

Curriculum for Excellence factfile — Parents as partners



I want to be more involved in my child's education. Is that OK?

You have a right as a parent to be involved and evidence shows that children and young people do better when parents and educators work closely together. Your relationship with the place and people involved in your child's learning is important. Your interest and involvement will show your child that you value their education. Getting involved can also be a useful way of making contacts and friends with people who have children of the same age.

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

You already make a huge contribution to your child's learning at home and your unrivalled knowledge of your child is invaluable to teaching staff. Support your child's learning at home. Support what is asked of your child in lessons and through homework. Talk to staff if you have concerns. Read notes and progress reports sent home and offer your comments. Attend open afternoons/evenings, Parents Night, fetes, shows and displays of work. Attend meetings with teaching staff to discuss your child's progress and plan future learning targets. Join the Parent Council and help influence plans for your child and others.

What can I usefully offer?

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

What can parents do to help their children?

Spending quality time together is important at any age. The 'play talk read' campaign gives great tips for parents of young children: www.infoscotland.com/playtalkread. Encourage good habits and routines from the start – diet, sleep, exercise, balancing work and play. That way young people will be able to make good life choices for themselves when they're older. Curriculum for Excellence puts a new focus on Health and Wellbeing supporting a child's ability to learn and it's woven through the curriculum. (There's a separate factfile on that topic.)

What specific things can I do to help?

Showing interest, asking questions, giving praise, listening – these all help. Encourage children to make choices, take responsibility for their decisions and solve their own problems – with your support. Encourage them to take on challenges they enjoy in and out of school. This will help develop knowledge, skills, confidence, self-esteem... all at the heart of Curriculum for Excellence.

How can parents support children at exam time?

The best support comes from your supportive relationship with your child, together with regular attendance, keeping up with homework and coursework throughout the term, promoting sleep, diet and exercise. Reports will let you know how your child is doing. If you're worried, ask for help. There is more flexibility under Curriculum for Excellence for secondary pupils to take qualifications when they are ready. Some are assessed by classwork rather than exam. For info on the new National 4 and 5 qualifications starting in 2013 see the factfile on 'Assessment and Qualifications' or visit www.sqa.org.uk. To understand the qualifications your child is studying, how these compare and plan future learning with your child see www.scqf.org.uk

Curriculum for Excellence in action
Bringing life to learning and learning to life
October 2010

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

There's a whole range of reasons why a young person might struggle, whatever stage of life they are at: fall-outs with friends, bullying, the stress of exams, struggling with lessons, difficulties at home, managing independent living for the first time. See www.infoscotland.com/justask for help with spotting signs of stress to parents' rights and info on the range of help available. Some schools have home-school partnership officers who can help. There's also a factfile like this called *Supporting Learners*.

How can I help my child at times of change?

Change or transitions can be exciting but can be stressful too. Moving from home to nursery, nursery to primary, primary to 'the big school' and onto further learning, training or work can be as stressful for the parent as for the child. Get your own worries addressed early so that you can do your best to make the change as smooth as possible. Focus on the excitement and opportunity. Listen to concerns – they are real and being heard is a big help. Don't be afraid to raise your concerns or ask questions at nursery, school, college or workplace. Within the school system, Parent Councils can often provide a good source of information and parents will share experience and help each other.

How can I help with homework?

Help your child make time and space for homework and reading. Sometimes homework will involve finding things out or doing something practical and you can do this learning together as part of family life – cooking, reading, playing. Help establish good 'study' habits as they grow older and this will help as they go through the system, helping them to become independent and successful learners. Give praise for putting time and effort into work, not just for getting the right answer.

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

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

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

How can Parent Councils help?

Parent Councils have a key role to play in raising standards – a key aim of Curriculum for Excellence. They can support improvement planning at school and can get involved in planning at local authority level too. They can raise issues nationally through their local rep on the National Parent Forum of Scotland. They make important links to families, the local neighbourhood and businesses that help bring life to learning.



Curriculum for Excellence in action

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

They offer a vital link to hear what young people think and want. They can invite parents in to share skills, time, expertise and knowledge. The Parent Council can link to local businesses that might offer work experience opportunities or give young people the chance to develop business skills. They can help with fundraising, organise career fairs and be on hand at parent events to talk to other parents.

Useful links and information

GENERAL: Parentline Scotland: 0800 800 2222

www.parentingacrossscotland.org

www.stepfamilyscotland.org.uk (advice for step parents)

EDUCATION: Big Plus 0808 100 1080 (reading/writing)

www.ltscotland.org.uk/parentzone (education changes)

www.parentforumscotland.org (National Parent Forum)

www.sptc.info (parent-teacher councils)

www.sqa.org.uk and www.scqf.org.uk (qualifications)

www.careers-scotland.org.uk (careers)

www.enquire.org.uk (additional support for learning)

www.hmie.gov.uk (monitor education standards)

www.engageforeducation.org

(access to education ministers)

HOMEWORK – ask your school for ideas too!

www.homeworkelephant.co.uk/teachers

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/homework

www.gridclub.com

www.channel4learning.net/apps/homeworkhigh

EMPLOYMENT – making connections with employers

www.employersandyoungpeople.org

Curriculum for Excellence is a major change to the education system that aims to raise standards of learning and teaching for all 3-18 year olds, wherever they learn. This factfile was prepared with the help of the National Parent Forum Scotland and answers questions parents and learners have about the changes and parents' role. In the factfile we sometimes use the term 'parents' for short – we mean all parents and carers. When we talk about 'learners' we mean all young people in nursery, school, college, community learning and training, special schools, extended support and secure settings. 'Teachers' or 'teaching staff' means all staff, lecturers, nursery nurses, trainers, support workers.