Delivering Skills for Life: 
The national strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills

Skills for Families
Working together to extend and embed family literacy, language and numeracy

Strengthening family literacy, language and numeracy: Extending the reach and scope of programmes
April 2003–March 2004
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Foreword

Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy, language and numeracy skills

Many millions of adults in England need help to improve their literacy, language and numeracy skills. Skills for Life, launched by the Prime Minister in 2001, sets out the Government’s strategy for meeting these needs.

Since the launch of Skills for Life, we have gained an even greater insight into the effect that lack of literacy and numeracy skills can have on individuals, their families, on the economy and on society. For example adults with poor literacy and numeracy skills will be less able to thrive at work and are more likely to be trapped in a cycle of poverty and disadvantage. They take on children who are even more likely to be trapped in that cycle.

For example, adults with poor literacy and numeracy skills could earn up to £50,000 less over their lifetime and are more likely to have health problems, live in a disadvantaged area or be unemployed. They and their children risk being cut off from the advantages of a world increasingly linked through information technology. Additionally, poor literacy, language and numeracy skills have been estimated to cost the country in excess of £10 billion a year.

Skills for Life is not just an education-only strategy, nor is it just a Government response to address literacy, language and numeracy skills needs. It covers all post-16 learners on learning programmes at levels from Pre-Entry up to and including Level 2. These courses range from discrete and embedded, classroom and community provision to voluntary and work-based learning.

Skills for Life addresses assessment through Key Skills, GCSE Maths and English and adult literacy and numeracy skills certification. So it is crucial that the strategy supports and reflects the successful implementation of other post-16 strategies. These include Success for All, the strategy for reforming post-16 further education and the Skills Strategy which aims to ensure that the skills we develop are valuable to young people.
Every organisation and individual has a contribution to make. Partnership and the ownership of "Skills for Life" by all our key, supporting and development partners are the most important elements for successful delivery.

Government departments, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), JobCentre Plus, the Prison and Probation Services, external partners in the post-16 learning sector, businesses, the CBI, TUC and many others are working together to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of adults through:

- **Boosting demand** for learning via a high-profile promotional campaign and by engaging all partners across government and employers in identifying and addressing the literacy and numeracy needs of their clients and employees;
- **Ensuring capacity** of provision by securing sufficient funding and coordinating planning and delivery to meet learners' needs;
- **Improving standards** of teaching and learning in literacy, language and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision;
- **Raising learner achievement** through the new national learning, teaching and assessment infrastructure and reducing barriers to learning.

We know that poor literacy and numeracy skills often run in the family, and family literacy, language and numeracy courses can be an effective way of breaking the cycle of underachievement. Skills for Families has been successful in showing how using the new national teaching and learning infrastructure can help to improve the quality of family literacy, language and numeracy programmes. It has developed a tailored teacher training programme and helped more learners to achieve national qualifications and secure the ambition, confidence and dignity that such achievements bring. It is a vital part of the "Skills for Life" strategy.

Ivan Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Skills and Vocational Education

*The Skills for Life Strategy states that parents and other primary carers are a key priority group. DfES and LSC commissioned Skills for Families to ensure that family literacy, language and numeracy programmes can be extended and embedded to have the greatest impact on the achievements of this group.*

**Principles:**

1. **Listening:** listening to a high profile promotional campaign and engaging all partners across government and employers in identifying and addressing the literacy and numeracy needs of their clients and employees.
2. **Enabling:** enabling a wide audience to access learning in literacy, language and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision.
3. **Making learners achievement through the new national learning, teaching and assessment infrastructure and reducing barriers to learning.**

The Skills for Life Strategy identifies parents and other primary carers as a key priority group. DfES and LSC commissioned Skills for Families to ensure that family literacy, language and numeracy programmes can be extended and embedded to have the greatest impact on the achievements of this group.
This is a significant time for family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN). It is receiving more attention than ever from policymakers at national, regional and local levels. Since April 2002, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) have implemented policy changes and funding increases to improve FLLN nationally. This includes establishing Skills for Families as a national initiative in 2003–04.

