

PART 5
Appendices

APPENDIX 1

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The objectives of strand 1 focusing on **FLLN** were:

1. To consider the extent to which the existing FLLN infrastructure, funding and programmes have been successful and to make recommendations on whether they should be continued in their current form or whether they should be revised;
2. To identify LEAs with low levels of involvement in offering FLLN programmes, to understand why and to advise on strategies for enhancing their involvement;
3. To consider the extent to which there is a match between groups of learners engaged in FLLN programmes and priority groups identified in *Skills for Life*;
4. To judge the involvement in, and effectiveness of, the voluntary and FE sectors in working with LEAs that offer FLLN programmes;
5. To consider the effectiveness of BSA guidelines and supporting materials for providers and to make recommendations on whether the current system should be continued or revised;
6. To identify models that are effective in engaging and motivating parents and promoting their progression to further learning, training or employment;
7. To consider the extent to which aspects of the national curriculum influence the delivery of literacy, language and Numeracy to adults in FLLN programmes and innovation in materials, strategies and methods;
8. To consider how FLLN relates to the National Curriculum in contributing to children's attainments in literacy, language and numeracy;
9. To consider how the continuing professional development needs of FLLN staff are met by providers.

The objectives of strand 2 focusing on **wider family learning** activities were:

1. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities and the ways in which they are funded and supported have been successful and to make recommendations on whether the provision and/or the funding and support systems for them should be revised;
2. To identify LEAs where LSC funding is being used to extend the existing provision and those where it is being used to establish provision for the first time;
3. To consider the groups of learners that engage in wider family learning activities and to determine whether they match the priority groups identified by the LSC;
4. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities raise the attainment and/or achievement of adults;
5. To consider to what extent wider family learning activities are secured through effective partnerships;
6. To consider the links between LSC funded family learning provision and other LEA pre-16 activities;
7. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities promote lifelong learning for the whole family;
8. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities build the confidence of family members of all ages;

9. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities provides progression opportunities, signposting individuals and or family groups to subsequent learning opportunities;
10. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities support children learning with adults;
11. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities help involve adults in children's education;
12. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities help to tackle social disadvantage;
13. To consider the extent to which wider family learning activities contribute to the regeneration of communities.

As the objectives specified in the tender were numerous and wide-ranging, NIACE and the LSC agreed, in early discussions, that not all of them could be achieved to the same level of detail during this short evaluation. Objectives 1 to 5 of each strand of the evaluation are the objectives which have been addressed in most detail by the research methodology and which receive most discussion in this report. The other objectives are addressed as far as it is possible.

**APPENDIX 2
STEERING GROUP**

Name	Organisation
Chris Sewell	Oxfordshire County Council
Beryl Bateson	Birmingham City Council
Julie McGee	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Ann Braham	London Borough of Islington
Jane Goodyer	Coventry City Council
Mary Crowley	Parenting Education and Support Forum
Foufou Savitzky	London Language and Literacy Unit
Sian Welby	Basic Skills Agency
Jayne Lievesley	Access to Learning for Adults (Team 1), Department for Education and Skills
Linden Paterson	Centre for Parenting Education, Merton College
Sue Evans	Learning and Skills Council
Andrea Mearing	Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, Department for Education and Skills
Mita Patel	Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, Department for Education and Skills

APPENDIX 3

THE EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This appendix describes in detail the research tools used in the evaluation.

1 Analysis of LSC database of providers and allocations

Funding allocations to LEAs were received from the LSC for the following funding streams:

- The BSA's *Additional Fund* for 2002/03;
- LSC's *Standards Fund for FLLN* for 2001/02 and 2002/03; and
- LSC's new *Family Learning* funding stream for 2002/03.

An analysis of the funding streams for FLLN and wider family learning was undertaken in order to understand how providers are funded for family programmes and to identify the extent to which there are variations in funding levels across providers. The figures were also used to help identify samples of providers for telephone interviews (see LEA telephone interviews below.)

The findings of the analysis of these figures were reported in chapter 5 of the report.

2 Postal survey of Local Education Authorities (LEAs)

A questionnaire was sent to 150 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in early October 2002 with a target response date of 31 October 2002. The initial response rate by the target date was 36 per cent, although a large number of questionnaires were received in the following days. Reminder letters were sent on 5 November 2002 and again on 25 November 2002. The "final" response rate was 67 per cent (101 LEAs). This is a very good response rate for a postal questionnaire.

A postal questionnaire was chosen in order to collect the ground level information that the evaluation required. The questionnaire covered issues such as the delivery and funding of FLLN and wider family learning including the extent of partnership working. LEAs were also asked about the number and type of learners that they attracted to their courses, the types of family programmes that they provided and what they thought about the guidance and support they received from the LSC and BSA.

The main results from the questionnaire were reported in chapters 5 –8 and 11-13.

3 Follow-up telephone interviews with LEAs

Follow up telephone interviews with LEAs were conducted for two reasons. Firstly, to ascertain why some LEAs had a low level of FLLN provision. Secondly to probe issues arising from the postal survey and other research tools and to collect information on more complex issues such as the recruitment and retention of learners, and practitioners' views on programmes and training and support.

As these aims were quite diverse, it was decided to have two sample groups;

- LEAs with a low level of involvement in FLLN;
- LEAs with a high level of involvement in FLLN and wider family learning provision.

The target of 15 telephone interviews was split so that 7 LEAs were interviewed from the first group and 8 LEAs from the second group. All interviews were conducted between mid January and February 2003. (One LEA from the low level involvement group could not be contacted within the timeframe for the interviews and was therefore not interviewed.)

LEAs with a low level of involvement in FLLN were identified using funding allocations for the BSA's *Additional Fund* and the LSC's *Standard Fund* allocations for FLLN for 2002/03 as an indicator of a low level of involvement. A shortlist of LEAs that did not take up any funding from the BSA's *Additional Fund* was drawn up, together with a list of LEAs that only took up funding for the BSA's Keeping up with the Children 12 hour course. This list was cross-referenced with LSC funding figures to ensure that all of the LEAs in the sample could safely be assessed as having a low level of involvement in FLLN. From this list, a sample of 7 geographically representative LEAs were selected for interview.¹ It is interesting to note that the majority of these LEAs did not reply to the postal survey.

LEAs with a high level of involvement in FLLN and wider family learning provision were selected in a similar fashion. Ranked funding allocations to LEAs (from highest to lowest) for the two FLLN and one wider family learning funding streams were analysed in order to identify LEAs that scored highly in at least two of their ranked funding allocations. These LEAs were also cross-referenced with the respondents to the postal survey as it was thought that LEAs with a high level of involvement in family programmes were more likely to have responded to the postal survey. LEAs that NIACE visited as part of the evaluation were also excluded from the eligible list. From this list, a sample of 8 geographically representative LEAs were selected for interview.¹

The results from the two questionnaires were reported in chapters 7-8 and 12-13.

4 Twenty telephone interviews with FE college providers

The evaluation aimed to interview 20 FE college providers of FLLN and/or wider family learning. This was in order to assess the involvement and role of the FE college sector in the provision of family programmes. Issues such as funding and partnership working were covered in the interviews, together with some of the issues that had been included in the LEA postal survey and telephone interviews.

Colleges and personnel engaging in family programmes were identified through NIACE's Further Education Forum for the Education of Adults (FEFEA) e-mail list.

¹ Given the low sample size, these LEAs were not selected on the basis of one in each Government Office Region (GOR) as per usual. However, they were selected as far as possible to represent LEAs in different areas of the country including rural LEAs.

This list has approximately 180 members. An e-mail was sent to all members asking them to get in touch with NIACE if they were an FE college that provided either FLLN or wider family learning programmes and were willing to participate in a telephone interview as part of the evaluation. Around 30 replies were received to this e-mail. A geographically representative sample of 20 FE college providers was chosen (2 from each Government Office Region) with colleges and personnel being chosen to equally represent FLLN and wider family learning.

Twenty FE college providers of FLLN and wider family learning were contacted in December 2002. 17 interviews were completed in January and February 2003 (3 interviewees could not be contacted within the timeframe and were therefore not interviewed).

The results from the questionnaire were reported in chapters 6-8 and 11-13.

5 Telephone interview with ABSSU regional officers

Seven out of 9 ABSSU regional officers were interviewed between November 2002 and February 2003. As key players within FLLN, it was felt important to seek ABSSU regional officers' views on the key developments and issues in FLLN, how much of a contribution they thought FLLN would and could make to *Skills for Life* targets and the key elements of successful FLLN models.

