

Engaging parents and families

A toolkit for practitioners

Section 11: Reporting and communicating with
parents and children

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Background

This section provides guidance to help practitioners in early learning and childcare (ELC) settings and schools review, monitor and evaluate their reporting and communication processes with parents and children. It aims to help practitioners in the development of a reporting process as well as those who may be reviewing their early learning and childcare setting or school's curriculum rationale.

Reporting and communicating with parents and children

'Everyone who is a parent has the 'right to receive advice and information about their child's education, general information on school life, events, information on the curriculum, to be told about meetings involving their child, and to participate in activities, such as taking part in decisions relating to a Parent Council'.

(Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act Guidance, 2006)

Reporting and communicating with parents helps them to understand and be able to discuss their child's progress and share in their learning. It is important therefore to identify and develop effective methods of reporting and communicating with parents and the wider parent forum in all ELC settings and schools ([Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act 2006 Guidance](#)).

Headteachers are required to report at least once per year to the Parent Council (or the parent forum if no Parent Council exists). The report must cover the performance of the school and the headteacher's objectives and ambitions for the school as set out in the School Improvement Plan. It must have regard to the most recent 12 month report on the School Improvement Plan and the authority's measures and standards of performance for its schools. Further information can be found in the Parental Involvement Act [Guidance](#) 2006.

Reporting and communicating with parents should be part of a regular on-going cycle whereby practitioners use a range of methods. Further information for practitioners is available in [Reporting to Parents and Carers: Guidance for schools and ELC settings](#). Reference should also be made to national practice documents (e.g. [Building the Ambition](#) and self-evaluation frameworks (e.g. [How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare?](#); [How Good is our School?](#) (Fourth Edition); [How Good is our Third Sector Organisation](#)), to identify areas of strength and points for development. Case studies are also available on the [National Improvement Hub](#).

Developing a process for reporting and communicating with parents and children

Parents should be involved at the outset in developing the ELC setting or school's curriculum rationale. If parents understand and have contributed to this, they will be better able to understand any reporting that is carried out thereafter in relation to the curriculum.

The rationale should be linked to the vision for the ELC setting or school and reflect the context and values of the ELC setting or school. It should take account of local and national policy and guidance, detail the agreed expectations of standards across the school and lead to improved outcomes for children.

Once developed, the curriculum rationale should be shared in an accessible format, with the wider parent forum and relevant stakeholders. This will help ensure that stakeholders has a mutual understanding of what the ELC setting or school is trying to achieve across all contexts of learning.

Activity 1: Curriculum rationale

Purpose

To review, monitor and evaluate the ELC setting or school's curriculum rationale.

The ELC setting or school should develop a curriculum rationale in partnership with parents, staff, children, partners and relevant stakeholders.

Reflective questions:

- Has your curriculum rationale been developed in partnership with parents, staff, children, partners and relevant stakeholders?
- What processes are in place to monitor and review the curriculum rationale?
- How is the curriculum rationale communicated to parents, children, staff, partners and relevant stakeholders?
- Are parents, partners and local organisations empowered to support and build the capacity of the school through sharing their skills for learning, life and work across the curriculum?

Activity 2: Collating data on children's learning

Purpose

To review processes for collating data on children's learning.

Before being able to report to parents, ELC settings and schools require a range of assessment strategies/approaches to assess children's learning. These can include peer and self-assessment, classroom observations, standardised assessments, summative assessments, jotter monitoring and planned learner conversations. Observations of children and professional judgement enable practitioners to identify next steps in learning.

ELC settings and schools should have an effective tracking and monitoring system to record children's progress across the curriculum.

Progress measured should include:

- the support being provided to children capable of more demanding work;
- how successfully children with additional support needs are meeting their personal targets.

Consideration should be given to making better use of data to evaluate the impact of changes over time. This will help determine whether curricular developments and changes to learning and teaching approaches are having a positive impact on children's attainment and achievement. With reliable data staff can analyse the progress of individuals, recognise trends across the school for particular cohorts of pupils and identify factors which may be influencing progress and attainment. Tracking the attainment of those in the lowest SIMD deciles will help better determine whether socio-economic factors are influencing attainment and achievement. Using the national benchmarks helps to assess children's progress and support moderation of standards.

