Review of Learning at Home

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Contents

FOREWORD

'Parents are the first and on-going educators of their own children and, as such, should receive information and support to help develop their child's learning at home, in the community and at school'.

(Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006, Guidance)

This review provides the first Scottish definition of 'Learning at Home'. Our objective was to produce an easily accessible and understandable definition of learning at home and to provide clarity for practitioners and parents.

Children learn from the moment they are born - they begin to absorb information and make sense of their world. As well as providing the cornerstones for growth and development: food, comfort and security, parents also provide stimulation naturally through family life, everyday activities, games, rhymes and language that help a child to learn. Many of these activities are part of everyday life and include preparing and eating meals together, doing the washing, shopping, watching television and visiting family and friends. For younger children all these activities are opportunities for exploring and learning.

Parents have an important role to play in helping their child's learning and development at home. However, once a child starts school, it is not always easy to know how best to help them. Thereafter, as children get older it can be easy to forget the strong influence that the home and community still have on their learning and development.

Learning at home recognises the vital role that parents, family members, peers and practitioners play in children's learning and development. This document contains a literature review, references to policy and legislation as well as links to case studies on the National Improvement Hub about how learning at home can look in practice.

Gayle Gorman
Chief Executive

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Scottish Government's Programme for Scotland identifies a number of priorities which include: empowering parents, teachers and children to make key decisions about the life of their school; an education system that will give children and young people the skills, support and experiences they need to fulfil their ambitions; building strong and safe communities; closing the attainment gap; raising attainment for all; and improving the life chances of children and young people in Scotland.

Why learning at home?

Children in Scotland only spend around 15 per cent of their waking hours in school. The remaining 85 per cent of their time is spent at home or in their community and this presents a significant opportunity for learning (OECD, 2014). What parents do with their children at home is more important than their socio-economic status. A stimulating learning environment outwith school can therefore be fundamental to their attainment and achievement.

Providing clarity and the first ever Scottish definition of learning at home is vital to help practitioners and parents take this forward. This review takes account of the available evidence on: developing a home learning environment; effectiveness of learning at home; supporting parents to help their children learn at home; a family learning approach; and barriers to learning at home.

Scottish definition of learning at home

'Learning at home is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of organised or active learning activities'.

(Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network, 2018)

Approach to the task

In producing this review, Education Scotland considered national and international research evidence and gathered case studies from practitioners across Scotland. Additionally, consultation events took place with practitioners on developing the definition of learning at home. Practitioners across Scotland engaged with and receptively supported the development of the review.

Conclusions

There are a range of key messages and recommendations for policymakers, local authorities and practitioners from this review. Research shows that learning at home can have significant immediate and longer term impacts on children in different ways. These include a child's early learning, later achievements, nurture, resilience, wellbeing, social mobility and skills for life. Furthermore, early linguistic and cognitive development in children is linked with parental investment in learning at home. However, some parents and families may require support (Kluczniok et al, 2013; Hunt et al, 2011; Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011). Settings/schools may wish to consider a family learning approach to help give parents, families and children the tools from which they can continue to learn at home together. Supporting parents to help them with their child's learning at home is therefore 'a vital part of improving outcomes for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds' (Hunt et al, 2011). Given that there can be different understandings amongst practitioners and parents about what learning at home is, this review will help to provide clarity. Reminding practitioners and parents of the importance and influence that learning at home has on a child's development, is key to raising attainment and improving outcomes (Hunt et al, 2011; Kluczniok et al, 2013).

Moving Forward

'Improvement activity is at the heart of securing better outcomes for our children'.

(National Improvement Framework, 2017, p19)

Improving outcomes for children and families remains a key focus for all. The key messages and recommendations from this review require to be taken forward by relevant stakeholders. Education Scotland, Scottish Government, local authorities, third sector organisations, practitioners, researchers and others involved in learning at home will continue to work in close partnership to progress these. Potential actions for strategic leaders, practitioners and researchers from the key recommendations in Section 5, are listed below.

Strategic
- Learning at home requires to be strengthened as outlined in the Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act (2006).
- 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.

Operational
- 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.
- Interventions with parents and families to help them engage in the child's learning should be multi-layered and remain as a key priority.
- 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.
- 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.

Research
- 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.

1. PURPOSE

Research shows that 'when children and young people live in a supportive home learning environment, it improves children and young people's attainment and achievement'.

(2018 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan, 2017)

Findings from the [Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006](#) showed that 'there was confusion and a general lack of understanding among parents and staff about the difference between homework and the concept of learning at home' (National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS), 2017, p19). Learning at home was also identified by headteachers as an area for further development (NPFS, 2017). Practitioners and parents can have different understandings about learning at home and this review aims to provide clarity. It also provides the first ever Scottish definition of learning at home.

Consideration has been given to the available national and international evidence and research about learning at home. The findings will help support local authorities and practitioners to review their current parental involvement strategies and approaches. It will provide guidance for practitioners to strengthen the learning at home strand of the [Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006](#) and meet requirements within the [National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan](#) for Scottish Education and the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#) (2015). The findings will also help inform future policy decisions.

The term 'parents' in this document refers to people with parental responsibilities (within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995) and others who care for or look after children or young people. A person with 'parental responsibilities' refers to someone with the rights and responsibilities that parents have in law for their child. Individual family units will comprise a wider range of people who might also contribute to a child's learning at home experiences.

Corporate parenting is defined in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) as 'the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers'.

For the purposes of support for children and families, 'child' means a person under the age of 18 years. 'Family', in relation to a child, includes any person who has parental responsibility for a child and any other person with whom the child has been living (Children (Scotland) Regulations, 1995).

2. CONTEXT

'….early learning experiences at home are crucial in creating strong foundations for nursery, school and beyond'.

(National Parenting Strategy, 2012)

2.1   Background

Learning at home is an ongoing priority within the parental engagement driver of the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan. Supporting parents to 'improve the learning that goes on at home will have a major impact on child outcomes' (Hunt et al, 2011). In addition to this, 'the interaction between parent and child at home can have a significant impact on a child's language and literacy development' as well as attainment and achievement (Scottish Book Trust, 2018).

