

Scoping Study on Models of Family Learning



Report

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Front Cover: Running woman with child – Aberdeen Family Learning Team
Marble Maze – Kelloholm School Family Learning
Warrior Men – Aberdeen Family Learning Team

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Introduction

Background

This scoping study was commissioned by the South East Forum in February 2008. The research remit was to examine the following:

- What is meant by Family Learning?
- What models of Family Learning exist that evidence an impact on:
 - raising aspirations?
 - widening access and increasing participation to further or higher education?
- How can Family Learning help the South East Forum meet its strategic objectives?

Methodology

The following methods were employed in this study:

1. An initial scan of literature on Family Learning definitions
2. A review of the policy context
3. Interviews with four people including the client; a government official in the field of adult learning and literacy; and an experienced practitioner, to give guidance on the key questions that would need to be addressed and useful models of practice.
4. Six further interviews with practitioners working in innovative initiatives with those groups of interest to the Forum
5. Small scale e-survey covering all local authorities in Scotland
6. A selective literature review of available evidence of the impact of Family Learning

The research was begun on 25th February and was completed by 28th April 2008

Linked Work and Training Trust (LWTT)

LWTT has an established reputation for quality and innovation in training, consultancy and research services across a range of policy areas relevant to community learning development, regeneration and social inclusion.

LWTT received one of five UK awards for excellence in Community Regeneration in 2003. The awards are made annually by the British Urban Regeneration Association to projects that have made an outstanding contribution to the development of regeneration practice in the UK. In 2004 LWTT was highly commended in the Scottish Urban Regeneration Awards 2004 in its 'People' section. In 2005 LWTT came first in the Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley in the Business in the Community awards and, in the same year, received the Taylor Award in Falkirk for quality services. LWTT also has Investor in People status gained in 2005.

LWTT offers degree programmes of education and work based learning with a community learning and development focus. The programme has been run in the Forth Valley since 1995 primarily for people active in their local community. It provides full time community development posts into which local people are appointed and receive an appropriate salary. More recently LWTT has adapted its programme for communities of interest, including running a degree course for Black and Minority Ethnic Workers and for those from Coalfield communities. LWTT is also a LearnDirect branded learning centre.

Summary

1. Definitions - The term 'family learning' now covers a wide range of practice and activities which are still changing and developing. The literature review suggests that it is now used to refer to: supporting the school curriculum; linking home and school learning; and connecting family and local learning. The practitioners who responded to the e-survey broadly supported these distinctions.

2. Policy context - The current policy context in Scotland is very encouraging. National and local government are committed to helping parents and carers provide a nurturing and stimulating home environment for their children and to helping parents improve their own literacy and numeracy so they can support their children. Following a decade of interest, the potential of family learning to address the pervasive effects of educational underachievement and to challenge the social, cultural and material conditions that have stigmatised many learners is widely recognised. However, at this point in time, strategic implementation has not matched the positive climate. It is a good time for the Forum to consider how they could contribute to raising aspirations and achievement through Family Learning in partnership with others.

3. A social practice approach - As an underpinning concept the social practices approach which now characterises Scotland's distinctive approach to literacy work allows providers to develop programmes in any area of adult life whether as members of the workforce, as citizens, family members or learners. This model has been embraced by practitioners in Scotland and the practice has developed in creative and innovative ways, increasingly able to engage with learners from disadvantaged areas, who feel alienated from institutional learning and to work with them in effective ways. The approach is vital, as it must address the continuing effects of decades of under-capacity in adult literacy and numeracy programmes in Scotland and the consequences of a long held acceptance by key decision-makers, providers and potential adult learners that low competence in literacy, language and numeracy is an acceptable 'handicap'.

4. Evidence on impact - There is a large body of research literature available evaluating the impact of family literacy programmes and numerous project reports. These studies typically describe and analyse a range of positive changes such as raising learners' aspirations or encouraging access to further education as a result of participating in the programmes. They are useful in conveying the overall value of the programmes, but they do not necessarily identify precisely what helps to produce these benefits. Interesting correlations are not yet demonstrated as consequences and this is acknowledged as a complex area for study. The implications of the data on poverty and disadvantage for the practice of Family Learning have also not yet been fully investigated. As yet, there is little evidence that helps in identifying why some initiatives are more successful than others or what makes for a successful programme for different groups of learners and more rigorous research is needed in this area.

5. Current debates - Family Learning practice is flourishing, despite uncertain funding arrangements in many areas, largely due to the commitment and dedication of practitioners and the willingness of managers to pilot initiatives. The risks of failure are high and important debates are taking place on targeting, recruitment and programme content, processes, and outcomes. Key issues need to be explored regarding how to work sensitively and respectfully with men, women and children, cultural change in the formal education sphere and the nature of learning, communication and literacy and numeracy. There is a need for consolidation of practice and research and for connections to be made with emerging theoretical debates within the UK and internationally. The involvement and views of learners in this process is paramount.

6. Role of South East Forum –The recent move of the adult literacies function of Learning Connections to the Lifelong Learning and Development section of the new Directorate General for Education within the Scottish Government, provides an opportunity for the Forum to take up a valuable strategic and practical role in collaborating with national government and local partnerships to develop or built on existing supportive networks practitioners and learners and to contribute to the quality of programmes.

Section 1 Policy Context

In attempting to build a conceptual framework for Family Learning, a summary of the policy contexts within which it has developed so far is outlined in the following section. It is possible to identify the following four policy strands:

1. Family Literacy Programmes

Within a global context, the 1990 International Literacy Year proclaimed by the UN General Assembly drew international attention to the crucial role literacy played in society and provided a key impetus for governments to engage with this issue. Following on from this, new approaches to literacy began to emerge in member states. In the UK different strategies and approaches emerged between England and Scotland, reflecting the underlying understandings of literacy and numeracy and, also, the policy drivers behind the respective strategies.

In Scotland, literacy work at that time was undertaken largely through 'adult basic education' in local authorities, via learning support and pre access courses in further education colleges and in small scale projects in the voluntary sector. This provision was normally based on an individualised remedial model, and in many areas learners worked on a one to one basis with tutors (often volunteers) in isolation, even when learning in a group setting. In some areas literacy work was integrated within a broader positive action approach through courses designed to build self confidence, to explore health issues or to increase democratic participation. When family literacy initiatives emerged in the UK in the early 1990's, the first family literacy projects in Scotland drew on the social contextual approach developed by Elsa Auerbach, working in the USA with bilingual and multilingual migrants and refugees. These early initiatives were developing within a rapidly changing political, policy and practice context. This context included shifts in adult literacy, in literacy teaching in schools, and a broader emphasis on inter-agency work to address material and social disadvantage amongst children.

In 1998 and 1999, several government documents covering areas such as - lifelong learning, further education, and skills - referred explicitly to adult literacy and 'basic skills'. Community learning strategies were established in each local authority area, in partnership with local colleges, voluntary organisations, health agencies and enterprise bodies, including explicit targets for participation in adult literacy and numeracy programmes. A review of Community Learning in terms of lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship provided a clearer and more positive model for literacy provision - raising literacy levels through dedicated and integrated tuition and community development, and recognizing both individual and collective goals.¹

At this stage the policy documents in England, Wales and Northern Ireland had replaced an earlier discourse of individual rights and welfare in educational social policy, a discourse of human resource development and an increasingly standardised definition of literacy, linked to formal educational structures and methods of assessment at initial and post school levels. The new Labour Government in Westminster overlaid the approach with a new rhetoric, drawing on the concept of lifelong learning and social inclusion, reflecting in Hamilton's view, increased sensitivity to European and other international thinking in the field.² Within this rapidly changing scene, however, the vocational rationale for adult learning remained powerful in Scotland, with responsibility for adult literacy and numeracy held by the Department for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning.

By the end of the 1990's family literacy, both in the UK and in the USA had become seen by

¹ 'Communities: Change through Learning' Scottish Office (1998).

² Hamilton, M in Powerful Literacies Eds Jim Crowther, Mary Hamilton and Lyn Tett NIACE (1999)

some as one answer to a number of educational and social problems.

Family literacy is the new “designer” literacy (like designer jeans): It is seen as a state-of-the-art way of connecting parents and children by promoting the literacy development of both. The National Centre for Family Literacy (NCFL) says that family literacy is the best long-term solution to America’s poverty problem, better even than school reform for “tackling under-education and all the related social and economic problems....Family literacy is being tied to welfare reform as a step in the process of economic self-sufficiency.”³

In 2000, the OECD’s International Adult Literacy Survey report⁴ led to national governments reviewing their policy. The newly devolved government at Holyrood enabled the distinctive approach to literacy work in Scotland to continue. The task group ‘Literacy 2000’ provided a focus for the development of national policy and strategy, reporting its findings and recommendations to the Minister for Lifelong Learning and Enterprise. In a policy context which had previously been silent or sometimes hostile to adult literacy, this flurry of activity stimulated interest in adult literacy and numeracy and created new opportunities for collaboration and debate on purposes and approaches including specific work with families, in workplaces and for young adults. The National Development Project and later the ALNIS report continued this exploration and consolidation of theory and practice, informing and shaping further national work on adult literacy and numeracy in Scotland and contributing to the development of a social practices model which now characterises Scotland’s distinctive approach to literacy work.

The Scottish approach to adult literacies adopts a social practice model, which sees literacies as a key dimension of community regeneration and a part of the wider lifelong learning agenda.⁵

As an underpinning concept of literacy the social practices approach allows providers to develop programmes in any area of adult life whether as members of the workforce, as citizens, family members or learners. The ALNIS report is currently being ‘refreshed’(sic)⁶ to take account of recent research and developments since the original report was launched and will set out a new strategy to 2011.

In 2007, the Community Learning and Development, and Adult Literacy and Numeracy functions of Learning Connections, until recently part of Communities Scotland, became integrated into the Directorate General for Education of the Scottish Government. The new role for Learning Connections is to support the development of provision, encourage the sharing of good practice and to look at quality.

1.2 The Skills Agenda

Family Learning has had a higher profile also in relation to the OECD’s International Adult Literacy Survey (2000)⁷ and the recent Leitch Report (2006)⁸ The OECD Survey gave evidence of the weak and polarised literacy and numeracy skills amongst adults in Scotland of working age, including recent school leavers. The Leitch Report considered what the UK’s long-term ambition should be for developing skills in order to maximise economic prosperity, productivity and to improve social justice and warned that the UK must ‘raise its game’ in terms of skills if it is to achieve an internationally competitive future.

