

## Strategic Framework for:

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

## Section 1

### This section covers:

1. Introduction

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It is well proven that children do better when parents, professionals and educators work together. 'However, not all parents find it easy to be involved in their child's learning. We want to help parents lay strong foundations for the loving, nurturing relationships that we know are integral to children's emotional, physical, socio-economic and educational wellbeing'

([National Parenting Strategy](#), 2012).

Increased parental expectations and desires to engage with early learning and childcare (ELC) settings\* and schools are evident from the national [Parental Involvement and Engagement \(PIE\) Census](#) data and in subsequent surveys of parents by local authorities and national parenting organisations throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Many settings and schools reported an increase in parental engagement through existing and new communication approaches offered by emerging technology and access to digital devices as a result of the [Connecting Scotland](#) initiative.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the topic of improving outcomes for learners, parents and families even more to the forefront of education discourses and debates. Practitioners across Scotland and indeed the world, have had to develop creative ways to engage with parents and help them support their children's learning and development during fluctuating periods of lockdown, blended learning and on returning to settings and schools. Many of the creative strategies and approaches used by teachers and practitioners throughout the pandemic have been welcomed and have proved to be effective in addressing the unique challenges presented by COVID-19. These have supported educational continuity and parental engagement. Whilst some of them may continue, long after COVID-19, they should be viewed as additional 'tools' and options rather than superseding all previous methods used to engage parents.

These additional tools to connect and engage with families builds on the vision in the [Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act](#) 2006 to involve parents in the wider life and work of the school and meaningfully engage them in their children's learning. Since the Parental Involvement Act came into force in 2006, there have been numerous developments in the form of key national strategies, [Frameworks](#), [action plans](#) and [Blueprint](#) which relate to the involvement, engagement and communication with parents, families and communities. Collectively, they provide the overarching framework within which local authorities, schools and practitioners should work.

However, there has never been a more important time to ensure that the workforce has the appropriate values, competencies, skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications to work effectively with learners, parents and families. Responsibility for working with learners, parents and families can vary across local authorities, early learning and childcare settings, childminders, schools, community learning and development, colleges and the third sector.

Ensuring the workforce continues to be developed and equipped and is given the time and resources to work with learners, parents and families can be an ongoing challenge (Family Learning Review, 2016). This is particularly the case because practitioners who work with learners, parents and families, do so across different sectors and can have a range of experience.

Depending on a practitioner's background, and the position or sector they are employed in, they can be registered with different standards councils or regulatory bodies such as the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTC Scotland) or the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC). In doing so, there is an ongoing need to ensure that there is a common language which is shared and used across all sectors by teachers and practitioners who work with learners, parents and families.

Given the range of audiences that this Strategic Framework covers, it should be recognised that while there are mandatory elements throughout for some sectors, providers and bodies, there are other key principles which are encouraged as being good practice for others who are currently not subject to legislative requirements. See section 4.9 for further information.

\*It should be noted that the word 'settings' throughout this Strategic Framework includes early learning and childcare settings and childminders. Additionally, the term 'professional learning' throughout the document refers to 'career-long professional learning' used in the teaching profession and to 'continuous professional learning' used by early years practitioners and childminders.

The Strategic Framework aims to provide a structure within which all stakeholders (see example list below) can engage in and deliver professional learning on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home. Definitions of these terms can be found in Section 6.

- Initial teacher education providers
- Providers of childhood practice programmes
- Local authorities
- Probationers/post-probationers/teachers
- Early learning and childcare practitioners
- Childminders
- Existing staff e.g. Headteachers, Depute Headteachers

This practical guidance document is intended to be useful to early years practitioners, childminders, student teachers, probationers, post-probationers, teachers and existing staff in all sectors across Scotland who work with parents and families to support children's learning.