Telephone interviews were chosen rather than a postal survey given the complex qualitative information that was being sought from the interviews. Face-to-face interviews were not considered viable given the timeframe of the research project and because it was not felt that the quality of the information gained would necessarily be any higher.

The main findings from the interviews were reported in chapter 10.

6 Interviews with key personnel at strategic level

Key personnel from organisations involved in family programmes were interviewed by telephone between November 2002 and February 2003. Similar to the ABSSU interviews, the views of key people were being sought on the key issues in FLLN and wider family learning.

Depending on their role and background, key people were either asked questions about FLLN or wider family learning or both aspects of family programmes. (Respondents were always asked to distinguish between FLLN and wider family learning in their responses). The questions posed in the interviews were similar to those asked to ABSSU regional officers, adapted as required for wider family learning.

Key personnel from the following organisations were interviewed: Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), Basic Skills Agency, Community Education Development Centre (CEDC), Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA), Department for Education and Skills

(DfES), the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), the LSC, Sure Start, Workers' Educational Association (WEA), the London Language and Literacy Unit (LLLU), Read-on-Write-Away (ROWA!), Campaign for Learning, and the Parent Education and Support Forum.

A full list of the organisations and the personnel interviewed is included in Appendix 7.

The interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 1 1/4 hours. 13 of the interviews were conducted by telephone, but in 2 cases the interviews were conducted in person.

The findings from the interviews were reported in chapters 10 and 15.

7 Analysis of a sample (16) of LLSC Delivery Plans for Adult Literacy and Numeracy

A sample of 16 Delivery Plans for Adult Literacy and Numeracy (sometimes known as Basic Skills Action Plans) were analysed. The sample was selected in order to be geographically representative, i.e. at least one Delivery Plan for Adult Literacy and Numeracy from each Government Office Region (GOR) was selected as part of the sample. The sample also included a number of LLSCs based in rural areas.

The Delivery Plans for Adult Literacy and Numeracy were analysed in order to assess how LLSCs saw the place and contribution of family literacy, language and numeracy programmes within adult literacy and numeracy provision.

The main findings of the analysis were reported in chapter 8.

8 Analysis of a sample of 20 Adult Learning Plans

NIACE's research undertook to review a sample of 20 Adult Learning Plans. This was in order to identify providers' strategic and operational intentions with regard to both FLLN and wider family learning.

The research team was able to pool resources with another NIACE project in order to draw on the expertise of its regional agents and that of a Senior Development Officer to analyse a total of 39 Adult Learning Plans.

The findings of the analysis for FLLN were included in chapter 8. For wider family learning, the findings were included in chapter 13.

9 Visits to a sample of 12 providers

One of the main research tools in the evaluation involved visiting a sample of 12 providers of family programmes to view LSC funded family programmes in practice. These visits were undertaken so that NIACE could observe FLLN and wider family learning in action in order to obtain additional insights into how programmes are organised, planned and delivered. The visits also provided an important opportunity to speak directly to learners, tutors and teachers and family learning co-ordinators.

Despite the very short time scale for evaluation, NIACE was able to organise these visits, owing largely to the goodwill of host LEAs that took on the role of organising them. As NIACE has no mandatory authority to visit LEAs as part of this evaluation, LEAs generously invited the research team to visit the LEA as their guest.

Selection of provision to visit

LEAs are the main recipients of funding for family programmes and are therefore the key players in the delivery of FLLN and wider family learning provision. Therefore it was decided to use LEAs as a gateway to view provision.

It was also decided early on in the evaluation that a range of LEAs and provision should be visited. The overriding principles used to select the visits were that the LEAs chosen should be:

- Geographically representative;
- Reflect the range of LEA types and delivery models/partnerships;
- Include a range of FLLN and wider family learning provision;
- Reflect a range of funding (from the highest to the lowest funded).

As an ‘expert group’, the steering group was asked to suggest a range of LEAs that NIACE could consider for a possible visit. It was planned that NIACE would analyse the responses received, including the pro-formas on the key features of the LEA and its family programmes provision, and select a sample that met the features above. More detailed criteria (see below) were to be used to select the sample in order to meet the selection principles outlined above.

This was seen as a valid method to select a sample of 12 LEAs to visit. Random selection of LEAs was thought to be unacceptable given that such a small random sample was highly unlikely to meet the selection principles outlined above (for example, geographical representativeness). Contacting all 150 LEAs and asking them to volunteer for a potential visit and complete a pro-forma to provide NIACE with the information on which to base its selection was also assessed as not feasible. This was because the exercise would have a) interfered with the response rate to the LEA postal survey (given the short-time scale for the evaluation, it was not possible to alter when the postal survey was sent to LEAs) and b) taken too long to complete and would therefore have added significantly to the time scale for the evaluation

Given that the responses from the steering group did not yield enough suggestions on which to base a good selection, it was decided to approach the LEA representatives who attended the NIACE/ACLF “Family Learning and Intergenerational Learning Conference” which took place in London in late September 2002. This was seen as an

efficient and effective way of receiving details on a sufficient number of LEAs from which NIACE could select a good sample that met its selection principles and criteria.

From the LEAs that attended the conference, details on 20 LEAs who were agreeable to hosting and organising a visit were received. These LEAs were added to the 5 suggestions from the steering group. NIACE combined this with the information from the LSC and the BSA on funding allocations. LEAs were then selected on the basis of the following criteria:

Principle	Criteria
Geographically representative	One LEA from each Government Office Region 2 LEAs from London 5 urban LEAs 5 rural (or mostly rural) LEAs
Range of LEA types Range of delivery models/ Partnerships	4 shire, 4 unitary and 4 metropolitan LEAs 6 direct LEA providers 6 LEAs either sub-contracting or working in partnership with the FE sector 6 LEAs working in partnership with the voluntary sector 6 LEAs working in partnership with schools 6 LEAs working in partnership with early years
Range of FLLN and Wider family learning provision	6 LEAs running <i>Family Literacy</i> and <i>Family Numeracy</i> courses (the courses aimed at the most disadvantaged LEAs) 6 language or ESOL courses Above partnership criteria – FE sector voluntary, schools, early years – also designed so that a range of provision in a range of settings could be visited
Range of funding	6 from the top 75 funded LEAs and 6 from the bottom 75 funded LEAs of each of the main funding streams, i.e. BSA <i>Additional Fund</i> , LSC <i>Standards Fund for FLLN</i> and LSC <i>Family Learning</i> . In addition, patterns between funding streams were analysed in order to select a mix of LEAs, e.g. some that were highly funded from the BSA's <i>Additional Fund</i> but received a relatively low amount from the LSC <i>Standards Fund for FLLN</i> (e.g. Plymouth) and LEAs that received a high amount of FLLN funding but a very low amount of wider family learning funding (e.g. Sheffield).

These criteria were mostly met. However, in a few cases NIACE could not visit its first choice of LEA because the LEA did not have the capacity to support a visit or

because the LEA did not get back to NIACE with a date for the visit in time. In these cases, NIACE selected alternative LEAs with similar characteristics.

LEA Visits

The following LEAs were visited as part of the evaluation:

LEA	Government Office Region (GOR)	LEA type
1 Bristol	South West	Urban
2 Plymouth	South West	Urban
3 Kent	South East	Rural/some urban
4 Camden	London	London urban
5 Newham	London	London urban
6 Liverpool	North West	Urban
Wirral	North West	Urban
7 Sheffield	Yorkshire & Humberside	Urban
8 Lincolnshire	East Midlands	Rural
9 Stoke-on-Trent	West Midlands	Urban
10 Essex	East of England	Rural/some urban
11 Oxfordshire	South East	Rural
12 Durham	North East	Rural/some urban

Notes: Liverpool and Wirral were ½ day visits making one full day visit

Ten of the 12 visits took place in the last week of November and the first week of December 2002. The visit to Essex LEA took place in late January, while the visit to Durham took place in early February.

NIACE encouraged LEAs to arrange for a mixture of standard and more innovative provision to be visited. However, the provision that NIACE visited was necessarily influenced by what was offered by LEAs to learners during the period that the visits took place and also by the availability of NIACE consultants.