The new Scottish Government’s response to this, the Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy (2007) is clear about the role of early intervention for children as part of its strategy

³ *Designer Literacy -reading the labels* Elsa Auerbach Family Literacy Forum Autumn (2003)

⁴ The International Adult Literacy Survey *Literacy in the Information Age* (the ALNIS Report) OECD (2000)

⁵ Literacy 2000 Team *Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland* (2000)

⁶ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/07135512/3>

⁷ *Literacy in the Information Age*, Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey, OECD, (2000)

⁸ *Prosperity for all in the Global Economy: World Class Skills*, Final Report from Lord Leitch’s Review of Skills, HMSO, (2006)

to develop a 'cradle to grave' blueprint for the nation's future skills agenda. The key elements in supporting positive development in the early years include:

- helping parents and carers to provide a nurturing and stimulating home environment
- providing children with high quality pre-school and school education
- helping parents with literacy and numeracy to enhance their ability to support their children's learning
- achieving effective early interventions to improve outcomes for all children but particularly those who face particular disadvantage or a high risk of poor outcomes later in life
- supporting effective transitions between the stages of learning, including the transition from nursery to primary school.

There is also a recognition that for 'hard to reach individuals', greater support is needed to help them in their initial engagement in learning and in the community and economy, through developing skills in literacy, numeracy, problem solving and communication, to enable their involvement as '*active, effective contributors to their communities and to the wider economy and society*'. One of the means to support this is seen as continuing to '*pursue our goal of Scotland exceeding world class levels of provision in literacy and numeracy. This will consider effective partnership working, quality and funding*'. In the Ministerial foreword to the document, Fiona Hislop MSP stated

*'A smarter Scotland is at the heart of everything we want to achieve for this country. We can only build a Scotland that is wealthier and fairer, one that is healthier, safer, stronger and greener, if people are equipped with the skills, expertise and knowledge for success'*⁹

The Scottish Government and COSLA have recently released a joint policy statement on early years and early intervention as a means to achieving 'opportunities for all'. Four task groups, including ones on 'creating communities that provide a supportive environment for children and families' and 'developing a suitable workforce to support the framework' will provide a basis for short, medium and long- term priorities and actions to be published as a final Early Years and Early Intervention Framework in Autumn 2008.¹⁰

1.3. Parental Involvement

There has been growing pressure to ensure greater participation by all parents in schools since the late 1990's when the New Community Schools (NCS) policy was seen as an integral part of the Scottish Executive's wider social inclusion strategy.

In recognition of the relationships between educational achievement, health and socio-economic factors, NCSs were charged with expanding and integrating the range of services offered to young people in disadvantaged areas with the intention of both raising attainment and promoting social inclusion. The NCS Prospectus (Scottish Office, 1998) outlined key goals which included: increasing the attainment of young people facing 'the destructive cycle of under achievement'; early intervention to address barriers to learning and maximise potential; and raising parental and family expectations and participation in their children's education.

⁹ *The Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* The Scottish Government (2007)

¹⁰ *Early Years and Early Intervention*. A joint Scottish Government and COSLA policy statement (2008), Edinburgh: The Scottish Government

Engagement with families was one of the essential characteristics of NCS projects which were tasked with 'empowering parents and family members to raise their expectations of their children and themselves'. The initial pilot programme involved over 170 schools - some single schools but most comprising clusters of locally associated schools, with funding in the form of a specific grant from The Scottish Office Excellence Fund to enable them to operate in an integrated way. These were eventually extended across all schools in Scotland.¹¹

In June 2006 the Scottish Parliament passed the Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act which supports a much stronger engagement by parents in their children's education, requiring schools to develop a strategy for parental involvement

*It is the duty of the Scottish Ministers to promote the involvement of the parents of pupils in attendance at public schools in the education provided to those pupils by the schools*¹²

The Act covers all schools and it helps parents become more involved in the school, ensures all schools welcome parents as active participants, and provides easier ways for parents to express their views and wishes. Along with the right to express views, parents now have new ways to raise issues, the right to be given a proper response to requests and questions, and the right to know more about what goes on in school. All parents are automatically members of the Parent Forum of the school and can vote for representatives on the Parent Council.

Since August 2007, the Parent Council now has a legal status which means the school and local authority are required to listen to it and give a proper response. The policy of involving parents in their children's learning is significantly strengthened by this new law: it makes involving parents in school learning a priority for every education authority and every school. It goes beyond giving parents the chance to be involved with school events and helping out in the classroom or taking part in decision-making bodies. It makes Family Learning a policy and a priority by expecting schools to firstly provide parents with information on what their children are learning in school and secondly to explain how parents can best support school learning in the home.¹³

1.4. Support for Children and Young People

This last policy strand is concerned with early childhood health and social welfare. The emerging policy focus is on multi agency approaches to supporting children's needs as individuals, learners, and future members of the workforce. This dimension is located at the juncture between schools, social work with 'at risk' children and their families and health services. In Autumn 2000, Peter Peacock, the then Deputy Minister for Children and Education announced a revised Child Strategy Statement underlining the Scottish Executive's commitment to ensuring children have the best start in life, and indicating that the Government believed this required better integrated services for children and young people, ensuring all organisations are 'child conscious'.

In June 2006 the Scottish Executive published its implementation plan for *Getting it right for every child* which set out an approach to reform of services for children in three areas - practice change, removing barriers and legislation. The reform was seen as part of their wider public service reform agenda to join up services around the needs of services users, strengthen accountability, and drive up quality and efficiency.

The consultation for '*Getting it right for every child*' explored what is meant by children's needs. 'Literacy support needs' appear alongside other terms - 'support needs' and

¹¹ Summary of evaluation of the achievements of the 37 Phase 1 New Community Schools pilot projects Scottish Executive Insight 7 (2003)

¹² Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act (2006)

¹³ Useful website www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

'communication support needs' used by respondents. Although for children in general no distinct recommendations for practice appear, the need for youth workers to have better training, skills and knowledge in order to deal with the specific need or problem of low literacy levels among young people was highlighted, (along with alcohol abuse and mental health).

The draft Children's Services Scotland Bill (2007) is intended to support this wide programme of reform and to place the child at the centre of service provision in Scotland. It affects all agencies and services who provide care and support for children and their families. This includes local authorities, police, NHS Scotland and voluntary sector organisations. *'It also impacts on services to adults who are parents, where support for the adult may improve outcomes for children'*¹⁴. With the change of government the progress of this proposed legislation which was planned to be introduced to the Scottish Parliament, possibly in the 2007-08 legislative session, has not yet been clarified.

1.5 Conclusion

The current policy context is very positive for Family Learning. National and local government are committed to helping parents and carers provide a nurturing and stimulating home environment for their children and to helping parents improve their own literacy and numeracy so they can support their children. One of the key interviews undertaken in this study was with the Development Co-ordinator of the Adult Literacies team in Learning Connections which is now integrated into the Directorate General for Education in the Scottish Government. Although not having a direct responsibility for policy, her view was that practitioners should feel encouraged about the role of Family Learning in the current policy climate.

'the profile and the role of Family Learning is going to increase because of policy initiatives such as the Outcomes/Performance Framework, the Curriculum for Excellence and high level National Outcome targets - also the Early Years Strategy which is going to be published in the Autumn. It's very encouraging because you can actually see the role for Family Learning. The government is going to be more hands off in terms of managing what's happening and more hands on in terms of supporting it.'

¹⁴ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec/Consultations>

Section 2: What is Understood by Family Learning?

Definitions as to what constitutes the term 'family learning' cover a wide range of practice and activities which is still changing and developing. This section tries to pin down this complex area of work in a succinct way.

2.1 Defining the Term

'Family Learning is based on the principle that awareness of opportunities for learning in everyday home and community activities raises confidence and contributes to literacy and numeracy development across generations' ¹⁵

The above definition which was felt to encompass the key aspects of the work was developed by a Family Learning centre in Ireland and it is presented as a useful working definition.

As outlined in the previous section, the term 'family literacy' came into use in educational provision in Scotland in the early 1990s and later was also known as 'family learning' although Family Learning now has a broader content. The literature review suggests that it is now used in several ways to refer to the following three activities. The practitioners who responded to the e-survey broadly supported these distinctions and their own ways of defining Family Learning are included below.

- Supporting the school curriculum
- Linking home and school learning
- Connecting family and local learning.

2.2 Supporting the school curriculum

This approach is seen as enabling parents to fully support their children with the demands of formal education. Programmes are intended to introduce participants to the early years curriculum in nursery and primary schools. The focus is generally on the normal development of beginner reading skills and concepts.

Working with parents and carers to help them help their children with their learning.

My service is particularly concerned with building the capacity of parents and carers to enhance their children's achievements in learning.

Where parents learn how to reinforce their child's learning at home. Providing supported opportunities for parents and carers to become more involved in their children's education and learning.

Family Learning aims to promote social inclusion and raise attainment by involving parents in their child's education both at home and in school.

2.3 Linking home and school learning

This attempts to link home and school learning at the nursery and primary and/or secondary stages of formal education, by involving the child's parents, and sometimes siblings, or grandparents, etc in programmes with the aim of recognising informal learning in the home and relating this to formal learning in school. The focus is normally on the knowledge and skills required for formal learning, such as concentration and memory, writing, reading, and numeracy.

¹⁵ Clare Family Learning Project, Republic of Ireland

*Allowing parents to see how important they are to their children's school learning - and how what they do at home relates to that 'other' learning.
To encourage parents to become involved in helping their children to learn, through activities, normal family day to day occasions.*

Family Learning is about linking parents/children/school together. With the aim of establishing an effective partnership between all concerned.

Whatever families are learning together. Needn't be formal learning— can make a cake together and you are learning.

2.4 Connecting family and local learning

This use of the term embraces work connecting formal school learning with informal learning among children and adults in the local area wherever this takes place, in homes, community centres, neighbourhood groups, and businesses. In these programmes the broader community learning and development approach is more typical and 'learning' is used in the widest sense.

Engaging with parents to support and develop an awareness of lifelong learning within a family and community context.

Intergenerational work with families learning together. It can be recreational, or directly linked to the curriculum.

Literacy as a word can be a bit off-putting – we wanted to be more holistic – looking at a broader approach to the family - that all kinds of learning in the family are valuable eg a day out together to the zoo.

It is important to note that these ways of using the term 'family learning' are useful as categories for presenting an overview. However in practice, the term is used to refer to distinct programmes and approaches which may include one or more of these categories. Thus it is possible for funders, managers partners and practitioners to refer to Family Learning in the planning and delivery of programmes but for each to interpret it differently.

