

Initial Project Ideas/brainstorm – Being a Parent mobile application

The purpose of this app is to go alongside and support the Being a Parent face-to-face groups. Being a parent groups are for parents who are struggling to manage the behaviour of one or more of their children. Groups last for 8 weeks and there is a separate introduction session at the start.

We want the app to be fully functioning and able to work by the end of the project, so modest and effective is better than complicated and incomplete.

Many of the parents who access our groups have low educational attainment, English as a second language and a fear of technology. Simple and user friendly is a priority. See bottom of document for a couple of easy to use apps that I like.

Features that we have thought of so far:

Homework

Between each week of the groups, parents are asked to complete homework tasks. These tasks are things parents are encouraged to go away and try during the week. We would like the app to contain a “homework” tab that allows parents to access the homework tasks on a week by week basis. Parents can see what the homework is and then record what they tried and what they have learnt. They will be able to record responses to structured questions such as

- What was the situation/task that you tried?
- How do you feel that it went?
- How did [named child] respond?
- Have you learnt anything or would you try anything differently next time?

Naturally these questions will change depending on the specific task. We will supply the homework tasks.

In addition to being able to record their responses to homework tasks privately, we would like the parents to be able to post their answers to a group chat or forum for the other parents to see. Other parents and the facilitators can comment on and “like” the posts, giving positive reinforcement to parents.

Handouts

At the moment parents are given paper copies of handouts. We would like a space on the app where all the handouts categorised by week can be stored for parents to view. We could also have a page in this section that simply lists the topics covered in that given week. E.g. this week we covered X, Y, Z. These were the handouts 1, 2, 3, 4. All of these topics can be seen in the course handbook (we will supply you with a copy of the course handbook).

Parent Profile page “me”.

Parents are part of a group. We want this app to function as a group as well so it needs social functions.

When parents sign up to the app they will sign up to their specific group, possibly through a specific code that is handed out during the group. Parents will be asked to set up a profile page that other parents can see, with basic demographic information, number of children, a photo of themselves and possibly their children. This must only be accessible to members of that given group.

Some of the profile should be private so that only the facilitators can view it. For example parents can write their mobile phone numbers on there but only facilitators can view.

Chat

This can function like a chat forum that parents can talk on, ask questions, post interesting things etc. It might be a good idea to have the general chat separate from where parents post the work they have been doing.

They should be able to ask the facilitator a question privately as well as writing it publically on the group.

Facilitators will also need to be able to log on to the app and will need admin rights so that they can moderate and delete chat that is not appropriate. They might also need to be able to control certain things and change e.g. the name of the group and the location and dates etc.

Home page

This should have their group name i.e. the location of the group and time and dates of the group. Facilitators will need to be able to update this for their group.

Recording progress

During the face to face groups parents complete a set of measures at the start of the group and again at the end of the group to measure progress. We would like these to be completed on the app (we will provide the measures). As part of this parents write down some goals for themselves and for their children that they want to achieve by the end of the course. It would be great if parents had to complete these as part of their profile and that they and others could see what their goals are. They would then need to re rate how close they were to achieving these goals (on a scale of 1 to 10) in the final week of the programme.

We also ask parents to evaluate the group half way through. This would be a good feature to add and goes directly to the facilitators.

If the results from these measures could be exported to excel at the end, it would be fantastic.

Pictures

Parents often love sharing pictures of their children. It would be nice to have the ability to upload photos to a section on the chat.

Push notifications

It will be essential that notifications can get pushed through to parents. Reminders for homework, messages from facilitators, reminders to complete measures etc.

Security

Confidentiality is very important. The app needs to be secure so that only parents in a given group can see the information. When first loading the app parents should set a pin code and they will need to enter this when accessing the app.

Apps that I like the design of (just for ideas).

Lose it! Calorie counter – The design is simple but effective. I like the 5 tabs at the bottom that are simple to see. Each one then takes you onto a screen where there are several other options along the top.

I particularly like the “social” tab, and I feel this could be made into a chat with other parents, but could also be a place to view other people’s goals, profiles and talk to the facilitators.

Hoop – what’s on for kids

This is a really simple and parent focussed app. I like the big colourful tabs e.g. TODAY, TOMORROW etc. I also like that there are lots of pictures with writing over it. We can provide lots of Being a Parent pictures that we use for the manuals etc.

Baby Buddy

This is a parenting app but mostly just contains information. I like the “avatar” on this. Parents can design their own person who guides them through. This might be too complex for a short project but if it is possible it might be a nice touch having an avatar delivering reminders and messages etc.