On average, two projects or programmes were visited per LEA visit (some LEA visits in urban areas allowed time for a visit to an additional project). It should be noted that a slightly larger proportion of visits were made to FLLN provision. Appendix 6 provides details on the LEAs and programmes visited, as do the research findings which were reported in chapters 9 and 14.

The visits were undertaken by experienced NIACE consultants (including two NIACE regional agents). These consultants were selected on the basis of their expertise and understanding of the development and delivery of FLLN and wider family learning programmes and on the high quality of their work on other NIACE research projects which involved field visits such as ‘Step into Learning’. Consultants attended a half-day training event at which they received full briefing on the evaluation and the visits and received ‘refreshers’ on the Adult Core Curricula and the National Curriculum for children. The proformas that were to be used to collect information during the visits were also discussed at length.

Two main pro-formas were designed for the visits; one for FLLN provision and a separate one for wider family learning provision. A further two pro-formas were also

used; a 'What Learners Say' pro-forma of questions to use when talking to learners, and a pro-forma for consultants who met with head teachers. These pro-formas were based on the criteria used to observe provision in the 'Common Inspection Framework' and OFSTED's 'Family Learning: a Survey of Current Practice'. They were designed in consultation with colleagues with experience in family programmes and educational research in order to offer consistency in data gathering and analysis.

It can be argued that inconsistencies in the data may arise when observations are made by different people. Their diverse knowledge, understanding and experiences are likely to influence how they engage in the research process. On the other hand it might be suggested that using one person, in order to address inconsistencies, provides a limited view and is influenced by the subjectivity of the individual concerned. Using several experienced consultants meant that where common practices and issues arose and effective practices identified, they were more likely to be valid. This approach strengthened the research methodology rather than weakened it.

The pro-formas were collated and coded according to their FLLN and wider family learning status. FLLN pro-formas were divided into literacy, language and numeracy groupings before being analysed by the research team. Wider family learning pro-forma were similarly divided into ICT and other wider family learning programmes.

It should be noted that due to very serious illness by one of its consultants, NIACE only has completed pro-formas from visits to 10 LEAs (information from visits that took place in Camden and Plymouth is missing). The findings from the visits to FLLN provision were reported in chapter 9 FLLN in practice. The findings from the visits to wider family learning were reported in chapter 14 wider family learning in practice.

10 Conduct focus groups with staff

NIACE undertook to conduct four focus groups with staff involved in providing and delivering family programmes. Four focus groups were held during November and December 2002; one in Chelmsford in the East of England, one at Liverpool University in the North West, one in Coventry in the Midlands and one at the London Language and Literacy Unit (LLLU). Furthermore, NIACE ran 2 extra focus groups at the Autumn Family Learning Network Conference. All of the focus groups were well attended by practitioners from the LEA, FE college and voluntary sectors who were working in either FLLN and/or wider family learning roles. Practitioners included family learning co-ordinators, basic skills co-ordinators and tutors.

The main aims of the focus groups were to:

- Identify and discuss important issues in the delivery, planning and co-ordination of family learning activities;
- Identify what is working and what is not working in the field;
- Identify the concerns and needs of practitioners.

Questions and discussions were constructed around 5 key themes:

- Training and Support;

- *Skills for Life*;
- National Curriculum and Schools;
- Progression (learners);
- Partnership working.

Participants were asked to clearly state whether their comments were directed at FLLN or wider family learning provision. The findings from the focus groups were carefully analysed by the research team in line with this approach.

The main findings from the focus groups were included in chapters 11-12 (FLLN) and 16-17 (wider family learning).

11 Family Questionnaire

One of the main purposes of the questionnaire was to give families participating in FLLN and wider family learning a voice in the evaluation.

It was originally intended that the questionnaire would be distributed to 100 families. This was intended to give data that provided an indication of the impact on families and individuals from participating in family programmes, rather than a sample size that was large enough to draw rigorous conclusions.

It was also originally intended to sample an equal proportion of families who were participating in FLLN and wider family learning and to achieve a good mix within those broad programme areas. However, it was later decided to refocus the family questionnaire on families participating in FLLN provision as the voice of families participating in wider family learning was well covered by the analysis of learning journeys (see 5.12 below).

101 responses to the questionnaire were received from families participating in a representative range of FLLN programmes (excluding workshops).

The results were reported in chapter 7 of the report.

12 Literature review

The British Library catalogue was searched using key words relating to family literacy, language and numeracy and wider family learning. Members of the steering group for the evaluation (the “expert group”) were also asked for any suggestions on key pieces of literature to include in the review. The research team also used their own existing knowledge of key pieces of literature to add to the list.

This resulted in a large list of potentially useful literature. In order to slim the review down to a manageable task, literature was selected for review on the basis of three key criteria; authority, relevance and recent date of publication.

The results of the literature review are reported in Appendix 5.

13 Analysis of a sample of 34 written accounts of ‘learning journeys’ provided by families

34 written accounts of “learning journeys” provided by families who entered NIACE’s Annual Family Learning Award (2001) were analysed. These statements, written by families themselves, provided information on what families experienced as a result of participating in family learning and what they intend to do next. The analysis was based on identifying common themes in the written accounts.

The results of the analysis are reported in Appendix 8.

APPENDIX 4 SKILLS FOR FAMILIES

Skills for Families is a new ABSSU and LSC initiative undertaken by a consortium led by the BSA. It is part of *Skills for Life*, the national strategy for improving adult literacy, language and numeracy. The programme, working with nine pilot projects in each of the regions, aims to develop effective, strategic approaches to embedding FLLN. It will mean ensuring that all FLLN provision is using the new *Skills for Life* learning infrastructure and that this becomes embedded across the LEA, LA, EYDCP and LLSC.

The *Skills for Families* programme will pilot local infrastructures with the aim of securing coherent planning, funding and development of FLLN at LEA/LLSC level. The initiative will run in 9 LEA/LLSC areas, one in each of the government office regions, and will last for one year. Its findings will be disseminated during the programme and after funding finishes.

The programme aims to build on existing research and evaluation undertaken by the BSA and the LSC, including this evaluation. Each of the nine pilots will consist of four strands:

- Piloting local infrastructures for planning and managing FLLN;
- Development and testing a range of delivery models, using LSC funding and based on the *Skills for Life* learning infrastructure and the National Curriculum, to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents and children;
- Teacher training and capacity building for schools and other organisations working with families, linking closely with the ABSSU's teacher training strategy;
- Dissemination of effective practice to other LEAs, LLSCs, voluntary organisations and other relevant agencies.

Projects will set challenging targets that align with *Skills for Life* targets, the Primary and Early Years strategies. They will ensure that progress towards targets is supported by individual LEA/LLSC action plans. A range of learner data as well as other information will also be collected, both for monitoring and evaluation, and in order to disseminate good practice.

LEA/LLSC partnerships will be expected to:

- Ensure that all schools in the LEA/LLSC area are aware of *Skills for Families*;
- Pilot at least four models of delivery (as described by the BSA) as well as delivering tried and tested FLLN programmes;

- Engage 300 families in programmes and ensure that 35 % of parents/carers take the National Literacy or Numeracy Tests or complete the entry level qualification;
- Ensure that each partnership has registered Test centres;
- Deliver a programme of capacity-building for up to 25% or up to 50 schools, whichever is greater, in each LEA/LLSC area, and up to 20 voluntary or community-based organisations working with families;
- Provide training in screening, piloting the revised FLLN screening tool, when available, for 100 staff and frontline staff in schools and other settings;
- Facilitate FLLN training for 30 teachers to enable them to achieve new Level 3 or Level 4 qualifications, by July 2004;
- Develop a range of FLLN promotional materials for LEAs, schools, voluntary organisations and providers;
- Develop a range of promotional materials to encourage families to take up FLLN learning opportunities.

APPENDIX 4 LITERATURE REVIEW

This appendix presents a selective review of the literature on family programmes.

FLLN provision

There is a substantial volume of literature on the family and its role in the development of literacy, language and numeracy. This section examines the literature on the family's role in the acquisition of literacy, language and numeracy, and the evaluation of FLLN programmes.

A comprehensive review of research on literacy and parental involvement is that of the National Literacy Trust (2001), which considers evidence on parental involvement and literacy achievement for children from birth to the age of 16. While acknowledging the methodological problems in relating parental influences to other influences such as socio-economic status, the report maintains that 'there are many indicators in research that parents can positively influence their children's literacy.' The report stresses that early intervention in the family is needed to prevent disparities in performance between children on entering school. However, some interventions aimed at parents may serve to exclude the very families who would benefit.

