

Family Learning

Family learning is a central area of work for the Pre-school Learning Alliance. In this context families include parents, siblings, relatives and carers - anyone who cares for a child and is interested in supporting their learning. We have a strong record of working with parents and their children and of supporting parents in developing their own education. We have developed a wide range of programmes to meet the needs of parents/carers and their children.

Family Learning covers:

- Parents and children learning together
- Parents learning more about how children learn
- Parents taking up learning opportunities to benefit their own learning

The Alliance has developed a range of programmes to meet the needs of parents and their children and to develop links between them and the early years setting.

Workshops for Parents and Carers

Storysacks

A 3-hour workshop for parents and carers.

This aims to give all parents/carers the confidence to enjoy books and reading with their children and promotes reading activities which form the basis for future shared reading. Parents are introduced to storysacks and helped to explore how to use them and make their own. It explores how a storysack can develop language and literacy by providing activities, props, tapes and toys.

Jump Start

A 1.5 hour workshop for parents, carers and their children under 5.

This is a series of one-off interactive workshops for parents and their children. The workshops have three parts:

- The first part is for parents to discuss what they will do with their children in the second part of the session
- The second part is a joint activity with parents and children together e.g. sequencing pictures from a well known story into their own book
- The last part reviews learning and discusses activities to do at home. Part of a session is run for parents and part for parents and children together.

The workshops offer fun, hands-on activities that support children's language, literacy and numeracy and are supported by the handbook *Family Learning for Pre School Leaders*, which outlines the principles of Family Learning and suggests sessions and sample activities.

Pick and Mix workshops

A selection of one-off 1.5 hour workshops

The Alliance has developed a range of short, family learning workshops. These can be delivered as one-off activities or as part of a series of events. Additional workshops can be developed to meet local needs. Contact your regional training and Quality Assurance Manager for more information.

These can be delivered for parents on their own or provide opportunities for parents and children sharing activities. Practical session plans offer fun activities to do with children and explore strategies and methods parents can use to encourage learning and communication.

Workshops include:

Number Games - exploring number concepts through playing games

Floating Boats - a practical workshop involving woodwork and science which may encourage fathers and male carers to attend

Choosing and Making Toys - exploring learning through play, the role of toys and the opportunity to make a toy from recycled material

Talking and Listening - exploring ways of communicating with your child

Making Books - an opportunity to create a personalised reading and communication resource with children

Visiting the library

Making greater use of libraries and to read to and with children

Making Music workshop

Understanding the importance of music, rhythm and sound in promoting children's development and learning, and its place in building awareness of culture, diversity, communication and language

Fun with paint workshop

Exploring and experimenting; focusing on the process and experience of painting rather than a finished product

Song and rhyme sacks

Designing and making a song or rhyme sack for use at home or in an early years setting

Fun with Puppets

How the use of puppets can contribute to a child's learning and development, in particular, the potential for encouraging communication, developing self assurance and making relationships

Fun with food

Promoting an understanding of the importance of healthy eating through participation in a variety of activities involving food

Exploring outdoors

Ideas and suggestions for developing children's experience of exploring outdoors and identifying safe and stimulating learning opportunities

Exploration and discovery

Exploration and discovery of the world for young children and how participation in these activities can contribute to their learning and development

Fun with Maths

Recognising and using a variety of opportunities that will help children have real life experiences of maths

Playing together – making a book

Parents' role in supporting children's language and literacy in the early years

Fun with wood

Using wood with children in a variety of ways

Playdough to snowdough

What children can learn when playing with dough and how to support their learning

Let's pretend - role play

Imaginative and pretend play and how these activities can contribute to their learning and development

Short Courses for Parents and Carers of under 5's

Shadow Puppets

Six sessions of 2 hours each

These materials form an approach to working with parent/carers and children which includes music, movement, drama, puppetry and stories. It introduces parents to ways of supporting language development through creative activities. The course is supported by a music CD and a bank of suggestions to use in settings with or without parents. It notionally covers 6 sessions but many of the ideas can stand alone. There is background information which explains the approach and some of the ideas that informed the development of this course.

Looking at Learning Together

Six sessions of 2 hours each. The sessions can stand alone or form part of a course and can include joint sessions of parents and children learning together.

This helps parents support their children's learning and covers the following topics:

- Communicating with your child
- Helping your child with early maths
- Involving your child in everyday activities
- Managing challenging behaviour
- Planning progress for parents and children

Parents and Carers Matter - From Birth to Three

Six sessions of 2 hours each. These are planned to include parents and children learning together for part of each session. This course is designed to introduce parents of children under three to the thinking and practice that underpins the Birth to Three Matters framework

Topics include:

- Parents and Carers Matter
An introduction to the framework, exploring the role of parenting
- Tuning in to your Child - A skilful communicator:
Parents' role in early language development
- Growing and Developing - A healthy child:
Recognising the stages of development and the uniqueness of individuals
- Making Connections - A competent learner:
Creating a learning environment for children
- A Sense of Self - A strong child:
Building a child's self image
- Moving On
Planning progress for you and your child

Hand in Hand: Developing Independence for You and Your Child

Duration: 2 to 4 hours

Ideal for: Parents and carers whose children are starting at a new setting and may be leaving their parents/carers for the first time.

Aim:

- To consider the issues and feelings for parents and children that separation brings
- To help participants choose a new setting and to clarify what they want and expect from it
- To gain understanding of the settling in process and parents' role in this
- To consider how participants' lives could be affected by their child starting a new setting

About the workshop

This workshop examines the issues arising when children start in a new setting. It covers choosing provision, separation, settling in and new opportunities opening up for adults. The workshop can be run as two sessions of 1.5 hours each or as a single session. The activities can be adapted to meet the needs of participants, in that those whose children have attended a Parent and Toddler group and are starting full day care may need different information to those starting school.

What next? Why not try...

Family Learning Workshops

Pick and Mix selection on supporting your child's learning.

Parents and Carers Matter - From Birth to Three

Courses for Tutors and Facilitators

Facilitating Family Learning

A two-day workshop designed to give inexperienced facilitators the knowledge and skills to run a range of family learning activities. It covers consulting with families, working with groups and planning activities.

Courses for early years staff

Making Links with Parents and the Community

A two-day workshop for staff and committee members interested in working with parents and the broader community. The course outline provides a series of linked activities that can be selected to explore the role of parents in partnership with the setting, creating links with the community and action planning. The sessions cover both the ideas behind working in the broader community and the skills needed to further that work.

