



Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit

Evaluating Parental Engagement and
Involvement in Renfrewshire Schools and Early
Years Establishments

This toolkit serves as a guide that will enable establishments to develop ongoing planning and evaluation of parental engagement approaches.

October 2019



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Introduction

Evidence indicates that “parental involvement makes a significant contribution to closing the attainment gap” (Sosu & Ellis, 2014, p. 24). Data from the Growing up in Scotland Study (2012) suggested that greater levels of parental involvement in education is associated with higher pupil achievement. However, we also know that levels of parental involvement and engagement with home learning vary drastically and that there are numerous potential barriers to meaningful engagement.

Goodall and Montgomery (2013) have acknowledged the importance of all parental involvement but also note that parental involvement and engagement are situated on a continuum, with the goal being to support parents to engage with their child’s learning. This continuum starts with activities that are establishment led (i.e., parental involvement with schools), moves to activities where the establishment and parents have a similar level of agency (i.e., parental involvement with schooling) and finally to parent-led activities (i.e., parental engagement with children’s learning at home). This continuum aligns well with research evidence that parental engagement is most effective when it relates to learning in the home rather than attendance at activities (Harris & Goodall, 2008). In primary school-aged children high levels of parental engagement have a larger impact on pupil outcomes than the quality of the school (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003). Sylva and colleagues (2004) also report that the quality of learning opportunities at home has a greater effect on cognitive and social skills than family demographics. As a result, it is crucial that educational establishments strive to engage with parents to ensure they have the skills and confidence to support their children’s learning at home.

Parental engagement- involvement continuum

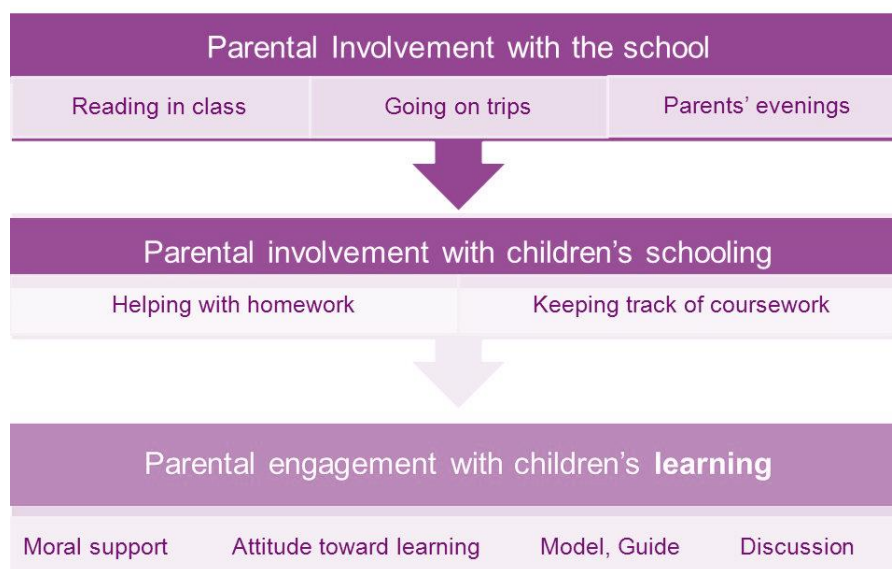


Figure 1: Goodall & Montgomery, 2013



To gather more information regarding parental engagement in Renfrewshire, an audit of existing parental engagement approaches across Renfrewshire's primary schools was completed. Senior staff from 23 primary schools participated in an online questionnaire. Respondents identified family learning as being one of the most important dimensions of parental engagement for their schools. Overall, staff reported more activities targeted at P1-P3 than P4-P7. In addition, more schools reported that they agreed or strongly agreed that their school supports parental engagement well for the P1-P3 stages than for the P4-P7 stages. Respondents were also asked how comfortable they feel measuring the impact of parental engagement approaches; most respondents indicated that they were unsure how to evaluate activities. As a result, it was agreed that Renfrewshire Educational Psychology Service would develop a toolkit for Renfrewshire educational establishments to use to plan for and evaluate parental engagement approaches.

This toolkit has been designed to support your planning and measurement of parental engagement in your establishment and is split into these two sections, however the resources provided can be used flexibly according to your own starting point and needs. The Model for Improvement provides a framework to plan parental engagement events and activities. The tools used in this model allow for close analysis of why a situation is happening including potential causes, planning out change ideas for improvement, and measuring these changes.

The fundamental principles of improvement are:

1. Knowing why you need to improve
2. Having a way to get feedback to let you know if improvement is happening
3. Developing a change that you think will result in improvement
4. Testing a change before any attempts to implement
 - a. Plan the test
 - b. Run the test
 - c. Summarise the learning from the test
 - d. Take action that is based on the learning from the test
5. Implementing a change

Before making any changes, the Model for Improvement encourages reflection and thinking on the current situation and how you can change by answering:

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- How will we know that a change is an improvement?
- What changes can we make that will result in the improvements that we seek?

This is designed to be a cyclical process of learning about change. We have designed the sections to be used in this way to allow for reflection on what information collected tells you, allowing for further planning.



Establishment Audit and Planning

Although evidence highlights the key role parents play in supporting children's learning, it is agreed that there is no one-size-fits all approach. As a result, it is essential for establishments to consider broader community needs, parent views, and establishment priorities when determining next steps related to parental engagement.

Once an establishment has conducted a needs analysis and gathered the views of parents and community stakeholders, embedding a systematic approach to planning and evaluating specific events and approaches is important. Planning allows an establishment to create change where it is needed and will be most effective, while monitoring ensures the change is long-lasting and implemented successfully across a whole establishment.

Needs Analysis

A first step in planning ways to engage with parents and promote home learning is to consider the following questions:

What are we already doing?

What can we do better?

What can we start doing?

A template with these questions is in Appendix A.1.

Wish Lists

Creating a wish list can clarify the targets an establishment hopes to achieve in relation to engaging with parents. The template, located in Appendix A.2, could be used to capture staff members and/or parents' wishes following a training event. To ensure the wishes continue to be a priority, the wish list could be posted in a prominent location and be updated, as needed.

Education Plans

The ongoing cycle of planning and monitoring in Children's Services can also be helpful for establishments. Establishment Improvement Plans may consider parental engagement through closing the attainment gap, building strong communities, tackling inequality, and developing learning. 'How good is our school?' and 'How good is our early learning and childcare?' may also support planning through Indicator 2.5 – family learning. Standards and Quality Reports provide a good platform for reflecting on progress and planning next steps, and the Quality Improvement Framework and associated visits, provide additional opportunities for planning and reflection. Inspection reports and Pupil Equity Fund planning may also be helpful to consider priorities.



Model for Improvement – Understanding your context

Before planning changes, it is crucial that you understand your system and context so that you make meaningful changes linked to your parental engagement aim(s). This involves understanding your current context to identify problem areas or causes, understanding how things link together, relationships between people, and the will to change. Several tools are included in Appendix A.3: process mapping, cause and effect diagrams, force field analysis, and Pareto charts.

Model for Improvement – Driver Diagram

A driver diagram can be a useful planning tool to identify where change is required and how you can implement these changes. It stems from the creation of an aim and allows you to identify what must change in order to meet this aim. This can be done in an interactive, visual way using post-it notes to brainstorm 'the things we need to improve to achieve our aim are...' and linking these to change ideas. Appendix A.4 contains further information and a driver diagram template.

Event Planning and Reporting

Events involving parents are often an important part of establishments' approaches to parental engagement and involvement. Recording the planning, evaluation and reflection stages of these events can help you to identify whether your events are meeting your intended outcomes and contributing to improvement in parental engagement. Aspects of planning may include: the member of staff responsible, who is invited, when invitations are issued and RSVP date, number of RSVPs, and resources required. Stating your aim for the event can also be useful for planning. Evaluation and reflection may include: commenting on attendance (actual vs. expected), audience feedback, presenter feedback, learning points, and changes for the next event. It is also a good idea to gather further feedback six weeks after an event to find out from parents and practitioners what they remember and any benefits. In their book *100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Engaging Parents*, Weston and Goodall (2018) created a template for the planning, recording and evaluation of such events. This can be found in Appendix A.5.



