

Family Learning at NIACE -
shaping strategy, supporting practice

AUTUMN UPDATE 2008



TRACKING AND MONITORING PROGRESSION FROM FAMILY LEARNING

This is the culmination of the project on progression that NIACE has completed on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council. The measuring and monitoring of progression from family learning has very much risen up the agenda with the new requirements for the Family Learning Impact Funding.

We recently launched the new resource pack to support the measuring and monitoring of progression, at two events in Sheffield and Leicester and attended by 150 delegates. This was also an opportunity to share national best practice from the project, look at curriculum and course planning to ensure the capture of the generic learning outcomes and the different types of progression and hold discussions around the long term

tracking of a sample of learners over a three year period.

For family learning practitioners and managers interested in developing effective methods of sampling progression of the adult participants from family learning programmes there is a website at www.niace.org.uk/FLprogression. It comprises a resource pack, developed from research and case studies with local authority family learning providers. The pack is supplemented by examples of reports and materials kindly supplied by providers.

Now available on the website: Copies of the presentation and 'defining progression' activity used at the launch events on 24 September and 6 October 2008.

Contact: familylearning@niace.org.uk

Included in this update

- Tracking and monitoring progression from Family Learning
- Families, Learning and Culture
- Grandparents and Family Learning Resources
- Family Learning Impact Funding (FLIF)
- Numbers and Money
- Family Learning Impact Findings Website
- Making the Connection
- Who's Who in Family Learning at NIACE

FAMILIES, LEARNING AND CULTURE

Inspiring families
through museums,
libraries and
archives



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The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) has commissioned a joint NIACE / MLA publication to support the development of effective family learning provision in museums, libraries and archives. It is aimed at managers and practitioners in museums, libraries and archives and family learning services,

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Families, Learning and Culture

whether funded through local authorities or the voluntary sector, to support collaboration and partnership in a rapidly changing environment.

The publication builds on the key findings of the evaluation of family learning programmes in museums in the North West undertaken by NIACE in 2007-08 and funded by Renaissance Northwest. There is much innovative practice to celebrate but equally more strategic thinking is needed to a) ensure the potential contribution of the cultural sector to support learning in families is fully exploited and b) ensure museums, libraries and archives are integrated into family learning policy initiatives at a local level.

To support museums, libraries and archives to promote their services to families two mini-book resources, designed for families who are not regular visitors, accompany this publication. The first highlights what to expect and how to share the experiences of a visit to a museum or gallery, the second identifies how to share the experience of a visit to a library or archive together.

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These resources are available for download at: <http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/Family/Default.htm> and the publications section of the MLA website at www.mla.gov.uk

GRANDPARENTS AND FAMILY LEARNING RESOURCES

Improving skills for life for grandparents and grandchildren

Over two thirds of the adult population become grandparents by the time they reach their late 60's¹, however those in the 55 to 65 year-old age group have the biggest skills for life needs in England². *Skills for Grandparents* – a NIACE resource launched on Friday 26th September 2008 to coincide with Grandparents Day (27th September) – seeks to address this situation and at the same time make an impact on the skills development of grandchildren.

Skills for Grandparents gives tutors and providers the information, teaching resources and training they need to run Skills for Life courses for grandparents. These courses also encourage grandparents to get actively involved in their grandchildren's skills development.

Jenny Cobley, said "With around six in ten women aged 55 to 65 having the maths skills expected of a nine-year-old, and around 82 per cent of children receiving some care from their

grandparents, these poor skills not only affect the grandparents themselves but also have a knock-on effect on their grandchildren."

She continued, "We produced these resources to help grandparents improve their own skills, while at the same time supporting their grandchildren with reading, writing and maths. We know just how powerful and positive the impact is when families learn together. These materials will help to put learning into the heart of what can be an incredibly special family relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren."

A FREE copy of the CD-ROM resource has already been sent out to practitioners. If you have not yet received your copy, please contact clare.chisholm@niace.org.uk to request one.

¹Dench, G. and Ogg, J. (2002) Grandparenting in Britain: A Baseline Study. London: The Young Foundation.