Following on from the Review of the impact of the Parental Involvement Act 2006 (NPFS, 2017), Education Scotland conducted a review of the current national and international research relating to learning at home. In the absence of a formal definition of learning at home, a Scottish definition was produced in collaboration with practitioners across Scotland. Case study examples of what learning at home can look like in practice were also collated.

2.2   Review of policy

Learning at home features in a number of Scottish policies and strategies. These include:

- National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan
- Family Learning Framework (2018)
- Review of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 (2017)
- Research to inform the Review of the impact of the 2006 Parental Involvement Act (2017)
- Family Learning Review (2016)
- Scottish Attainment Challenge (2015)
- Adult Learning in Scotland: Statement of Ambition (2014)
- National Parenting Strategy (2012)
- Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act (2006)

A detailed policy mapping overview is provided in Appendix A.

3. What is learning at home?

Parents have a vital role in a child's learning and development throughout their lives. Early learning and childcare settings, schools and communities can also play a key part in recognising, developing and resourcing this.

Scottish definition of learning at home

'Learning at home is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of organised or active learning activities'.

(Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network, 2018)

Learning at home can happen through a range of events including play, leisure activities, fun events, sports, trips, cultural or volunteering experiences. It can also happen through curriculum related activities, homework, reading and sharing books. Activities for learning at home can be specifically designed to enable parents to engage in their child's learning and build upon the learning from school or early learning and childcare setting. It can also provide intergenerational learning opportunities for the child, family and extended family and the community. Some families can benefit from using a family learning approach to help support them with learning at home (see Section 3.2).

Practitioners from across Scotland have provided the following words as examples of activities and experiences of learning at home that they use in their practice:

3.1 Why is learning at home important?

Children in Scotland only spend around 15 per cent of their waking hours in school. The remaining 85 per cent of children's time is spent at home or in their communities and this presents a potentially significant opportunity for learning (OECD, 2014). Around 80 per cent of the difference in how well children do at school depends on what happens outside the school gates and so learning at home is crucial for children to learn and develop (Rasbash et al, 2010; Save the Children, 2013).

What families do has a greater influence on a child's learning than who they are or their socio-economic status. Parenting and children's activities in the early years are highlighted in various research studies as making a significant difference to longer term outcomes for children (Melhuish, 2010). Providing information for parents on the importance of learning at home is therefore crucial, especially during the early years. The various ways that learning at home impacts on children, as identified in research, include:

- a child's early learning
- later achievements
- nurture
- resilience
- wellbeing
- social mobility
- skills for life

Building strong relationships and developing an understanding between home and school supports children's learning. Information shared by parents with their child's setting/school helps practitioners to then adapt their approach to suit the learning needs of pupils. The partnership working between parents and settings/schools also allows potential difficulties and opportunities to be identified at an early stage and to build a holistic picture of a child's progress and achievements (Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act Guidance, 2006). The better the information that settings and schools provide, the more parents can support their children's learning at home (Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act Guidance, 2006).

3.2   Review of evidence

'Effective parental involvement programmes are among the interventions that can help to close the attainment gap associated with pupils from economically disadvantaged households. Such programmes focus on helping parents to use appropriate strategies to support their child's learning at home'.

(Sosu and Ellis, 2014)

Background

Evidence from the Growing Up in Scotland Study (2010) suggests that children from less advantaged households are less likely to experience a wide range of 'home learning' activities than children from more advantaged households. In comparison, children who experience a wide range of activities such as being read to, singing, nursery rhymes and drawing from an early age, score higher in cognitive ability tests at age 3 than children with less experience of these activities.

Local Authorities have a duty under the Act to include learning at home in their Parental Involvement Strategy. Settings and schools have a responsibility to help make the links between what is being taught and learning opportunities that exist at home and in the community. They also have a particular role in helping parents to continue learning at home with their child.

The Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 recognises the vital role that parents and families play in children's learning and development. Within the Act, parents are entitled to receive information and support to help develop their child's learning at home and in the community. Parents have a key role in providing the cornerstones to allow their child to learn, grow and develop through everyday stimulating activities such as games, rhymes and language.

> *'A growing body of research suggests that good parenting skills and a supportive home learning environment are positively associated with children's early achievements and wellbeing'.*

(Economic and Social Research Council, 2012)

The influence of the home learning environment is 'over and above that of standard measures of family socio-demographic factors such as parental education, socio-economic status and income' (Growing up in Scotland Study, 2010, p3). Providing a 'supportive home learning environment is also positively associated with children's early achievements and wellbeing' (ESRC, 2012, p1; Kluczniok et al, 2013; Clarke and Younas, 2017). Parental support of 'learning within the home environment…..makes the maximum difference to achievement' and raising attainment more than parents supporting school activities (Harris and Goodall, 2007). However, the home learning environment is multi-dimensional and it is important to define the individual contributions that it makes to children's learning and development as well as to outcomes (Hartas, 2012).

Increasing the 'frequency' of parental engagement with learning at home 'cannot counteract the impact of the socio-economic gap on child outcomes' (Hartas, 2011, p909). There are a range of background variables such as socio-economic status, parental education and family size which can affect the impact on a family and the home learning environment. Regardless of this, parental engagement in learning at home, parental attitudes and behaviours can overcome these background variables and are crucial to a child's achievement (Cole, 2011).

Developing a nurturing relationship between parents and their child helps support their emotional and social development. This can be through responding to their needs but also through smiling, touching, body language and eye contact. Responding to a child in this way has a range of benefits. These include developing problem solving skills, emotional communication, establishing future emotions, behaviours and helps build relationships as they grow and develop. Setting individual and appropriate boundaries and routines is important for every child. This includes encouraging relevant sleep patterns, healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise. Building on the attachment between a parent and their child is a two-way process. Parents who respond to their child's needs through listening carefully will help their child to foster a secure attachment and develop their communication skills for life.

Obtaining further information about a child's physical, emotional, cognitive (thinking skills), social development and needs enables parents to understand the various stages of a child's learning journey. Improving the quality of the home learning environment and changing parenting behaviours is therefore a key step in helping to close the attainment gap (ESRC, 2012). Helping parents to learn at home with their child especially during the early years, has in previous studies predicted academic outcomes up to age 16 (Sammons et al, 2015).