Another review of the literature in this area is that of Brooks et al (2001), which found that adults involved in family literacy have higher attendance, retention and completion rates than adults in general provision and that their progress to further study and employment is high. For these families, there were gains in parents' ability to help their children, as well as gains for the children.

The importance of beginning reading and writing skills at home and the key role parents have as their child's first educator has been described by Snow, Syla and Dickinson in a range of reports, books and articles. Syla et al (2003) report in the EPPE Project (the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education) on the importance of the quality of the home learning environment for pre-school children. Snow's work with Burns and Griffin, *Starting out Right: a Guide to promoting children's reading success* (1999), stresses the importance of teacher-parent relationships too. "Parent-teacher relationships are very important for children's optimal progress in school."

The OFSTED survey of family learning (2000), offers a measured critique of family learning, the majority of which was family literacy and the emerging family numeracy. In 2000, all 150 local authorities had bid for and taken up their family literacy allocation from the *Standards Fund*, sometimes supported by additional funding such as *Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)*. The survey found the introduction of the *National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies* in primary schools tended to overshadow the importance of the family learning context for effective pre-school learning. (The most recent findings from the NIACE research found that respondents now express similar concerns regarding the adult core curricula.)

The OFSTED survey found that in a small number of local authorities, family learning offered good value for money but that in the remainder it did not. Some of

the reasons cited were the reluctance to develop strategies to reach learners most in need, and the failure to track “immediate or short-term gains over time; an evaluation of family learning is long overdue.” The survey also reported the improved competence of adults in literacy, numeracy and parenting, increased confidence in contact with schools and progression for over 50 per cent of participants to further education or better jobs. However, when commenting on the quality of teaching the evidence was that teachers found joint sessions challenging and could not respond adequately or consistently to the disparate needs of adults and children. The teachers were described as competent in their own field but poorly informed about the approaches of the colleague with whom they were working. The joint planning frequently lacked a clear focus on realistic and measurable objectives for adults and children. This was highlighted as an issue for attention at service level. At national level, the survey recommended an end to the pattern of short term funding and an evaluation of the ways in which family learning could contribute to changing attitudes to learning in a community.

The policy framework for improving adult literacy, language and numeracy is set out in the Government’s *Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills* (2001). The development of a national strategy was prompted by the Moser Report, *A Fresh Start*, (1999) which recommended the expansion of the programmes and further exploration of effective models of FLLN (see previous Chapter for a full discussion of the Moser Report).

The *Skills for Life* strategy identified parents as one of its key target groups and sets an ambitious target of 60,000 parents to improve their skills by 2004. The overall *Skills for Life* target is equally ambitious. The Government expects to see 1.5 million adults improve their literacy or numeracy skills by at least one level, achieved through the National Test or a recognised accreditation, by 2007. *Skills for Life* introduced to adult literacy, language and numeracy a new infrastructure including a new National Test, standards, curricula, assessment, accreditation, subject specifications for tutors and

Family literacy provision has also been boosted by the Government policy for out of school provision, set out in a ‘*National Framework for Study Support*’ (1997). Walton (1998) provides a guide to practice in developing family literacy in this context.

The role of the family in developing literacy is explored by Hannon (1995) and Hannon and Nutbrown (1997). They show how the home environment is rich with opportunities for developing literacy. Barton and Hamilton (1998) argue that unless family learning initiatives give equal recognition to school and home literacy, literacy practices in the home will be subordinated to an external view of literacy. Finlay (1999), writing of her experience of tutoring a group of vulnerable young mothers on a housing estate, argues that functional literacy by itself cannot meet the needs of such learners. She describes how she devised a curriculum that offered greater scope for expressive writing and other freely chosen literacy activities.

The importance of the family role in developing children’s literacy, numeracy and language is also emphasised in a more recent national evaluation. *Watching and Learning, the final report of the external evaluation of England’s National Literacy*

and Numeracy Strategies (2003) argues that schools alone cannot bring about significant change in literacy, language and numeracy. “Family literacy and numeracy programmes have been funded as well to help parents improve their own skills. In spite of these efforts, the potential contribution of parents to their children’s learning has not been realised.”

Programme evaluation is generally strong relating to parental involvement in learning, and specifically in relation to literacy and numeracy in the primary years. The benefits of the Basic Skills Agency’s family literacy programme in terms of improved attainment, retention and progression has been well documented (Brooks et al, 1996, Brooks et al, 1997). The NFER “Family Literacy Works” (1996) evaluation of the BSA demonstration programmes found that the BSA’s aims – to boost children’s literacy, parents’ ability to help their children and parents’ literacy – were fulfilled. In terms of benefits to parents, attendance rates were consistently high, parents improved their average reading score and 95 per cent of parents attained partial or full accreditation of a level of Wordpower. Over half of the parents also reported a growth in confidence and over 80 per cent of parents also reported their intention to go on studying. Twelve weeks after the courses finished 70 per cent were actually doing so. This evaluation highlighted the need to track parents effectively and record progression outcomes. The courses were also found to improve parents’ communication skills, for example, in speaking to their child’s teacher. This evaluation, together with the evaluation of practice in local programmes (Brooks et al, 1997) found the importance of joint planning by teachers with school and post 16 experience on the intensive programmes, crèche facilities and reflective teaching. Furthermore, the length and intensity of the longer programmes was seen as key to the scope for making progress.

A further study confirmed that FLLN approaches are effective with groups whose first language is not English (Brooks et al, 1999). The BSA commissioned the NFER to evaluate three alternative models:

- working with linguistic minority families where the parents had literacy, language and numeracy needs and the children were aged three to six
- working with parents with literacy, language and numeracy needs and their children in Year 4
- working with parents with literacy, language and numeracy needs, and their children in Year 7.

In the linguistics minority model, the evaluation found that parents significantly improved their literacy in English, parents gained confidence both generally and in their command of spoken and written English and many of the parents planned to go to further courses. Brooks found that two of the critical success factors in the model’s success were the calibre of the staff (and especially their close co-operation and joint planning) and the quality of the teaching offered. The possible barriers to success of the provision included the inclusion of accreditation and assessment which were sometimes felt to be inappropriate or too demanding.

The BSA’s own evaluation (1998) established that there are similar benefits for participants in their family numeracy programmes. The most recent evaluation by Brooks (2002) for the BSA, of the *Keeping up with the Children* initiative, found that the programme was successful in recruiting people who had not studied recently.

Thirty eight per cent of parents had last attended a course more than 10 years before. This may be considered particularly significant within the current *Skills for Life* strategy and the need to recruit learners who may not acknowledge their literacy, language and numeracy needs. Parents reported increased confidence in their own educational attainment and this was supported by field work. Many parents were keen to progress to further courses and many became more involved with their children's school. The strongest themes in the parents' views on this success were the group dynamics, their learning in general and learning to help their children with a fair number of comments focusing on the specific literacy and numeracy content. The evaluation concluded that "Family literacy and numeracy have a clear contribution to make to raising standards of both parents and children, and thus contributing to the Government's wider goals of social inclusion and widening participation."

The *Sure Start* programme, evaluated by Ball (2002) threw up a number of issues about staff shortage, which are relevant to the work of this evaluation. Ball found that "partners have complained that *Sure Start* has poached trained staff" and "there aren't enough skilled people to go round". The NIACE audit of *Sure Start* literacy, language and numeracy activity (2002) also found that some *Sure Start* staff had literacy, language and numeracy needs themselves. A tension was identified between the ethos of *Sure Start*, allowing parents to take the initiative, and the need to identify parents with literacy, language and numeracy needs. The majority of programmes reported that, although a literacy, language and numeracy need amongst parents had been identified, they waited for parents to come forward for help. Staff reported that they gave ad hoc help with reading and writing tasks. The audit identified a wide range of *Sure Start* activities where reading, writing, spoken language and numeracy were a part of provision, few could be described as literacy, language and numeracy provision as such.

Wider family learning

Overviews of family learning are less well represented in the research than are the studies of its component elements. However, a good introduction to family learning is provided by *Riches Beyond Price: Making the Most of Family Learning* (Alexander and Clyne, 1995). Seven categories of family learning are identified, including those in which 'the family' is the content for learning and others where the family is a context for learning. The book argues that families and the organisations that support them constitute a 'foundation sector' that should be adequately funded at local and national level. Alexander develops his argument in *Family Learning: the Foundation of Effective Learning* (1997), which outlines a long-term strategy for a multi-agency approach to working with families. Haggart (2000) examines family learning in the light of recent policy and funding initiatives, including the Government's mantra of joined up thinking and practice. Research by the Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning programme (2001) explored family learning from the perspective of families themselves.

