

STAFF INITIATED

Awkward Situations

Sometimes a staff member does have to speak to a family about something that is not pleasant such as:

- overdue fees
- child's behaviour - parents find it hard to hear that their child has been misbehaving so although not as difficult as 'The most difficult conversation', some of the comments suggested may be useful.
- parent's behaviour - see 'Awkward conversations - family initiated'

When worried about outstanding fees.

- Print off notice that says: This is a computer generated message. You have outstanding fees of If you are unable to make a contribution to reducing this amount in the next fortnight you will be contacted by staff.
- 'I notice that you have fees outstanding. What can I do to help you?'
- 'Your fees are getting a bit behind. How can I help you to sort this out?'
- 'How can we work together to reduce these outstanding fees?'

Separate the debt from the current fee. Allow families to pay the last fortnight etc and work out a separate plan for the outstanding debt.

Start with what has been working (even if small), then mention the issue and then:

- 'How can we work on this together?'
- 'How can we solve this issue together?'
- 'What is the best possible outcome we can aim for together?'
- 'What do you want out of this situation?'

FAMILY INITIATED

Situations may be uncomfortable due to your distress or the family's. For example, when a parent is complaining about a staff member, you could say:

- 'Have you mentioned your concerns to the staff member?'
- 'I think we all need to meet and talk about this.'
- 'I think this issue needs a formal meeting and (staff member) needs to be at this meeting. What time would suit you?'

In a situation when a parent approaches you angry and upset refer to the 'Communication - always listening' sentences.

In the situation of a parent being unhappy about the care of a child, you could say;

- 'I'm sorry you are unhappy about this. I want to hear your concerns in detail.'
- 'I'm glad you have brought this up with me. Would you like to speak to the room staff as well?'

Sometimes parents just need someone to listen to them, so always listen first. It may be that the issue they start with is not what they are worried about at all.

When we are emotional our thoughts and judgment are affected, so always STOP > CALM > THINK > DO/SAY to get the best outcome for everyone.

'Sometimes parents just need someone to listen to them.'