Parents and families can engage in a range of activities in the home learning environment as part of the everyday characteristics of family life. These may include 'time spent reading to children or encouraging children to read, the activities and materials available to children, access to resources such as computers and visits to museums and libraries and other sources of learning' (Clarke and Younas, 2017). This investment of parental and family time in the home learning environment has been shown to 'significantly aid children's development….and also helps with literacy' and mathematics performance (Dickinson and Tabors, 2001; Reynolds et al, 2008). Engagement with and being actively involved in other learning activities such as gardening, baking, cooking and outdoor learning can instil motivation, curiosity, the value of learning as well as a desire to learn in children (Clarke and Younas, 2017).

Longitudinal studies provide the research evidence which confirms that stimulation through a rich home learning environment is associated with children's better cognitive development and

achievement, especially during early childhood (GUS 2010; Cole 2011; Baker 2015). The home learning and communication environment for babies and toddlers impacts on their acquisition of language and performance when starting school and is associated with later educational attainment (Hamer, 2012).

Factors that have been shown to positively influence a child's communication include early ownership of books, attendance at an early learning and childcare setting and a range of learning at home activities (Law et al, 2011). The activities shown to help children and raise attainment include (Law et al, 2011):

- the child playing with letters/numbers at home - linked with attainment in all measures
- a child's attention being drawn to sounds, letters - linked to literacy skills, early number skills and non-verbal attainment
- parents reading with their child – linked with higher scores in all outcomes
- visits to the library, museums, galleries – linked to positive association with language, literacy and early number attainment at school entry
- parents helping their child with a range of activities, having toys available - predictors of the child's expressive vocabulary
- parents helping their child to learn songs or nursery rhymes – linked to a significant positive impact on language scores when starting school
- encouraging and helping your child to cook a meal and/or set the table
- allowing your child to help you with DIY jobs around the house
- researching a topic of interest on the internet, in a library or from other sources
- helping your child to learn about political parties before they go to vote
- working together with your child on different activities eg gardening, baking
- showing your child how to play a musical instrument

'What parents do in terms of educational activities and parenting style' is considered to make a difference across a range of areas including behaviours and higher cognitive assessments. The home learning environment, family routines and psychosocial environmental factors are important to help close the 'gaps' in early child development (ESRC, 2012). Children who do not have a stimulating home learning environment are considered to be 'more responsive to high quality pre-school provision than those from homes that had high levels of stimulation and intellectual challenge' (Sylva et al, 2012).

Effectiveness of learning at home

> *'….income alone is not enough to reduce socio-economic inequalities in children's literacy and social skills development. Supporting the development of parents' capabilities through access to education and training is crucial'.*

(Hartas, 2011)

Learning at home is an important part of learning through everyday routine activities. Parental investment in learning at home is considered to 'make a positive contribution to child development by enhancing skills such as organisation, planning and monitoring and language that are conducive to learning, as well as motivation towards learning by developing academic interests and making connections between curriculum subjects and everyday experiences' (Hartas, 2011, p909). However, this can be dependent on various factors. Parental behaviour, parenting practices, positive parenting experiences and the ways in which parents interact with their child all play a contributing role to the effectiveness of learning at home and to promote better longer term outcomes (Sylva et al 2012; ESRC, 2012; Sylva et al 2014).

The effectiveness of learning at home can, according to Hartas (2011) depend on 'how well equipped parents are, educationally and financially to maximise the learning experiences for their children' (p910). It can also depend on the 'how', the 'quality of interactions' and 'under what socio-economic circumstances' that parents support their child's learning at home (Hartas, 2011). Consideration needs to be given to developing partnerships with parents and families and providing advice and support to help them maximise opportunities for their child to learn at home.

Impacts of learning at home can be influenced by 'parents' capacity to invest in financial and intellectual resources' (Hartas, 2011, p910). Careful consideration should be given to the types of learning activities that are used by settings/schools to ensure that monetary capacity does not impact on the intended outcomes or increase inequity amongst families.

Learning at home activities can help strengthen a child's capacity to accomplish skills and tasks. Engaging in frequent learning at home stimulated activities that include informal numeracy experiences has been shown to advance maths skills (Baker, 2015). Stimulation through learning at home is also 'positively related to cognitive development, especially during early childhood' (Baker, 2015).

Although learning at home does have a positive impact on academic areas, measuring the effectiveness on a child's 'literacy and social development may take time to materialise into observable outcomes' (Hartas, 2011, p910). Nonetheless, investing frequently in learning at home alone will not resolve the socio-economic gap on children's development (Hartas, 2011). Practitioners and parents need to be aware of the 'impact of parent-child communication and in particular, the influence of the home learning and communication environment in the early years' (Hamer, 2012).

Supporting parents to help their child's learning at home

> *Supporting parents to help them with their child's learning at home 'is a vital part of improving outcomes for children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds'.*

> **(Hunt et al, 2011, p6)**

Communicating and listening to parents can often be a strong focus for settings/schools but studies continue to show that there are improvements to be made to support parents in helping their children learn at home (Sylva, 2012). A study by Hunt et al (2011) highlighted that although the majority of parents maintain the same level of early learning at home after their child starts an early learning and childcare setting, families where adults are not employed actually do less. Raising awareness of the importance of maintaining levels of learning at home across families particularly in the early years requires an on-going focus, even though a child is attending an early learning and childcare setting. Further information is also required to explain, for example, that learning at home does not always require to be parent-led and some activities could include children learning together (Hunt et al, 2011).

Interventions which have had a positive impact on reducing the attainment gap are those which 'focus on helping parents to use appropriate strategies to support their children's learning at home' (Sosu and Ellis, 2014, p25). This is as opposed to merely seeking to raise parental aspirations for their child's education. Practitioners should ensure that they continually reinforce not just the message about the importance of learning at home but also provide an explanation of the range and variety of learning at home activities at different ages and stages. Inviting parents into settings/schools, building relationships and regular sharing of children's learning can help encourage and promote learning at home (Hunt et al, 2011). This approach can also help outline the roles of parents and practitioners around learning at home.