2.5 The 'social practices' approach

In Scotland, a social practices approach to adult literacy and numeracy has been adopted and this concept has influenced practitioners in this field, and increasingly in other areas of adult learning and community development. The term marks a shift away from an earlier view of literacy and numeracy as decontextualised skills involving a straight-forward manipulation of letters, words and figures. A skills view implies that literacy and numeracy are relatively easy to acquire, and assumes that they are largely developed in school and remain fairly stable throughout our lives. A social practices perspective sees literacy and numeracy as taking place within the events in our working, home, educational and public lives. These events are in turn are shaped by social and cultural practices which govern expectations and conventions for the proper and improper use of reading, writing, language and handling numbers. Thus adults' and children's uses of literacy, language and numeracy are complex cognitive activities which depend on social and cultural knowledge and intention. Differences between the literacies of education, home and the community can become profound because family and community 'vernacular' literacies are unrecognised by professionals and others from more dominant linguistic and social groups. As a result, learners' habitual ways of speaking and writing can appear transgressive to teachers and it can be very difficult for learners to conform to teachers' expectations.¹⁶

¹⁶ For an example of this disjuncture, see Grote, E. (2006) *Challenging the boundaries between School-Sponsored and Vernacular Literacies: Urban Indigenous Teenage Girls Writing in an "At Risk" Programme*, Language and Education, vol. 20 no. 6

2.6 A common discourse?

The definitions expressed in the official language of policy documents, or strategic frameworks, necessarily reflect a focus on programme goals and objectives, locus and outcomes. Although these were widely echoed by practitioners, other comments they contributed give a glimpse of broader discourses and theoretical perspectives that underpin the work. These were of a different order and encompassed areas such as: the focus on different points in the 'process and product' spectrum; the underlying principles at work; the rationale for intervention; the influence of the 'wealth model' in preference to a deficit model; the culture change required in schools; issues of empowerment, citizenship and social inclusion; and a strong emphasis on building respectful relationships with parents and carers as the 'launch pad' of any further engagement.

As is the case in any relatively new professional field involving a wide variety of activities and practices, Family Learning workers are developing their own thinking and practice as they work with the challenges the work presents. Some of these additional themes will be picked up in later discussion but it is outside the scope of this exercise to explore all of these more thoroughly. They are referred to here to indicate the deceptive simplicity of assuming a common discourse. Given the different policy interests that contributed to the emergence of Family Learning outlined in the previous section, it is inevitable that there will be approaches that are based on different values and assumptions and often concerned with different goals. This, in turn, has different implications for practice and evaluation. The complexities that are involved in the term 'family learning' serve as a reminder of the importance of involving practitioners in developing and monitoring public policy.

2.7 Conceptual Mapping

The following 'conceptual map' is an attempt to begin to clarify the complex ways in which Family Learning is currently understood and practised. This does not provide a definitive model or a fixed framework but offers a way to visualise the complexities of contemporary practice, to consider how it is being interpreted, and to create dialogue and discussion.

The two dimensions or cross lines in Fig.1 represent some of the more important debates and variations of practice within Family Learning. The locus and focus of learning, is illustrated as a continuum moving along a horizontal axis, from more family centred on the left side to more school/ nursery focused on the right. Family literacy can be seen as operating at the intersection between home and school, as a 'third space'.¹⁷

The vertical dimension relates to the thinking and practice which can be encompassed by concepts of 'process' and 'social practices' at the top end, moving along a continuum towards a more 'product' or 'skills' orientation at the bottom. Each of the four 'quadrants' created can be seen as encompassing different emphases and practices within Family Learning.

¹⁷ Pahl,K.& Kelly,S (2005) *Family literacy as a third space between home and school. Literacy. Vol 39*

2.8 Overview of Models

From the literature search, an overview of models of Family Learning practice that are most relevant to the SE Forum's objectives are presented in Table 1. and grouped into four sections.

Many of the examples in the literature deliver programmes where the curriculum is predominantly fixed, and the purpose focused on compensating for educational inequalities. Five of this type of programme are cited: the Kenan project, because it was intensive, multi-faceted and remains influential. Four other examples from England and Scotland show the variations in the use of staff, resources and partnership working. Examples of practice based on a more open curriculum or more flexible opportunities for participation are less common but seven are presented, showing different aims, resources utilised and outcomes for individuals, families and communities.

A 'mapping' diagram is also used here to provide a visual means of summarising the different models and their orientation. See Fig 2.

This diagram is designed to highlight the intended programme content and purpose of each initiative. It seems helpful to present programmes in terms of these factors, rather than their location (in the school, in the community) or target participants (parents along with children; or parents alone).

The horizontal axis shows the continuum between models that add a layer of extra activity to existing family interactions, and those that are explicitly educational. At one end, **supplementary learning** models simply provide extra opportunities for families to enjoy social and cultural activities together, whilst at the other end of the continuum, the **compensatory learning** ones provide structured learning opportunities.

The vertical axis shows the continuum between models that offer a **fixed curriculum**, based on ideas of what families need to learn about, and models that develop a more **open curriculum**, where engaging and negotiating with families leads to designing and building the curriculum in participative way.

The twelve examples of Family Learning are placed within the map's four quadrants (reading from the top, right hand side: fixed and compensatory / open and compensatory / open and supplementary / fixed and supplementary) to show their approximate position in terms of these features.

An Overview of Family Learning Models

Table 1(a): Fixed, compensatory model examples

Initiative	Participants	Key Features	Provider	Reference
Kenan Family Literacy Project, Kentucky & North Carolina, USA	Parents and 3-4 year old children	An intensive programme with 4 elements: a preschool programme for children, adults studying various academic and vocational subjects, Parent and Child Together (PACT) time, where parents and children worked and played together, and Parent Time (PT) where parents met as a group to address significant problems. Detailed evaluation identified 7 types of parents who took part by comparing their participation, motivation, capability, needs, and likelihood of accomplishment. 5 'successful' groups of parents and their children were identified as making important gains in academic performance, self-concept, social skills, and control over their lives, and 2 'problematic' groups, where few adults remained in the programme for periods long enough to make significant gains in their own or their children's achievements.	National Center for Family Literacy, Louisville, Kentucky	Darling, S. & Hayes, A. (1989) Breaking the Cycle of Illiteracy: The Kenan Family Literacy Model Program, The William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust Family Literacy Project, Final Report 1988-1989
Freeston Family Learning Centre, Wakefield, England	Families and the local community members	'Extended services' offered through the college for families and the local community through a programme of Skills for Families, study support and adult learning projects for all ages.	Freeston Business and Enterprise College	Cited in Clawley, J. & Goldman, R. (2007) Engaging Fathers: Involving parents, raising achievement, London: Department of Education and Skills Further details available from www.wakefield.gov.uk , accessed 10/04/08
Family Literacy	Fathers and	The aim was to support men as	Prison Library	Details available from Family Reading Case Studies at

Initiative	Participants	Key Features	Provider	Reference
HMP, Birmingham, England	their children	fathers through reading with their children and improving their own literacy skills. Words on Wheels (a mobile library for under-fives) parked at the prison's Visitor's Centre for five visits. There was a 'Family Man' course in the Education Department and sessions in the prison library with groups of dads, using the initiative's collection of adults' and children's books.	and Education Department supported by Birmingham Libraries' Children's Team	www.literacytrust.org.uk accessed 10/04/08
Sure Start Programme, Foxhill & Parson Cross, Sheffield, England	Parents and children	Training for and consultation with parents via a community teacher and parents' groups working alongside other services such as health visitors and midwives.	Sure Start Pilot Projects, Department of Education and Skills, England	Weinberger, J. ed. (2005) Learning from Sure Start: Working with Young Children and their Families, Berkshire: Open University Press
Family ESOL Projects, Dalkeith, Scotland	Parents of children entering or in secondary school	A DVD was produced, jointly with pupils and their parents, in several languages aimed at helping primary school pupils and their parents understand the Scottish education system as the transition to secondary school begins. An online ESOL course was developed for parents of Polish pupils already at the secondary school.	Newbattle Abbey College & St. David's High School	Newbattle News, February 2008 Available from www.newbattleabbeycollege.co.uk accessed 17/04/08

Table 1(b): Open, compensatory model examples

Initiative	Participants	Key Features	Provider	Reference
Family Literacy Project, South Africa	Parents and care givers, teenagers and primary school children	The aims are to strengthen parental desires to offer their children a better start than they themselves had, and for parents to learn how to support early literacy, to share information and issues about home life and to work on their own literacy development. The Reflect approach to negotiating and creating a curriculum is adopted: finding out what people already know, then using discussion to identify the new information needed. This contributes to successful motivation and retention. FLP runs as twice weekly sessions for parents and care givers, weekly groups for teenagers and children and has 3 community libraries and 8 book boxes.	South African National Government	Desmond, S. Learning and Motivation, RaPAL vol. no. 64, January 2008 Details also available from: http://www.familyliteracyproject.co.za/about.html accessed 19/04/08
ReachOut to Parents, Liverpool, England	Parents and children as family and local community members.	The aim is to develop a curriculum focusing on family issues at pre-Access, Access and Degree level. Initial modules 'Our Family Matters' are intended to explore participants' own discussions and debates about modern families. They form the pre Access part of the programme. Modules can lead to nationally recognised qualifications, and ultimately a Community Degree. Teaching and learning take place as an outreach programme in Parents School Partnership centres.	Liverpool Hope University College with the Liverpool Parents School Partnership	(2005) Learning Mentor Training, Module Two, Booklet One, 3 rd Edition, Liverpool: Liverpool Excellence Partnership & Department of Education and Skills, England Mufti, E. (1999) ReachOut to Parents: Interim Report, Liverpool: Applied Research Centre, Liverpool Hope University College

Initiative	Participants	Key Features	Provider	Reference
Family Learning, Edinburgh, Scotland	Parents / carers with children in Nursery and early Primary School	A long standing programme which offers activities for parents / carers to enable them to support their children's literacy and numeracy through the development of their own learning. Family Learning workers are based in five neighbourhood Community Learning & Development teams. They offer weekly group sessions, and annual transition activities to support the move from nursery to primary school. Recently 'bite-size' 5 session taster style courses beginning with a free breakfast were piloted. Using craft and photography and exploring self image, the bite size approach has attracted good levels of participation and high demand for further learning. On the basis of this demand, full day sessions are being run for a 4 week period with a choice of options (e.g. politics, literature).	Community Learning & Development, City of Edinburgh Council	<p>Addison, A & Bain, J. (in progress, due 2008) Bite Size Learning Course Report, Edinburgh: North Edinburgh Community Learning and Development</p> <p>(2004) Report on Review of Education's Service Plan, Social Justice and Older People Scrutiny Panel, City of Edinburgh Council</p> <p>Heywood, J. et al. (2000) Involving Parents in Early Literacy, Edinburgh: City of Edinburgh Council</p> <p>McPaul, R. et al. (1999). Family Learning in Edinburgh, Edinburgh: City of Edinburgh Council</p>
Lads and Dads Book Clubs, Hampshire, England	Fathers and father figures and teenage boys	These clubs met twice a term, after normal library hours, to promote reading among men taking an approach different from the more typical short course or activity based workshops.	Local authority secondary schools and public libraries.	Goldman, R. (2005) Fathers' Involvement in Children's Education, London: National Family and Parenting Institute

