

# Scottish Attainment Challenge Practice Exemplar

## Family Learning

### Aileymill Primary School, Inverclyde



Parents, as prime educators, have a strong and important role to play in their children's education. Family learning broadly refers to approaches which engage parents/carers and children jointly in learning. This can include family learning opportunities in literacy and numeracy, to support improvement in basic skills. Family learning can provide a range of benefits for parents and children, including increased attainment for children, improved parenting skills and greater parental confidence in supporting their children's learning at home.

The Family Learning approach at Aileymill Primary School has been developed with these principles at its core. Staff are ambitious and aspirational for their children and families. It is intended the club will bring parents and families into the school to learn with their children, its principal focus on supporting children and families in Primary 1 and 2. This work has also been extended to older siblings in the school to remove as many barriers as possible for families to attend and engage in the Family Learning Club. Through this type of work, the school plan to equip parents with skills/tools to support their children's learning at home. Ultimately, the school aim to raise attainment and reduce inequity.

As a direct result of The Scottish Attainment Challenge, Aileymill Primary School has a full-time Barnardo's Family Support Worker. She plays a key role in the overall leadership and organisation of the Family Learning Club, whilst maintaining a 'hands on' role in the work of the club.

Aileymill Primary School's Family Learning Club has been operational since November 2015. Initially, this club was set up and led by a Newly Qualified Teacher, and is now supported by a permanent Class Teacher and the Family Support Worker.

In the beginning, parents had their own expectations of the family learning club, in that children would bring homework out of bags and teachers would help them to complete tasks. Working collaboratively, families, the school and Barnardo's have co-created a successful model whereby there is a clear structure to each session, and parents engage in and support their children's learning in a relaxed environment. There is a snack area where families enjoy healthy food before beginning home learning activities in the learning zone. When home learning activities are completed, families then move into play-based learning zone, and choose from a range of educational games which have been provided thorough funding from The Scottish Attainment Challenge.

A mixture of school staff support the family learning club, contributing to its success.

#### Early signs of impact/positive progress

Parents and children have the opportunity to develop social and problem-solving skills, through play-based learning, working with highly trained staff, in a relaxed environment.

Barnardo's Family Support Worker and school staff continue to develop effective working relationships with school, whilst improving ways of sharing information to support families in the whole school community context.

There are regular, planned drop-in sessions for families where they can meet with the Barnardo's Family Support Worker to discuss any aspect of support required.

Initially, snacks provided at the Family Learning Club consisted of juice and biscuits. However, families suggested these be replaced by healthier options. The school has responded to this suggestion by providing fruit and water.

Very effective relationships exist between the school and Barnardo's.

Families who have been referred to Barnardo's and participate in the Family Learning Club can benefit from further support and feedback on skills and strategies to develop social and emotional skills, as well as strategies to engage children in learning, and provide support to parents to help further develop their skills to support their children's learning.

There are opportunities for parents to engage with each other, particularly single parent families and others who are isolated.

Parents now approach Barnardo's Family Support Worker and teachers for support to equip them with skills and strategies to help their children learn.

## Reflections

*The Family Learning Club has developed a capacity to reach out, in a less formal environment, to our families. The backing of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, both in terms of vision and values, as well as financial, supports our on-going work and absolute focus on raising attainment and reducing inequality.*

Catriona Miller, Head Teacher

*Staff aim to be responsive to parents and will tailor resources and activities to match issues raised by parents the previous week.*

Catriona Anderson, Class Teacher