

Strategic Framework for:

Parental Involvement, Parental Engagement, Family Learning and Learning at Home

Section 7

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7. Parental entitlements and empowerment

7.1 Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006

In 2006, the [Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act](#) came into force. Within the Act, Scottish Ministers and local authorities have a duty to promote the involvement and engagement of parents in their child's early learning and childcare setting or school and their learning. The Parental Involvement Act (2006) recognises the benefits of involving parents in the wider life of the school and the vital role they play in supporting their children's learning. Providing and strengthening the framework to support parental involvement and parental engagement is therefore a key focus of the Act.

Duties within the Act:

- Parents are entitled to receive information and support to help develop their child's learning at home and in the community.
- Early learning and childcare settings and schools must be open to the involvement of parents in the work they do and they should consider ways of providing information that helps parents engage with school and their children's education.
- The Act provides a framework for ensuring that parents have the opportunity to express their views and have these taken into account on: policy matters affecting the education of their children; the school's arrangements for promoting parental involvement and engagement; and any other matters or issues of interest to parents.
- The Act makes provision for parents to be a member of the Parent Forum at a school and to have their views represented to the school, local authority and others through a representative Parent Council for the school. It also gives them the right to raise their concerns and/or make a complaint. Other ELC settings or schools may have parent committees or associations that will represent the wider parental view.

Reference is made throughout this Strategic Framework to the application of the Parental Involvement Act in settings and schools. This includes all sectors such as early learning and childcare, primary, secondary, special, community learning and development and the third sector. It should be noted that the application of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 covers parents of children attending early learning and childcare provided in public primary schools - they are members of the school's parent forum and may join the Parent Council. The Act does not apply to parents of children in 'free-standing' local authority nurseries or those attending early learning and childcare provided by a 'partner provider'. Nonetheless, we would encourage early learning and childcare settings, currently not subject to the legislative requirements, to ensure that there are effective arrangements in place for parental involvement and parental engagement and that the key principles highlighted throughout this resource are adhered to.

7.2 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child explicitly recognises the central role played by parents, carers, and families in ensuring that children grow up healthy, happy and safe. It recognises that families need protection and assistance to support the rights and wellbeing of children. Rights within the UNCRC require governments to recognise parental responsibilities and provide resources and support to help them fulfil their responsibilities, including assisting parents and carers to ensure children are provided with an adequate standard of living.

Parental responsibilities are directly referenced in articles 5, 18 and 27 of the UNCRC and references to parenting and the role of families are made throughout a large proportion of the articles.

Further information can be found [here](#).

7.3 Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)

'[Getting it right for every child](#)' (GIRFEC) provides Scotland with a consistent framework and shared language for promoting, supporting, and safeguarding the wellbeing of children and young people. Through a common understanding of wellbeing, we recognise that children and young people need to grow up safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included, so that they can become confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens.

GIRFEC was developed based on evidence and it is internationally recognised and is an example of a child-rights-based approach. It is locally embedded and positively embraced by organisations, services and practitioners across Children's Services Planning Partnerships, with a focus on changing culture, systems and practice for the benefit of babies, infants, children, young people and their families. This is delivered through the core components of:

- a named person who is a clear point of contact for children, young people and families to go to for support and advice. A named person can also connect families to a wider network of support and services so that they get the right help, at the right time, from the right people;
- a shared and holistic understanding of wellbeing and a single model of how this can be considered and supported; and
- a single, shared approach to planning for children's wellbeing where support across services is needed, co-ordinated by a lead professional.

GIRFEC is supported by the use of the National Practice Model which sets out a shared framework and approach to identification, assessment and analysis of wellbeing needs. It provides a consistent way for practitioners to work with children, young people and their families to understand the child's individual growth and development in the context of their rights, unique family circumstances and wider world, exploring strengths, resilience, adversities and vulnerabilities. Under the GIRFEC approach, all sectors and services should act together as a scaffold, to ensure that all children and young people have their rights upheld through receiving the right support, at the right time.

7.4 Empowered system – parents and carers



The Empowering Parents and Carers Guidance considers the contribution of parents and carers in an empowered system.

Empowering parents means improving and strengthening the ways in which education staff engage with parents and families; and, ensuring they are at the centre of decision making processes about their children's learning.

Further information can be found on the [National Improvement Hub](#) and in the National Parent Forum of Scotland's [nutshell guide](#) to Scotland's Empowered System.

7.5 Reflective questions

The following questions are provided to stimulate discussion and support improvement in practice. These are not intended to be prescriptive but may be useful as part of your self-evaluation journey.

- To what extent can we demonstrate that children, young people and families are at the centre of our decision-making processes? Give examples.
- What evidence do we have that we are actively seeking out the voices of children, young people and families using a variety of mediums? How are these voices being heard and taken into account to drive improvements?