Measurement Tools

Evaluation follows on from the analysis of needs and planning to create the evidence for new approaches working in establishments. Specific methods used to measure, including using existing school data, sampling, completing a case study and gathering survey data can add meaningful information that can be used to inform an establishment's next steps. Appendix B.1 contains numerous ways of measuring change in educational establishments.

Gathering and Tracking School Data

Local authority tracking information, such as attainment data, attendance data, and exclusions, can be a helpful way of measuring change over time. This can be done annually to see long-term change, or more frequently if your establishment is gathering this information more regularly. A template spreadsheet is provided in Appendix B.2 for tracking attendance, exclusions, achievement, and attainment gaps, but this information may already be compiled in a School Profile. More information regarding using data from School Profiles, the Attainment Dataset and Census Dataset can be found at <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/re/dataliteracyren/>. Sampling your establishment population can also be a useful way of gathering data and can be done in ways that represent your community. See Appendix B.3 for more information on sampling.

Model for Improvement – Plan, Do, Study, Act

Plan-Do-Study-Act is a tool for testing the small change ideas you develop from compiling a driver diagram. The aim of PDSA cycles is to learn what happens when you try to do something differently by testing and implementing a change. This knowledge is gained by predicting what will happen when you change something then comparing to what happened. Most improvements will require multiple cycles to further build knowledge and achieve significant improvement. Appendix B.4 contains further information and a PDSA template. There is also information about creating run charts to view data and changes over time.

Questionnaires

Collecting parent and/or staff views can be a useful way to capture perceptions, evaluate current practice and plan next steps. One method for gathering this information would be to use a questionnaire. This data could be collected to inform planning, capture information at regular intervals (e.g., once per session) or be administered before and after changes in parental engagement approaches have occurred.



Appendix B.5 provides an overview of creating a questionnaire and sample questionnaires for your use. The sample questionnaires included are:

- Parental Engagement in Children's Learning Questionnaire (to capture parent views regarding home learning)
- Parent Perceptions Questionnaire (to gather parent perceptions about the school)
- Home-School Communication Survey (to survey parent perceptions on the communication happening between school and home)
- Parental Involvement in School Events Questionnaire (to investigate parent participation in school events)
- Parental Involvement in School Decision Making Questionnaire (to examine parent perceptions on being included in school plans/decisions)
- Home Learning Activities Census (to capture the frequency of specific home learning activities)

Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census (Government)

This national census was conducted for the first time in 2019 and results are available for individual primary, secondary and specialist schools. PIE data can serve as a useful starting point for determining next steps or monitoring parental engagement approaches over time. Please note some questions from the PIE have been included in the sample questionnaires located in Appendix B.5 so that schools may compare parent responses to target questions over time.

Home Learning Activities Questionnaire (Parent Census by Weston & Goodall)

The Home Learning Activities Survey, located in Appendix B.5, can be used as an information gathering tool to capture what parents already do to engage their children in learning at home. Like some of the other questionnaires located in Appendix B.5, it can be also be used to survey parents on multiple occasions to evaluate any changes over time. For example, it could be administered as part an initial needs analysis and again after planning and delivering activities related to home learning.

Case Studies

Case studies can be an effective way of recording a specific example of progress with parental engagement. Case studies focus on a smaller 'unit', such as a pupil, family or class, and explore change in great detail. These are a more time-intensive way of evaluating so should be planned carefully to ensure someone is able to effectively record and write the study. Appendix B.6 to includes information on how to use a case study approach and Appendix B.7 contains a case study example.



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Appendices

A selection of resources, tools, and templates to support your parental engagement work.



Appendix A.1 – Needs Analysis

Needs Analysis

What are we already doing as a school/establishment to support parental engagement?	How is it working (and how do we know)?
What can we do better/adapt?	
What can we start doing?	



Appendix A.2 – Wish List

Your Wish List

Use this list to imagine where you would like to be in terms of parental engagement. Don't worry about resources or barriers for this wish list. Just note down what parental engagement you would like to see in your establishment. Don't forget your SMART targets: Specific, Measurable, Assignable (that is, you know who is responsible), Realistic and Time-Limited!

My Wish List for Parental Engagement	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	

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Now, list any barriers that might impede the actions that you've listed on your wish list. Some wishes may have more than one barrier.

Barriers to My Wish List	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	

Shared with permission from 100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Engaging Parents by Kathryn Weston and Janet Goodall, 2018.



Appendix A.3 – Understanding Your Context

Process Mapping

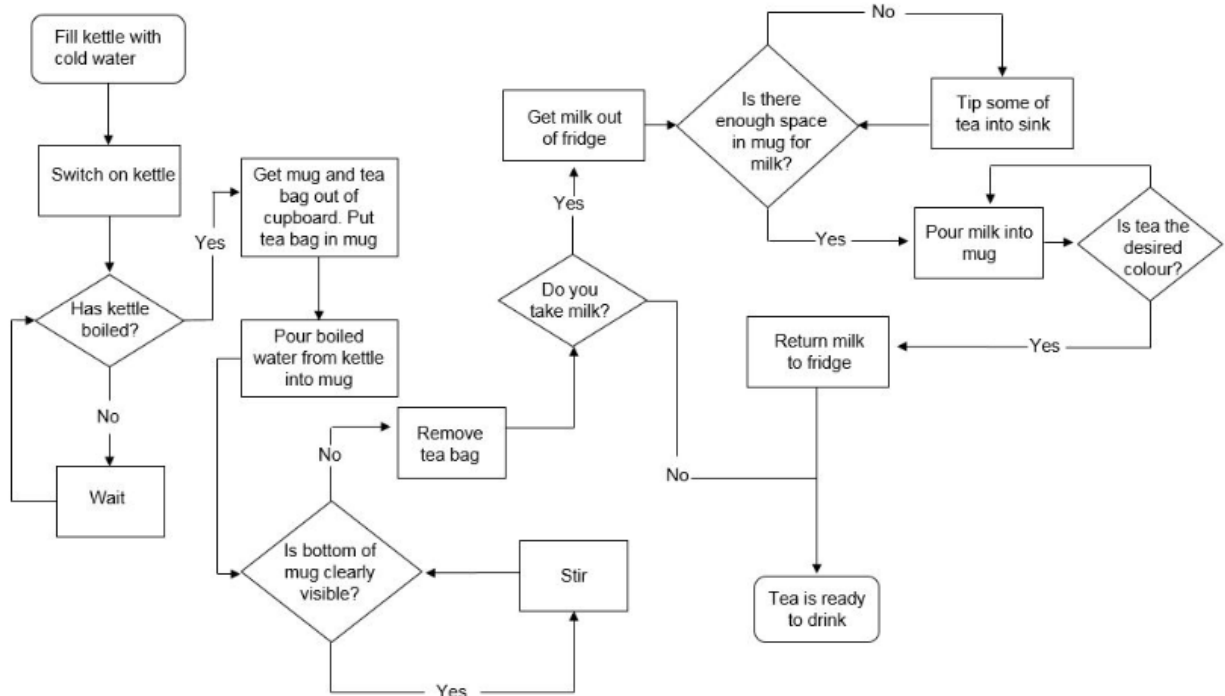


Figure 2: Process Mapping (NHS Education for Scotland, 2019)

Process maps help us to learn from the current situation and make sense of the information we already have about a process. It is used to visually represent all the steps in a process and helps people to identify areas where change is needed. It is a good team building activity as it allows numerous people to be involved. The process map should be as detailed as possible to allow you to identify where things are working well or are a challenge. Asking questions such as: what happens next in the process, who is involved, and where and when does the issue arise can give helpful information. It can also be helpful to consider if there is anything in the process which is 'adding no value' and can be easily removed. You may want to consider a process map for parents attending a learning session, for example, starting with invitations and tracking this process up to parents coming through the door.



