Learning experience 4: An open-door policy

Theme: Well-being, Aim 1 and Learning goal 3

Age group: Toddlers and young children

Setting: Home and sessional service (playgroup)

Mina greets the children and their parents as they arrive at the playgroup every morning. She finds these few minutes of contact invaluable. Parents can let her know if they would like more time to chat about their children and she arranges a time to suit. At the beginning of the year she also lets them know that she can be contacted by phone every day from 1 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. if they have any concerns, or just want to chat about how their child is getting on in the playgroup. She reminds them of this regularly, and many of them find it reassuring that they can keep in touch like this. Some children are brought by relatives or childminders, and this form of contact is invaluable for their parents as they can ring Mina during their lunchtime.

Mikie (2 years and 11 months) started in the playgroup a month ago. His mam, Lucy, is very shy and Mina makes a special effort to have a chat with her once a week. Mina shows Lucy something, such as a photograph of him playing or a picture that Mikie has made. She uses this to encourage Lucy to talk about Mikie. She asks about things he likes to do at home and she offers ideas to Lucy to help extend what he is learning in the setting.

Reflection: What strategies could I use to help parents to feel more confident in talking to me about their children?