Research into lifelong learning has explored several issues relating to families and learning. The National Advisory Group for Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning (1999) argues that the learning undertaken by families is a powerful means of illustrating its lifelong role and nature. Spurling and Smith (2000) explore the relationship between an individual's motivation to learn for personal development and

the family context. They suggest that although there may be some tension between an individual's drive and his/her family's motivation, nonetheless there are benefits in enlisting the family as a 'learning organisation'.

The Government's priority of widening participation in lifelong learning has focused attention on hard-to-reach groups of learners. Family learning has been highlighted as a strategy for reaching some of these groups. Brooks et al (2001) found that the main reason for parents joining family literacy programmes was the desire to help their children. McGivney (1999a) shows that fathers have been drawn into learning through a desire to help their children to learn. Whether older learners, a group adversely affected by changes in the funding environment since 1992, are similarly motivated to participate in order to help grandchildren, does not seem to have been researched. Good practice in reaching minority families is described in Bastiani's evaluation (2000) of the AMBER project and his investigation of home-school work in multicultural settings (1997).

Research into home school community relations is interested in the nature and value of the school's relationships with parents and its community. A useful introductory book is that of Ball (1998), which provides a broad overview of the relationships between schools and their communities. She suggests a typology of seven kinds of links between home and school, such as the parent governor who gets involved in the management of the school, or a more ephemeral link such as a letter sent home with the pupil. She argues that a holistic approach to work with families would help to win back pupils who are disaffected and at risk of social exclusion.

Ball's typology is the starting point for a review of the literature on home-school-community links by Dyson and Robson (1999). They found that the literature evaluating these links was overwhelmingly local and small scale with an absence of any longitudinal or national study. They argue for a proper research programme to assess the long-term benefits. Hallgarten (2000) investigates how effective two-way communication can be established in schools and how schools can develop parental involvement and support home learning. He argues that policies which expect more of parents will over time discriminate against those children whose parents do not have the resources, emotional or material, to respond. Family learning, he cautions, should not be seen as a 'magic bullet'.

In a recent collection of essays about Scotland, Innes (1999) argues that there is a new agenda for schools to attend to, one in which family learning is promoted over the long-term. A framework devised by MacBeath (1997) for school self-evaluation included home-school links as one of the ten indicators of a good school. Since the introduction of home-school agreements in 1997, researchers have been interested in their effect on parents' and pupils' attitudes. Ouston and Hood (2000) found that there was a fair degree of cynicism about the agreements from all, parents and young people alike.

Home school links in multi-cultural settings are examined by Bastiani (1997), who concludes that schools that can involve their minority communities make an enormous contribution to the confidence of parents who want to help but face barriers relating to language and culture. In a fascinating study of supplementary (or Saturday) schools, Bastiani (2000) shows that it is their very position on the margins

of statutory schooling, free of the compulsion of maintained schools, that give them such energy. The schools have the quality of a large extended family and are well supported by the community. He argues that maintained schools should do more to foster links with supplementary schools and to learn from their successes.

Alternative visions of schools include Alexander's (2001) who proposes the 'citizenship school', where young people and their parents experience a democratic ethos and participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives. The Government's own vision for schools is found in its Schools Plus PAT report (2000) which promotes the idea of a full-service school where parents would be actively involved in their own learning in the school and would have access to school resources for out-of-hours learning alongside their children.

The literature on parental involvement in children's learning is extensive. There is a large body of research to demonstrate the impact on children's achievement of their parents' involvement, whether it is paired reading, play, book sharing, or support for the child's homework. (Wolfendale and Bastiani, 2000; Wade and Moore, 2000; Bastiani, 1997; McCormick, 1999; Innes, 1999; Bastiani, 1999; Tizard and Hughes, 1984). Conversely, there is evidence that lack of involvement is correlated with poor literacy skills in children (Parsons and Bynner, 2000)

Programmes like *Sure Start* and *Early Excellence* that intervene early in family life to encourage parental involvement are based on practice in the US in the 1960's. Longitudinal studies of the Head Start programmes show that the children of families involved in the pre-school programmes continued to show benefits into adulthood in terms of educational attainment, employment, mental health, and positive social behaviour (McKey et al, 1985) Programmes were especially effective where two generations of the family took part in the programme. Multi-faceted programmes combining health, education and other outcomes were shown to be most effective.

The research team at Pen Green Family Centre, where services for families are fully integrated, has produced a wealth of material (Whalley, 1997; Whalley and Arnold, 1997; Whalley and the Pen Green Team, 2001), to demonstrate how parents and family centre staff can work together. Particularly interesting has been the participative research with parents. This study identified eight effective teaching strategies that parents routinely use with their children at home. By involving families in the research, staff and parents were able to build on home learning in the nursery, customising care and education for individual children. At the same time, parents were empowered through realising their skills in promoting learning.

Involving parents in the learning of older pupils has been seen as more difficult than involving them in primary schools. Capper, Downes and Jenkinson (1998) look at effective strategies for reaching parents of older pupils.

In terms of social inclusion, there is considerable evidence that family and community learning can encourage individuals to remain active in social and economic life. The preliminary evidence (Pascal et al, 1999) from the evaluation of eight of the twenty-nine *Early Excellence* Centres suggests that they can break cycles of deprivation by building trust, mutuality and understanding, empowering parents to develop their abilities and become more active participants in the local community.

OECD research (1999) cited the example of Priory Primary School in Dudley as a model for addressing social exclusion. The school serves an estate characterised by multiple deprivation, as evidenced in the high rate of long-term unemployment and higher than average rate of free school meals. In 1993 a new head teacher launched the Priory Partnership Project to raise pupil achievement by involving parents in their children's learning. The research documents the wider benefits of the partnership in terms of the whole community's involvement and raised aspirations. The research notes that "community and individual benefits came in equal measure from the work". Furthermore,

Long-standing patterns have been broken at Priory Primary, to create a virtuous rather than vicious circle. The route to community school status, with a fully-fledged adult education service may have been a serendipitous outcome of efforts to raise pupil standards, but it is all the better for that and is a model that is worth closer attention.

There is considerable evidence to show that family learning can serve as a trigger for further education and training, frequently leading to employment. (McGivney, 1999a; McGivney, 1999b; Brooks et al, 1996; Brooks et al, 1997; Brooks et al, 2001; OFSTED 2000). Frequently, but not exclusively, employment is in child development and social care related jobs. Parents who volunteer in schools and family centres through family learning are frequently encouraged to develop their interest in child development. Where centres offer integrated services including good advice and guidance, such as at the Pen Green Centre for under 5's and their families, progression to qualifications and work placements is frequent (1997).

By recognising the skills and knowledge involved in parenting and family relationships, providers send a powerful message that can boost parents' self-esteem. Liverpool Hope University's joint honours degree in Family Studies enables parents to draw upon their experience of family life to gain a qualification that has currency in the job market, particularly in the fields of social regeneration, community work and care (Gaunt, 2000). In the new 'learning beyond the classroom' culture described by Bentley (1998), families and the community are important keepers of distributed intelligence, supplementing the taught curriculum in formal institutions.

Learner perspectives on wider family learning are under-represented in the literature, and where they are voiced the learners are generally adults. In *Parental Perspectives of Family Learning* (2002), Angela Brassett-Grundy presents the findings of qualitative research based on focus groups and interviews with participants and non-participants in family learning. Both groups of parents recognised the importance of family learning, though the obstacles to learning that non-participants perceived indicate that high levels of support are needed to engage non-learner parents and their families in family learning. A recent valuable publication that captures the voice of parents is that of the London Language and Literacy Unit's *On the Road: Journeys in Family Learning* (2002). This edition of the testimonies of parents who participated in the Unit's family learning programmes since its inception in 1985 documents, in their own words, the wide range of benefits experienced by families as a result of their participation.

