

**Workforce Development Team  
(Leeds City Council)**

<b>Approach</b>	<b>How parents / carers have a voice and influence</b>	<b>What works well</b>	<b>Challenges faced</b>
<p>We offer training to foster carers in “safe” environments where they can network with other foster carers as well as with childcare professionals (multi-agency approach).</p>	<p>We take feedback and develop our materials based on what the foster carers tell us is important to them! The fact that they are listened to and their suggestions acted upon goes a long way towards building trust in the work we do, which all helps our work as we go forward.</p> <p>In addition, we actively seek involvement from parents and carers in the development of new or bespoke training packages by inviting them to review our training packages before final delivery.</p>	<p>The personal approach. Talking to people and inviting their input has remarkable results. We’ve had a representative from the EPIC Parents group praise us by saying: “That’s the first time I’ve asked for something from the council and they’ve delivered it!” when we were developing the Short Breaks training.</p>	<p>Accepting that we don’t know everything.</p> <p>As educators, it’s sometimes hard to remember that the people in the room are the real experts. A corollary to this is that parents and carers can sometimes be reluctant to believe that we, as professionals, not only welcome their input, but value it very highly.</p> <p>The challenge there lies in convincing them to open up and that they really do have expertise that we need. A huge plus is that when this happens, we are building their self-esteem – a win-win!</p>