Cause and Effect Diagram

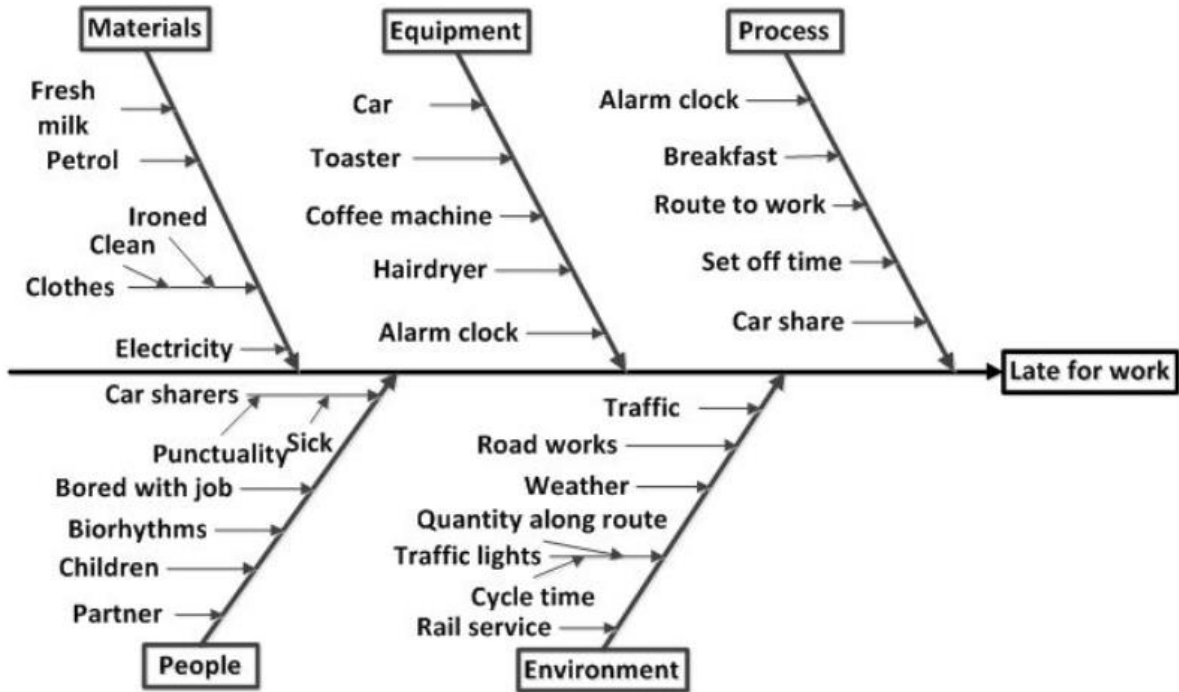


Figure 3: Cause and Effect Diagram (NHS Education for Scotland, 2019)

Cause and effect analysis helps you to identify all the likely causes of problems you are facing. The problem is named on the right of the diagram and major categories that may be causes of the problem are listed as branches; typically, this always includes materials, processes, people, environment, and equipment. This then allows you to list possible reasons for the problem associated with each category, leading to potential change ideas. You may want to consider a cause and effect diagram for pupils not completing homework, for example, looking at what a child or family needs to be able to facilitate this.



Force Field Analysis

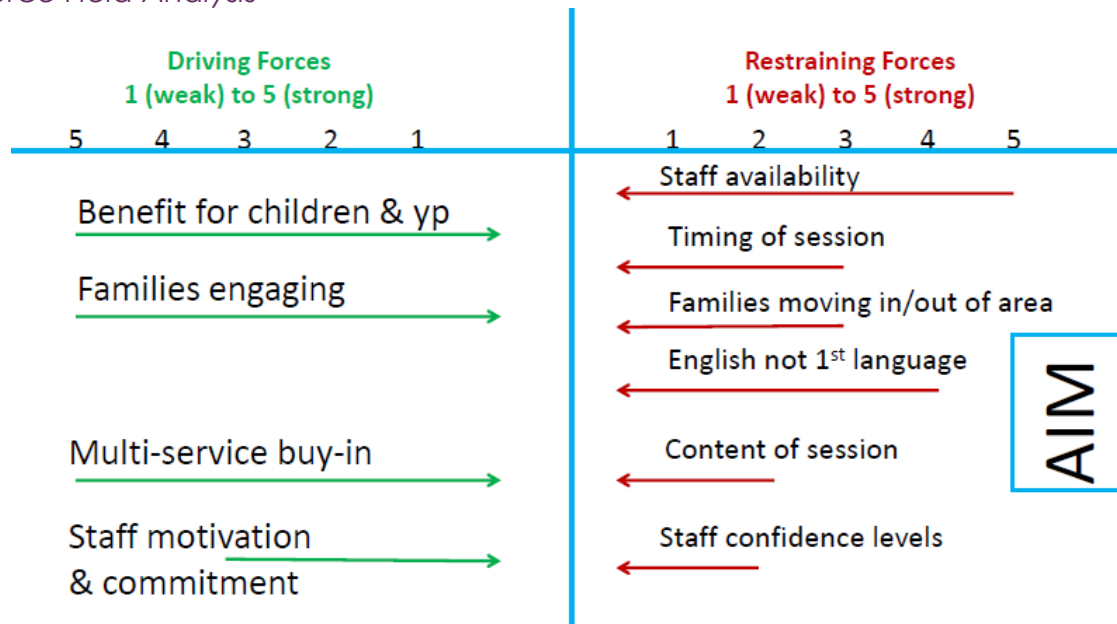


Figure 4: Force Field Analysis (Children and Young People Improvement Collaborative, 2019)

A force field analysis is used to identify factors that support or hinder your capacity to move towards a solution; it works on the principle that unless the restraining forces are addressed, then it is very difficult to move forward. It presents both the positives and negatives of a situation and encourages people to agree the relative priority of factors on each side of the change (indicated by arrows in this example). It is a good group exercise when there are differing views as all people can be heard and see their comments considered. The example above outlines the driving and restraining forces of holding a group for parents.



Pareto Chart

Pareto Chart of late arrivals to work by reason

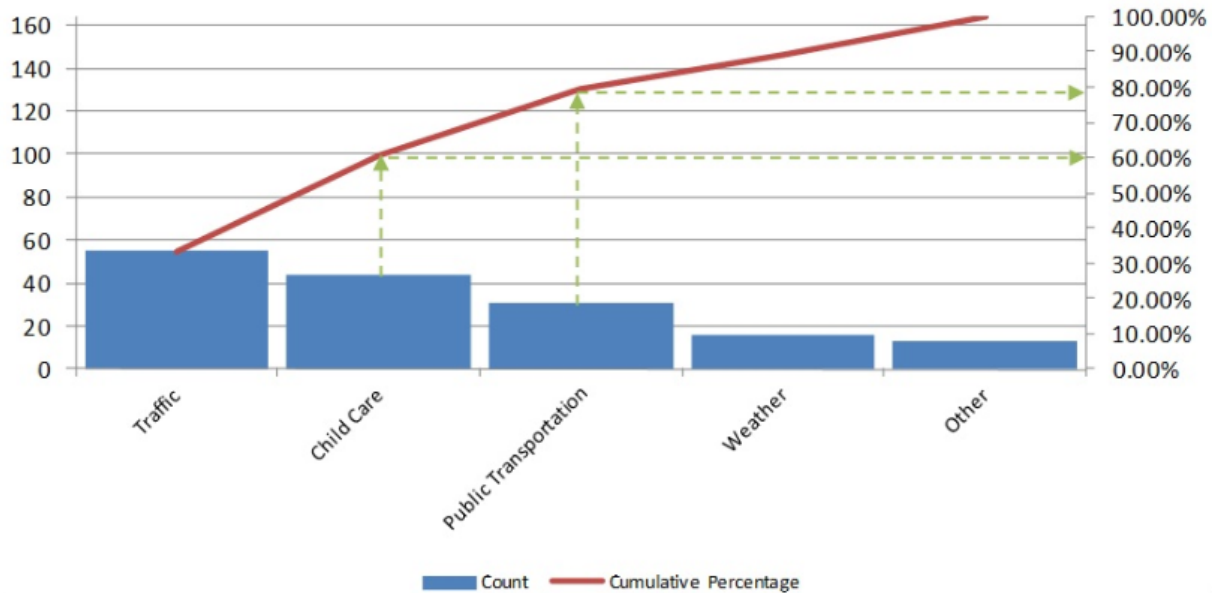


Figure 5: Pareto Chart (1000 Lives Improvement, 2014)

A Pareto chart helps a team to focus its improvement ideas on the factors that have the greatest impact. It also helps to communicate the rationale for focusing on certain areas. The ‘Pareto Principle’ outlines that in any group of things that contribute to a common effect, relatively few of these things account for the majority of the effect. The bar chart shows the factors that contribute to an overall effect and are arranged from most frequent to least, helping you to identify the factors which should get the most attention. There is also a line showing the cumulative percentage allowing you to see that, in this example, the top 3 causes account for 80% of lateness to work. Pareto charts require a significant amount of data (e.g. 30 days’ recording on reasons for lateness) and therefore are not always suitable.



