

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Key messages and recommendations

There are a number of key messages and recommendations from this Review of Family Learning.

Key messages

- Family learning reaches the most disadvantaged, helps close the attainment gap and extends beyond the duration of the intervention.
- Family learning is an approach that has an impact though the different age ranges.
- Current research suggests that family learning is important and it works.
- Family learning programmes can be relatively inexpensive and provide a high social rate of return on investment.
- There is a need for better data collection processes. Longitudinal evaluations should be embedded where appropriate.
- Little is known about the impact of family learning on families which include a disabled child and/or parent.
- Evidence should inform the design of any family learning programme. Creative approaches to engagement and programme delivery should be given the time and space to develop. Impact and outcomes should be evaluated and programmes changed if necessary. This should be part of a strategic and informed approach.

Recommendations

- Funding for family learning programmes require to be built into drivers for change to ensure successful outcomes for families.
- Resources in this field are required to meet the key drivers in the Scottish Attainment Challenge and National Improvement Framework.
- Inspection findings should be used to identify trends, needs and influence future policy developments.
- Embedding family learning into cross-cutting policies and strategies is required to ensure greatest impact and maintain a strong focus at a national and local level.
- Family learning would be improved through greater cohesion from the strategic level to the operational level with the support of a framework.
- Obtaining more Scottish-based research is important given that little is known about the impact of family learning across Scotland.
- Consideration should be given to how further family learning research should be agreed and processed in alignment with the National Research Strategy.
- More research on methodology would support stronger provision and an understanding of why and how a family learning approach should be used, and why or when it should not.
- It is recommended that the workforce undertake relevant qualifications and continuous professional development.
- The key findings and recommendations of this Review of Family Learning will form part of the National Improvement Plan for Scottish Education. They will also feed into Scottish Attainment Challenge outcomes to ensure that family learning opportunities are considered by local authorities and schools when developing future plans.

- Key stakeholders in adult learning should continue to support adults who require more intensive support when engaged with family learning programmes in line with the Statement of Ambition.

6.2 Summary

The review of evidence highlights that family learning plays a key role in society and positively supports the delivery of excellence and equity. However, there remains scope for targeted research and literature on the definitive impact of family learning in Scotland. The Review emphasises the need to gather more evidence through a range of methods including inspection findings and feedback at a local and international level.

Developing the workforce through relevant qualifications and continuous professional development will continue to have a number of positive outcomes for families and communities. Trained staff will be skilled in engaging and working with the most disengaged families to improve relationships between home and school. Family learning programmes support parents to increase their individual skills, knowledge and confidence. This in turn will help parents support their child's development as well as their own personal opportunities for learning, training and employment.

Continually refreshing and updating the professional learning resources on the National Improvement Hub will help support practitioners across Scotland who work with families.

Embedding family learning across education, health and socio-economic policies is crucial to closing the poverty-related attainment gap.