

Peer-Led Advocacy for Parent Support and Involvement

Theme: Parent involvement / participation / parent champions

Service Provided: Peer Support Networks for Parents of SEND Children

Overview: Kids implemented a peer-led advocacy program where experienced parents (parent champions) supported other parents who were new to the SEND system. These champions provided emotional support, shared practical advice, and helped new parents navigate the often-complex processes of applying for SEND support and funding. The service also included group workshops where parents could meet, share experiences, and learn from each other.

Key Best Practices:

- Peer-Led Support: Parents who had been through the SEND system acted as champions, using their experience to mentor and guide others.
- Training for Parent Champions: Parent champions received training in active listening, advocacy, and how to support other parents in navigating complex educational and healthcare systems.
- Inclusive Community Building: Regular support meetings were held in accessible locations, providing a sense of community and reducing the isolation often felt by SEND families.
- Information Sharing: Workshops provided parents with the knowledge to effectively advocate for their child's needs, understand their rights, and access services.

Outcome:

Parent champions successfully empowered other families to feel more confident and knowledgeable about their SEND journey. This increased parent participation in decision-making and advocacy, leading to better outcomes for children. The program also helped to reduce the emotional stress that many parents feel when navigating the SEND system alone.

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