Reflective questions:

- How does your ELC setting or school collate and record data to assess children's learning?
- Does your ELC setting or school's tracking and monitoring system record progress across all areas of the curriculum to contribute to a holistic picture of each child's learning?

Activity 3: Analysing data

Purpose

To assess knowledge and skills of staff to make professional judgement of children's progress.

It is important that practitioners have the knowledge and skills to determine what standards merit 'achievement of a level' to enable them to make an accurate professional judgement of children's progress. Practitioners need to understand their responsibilities in reporting to parents. Improved confidence in teachers' judgements on how well children are learning and progressing can be achieved through working on moderation activities together and with colleagues in other cluster ELC settings and schools.

Reflective questions:

- Do practitioners undertake appropriate professional learning on effective approaches to tracking children's progress and attainment?
- Are practitioners building on individual children's prior learning to ensure continuous progress at a pace appropriate to their needs?
- Are practitioners able to strategically and critically analyse data?
- Do practitioners have regular opportunities to have discussions on children's progress with senior management and focus on raising attainment?
- Are practitioners engaged in professional dialogue to discuss children's progress at transition points? Are the outcomes of that dialogue recorded and any necessary action taken where appropriate?
- Are practitioners confident in assessing the impact of interventions on children's learning over time?
- Do practitioners monitor progress and attainment of groups of children who have barriers to learning?

Activity 4: Reporting to parents

Purpose

To consider ways of reporting to parents.

'Parents and families must have access to information that allows them to form a clear understanding of how their child is progressing, and the information they need to help them play a key role in their child's education'.

([National Improvement Framework](#) for Scottish Education, 2016)

In order to engage parents more fully in their child's learning, they need to understand their role and the extent to which they can or should contribute. Consideration should also be given to methods of reporting to parents with additional support needs, literacy challenges, language barriers, disabilities and parents who do not live together.

What could reporting to parents look like?

Reporting to parents should be based on robust assessment, moderation, monitoring and tracking and continually look at improving the child's progress across the curriculum.

- Children review their learning with staff and this is reported to parents.
- Face to face meetings between practitioners and parents are held at the start of the new session to see how the child is settling in. Sessions can be arranged for parents where the class teacher gives an overview of the topics and intended outcomes for that term. This will enable parents to support their child's learning at home.
- School reports have helpful personalised parental prompts for each subject to encourage parents to become involved in supporting their children's learning. Reports are individual and meaningful.
- Parents are informed and supported to help their child learn at home.
- Reporting to parents which focuses on learning can help identify any issues. Ways for schools and parents to work together can then be identified.
- Wider achievements in school are recognised and reported to parents.
- Parents receive regular meaningful tracking forms, mini reports or updates and a summary report at the end of the year.
- Parents have more direct contact with their child's teacher(s).
- Reporting to parents includes the wider aspects of school eg friendships.
- Parents have weekly opportunities to join children in the classroom.
- Reports to parents are in an easily accessible, jargon free, appropriately sensitive format. They should be reflective of any additional supports needs of children.
- Feedback is given to parents on how the ELC setting or school is taking forward parents' views after a consultation.

Reflective questions:

- What methods do you have in place to report to parents? What changes are required to enhance your methods of reporting to parents?
- What are the positive elements of your current processes around reporting to parents and is it meaningful? How do you know?
- What system do you have in place to improve the reporting and communication processes with parents?
- Are parents involved in reviewing methods of reporting?
- Are reports to parents individual and meaningful?
- How do you involve children in leading the sharing of information between school and home?
- How do you ensure that reporting to parents is a two way dialogue rather than a one-way flow of information?

Examples of reporting to parents

School reports and parents' evenings are the most obvious formal ways in which schools can pass on information to parents about their child. However, schools that successfully manage to stay in touch with the views of their parents employ a wide range of formal and informal approaches that are reviewed and updated regularly.

