 

Embedding Family Learning Case Study

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| **Name of establishment** | Pollokshields Primary |
| **Case Study Written By**  *Name and Job Title* | Claire Bradley, Family Learning Officer & Taz Ahmed, Principal Teacher |
| **Date Completed** | April 2023 |
| **Setting the Scene**  *Brief description of your establishment* | |
| Pollokshields Primary sits at the heart of a culturally diverse area, mainly consisting of residents from a Pakistani / Mirpuri heritage. 48.5% of the pupils have English as an Additional Language. Except for English,the languages spoken in our school community are mostly Urdu, Punjabi, Mirpuri, and also Slovak, Romanian, Pushto, Arabic, Tamil.  8% of pupils are in SIMD Decile 1&2. However, this is not a true representation of deprivation, as many of our pupils live with extended families in private rented accommodation.  24.5% of pupils are registered for free school meals. Again, this is not a true representation of poverty within the community as some parents do not apply for this resoource. Language barriers, pride, and existing free meals entitlement for P1 to P5 are some of the factors involved.  0.3 % of pupils are looked after and accommodated. | |
| **Action/Approach Taken**  *Detail the actions taken in order to develop and embed family learning into your establishment. What was done and how? What staff and partners were involved? What were the costs and timescales?* | |
| **This case study covers family engagement and learning at Pollokshields Primary from (Taz include dates please) and outlines planned interventions and “what’s next”:**  **Pre 2021**   * Few Family Learning opportunities and limited whole school awareness/ knowledge and understanding.   **Year 2021 – 2022 – (new remit – Family Learning)**   * **September’21** - Ready Steady Read pupil assessments in P1 highlighted where targeted support was required, and the Story Sacks programme was introduced using existing resources. * **October ’21**- First Family Learning programme (Story Sacks) was rolled out. (Most EAL parents indicated that communication was a problem as they were not literate in English and few not literate in first language, therefore, twitter, emails and even translated letters in Urdu were not beneficial. Parents relied heavily on “word of mouth”. – This was addressed; Term 3 and 4 newsletters included QR codes which enabled parents to listen to information in Urdu/ English * **October’21 to present day**- Developing my knowledge of Family Learning Principles and Practices, how to engage parents, making links with the Family Learning Team and other agencies, and learning about Family Learning programmes available and how best to evaluate these. – **Ongoing** * **November’21** – ESOL classes run by Homestart reintroduced post-lockdown. **Ongoing** * **March ’22** - Digital workshops to show parents how to access QR codes on their phones based on parental voice during Story Sack Programme on October’21. To further improve communication – EAL parents now feel included and better informed. * **April ’22**- Made links with FLO – Claire Bradley. Set targets for Family Learning Action Plan. * **May’22**- Nurture parent group workshops led by Nurture Staff * **May’22** – Set up a fortnightly conversation café (Friday -9.15 to 10.00) to meet parental social needs, improve mental health, and strengthen bonds with the school. Discussions identified further Family Learning needs (Parenting classes/ beginners computer classes/ help with maths/ literacy). These needs were addressed in the next academic year. * **November ’22** – Staff Baseline assessment – understanding of Principles and Practices of Family Learning. Data indicated that all staff needed training. * **November ’22** – Conversations with a wider group of parents highlighted more Family Learning needs. (Maths, Reading, Behaviour Management, Developing Routines, Computer skills) – based on this P5-P7 Glasgow Counts Workshop, Phonological Awareness, Sounds, and Reading workshop, Triple P workshops, Beginners guide to computers classes were delivered in Terms 3 and 4 * **March ‘23** – Whole staff training on The Principles and Practices of Family Learning delivered by FLO to raise awareness and develop a shared understanding - developing consistency across the school. FL is everyone’s responsibility. * **May ’23** – P1 induction – Family Learning Information Stall with FLO- New parents made aware of existing Family Learning opportunities. Parents asked about Family Learning needs to further drive Family Learning focus. * The majority of parents indicate that they enjoy meeting up and socialising at workshops as there is little opportunities out with school. One parent alluded to FL being the highlight of week- poor mental health. All parents requested a regular meeting up.   **Family Learning Partners:**  **2021 - 2022**   * Family Learning Team * Homestart – ESOL classes * Nurture staff (school) * Digital Leaders of Learning (school)   **2022 – 2023**   * Family Learning Team * Visiting Schools in the local – St Alberts and making links with the wider community- Whiteinch Primary * Homestart – ESOL Classes * Financial Inclusion Officer – input at Conversation Cafe * Glasgow Life Digital Learning Team * Glasgow City HSPC - Triple Parenting Teams Groups and Workshops * Barnardos – PATHS * CLOL – Maths /Literacy * DLOL * Homelink Assistant – hosts Conversation Cafe   **Training and Developing Family Learning Knowledge for Family Learning Lead:**   * Family Learning webinars – Principles, Practices and Engagement and Planning 2021 - 2022 * Evidencing and Evaluating Family Learning – 2021 - 2022 * FLAG (Family Learning Action Group) – **ongoing** since Nov’22 * Everywhere Bear transition (links with feeder nursery) March’23 * Playing with Sounds- January ‘23 * Families Connect- February ‘23 * Sharing good practice visit to St Albert’s for ideas- February ‘23 * Measuring the impact of family support – Whiteinch Primary January’23 | |