Supporting parents and families to help them engage in their child's learning should be a key priority and involve multi-layered interventions. These interventions should use an assets based approach and begin by 'building on the families' strengths' as well as encouraging and utilising the skills of parents (Hartas, 2011, p911). Such interventions should take account of the diverse ways in which parents interact and learn together with their child (Hartas, 2011).

Consideration should also be given to improving staff awareness of the importance of engaging with parents on learning at home. Settings and schools should ensure that staff are confident in providing information and advice on learning at home (Hunt et al, 2011).

A family learning approach

Family learning as an approach is not a new concept but one which helps break cycles of poverty and disadvantage amongst communities whilst at the same time enhancing the intergenerational transfer of skills from the parent to the child and the child to the parent (Family Learning Review, 2016). Research evidence shows that family learning is reaching those who are more likely to be living in the most deprived Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles, in receipt of benefits, from an ethnic minority background, less likely to be educated to degree level, working part time and who are female (Harding and Ghezalayagh, 2014). Family learning has long-term benefits as it affects behaviours and attitudes to learning across the whole family (van Steensel et al, 2011).

Supporting, equipping and building capacity amongst Scotland's parents to capitalise on children's opportunities for learning is key in raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. A family learning approach can be a catalyst in helping adults take up adult learning courses, training opportunities, gain employment or attain new skills. This in turn positively impacts on children's individual attainment, their aspirations and personal learning journey (Family Learning Review, 2016). Family learning also facilitates increased parental participation and engagement. Further information can be found in the [Review of Family Learning](#) (2016) and the [Family Learning Framework](#) (2018).

3.3   What are the barriers to learning at home?

'Evidence suggests that parental involvement in early learning has a greater impact on children's well-being and achievement than any other factor, such as family income, parental education or school environment'.
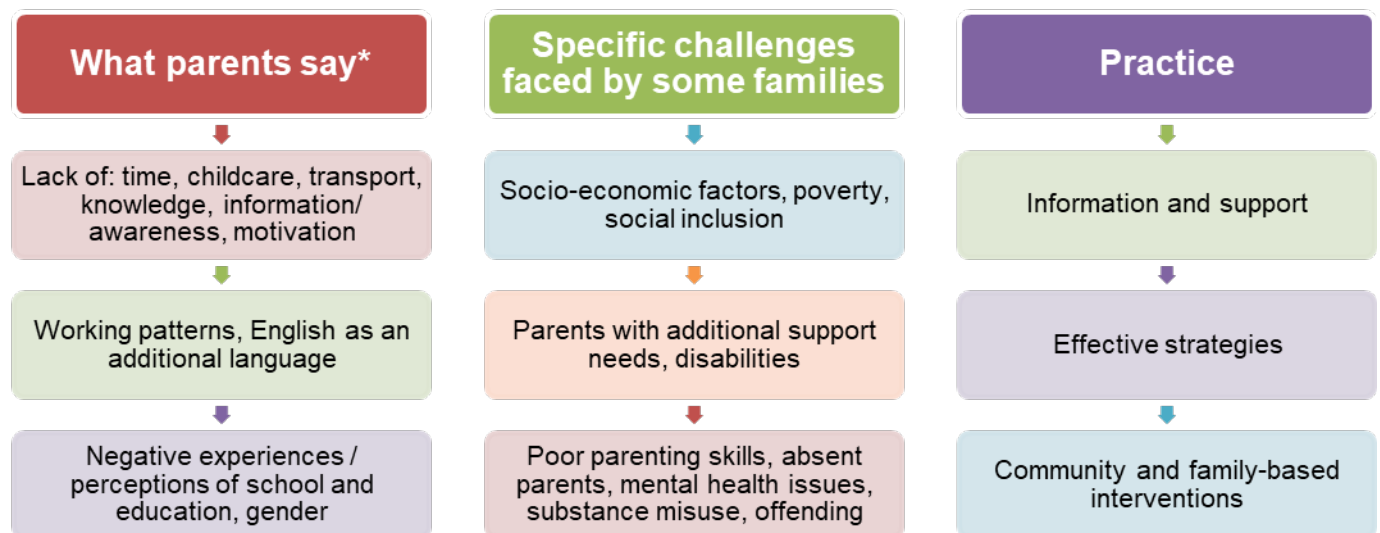
(Hunt et al, 2011)

Parents

Parents have outlined a number of factors which they feel restricts their ability to be more involved in their child's learning (Scottish Executive, 2005). These fluctuate from external barriers outwith a parents' control to individual obstacles specific to personal life circumstances (Scottish Executive, 2005).

External barriers to learning at home can be multifaceted. Individual barriers to learning at home can result from an individual's socio-economic circumstances such as poverty, working patterns, or social exclusion. Some parents also have personal assumptions about what their level of involvement or engagement in their child's learning should be (Scottish Executive, 2005). This should not be confused with the myth of 'poverty aspiration' which suggests that a child's 'less successful progress in education' is a result of 'their and/or their parents' poor aspirations' (Treanor, 2017, p1). Evidence from the Growing up in Scotland Study (In Treanor, 2017) and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2011) suggests that children living in poverty do not start with low expectations and they have the same hopes and dreams as all children. Aspirations can

however, reflect the 'expectations and constraints inherent within their setting, rather than a free choice of desired outcome' (Treanor, 2017, p1). In communities where there are multiple levels of deprivation, aspirations of parents for their children are high but they 'feel unable to engage with their child's learning in the home and feel inadequate in their knowledge and experience to help their children' (Treanor, 2017, p1).

Clear alignment between parents' aspirations for their child and what the child aspires to themselves, was a finding from a previous study (Kintrea et al, 2011). Supporting aspirations, however, meant 'working with parents as well as young people, particularly where parents face disadvantage themselves' (Kintrea et al, 2011, p70). Parental knowledge in how to make aspirations real and obtainable was considered to be the missing element (CRFR, 2017).

