

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 (NPFSS), 2017, p19). Learning at home was also identified by headteachers as an area for further development (NPFSS, 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.