(Scottish Schools (Parental Involvement) Act Guidance, 2006)

Practitioners should consider how parents who do not live together, parents in prison or in the armed forces can be kept informed of their child's progress. Policies and procedures should be in place to ensure this happens whilst also taking account of any safeguarding considerations. Where it acts as the corporate parent of a care-experienced child, the local authority should ensure that it has effective arrangements in place to liaise effectively with the child's school and to provide encouragement and support for the child's learning outwith school.

Reports to parents could include topics on: literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing, learning across the curriculum, wider achievements, child's personal attributes or achievements, progress in learning and school events. Parents should be encouraged to share their perceptions about their child's learning and their views, opinions and concerns should be taken seriously.

Examples of reporting and communicating with parents	
Newsletters Parents evenings Home-link resources Blogs/Class blogs School shows / showcase events Assemblies School website / Social media Online/learning journey folders / e-portfolios Homework diaries Daily feedback sessions/diaries/conversations Phone calls, texts Using films to communicate and share the learning.	Letters, emails Open door policy Classroom visits/open days Noticeboards Digital online learning journals Meetings - key workers/planned meetings Transition meetings Digital technologies e.g. school app which translates newsletters and information into different languages Profiles

Activity 5: Reporting and communicating with children

Purpose

To review, monitor and evaluate processes for reporting and communicating with children.

'Children and young people need high-quality feedback about their progress and a clear understanding of the support that is in place to help them succeed'.

([National Improvement Framework](#) for Scottish Education, 2016)

Children need to be clear about:

- what progress they are making across their learning;
- what level they are working at;
- what they are expected to achieve; and
- the standards they are being measured against.

Involving children in planning, recording their learning, assessing their own progress, regularly setting targets, making choices and leading their learning can help with reporting and communicating with children. Feedback in jotters, through e-learning journals, GLOW, etc. also helps children understand their progress and next steps. Opportunities for children to build on their achievements and develop their leadership skills is a vital part of their learning.

Achievements

ELC settings and schools should consider how to track achievements in and out of school to ensure children are achieving and progressing well but also to identify children at risk of missing out. Parents should be encouraged to share their child's achievements with the ELC setting or school. This is also useful to track the skills and attributes children acquire across the totality of their learning in and out of school.

Children's achievements in ELC settings and schools can be recognised through effective use of praise and good communication with families. They can be documented through a variety of methods including: photographs, wall displays, learning folders and certificates. Achievements can also be recognised through blogs, newsletters, awards, prize giving ceremonies.

Reflective questions:

- How are children's achievements in ELC settings and schools reported to parents?
- Is there a process in place for parents to report achievements outwith ELC settings and schools and for these to be recorded?
- Are children's achievements in ELC settings and schools linked with those in their local community to enrich children's understanding of themselves as active citizens?
- Are children aware of their skills and how to build on their achievements?
- Do children recognise the skills they are developing and how they can be applied in a range of different contexts?
- Do children understand and recognise the skills gained for learning, life and work?

Reading list

Scottish Executive (2006), '*Scottish Schools (Parental involvement) Act 2006 Guidance*'. Edinburgh. Astron. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2006/09/08094112/0>

Further Information

[Reporting to Parents and Carers: Guidance for schools and ELC settings](#)

[National Improvement Framework: Improvement planning and reporting poster](#)

[National Improvement Framework Parent Communication Plan](#)

[Parentzone Scotland](#)

[Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act 2006 Guidance](#)

[Sharing Learning, Sharing Assessment – Report for Parents](#)

[Tackling bureaucracy](#)

[Review of the Impact of the Parental Involvement Act \(2006\)](#)

[Ipsos Mori - Research to inform the Review of the Impact of the 2006 Parental Involvement Act](#)

[How good is our school? \(Fourth edition\)](#)

[How good is our early learning and childcare?](#)

[How Good is our Third Sector Organisation](#)

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