

Working with parents to support children's learning

Four recommendations on working with parents to support their child's learning

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<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/tools/guidance-reports/working-with-parents-to-support-childrens-learning#recommendation-1>

Peak Academy's response to EEF report on 'working with parents to support Childrens learning'

Four recommendations

Actions from Peak

Critically review how you work with parents

Schools should be optimistic about the potential of working with parents: There is an established link between the home learning environment at all ages and children's performance at school.

Schools and parents have a shared priority to deliver the best outcomes for their children. However, evidence on effective strategies that schools can use to engage parents in their children's learning is mixed. If the aim is solely to improve academic outcomes, classroom interventions working directly with children currently have more evidence of effectiveness at improving learning than parenting interventions with the same aim.

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Working effectively with parents can be challenging, and is likely to require sustained effort and support. Most schools say that they do not have an explicit plan for how they work with parents; fewer than 10% of teachers have undertaken CPD on parental engagement.

Therefore, schools should start by critically reviewing their aims and current approaches: focusing on areas that have better evidence different approaches are needed for different ages; talking to parents who are less involved about what support they would find helpful; and planning and monitoring progress towards their aims.



Actions	Impact
Academic review day actively supports all parents involving them with their child's progress both regarding soft and academic outcomes.	Vast majority of parents engage. Given the fact many parents travel from surrounding counties and over an hour we feel this is a success.
At the same time we gather parental reviews and promote feedback onto the Ofsted parental questionnaire	Overwhelmingly positive regarding the school and its provision.
Weekly phone calls	Excellent relationships with parents
Parent mail and regular newsletters	
Regular professional meetings	
Parents can access behaviour tracking information	

Actions from Peak

Provide practical strategies to support learning at home

For young children, promoting shared book reading should be a central component of any parental engagement approach. Home learning activities such as practising letters and numbers, are also linked to improved outcomes.

Tips, support, and resources can make home activities more effective, for example, where they prompt longer and more frequent conversations during book reading.



Support parents to create a regular routine and encourage good homework habits, but be cautious about promoting direct parental assistance with homework (particularly for older children).

Parents can support their children by encouraging them to set goals, plan and manage their time and emotions. This type of support can help children to regulate their own learning, and will often be more valuable than direct help with homework tasks.



Actions	Impact
Parental invites to CPD sessions	
Weekly phone calls with all parents	
Bespoke homework activities	
Reading logs for those on reading programmes	
ECHP meetings and target setting	

Actions from Peak

Tailor school communications to encourage positive dialogue about learning

Well-designed school communications can be effective for improving attainment and a range of other outcomes, such as attendance - Examples include weekly texts sent from school to parents, and short termly letters.

Impacts from such approaches may appear small, but they are generally low cost, straight-forward to introduce, and can prompt wider engagement.

Messages are likely to be more effective if they are personalised, linked to learning and promote positive interactions, eg, celebrate success. Communication should be two-way: consulting with parents about how they can be involved is likely to be valuable, and increase the effectiveness of home-school relationships. Currently around half of parents say that they have not been consulted.

School communications may be particularly important for engaging some parents/carers who could play an important role but may have less contact with school.

Actions	Impact
Coffee mornings held for parents	
Regular home visits	
Parent governor opportunity	
Involve parents in new strategies being delivered	Soft launch and QA for our sleuth model for parents
Collect pupils if they miss taxis and transport	
Parent mail and news letters	
Contact parents during holidays for feedback to staff in new term	
Invites for assemblies and sports day/celebration event	
Academic review day- 3 reports a year on progress	
EHCP's and multi-agency meetings	
Transition days from year 6	
College transitions	
1-1 mentoring and support for parents of young carers	

Actions from Peak

Offer more sustained and intensive support where needed

Start by assessing needs and talking to parents about what would help them support learning: targeting is likely to be needed to use resources effectively, and avoid widening gaps. Target and communicate carefully to avoid stigmatising, blaming or discouraging parents. Focus on building parents' efficacy: that they are equal partners and can make a difference.

Encourage a consistent approach to behaviour between parents and the school, for example, by sharing expectations with parents.

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Offering more structured, evidence-based programmes can help to develop positive behaviour and consistency where needs area greater.

Plan carefully for group-based parenting initiatives (eg, regular workshops): a convenient time and location, face-to-face recruitment, trusting relationships, and an informal, welcoming environment are the most important factors for parents to attend group sessions.

Consider offering regular home visits for younger children with greater needs. This can be an effective approach for parents that struggle to attend meetings in settings, and for building relationships.



Actions	Impact
Regular, weekly communications with all parents	
Review meetings involving home targets	
Sleuth	
Home to school agreement	
Home visits	
Warm friendly ethos	
Offer variety of options to visit the school for new consultations	