Appendix A.4 – Driver Diagrams

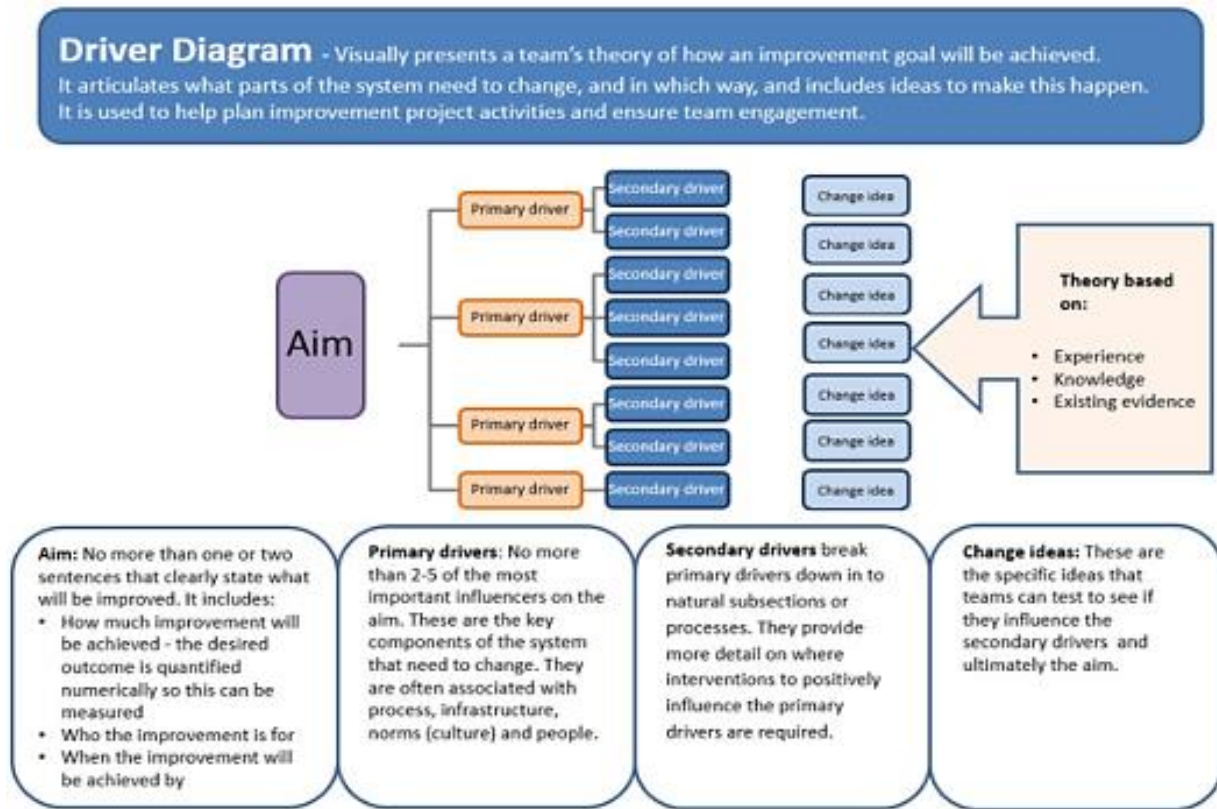


Figure 6: Driver Diagram (NHS Education for Scotland, 2019)

A driver diagram presents a theory of how an improvement goal will be achieved. By identifying primary and secondary drivers, it helps a team focus on areas where changes will have the greatest impact. The driver diagram also helps to identify outcome and process measures for improvement work. You should have 2-5 primary drivers that focus on the key aspects of the system that need to change – these are often linked to the branches seen in the Cause and Effect diagram. Secondary drivers provide more detail on where interventions to positively influence the primary drivers are required. The change ideas are specific tasks that teams can test to see if they influence the secondary drivers, and in turn the overall aim. The driver diagram should be a working document that changes as PDSA cycles are carried out and measured, identifying areas for wider implementation or ideas which have not had the expected impact and should be stopped. A template for recording your driver diagram is below.



Change Ideas

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Secondary Driver

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Primary Driver

--	--	--	--

Aim





--








Appendix A.5 – Event Planning and Reporting

Event Name:			
Date of Event:			
Date form filled in:			
Organisation	Aims	Evaluation	Findings
Place:	Aim(s):	Comments on attendance: •	What have we learnt? •
Member of staff responsible:		Evaluation markers: •	
Audience – who was invited?			Was the aim achieved? Why or why not? •
Date invitation issued:	Attained? Comments? •	Good practice to share: •	
Date of RSVP required:			
Numbers attending:	Resources used: •	Follow up evaluation date:	

Shared with permission from 100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Engaging Parents by Kathryn Weston and Janet Goodall, 2018.

Appendix B.1 – Ways of Measuring

	Suggestions	Definition / Purpose
	<p>Case Study Record of an individual experience or comparison between cases</p>	<p>A process or record of research investigating the development of a person, group, or situation over a specified period of time. This involves observation in real context to fully understand or depict an experience.</p>
	<p>Documents and Records Review Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from attendance at school • Data from attendance at clubs • Action plans • Improvement Plans • Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) Records • PRD Records • CLPL Records • Minutes from meetings • Pupil work samples • Reports and statistics 	<p>Used to trace history and current status in relation to a theme / topic, to trace participation rates and to monitor test of change processes and measure fidelity to a change process.</p>
	<p>Interview Types</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Interview • Formal / Informal • Group Interview • Focus Group 	<p>Individual interview has the possibility of eliciting in depth information.</p> <p>Group interview / focus group can yield further information as participants are encouraged to contribute by listening to comments from others and by the support from the group members.</p>
	<p>Multi-method research using a combination of different research methods. Example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mosaic Approach (<i>Clark and Moss, 2001</i>) comprises various listening tools that are both verbal and visual. Includes Interviews, photo books, tours and map making. 	<p>To obtain a more holistic view; useful when measuring more than one paradigm, using more than one methodological tool or data collection method in the same study.</p> <p>This is an inclusive approach and can useful for gathering data pertaining to young children.</p>

	<p>Observation Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-participant observation • Participant observation • Time sampled observation • Think out loud technique (participant verbalizes thoughts and perceptions whilst engaged in an activity or task) 	<p>To gather information about language, behaviour or how a program works.</p> <p>Observations can be captured using a range of methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Film • Audio recording • Transcript • Take notes at the time or later • Use coding to analyse notes
	<p>Questionnaire or survey (including online) Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data (numerical) from closed-ended questions • Qualitative data using open-ended questions 	<p>To quickly and easily collect a lot of information in a non-threatening way from people about their demographic characteristics, opinions, choices, preferences, attitudes, beliefs, motivations, etc.</p>
	<p>Likert Scale</p>	<p>Can be used in a survey and contains several statements that address the concept under examination with an interval scale, prepared by the researcher.</p>
	<p>Semantic Differential Scales</p>	<p>To measure knowledge, understanding and attitudes towards a given issue using an interval scale with several opinions set up at extreme ends (e.g. useful–useless)</p>
	<p>Voting and Ranking Processes Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballot • Secret box • Tokens • Visual / pictorial 	<p>To quickly capture views on a range of opinions and good for gaining anonymous opinions.</p>
	<p>Written Comments Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speech bubbles • Comment slips • Post-it • Display board • Written comments on pupil's work • Diary or Journal entries 	<p>To capture feedback, opinions, suggestions and ideas.</p>
	<p>Profiling or Assessment Tools Examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Boxall Profile • Goodman's Strengths and difficulties questionnaire • Audit Tools in Ed. Scotland Framework Applying Nurture as a Whole School Approach 	<p>To audit current practice and to identify baseline scores in relation to children's development, behaviour and health & wellbeing.</p>