| New developments  *What new projects or initiatives did you establish?* | |
| **2021-22**   * Story Sacks – October ’21 **and** October’22 - **targeted** * ESOL with Homestart – (re-established Nov’21 post-Covid) – **ongoing -** **targeted** * IT classes including QR codes for parents to “hear” rather than “read” school information – March ‘22 * Conversation café -May’22 – **ongoing monthly. -universal** * P1 induction programme– Family Learning activity May’22 **and** May’23 -**ongoing annually -universal**   **2022-2023**   * Read, Write, Count Book Fun Sessions– CLOL- November ’22 - **universal** * Family Financial Support information session- February ’22 - **universal** * Digital Drop-in – Showbie/ PayPal – February’23 - **targeted** * Getting started in Digital Learning – (Pollokshields Library) February ’23 and April’23 - **universal** * Triple P Parenting Group and workshops February’23 – June’23- **universal** * P1 Book Bugs Sessions – March ’23 - **universal** * Learning Showcase afternoons (P1 – P7) – March’23 – June’23 - **universal** * Barnardo’s PATHs promoting alternative thinking strategies (P2 – P7) Parent information sessions -March’23 – June’23 - **universal** * Maths – Glasgow Count Strategies Workshops (P5 – P7) CLOL – April’23 - **universal** * Families Connect Programme – April ’23 – June ’23 - **targeted** * P2 Phonological awareness /reading workshop – May ’23 **targeted** | |
| **Obstacles and Issues** *What obstacles or difficulties, if any, did you have to overcome?* | |
| * Covid lockdown impacted on attendance - We initially organised paper packs to support learning at home. Staff trained each other to engage with Google Classroom but this was not successful as most children did not have access to digital devices and parents did not have digital skills to engage. Continued with paper packs being collected from school. * Language barriers/EAL families – ESOL classes in school /QR codes on termly newsletters to enable EAL parents to listen to information/ offer bilingual books at reading activities- parents feel more included and informed/ Bilingual PT /FL lead visible at school gates 8.50 am to 9.00 am daily * Engaging parents– relationship building with school staff and encouraging parents to participate via school gates chats and 1:1 engagement. Use the conversation café as a resource. * Digital Learning -Limited EAL parental knowledge – Getting Started in Digital Learning classes in local library with Glasgow Life and in-school class on how to use QR codes / Showbie and Paypal * Cultural barriers at home identified – problems that living in an extended family situation can present. Meeting the needs of the grandparents/ extended family in family homes can disrupt parental attempts to develop routines and home learning. Empathize with parents and collectively develop strategies that will work. Giving parents a voice/ ownership ensures better engagement. * The majority of children attend mosque after school for up to two hours – better to have FL events during the day – before 3 p.m. – School is both sympathetic and empathetic; planning events to meet parental needs, giving advance notice of events for working parents and held one session in the evening. * Culturally sensitive – The majority of families fast during the month of Ramadan. A few families participate in other religious events and festivals. Avoid planning coffee mornings or Family Learning programmes during this time. This should ensure a more successful uptake of and regular attendance at events/ whilst building stronger parent/ school partnerships based on respect and understanding. * Ensuring parents remain committed and programmes are well attended. The second Beginners to Digital Learning Programme was cancelled by the trainer mid-programme due to poor attendance. – Learned from this experience and I ensured all families in the Families Connect 8-week programme and Triple P parenting programme, were all phoned the day before, and reminded at the school gate on the morning of the programme. This strategy worked well. * Lack of parent confidence – Sharing research – 85% of learning happens at home / in the community. Parents are very much a part of their child’s learning journey. Acknowledging the differences in education systems in South Asia and Scotland and breaking the perception that “school is something that happens to their child”. Giving parents skills to support their child and help develop a “can do” attitude. Achieved by listening to their needs, modelling the how-to, and supporting the interaction between parent and child. PRAISE. Being welcoming, visible and approachable at school gates – developing good 1:1 relationship, whilst raising awareness of Family Learning opportunities and encouraging engagement. Instilling a belief that they **can** make a difference, ensuring positive outcomes for themselves as well as their children. | |
| **Results and Impact** *Outline the results of the actions taken. What impact and positive changes occurred (include impacts on parents, children and staff), were there any unforeseen benefits?* | |
