice?

In our busy roles, let's never lose sight of the importance of informal engagement and persistence. Helping parents to recognise their personal capacity and skills is extremely important and providing the opportunity for them to share is very valuable. Language or language confidence can be a barrier to inclusion, but in a supportive, caring environment, many barriers can be overcome.

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