What parents say*	Specific challenges faced by some families	Practice
Lack of: time, childcare, transport, knowledge, information/ awareness, motivation	Socio-economic factors, poverty, social inclusion	Information and support
Working patterns, English as an additional language	Parents with additional support needs, disabilities	Effective strategies
Negative experiences / perceptions of school and education, gender	Poor parenting skills, absent parents, mental health issues, substance misuse, offending	Community and family-based interventions

*The contents of this table have been adapted from the Scottish Executive's (2005) 'Parents' Views on Improving Parental Involvement in Children's Education' and the National Parent Forum of Scotland's (2017) 'Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006'.

Parents and families can at times need support from practitioners to help them support their child's learning at home and to understand the curriculum (Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011). Establishing a meaningful relationship between families and the setting/school is a necessary starting point and one which should be a two-way communications process. Focusing on the principles of learning at home thereafter will help build on the relationship and interactions between home and the setting/school, as well as being of benefit to families.

Furthermore, parents may need help and support to understand the learning that is going on in the setting/school. Settings/schools also require to know from parents and families, about the learning taking place at home as well as the home learning environment.

Homework

> *'Schools whose pupils do homework tend to be more successful'.*

> **(Education Endowment Foundation, 2017)**

Homework is considered to be 'tasks given to pupils by their teachers to be completed outside of usual lessons (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017). Such tasks can include literacy, numeracy and activities to develop inquiry or problem solving skills. Homework can often be an additional source of stress for families with the least capacity to undertake the tasks.

Findings in a review of best practice in parental engagement (Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011), with parents of children aged 9-13, showed that:

- 84% of parents reported that their child's school provided them with little or no resources to help support their child's learning at home.
- 84% of parents reported that their child asks for help and advice with school work and revision at least once a week.
- 79% of children report that they would like their parents to know more about what they are learning in class so they can provide more support outside the classroom.
- 53% of parents reported being asked for help most days or every day.
- 22% of parents reported that they frequently found themselves unable to help children with homework because they didn't understand the topic being learned in class.
- 81% of parents would welcome support and guidance on how best to support their child's learning at home.

Extensive studies have been undertaken on the subject of homework. Many of these studies have considered the correlation between homework and the school's performance. Debates continue as to whether homework is the reason why schools perform better and are more successful rather than other school related factors. Indeed, following a number of reviews and meta-analyses, 'there is stronger evidence that it [homework] is helpful at secondary level but there is much less evidence of benefit at primary level' (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017; Hattie, 2008).

Time spent doing homework in secondary school has not only been a 'strong predictor of better attainment and progress' it has also 'influenced better social-behavioural outcomes (Sylva et al, 2012). For secondary school pupils, home remains strong and significant while also being likely to 'increase opportunities for learning, provide opportunities for practice and also feedback when assessed, and encourage independent study skills and responsibility' (Sylva et al, 2014).

Short focused interventions that relate directly to what is being taught and that are built on in settings/schools are likely to be more effective in improving attainment than regular daily homework (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017). Additionally, the 'quality of the task set appears to be more important than quantity of work' (Education Endowment Foundation, 2017). Effective homework is linked to greater parental involvement and support. Nonetheless, at times, the purpose of homework is quite often not clear to children. Where schools do move away from prescribed homework tasks, towards more learning at home tasks, this is not always communicated to parents in a way that is easy to understand. Care should be taken by practitioners to ensure that they share with parents and families the reasons why schools are changing their approach as well as explaining the intended learning outcomes.

A study ordered by the House of Commons (2014) looked at the number of evenings per week that young people in England spent doing homework and the progress they made. Findings from the study showed that less advantaged students often had no place at home to do their homework. Providing space and time at the end of the school day for children and young people to complete their homework was identified from the study as a possible solution to this.

Cultural change is required to move away from common assumptions that learning at home is confined purely to homework. Furthermore, practitioners should be cautious regarding their communications to parents to ensure that learning at home is also not promoted solely as homework.

Overcoming the barriers to learning at home

Overcoming the barriers to learning at home and building the capacity of parents may require a move away from more traditional methods. The early engagement process with parents and techniques used are crucial in developing relationships and trust which is a motivating factor in

families who ordinarily may not be engaged. Practitioners should also ensure that they take a sensitive approach to working with families and ensure that this is a genuinely collaborative and user led process. Working in collaboration with parents, families and partners on learning at home is essential to ensure that this improves outcomes for children, reduces inequity and closes the attainment gap. Findings from the NPFS Review (2017) suggests that parents of children with additional support needs require help with learning at home (NPFS, 2017).

Other factors which can impact on families and learning at home can include:

- Protected characteristics*
- Literacy difficulties
- English speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Caring responsibilities
- Service families
- Absent or displaced parents
- Parental confidence

*Protected characteristics are the nine groups protected under the Equality Act 2010. They are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The increased focus and promotion of learning at home has been a positive outcome of the Parental Involvement Act (NPFS, 2017). All settings/schools should continue to make the links between what is being taught in settings/schools and the learning opportunities that exist at home and in the community. Links should also be made to help parents understand how learning at home continues to impact throughout all stages of a child's learning journey including into the secondary school years and beyond. Overcoming the barriers to learning at home is crucial in helping children to learn and develop. Schools and settings can address this using their existing resources and creative approaches to help change pre-existing cultural notions about learning at home. Practitioners do require to have clarity on what learning at home is and how they can support parents and families with this.

Read, Write, Count is a national initiative which aims to build on the success of the PlayTalkRead and Bookbug programmes in the early years through encouraging parents and families to include easy and fun reading, writing and counting activities in their everyday lives. The Read, Write, Count campaign endeavours to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of Scotland's children by providing advice and support for the families of children in primaries 1, 2 and 3. Settings/schools can use this national resource to engage parents and help them use the materials at home as a focus of school learning tasks.

Practitioners may also wish to consider, in consultation with parents and parent councils, the need for further information on the various topics being taught in settings/schools to enable families to continue these discussions and support their child's learning at home (NPFS, 2017).

3.4   Workforce development

Building the capacity of Scotland's parents to improve the life chances of children and young people is key to raising attainment. There are a range of practitioners who can help build parental capacity and who have a key role to play in learning at home. These practitioners can come from a variety of backgrounds and sectors including community learning and development, life-long learning, third sector, early learning and childcare settings, schools, local authorities, family support, home-school link workers, health and social workers.

