

# Curriculum for Excellence factfile

## How parents can get involved



### Why would I want to be involved?

You have a right as a parent to be involved in your child's education and schools welcome this. There is lots of evidence that shows that when parents and educators work closely together, children do better. So your relationship with the place and people involved in your child's education is important. Any interest and involvement you have will show your child that you value their education. Getting involved can also be a great way to make contacts and friends with people who have children of the same age.

### How can I be involved in my child's education?

You can be involved in different ways. Support your child's learning at home. Support what schools asking of your child at school and through homework. Talk to staff if you have concerns. Read notes and progress reports sent home and offer your comments. Attend open evenings, Parents Night, fetes, shows and displays of work. Attend meetings with teaching staff to discuss your child's progress and plan future targets. Join the Parent Council and help influence plans for your child and others.

### I'm not sure I've got anything to offer.

#### What would be useful?

Time, a pair of hands, ideas, energy, skills, support. Depending on the age/stage of your child and how involved you want to be, this could be helping in class, with outdoor projects, going on trips, sharing your own experience and skills, helping out at exam time, joining the Parent Council, fundraising. Ask about the options and you can work out what suits your availability and interest.

### What can parents do to help their children?

Spending quality time together is important at any age. The 'play talk read' campaign gives great tips for wee ones: [www.infoscotland.com/playtalkread](http://www.infoscotland.com/playtalkread). It's good for parents to encourage healthy habits and routines from the start – diet, sleep, exercise, balancing work and play. That way young people will be able to make good life choices for themselves when they're older. Curriculum for Excellence puts a new responsibility on all staff for Health & Wellbeing and there's a factfile on that topic.

### What specific things can I do to help?

Show an interest in what's going on. Ask questions. Give praise when it's due and challenge when it's needed. Listen. Encourage them to make choices, take responsibility for them and solve their own problems – with your support. Balance work and play. Encourage them to take on challenges they enjoy in and out of school. This will help develop knowledge, skills, confidence, self-esteem... all at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence.

### How can parents support children at exam time?

There is more flexibility under Curriculum for Excellence for your child to present for qualifications when s/he is ready. Reports from school will tell you how they're doing. If you are worried ask for help – see the factfile 'Support for Learners'. The best support is regular attendance, keeping up with homework and coursework throughout the term, plus sleep, diet and exercise. Some qualifications are assessed by classwork rather than exam. For information on the new National 4 and 5 qualifications starting in 2013 see the factfile on 'Qualifications and Assessment' or see [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk).

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Curriculum for Excellence in action

Bringing life to learning and learning to life

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## What can I do if my child isn't coping?

There's a whole range of reasons why a young person might struggle, whatever stage of life they are at. Difficulties at home, fall-outs with friends, the stress of exams, learning difficulties. There's helpful information at [www.infoscotland.com/justask](http://www.infoscotland.com/justask) from spotting the signs of stress to parents' rights and the range of different needs support can help with. See factfile: Supporting Learners.

## Can I help when my child goes to secondary?

'Transitions' can be stressful – moving from home to nursery, nursery to primary, primary to secondary and onto work or college. These times of change are often as stressful for the parent as they are for the child. Get your own worries addressed early so that you can do your best to make the change as smooth as possible. Focus on the excitement and opportunity. Listen to concerns – they are real and being heard is a big help. Don't be afraid to raise your concerns or ask questions at nursery, school or college. Parent Councils in school can often be a good source for parents to get parent-to-parent information. Ask for their contact details.

## How can I help with homework?

Help your child make time and find a quiet space for homework and reading. Getting into good "study" habits as they grow older and move up through the school system should help them to become independent and successful learners. Give praise for putting time and effort into the work, not just for getting the right answer.

## I'm a bit out of my depth to help with homework

Just showing that you are interested matters most. Often, asking children to explain what they have learned helps a great deal to reinforce their learning... even if you don't fully understand the detail. Teaching methods change over time, so schools often run sessions to show parents what children are being taught. If homework really is a problem for you or your child, talk to school about it.

Online help is available too. There are lots of homework sites (see opposite) and the Scottish schools intranet, Glow, offers another way for teachers, pupils and parents to work together.

Children can have differing home circumstances and sometimes the person most able to help them with their learning is another relative or carer.



## Curriculum for Excellence in action

Watch films and hear teachers and young people talk about their experience of Curriculum for Excellence. There's a set of factfiles too on the background and benefits, qualifications and assessment, the secondary experience, supporting learners and health and wellbeing. [www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk)

## How can Parent Councils help?

Parent Councils can make important links to families, local neighbourhood and businesses that can help bring life to learning. They can also be a vital link to hear what pupils think and want. The Parent Council can invite parents in to share their skills, time, expertise and knowledge. This gives pupils a sense of the world they are moving into and an understanding of how different learning paths may lead to different outcomes in life. The Parent Council can link to local businesses that might offer work experience opportunities or give young people the chance to develop business skills. They can help with fundraising, organise career fairs and be on hand at parent events to talk to other parents.

## Further information

### PARENTS

Parentline Scotland: 0800 800 2222

Parenting generally: [www.parentingacrossscotland.org](http://www.parentingacrossscotland.org)

National Parent Forum Scotland:

[www.parentforumsotland.org](http://www.parentforumsotland.org)

Parents and carers: [www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk](http://www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk)

Advice for step parents: [www.stepfamilyscotland.org.uk](http://www.stepfamilyscotland.org.uk)

### EDUCATION

Share ideas, ask a Q: [www.engageforeducation.org](http://www.engageforeducation.org)

Qualifications: [www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)

Careers: [www.careers-scotland.org.uk](http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk)

Learning resources: [www.bbc.co.uk/learning](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning)

Additional support: [www.enquire.org.uk](http://www.enquire.org.uk)

Standards and inspections: [www.hmie.gov.uk](http://www.hmie.gov.uk)

Teaching practice and support: [www.itscotland.org.uk](http://www.itscotland.org.uk)

### HOMEWORK – ask your school for ideas too

[www.homeworkelephant.co.uk/teachers](http://www.homeworkelephant.co.uk/teachers)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/homework](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/homework)

[www.gridclub.com](http://www.gridclub.com)

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