Evaluation of family learning programmes is characterised by ‘unevenness’, even ‘serious limitations’ as noted in a helpful review by Dyson and Robson (1999). While their research focuses primarily on home-school-community links, some of their findings could be applied to family learning as a whole. They note that there is ‘a reliance on local evaluations of small-scale projects and an absence of wide-ranging programmatic evaluations.’ They suggest that this is due to the fact that programmes involving parents and the community are generally ‘short-term, locally determined projects, with minimal intervention from central Government.’

Programme evaluation is generally stronger relating to parental involvement in learning. The *SHARE* parental involvement programme has been evaluated at KS1 (Bastiani, 1999) and KS2 (Lewis, 2000). These evaluations confirm that parental involvement has multiple benefits, but recommend that key issues such as accreditation of adult learning require further work. CEDC has evaluated its programmes targeted at carers (CEDC, 2001) and fathers as readers with their children (CEDC, 2000b) and fathers as ‘active dads’, (CEDC, 2000a).

A longitudinal evaluation of the Peers Early Education Partnership (PEEP), an early intervention programme in Oxfordshire, is currently underway. The interim report (Brooks et al, 1998) found that families benefited from the diverse approaches adopted at community level to reach parents in disadvantaged areas

Dyson and Robson (2000) argue that a more coherent approach is required into home-school-community relationships, and again this applies to family learning generally. They call for more substantial research studies, in terms of ‘scale, scope and depth’. The evaluations of *Sure Start* and the *Early Excellence Centres* will, to some extent, answer this need. Certainly the initial research undertaken to establish the model for evaluating the early excellence centres (Pascal et al, 1999) has demonstrated the need for family learning, the effectiveness of integrating services in a family centre and the possibility of using performance indicators that are sensitive to the family and the community.

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APPENDIX 3

OVERVIEW OF PROVISION VISITED DURING THE LEA VISITS

This appendix provides an overview of the provision visited by NIACE consultants during the LEA visits. (The draft final report includes details on nine of the 12 visits. Details on the remaining 3 visits will be included in the final report.)

FAMILY LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY (FLLN)

Literacy

LEA	COURSE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	SETTING	FUNDING	PARTNERS
Bristol	Language and Literacy 26 hours	Family Literacy course (13 weeks x 2 hours)	Parents only, children only, then Joint	Primary School	LSC Family Literacy– with match funding from Bristol Community Education Service	Library Service
Kent	Family Literacy 72 hours	Family Literacy OCN succeeding generations level 2	Parents only, then Joint	School – early years section	LSC via adult education, early years project (funded by social services) for staff and creches	LEA adult education, teacher, social services
Wirral	Family Literacy 72 hours	Family Literacy course (approx 12 weeks)	Joint	Primary School	LSC, BSA	LEA, School, College
Lincolnshire	Family Literacy 60 hours	Mapped to adult core curriculum but not strictly BSA model (12 weeks x 5 hours)	Parents only, then Joint	Community Centre	LSC via LEA, additional funding via LA (ESF) for accommodation, travel, childcare.	Group of 6 rural school head teachers secured ESF funding, LEA FL co-ordinator, tutor
Lincolnshire	Family Literacy 60 hours	Mapped to adult core curriculum not strictly BSA model (20 weeks x 3 hours)	Parents only, then Joint	School	ALP budget via LSC, ESF funding for teacher cover	LEA adult education (main funding), schools (teacher, premises)

London Borough of Newham	Family Literacy Project 60 hours	BSA model Family Literacy Project (10 weeks x 6 hours)	Joint	Primary School	LSC (Standards Fund), LEA (NewCEYs)	NewCEYs, School
Sheffield	Keeping up with the children	KUC 24 (12 weeks x 2 hours)	Joint	Primary School	SRB5, Business Links (via WH Smith), Community Trust, BSA, NOF	REAL Project, SRB5, LEA, Business Link
Sheffield	Family Literacy 90 hours	BSA model (20 weeks x 3 hours)	Joint	Infant School	BSA additional fund	LEA, College, School, literacy tutor, home-school link co-ordinator
Sheffield	Keeping up with the children 24 hours	Using own materials, but following children's learning	Parents only then joint	Infant School		
Essex	All day breakfast club	Family literacy (open-ended)	Parents then joint	Community College	SRB, LSC	Library & job centre (for delivery)
Liverpool	Working with bilingual families	Variety of courses for bilingual parents (series of workshops from initial to advanced during 1 year)	Parents only	Primary School	LSC, BSA, SRB, Standards Fund, EAZ, Equal Lazer	Liverpool
Durham	Family Literacy 80 hours	Family Literacy course (10 weeks x 8 hours)	Joint & parents only	Primary School	LSC, SRB	LEA, School

Numeracy

LEA	COURSE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	SETTING	FUNDING	PARTNERS
Bristol	Count Us In 90 hours	Family Numeracy course (60 hours contact time/30 hours private study)	Parents only, children only, then Joint	Primary School	LSC Family Literacy/Numeracy funding (ex-Standards Fund) – matched funding from Community Education	EMAS (Ethnic Minorities Achievement Service)
Kent	Family Numeracy 45 hours	Family Numeracy using SHARE module and materials (15 weeks x 3 hours)	Joint	Primary School	BSA additional fund, LSC standards fund via LEA	LEA adult education, School, BSA
Oxfordshire	Family Numeracy 45 hours	Family Numeracy (15 weeks x 3 hours)	Joint	Primary School	BSA, LSC, Standards Fund	LEA, School
Oxfordshire	Keeping up with the children 12 hours	Using own materials – targeted by LEA	Parents only	Primary School	BSA	LEA, teacher/tutor liaison
Stoke-on-Trent	Family Learning (numeracy)	Family Numeracy course (10 weeks)	Parents only then joint	Primary School	LEA, BSA, KUC fund	LEA, School, College
Stoke-on-Trent	Family Learning (numeracy)	Family Numeracy course (10 weeks x 2 hours)	Parents only	Community Centre	SRB, LEA, Sure Start, LSC	Sure Start, Community Centre, LEA, College
Stoke-on-Trent	Family Numeracy	Family Numeracy course (10 weeks)	Parents only then joint	Primary School	LSC, LEA, BSA, KUC fund	LEA, School, College

WIDER FAMILY LEARNING

LEA	COURSE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	SETTING	FUNDING	PARTNERS
Bristol	Family Talk 20 hours	Parents share ways of making communication fun (10 weeks x 2 hours)	Parents only then Joint	Nursery School	LSC	Speech Therapists designed course OCN accredited training for others to deliver
Oxfordshire	Parent Partnership 20 hours	Looking at code of practice around Special Educational Needs	Parents only	Family Centre	LSC	WEA, Pupil Services
Sheffield	Family Learning Level 1 or 2	WEA family learning course for parents	Parents only	Infant School	WEA via LSC	Local authority, WEA, School
Essex	Pre-school workshop (open-ended programme)	Play and Learn	Joint	Community College	LSC	None
Durham	SHARE 28 hours	14 weeks x 2 hours	Parents only	Primary School	SRB	LEA, School

ICT (sub-group)

LEA	COURSE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	SETTING	FUNDING	PARTNERS
Bristol	Exploring computers together 24 hours	IT course for different levels of ability/background. Can gain OCN accreditation (12 weeks x 2 hours)	Parents only	School	LSC main programmes	EAZ Parent Co-ordinators, tutors
Wirral	Family ICT 30 hours	Parent and child work together to develop ICT skills (12 weeks x 2.5 hours)	Joint	Primary School	LSC, BSA	School, Wirral FL

LEA	COURSE	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	SETTING	FUNDING	PARTNERS
London Borough of Newham	Nursery Laptop Project 12 hours	Parents and children working on early years software using laptops (6 weeks x 2 hours)	Joint	Nursery School	BSA (purchased laptops), LSC (Standards Fund)	NewCEYs, Oasis Nursery School (accommodation)
London Borough of Newham	Family Computer Workshop 10 hours	Parents and Key Stage 2 children working in school's IT suite (5 weeks x 2 hours)	Joint	Primary School	LSC, NewCEYs (Newham Community Education & Youth Service)	NewCEYs, School

**APPENDIX 7
KEY PERSONNEL INTERVIEWED**

Organisation	Person Interviewed and Role
Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI)	Les August, Inspector and Manager, ACL Inspections
Community Education Development Centre (CEDC)	Teresa Johnson, SHARE manager
Pre School Learning Alliance (PSLA)	Margaret Lochrie, Director
DfES	Val Hewson, Access to Individual Learning Division
Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)	Maureen Banbury, Her Majesty's Inspector
Learning and Skills Council	Sue Yeomans, Programme Manager, Community Learning
Sure Start	Ashish Vadher, Programmes, Training, Quality & Process Team Leader
ROWA!	Carol Taylor, Director
Basic Skills Agency (BSA)	Sian Welby, Head of Family Programmes
Workers Educational Association (WEA)	Julian Harber, National Co-ordinator, <i>Helping in Schools</i> Programme
Campaign for Learning (CfL)	Heather Rutledge, Director, Midlands Region
National Literacy Trust (NLT)	Viv Bird, Project Director, Literacy and Social Inclusion
London Language and Literacy Unit (LLLU)	Foufou Savitsky
Sheffield University	Greg Brook, Research Fellow, School of Education, Sheffield University
Parenting Education and Support Forum	Mary Crowley, Chief Executive

Appendix 8

Family Learning Journeys

8.1 Introduction

This appendix presents the findings of an analysis of 34 learner testimonies that were submitted for the 2002 NIACE Family Learning Awards. After describing the nature of the sample, the findings of the analysis are presented in the form of major themes.