How establishments gather parent views – Renfrewshire primary schools

Examples from Todholm Primary, St David's Primary and Houston Primary

- Consultation with parents regarding learning event topics
- Comment book at learning events
- Use of online surveys
- Home Visits
- Parent attendance at school events
- Collaboration with local colleges and universities to collect data
- Feedback via surveys following events and programmes
- Parent Council feedback



Appendix B.2 – Tracking Spreadsheet

Poverty Related Attainment Gap (%)	Numeracy									
	Writing									
	Reading									
	Listening & Talking									
Attainment: % Achieved Expected Level	Numeracy									
	Writing									
	Reading									
	Listening & Talking									
Exclusions										
Attendance (%)										
Session										



Appendix B.3 – Sampling Techniques

Sampling can be an effective way of representing a wider population with the advantage of having smaller amounts of information to analyse. It is important that several factors are considered when planning samples. Let's use the example of sending a questionnaire to parents about their views on their engagement with their child's learning. A sampling frame is the source of your wider population – in this case, each household in the establishment which could be taken from SEEMIS and existing records.

Simple Random Sampling – involves selecting people at random from the sampling frame; this could be by a random number generator online (e.g., <https://www.randomizer.org/>) or eyes closed selection.

Systematic Sampling – involves choosing a starting point in the sampling frame at random and then choosing every n^{th} person depending on the number of participants required, e.g., if a sample of 50 is required from a population of 300, every 6th person would be selected.

Stratified Random Sampling – involves dividing the population into groups which share a particular characteristic, e.g. SIMD/Quartiles. This normally involves **proportionate sampling** which is when the numbers in each group selected for a sample reflect the relative numbers in the entire population. For example, if 30% of your pupils are in Quartile 1, then 30% of your sample parents will also come from Quartile 1; 25% from Quartile 2; 30% from Quartile 3; and 15% from Quartile 4.

Convenience Sampling – involves choosing the most convenient people to be involved in the questionnaire and repeating this until the required sample size has been reached (e.g., asking parents to complete it at a parents' evening). This is an easy way of sampling and ensuring responses, but often does not represent your whole population due to the biases associated. For example, parents who attend a parents' learning session may be more likely to be involved in their child's learning.

There are also sampling techniques which can be effectively used for gathering information in the establishment or at events, such as time sampling. This is commonly used during observations and records a specific occurrence at set times. For instance, at a parent-pupil learning session, the observer will record the number of parent-pupil pairings who are interacting at 3-minute intervals. The use of a table like the one below may be of help.

Observer:															
Date:															
Event:															
Minutes	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42	45
No. of Interactions															

Appendix B.4 – Plan, Do, Study, Act and Run Charts

Plan-Do-Study-Act

Plan

- Have a clear objective
- Make some predictions about what will happen
- Questions and predictions
- Plan to carry out: Who? When? How? Where?

Act

- Make decisions about what to do next
- Adopt, adapt, abandon
- Ready to implement?



Do

- Carry out plan
- Document problems
- Capture feedback/ observations

Study

- Analyse data
- Compare to predictions
- Summarise
- Use knowledge to update your theory about this change

Figure 7: Plan-Do-Study-Act (NHS Education for Scotland, 2019)

PDSA cycles are an improvement tool that can be used to test an idea by trialing a change for a short period of time and in a limited format (e.g., in one classroom) and assessing its impact. It helps us to investigate what happens when we try to do something differently and to build knowledge by predicting what will happen during a test and compare this to the actual results. You will often require multiple PDSA cycles to build further knowledge and identify the most appropriate method of change that can be implemented on a larger scale. Each cycle should be recorded independently and stored for future reference. Each overall aim will involve several tests of a variety of change ideas. A template for recording your PDSA cycle is below.

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



AIM				Cycle Number
Intended Outcome What are you trying to accomplish?				
Change Idea (task):				
P	PLAN How will we get there? List the tasks needed to set up this test of change.	By whom?	When?	Where?
	Predict what we might see when the test is carried out. What do you think will happen?	How will you measure this?		
D	DO Describe what happened when you implemented the change.			
S	STUDY Describe the results you measured and your outcomes. How did they compare to the prediction? What difference did this make?			
A	ACT Describe what modifications to the plan will be made for the next cycle. Will you adapt/adopt/abandon?			



Run Charts

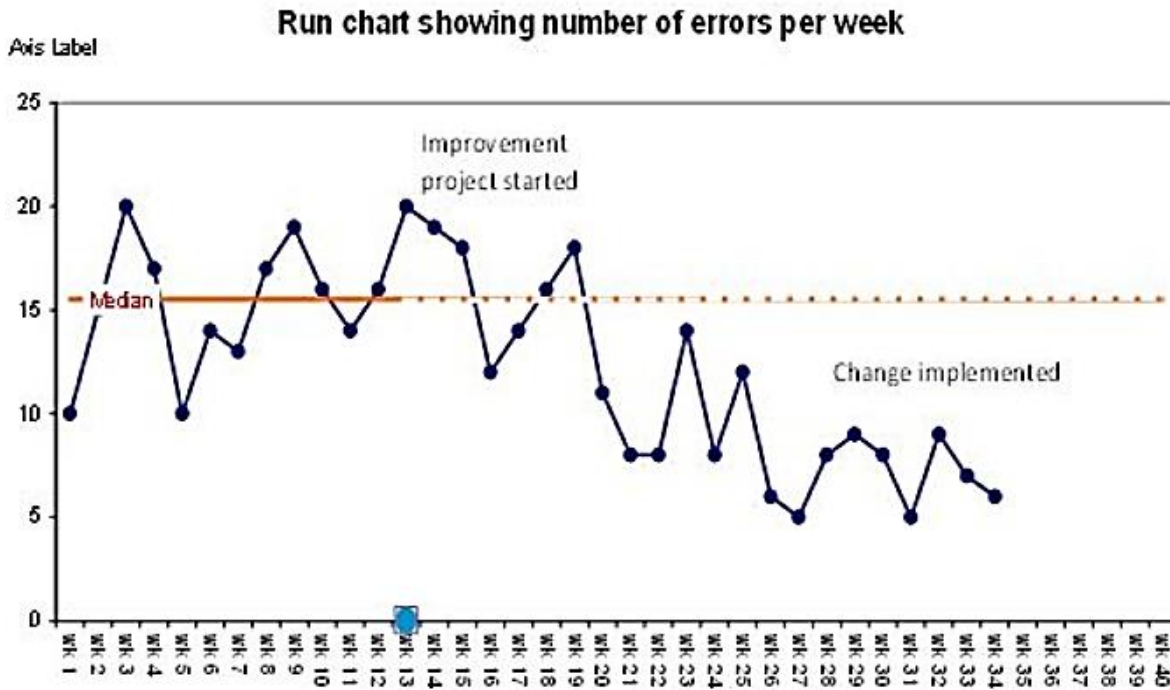


Figure 8: Run Chart (NHS Education for Scotland, 2019)

A run chart is a line graph of data plotted over time which allows you to see trends or patterns. By looking at your data in this way, you can see if changes are resulting in improvement and if this improvement has been sustained. The time when changes are implemented is marked on the graph so you can easily see if there has been an impact following this change. Run charts require at least 10 data points to record the median and any significant changes through shifts, trends, and runs. A shift on a run chart is six or more consecutive points above or below the median, not counting any points which lie on the median; the probability of the same outcome occurring six times in a row is less than 3 in 1000 therefore the change is likely to mean something and not be random. A trend is five or more consecutive points all going up or down including across the median, if there are two or more successive points of the same value. A run is a series of points on one side of the median, to determine the number of runs, count the number of times the data line crosses the median and add one; statistically significant change is identified by too few or too many runs compared to the number of data points. Finally, astronomical data points allow you to identify unusually small or large data points which stand out from the rest of the data and which do not tend to contribute to showing significant change due to their random nature.

