



Solihull Family Learning Network

Lifelong Learning
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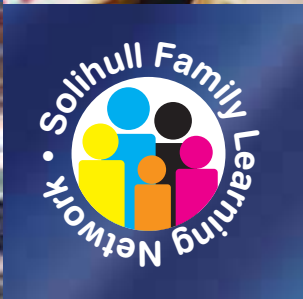


Taking Family Learning Forward

A FAMILY LEARNING STRATEGY FOR SOLIHULL

2006 – 2009

Solihull Family Learning Network



The most important thing we need to do is to make sure that we support people to reach their potential.

A Place for People Community Strategy for Solihull 2003 -2013

What is a Family?

The modern family can be a network or a small unit of different generations that fulfil the parenting responsibilities, eg grandparents, foster parents, carers, civil partnerships, friends, lone parents.

What is Family Learning?

Family Learning is about families enjoying learning together.

The distinctive features of Family Learning are:

- Parents / carers learning together with children
- Parents / carers learning separately in order to engage in learning with children or other family members
- Children learning separately in order to share learning with other family members

Why is Family Learning important?

- Encourages children and adults to feel good about learning
- Improves skills with words, numbers and IT
- Helps parents to understand how their children learn at home and at school
- Increases parenting skills
- Helps parents and carers get back into, or develop, their own learning for personal growth and the workplace
- Provides opportunities for further study

Family Learning opportunities include a range of both formal and informal activities for families to learn parenting skills, literacy and numeracy, citizenship, health and many other leisure, recreational and cultural activities.



How does Family Learning support Every Child Matters?

Every Child Matters Outcomes	Family Learning
Being healthy	Key partners, such as Health Visitors and Children's Centres, provide a trusting relationship with families where family learning activities can be a vehicle to communicate health information as well as identify parents with skills for life needs, and signpost them to other learning provision.
Staying safe	Early intervention, starting with pre-school family learning activities, builds 'social capital' through parent bonding, social networks and citizenship skills.
Enjoying and achieving	Reduces under-achievement through activities that enable families to enjoy high-quality learning experiences together and supports the creation of quality home learning environments and strong partnerships with schools.
Making a positive contribution	Empowering parents through improved skills for life - improving their trust, interest and involvement in institutions and organisations that operate in their community. Supporting community cohesion by bringing people together from diverse backgrounds.
Economic well-being	For parents, family literacy, language and numeracy can help them achieve their aspirations through supporting their child's education and improving their own employability.

"I feel the course has given me more confidence in helping Jack improve his literacy skills. I feel much more aware of what things will benefit him. I understand what approach will be used in school and I will be able to reinforce this at home."

Learner, Valley Infant School -
'Help Your Child with Literacy'
Solihull College

SolihullActive is a database of information on a wide variety of leisure activities within the Borough, including those that will encourage families to exercise together. www.solihull.gov.uk/activities



Solihull – a place for people to achieve

The Community Strategy, A Place for People, describes the sort of place we want Solihull to be in the future. It aims to address people's concerns now and to respect the needs of future generations. It sets out the important issues and how they will be tackled. The Family Learning Strategy supports the following key themes:

- Opportunities for learning and creativity
- We value children, young people and family life

The Family Learning Strategy also contributes to the Council's Objectives, in particular:

CO1 A brighter future for our children

- To provide improved facilities and support for our children and young people
- To ensure our children and young people grow up in a safe environment with opportunities to make a positive contribution.

CO3 Closing the gap of inequality

- To reduce inequalities in respect of health and education and improve access to work and leisure.

The Family Learning Strategy supports the key themes for change outlined in the Solihull Children and Young People's Plan 2006 – 2009:

- Putting families at the centre of planning
- Early intervention to allow children and families to reach their full potential
- Ensuring the needs of the most vulnerable families are met and taking positive action to address inequalities
- Integrated services and the best use of resources
- Develop a workforce that can deliver Every Child Matters - Change for Children.

Solihull is an excellent place to live and work. There are different social and economic contexts within the Borough – the wards of Kingshurst and Fordbridge, Smiths Wood, and Chelmsley Wood, are priority areas for regeneration and there are pockets of need throughout the Borough. Family Learning also contributes to neighbourhood renewal, active citizenship, healthy family lifestyles and crime prevention.

The challenge is to make Solihull a good place to live for everyone.

How do families learn in Solihull?

A flexible Family Learning model is delivered in Solihull which demonstrates progression to further learning opportunities and routes into employment.

A strong partnership between Solihull College and Solihull MBC allows a diverse range of programmes to be delivered in libraries, schools and local community centres. Strategic direction is set out in the Adult and Community Learning Plan 2004-2007.