It is important that practitioners take time to understand the individual needs of families, community demographics and allow time and space to develop and build relationships. It can be

too easy to make assumptions about parents and families without having a holistic overview of their individual circumstances. Families need to feel valued, understood and listened to.

To help build the capacity of parents, practitioners working with families may wish to consider continuous professional development in: family learning; adult learning approaches; engaging parents; and/or any other relevant training.

3.5   Summary

The aim of this review is to provide information and clarity for practitioners about learning at home. There are key elements that have emerged which are of relevance to policy makers, practitioners and researchers. The review of evidence is strong in highlighting that learning at home is an important element to help close the attainment gap. Learning at home can in itself entail relatively low or no cost activities which provides longer term impacts up to age 16.

Although national and international research on learning at home has been considered, it should be recognised that the scope of this Review is limited to reviewing evidence from the available literature. Consideration has not been given to obtaining wider evidence that would have been gathered through consultation with practitioners, parents/families or children and young people. Further research is also required along with more Scottish longitudinal studies on the impact of learning at home.

Practitioners should consider moving proactively into a phase of building learning partnerships with parents and partners. Additionally, practitioners should encourage and provide greater opportunities for parents and families to learn at home with their child. Parents, families, communities and partners should be involved in developing learning at home policies or strategies in schools and settings. Links to case studies on the National Improvement Hub have been provided in Section 4 to exemplify how learning at home is working in practice.

4. What does learning at home look like?

'Schools are often unaware of how parents engage with their children's learning and either undervalue this engagement or do not respond positively. Providers should recognise that parental engagement includes a wide range of activities, including learning at home, school-home and home-school communication, in-school activities, decision making…….and collaboration with the community'.

(Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011)

4.1 Examples of learning at home

Defining the range and complexities of learning at home is challenging as it can overlap across aspects of learning undertaken with parents, families, peers or practitioners. Schools which are engaging effectively with parents often operate within the widest definitions of parental involvement, parental engagement and family learning (Goodall and Vorhaus, 2011). In consultation with practitioners for this Review, learning at home can include:

- learning at home / homework activities
- families learning together
- helping parents
- sharing learning
- decision making
- communication methods

Below are examples of learning at home as identified by practitioners in Scotland and from inspection findings.

Examples of learning at home – from practitioners

Learning at home / homework activities	Sharing learning
Family challenges/challenge cards, adventures with Teddy, board games, shopping, lego building, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) challenge, pick and mix homework, sacrament preparation, model making, newsletter, powerpoints on favourite/interesting things, cake decorating – taking photographs, 100 things to do before you're 13, transition teddy, trips, woodland walks, numeracy / literacy bags, cook at home bags.	Nurture groups, Maths recovery lessons (with children), child led workshops, outdoor learning, stay and play, open afternoons, homework fun challenges, Primary 1 learning at home reading block, class assemblies, careers day, talk time homework, shared learning exercises (Art/IT – practical), open days, home visits, celebrating what parents already do - sharing across the wider school community, directory of parental skills.
Families learning together	**Decision making**
Family learning events or homework club, PEEP / bookbug, parental reading programme, photography club, outdoor learning, cooking, crafts, work with fathers, Gardening groups, family nurture projects.	Reviewed reading policies, review and planner, tracking achievements, personal learning planning, target setting, GIRFEC review meetings.

Helping parents	Communication methods
ESOL, learning at home guidance – leaflets, parent packs, workshops, videos, cafes, home-link worker, parent mail/text messages, homework clubs, notes of intended learning.	Show my homework, website, twitter app, homework app, Glow, RM Easimaths, leaflets, learning logs, e-portfolios*, learning letters, consultations, social media, e-learning journals.

*It should be noted that pupils can struggle to access the necessary technology both at home and in school to enable them to take e-portfolios forward throughout their learning journey. Consideration could be given to placing greater emphasis on the learning taking place at home being the information recorded by pupils and families.

Examples of learning at home – Inspection Findings

Learning at home / homework activities	Sharing learning
Learning at home bags, building on achievements from home, homework tasks with family members, Ted's adventures at home, home-link initiatives, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), travelling dolls, lending library.	Class reward system, home-school sharing of achievements, child led workshops – informative learning opportunities provided by teachers.
Families learning together	**Decision making**
Family homework group, Parent-child homework club.	Parents encouraged to support learning through parents meetings, work with school to address issues, target setting in user friendly language.
Helping parents	**Communication methods**
Stay and play sessions, parental workshops, open days, special events, planned support for parents on supporting reading at home, written materials on what child is learning, information booklet on supporting at home.	Online learning journals, daily conversations, interactive online resources, blog, learning profiles, home-school diaries, text messages, noticeboards, photographs.

4.2   Case study examples of learning at home

In order to better support practitioners, Education Scotland has developed the National Improvement Hub (NIH). This is an easily accessible portal designed around the needs of education practitioners, providing interactive digital content and tools to improve practice and increase the quality of learners' experiences and outcomes.

Links to case study examples of learning at home are provided below. These have been selected from different local authorities and cover a variety of themes and approaches to learning at home. Some case studies were sourced through inspection findings and others were identified from the 2017 National Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) challenge pilot.

Fifty establishments participated in the National STEM pilot which aimed to support 3-18 approaches to STEM learning and teaching within five school clusters across Scotland. The pilot allowed Education Scotland to develop new partnerships and approaches to building capacity for STEM learning. This included:

- Trialling of a draft STEM self-evaluation and improvement framework
- Cluster networking and training events
- Introduction of the Improving Gender Balance in STEM Project
- Developing new career-long professional learning approaches to improve digital literacy in schools
- Developing cluster-wide approaches to STEM
- Partnerships with Skills Development Scotland, STEMNET, SCDI, SSERC, Generation Science and Institute of Physics.