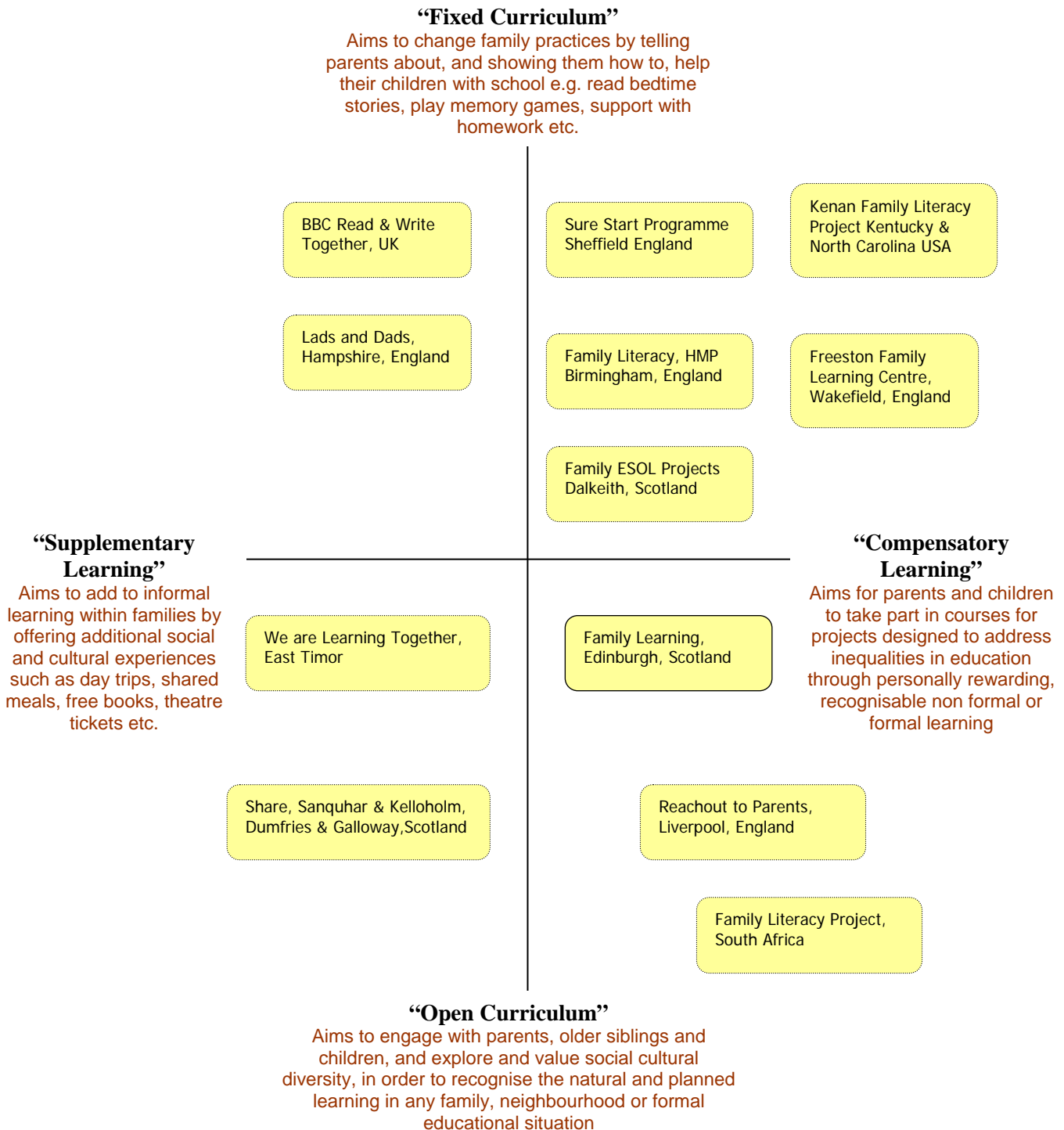
Table 1(c): Open, supplementary model examples

Initiative	Participants	Key Features	Provider	Reference
Share – Sanquhar and Kelloholm, Dumfries & Galloway	Fathers, grandfathers and children	Empowering men, through opportunities to become involved in adult learning, the local community or in training, volunteering and employability programmes. Activities are designed for men to enjoy, such as technical aspects, building and making things, physical activities, trips and outdoor activities. 70 men are now involved and they run their own clubs.	Community Learning& Development, Family Learning with Sanquhar & Kelloholm Primary Schools	Details available from: www.dumgal.gov.uk/Dumgal/xdocuments/13032.pdf.aspx accessed 17/04/08 Also a DVD of the project has been produced, for details contact: Mary-Ann Riddell, Family Learning Co-ordinator, Dumfries& Galloway Council Tel 01695 0426
We Are Learning Together, East Timor	Women and school age children not attending school or have dropped out	Raising awareness of literacy through making personal books and books about participants' families and communities. Books are made first in the local language and later in the majority one.	Oxfam, Hong Kong	Patience, M. (2007) Kami Apende Putu (We Are Learning Together) – a family literacy project, RaPAL vol. no. 63, Summer

Table 1(d) :Fixed, supplementary model examples

Initiative	Participants	Key Features	Provider	Reference
Lads and Dads Book Clubs, Hampshire, England	Fathers and father figures and teenage boys	These clubs met twice a term, after normal library hours, to promote reading among men taking an approach different from the more typical short course or activity based workshops.	Local authority secondary schools and public libraries.	Goldman, R. (2005) Fathers' Involvement in Children's Education, London: National Family and Parenting Institute
Read & Write Together, UK	Parents of older babies, toddlers and 3 - 8 year olds	An education campaign broadcast on BBC One in 1998, with accompanying information pack for parents telling them 'how your child learns to read and write and [...] how you can help' plus activities and useful contacts.	BBC	Shorrocks-Kelly, K. (1998) Read & Write Together, London: BBC Learning Support

Fig 2



Section 3 The Impact of Family Learning

The second remit for this scoping exercise was to consider the available evidence on the impact of Family Learning on raising aspirations and widening access to Further and Higher Education.

3.1 Introduction

The previous sections in this report have outlined the different policy contexts in which Family Learning has emerged in the UK and the wide range of programmes and practice it encompasses. These factors create a number of challenges when considering available evidence on the impact of specific programmes.

There is now an accepted body of evidence about the benefits to children that is fuelling various government initiatives.

- It is accepted, for example, that parental involvement in the early years has a significant impact on children's cognitive development and literacy and numeracy competence¹⁸ and has a significant effect on pupil achievement throughout the years of schooling.¹⁹
- Other positive changes for children as a result of successful programmes of Family Learning include: positive behavioural and attitudinal changes; enhanced confidence and self-esteem; awareness that learning is a normal activity throughout life; and pleasure from collaborative learning.²⁰
- In particular, there is evidence that a father's interest in a child's schooling is strongly linked to educational outcomes for the child. A father's involvement in children's education at age 7 predicts higher educational achievement by age 20, in both boys and girls.²¹

However, within the field of Family Learning practice, there is far less evidence of the specific impact of particular models.

3.2 The quality of existing research

The different policy imperatives have provided an environment in which Family Learning has been allowed to flourish rapidly. The practice has forged ahead, with practitioners developing a variety of innovative programmes but research has not yet caught up. Consequently there has been little quantitative research carried out to rigorous scientific standards. Whether this type of research is appropriate for all aspects of Family Learning is open to debate but certainly the lack of a body of evidence based knowledge is a feature of Family Learning practice today.

This is clearly identified in a recent 2008 study which conducted a UK-wide and international review of family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) programmes and practice. It is one of the first attempts to conduct an analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in this field. This 'meta' study was based on studies exhibiting a wide range of research designs, analysing both qualitative and quantitative evidence. No non-randomised controlled trials were found, and most of the evidence consisted of data from matched-group and one-group pre-test/post-test studies.

¹⁸ Institute of Education *Measuring the impact of pre-school on children's cognitive progress* (2002)

¹⁹ Desforges, C *The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment* DfES Research Report 433 (2003)

²⁰ OFSTED *Family Learning: A survey of good practice* (2000)

²¹ Hobcraft *Childhood experience and the risk of social exclusion in adulthood* in CASE Briefing Nov 1998.

Although this was a rigorous review an inclusive stance was taken towards what should be counted as a family, and to the range of practices to be classed as literacy, oracy and numeracy. Holistic and community approaches, and formal and informal learning, were all considered.²² Some of the key findings were

- There appear to have been no studies, either quantitative or qualitative, in which different approaches to family literacy or language or numeracy have been compared. Thus there is no research basis for claiming that any one programme is more effective than any other.
- The quantitative research evidence can be summed up as showing fairly convincingly that parents benefit in their ability to help their children and in wider ways eg. confidence, and that children's literacy and numeracy capabilities benefit; however, there is only just enough evidence to suggest that parents' own literacy and numeracy benefits.
- There is also hardly any evidence on wider benefits for children. Compared with the dearth of evidence on benefits to parents' literacy and numeracy capabilities there was much more on children's skills, though some of it was mixed.
- No research has yet been done into the claim that parents in FLLN programmes make better progress than they would in stand-alone ALN programmes. There has still been no attempt to test this notion empirically

3.3 Methodological Issues

In looking at which findings could be supported by quantitative evidence, and the strength of that evidence, the following methodological issues were also observed

- The information provided was sometimes patchy, even in well-funded and well regarded evaluations.
- Some studies for which great importance is claimed had sample sizes too small to bear that weight
- Exactly half the studies provided data only or mainly from an intervention group, with no or few comparison group data
- Most of the evidence arises from test data or, in such aspects as self-confidence, validly from self-report questionnaires, but for some aspects less direct measures were used, e.g. teachers' reports about parents and children. Reliance on indirect measures of impact was more frequent with parents than children, and there were fewer test data on parents than on children

These findings of course do not suggest that the benefits from Family Learning do not exist, the key message is simply that as yet there has not been enough rigorous research evidence collected to confirm or refute this or to identify what are the most effective models.

There are also important aspects with regard to identifying robust evidence such as:

Interpretation of results

Interpreting research results uncritically can create implications for targeting and evaluating programmes. For example, some research, including more recent large scale studies²³ found a correlation between parents' literacy difficulties and their children's literacy achievements. This led to an assumption that all parents with

²² Brooks G. Pahl K Pollard A Rees F Effective and inclusive practices in family literacy, language and numeracy: a review of programmes and practices in the UK and internationally CfBT Education Trust and NRDC (2008)

²³ Bynner & Parsons (2006)

literacy difficulties will have low-achieving children. An argument put forward by Hannon stated that 'correlation is one thing, identification quite another'. He warned against the rhetoric implicit within these studies, which suggests that all parents with literacy difficulties will have low-achieving children, and that low-achieving children will have parents with literacy difficulties.²⁴

Longitudinal Evaluation

All too often educational innovations have an impact while they are running but the effect wears off afterwards so longitudinal studies are required to monitor this aspect. For example, a project in Birmingham in 1992 gave babies a book at a very young age, to share with parents at home. The evaluation showed that early contact with books led to more awareness of books, more book sharing, more parental enrolment in libraries, and family use of books. A longitudinal study, followed up the children and found evidence of impact at age 2 to 3. Two further studies followed some children from the original 1992 cohort to school entry and then to Key Stage 1 assessments at age 7, and found they were significantly ahead of comparison groups in reading and number.²⁵

Moreover the benefits of programmes may not transfer to later life. Sticht reminds us that a higher level of literacy competence is required at the later stages of education and adult life. As the integration of reading and writing with oral language and cognitive abilities becomes more demanding these early gains may not be sustained.²⁶

3.4 What to Measure?

Another common problem in gathering evidence in newly emerging fields is to identify exactly what to measure and what its significance might be. Three examples are outlined briefly below.

