

A better way of engaging parents and communities to ensure that education doesn't stop at the school gates.

Evidence shows that when parents are engaged in their child's education, they do better at school.

One of the biggest challenge's schools face is the lack of evidence around effective strategies schools can use to meaningfully engage parents in their children's learning.

Schools are also struggling to reach the parents that they most want to and when they do, they are unable to evidence the engagement that is happening.

We are calling for a better way of engaging parents and communities to ensure that education does not stop at the school gates.

Why is parental engagement so important?

Children from low socio-economic backgrounds underachieve academically compared to their more affluent peers. This gap starts at the earliest stages, with early years attainment. In 2018 there were 17 local authority areas where the disadvantage gap was already at least six months by age five; this is a third larger than the national average of 4.5 months. [1] At later stages, the most persistently disadvantaged pupils are almost 2 years [22.6 months] behind at the end of GCSEs. [2] However, it doesn't have to be this way.

Parental engagement leads to better outcomes

Evidence shows that when parents are engaged in their child's education, they do better at school. [3] This is most evidenced with children aged 4-7, where the impact of parental engagement has been proven to be bigger than the differences associated with the quality of the school the child is attending. [4] Although parents from low socio-economic backgrounds usually have the same beliefs, knowledge and aspirations about their child's learning as their more affluent counterparts, they often lack the ability to turn their high aspirations into regular habits of behaviour that could meaningfully support their children's development.[5]

What can be done?

To improve outcomes for all children, more needs to be done to support parents, particularly in developing the early home learning environment. This has not been central in our education system, resulting in a limited amount of evidence and practical knowledge in this area [6]. Therefore, many schools continue to struggle in engaging parents in a meaningful way.

Teachers want to engage more with parents too

There has also been a distinct lack of teacher training to engage parents, with fewer than 10% of teachers saying that they have received training on parental engagement. [7] It is not for lack of interest either. Almost all teachers believe that parental engagement has a positive impact on their school and want to find effective ways of engaging parents. [8]

To create a fairer education for all we need to ensure that all schools and school leaders understand how to engage meaningfully with parents and that parents feel supported, and confident in their ability to impact their child's learning.



How Learning with Parents is helping boost engagement in their child's learning

Learning with parents exists to support every child to fulfil their potential by motivating and empowering families to have enjoyable learning experiences together. In 2019 they supported 10,000 parents across 100 schools. [9]

[View the video here.](#)

A better way of engaging parents and communities to ensure that education does not stop at the school gates.

Frameworks for reference



In order to ensure that every child reaches their full potential it is crucial that schools and government make parental engagement a priority.

This means:

- Creating a common language around parental engagement
- Championing effective parental engagement as a means to narrow the disadvantage gap
- Ensuring all schools are supported in improving parental engagement
- Empowering parent governors as champions for effective parental engagement
- Creating a parental engagement criteria for school aged children.

1. A blueprint for parent friendly schools



An easy to apply framework with a clear set of activities and success criteria that schools can put into practice in collaboration with parents.

[Read more here. \[10\]](#)

2. Best practice guide for engaging parents



Schools and parents have a shared interest in doing the best for their children. However, it is sometimes difficult to know where to start. This guidance report outlines evidence based recommendations on working with parents so that they can support their child's learning at home.

[Read more here. \[11\]](#)