Government Ministers made a manifesto commitment to roll out nationally a cluster approach to STEM. This is being undertaken within the context of the national STEM Education and Training Strategy for Scotland. In light of this, it was important, to learn from the experiences gained through the pilot to help scale up approaches that proved successful to better help school clusters across Scotland. Outcomes of the National STEM project at the end of the 18-month pilot phase included an increase in:

- parental confidence – building up knowledge to support child's learning
- parental involvement and link with the school – utilising parents' skills
- parental engagement in their child's learning – greater in-depth discussions at home
- wider family network being involved - intergenerational learning
- greater understanding of curriculum
- children and families repeating experiments at home or trying new ones
- family science clubs/homework clubs
- volunteer helpers

The STEM Education and Training Strategy was published by Ministers in October 2017. The strategy sets out the vision for STEM education and training for the next five years under the themes of excellence, equity, inspiration and connection.

Learning at home case studies

Killin Nursery – example of how to engage and support young children's learning at home.
Bankton Primary School – how to build capacity in parents to become active learning partners.
Glenlyon Primary School – using weekly homework to focus on listening and talking to improve learning at home.
Lismore Primary School – encouraging wider achievement, learning at home and improving home/school partnerships.
Mearns Primary School – helping parents to support their child's learning at home.
St Bartholomew's Primary School – programme to increase children's confidence in early literacy skills with the help of their parents/carers with a particular focus on phonics.
St David's Primary School – parents and children spending time together on a 'try at home' task.
West Kilbride Primary School – using 'science boxes' to encourage parental engagement in children's learning at home.
Craigie High School – strategies to help parents support their child's learning.
Largs Academy – helping parents understand the Broad General Education, Senior Phase, teaching strategies used in school to enable them to support their child's learning at home.
Ailsa Family Learning Centre – family learning programme which promotes healthy cooking, eating and helps develop family learning strategies in the home environment.

Glasgow Clyde College – creative approaches used to engage parents with little or no previous experience in science.
Renfrewshire – Pizza Reading – an early intervention family learning project that helps families to develop their skills and confidence using a holistic social practice approach.
Dundee – family literacies learning project.

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.

6.   METHODS

This section outlines the methods used in the Review of Learning at Home. It has been structured around the different stages of the review process.

6.1   Review of policies and strategies

A review of policies and strategies in relation to learning at home was carried out to obtain an overview of the most relevant documents to be considered in this report.

Consideration has not been given to strategies within local authorities on learning at home as these are often embedded into local Parental Involvement Strategies.

6.2   Review of evidence

A review of relevant evidence in relation to learning at home was carried out. The review included national and international literature on learning at home and its associated links to policy and strategy.

The review of evidence drew on a number of sources to identify research covering the past 10 years which was of current relevance to learning at home. Searches were conducted of the Idox database for research specifically linked to learning at home. Key words/terms used in the search were:

- Learning at home
- Home learning
- Home learning environment
- Raising attainment
- Parental involvement
- Parental engagement

Other key words of interest included: academic attainment; achievement; benefits of learning at home; learning together; families; improving outcomes; poverty; homework; socio-economic background; attitudes to school; closing the gap; and supporting parents.

The search returned a number of results that were of relevance including: parenting styles, parent-child relationships and child development. Searches were also conducted by the Scottish Government library across databases (nationally and internationally) and from publicly available resources on the web.

6.3   Developing a definition of learning at home

The results of this review of evidence helped provide the background context for learning at home and identified the need to develop a Scottish definition. Consultation was then undertaken with a range of practitioners across Scotland at workshops, conferences and research cafes on a draft definition. Feedback from the consultations helped shape the revised draft. The final version of the Scottish Learning at Home definition was produced in partnership with the Scottish Parental Involvement Officers Network (SPION).

APPENDIX A – ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Background – Scottish policy mapping

This section provides an overview of the key national policies and strategies relating to Learning at Home. These policies provide the overarching framework and guidance within which local authorities and practitioners should work.

After devolution in 1999, the Scottish Executive (now Scottish Government) identified the need for more research data and information about children's circumstances, their opportunities, difficulties and the challenges they faced as they grew up. This lack of existing data on developmental phases in children's lives, early years and the transition into adolescence led to the commissioning of the longitudinal study Growing Up in Scotland (GUS).

The GUS study was designed to examine 'the characteristics, circumstances and attitudes of the families who took part in the research' (GUS, 2007, p1). It aimed to track the lives of a cohort of Scottish children from their early years through childhood and to look at their experiences across time. The study has a specific and unique emphasis on Scotland and is 'driven by the needs of policy-making, with a particular focus on access to, and use of services' (GUS, 2007, p2). Topics covered in the GUS study have included: characteristics and circumstances of children and their families; pregnancy and birth; parenting young children; parental support; child health and development; parenting styles and responsibilities; and parental health.

The Growing up in Scotland Study has been fundamental in supporting Scottish Government after devolution, in developing cross-cutting health, education and socio-economic policies.

Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act Guidance (2006)

The Parental Involvement Act recognises the vital role that parents play in children's learning and development. It aims to encourage parents to develop their children's learning at home and in the community. Local authorities are required to 'take into account factors that may act as barriers, discourage or inhibit parents' involvement in their children's education' (p10).

There are many reasons why some parents have little or limited contact with the school, or who have difficulties in supporting their child's education and learning e.g. parents' own experience of school education. Within the Act, local authority and school staff are required to work closely with colleagues from other services, such as home-school link services, community learning, health, and social work, or other organisations to help support the work of the strategy, or who are working with families. They are also required to consider the effectiveness of their existing structures and ways of working with parents to encourage parental involvement.

Duties within the Parental Involvement Act:

- Parents should receive information and support to help develop their <u>child's learning at home</u> and in the community.
- Learning at home should be included in the Local Authority's Parental Involvement Strategy.

National Parenting Strategy (2012)

The Scottish Government launched the National Parenting Strategy in 2012 with the purpose of acting 'as a vehicle for valuing, equipping and supporting parents to be the best that they can be so that they in turn can give the children and young people of Scotland the best start in life' (p7). Helping parents to be the best they can be, makes a difference to children and young people (NPS, 2012, p3). The process for making this happen is through championing the importance of parenting, strengthening the support on offer to parents and making it easier for them to access

the support they need. Within the document, parents alone are not expected to 'shoulder the responsibility of improving the life chances of Scotland's children and young people' (p11).

