



From left to right: Norlie Easmon, Pauline King, Mihriban Tanyildiz, Rose Afua Dadzie

Meet the Haringey parents supporting others

When it comes to children, there is one source of information that parents always rely on: other parents.

The Parent Champions scheme launched in Haringey this year, bringing together local volunteers to provide parents across the borough with information and advice on free early learning and childcare, and the benefits of enrolling their children in nursery.

"I'm happy to be a Parent Champion because I'm a parent too," says Pauline King, mum of three. "I've been a working mum, juggling childcare and hefty fees, so I was willing to help other parents just starting out on the childcare wheel as I already experienced the challenges they face."

Pauline was looking for volunteering opportunities when she found out about Parent Champions. She was glad it didn't need any kind of qualifications – just a positive personality and a willingness to talk to people.

Fellow champion Mihriban Tanyildiz says that approaching someone to offer support while they're doing their shopping, or with their children, can be awkward. And there are forms to fill in and calls to follow-up, but the champions say it's worth it to help make sure families don't miss out on free learning opportunities for their children.

"I know a lot of Turkish mothers who can't use services in Haringey because of the language barrier," Mihriban says. "I'm glad I can help them by giving information in a way that they can relate to."

Rose Afua Dadzie's volunteering days began at a parent forum after her children, now age five and seven, started school. "I was enjoying it so much, so I decided to do more for the community."

Parent Champions get full training and support and it's a great way for volunteers to gain or build communication and organisation skills for work.

Grandparent Norlie Easmon says being a Parent Champion has helped her get her self-confidence back following a stroke. She recently talked to a mum about "Free for 2s" early learning for eligible two-year olds. "She was so happy and excited about it and that made me so glad."

Parent Champions are supported by the national Family and Childcare Trust. For more information, email EarlyYearsProvider@haringey.gov.uk