| **Staff:**   * Upskilling of family learning lead – developed knowledge and understanding of principles and practices, of family learning and parental engagement and planning, evidencing, and evaluating Family Learning. * Making links with the Family Learning Officer for support and input * Attending FLAG sessions - making links with schools within and out with the learning community to develop good practice. * Confidence in using techniques and practices to engage parents, learn about their needs and provide programmes that are needs-led * Training led by FLO - whole school awareness of existing practices (coupled with school display) and knowledge and understanding of the Principles and Practices of Family Learning. – All staff now have a better understanding of Family Learning * The majority of staff show interest in developing Family Learning. * Two staff trained and have become Families Connect Programme facilitators.   **Parents:**   * All targeted P1 Parents understand the importance of the mother tongue when sharing stories and developing literacy skills with their children, using pictures in story books or objects to make up their own stories is equally valuable. Reading has now become a routine in most homes while also introducing quality 1:1 time between parent and child– modelled via story sacks - how to read books, title, character exploration, blurb etc, and directionality of print. Raising awareness that reading increases vocabulary and knowledge of the wider world and that questioning develops comprehension and predictive skills * Parents developing an enjoyment of reading with and spending 1:1 time with their children. * Developing bonds within the parent body and improving mental health- Conversation Cafe -Providing space for parents to meet and chat. The majority of parents indicated that they enjoy meeting up and socialising at workshops as there is little opportunity out with school. They have also received support – finance information. * All parents consulted feel more confident in supporting their child. * Parent’s views are being listened to when consulted and their views are valued and acted upon by providing learning opportunities based on their feedback and needs. * Improved IT skills – using QR codes, accessing showbie /paypal, beginners computer skills. Parental engagement and confidence have increased, this is evidenced by almost all parents who have received targeted support, requesting other Family Learning opportunities. * Raising awareness - Children attend school during the day and mosque in the evening. Not only is it a long day for the children but the language that they learn in each setting – English and Arabic, differ in terms of script and in the directionality of print, thus confusing children. Parents stated that they “had never thought about that”. * Chatting with parents began to understand that current lines of home/school communication were not inclusive and did not meet the needs of some of our EAL families. The best way to communicate was through chats at the school gates, telephone calls to build relationships. Communication and home-school links improved using QR codes but parents still rely heavily on chat at school gate. * Changing parent mindset while instilling confidence -Parent thinking was “School is what happens to my children”. The Family Learning lead was able to speak to parents in Punjabi/Urdu which greatly helped to improve communication whilst developing trust, and confidence. Delivering needs-led programmes based on parental input. * Parents were starting to be asked about their aspirations for their children and being given the message that they as parents are very much valued by the school as partners in their children’s learning and development and that success can be achieved when school, parents and children work together to achieve positive outcomes. * Attending parents developed an understanding of the PATHS resource – to develop consistency in language and strategies used to praise / deal with emotional difficulties in both school and at home. * Families Connect parents are praising children effectively( not critically) and are actively listening to their children more. * Targeted P2 parents more confident in supporting their children in reading/ writing. * Better understanding of Glasgow Counts strategies gives parents greater confidence to better support children with Maths. Developing consistency, knowledge and understanding. * Parents have developed knowledge and understanding of effective parenting strategies.   **Children:**   * Bonding and 1:1 time with storybooks at home has become a routine and something they do often with their children. * Ready Steady Read post-programme assessment demonstrated, that children demonstrate improved understanding of concepts of print (improved scores in assessments), phonological awareness, and reading readiness. * Increased understanding of directionality of print and print concepts (reading left to right, discussing the terms books, author, title, blurb) * The majority of P2 children improved in blending skills – evident in their writing and reading skills as reported by class teachers and parents. * Children’s confidence and self-esteem increase when presenting to parents at Family Learning events/ Showcase of Learning opportunities. * Children using PATHS language and strategies consistently at home/ school. Developing emotional literacy, using calming down and problem-solving strategies. * Children are better supported in Maths at home. This positively impacts on attitude to learning/ achieving success. * Opportunities to taste a variety of healthy snacks at Families Connect. – develop healthy eating. * Health benefit from improved behaviour management strategies and bedtime routines introduced by parents. | |
| **Lessons Learned** *What are the key learning points? What worked particularly well? What would you do differently next time? What advice and recommendations would you give to other people dealing with a similar situation?* | |
