



Department for Work and Pensions PSA Targets

'Objective I: Ensure the best start for all children and end child poverty by 2020.'

1. *Halve the number of children in relative low-income households between 1998–99 and 2010–11, on the way to eradicating child poverty by 2020, joint with HM Treasury, including:*

- *Reducing the proportion of children living in workless households by 5 per cent between Spring 2005 and Spring 2008.*

'Objective II: Promote work as the best form of welfare for people of working age, while protecting the position of those in greatest need.'

4. *As part of the wider objective of full employment in every region, over the three years to Spring 2008, and taking account of the economic cycle:*

- *Increase the employment rates of disadvantaged groups (lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50 and over, those with the lowest qualifications and those living in the local authority wards with the poorest initial labour market position).*

Evidence from research

The sample in this study included 188 adults who had completed a family learning programme between one and four years previously, and approximately 100 adults who were coming to the end of a programme. A multi-method approach was used based on telephone interviews with previous learners, a postal survey of current learners, a postal survey of head-teachers, face-to-face interviews with a sub-sample of current learners, observation of family learning classes and interviews with family learning zone managers and development workers, and a small survey of family learning tutors. Following involvement in family learning, 80 per cent of previous learners had gone on to do at least one other activity. The most common next step was volunteering in school and learning or training for employment. Over one-third of parents revealed that they had gone on to perform one or both of these activities.

Horne, J. & J. Haggart, 2004. *The impact of adults' participation in family learning: a study based in Lancashire*. Leicester: NIACE. Unpublished.

Evidence from inspection

Inspection of family learning in Newcastle upon Tyne in 2005 found that parents gain confidence and those who were previously unsuccessful in the school environment are happy to promote family learning to others. Increases in confidence and in skills have helped some parents enter employment following family learning programmes, for example, as classroom assistants in schools.

ALI, 2005. *Newcastle upon Tyne LEA. Inspection Report*. Available at: <http://docs.ali.gov.uk/Inspreps/28/7142DET.PDF> (accessed 2 May 2006)



Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre in Hammersmith and Fulham, inspected in 2002, has a family centre that brings together learning, childcare and family support. Staff support adults and children to learn together with opportunities including the development of parenting skills and access to adult education. As a result of the skills they have gained at the centre, a number of parents and carers have secured jobs.

Ofsted, 2002. *Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre. Inspection Report.* Available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/reports/100/100315.pdf> (accessed 2 May 2006)

Evidence from practitioners

Family learning contributes a great deal to families where adults are currently unemployed. In particular, family literacy, language and numeracy could help bring about an attitudinal shift in parents/carers/adults helping instil confidence and raising self-esteem for those in the home and in the workplace. Family literacy, language and numeracy can help motivate and inculcate a positive approach to learning and training on the part of family learners and is particularly effective in reaching out to those who might not perceive themselves as learners. In terms of helping adults return to the workforce, Family literacy, language and numeracy provides family members with an opportunity to gain a qualification. The experience might also stimulate interest and involvement in volunteering which can enhance employment prospects.

Wider family learning is often considered the 'warm up act' by practitioners for other family learning such as family literacy, language and numeracy and/or other learning provision. Many practitioners feel that it provides a crucial first step to other learning and in drawing out a willingness to learn. Wider family learning also builds confidence, enabling adults to undertake further learning and also to obtain employment. This is accompanied by raising aspiration and expectations of what to expect from life for individuals, their children and for their communities and stimulating new interests.

What it looks like in practice

Sure Start in West Bassetlaw in Worksop, Nottinghamshire covers the four areas of Carlton in Lindrick, Langold, Costhorpe and Oldcotes. An ex-mining community, the food industry is now dominant in the form of sandwich factories. A learning co-ordinator and community development worker are seconded to Sure Start. The learning co-ordinator gives advice and support to parents/carers on a number of issues including job applications, completing forms and returning to college. A number of activities are held at Sure Start including a work shadowing pilot in which a group of mothers shadowed jobs in a variety of organisations for a day. The pilot illustrated to women the job opportunities available whilst raising their self-confidence and aspirations. In addition, the mothers received a professional CV. An evaluation of the pilot revealed that the women felt inspired by shadowing other women who had family responsibilities. .

Source: with thanks to Pip Beasant, Learning Co-ordinator, West Bassetlaw Sure Start.

