

# Family Literacies Learning in Scotland



## Why are parents important?

"The idea that parents need to be literate and that through the intergenerational transfer of skills and attitudes, the parents' education can influence the subsequent educational achievement of their children, is a foundational belief of contemporary family learning programmes."

*Dr Tom Sticht: Towards a Multiple Life Cycles Education Policy (2007)*

## Parents' learning helps children's learning

- Parents, carers and families are by far the most important influences on children's lives.<sup>1</sup>
- Family literacies provision is an investment in Scotland's future because it contributes towards equality of opportunity by changing learning patterns within families. This can happen when there is transfer of motivation, language, literacy and numeracy from one generation to another.



## What parents say...

*"It has definitely made me realise that if a parent reads a lot a child is more likely to follow suit. I have not been a great reader, this may have caused a knock-on effect."*



## What is family literacies?

Family literacies learning describes work with parents to develop their own literacy and numeracy capabilities so that they can support their children's learning. It builds on what parents and carers already do with their children, whether babies or teenagers. There is no one definition or way of delivering family literacies learning, and it may take place in a broader family learning context. It can involve working with parents alone, or with parents and children together.

## Examples include:

- working with parents in partnership with schools at transition stages between nursery, primary and secondary and at the end of school education
- working with offenders to produce stories for their family members
- working with Dads' groups
- working in family centres, nurseries and community based groups
- joint projects with literacies providers and organisations such as Bookstart.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentsaspartnersinlearning/about/about.asp>

# The Evidence



## Family literacies learning makes a difference to both adults and children

- Research finds that adults with the lowest levels of literacy and numeracy reported that as children they received little support or encouragement in relation to education.<sup>2</sup>
- If economists are right to argue that investment in young children gives the best returns, parents need to build their own literacy and numeracy capabilities in order to help their children learn.<sup>3</sup>
- ‘...children whose parents have more contact with schools are more independent, take more initiative, and perform better than those whose parents have less contact with teachers.’<sup>4</sup>

### What parents say...

*“I have noticed a big difference in myself and I am now not embarrassed to sit down with my kids and help them with their homework. Before I would have come up with excuses and said that the dog was needing a walk.”<sup>5</sup>*

*“The communication and the relationship between the parents and the school forms an important channel for the school, stimulating it to understand and recognise the strengths of home and community language and literacy practices.”*

*Effective and Inclusive Practices in Family Learning 2009*

### Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006 aims to help parents to be:

- involved with their child’s education and learning
- welcomed as an active participant in the life of the school
- encouraged to express their views on school education generally.<sup>6</sup>

### Find resources on:

- Adult Literacies Online [www.aloscotland.com](http://www.aloscotland.com)
- Communities of Practice in Adult Literacies CoPAL (link)
- Scottish Network for Parental Involvement in Children’s Learning (SNPICL) [www.snpicl.org.uk](http://www.snpicl.org.uk)

<sup>2</sup> Research Briefing: Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) NRDC 2008

<sup>3</sup> *New Light on Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland: Summary Report (2008)* p18

<sup>4</sup> Epstein, JL and Dauber, SL 1989) Social studies and art program. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association San Francisco, CA

<sup>5</sup> *Effective and Inclusive Practices in Family Learning – Linked Work and Training Trust 2009*

<sup>6</sup> Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act 2006