Learning over time

LSAL, a longitudinal study of adult learning in the US gives us more understanding of how learning develops in relation to adults' life transitions and changing practices, and the significance of spontaneous and planned home learning. It uses measures of literacy and numeracy proficiency (skills) measured by tests and also of literacy 'practices'. It shows that both participation in classes and self-study have positive effects on literacy practices. In turn, increased engagement in literacy practices over time leads to increases in proficiency. Concentrating on measuring short-term proficiency changes through measures such as literacy tests to define success may not capture the full impact of educational programmes. It would be better to evaluate impact in terms of shorter-term changes in practices and longer-term development of proficiency.²⁷

The current tests have the advantage, for policy-makers, of being quick, cheap, easy to administer and giving unequivocal results (pass or fail). However, these advantages may go counter to the need for measures that reveal the changes that contribute to the main policy goals of 'engaging potential learners through every possible means' and 'creating a high-quality learning infrastructure'.²⁸

²⁴ Hannon (1999)

²⁵ Wade and Moore (1998b),(2000)

²⁶ <http://www.nald.ca/library/research/sticht/06dec/06dec.pdf>

²⁷ Reeder, S *Literacy and the life-course* Reflect Issue 2 NRDC Feb. (2005)

²⁸ Merrifield, J *Literacy, the life course and accountability* Reflect Issue 3 Dec.(2005)

Progression

Some policy documents and providers give a view of adult literacy and skill development which sees the learner progressing through a relatively seamless learning system until they achieve a previously defined outcome.

*We believe that all of our providers - colleges, universities, Community Learning and Development, schools, private training providers, voluntary sector organisations and the Scottish Prison Service are part of one and the same **learning system**, geared towards helping individuals develop the skills they need and with all providers understanding and supporting transitions individuals make both into and out of particular courses or programmes.*

Quality provision is also vital to ensuring that individuals stay in learning and we will continue to support improvement and assure quality through inspection, review, evaluation and audit.²⁹

A break from learning can be seen as 'early exit' and therefore as failure, rather than as part of a normal pattern for adult learners. Findings from LSAL also showed how 'patterns of participation' were often broken into multiple episodes. The picture of 'dipping in and out of learning' reflected the realities of already busy lives filled with the competing demands of family and work. These patterns will be familiar to practitioners but are not always reflected in assessment measures.

'accountability systems that track retention and success rates view exit without a qualification as negative, a failure by the provider to keep learners engaged. LSAL, in contrast, reveals learning trajectories over much longer time-spans. 'Dipping out' is not necessarily negative, nor does it imply a lack of impact on literacy.'³⁰

As researchers focus on the effects of programmed learning and do not normally track changes in literacy practices, the evidence on how practices are sustained and continue to impact on learners' competence and ability to transfer uses of literacy to new situations is absent.

Parental Involvement

The importance of parental involvement is a key aspect of Family Learning, but the emphasis on transferability of literacy and numeracy capabilities is increasingly being seen as only part of a much more complex process.

In an experiment to assess the effects of parental involvement in the teaching of reading, children took school-reading books home and parents were encouraged to help their children by talking about stories, listening to children's oral reading with minimal intervention and ensuring that the shared reading experiences remained enjoyable. They found that children who read to their parents on a regular basis made significant reading test gains, in fact greater gains than children receiving an equivalent amount of extra reading instruction by reading specialists at school. The research design included follow-ups at one and three years; both showed the children's gains had been maintained.³¹ Some children who were reading to their parents who could not themselves read English, or who, in a few cases, could not read at all, still showed improvement in their reading and their parents remained willing to collaborate with the school.

This raises questions about the quality of involvement as well as emotional and psychological factors. Its importance was identified through a study which found that

²⁹ *Skills for Scotland: A Lifelong Skills Strategy* (2007)

³⁰ See Note 10

³¹ Tizard, Schofield, Hewison, *Collaboration between teachers and parents in assisting children's reading*. (1982)

parental involvement in a child's schooling 'was a more powerful force than other family background indicators such as social class, family size and level of parental education and contributes to no less than 10% of variation in achievement.'³²

Researchers in the field, such as Hannon and Auerbach support the idea that the context provided by parents and their consistent support may be more important than any transfer of literacy and numeracy capabilities.³³

Benefits of Involvement for Parents

Another area that is recognised by many practitioners but has not yet been fully identified through research is a clearer understanding of how motivation for learning in families is developed. Smith and Spurling argue that it is the experience of parenthood itself that can be of central importance in 'remoulding' parents own awareness. Adults who may not be motivated to learn for themselves, find that the experience of being a parent not only increases their learning aspirations for their children, but through active involvement, their own learning motivation increases, which in turn helps their children's motivation – thereby stimulating a positive learning spiral for both generations.³⁴ This suggests that the quality of the parent / child learning experiences are crucial in raising the aspirations of parents for themselves and for their children.

As one practitioner interviewed stated,

Family Learning tries to draw together all members of the family to learn together and to discover that learning can be fun when shared with others. It also creates an atmosphere of support within the family for those choosing to further their own learning opportunities.

The OFSTED 2000³⁵ report noted that successful programmes of Family Learning resulted in the following benefits to parents:

- improved competence in literacy and numeracy
- progression for over 50% of participants to FE and training or more challenging jobs
- increased confidence in contacts with schools, teachers, and the education system, leading to becoming more active partners with schools
- a greater understanding of child development and of the strategies that can be used to help children to learn at key points in development,

3.5 Practitioners' Views

The e-survey conducted in this study to ascertain practitioners' views, confirmed some of these points and supported a number of themes that emerged from the literature review. In response to the question 'can you identify the key outcomes for the learners you work with?' practitioners identified the following:

Engagement with children's learning in school

Parents have an enhanced understanding of how their children learn in school and how they can assist with this process at home, during everyday life.

Families have the capacity and confidence to support, and take an active role in their child's' learning.

³² Feinstein, L & Symons, J *Attainment in Secondary School*: Oxford Economic Papers, 51 (1999)

³³ Auerbach (1989)

³⁴ Smith, J & Spurling, A *Understanding Motivation for Lifelong Learning* NIACE (2001)

³⁵ *Family Learning: A survey of good practice* OFSTED (2000)

Parents share their experiences with other members of their family by talking to a partner; sharing games and books made in groups with their child and singing rhymes/ telling stories at home with their children that they both heard together as part of FL events or that parents have learnt about in parent group.

Relationship with School/nursery

Parent felt their child has benefited by their being involved as settled easier into school

Improved relationships between family members / school staff

Confidence/self esteem

Parents a bit more confident approaching school and teachers, as they are more confident in their self and what they have achieved through the project

Parent felt more confident helping child to learn as realised they have skills and experience to do so and fun doing things haven't done since a child

Parents own development/progression

That parents recognise the skills they already have and look at the skills they need to develop.

Introduction to other adult learning opportunities available locally

They want to do more of this kind of learning, interest in and enthusiasm for further learning

New jobs through gaining qualifications

Friendship/support networks

Parents/carers access parent-based supportive networks.

Friendships and continuing support from other parents

Links to other provision in the community for themselves and their children

3.6 The Impact of Disadvantage

The Forum's concern for particular groups of learners identified in their strategic objectives is considered here. Key facts are presented which have implications for Family Learning.

The evidence highlights firstly, the factors related to the home and family life or local circumstances which appear to influence achievement in schools and secondly, the factors which may affect adults' motivation, retention and achievement in post 16 education.

Factors influencing achievement in school education:

An important longitudinal study shows that men and women in Scotland with the poorest grasp of literacy or numeracy were far more likely to have left full time education at the earliest opportunity with no qualifications. This is most marked among poorly skilled people living within the Central Belt region (1 in 2 of those with Access Level 2 or 3 literacy had no

qualifications compared with around 1 in 3 of those living in other parts of Scotland).³⁶

Those with the poorest grasp of literacy and numeracy, particularly literacy, had a relatively disadvantaged home life in childhood, both economically and in terms of education levels among parents and educational support offered by them. Far fewer parents of those with the poorest skills had enjoyed any extended education or gained any qualifications (87% of mothers at Access Level 2 or 3 Literacy had no qualifications, compared with 43% of mothers with Level 5 or higher). Compared with Great Britain as a whole, more children in Scotland had grown up in families living in overcrowded rented housing. Given their own school experiences and difficult home environment, it is hardly surprising that far fewer parents of people, who as adults are at Access Level 2 or 3 literacy, had any aspirations for them to continue their education when they were aged 16.³⁷

Fewer of the poorly skilled parents were seen by teachers as interested in their child's education towards the end of primary school. These parents were also much less likely to read to their youngsters (40% of those with Access Level 2 or 3 literacy at age 34 had been never read to, compared with 19% with Level 5 or higher). Moreover this pattern may repeat: mothers age 34 with a poor grasp of literacy and numeracy report higher levels of their own children not being able to read any words at the age of five, when compared with the cohort overall.³⁸

Parents' perceptions of a child's problems are an important factor in securing help from the school or family members and friends. Among the adults with Access Level 2 or 3 literacy skills, nearly half had been thought by their parent at age 10 to have 'some difficulties' or 'great difficulties' with reading. In other words, the majority had been thought to be coping with the demands of reading at school. Parents of those who as adults are at Access Level 2 or 3 literacy were much more likely to think they were having 'great difficulty' or 'some difficulty' with writing and maths at age 10.

However, parents then seem to accept underachievement during secondary schooling: by the time people in the study reached 16, only 1 in 10 mothers of those who grew up to have Access Level literacy thought their child now had difficulties with reading, and only a further 1 in 10 thought their child had found difficulties with learning to read earlier on.³⁹

The International Adult Literacy Survey compared several factors with literacy performance. For Scotland, it found a strong association between adults' literacy level and their social class: amongst those in the semiskilled and unskilled occupations, 38% were at the lowest level on a reading scale. Income was also a good predictor of literacy performance in the survey: 27% of people in the lowest income band and 32% of those in the middle income band were at the lowest level on a reading scale, compared with only 10% of those on the highest income band.⁴⁰

IALS confirmed lack of qualifications was clearly associated with lower literacy: almost half (45% to 48%) of people in Scotland with no formal educational qualifications were at the lowest literacy levels. Older learners may have unexpected strengths and weaknesses. Those aged 56 to 65 did significantly less well than younger people. However their age seems less relevant than might be assumed: more of them had left school at primary or early secondary level.⁴¹

36 Bynner, J. and Parsons, S. (2008) *New Light on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland: Evidence from the 2004 survey of the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70)*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

37 Ibid

38 Ibid

39 Ibid

40 *Adult literacy in Scotland: analysis of data from the 1996 Adult Literacy Survey*, Scottish Executive (2001)

41 Ibid

Factors influencing participation in post 16 education

The birth cohort study cited above found, when compared with Great Britain as a whole, men and women living in Scotland in 2004 were less likely than others who had no Scottish heritage to self-report any difficulties. Also they were less likely to have attended any adult learning to help them improve their reading, writing, numeracy and maths. Men and women living within the Central Belt region were least likely of all to self-report difficulties⁴².