²DfES (2003) The Skills for Life survey. London: The Stationery Office. (8,730 respondents)

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Skills for Grandparents (ISBN 9781862013728) is a CD-ROM and is priced at £20.00. More information on this resource can be found at

<http://www.niace.org.uk/publications/S/skillsforgrandparents.asp>

To listen to a podcast featuring family learning at Lawford Mead Infant and Nursery School in Chelmsford, go to <http://www.niace.org.uk/news/audio/Grandparents.mp3>

FAMILY LEARNING IMPACT FUNDING (FLIF)

Extending the reach and improving the quality of FLLN

We are providing the support for Family Learning Impact Funding (FLIF) on behalf of the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) for the development strands of Wider Family Learning and Financial Capability. The aim of the development activity is to share existing best practice and support providers to implement FLIF in line with the requirements of the new guidance.

We have carried out a consultation event on wider family learning to capture effective practice and ensure that experienced practitioners

contribute to the design of the teaching and learning materials. We are collecting and will ensure best practice examples and case studies from across the country for publication on the Skills for Families website.

We are designing training modules with support materials for the priorities of both strands for cascade training. A series of regional training events to introduce the materials across both the strands and enable providers to develop the training for cascade.

We will then be supporting the preparation of the cascade of the training in selected locations. This second phase of the project is running from September 2008 and is

looking to support providers, in particular with their work with families at risk, fathers and other male carers. The Wider Family Learning strand is supporting the development and delivery of family learning courses running for a minimum of 20 hours including assessment of adult skills and links to progression and focusing on four policy areas – community cohesion, arts and culture, health and well-being and sustainable development.



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NUMBERS AND MONEY

Research shows that adults with low numeracy skills tend to be economically disadvantaged and that poor numeracy can contribute to familial cycles of deprivation. NIACE Family Learning Matters topic paper no. 4 – **family numeracy** explores the role of family numeracy programmes as an effective means of improving the numeracy skills of both adults and children and helping to reverse this cycle. It looks at family numeracy within the context of the LSC guidance and gives examples of innovative and interesting programmes being offered by family learning providers. It also includes some fun dice activities for practitioners to use with families. At a time of increasing economic uncertainty, NIACE Family Learning Matters topic paper no. 5 is very timely. **A strategic approach to family learning and financial capabilities** explores the role of family learning in helping to improve financial capability within families. It is aimed at family learning practitioners and managers looking to develop and a strategic approach to work in this area. It briefly details NIACE's strategic aims and actions.

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Both these topic papers can be downloaded from www.niace.org.uk/Research/Family

learning at home learning at school
an action research project

This is a two year project is funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and is a partnership between ECOTEC, NIACE and JB Associates. The project is working with six local authorities, to exchange good practice and test new methods of working with parents. For more information on the project see the website and newsletter at <http://www.learning-hs.org.uk/>

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FAMILY IMPACT FINDINGS WEBSITE

We're looking for research from family learning providers

Early next year, NIACE will be launching a new website for Family Learning practitioners to share their research with each other, and with academics and policy makers. The idea for the website came out of the joint NIACE/Family Learning Local Authority Group (FLLAG) 'Building Family Capital' conference in January 2008. The conference recognised that there was a wealth of practical, on the ground research being carried out by Family Learning practitioners and providers working with families, but that it was not being seen by the academics who carry out research on families and family learning, or by policy makers in these areas.

The website will make this research available for the first time in one searchable database.

We're looking for any research carried out by, or on behalf of family learning practitioners and providers.

It doesn't have to be a major academic piece of research (though that would be welcomed too) – it could be something you carry out as part of your everyday work such as an evaluation or review, a piece of reflective practice or action research. The point is we want to share what's happening on the ground.

We're also interested in hearing about research that you're just starting, or in the middle of carrying out.

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FAMILY LEARNING: A MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH

NIACE has been working in two London boroughs (Westminster and Brent), funded by the John Lyons Charity, on a project to develop a best practice programme which links parenting skills and wider family learning in Children's Centres using a multi-agency approach.

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MAKING THE CONNECTION

The Mental Health and Family Learning pack

A resource pack aimed at managers and practitioners in adult learning, particularly family learning and mental health services, who want to work in partnership to improve, set up or develop opportunities that promote access to family learning for adults experiencing mental health difficulties. The pack may also be useful for anyone interested in mental health and family learning.

The contents of the pack have been inspired by events held in the summer of 2007, where practitioners from family learning and mental health came together to highlight what work already exists in this area, how it could be developed and what information each sector would find useful in a resource pack.

To obtain a free copy of the pack, please email emily.jones@niace.org.uk or telephone 0116 2859676

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Who's Who in Family Learning at NIACE

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