| **Learning Points:**   * Evaluating and listening to parents is key, being flexible, changing and adapting programmes to meet specific needs or from feedback from parents. This will ensure regular attendance and direct future Family Learning opportunities. * Under-confident parents – build the relationship by being attentive and visible and continue to engage even when some parents not engaging or participating. Don’t be judgemental, address the barrier, not the behaviour. * Being organised- well planned/resources/ registers/ evaluations * Be culturally sensitive to your community when planning and delivering events. * Give parents a voice/ownership of group agreement to ensure quality engagement with programmes. * Be supportive- reminders of dates, and acknowledge that every family circumstance is different. * Good publicity of events. * Modify resources to meet needs – translated into first language * Ensure Family Learning programmes are differentiated and sustainable   **Worked Well:**   * Building relationships at school gates and on the telephone, able to understand cultural barriers instinctively (wider family issues and attending Mosque and reading in Arabic) and make parents feel more comfortable about participating. * Raising awareness of the directionality of print, overcoming barriers, and supporting parents who were not literate in their mother tongue. * Using parents as support networks for each other. - Building bonds within the community * Families Connect Group – did all the above effectively, evidenced by positive feedback and willingness to attend/ demand for new Family Learning opportunities. * Use of bilingual books to ensure all were included in activities and felt valued. * Delivering programmes bilingually- English AND Urdu to ensure all feel valued and included. * Collaborating with FLO to lead training/ provide direction. * Attendance at FLAG meetings – examples of good practice and networking opportunities.   **What would you do differently:**   * Modified Story sack programme to include a visual of a front and back book cover Translated into Urdu to help EAL families learn and identify the terms Title, author, illustrator, blurb etc. * Introduce a translated phonetic alphabet to support parents who are not literate in English. * Be aware of group dynamics and ALWAYS remind families of dates by phoning a day before the programme. - The second Computer class programme was cancelled because of this. In hindsight, 2 out of 3 families selected are known to have very poor attendance at events. * Hold coffee morning for each stage (P1 to P7) to develop knowledge of Family Learning, raise awareness of existing family learning opportunities, learn about parental skills, and identify the needs of parents to direct future FL opportunities. | |
| **Next Steps** *Briefly describe the future of the project or related initiatives. For example, how you intend to maintain the momentum of the action you have taken so far, how you will monitor the success of your actions, or how you intend to build on/create new initiatives.* | |
| **Following on from the success and relationships built in the last year, we aim to further enhance our family learning by offering out the following programmes/interventions:**  **2023 - 2024**  As well as continuing the programmes delivered in 2022 – 2023, we aim to introduce the following-   * Everywhere Bear transitions into P1 – September’23 * Play Along Maths - February’24 to June’23 * Library visits for ESOL parents/ families – November’23 , continuing in Terms 3 and 4 * Playing with Sounds – October’23 * Fun with Food – March ’23 * P1 and P2 How to teach Reading workshop- January’23 * ASN Family Support – January’24 * PATHS workshop – term 3 * Make videos for Showbie to show How to…. Tutorials to support Maths and Literacy. – January – March’24 | |
| **Any Other Information** *Detail here any further information you would like to include in your case study, e.g. photos, impact statements, suggestions for further reading* | |
| As stated above, groups of parents were targeted at gates, parent's nights and from targeted and universal support events (see above) to ascertain Family Learning needs. The information provided then directed future Family Learning opportunities.  Feedback from parents  STORY SACKS –   * “ I always look forward to a Friday. It has been a great opportunity to meet others. I feel at peace here, my mind feels fresh here”.- **This comment resulted in the Conversation Café being introduced.** * “I was very nervous at the beginning, but I have really enjoyed these sessions. The children have developed good habits and routines around reading at home”. * “The worry that “is it just my child?” has gone. Great meeting other mums in the same situation.”   FAMILIES CONNECT   * “I had forgotten what it felt like to play!” / “I didn’t know they could learn so much through play”. * “I understand now why it is important that children should be able to name their feelings”. * “I am so embarrassed! I didn’t realise that I was praising and criticising at the same time” * “I read to my children, but I’ve never asked them questions about the book.” * Storytelling – “I haven’t laughed like this for a long time/ This was great fun and so easy to do!” * Counting – “I didn’t know that teachers do work on estimating. I just taught my children to count/ I wish I had known about this when my child was at nursery”. * Families Connect is needed. I learned so much!”   ESOL-   * “I want to learn English so that I can become independent, so I won’t have to rely on my children. I will be better able to integrate.”   READ, WRITE , COUNT   * “It was very enjoyable to sit with my daughter in space where she spends most of her time during the week”. * “Less Power Point, more informal chat please. Excellent to be back in school”.   DIGITAL LEARNING – COMPUTER   * “Thank you. I have been wanting to do this for ages”.   LEARNING SHOWCASE   * “It was lovely to see the children so proud, please continue this for future years”.   PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS / READING WORKSHOP   * “It’s like being back at school again”. * “Thank you for this. It was really helpful”. | |