

Some useful questions answered about the model and the training

1. *What evidence is there that PSI-ATP works?*

- The model is based on research mainly in the USA, over some thirty years (Joyce Epstein "School, Family, and Community partnerships - John Hopkins University)
- The model is developed around the six types of involvement (J. Epstein, 2009) and the objective is to set 4 x specific goals and develop an action plan on a yearly basis. The goals can link to the school's yearly action plan, can be very useful in term of self-evaluation and illustrate effective partnership in action in terms of inspections etc.
- The partnership can be very helpful in enabling the school to achieve its yearly improvement plan
- To date, 97% of schools who start an Action Team Partnership in Ireland continue into 2nd - 3rd year
- The ATP group become the "**action arm**" for achieving some of the goals that the school plan might have already identified (thereby: adding value)

2. *Is it more work for the Principal and Teachers?*

- *It is the Principal who usually selects the members of the first ATP*
- Although the Principal does not chair/lead the team, they are always a member of the ATP.
- The work is **equally** shared across the membership group, although especially in the first year it will require "leaders" to encourage and motivate others and these often initially are teachers, but not necessarily so. It is **not doing more**, but doing it more effectively in a spirit of **true partnership** (not merely involvement of children, parents and community members) in a co-ordinated and SMART manner
- Teachers and parents will encourage and support the children's involvement.
- Each ATP team will have their own style of working in their school with parents, teachers, children and local community representatives and this may relate to the local school environment
- If requested, the Co-ordinators of the ATP programme can put you into touch with Principals and teachers in your area, with a school already undertaking the ATP model of working. This may enable you to hear more about the practical considerations of utilising this approach and undertaking the training. Hopefully, this may assist you in making the decision to develop and form a n ATP for your school.

3. Who are members of the ATP?

- Membership should include 2-4 teachers (including Principal or representative)
- Children: normally 4th - 5th (at least two from each class)
- 2-4 Parents of children attending the school
- Community representation - this can be school liaison / welfare officers, faith groups, members of the local and business community. Some schools have included youth club workers, local shop keepers, staff from community resource centres and even the patrol warden person!
- An ATP can be any size but to have the representation required it is usually 8-16 members (dependent on the size of your school) and should have representation from all named partners above

4. What does the training involve?

- Training input is provided by Partnership Schools Ireland Coordinators and NPC trainers
- Training is usually delivered in 2 x 3.0 hours sessions (children are involved with adults in the training), with usually a week between them. The training could be undertaken anytime within the school day that suit the membership (would not advise trying to do in one whole day since there is a lot of information to get through, especially in the first session and concentration may be hard to maintain!).
- The second session is about developing the school's own action plan and by the end of this session the school normally would have identified the 4 goals: 2 academic, one partnership and one behavioural for their first-year action plan for their school.
- The training and presentation material has now been adapted to meet the needs of special educational schools and is suited for both primary and infant schools.

Once a school decides it would like to take on the training please contact the PSI-ATP Coordinator at [01 8874478](tel:018874478) or by email: psi@npc.ie or complete an application form and return.

Most schools find that they are trying to work in effective partnerships and that the training enables them to structure and organise their efforts better.

5. Who Funds the training for Partnership Schools?

This programme is funded by Partnership Schools Ireland and the Department of Education and Skills, for a three-year period, in partnership with National Parents Council (Primary).

It is not doing more but hopefully doing it more effectively in a truly partnership manner!

**Liam McPherson and Deirdre Sullivan - Co-ordinators - Partnership Schools Ireland for ATP
Tel: [01 887 4478](tel:018874478) or email: psi@npc.ie**