Those living outside the Central Belt were more likely to be aware of their limited grasp of literacy (21% compared with 12% in the Central Belt) and especially their limited grasp of numeracy (49% compared with 27% in the Central Belt). However the motivation to improve poor skills in Scotland was far lower than for Great Britain as a whole⁴³. Among those with Access Level 2 or 3 literacy, only 17% report reading difficulties, and only 16% of those with Access Level 2 numeracy report difficulties. The number of adults with the lowest literacy and numeracy competence, who report any desire to do something to improve their skills, is also low.⁴⁴

Space in which to study is an issue. Compared with people in Great Britain as a whole, those with the poorest grasp of literacy in Scotland are most likely of all to live in rented and overcrowded homes.⁴⁵

There is some evidence on the barriers men and women face as learners. Both men and women with low competence are more isolated than other people and so may need more support and encouragement for their studies. Men with Access Level literacy or Access Level 2 numeracy were most likely to be still living with one or other of their parents at age 34. More of the men and women with Access Level literacy had never lived with a partner by age 34.⁴⁶

Women with poor literacy skills were the most likely to have first moved in with a partner when teenagers and to have become teenage mothers (24% compared with 5% of those with Level 5 or higher literacy). They went on to have more children, often three or four by age 34 (29% compared with 8% of those with Level 5 or higher literacy). Although as many as 1 in 5 women with Access Level literacy did not form (live-in) partnerships by age 34, the majority began to live with partners and start family life earlier than women with a better grasp of literacy.⁴⁷ However although much attention is focused on such young mothers in Family Learning, the influence of fathers can be significant.

3.7 Conclusion

There is a large body of research literature available evaluating the impact of family literacy programmes and numerous project reports. These studies typically describe and analyse a range of positive changes that occur for the participants as a result of participating in the programmes. They are useful in conveying the overall value of the programmes, but they do not necessarily identify precisely what helps to produce these benefits. The implications of the data on poverty and disadvantage for the practice of Family Learning have also not yet been fully investigated.

As yet, there is little evidence that helps in identifying why some initiatives are more successful than others or what makes for a successful programme for different groups of learners.

42 Bynner, J. and Parsons, S. (2008) *New Light on Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland: Evidence from the 2004 survey of the 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70)*, Edinburgh: Scottish Government

43 Ibid

44 Ibid

45 Ibid

46 Ibid

47 Ibid

Section 4 Case Studies

As the previous section outlined, rigorous evidence of the impact of family learning models is still lacking. However, the literature review helped to identify a selection of models (in Section 2) which were seen as relevant to the Forum's objectives. This last section gives an outline of four case studies which show work being undertaken with those groups identified by the South East Forum, and which give indications of models which appear to be promising.

4.1 Key features

These four case studies have been extracted from the six further interviews that were conducted as part of this study. Time did not allow for any large scale investigative research. They were selected from recommendations from other key practitioners, from a web-based search and from the survey, as seen as being interesting and 'successful' projects and working with those target groups identified in the Forum's strategy. It was assumed that the Forum would be more aware of initiatives within the SE region and so the case studies were selected from other areas of Scotland.

The following are some of the key features which appear to have an impact on raising aspirations, and access to further or higher education.

Recruitment

Practitioners have to overcome considerable barriers to encourage those adults who may feel uncomfortable, uninterested or anxious about engaging or entering an educational setting. All the case study show practitioners are acutely aware of these risks and use creative and sensitive strategies to deal with them. These include:

- providing a welcoming and non-threatening atmosphere
- valuing parents existing knowledge, language and culture
- respecting parents as people
- forming relationships first before introducing learning opportunities
- utilising informal methods and activities that are enjoyable and active
- non-stigmatising approaches with any targeting done discretely

This is recognised as a key part of family learning practice.

The drop in and the coffee groups are essential links in the chain of community schools activities, helping to build the relationships that enable individuals and families to access family learning and family support. .. 'The informal opportunities represent a key access route to other services as well as performing their essential roles of building confidence, providing information and helping some of the parents to develop new social and support networks'⁴⁸

Given the difficulties of recruiting learners from these groups it is encouraging that these projects attract large numbers of learners.

Approaches to Learning

To overcome parents' anxiety or disinterest in what was seen as 'school learning' a number of approaches can be seen to be operating. Some of these non-stigmatising methods are very subtle but significant for the learner. It can be quite acceptable for parents to join computing classes because not knowing about computers is still quite common amongst adults. Similarly calling a course "I'm a parent get me out of here!" signals an acceptable feeling that all parents experience, rather than a course on parenting which might be seen as focusing on skills that are lacking.

⁴⁸ North Perth New Community School, Independent Evaluation (2003)

All the case studies adopt a social practices model, building literacy and learning around existing interests such as photography or physical activities or a concern about their community such as the lack of decent play areas. A negotiated curriculum requires practitioners to be flexible, creative and organised and the work rate is high.

Research suggests that most parents are interested in their children's education and these case studies show that this concern and motivation can be a powerful factor in encouraging their involvement in their own learning. Creative ways are employed to connect with this, such as:

- providing enjoyable experiences for parents and children to be together in order to build parents' confidence and pleasure in their own abilities to help their children.
- creative mechanisms such as exhibiting photos of fathers together with their children at a social event to enable them to see themselves more positively.
- providing practical playful learning experiences such as building catapults which use the imagination and stimulate a renewed interest in learning.

Making learning implicit or explicit?

Unlike the statutory obligations of formal schooling, engaging adults who have disengaged from education has to be carefully negotiated. One of the common ironies in the family learning field is the way in which practitioners often have to promote activities without any mention of learning or education. In many of the case studies, more formal learning opportunities are only gradually introduced.

However, encouraging a more conscious awareness of the learning process for themselves appears to be important in terms of parents' self-esteem and sense of being in control of their lives. Inviting parents in to plan and develop new programmes (e.g. Brucehill's Science Boxes) makes the learning explicit and open. Sessions to help parents see what and how their children are learning, to de-mystify the teaching and learning process and therefore make it more accessible. This step seems to be more effective once basic relationships have been made. When asked if the learning was explicit for those involved in activities, one practitioner said,

It hasn't been, we concentrated on enabling people to relax and enjoy the experience. But I would like to just have the Dads on their own now and explain what is happening in some of their children's classes, so they know what is happening, how we are doing it – to raise their awareness of learning and education.

Widening Experience

Many of the activities described in the case studies take place out of the classroom. Practitioners describe the freedom that this seems to offer and described active learning as doing or making things. This could include activities such as:

- taking photographs of a local area and then making notes
- making models or puppets or DVD
- walking over the hills and noting the natural environment
- baking or shopping involving numeracy
- going to a football match, taking photos and noting numbers and words
- planning and producing leaflets e.g. on lunch box ideas for other parents

In addition, many of the outdoor activities offered learners access to different experiences and environments which they may not have been able to access previously through lack of money or information. One practitioner suggested that some parents felt uncomfortable going to the beach or going to the countryside because they hadn't had this experience themselves as children and felt unsure about what to do or how to enjoy it.

The introduction to new cultural experiences - going to Museums, libraries or historical landmarks, handling objects and hearing about local history provide enjoyable, stimulating and rich sources of learning. Similarly building on active concerns such as getting improvements in local amenities uses this motivation and enables people to learn and apply learning in a way that is meaningful in their lives, rather than abstract or subject based.

Empowerment

A number of projects demonstrate the importance of encouraging parents to be more in control of their own lives and learning.

- parents as 'critical friends' to advise on a learning tool such as the Science Boxes
- deciding on programmes
- running their own groups and organisations
- getting involved in community campaigning

Progression

All the case studies and many examples from the survey give anecdotal evidence of parents moving on to skill development, further education, self study, volunteering, employment, involvement in school life, running local activities such as local radio programme.

Evaluation

Most projects have monitoring procedures or regular evaluation in place and these can be very detailed depending on the different funding requirements and accountability systems. Some projects had produced DVD's on their work providing a creative way to capture the essence of a project. Research on the impact of the Aberdeen project on children's attitudes and attainment has been undertaken by Aberdeen University using data from Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS)⁴⁹ A comparison was made between pupils whose parents had been involved with the project and a peer group. Inclusion in family learning activities by parents appeared to make a measurable difference in attainment difference. Differences have been seen in two separate cohorts of pupils starting and ending Primary 1 over a two year period, however the work is still ongoing.⁵⁰

Case Study Characteristics

Lastly, some of the key characteristics of each of the Case studies are outlined in Table 2. These give an indication of staffing levels; the area covered; the learners; and the model or emphasis of the project.

⁴⁹ Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) is a range of assessments for primary school pupils developed by the University of Durham. These measure performance in Reading and Maths plus attitude to school and subjects

⁵⁰ Stelfox, K *The Impact of the Family Learning team on Attainment in schools in Aberdeen*(forthcoming)

Case Study 1

Family Learning Team: Kittybrewster Primary School Aberdeen	
Staff	Team includes 2 full time staff and 4 home link tutors. Work in 8 primary schools located in designated areas of deprivation
Model/Approach	Based on a 'wealth' rather than a 'deficit' model
Universal/targeted?	Programmes offered to all parents
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer Away Day for Families whose children starting school -breakfast, games, and fun activities. Get to know the parents. Photos taken and then invitation to view a week later and hear more about the programmes on offer. • Go to any school events and run a stall about the work • Run a weekly local radio show on family learning. Trained up to do this and now parents are involved, learning how to produce and edit material
Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-designed an American Positive Parenting programme using special puppets to tackle 'emotional literacy' of children. Courses for children - now in all P1 and P2 classes in 8 schools. Separate one for adults <i>I'm a parent get me out of here!</i> combined with literacy work. Celebration breakfast at end of course. • Family Fun Days on Saturdays using different theme each time. Using the Reading Bus (a mobile library for children), storytelling plus follow up activities for parents to do with their children. One day is run each year in all 8 schools. • Residentials for groups of families produce excellent results • Work with Local Museums, very stimulating for people touching and learning about artefacts and local history. • Messy Play - blocks of 3 weekly sessions after school for parents and children. • Confidence building • Maths and Reading - produced booklets for parents to help their children • DVD on the Doric language now used in local schools • Challenge Dad project funding now ended.(See below)*
Encouraging Active Citizens	One group took digital cameras to record aspects of their local community and write up. A scruffy play area was noted. Parents supported to write to councillors; organise a campaign; and visit other playgrounds. Grant of £30,000 gained to improve it.
Progression	After initial relationships are built, parents are encouraged and invited onto further programmes designed to suit their needs, some with their children.
Evaluation	Anecdotal evidence of parents moving on to further education/training/jobs and involvement with school initiatives/volunteering. Many parents from the play area campaign project are very involved now in community and school. HMI 2005 Report described this as 'leading edge practice'. Quantitative evaluation undertaken by Aberdeen University research officer showing impact on children's attainment.