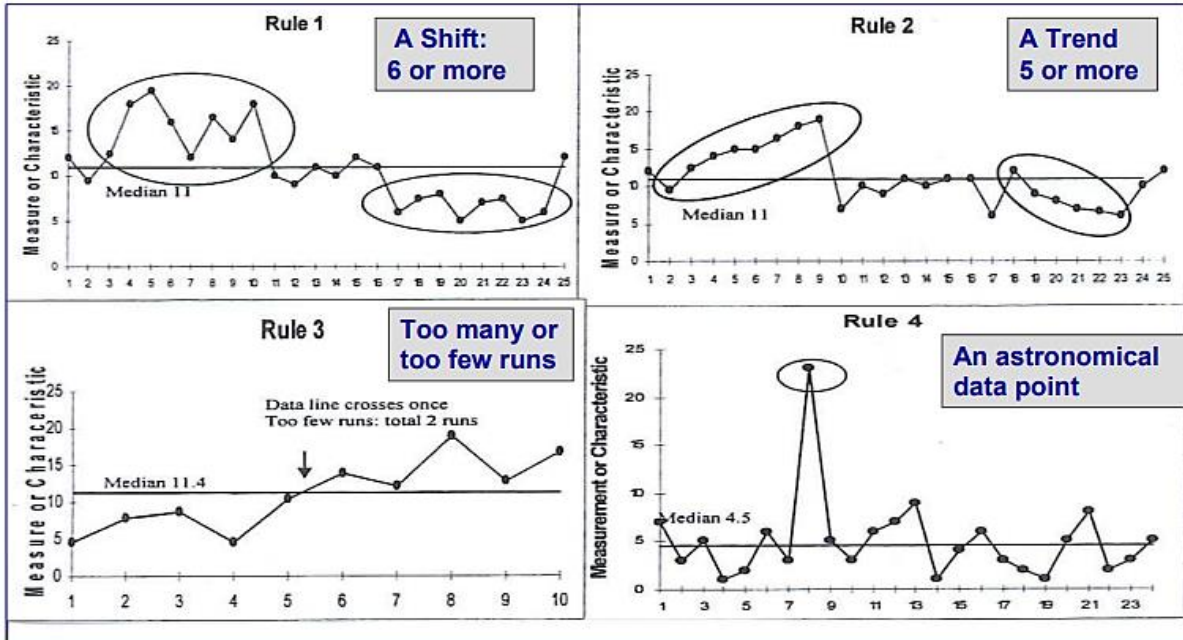


Figure 9: Run Chart Rules (Provost & Murray, 2011)

Run charts can be created in Microsoft Excel using the QI Charts Add-In. Additional information and templates are available at:

<http://www.ihl.org/resources/Pages/Tools/RunChart.aspx>.

Appendix B.5 – Questionnaires

What is a questionnaire?

A questionnaire is a means to gather a range of answers from multiple respondents in a controlled manner. A *structured questionnaire* gathers information using specific, closed questions where you tick one or more possible predetermined responses. Alternatively, a *semi-structured questionnaire* can include specific, closed questions and more general questions where the respondents can provide an open-ended response.

Although questionnaires are just one of many ways to gather information, they are frequently used in education for several reasons:

- Low cost
- Little time required to collect data
- Easy way to gather responses from a large sample of people quickly
- When closed questions are used, analysis is straightforward
- Respondents can remain anonymous, where appropriate

Despite having many benefits, it is important to keep potential disadvantages to using questionnaires in mind:

- Inability to generalise conclusions if small sample of respondents
- Potential respondents may lack motivation to complete a questionnaire
- Questions must be brief and simple to avoid confusion/misinterpretation
- Misinterpretations cannot be corrected
- Order of questions can bias responses
- Unable to ask for clarification or verify honesty of responses

Developing Ideas

Before creating a questionnaire, you need to identify what information you hope to gather:

1. What problem or area are you attempting to investigate?
2. What information are you hoping to gain?
3. When will this information be collected? Will it be completed once (e.g., following an event or used for planning), used as a pre- and post-measure, or used to capture information on several occasions (e.g., tracking staff perceptions of parental engagement with learning at home throughout a school session)?
4. How will it be completed (online, paper questionnaire sent home, via phone interview) and from whom (parents, school staff, pupils, other stakeholders)?
5. Will respondents complete the questionnaire independently or will support be needed?

Developing Questions

Determine what categories of information to gather

- Questions about *facts*



- Questions about *opinions and beliefs*
- Questions about *behaviours*

In addition, items can be written as a closed question with a set range of responses (e.g., yes or no, true or false, agree or disagree) or open question where respondents generate their own responses.

Determine how answers will be reported

Selected responses

- Works well with factual questions
- Respondents can be asked to choose one response or tick all that apply
- An "Other" or "All of the Above" option can be included

How much time does your child read independently at home?

Not at all

Less than 1 hour per week

1 hour to 5 hours per week

More than 5 hours per week

Specified responses

- A simple, open question where respondents write in a response

What did you find most useful about the event?

What did you find least useful about the event?

Ranked responses

- Gather respondent opinions and preferences while limiting possible responses to a series of items

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



Please rank the following dimensions of parental engagement in order of importance (where 1 is most important and 6 is least important)?

- Parenting Support/Training
- Collaboration with the Community
- Volunteering
- Learning at Home
- Home-School Communication
- Decision-Making

Scaled responses

- Provides respondents with a range of responses that indicates their opinions or preferences

The workshop on literacy provided useful strategies to support my child's learning at home.

- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree

How welcome do you feel when you visit your child's school?

Very Unwelcome	Unwelcome	Neutral	Welcome	Very Welcome
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Compiling the Questionnaire

- Consider sharing your questions with others before developing to questionnaire to ensure it is jargon-free and clear
- Consider including a title, introductory statement and/or instructions at the start of your questionnaire



- For longer questionnaires, consider grouping questions by category

Other Considerations

- Options for how to complete; consider providing both an online and paper version
- If reading English is a barrier to completion, consider finding someone to translate the survey
- Respondents tend to provide more honest answers when their identity is kept anonymous
- Share the purpose of the questionnaire with all school staff and share your results

Sample Questionnaires

A selection of sample questionnaires to use follows. Please note that some questions from the national 2019 Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census are included, and it may be helpful to compare responses to previous PIE data. The sample questionnaires included are:

- Parental Engagement in Children's Learning Survey
 - Capture parent views regarding home learning
- Parent Perceptions Survey
 - Gather parent perceptions about the school
- Home-School Communication Survey
 - Survey parent perceptions on the communication happening between school and home
- Parental Involvement in School Events Survey
 - Investigate parent participation in school events
- Parental Involvement in School Decision Making Survey
 - Gather parent perceptions on being included in school plans/decisions
- Home Learning Activities Census
 - Capture the frequency of families engaging in specific home learning activities

Please note, the questionnaires refer to 'school', but this can be changed to 'nursery' or other labels as required.

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



Parental Engagement in Children's Learning Questionnaire

I know what my child is learning at school. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The school provides me with useful information about how I can help my child learn at home. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The school provides gives me the information I need to support my child's learning at home. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The school encourages my participation in my child's learning.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I am confident in supporting my child's learning at home.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

How often do you have conversations with your child about what the class is learning at school?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Never	Don't know
-------	--------	---------	-----------------	-------	------------

How often do you help your child understand the content s/he is learning in school?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Never	Don't know
-------	--------	---------	-----------------	-------	------------

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



Engaging my child in learning activities outside of school is important.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

How often do you help your child engage in activities which are educational outside the home?

Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Never	Don't know
-------	--------	---------	-----------------	-------	------------

What does the school do to help you support your child's learning at home?

What can the school do to help your child engage in learning more productively at home?

