

# THRIVING LIVES TOOLKIT FOR EARLY YEARS

## PRINCIPLE 6 GUIDANCE

---

developed by CREC on behalf of the SCiP Alliance





## PRINCIPLE 6: FAMILIES ARE ENGAGED

Evidence Suggests that ...	What Might This Look Like	Emerging, Developing and Embedding Practice
<p>...Armed Forces parents and families are the foremost influence on a child's developmental progress and wellbeing.</p> <p>...Armed Forces families have a diverse and complex range of needs, relationships and parenting approaches.</p> <p>...establishing close relationships with parents and families can provide vital information to support an Armed Forces child to navigate their lives well and thrive.</p> <p>...empathy, compassion, communication and effective listening by staff can foster a parent's confidence in the setting's ability to support their child.</p> <p>...support and care for parent and family wellbeing, and for positive warm parenting approaches, facilitates a stable and nurturing home environment for the child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear and positive welcome and induction process to new Armed Forces families.</li> <li>• High awareness of individual family circumstances.</li> <li>• Family Support for individual parents and families.</li> <li>• Support groups for Armed Forces parents and families.</li> <li>• Early help for parents and family emotional health and wellbeing.</li> <li>• Virtual communication with 'away from home' parents.</li> <li>• Employment (or designation) of an Armed Forces Family Liaison.</li> <li>• Signposting families to other sources of support.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Emerging:</b> Early Years providers will be exploring how to value, engage and support Armed Forces families but may not have initiated any specific actions. There is limited recognition of how engaging families and understanding more about their unique experiences can support and enhance the child's wellbeing in the setting.</p> <p><b>Developing:</b> Early Years providers will recognise how engaging families and understanding more about their unique experiences can support and enhance the child's wellbeing in the setting. Some staff awareness may exist, but further CPD and support is required. Documentation may reference engagement and support of Armed Forces families but it is not always delivered.</p> <p><b>Embedding:</b> Early Years providers will consistently engage with Armed Forces families and seek to draw upon their skills and experiences to enhance the support offered to their children. All staff members understand the important role that the family play and shaping the child's life and acknowledge them as a source of expertise. Approaches to meaningfully engage families are utilised by all staff and embedded within daily practice.</p>



## PRINCIPLE 6: FAMILIES ARE ENGAGED

### Practical Illustrations of Good Practice

To support this process, a number of practical examples are set out (in the form of practitioner quotes) at the end of this document. These examples can be used to inspire new ways of working, provoke reflective dialogue, and to demonstrate what things are possible across the range of different early years provider types that exist.

### Examples from Practice: Principle 6

*We provide support for families to access local support. (Online survey)*

*With families living not as part of service communities the family needs support. This might be as simple as dropping off early as one parent is serving abroad. (Online survey)*

*Parents need people who check in with them, offer them advice and compassion. (Online survey)*

*To keep communication open, we have some books we can lend to our service families. We put photos and observations on our Family system so all parents can access, seeing the development and shared experiences. (Online survey)*

*We have worked to create a network around the family. This has worked very well. (Online survey)*

*Our Key Person develops strong links with family members by allowing additional time to talk at the beginning and end of sessions. We provide an online learning journal for a parent deployed abroad. (Online survey)*



*We made sure we checked in on with mum on a regular basis and offered her a shoulder when needed and ensured she wasn't isolated. We helped to provide babysitters, so she had time for herself. This all enabled her to deal with her child better. (Online survey)*

*Taking time to listen and being flexible with pick up and drop off times for the parent. Accepting that the best time for parents to make contact/e mail is often after bedtime and responding appropriately. (Online survey)*

*Our childcare settings recognise and are empathetic to service families and the impact separation has on them all. We provide opportunities for parents to attend the settings for craft sessions and offer the opportunity for parents to come in and speak with the staff team. We use FAMLY which enables those families who are separated to have the opportunity to communicate through the system and the children can send pictures of work completed and we can include pictures of children undertaking activities within the time they spend with us. (Online survey)*

*We are currently developing an Armed Forces Community Room for family events for service families. (Online survey)*

*We encourage spouses and wider family members to sign up to our online learning journals so they can keep in touch with what the children are doing and send back what they are doing so we can share this with the children. (Online survey)*