*For more information <http://www.challengedad.com/>

Case Study 2

<p>Head Teacher: Brucehill Education and Childcare Centre, Dumbarton</p>
<p>Staff Head Teacher with whole staff team. Nursery offers 120 half day places.</p>
<p>Model/Approach 'Learning Together' developed as a real commitment to parental involvement to reduce barriers between parents and teachers, home and educational institution and to create a genuine partnership. A holistic approach - effective and purposeful. Proper relationship, not tokenistic tackling the barriers to education. Involves respecting parents as the prime educators. Process as important as product. rather than a top down initiative, staff and parents are developing work together. A key aim is trying to develop more awareness about learning.</p>
<p>Universal/targeted? Programmes offered to all parents</p>
<p>Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parents see key worker daily so relationship is developed with all parents. • Less confident encouraged by staff • Parents asked to help with the science initiative - a new venture and their help was essential. They started from scratch to investigate with their families and alongside teachers why science was seen as a difficult topic and to develop science boxes for use at home by families. Parents were not to be recipients but active partners. Home baking was used to attract participants.
<p>Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Boxes was the first programme. Survey asking parents why it was a difficult subject/what do you remember from learning it at school? Bunsen burners and magnets were remembered. Investigated: is colour / paint / cooking to do with science? Processes like floating and sinking were identified. Ran as workshops and groups after end of nursery day. Each group looked at different topics. Other family members came and crèche provided for smaller ones. Created group of 'critical friends' - tried things out at home and gave feedback. Real learning going on for everyone. Teachers weren't in charge, lots of things changed when parents didn't think they worked. Hands on active learning took place for 10-11 months and then 24 Science Boxes launched. £4000 grant from LTS sought and the programme was monitored all the way. Photos and videos taken. Parents invited along with Head Teacher to talk at conferences and seminars. • Physical Bags built on this experience. Games/activities for families to take home and use for fun and learning. Used same process. • Story Sacks self-regulating system organised by parents which frees staff time. Now in 3rd year of operation with 1000 books in library • Sleepover -children take home a toy animal for a sleepover at home for 2 weeks plus digital camera. Children make a story about what happens to animal. Make a photo book - children to write it and put it together with parents. Every child gets a go. Stories are displayed in the school.
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>HMI Report ranked as excellent. The use of evaluation sheets for children - to encourage parents to ask their children what they liked. Other family members can join in. Parents are encouraged to ask child - what did you <u>learn</u> today, rather than <u>do</u> today?</p>

Case Study 3

Community Schools Co-ordinator: Goodlyburn Primary School Perth
Staff Multi-disciplinary team 2 community learning workers, health worker, 3 p/t family link workers, literacies tutor from Perth College, teacher who links to home, sessional staff. Area with high deprivation index and unemployment.
Model/Approach Started as a single community school project then expanded in 2000. Made links with social work centre and Youth Clubs. Originally offered parents literacy and numeracy and accredited adult education courses on personal development/communication. Then decided to focus on bringing families together to learn because this was the greatest benefit to all. Recognition that the stresses from poverty means parents don't do things with children. Find route people want to take.
Universal/targeted Some targeting to encourage more vulnerable families. Extended families involved - grannies, older siblings come along.
Recruitment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started with Summer Holiday programmes to help families who through poverty were missing out on normal family holidays. Got to know families • The family link worker actively encourages more vulnerable families along. • Advertising through schools and word of mouth. • For Men's' Work started with questionnaire at Christmas fair in local schools - talked to dads, asked what they liked for them and their children. 59 registered. Created database and then phoned round or visited to invite to various activities. • Drop-ins - Adults are encouraged to either just drop in for a coffee and a chat in an informal way.
Programmes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Clubs in the evening. Optional activities - cooking physical games etc. Huge response 60 -65 parents and children. Put on a crèche to let parents come along with older children. However dads were missing. • Men's Work started. Digital photography etc. Organise men and children trips – swimming / walking / cooking / bush craft etc. on Saturday mornings. Good response. 70 people on outdoor trip at Easter 2008. • Homework Group for whole families • Wide range - family holiday activities, family technology classes to groups sharing ways of handling teenagers or developing healthy lifestyles.
Progression Some parents move on to helping in the primary and secondary schools as volunteers. For some, the move from drop-in gives them the support and confidence they need to progress to adult learning. Once staff know people they can suggest various things – e.g. can accompany them to Careers Scotland.
Time Approach is not a quick fix - been working for 10 years to develop all the relationships needed across disciplines, agencies and the community. The process has to be nurtured.

Case Study 4

<p align="center">Family Learning Co-ordinator: Primary Schools Dumfries & Galloway</p>
<p>Staff Co-ordinator and Team also includes Adult Education staff. Funding was from the Working For Families - Community Regeneration budget. Area of high unemployment and deprivation</p>
<p>Model Learning has to be enjoyable -recent research shows that the brain development is linked with emotional development and that enjoyment helps us learn and that the learning will stick. But also it is really important to build relationships that are non-threatening. Started in Sanquhar and so successful now spread to Kelloholm</p>
<p>Universal/targeted? Targeted at fathers after Hobcraft Research 1998 showed the impact their involvement had on child's attainment.</p>
<p>Recruitment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The carrot was invitation to all the fathers to come into school one evening for a family portrait photo of them and their children. Mums not allowed. Time for them to meet each other informally before getting their photo done. • Invited them back to see photos - device to get them in again together. Organised a slide show of all the photos – quite unexpectedly emotional – seeing themselves with their children as the father of the family. • Next invited them to come on an outing with their children – to a Farm Park. This was excellent and good fun – the families enjoyed it • The key thing is building relationships with the men – once they perceive there is not going to be anything threatening, we can introduce more things.
<p>Programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time had to be more flexible, couldn't be in the daytime often, so sessions in the evenings and weekends. At the moment run events about twice a month. • Male class teacher helped with planning to look at exercises/activities men would enjoy – technical/ building/making things, physical activities etc. • Match outings with related activity back in school - after trebuchet visit made catapult machines, shot brussel sprouts across the gym. Children loved this. • First sessions aimed at having fun, doing or making things. Lately introduced writing stories session - wouldn't have tried earlier as too reminded of school lessons, but now they enjoyed it. Wrote together, so dads who weren't so confident could let their children take the lead. Comments very favourable – one father saying he hadn't written anything like this since he was at school.
<p>Progression</p> <p>Co-workers come to every session, build rapport with people, so easier to ask for help to look at literacy, training, education, skill development etc. Number of the fathers now taking part in a computer skills class, few get literacy help one to one, 12 in computer class, 1 doing Higher English, and 1 with Community Mentoring scheme to help people back into employment. Men now organise the groups themselves. Got constituted, bank account, applied for funding and organise the programme.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>More fathers involvement in schools. 70 men involved now. Schools' report that the children are better behaved when their Dad's are coming into school.</p>

Table 2 Case Study Characteristics

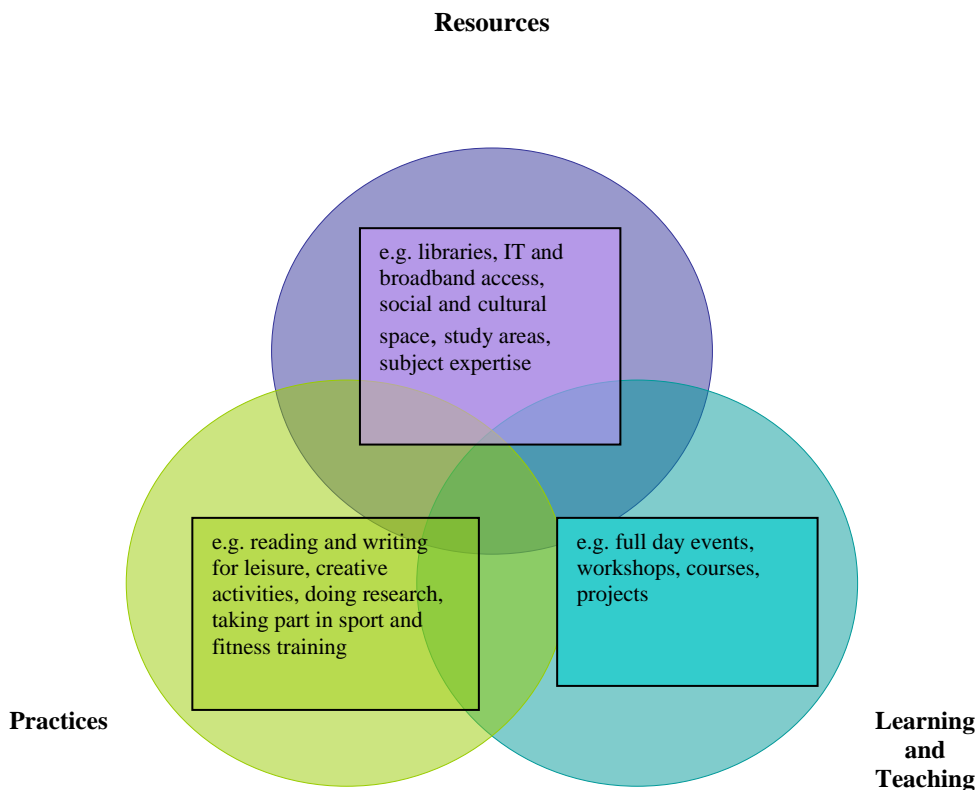
	1.Aberdeen	2.Dumbarton	3.Kelloholm	4.Perth
Spread of work	8 primary schools in Aberdeen City	Education & Childcare Centre Brucehill Dumbarton	2 rural primary schools, Kelloholm & Sanquhar Upper Nithsdale Dumfries& Galloway	2 community learning bases, pre-school centre, 4 primary, 1 secondary school Vol.orgs North Perth
Staff	Family Learning workers Home link tutors	Head Teacher and nursery staff	Family Learning Co-ordinator, adult basic education	Multi-disciplinary-community learning, literacies, family link, health, home link teacher, Council Ranger Services
Learners	All families with children in schools. Also Challenge Dad as separate funded initiative.	All families with children in nursery	Fathers of children in 2 schools.	All families, but special encouragement to more vulnerable families.
Model/ Emphasis	'Wealth model' not deficit. Build on and value cultural richness within families to help children at school. Emotional literacy as well. Parents as active citizens.	Partnership, not tokenistic. Families and teachers learning together. Co-educators. Bringing home and nursery learning together Parents running school library	Learning as fun and enjoyable helps families to learn more effectively. Outdoor and active learning. Parents organising/ directing activities	Community school model. Aware of effects of poverty. Bringing community life and school learning together Families enjoying being and learning together.

