

Policy Briefings for Decision Makers and Family Learning Practitioners

Introduction

Government policies in relation to children, parents and families are part of a vision for a socially inclusive and prosperous society. A large number of policy areas and government initiatives impact upon children, parents and families including those policies that are explicitly aimed at children and families. Family learning has a role to play in each of these policy areas and initiatives, including health improvement, skills and economic competitiveness, children and families, in the cultural sector through museums, libraries and archives, social inclusion and in initiatives such as Skills for Life, Extended Schools and learning communities.

The Policy Briefings that follow, organised by government department, set out the contribution of family learning in achieving a number of Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets. First introduced in 1998, PSAs are a means by which value for money for public services can be measured. In recent years the number of PSA targets have been reduced and are more outcome-focussed such that departments and organisations have flexibility to achieve them. There are presently 110 PSA targets across government. The National Audit Office validates data systems providing for performance information. The *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* agenda's five outcomes for children and families are reflected in the newer PSAs of 2004. This is illustrated in targets focusing on children's development and a number of targets with shared responsibility across departments.

Against each department's PSA is evidence of the contribution made by family learning, drawn from selected research, inspection and from practitioners and providers attending NIACE consultation events in October and November. A strong case is made for the role family learning can play in supporting a range of outcomes for children, adults, families and communities in relation to development, behaviour, achievement, learning and skills, returning to employment, social inclusion and participation in cultural activities.

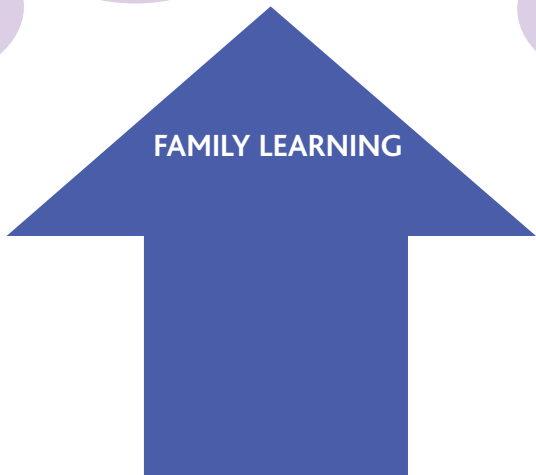
In a small number of instances the evidence on the contribution of family learning is limited. This highlights the need for additional research to further support the case for family learning.

The diagram overleaf illustrates the pertinent PSAs to which family learning can usefully contribute and the government departments with which they are associated, where:

- DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- DfES = Department for Education and Skills
- DoH = Department of Health
- DWP = Department for Work and Pensions
- HO = Home Office
- ODPM = Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

1. The definition of family learning used during the course of this project refers to learning approaches that engage parents and children jointly in learning. The term covers a wide range of models, from initiatives such as 'Bookstart' where book bags are distributed through health visitors to stimulate early book sharing in families to structured activities engaging families in museums and galleries to the wide range of family programmes funded through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The latter include family literacy, language and numeracy programmes (FLLN) and wider family learning programmes (WFL).





PSH targets to which family learning contributes