



Learning at Home

What is learning at home?

'Learning at home is the learning which happens in the home, outdoors or in the community. It can take place through everyday activities that families already do and can overlap with aspects of organised or active learning activities'.

(Scottish definition of learning at home)

Parents have a vital role in a child’s learning and development throughout their lives. Learning at home can happen through a range of events including play, leisure activities, fun events, sports, trips, cultural or volunteering experiences. It can also happen through curriculum related activities, homework, reading and sharing books.

Activities for learning at home can be specifically designed to enable parents to engage in their child’s learning and build upon the learning from school or early learning and childcare setting. It can also provide intergenerational learning opportunities for the child, family and extended family and the community.



Learning at home is an important part of learning through everyday routine activities. Parental investment in learning at home makes a positive contribution to child development by enhancing skills such as organisation, planning and monitoring and language that are conducive to learning. It also contributes to developing motivation towards learning by developing academic interests and making connections between curriculum subjects and everyday experiences

Why is learning at home important?

Children in Scotland only spend around 15 per cent of their waking hours in school. The remaining 85 per cent of children’s time is spent at home or in their communities and this presents a potentially significant opportunity for learning (OECD, 2014). Around 80 per cent of the difference in how well children do at school depends on what happens outside the school gates and so learning at home is crucial for children to learn and develop.

What families do has a greater influence on a child's learning than who they are or their socio-economic status.

Developing a nurturing relationship with your child helps support their emotional and social development. This can be through responding to their needs but also through smiling, touching, body language and eye contact.

Responding to a child in this way has a range of benefits. These include developing problem solving skills, emotional communication, establishing future emotions, behaviours and helps build relationships as they grow and develop.

Building on the attachment between a parent and their child is a two-way process. Parents who respond to their child's needs through listening carefully will help their child to foster a secure attachment and develop their communication skills for life.

Obtaining information about a child's physical, emotional, cognitive (thinking skills), social development and needs enables parents to understand the various stages of a child's learning journey.

What can parents do?

Parents and families can engage in a range of activities in the home as part of everyday family life. These may include

- time spent reading to children or encouraging children to read
- the activities and materials available to children
- access to resources such as computers
- visits to museums and libraries and other sources of learning
- engagement with and being actively involved in other learning activities such as gardening, baking, cooking and outdoor learning can instill motivation, curiosity, the value of learning as well as a desire to learn in children.

This investment of parental and family time in the home learning environment has been shown to 'significantly aid children's development....and also helps with literacy' and mathematics performance'.

Factors that have been shown to positively influence a child's communication include early ownership of books, attendance at an early learning and childcare setting and a range of learning at home activities.

The various ways that learning at home impacts on children, as identified in research, include

- ✓ a child's early learning
- ✓ later achievements
- ✓ nurture
- ✓ resilience
- ✓ wellbeing
- ✓ social mobility
- ✓ skills for life

Setting individual and appropriate boundaries and routines is important for every child. This includes encouraging relevant sleep patterns, healthy eating, personal hygiene and exercise.

Royal Society of Arts: [Sleep or Die](#)

Activities which may help children and raise attainment include:

Activity	Linked with
The child playing with letters/numbers at home	Attainment in all measures
A child's attention being drawn to sounds, letters	Literacy skills, early number skills and non-verbal attainment
Parents reading with their child	Higher scores in all outcomes
Visits to the library, museums, galleries	
Parents helping their child with a range of activities, having toys available	Child's expressive vocabulary
Parents helping their child to learn songs or nursery rhymes	Significant positive impact on language scores when starting school
Encouraging and helping your child to cook a meal and/or set the table	<p>What parents do in terms of educational activities and parenting style' is considered to make a difference across a range of areas including behaviours and higher cognitive assessments.</p> <p>The home learning environment, family routines and psychosocial environmental factors are important to help close the 'gaps' in early child development.</p>
Allowing your child to help you with DIY jobs around the house	
Researching a topic of interest on the internet, in a library or from other sources	
Helping your child to learn about political parties before they go to vote	
Working together with your child on different activities eg gardening, baking	
Showing your child how to play a musical instrument	

Homework

'Schools whose pupils do homework tend to be more successful'.

([Education Endowment Foundation, 2017](#))

Homework is considered to be 'tasks given to pupils by their teachers to be completed outside of usual lessons. Such tasks can include literacy, numeracy and activities to develop inquiry or problem solving skills. Homework can be an additional source of stress for families, often those with the least capacity to undertake the tasks.