Solihull College is able to deliver a well-planned programme, which offers a natural synergy between informal and personal development programmes and accredited provision. This model ensures that, with the support of Nextstep Information, Advice and Guidance, learners have access to learning opportunities where and when it suits them.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate 2003 Inspection Report of Solihull Council highlighted in the 'Overall Judgement' that the quality of provision, delivered by Solihull College in family learning was 'good' and that learners' achievements are 'very good' in all family learning programmes.

For example, 100% of participants in a specific Family Learning Programme progressed to further learning at Solihull College.

What does the Family Learning Strategy hope to achieve?

The Strategic Objectives (SO) are:

SO 1 Improve the quality of life for families

Families:

- Take first steps into learning and have fun learning together
- Have access to learning activities in quality, local venues
- Benefit from learning activities that fit with their family needs – pre-school activities, parenting skills, health information, learning at school

SO 2 Help families to achieve

Families:

- Improve skills with words, numbers and IT
- Increase skills that enable them to learn for their own personal growth and the workplace
- Feel pride in their achievements, receive recognition, and celebrate success

SO 3 Build social and community capacity

Families are:

- Empowered to participate in community life and become involved in local activities and decision-making
- Encouraged to be active advocates for learning
- Involved in learning activities delivered by a wide range of community partners

SO 4 Develop the infrastructure for learning

Families benefit from:

- Being listened to, consulted and actively involved in the planning of learning
- Enjoying increased access to flexible, quality, planned, purposive and progressive learning opportunities
- Accessing activities that are responsive to neighbourhood needs and recognise the diversity of communities
- Having clear progression routes through sign-posting between all types of provision

How will we deliver the Strategy?

The Strategic Objectives will be reflected in the work of all partners, ensuring a shared vision and a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of Family Learning in Solihull by the widest range of organisations.

An Action Plan will include the agreed actions and outcomes and will be reviewed regularly. It will be adjusted as the national, and local, policy and funding climate requires. It will be monitored and evaluated to ensure that the voice and needs of local families and local priorities are at the forefront of all planning and delivery.

Joined-up planning and effective partnerships are the key to widening participation in planned, purposive and progressive learning opportunities for families in Solihull.

Who has been involved?

The Family Learning Strategy grew from the first Solihull Family Learning Network Conference in March 2005. This brought together a wide range of organisations to consider the potential of developing a Solihull Family Learning Network and to examine the local needs and challenges that would inform the development of a Family Learning Strategy.

Subsequent consultation on the Strategy continued at a seminar in November 2005, at the Solihull Lifelong Learning Partnership and with the Birmingham and Solihull Learning Skills Council. The Strategy was launched at the Family Learning Network Conference, March 2006 where the Action Plan was developed.

The consultation involved a broad base of organisations and individuals including health visitors, Solihull College, early years settings, schools, libraries, the Arts Service, Leisure, Children Centres, Family Centres, Social Services, park rangers, Trading Standards and community groups. Consultation with families will be a continuing process.

The consultation process has been produced as an Appendix to the Strategy. The Consultation Appendix records the views and recommendations of all those involved, actions taken and changes made as a result of those views.

"I found out how children write maths. I really enjoyed making a book for Josh. He loves looking and playing with the touch and feel numbers and it is really helping him to say numbers."

Learner, Kingshurst Children's Centre - 'Help Your Child with Numeracy'
Solihull College

I now include my children in every day activities

Parent

4u2do Solihull - a dynamic site to help Solihull children, young people and their families find clubs, activities, services and events in their area. The Issues page covers topics such as bullying, Internet chat rooms, health and wellbeing, domestic violence and lots more. www.4u2dosolihull.org



The Strategy supports local, regional and national priorities for learning:

Every Child Matters

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

21st Century Skills - Skills Strategy White Paper, DfES 2003

www.dfes.gov.uk

A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: A National Strategy Action Plan, ODPM

www.neighbourhood.gov.uk

Respect Action Plan

www.respect.gov.uk

Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, DfES 2004

www.dfes.gov.uk

Birmingham and Solihull Learning and Skills Council Annual Plan 2004-2005

www.lsc.gov.uk/birminghamsolihull

Adult and Community Learning - Strategic Development Plan 2004-2007 – Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and Solihull College

www.solihull.gov.uk

Solihull Community Strategy - A Place for People 2003-2013

www.solihull.gov.uk

Solihull Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009

www.solihull.gov.uk

Council Plan 2003 / 2006, 2004 update – Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

www.solihull.gov.uk

Health Inequalities in Solihull, Strategy Framework 2005-2010

www.solihull.gov.uk

Twelve local families worked with artist Adrian Higgins for six weeks to create three stunning, 2 metre long, collages depicting Chelmsley Wood past, present and future.

“It was interesting planning and following the project through.”