8.2 Key findings

- While male family members take a marginal role, family learning is still predominantly thought of as ‘women’s work’.
- The gaps and silences relating to ethnicity and social class point up areas where further research and development is required.
- An important quality of family learning is that it is framed as ‘helping’ and personalised as opposed to the more professional approaches of schooling and other services for families.
- Parents cite their children’s enjoyment as a major benefit of family learning.
- Family learning provides an opportunity to pass on a ‘love of learning’, seen by some parents to be just as important as passing on material wealth.
- Parents feel more able to manage educational change through participating in family learning.
- Parents feel the quality of their family relationships and experiences is enhanced through learning together.
- The enhanced confidence that parents report as a result of learning as a family may stem from the validation they receive of what they already know and in addition, the discovery of latent talents and interests.
- Family learning provides a valuable opportunity to boost self-esteem for many people who experienced schooling as a time of disappointment and failure.
- The benefits of family learning ‘ripple out’ beyond individuals and families to extended networks and communities.
- Many adults describe their future learning intentions in relationship to family events and other family members.

8.3 Evidence

The set of data pre-dated the evaluation. However, it was felt to be a valuable source of evidence because it presents the views of learners involved in family learning. This is a perspective that is generally under-represented in evaluation of, and research on, family learning. However the sample cannot be regarded as representative of families involved in learning for a number of reasons. First, these are families that felt their learning was significant enough to warrant an award, so they are unusual in that respect. The sample contains no families that were not satisfied with learning; nor are non-participants in family learning represented. Secondly, the testimonies were written by adults, i.e. parents and carers, while children were silent. In this respect it is not unlike many samples studied in family learning. Thirdly, the sample contains two clusters of submissions from parents who were part of groups encouraged to submit testimonies by their tutor. It is possible that the tutor influenced the group by

what was said about the awards. Fourthly, one of these groups of parents submitting testimonies contained a number of parents of special needs children, so this group of parents is well represented. Finally, while the amount of detail provided varies from one submission to another, on the whole they are short and are limited to answering the questions on the pro-forma. There is little contextual detail such as the writer's social class or ethnicity. One detail that can be taken as an indicator of the writers' social class is the level of literacy evident from the written submissions. A substantial majority of the writers have low levels of literacy. To summarise, the sample is best regarded as an opportunity sample, created outside the evaluation process. In the light of the reservations outlined above, the sample of testimonies has been analysed in terms of major themes. For the purposes of the evaluation, the submissions are referred to numerically (e.g. 'FL3') to protect the identity of the writers.

8.3.1 Major themes

8.3.1.1 Families as a site of learning

Women's work. The evidence from this sample strongly suggests that family learning is women's work. 21 out of 34 submissions represent exclusively mothers and children. This should come as no particular surprise since it is well known that women are the 'first point of contact' for children at school, most likely to be called on to help with homework, and more likely than men to take part in community-based adult learning activities. The role of men is secondary, as exemplified in FL1: 'My husband has helped out by supporting our learning together and assisting with creative ideas and practical work which may have been required'; or as a driver (FL33) taking his wife to university every day. The findings relating to the gendered nature of family learning can be related to other evidence reported here which suggests that family learning over-estimates formal as opposed to informal learning (see section 3.6) Overlooking informal learning may also overlook male roles in family learning.

Fathers' and grandfathers' role. Men appear as grandfathers or helpers but in only two cases are fathers actively involved in learning processes. In FL26 there is evidence of both parents being involved but in different ways. While Mum attends Family Numeracy (presumably daytime) both parents and 3 children attend a Community Learning Day. While Mum learns Computing in her own time, Dad learns Cookery. There is a sense here of learning as a shared activity but one in which not everyone does the same thing (a bit like TV watching). The important thing is that 'we all have fun'. FL 34 (the only entry obviously written by a man) is a grandfather who illustrates the intergenerational nature of family learning: 'Learning together as a family commenced whilst we absorbed and observed the Special Needs of our grandson only a few hours old weighing 3 1/4lbs with significant heart defects and diagnosed Down's Syndrome'.

Family cultural traditions. The material is silent about significant variables of ethnicity and social class (except in so far as social class can usually be 'read off' from literacy levels). Thus it does not reveal anything about specific kinds of family learning which may be related to specific ethnic groups (including learning related to religious beliefs and practices). One might, for example, have expected to hear about the involvement of ethnic minority families in supplementary schools (mentioned in

passing by FL25) or first language classes. The one mention of a different culture is of ‘Indian (sic) culture’ in a museum, hardly an encouraging way to approach a series of cultures which are ‘first’ cultures to many British children. One of the most significant aspects of this sample, then, may be the silences and omissions. This may have implications not just for family learning as a policy area but also the way in which NIACE’s family learning awards are promoted to learners and their tutors.

‘Helping’ - the language of family learning. Parent-child learning transactions are frequently described in terms of ‘helping’ as opposed to the more specialised language associated with formal education. FL8 refers to First Aid and Child Protection as ‘courses I did myself to help my children if needed’; FL9 ‘to help children in there (sic) school work’; FL11 ‘helping them with homework and general learning’; FL15 ‘I also help my children at home with their schooling’; FL19 was ‘delighted to be able to help my (child) with the skills that I learnt’.

Family learning as cultural capital. FL3 states very plainly that she had given her boys ‘a love of learning that will last them a lifetime’. This account can be seen as a model of the cultural impact of family learning, influencing not just the ‘cultural capital’ of the present generation but also that of the future.

8.3.1.2 The benefits for children

Learning is ‘fun’. Of course it would be better if the views of children themselves had been gathered, but instead the parents and carers described what they believe to be the main benefits for children. Parents report that children derive a great sense of enjoyment from family learning. This is evidenced by the following examples from the testimonies.

- FL21 – ‘(My son) Terry said he enjoyed finding out how adults learn and both children thought learning with mum was fun’
- FL22 - ‘sharing what we have made together is our biggest gain’
- FL26 – the community learning days have been fun and we all learnt something new’
- FL28 - ‘but most of all we learned to have fun’
- FL29 - ‘The children have enjoyed us showing interest in what they are doing in school and taking part in this course with them’
- FL30 – (A guided walk in the park) ‘is very educational for the children as well as being very enjoyable’.

Coping with educational change. One of the difficulties parents experience in trying to help children with school work is the impact of changing educational methods across generations. This must be especially acute when a child is special needs, as FL 22 comments: ‘I can help her to learn the same way she is being taught’.

The quality of family life. A number of respondents refer to the way that learning can enhance the quality of family life (though this expression would need explicating – is it spending time together, or what families do together, or the way adults treat children and vice-versa?)

- FL13 ‘We has (sic) a family know what we need from each other’
- FL20 – ‘Reading has become very important in our family we like to share books and read together at bedtime. We spend time together talking and listening which

- has helped the whole family ... The whole family see learning as a positive (sic) thing and like to visit the library. We go on educational trips together.’
- FL23 – ‘As a family we have undertaken tasks which we have never done before. We were able to work together as a team and give each other moral support.’

A fuller example is given in FL7: ‘By learning together it has brought us closer together as a family improving the ways in which we communicate with each other and provide support for each other. By learning together it has also helped us to recognise each others (sic) skills and abilities which we were not aware of before being involved in training and working (together). We have also learned that by working together we can achieve more than if we work on our own, but at the same time develop our individual skills.’

