

1. PURPOSE

This report seeks to provide a review of the available evidence on family learning. Particular attention was paid to current national and international research on family learning and relevant links to policy and strategy. This document will support local authorities to review their current policies and approaches to achieving family learning outcomes to meet their requirements within the [2017 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan for Scottish Education](#) and the [Scottish Attainment Challenge](#) (2015) and the [Delivery Plan](#) for Scottish Education (2016).

The term ‘parents’ in this document includes guardians and any person who is liable to maintain (within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995), or has parental responsibilities within the meaning of section 1(3) of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995, or has care of a child or young person.

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

‘The role that parents and carers play in raising the next generation of Scots is central to everything that we want to achieve for our families, our communities and our country’.

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

2.1 Background

On the 28 June 2016, the Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, John Swinney MSP, launched the [Delivery Plan](#) for Scottish education. The Delivery Plan followed engagement with a number of key education partners at an education summit focusing on raising attainment. The Delivery Plan aims to achieve excellence and equity in Scottish education by focusing action around three key priorities:

- closing the attainment gap;
- ensuring we have a curriculum which delivers for our children and teachers; and
- empowering our teachers, schools and communities to deliver for children and young people.

The Delivery Plan is closely aligned to the improvement drivers outlined in the National Improvement Framework and the Scottish Attainment Challenge. The vision and priorities for children’s progress in learning have been set out in the National Improvement Framework. The Scottish Attainment Challenge aims to raise the attainment of children and young people living in deprived areas in order to close the poverty-related attainment gap.

Family learning is identified in the Delivery Plan (2016) as a key driver for change and states that schools should:

‘Develop family learning programmes that support children’s progress and achievement. This also means empowering parents and enabling them to be active participants and

effective contributors to the life of the school and to school improvement’ (p16).

Within this context, Education Scotland in consultation with Scottish Government, conducted a review of the current evidence relating to family learning and collated case study examples of what is working well in Scotland and why. It is supported by national and international evidence gathering in relation to the benefits and impacts of family learning. The Review will help inform future policy direction with a view to supporting children’s progress and achievement. The findings from this Review will be shared with local authorities, schools and practitioners to influence practice.

2.2 Review of policy

The Scottish Government has progressed a number of political aspirations and pledges since devolution in 1999. This section provides an illustration of the resultant cross-cutting policies and strategies which relate to family learning. A more detailed policy mapping overview is provided in Appendix A.

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is viewed as being the overarching framework in Scotland and family learning fits within this landscape. Depending on priorities within a local authority, practitioners will draw upon different policies at different times. Current policies and strategies are focused on raising attainment and closing the poverty-related equity gap. Family learning is clearly identified within the policies and strategies and is a key approach in delivering on the outcomes within the documents.

The illustration below provides an example of how family learning links to policies and strategies. It also highlights the diversity of partners that could potentially be involved in developing programmes at a local level. The range of partners will change depending on local needs, outcomes and assets.

Illustration of family learning policy and strategy links