* Denotes a question from the National Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



Parent Perceptions Questionnaire

School staff in the school are approachable. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The teachers and school are doing a good job teaching my child academic subjects.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The teachers and school are doing a good job teaching my child to follow rules and directions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree		Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	--	-------	----------------	------------

School staff are doing a good job keeping me well informed of my child's progress.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

School staff are doing a good job encouraging my child's sense of self-esteem.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The teachers/the school are doing a good job encouraging my child to have a positive attitude toward learning.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

School staff are friendly and approachable.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The teachers and school are receptive to my input and suggestions.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I am confident that teachers/the school are sensitive to cultural differences.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

* Denotes a question from the National Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



Home-School Communication Questionnaire

The school keeps me well informed about my child's progress in a way I can understand. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I can contact the school within opening hours to speak to staff. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The school asks for my views about my child's learning and takes them into account. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

How often does the school get in touch with you to provide information on what your child is currently learning about? *

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

How often does the school get in touch with you to provide information on how your child is progressing with their learning? *

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

How often does the school get in touch with you to provide information on how your child is doing socially at school? *

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

How often does the school get in touch with you to provide information on ways to help your child continue learning at home? *

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

How often does the school get in touch with you to provide general information about the school? *

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



I am confident that if I need to contact my child's school, it will respond helpfully to my questions and comments. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I am confident that school staff are easy to reach when I have a problem or question.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I feel well informed about what my child is currently learning about.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I feel well informed about how my child is progressing with their learning.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I feel well informed about how my child is doing socially at school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I am confident that school staff keep me aware of all information I need related to school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I am confident with how to communicate with the school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I know who to talk with at school regarding concerns about my child's education.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The school is making me aware of family learning opportunities. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

Overall, how satisfied are you with how the school engages with you? *

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied or Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Don't know
-------------------	--------------	-----------------------------------	-----------	----------------	------------

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



How do you prefer to communicate with the school? (circle all that apply)

Through the Class Teacher	Via the School Office	Phone	Email	SMS	Other: _____
---------------------------------	-----------------------------	-------	-------	-----	-----------------

What ideas to do you have for improving communication between you and the school?

* Denotes a question from the National Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



Parental Involvement in School Events Questionnaire

There are opportunities for me to help with my child's school. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I have taken part in family learning activities in the past school year. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

Thinking about your current involvement in the life of the school, would you like to be: *

A Lot Less Involved	Slightly Less Involved	Neither More or Less Involved	Slightly More Involved	A Lot More Involved	Don't know
---------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------	------------------------	---------------------	------------

How likely would you be to attend a family learning event at school? *

Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely or Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	Don't know
---------------	----------	----------------------------	--------	-------------	------------

If there is anything preventing you from being more active in the life of the school, is this because: (please circle all that apply) *

There are No Opportunities	Work Commitments	Care of Younger Children	Lack of Confidence	I was Not Made Aware of the Opportunities	Cost	Language Barriers	Other
----------------------------	------------------	--------------------------	--------------------	---	------	-------------------	-------

To what extent do you feel involved in school life?

Very Uninvolved	Uninvolved	Neither Uninvolved of Involved	Involved	Very Involved	Don't know
-----------------	------------	--------------------------------	----------	---------------	------------

What time is most convenient for you to come into school?

After Morning Drop Off	Before Afternoon Pickup	After Afternoon Pickup	Lunchtime	Evening	Don't know
------------------------	-------------------------	------------------------	-----------	---------	------------

How often do you attend any parent groups at the school?

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

In the past year, how often have you visited the school?

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



How often have you participated in any fundraising efforts at the school?

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

In the past year, how often have you volunteered at the school?

Weekly	Monthly	Once every term	Once every school year	Never	Don't know
--------	---------	-----------------	------------------------	-------	------------

What is the best thing the school does to help parents become involved with the school?

* Denotes a question from the National Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



Parental Involvement in School Decisions Questionnaire

The school seeks my views and opinions on school policies. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

My views help the school to decide priorities in the school improvement plan. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The views and suggestions of the Parent Council are taken into account by the school's senior management. *

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I am involved in making important decisions at the school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

I have opportunities to influence what happens at the school.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

The school involves me in meaningful ways.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
-------------------	----------	---------------------------	-------	----------------	------------

* Denotes a question from the National Parental Involvement and Engagement (PIE) Census

Parental Engagement Evaluation Toolkit



Home Learning Activities Census (Weston & Goodall)

Dear Parents and Carers,

We value what you do with your children and see it as an integral part of their learning. We want to work with you to support learning, so it will help us to know what you are already doing. Please note that this census is completely anonymous – we’re just interested in getting a general overview!

Please tell us how often you:

Activity	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Rarely or not at all
Read with your child (including bedtime stories)				
Watch and discuss TV programmes (like <i>Big Cats</i> , <i>Planet Earth</i>)				
Ask your child what they have learned at school				
Help your child with their homework				
Go to the library with your child				
Go to other places related to learning with your child (museums, etc.)				
Talk about what your child has learned in school in other ways, e.g. reading signs when out and about				
Play games with your child				
Help your child find answers to questions when they don't know the answers				

This *Parent Census* has been shared with permission from *100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Engaging Parents* by Kathryn Weston and Janet Goodall, 2018.



Appendix B.6 – Case Studies

What is a case study?

A case study looks at a unit (e.g., an individual, group, or community) or multiple units (e.g., several establishments, different professions) within the present context. You should identify the specific questions you want to answer at the beginning to identify the appropriate sources of evidence – it is very rare that a single source of evidence will be enough. It is also important to go in with an open mind towards what you might discover through the case study.

The case study describes the main method of research, however within this approach different sub-methods are used. These might include interviews, observations, or looking at concrete evidence such as planning tools or completed work. Different methods have different strengths and weaknesses and by using multiple sources, we can be confident we are getting the true picture – if they don't agree, this indicates that the picture is more complicated than expected and we should do further research. An example of this is comparing what people say they do versus what they do (interviews versus observation) – do parents report a high level of satisfaction with learning events but data shows low attendance rates?

Methods for Case Study

Observation

Observation involves three key components: watching, listening, and clarifying. It is a fantastic way of obtaining 'data' about what is happening because it collects evidence of what people do, rather than what they say or intend to do. The more you know a context or situation, the more able you are to critically reflect on whether this evidence reflects typical practice or is an example of abnormal practice (either good or bad) due to the observation. Observations which are unstructured (e.g., where the observer is actively involved in the situation or well-known to the participants) are more likely to influence the situation. Observations which are structured (e.g., repeated observations by different people using the same structure, or the observer remaining an outsider to the situation) reduce this observer effect.

Observation can be used in several different ways:

- Exploratory – at the beginning of an evaluation to gather initial information and decide which research methods will be most appropriate;
- Supplementary – used alongside survey techniques to give further illustrative information and evidence;
- Multi-method – equally weighted with other research methods;
- Main method – when the primary purpose of observation and the overall evaluation is to create an explanatory description of a situation, or descriptions over several occasions.

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Observations will generally follow a typical pattern:

- Begin with a descriptive observation which looks at the setting, people, activities, and apparent feelings (as judged by the observer);
- Focus in on elements which are particularly related to your aims and include some provisional explanations that help to make sense of what you see with what you already know about the context or situation;
- Include running descriptions, ideas and provisional explanations, personal impressions and feelings, and things to check later.

If you are looking at a specific behaviour, then it might help to look at structured observations which use data collection. You should endeavour to carry out observations of the same event over several occasions (where possible) to gather a more accurate reflection of what happens in the situation, and ensure they are recorded on the same sheet or attached sheets to keep notes together. Behaviours seen during structured observations are often recorded using tally marks for ease. Interval sampling is used to observe at set time intervals (e.g., looking at how many pupils are leading the discussion in a pupil-parent learning session every 3 minutes); event sampling is a form of continuous observation (e.g., looking at how many times a parent asks their child a question in a pupil-parent learning session). Interval sampling is used when the behaviours happen so often that continuous observation is not needed to gain an accurate picture.

Interviewing

Interviews can add further information to your case studies, particularly if this case study focuses on an individual or small group. A strength of interviews is the 'richness' that you can obtain from them through asking more open questions which allow you to further prompt the interviewee and gather extended responses. Interviews cover a wide range of questioning techniques on a continuum from unstructured to structured:

Unstructured	←					→	Structured
Listening to other people's conversation; a kind of verbal observation	Using 'natural' conversation to ask key research questions	'Open-ended'; just a few key open questions	Semi-structured interviews, i.e. open and closed questions	Recording schedules: in effect, verbally administered questionnaires	Semi-structured questionnaires: multiple choice and open questions		Structured questionnaires: simple, specific, closed questions

Table 1: The verbal data dimension (Gillham, 2000)

Carrying out interviews in your own establishment can have numerous benefits, particularly at the beginning of a case study process. Asking unstructured, naturally occurring, questions as they arise can help others be more open and honest. You will not record these formally at the time, but it is important that you write them down as quickly and accurately as possible.