What is striking in this set of respondents is the absence of comment about playing computer games together, or watching TV programmes with educational or cultural content together, which are quite common family activities. There was, however, some reference to this in FL21 where quality of family life also refers forward to quality of life in adulthood. Her future learning plan is ‘To make enquiries about purchasing a computer, which with the right programme will give the family a greater chance to learn more and interact with other cultures. To continue learning to enable the family to have a better quality of life through learning.’

8.3.1.3 The benefits for adults

Confidence. In general, the adults completing these forms seemed more eager to talk about their children than themselves. There are exceptions. For example, FL19 wrote: ‘I am dyslexic and had no confidence in myself or the school system’. She now hopes to take a spelling course at college, while ‘my learning plan for the future is to get enough confidence to enrol on an access course.’ Similarly FL10 wrote: ‘helped gain confidence to help my children and help build on their education and support them and my own self esteem’; she hoped ‘to carry on doing these courses to help me and my children’. Confidence, then, is not a once-and-for-all issue but a question of taking small steps. Yet this rather cautious learner then wrote with perfect spelling: ‘I have a dream which I know with a good education I could achieve. I am going to be a nurse and maybe have a degree.’

Identifying latent abilities. There were two examples of adults identifying latent abilities, both in artistic fields. FL23 wrote: ‘We were able to identify and develop artistic abilities which we did not know we had and were capable of’. A grandmother wrote: ‘I have discovered the world of colour creativity ... retirement is full and productive.’

Ambitions and stereotypes. All aspirations and ambitions take shape in a context. The testimonies indicate parents’ ambitions as well as the current context that may shape ambition. The findings suggest that while parents’ ambition was being kindled it remained tightly bound by society’s expectations of women:

- FL6 – ‘I have also been asked to train as a breastfeeding support peer counsellor by my health visitor so I can help and advise new mothers’
- FL16 - ‘Hopefully when my 1yr old starts school I would like to have the qualifications behind me to become a teacher or a teachers (sic) aid.’ Interestingly,

she was the one respondent who admitted to problems with her own schooling: ‘I wasent (sic) very good at maths at school’.

- FL27 – ‘I would like to study more, perhaps go to college when the children are older, and get more involed (sic) in the school.’ (Her sister FL15 wrote ‘I would like to study more, perhaps when my younger daughter gose (sic) full time education’).

Frustrated ambitions. Although almost all writers are silent about their own experience of education, training and work, there are indications of earlier frustrated ambitions. For FL1, the Family Literacy project had ‘... given me the confidence to have a go at being creative and rekindled my own desire to become a nursery nurse, which would have been my chosen career if more places had been available when I left school’. FL26 stated: ‘Going into Family Learning has encouraged me to return to learning on my own’.

8.3.1.4 The benefits for the community

The extended family. Several of the submissions indicate how learning involves their extended families. FL31 (grandparent) gives evidence of this: ‘The skills I learned I then passed on to other members of my extended family, which then had a ripple effect to other children in the family circle’. FL4 revealed a pattern of involvement in learning and voluntary and paid community work:

- she herself worked as a childminder
- father does conservation work on both paid and voluntary basis and involves his grandchildren in this
- mother and sister ‘are reading partners for children who need extra help in school.’

The final example of an extended family is FL34, a family with a Down’s Syndrome child: ‘On returning home (from hospital) we knew that from 7 gt. grandparents to 3yr old cousin + extended family & friends we would all be available to support him sharing responsibility to ensure continuity of experiences in loving, caring, stimulating environment.’

Helping out in schools. One submission described how a group of parents, carers, grandparents were continuing to meet at a special school to produce Story Sacks and other play items for school use: ‘At the end of the course, other students and I continued to work in school, producing more story sacks’ (FL31).

Setting an example. One respondent (FL3) felt that her own successful involvement in learning set an example not only to her sons but also to the wider community about what women in general and lone parents in particular can achieve: ‘... I have given my boys a love of learning that will last them a lifetime, seeing them achieve in the learning field has also given them a respect for women ... I believe my family’s involvement in learning has given the local community a positive image to single parents, my children have grown in confidence & care for others, we work and learn together as a team ...’

Active involvement in the community. The three generations represented by FL7 attended a wide range of training courses, including Outdoor Leadership,

Understanding the Environment, Cycling and Music. Their future family learning would be centred around ‘Committee skills ‘ and ‘improving organisational effectiveness’.

8.3.1.5 Benefits for particular groups

Children with special needs. For parents of children with special needs, simply meeting one another is a form of support. The parents in FL28 were initially ‘a little anxious’, but despite that ‘jumped at the chance to become involved’ with family learning: ‘All the staff members were warm and supportive and we have forged valuable friendships with other carers who we would never otherwise have met.’ This group was continuing to meet after the course was completed. Another positive evaluation of this family learning experience is FL30: ‘With all the input we all put in as a family and with the help of (the) school, (our daughter) has come on leaps & bounds’. This account demonstrates the involvement of non-special needs siblings in family learning: ‘My three other children ... all helped to make the game and enjoyed playing it’ (FL18).

Lone parents. Although the proportion of lone parents in the sample is not known, one submission described the isolation experienced. ‘As a lone parent, it’s easy to feel “different” and excluded from the life chances other people take for granted, like many people in my position, I felt a sense of failure, when I have not been able to afford the material possessions for my two sons ...’

Childminders. Childminders and foster parents play important roles in our society. The one example of this was FL4, who was keen to make the point that her own family learning extended ‘to the children I childmind as well as my own’. She claimed that ‘confidence building and praise is heaped on our own children as well as those we care for and helped.’

Family-like activities. One respondent used ‘family’ as a metaphor for other kinds of groupings. FL25, a black Afro-Caribbean woman keen to promote black authors in a provincial town in England, described her work through youth clubs, senior citizens groups, a book-reading club at a community centre, a Saturday school and so on. She had moved from encouraging children and grandchildren to study and read to a broader role within learning. She describes the books she promotes as a ‘family of books’.

8.3.1.6 Formal and informal learning

Informal learning. The emphasis from these respondents is usually on school learning – on supporting children in what they learn at school, or, in the case of adults, in returning to study at a college or other formal institution. Some submissions, however, captured the essence of informal learning that positions the family as central in creating a culture of lifelong learning.

‘Things we already know’. Formal learning with adults often proceeds most successfully when it builds on previous informal learning. FL2 wrote about a Sure Start scheme: ‘We learn things that we do already but don’t realise until we are told by someone else.’ This goes to the heart of informal learning, or learning by

experience. On the one hand, one intuitively learns many things through life ('things that we do already'). On the other hand, to 'learn from experience' means to recognise the meaning and value of that experience ('don't realise until we are told by someone else').

Shared enthusiasms. Very often family members learn together from shared enthusiasms, and this type of learning is under-represented here. FL5 wrote: 'I have always been interested in the stars. I bought a telescope and my son and I used to take it outside and map the sky. He is now 8 years old & is very interested in cosmology. I completed a course in Astronomy and Cosmology.' Their learning ambitions are simple: 'We'd love to get a larger telescope and continue our star searching.'

Parents as teachers. For FL19 the most important gain from her family learning course 'is that I learnt that I am one of the most important teachers in my sons lives'.

8.3.1.7 Progression

Family and personal learning. Question 3 on the pro forma asked applicants to answer the question 'What are your learning plans for the future?' Parents and carers indicated their future intentions as follows:

- More family learning = 20
- Learning for self = 19
- Both = 8
- Neither = 4

Almost as many adults intend to learn for themselves as do those intending to learn as a family. About a quarter of the sample of adults intend to learn both for themselves and with their children, thus supporting the contention that parents and carers who come originally because of their children become motivated to learn for themselves. A small proportion of parents did not have any plans for further learning.

The relationship between parenting and learning. For many parents, their learning plans were formulated in the context of family events and futures, as the following quotes demonstrate.

- 'Hopefully when my 1yr old starts school I would like to have the qualifications behind me to become a teacher or a teachers (sic) aid.'
- 'I would like to study more, perhaps go to college when the children are older, and get more involved (sic) in the school.'
- 'I would like to study more, perhaps when my younger daughter gose (sic) full time education'

8.3.2 Conclusions

The 34 testimonies by learners provide valuable insights into a range of issues from the perspective of parents and carers involved in family learning. The key findings are summarised in section two at the beginning of the Appendix.