Time spent doing homework in secondary school has not only been a 'strong predictor of better attainment and progress' it has also 'influenced better social-behavioural outcomes. For secondary school pupils, home remains strong and significant while also being likely to 'increase opportunities for learning, provide opportunities for practice and also feedback when assessed, and encourage independent study skills and responsibility'.

Homework in Primary also correlates positively with progress. At Jordanhill pupils in P6 and P7 spend some 25% of their week with Secondary teachers and we do not see the decline in progress from P6 to S1 reported elsewhere. We believe that the extended transition into S1 is a key element of this. Pupils need to develop an understanding of the demands and benefits of homework from an early age.

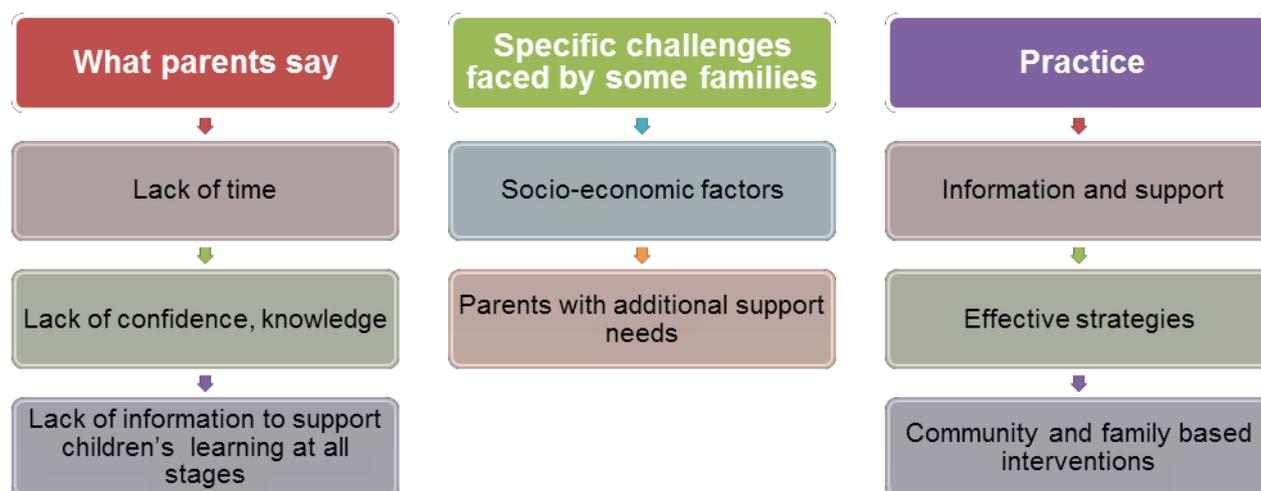
Both the amount of time spent on homework and the level of support offered by parents must be proportionate. Your child should not be spending hours on tasks designed to be done in 15-20 minutes.

[Contact us](#) if you have concerns.

You can read our Homework guides for S1-S3 [here](#). Advice on homework is also contained in the [Primary](#) (page 21) and [Secondary](#) (page 21) prospectuses.

Helping Parents (What we do)

There can be many barriers to parental engagement with home learning.



Parent Briefings

The school organizes a wide range of briefings for parents at its Parents' Conference and on an ad hoc basis. These cover topics such as Literacy, Numeracy, STEM education and many health and wellbeing related issues.

Please check the [In Focus leaflets](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) pages on our web site.

Pupil Support

Information about the work of Support for Learning can be found in the [prospectus](#).

We provide specific advice to pupils and parents about structuring and tackling both academic and personal challenges.

The services of our counsellor are also available.

The school runs an enormous range of trips, excursions and of out of school hours activities which provide exactly the kind of stimulus to learning and development commended to parents by the research on learning at home. Most of these do not form part of statutory provision. Limited and reducing state funding is available. We rely on parental contributions to fund many of these programmes.

We also rely on [parent volunteers](#). If you can assist us, then please contact the school.

Supported Study

A range of activities run throughout the year which emulate and compliment the 'ideal' home study environment.

Targeted homework clubs run before and after school.

We provide mentoring for pupils who need support on the learner journey in and beyond school.

Financial Support

The school provides an enhanced level of support through the generosity of the [Educational Amenities Trust Fund](#).

All communications regarding co-curricular activities contain an invitation to contact the bursar should cost be a barrier to participation.

See [Financial Support](#)