Section 5 Discussion

5.1 Resources for Higher Level Competence

The wealth approach to Family Learning was strongly advocated by experienced practitioners in the survey as a means of reaching the groups of interest to the Forum. This approach entails providers building on the rich resources (knowledge, cultural practices and social events) already present within families. It means going beyond providing learning and teaching opportunities by identifying other ways to support and expand adults' and children's' uses of literacy, language and numeracy. It is helpful to think of three positive forces for developing higher level competence:

- making more literacy, language and numeracy resources available
- providing more opportunities for learners to engage in practices that sustain and stimulate language, literacy, numeracy and learning
- offering learning and teaching opportunities.



Forum members might consider ways in which these could be provided. For example, **space** for a mobile library to visit target neighbourhoods could be allocated or negotiated. This could offer a collection of DVDs, CDs, magazines, and laptops, with broadband internet access, on particular themes of interest to local families such as sport or family history.

In addition **writing tools** (such as notebooks, highlighters, dyslexia overlays and calculators) and **multi media IT tools** (digital cameras, video cameras, audio recorders) could be

provided so that the reading, listening and visual activities can be enriched by more active writing and recording.

Access to expertise- of staff, students or volunteers who have a knowledge of topics (such as sport, family history, journalism, research, digital technology) would enable participants to investigate their interests and share their knowledge with each other in visually and linguistically interesting ways. Furthermore, there is the potential, at any stage in the process, to build on the practices that are emerging and to extend the offer from access to resources, to more formally organised learning and teaching, and ultimately to set up accredited programmes through further and higher education.

5. 2. Developing Open Programmes

As Family Learning providers, South East Forum has the potential to work from any of the types of programme shown in the conceptual map in Section 4. Although the policy and strategic context is favourable for adult literacy and numeracy and educationally disadvantaged children, local and national strategy and funding arrangements appear to have focussed attention on specific schools or neighbourhoods and intervention to address specific expectations in schools. It would be appropriate to develop programmes with more open curricula and more diverse supplementary (and indeed more broad compensatory) learning activities and events, in response to local circumstances and interests. Such programmes are likely to attract a wider range of participants, including father figures and older children.

5. 3. Enjoyment in Learning

Experienced practitioners and researchers have noted the importance of learning which is enjoyable and inspiring to take part in. Creative content and socially rewarding processes are to be encouraged and acknowledged as important educationally. They allow adult learners and their children to re think their self image, seeing themselves perhaps for the first time as successful learners in an educational setting. This experience offers positive role models for peers and younger learners, challenging cultural expectations of who can become a successful learner. If sustainable, an improved self image can enable individuals to make smoother life transitions, including transitions to further and higher education, employment and training.

5.4. Strengthening Effective Practice

South East Forum is well placed to support and strengthen effective practice in Family Learning as a means of reaching its target groups and achieving its objectives. Participating institutions could play a role locally in developing more rigorous research, disseminating learners and workers experiences in local and international programmes, promoting and supporting practitioner networking and research, and strengthening consultation with and representation of learners and families. It could be useful for the Forum to create a mechanism that allows an ongoing dialogue with learners with the object of seeing what families can teach providers. Space could be created to enable families to contribute more fully to the emerging debates about policy, strategy and practice, not viewing their contributions as 'fringe events' but as a key element in the decision making, process

5.5. ICT and Family Learning

ICT has a major contribution to make to creative content within programmes, the publication and dissemination of materials used or produced within Family Learning initiatives, and effective communication between and networking amongst learners and practitioners. Family Learning needs to take account the way literacy and language are changing, and the ways home, work and educational practices are shifting in response to developments in information and communication technology. The concept of 'multiliteracies'⁵¹, developed to capture this rapid change and review its implications for teaching and learning in education

⁵¹ Cope, B. & Kalantzis M. eds (2000) *Multiliteracies: Literacy Learning and the Design of Social Futures*, London: Routledge

needs to be explored with learners and those supporting learners. Given the increasing division between resources and experiences in using ICT, families living in areas of economic deprivation need strong support to keep pace with new forms of communication online and integrated into social and workplace interactions via text messaging, video conferencing etc.⁵²

Digital storytelling, blogging, mobile phone texting and other popular cultural forms, such as television, PlayStation / X Box games and instant messaging, are beginning to be recognised as multi modal literacy practices which can be drawn on in adult learning. Family Learning needs to be encouraged and supported in the use of these tools and activities both as learning and teaching methods, and as curriculum content. Multi modal learning appeals to, and works well for, learners who have had unsuccessful experiences with traditional teaching and learning methods; it offers valuable insights into the digital and globally diverse world we now live in; and it has the creative potential to stimulate and inspire reluctant learners⁵³.

As digital technology is changing rapidly and programme staff have little time to keep up with developments, South East Forum could offer practitioners 'hands on' training and basic technical support, and could assist with equipment purchase through advice and trial loans, and host online services and e-learning content.

5.6. Inter-agency communication

This is vital to effective targeting and responsive programming in Family Learning. The Forum could play an enabling role; hosting meetings between practitioners themselves and cross-disciplinary seminars between practitioners and other professionals (teachers, lecturers, health visitors, social workers) so that exchange of ideas and issues occurs more broadly than at the programme manager and funder levels. This would encourage lessons from the informal style of Family Learning to be recognised and wash into other areas of education, contributing to Scotland's aim to develop a high quality literacy and numeracy 'system that learns'.

5.7. The current policy context

This is very positive for Family Learning: national and local government are committed to helping parents and carers provide a nurturing and stimulating home environment for their children and to helping parents improve their own literacy and numeracy so they can support their children. However strategically, how this will work is as yet uncertain. Whilst national government set the direction of policy and the national outcomes, Family Learning providers must look to inter-agency partnerships and their local authorities to agree how local needs and circumstances should be provided for. The period of time ahead will involve further potentially turbulent transitions in funding, staffing, programme planning and accountability. The Forum could help practitioners working as programme managers and tutors in their area by drawing them together to capture their experiences and recording this. It is possible that Learning Connections will wish to support such efforts to learn from practitioner experience and carry these lessons forward into a new phase of development.

⁵² See also Kress, G. (2003) and Crystal, D. (2006)

⁵³ For example, a research project *Camcorder Cultures: Media Technologies and Everyday Creativity*, at the Institute of Education, University of London, is exploring the use of video cameras in everyday lives as part of family's communicative home practices www.childrenyouthandmediacentre.co.uk/projects

Appendix 1 e- survey

This small scale survey was carried out in order to complement the information gathered from the literature review. Given the time available for this scoping study a response time of three weeks was given. A practitioner contact was sought from each of the 32 local authorities and 42 questionnaires were sent out. This method produced 19 responses (45% response rate). The Scottish Network for Parental Involvement in Children's Learning was also approached and they agreed to inform the network about the questionnaire. This produced another 16 responses, a total of 35.

Respondent Characteristics

Local Authority Area

The respondents covered the following 20 local authority areas:

Aberdeenshire, Aberdeen City, Angus, Dumfries & Galloway, East Ayrshire, East Dunbartonshire, West Dunbartonshire, East Lothian, East Renfrewshire, Edinburgh, Falkirk, Fife, Glasgow, Highland, Mid-Lothian, Moray, North Lanarkshire, Perth & Kinross, Shetland, South Lanarkshire.

Job Titles(28 responses)

Given the range of family learning work, participants' job titles were as follows:

Family Learning in their title (12)

Adult learning (3)

Community Learning & Development 2

Adult Literacies (3)

Home School Partnership/Home Link/Community Link/Early Years Worker(4)

PEEP (Parents as Early Education Partners) Co-ordinator

Play at Home Advisor

Director of Private Company - Maths on Track

Police Sergeant (part of Highland Pathfinder multi-disciplinary team)

Participants worked with the following learners

(more than one choice)

Parents & children pre-nursery and nursery age	12
Parents & children of primary school age	13
Parents & children/young people 11-14yrs	5
Parents& young people 15-19yrs	2
Young people only 15-19yrs	1
Other Family members/carers and children	5

The setting for their work

Nursery, school or FE College	17
Community venue/s eg Family Learning centre	15
Homes	3

Appendix 2 Glossary

Adult Basic Education (ABE): the term widely used in Scotland prior to 2000, to refer to literacy and numeracy learning and teaching programmes, sometimes also intended to refer to a wider programme including the development of technology skills, organisational abilities etc., see also Essential Skills.

Adult Literacy and Numeracy (ALN): literacy and numeracy learning and teaching programmes designed for adults, including young adults who are absent from / excluded from school education.

Dedicated programmes: the term used in Scotland to refer to the 'stand alone' literacy and numeracy learning and teaching, in contrast with combining the learning and teaching with other learning (see integrated programmes).

Deficit approach: a descriptive term used to express what is now seen as a negative way of developing learners' literacy, where curriculum design starts from learning goals that are identified through initial assessment tools or learners' own accounts of what they **cannot** do (see wealth approach).

Essential Skills: the term widely used in Scotland prior to 2000, to refer to literacy and numeracy learning and teaching programmes. Sometimes a euphemism for Adult Basic Education, although often it was intended to encompass a wider programme than the earlier adult literacy and numeracy provision, see also Adult Basic Education.

Family Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) programmes: the term used to refer to literacy and numeracy learning and teaching programmes designed to benefit parents, siblings and other relatives of pre school and school age children and (directly or indirectly) the children themselves.

Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy (FLLN) programmes: the term used to refer to literacy, oral language and numeracy learning and teaching programmes designed to benefit parents, siblings and other relatives of pre school and school age children and (directly or indirectly) the children themselves.

Integrated programmes: the term used in Scotland to refer to the combining of literacy and numeracy learning and teaching with other learning such as arts and crafts, using technology, sport and leisure, or civic participation (see dedicated programmes).

Multiple literacies: A concept derived from ethnographic theory and research emphasising that literacy practices and ways of knowing are culture-specific. When applied to learning and teaching, it entails recognising that learners inevitably bring to education rich 'vernacular' knowledge and ways of making meaning. If these resources remain untapped by teachers then, particularly for those from marginalised communities and cultural and linguistic minorities, it can become difficult to engage effectively with education.

Phonics (synthetic and traditional): the relationship between letters and sounds usually learned as a foundation skill in early reading. Synthetic phonics is currently regarded as a better method of teaching this relationship to young children.

Reflect: an approach to adult learning and social change largely used in developing countries, originally as an approach to adult literacy and empowerment. It fuses the theories of [Paulo Freire](#) with the methodology of [participatory rural appraisal](#) and uses a cycle of thinking, planning and action.

Remedial model: an approach to teaching and learning, adopted immediately after the 1970's BBC 'On the Move' adult literacy campaign which assumed learners had missed out on the basics of reading or writing at primary school and needed to be treated individually and offered 'catch up' phonic training, alphabet exercises, word and sentence activities such as matching words to pictures, and punctuating sentences.

Wealth approach: a descriptive term used to express a positive way of developing learners' literacy by drawing on and valuing their existing social and cultural practices and identifying learning goals from their perceptions and aspirations rather than assumed needs (see also deficit approach and remedial model).