'The nurturant qualities of the environments where children grow up, live and learn - parents, caregivers, family and community – will have the most significant impact on their development. In most situations, parents and caregivers cannot provide strong nurturant environments without help from local, regional, national, and international agencies' (World Health Organisation, 2007, p3).

Adult Learning in Scotland: Statement of Ambition (2014)

Adult learning with the family provides modelling for children and young people. Intergenerational learning has the power to create a more cohesive society by challenging stereotypes and through valuing the experience of both young and older people. The Statement of Ambition document aims to inspire, through adult learning, the people of Scotland to develop their dreams and aspirations, building hope and realising ambitions for individuals and communities.

Scottish Attainment Challenge (2015)

The Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to achieve equity in educational outcomes and raise the attainment of children and young people living in deprived areas in order to close the poverty-related attainment gap. The Challenge focuses on and accelerates targeted improvement activity in literacy, numeracy and health and wellbeing in specific areas of Scotland. It also supports and complements the broader range of initiatives and programmes to ensure that all of Scotland's children and young people reach their potential.

'How Good Is Our School?' (4th edition) (2015) and 'How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?' (2016)

'How Good Is Our School?' and 'How Good Is Our Early Learning and Childcare?' aim to support the growth of a culture of self-improvement across Scottish education. They build on previous frameworks and continue the journey of moving Scottish education from being good overall to being great overall.

'Evidence on the current performance of Scotland's education system suggests that we have a good education system, which is performing strongly in a number of respects. However, we are not yet at the level of achieving consistently excellent levels of performance which would match the world-leading ambition of our vision' (Education Scotland, 2013, p15).

Review of Family Learning (2016)

The Review of Family Learning is the first of its kind in Scotland. It aims to provide an easily accessible guide for practitioners and gives a summary of evidence taken from research, case studies and consultation with partners.

Within the Review, 'increasing ways in which parents and families can be equal partners in their children's learning at home, school and in communities' is viewed as 'crucial to raising attainment for all and closing the poverty-related attainment gap' (p4). 'Family learning programmes can be a conduit to increasing parental involvement and engagement in the life of the school and in children's learning at home' (p9).

National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education

The National Improvement Framework sets out the vision and priorities for children's progress in learning. The Framework is key in driving work to continually improve Scottish education and close the attainment gap. The Framework aims to 'improve and increase ways in which parents, carers and families can engage with teachers and partners to support their children and young

people and increase the voice of parents and carers in leading improvements with schools' (National Improvement Framework, 2018, p14).

The Framework is linked to other key national outcomes such as giving children the best start in life and being ready to succeed, tackling inequalities in Scottish society and improving the life chances for children, young people and families at risk. It builds on other improvements and reforms such as Getting it Right for Every Child, Early Years Collaborative, National Youth Work Strategy and Teaching Scotland's Future (skilled workforce). The Framework provides a shared focus to ensure that 'partners are focused effectively on key priorities' to work together and make the vision a reality (National Improvement Framework, 2018, p5).

Research to inform the review of the impact of the impact of the 2006 Parental Involvement Act (2017)

Independent research by Ipsos MORI was undertaken with 502 parents via a telephone survey and 4 case studies.

Key Findings:
- Most parents and some parent councils had limited knowledge of what learning at home meant in the context of the Act.
- Parents discussed learning at home synonymously with homework.
- Concerns that too much focus on learning at home could widen the deprivation attainment gap for those children whose parents may be less inclined to support them at home or do not have time to do so.
- Learning at home was an area headteachers felt they could improve on.
- Barriers to other forms of learning activities – financial constraints, lack of public transport in rural areas.
- More intangible aspects of learning at home where parents play a key role eg developing respect, resilience and self-confidence were not mentioned.

Recommendations:
- Learning at home is promoted to parents as a wider concept than just 'homework'.
- Greater promotion of learning at home could be through schools in the form of support and information but would also benefit from more focus at a national level.
- Greater thought should be given to how to support deprived parents in providing learning at home and how to support those children who do not receive that support.

Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 (2017)

National Parent Forum of Scotland undertook a multi strand review which examined the impact of the 2006 legislation. Responses received were from 1200 parents, 460 parent councils, 86 stakeholders.

Key Findings:
- The majority of parents understood 'learning at home' to mean 'homework'.
- Confusion and lack of understanding amongst parents and staff about the difference between homework and the concept of learning at home.
- Clarification is required to help broaden parents' and staff's understand of learning at home.
- The majority of respondents considered the increased focus on and promotion of learning at home was a positive outcome of the Act.
- Parents mentioned many examples of the ways in which schools supported learning at home. Suggestions for future included: more accessible teaching staff who are willing to engage with parents; and robust homework policies.

Positive impacts of the Act on Learning at Home included:
- Learning at home goes beyond assigned homework.
- Schools recognise the need to support parents with learning at home and have developed resources to help.
- IT platforms are being used to help with homework and learning at home.
- Communications, relationships and partnership working between schools and parents have improved.
- There is greater involvement from families.

Key Recommendations:
- Education Scotland take further steps to promote the benefits and ways for parents to get involved in their child's learning, including as a key priority 'understanding and practical application of the 'learning at home' strand of the Act.
- Schools should provide parents with effective strategies to support children's learning at home and take an evidence-based approach to the setting of homework and supporting learning at home.

Governance Review Next Steps (2017)

The Governance Review Next Steps document 'recognises that a parent's most important engagement with school is about their child's education and learning that goes on in the home. Evidence from key academics such as Dr Janet Goodall suggest that parental engagement in children's learning has the greatest impact on outcomes for children'. The Scottish Government have committed in the Governance Review Next Steps to 'boost support to those parents who do not currently engage as much as they would want to through enhancing the availability of home-school link workers and extending family learning' (p4).

Family Learning Framework (2018)

The Family Learning Framework provides a strategic framework to support the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of family learning in Scotland. It is aimed at those who are already delivering family learning, or who are about to be involved in planning, developing and/or delivering family learning. The Framework builds on the 2016 Review of Family Learning.

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