

5. Conclusion

5.1 Key messages and recommendations

There are a number of key messages and recommendations for policy makers, local authorities and practitioners from this Review of Learning at Home.

Key messages

- Learning at home is an important element of children's learning and development before and after they start an early learning and childcare setting or school.
- Research shows that learning at home can have significant immediate and longer term impacts on children in different ways including a child's early learning; later achievements; nurture; resilience; wellbeing; social mobility; and skills for life.
- Interventions to help and support parents and families to engage in their child's learning should be multi-layered and remain a key priority.
- Practitioners and parents can have different understandings about what learning at home is. Work should be undertaken in partnership to ensure clarity and a shared understanding. Cultural change is also required to move away from common assumptions that learning at home is confined to homework.
- Parental Involvement Strategies at a regional, local or school level should include learning at home.
- Settings/schools may wish to consider a family learning approach to support children to achieve the highest standards, reduce inequity and close the attainment gap.

Recommendations

- Learning at home requires to be strengthened as outlined in the Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act (2006).
- Practitioners working with families should consider career-long professional learning in family learning approaches, adult learning approaches, engaging parents or other relevant training. Consideration should also be given to improving staff awareness of the importance of engaging with parents regarding learning at home. Staff should be confident in providing information and advice on learning at home.
- Schools should develop and regularly review their learning at home policy in consultation with parents, pupils and the community.
- Practitioners should continually reinforce the message to parents and families about the importance of learning at home. An explanation of the range and variety of learning at home activities at different ages and stages should be provided to parents and families.
- Practitioners should work with relevant partner organisations to help remove barriers to learning at home.
- Parents and families should be provided with information and/or resources to help them support their child's learning at home. They should be supported to understand the curriculum and the learning taking place in the setting/school to enable them to provide more support at home.
- Settings/schools and parents should regularly share children's learning to encourage learning at home, support home-school partnerships and build a holistic picture of a child's progress and achievements. These should be gathered and used to identify any gaps in a child's learning and development as well as to celebrate their achievements.
- Further research is required on the longitudinal impact of learning at home across Scotland. This would include wider community outcomes.
- Additional research is required to gather evidence on learning at home through consultation with practitioners, parents, families, children and young people.

5.2 Summary

The review of evidence shows that learning at home is a crucial part of children's learning and development and plays a key role in helping to close the attainment gap. There remains scope for further research along with more longitudinal studies to ascertain the impact of learning at home on children and young people across Scotland.

Raising awareness amongst the workforce and with parents about what learning at home is, remains a key priority for practitioners. Further work is also required to help equip and support parents to enable them to facilitate learning at home. This requires to be addressed through building on the strengths of families and by taking into consideration the diversity of parent-child interactions.

Parents and families should be informed and/or reminded about the importance of learning at home and the impact this has on their child's acquisition of language and attainment throughout their educational journey as well as the longer term outcomes.