Semi-structured interviews are the most important type of interview in case studies. They allow the interviewer to be flexible and responsive to what the participants contribute, while keeping



a clear focus on the key issues and what you wish to gather through this face-to-face information gathering technique. As interviewer, you can decide which order to ask questions in based on the direction the interview takes and may add in additional questions to gather more information. A mixture of open and closed questions can be used and at times the interviewee may lead the direction of the interview.

The main elements when preparing for an interview are:

- Identifying key topics;
- Deciding on questions (around 5 to 10 is enough);
- Checking that the questions are genuinely open and do not indicate a preferred answer;
- Deciding on prompts (things you might need to remind the interviewee about if they do not volunteer these details);
- The use of probes (getting the interviewee to tell you more about a point or clarifying);
- Deciding how you will record the interview – writing notes can affect the flow of an interview and writing up afterwards may mean missing parts of answers; digital recording or someone else acting as note taker might be more effective.

Writing Up Your Case Study

As someone working in education, it is likely that the people reading your final case study report will either be colleagues in education, parents, or third sector associates. For a case study to be relatable to this audience it should describe a real-life situation and outline implications for work or next steps. It is important that it is easy to read and accessible to all (e.g., plain language, explains concepts/terms, describes the context).

The report should outline what the original problem or question was that led to the study and some brief information about what was carried out during the case study, such as the number and location of observations, interviews, questionnaires. The main body of the report should include the evidence of what you have found; this might include quotes or photos. Your final section should summarise what you have found – why was your original problem happening, what can be done to change this, and what can others learn from this.

Appendix B.7 – Case Study Example

Approach

The Pizza Learning programme complements the children's learning in school, and uses the community learning and development (CLD) approach to family learning. It provides the opportunity for parents and children to learn together and aims to positively impact on their confidence, build capacity, and raise attainment and aspirations. The programme is managed and coordinated by CLD practitioners and consists of three connected strands of family learning: Pizza Reading, Pizza Maths and Pizza time, over a 10-20 week period. Attendance at the tea time sessions are incentivised by the sharing of pizza after learning, contributing to the social fabric of the programme.

Values of Family Learning

- Recognising the role of the parent as the first educator
- Equal partnership between learners and educators in the process of learning
- Programme is offered as a universal provision with open access
- Promoting change and empowering individuals and communities
- Raising aspirations

The family

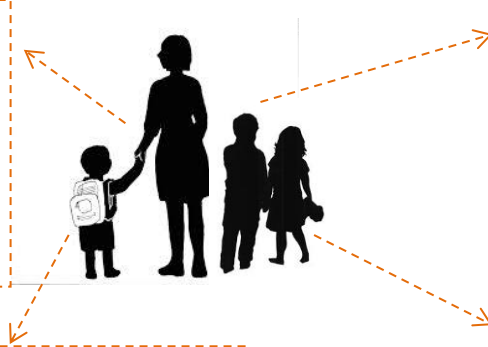
This case study is based on a family from an area listed in the Scottish index of deprivation as one of the most deprived communities in Renfrewshire. The family are from SIMD 1 and receive clothing grants for each of the three children. The children attend Primary School B, where the Family Learning Programme has been in place since 2015 and is a well-established and valued initiative for the community. The case study will showcase the family's journey through the intervention and highlight how it has impacted on each member in a number of ways. To ensure confidentiality and protect identities, names of the parent and children have been changed.

Cath

As the parent, Cath has attended Pizza Reading, Pizza Maths and Pizza Time Transitional Skills with her 3 children. At first, Cath was very reluctant to come along to the programme. She felt "anxious and uncomfortable".

Liam

Liam is 6 and in P2 and took part in Pizza Reading. He initially took part in the programme as a child in the Crèche, as his mother attended the sessions with his elder siblings. Liam also went on to attend Pizza Maths.



Kevin

Kevin took part in Pizza Time in P7. Kevin is 12 and now in his 1st year of High School. Kevin was very shy when he started Pizza Time and lacked confidence.

Sharon

Sharon is 8 and was in P4 when she attended Pizza Maths. Sharon believed she was not good at Maths, it was hard to understand, and had no confidence. Sharon also took part in Pizza Reading. She liked to read but lacked confidence in her ability.

Intervention: Initial engagement with the family

Cath received a letter inviting her to attend the Pizza Reading Group which had started for Sharon's age group at her school. Cath felt unsure about what her involvement would be in the programme. She also wasn't sure why she was being asked to participate and assumed it involved reading which made her more reluctant to engage and slightly apprehensive.

Following written communication, the Pizza Learning coordinators telephoned all parents personally, to encourage them to attend. Cath learned a lot more about the programme and what was included during this phone call. She was pleased that the programme included fun activities as well as reading together, and crucially there would be a crèche available which removed a significant childcare barrier for her. The telephone call helped alleviate her concerns and Cath appreciate the personal approach. Sharon was also keen to take part as she always enjoyed reading.

Pizza Reading



Sharon – When Sharon and her mum started the sessions they found the Family Learning staff very welcoming and approachable. The sessions helped Sharon focus by taking the time out to read. Cath states it has "really improved her skills". It helped build her confidence as by the end of the sessions "she loved to read out loud" and now often "disappears to her bedroom to read a book".

Liam – Pizza reading also involved arts, crafts and games which Liam really enjoyed. Liam settled down once he familiarised with the staff and started to really engage with the learning activities.

Pizza Time



The Pizza Time Transition Group was developed to support families in the key transitional stage of going to secondary school, with an aim to; build confidence, self-awareness, self-esteem, raise aspirations and ultimately raise attainment of learners.

The 20 week programme also gave families time to build solid long lasting relationships and grow as a community.

Kevin –After her positive experience in Pizza Reading, Cath encouraged Kevin to participate in Pizza Time. Facilitators observed that Kevin was very shy when he started the group. However, over the course of the programme Kevin took part in group discussions and group work which developed his communication skills. Kevin's confidence increased considerably and by the end of the programme he was happy to present his work to the whole group. Facilitators commented that his skills and knowledge shone through his work and he became much more comfortable in the learning environment. This was especially significant for Kevin as he was now better equipped to access High School learning. Cath stated she was very proud of him.

Pizza Maths



Sharon – Cath brought Sharon to the Pizza Maths group to encourage her to think differently about Maths and develop her confidence in the subject. Cath thought the social practice approach in the Maths sessions were particularly helpful as it helped Sharon understand how relevant Maths was to her everyday life; i.e. using weight when baking. Cath stated that Pizza Maths was "nothing like she expected; it was fun, and used relevant activities". Sharon developed confidence in Maths and her ability to do Maths school work was "better than before taking part in the programme".

Kevin – Although he was now in S1, Kevin decided to come back to St David's to take part in Pizza Maths, stating he "wasn't very good at maths and wanted to improve". Kevin went on to receive 100% in a Regional Maths Test in High School after the programme and believed the support he received at Pizza Maths helped achieve this.



Family and Community

Learning as a family:



Cath stated the opportunity to spend more time with her children at the Pizza Groups had brought them closer together as a family, strengthening their relationships. She added that Pizza Learning “benefitted family life, improved relationships, and is a safe, supportive and comfortable environment.”

She now feels confident and capable in helping her children with their homework and is very proud of her achievement. Moreover, Pizza Learning provided her with the confidence to consider other personal opportunities. Before Pizza Learning, Cath had never considered being involved in St David’s Parent Council as she thought “only certain people took part in it”, and she didn’t have the right skills or strengths. Now, Cath is a member of the Parent Council and is enjoying being involved and engaged at her children’s school, realising how significant “being involved in school life” is, and how much it “helps my children to learn.”

Cath and her family developed confidence, skills and capacity throughout the Pizza Learning Programme. They were able to break down barriers to learning which prevented them from aspiring and achieving to their full potential.

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