“Although it appeared to be a mammoth task at the beginning, once we started because of the massive keen interest we managed to finish our collage (brilliant) we are so proud of it.”

“We have talked about this to teachers at the school the children attend, they have told friends they have thoroughly enjoyed it.”

“Good to spend time with children and they thoroughly enjoyed it. They carried on cutting and pasting at home.”

Quotes from parents involved.



The following national learning organisations acted as critical friends during the development of the Strategy:

National Family Learning Network

www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

Campaign for Learning

www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

NIACE

www.niace.org.uk

Inspiring Learning for All, MLA

www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk



For further information contact:

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The Strategy, Consultation Appendix and Action Plan can be downloaded from the Solihull Family Learning Network web-pages: www.solihull.gov.uk/familylearning

Robotics Workshop - build a simple motorised replica model of the Mars Rover and programme a robot with a computer using light and touch sensor. This activity attracts a good number of boys with their dads and is aiming to take part in regional competitions.

I used to play on my Playstation, but now I play the games I made with my Dad!
Boy aged 6



The Strategy has been developed by the Solihull Family Learning Network in consultation with families, providers and community organisations.

The Solihull Family Learning Network

Working together to take Family Learning forward

Our vision is to make Solihull a place where we celebrate Family Learning. We aim to make a difference by working in partnership – listening to learners, sharing good practice and resources, planning together and taking action to develop learning communities in which all families feel empowered and thrive.



Family Learning Week - over 1,000 children and adults in Solihull enjoy Family Learning Week every year. The aim of the week is to provide opportunities for families to try something new together and enjoy learning.



Benefits for Network Partners

- Shared vision, values and goals
- Strategic planning and partnership delivery
- Active communication, discussion and debate
- Information about current issues and funding
- Good practice and success is shared and celebrated
- Involvement in national and local learning campaigns
- Opportunities to influence decision-makers
- A high profile for Family Learning through promotion and advocacy

So that Families have:

- Access to seamless provision of learning
- Choice of activities and locations
- Opportunities to progress to further learning
- A gateway to special support services
- A voice in their learning futures

Who are our Members?

The Solihull Family Learning Network has a range of members locally, regionally and nationally who are involved in providing and supporting Family Learning. They include:

Colleges – community centres – voluntary organisations – libraries – museums – arts centres – clubs – religious or cultural organisations – youth groups – sports and leisure centres – pre-school groups – childminders – schools – park rangers – adult education tutors – and of course, the learners themselves.

Join the Network and be a part of an active membership that comes together through an annual programme of meetings and events.

For further information, contact:

Solihull Lifelong Learning Partnership

0121 704 6972

www.solihull.gov.uk/familylearning

Every year **5,000 adults and children** enjoy Family Learning activities and courses in Solihull. **Celebrating success** is an integral part of the Family Learning Strategy. In Solihull we celebrate learners' achievements at the **Solihull Adult Learners' Awards** in October every year. There is a special category for Family Learners.



Parks - enjoy a wide range of park events throughout the year including educational walks, talks on plants and wildlife, conservation and family fun days.
www.solihull.gov.uk/parks

Bookstart - ensures that all families with pre-school children receive three free book gifts to use at home together, supported by Family Learning activities in libraries, clinics, Children's Centres, the Excellence in Communities Learning Centres and a range of other community venues.



"I really feel that I have achieved so much over the last 10 week course. I have gained so much confidence and understanding of numeracy with the help of the tutor. She really broke things down in an easy to understand way and dispelled the myths! I know that I will take my new confidence forward with my two young children that numeracy is fun and important and not impart my previous fears and hang ups."

Learner, Burman Infant School – 'Help Your Child with Numeracy' Solihull College

Homework Clubs in Libraries - drop into any of the four Homework Clubs at Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst, Hobs Moat and at Central Library. Families can get in-depth help with homework and projects and learn essential information and study skills for independent learning.



I like learning with my Mum, and sometimes I teach her too!

Boy aged 6



Early Start - is a Chelmsley Wood Children's Centre programme where children between 0-3 years play and learn in a stimulating environment appropriate to their stage of development and to share play experiences with their parents/carers.

Black History Month - during October, an exciting programme of family focussed activities and events take place which promotes awareness of Black History and its contribution to society. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the diversity of Solihull and acknowledge the achievements of communities which will enrich the cultural heritage of the Borough in future years.



It's a way of bonding, her happiness is my happiness!
Parent



How do we know Family Learning makes a difference?

"I'm really excited - I never thought I would have the chance to make a pot at a potter's wheel - I've had to wait until I'm 40 to learn how to do it with my daughter! We are both more creative than we thought and we will take our pots home to dry out. Where can I do a course? Please let us know when you are putting on another pottery workshop."

Parent participant, Balsall Common Library