The purpose of this guide is to disseminate lessons and examples from the Skills for Families project, and to offer guidance to Local Authorities and local LSCs on developing new family programmes to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents and children. It is based on:

- the context set by the national Skills for Life strategy, and the Early Years, Primary and Key Stage 3 strategies;
- the Skills for Families criteria;
- the LSC funding criteria;
- progress reports provided by LEA/local LSC partnerships;
- feedback given by Skills for Families project staff;
- the views and experience of parents, early years and post-16 teachers and practitioners from the primary and community health and social care sectors;
- the extensive experience of training and family learning programmes of the LLU (formerly the London Language and Literacy Unit);
- the Basic Skills Agency’s experience of developing, supporting and evaluating FLLN programmes.

Introduction

1. See Annex 1 for list of regional projects.
2. The word ‘parents’ is used to refer to mothers, fathers, grandparents, guardians and other primary carers.
This document does not describe programmes eligible for LSC funding in 2004/05 but the work that was done to inform changes to the menu of programmes for 2004/05.

Snapshot descriptions of projects written by the Skills for Families consultants are also included. These descriptions are intended to give a flavour of projects in progress. We hope that the experiences of the projects will be useful to other organisations in judging experiences that are not yet well-implemented. Some of the new Skills for Families programmes are included in the LSC menu for funding in 2004/5.

This is one of three guides forming part of an overall model providing guidance on strengthening all aspects of family literacy, language and numeracy programmes eligible for LSC Funding in 2004/5. The other guides, Planning for quality, Extending the reach and scope of programmes and Testing approaches to teacher training and capacity building for schools and other organisations working with families can be downloaded from the Skills for Families website at www.skillsforfamilies.org. Details of programmes eligible for LSC Funding in 2004/5 are available from local and national offices of the LSC.

References for key project resources are included at the end of this guide.
Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes can raise achievement across generations. They can contribute to the Early Years, Primary, Key Stage 3 and Skills for Life strategies, as well as increase social inclusion.

We know that support at home is a key determinant in children's early and continuing success in literacy, numeracy and overall schooling. Support at home is critical to the success of school-based programmes, and the success of school-based programmes is likely to be greater if family involvement can be increased. Research on Effective Pre-school Education (EPPE) concludes that 'the quality of the home learning environment is more important than who they are.' In other words, the cycle of underachievement can be broken, especially if proven approaches to supporting language and learning in the home can be modelled, explained and adopted.

Research and experience have shown that parents want to know more about how best to support their children's learning. However, parents with poor language, literacy and numeracy skills often need structured, supportive opportunities for advice, guidance and learning. Family programmes are magnets for parents who may not be attracted to learning on their own account but who may go on to learn for themselves, become more involved in their children's schools and become more active in their communities.

The positive effect of FLLN on both parents' and children's achievement has been one of the reasons for the continued success and expansion of the programme.

Family programmes aim to encourage family members to learn together. They should include opportunities for joint and independent learning and whenever possible lead both adults and children to pursue further learning.

Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes aim to:
- improve parents' ability to help their children;
- improve parents' understanding of learning and catering;
- improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents;
- improve children's acquisition of literacy, language and numeracy.

Making a positive contribution

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2. Watching and Learning 2 OISE/UT Evaluation of the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, University of Toronto, 2001.
Strengthening FLLN

Skills for Families has arrived at just the right time as our service has developed. It is a real opportunity to drive both improvement of the quality of what is on offer, as well as our capacity to deliver more to the greatest need.

Richard Newton, Family Learning Coordinator, Wakefield

The work of this national project has stimulated much interest locally, regionally and nationally in Read On – Write Away! (ROWA!) as an organisation and in family literacy, language and numeracy within ROWA! By developing workable infrastructures and new approaches to planning, the ROWA! Skills for Families project has begun to provide a framework for the future development and mainstreaming of family learning provision.

Karen Hanson, Skills for Families Consultant, Derbyshire

Since 2001, the national teaching and learning infrastructure for adult literacy, language and numeracy has started to have an impact on the quality of provision in family programmes. However, key challenges remain. The lessons of Ofsted and Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) inspections on the variable quality of family language, literacy and numeracy provision have set an agenda for where quality can be improved. Skills for Families has created the opportunity to try different formats for existing programmes; to press forward on teaching strategies and to try out new approaches, for example, introducing the national test, and improving assessment and the use of assessment data in the development of learning provision.

We know that people can be sceptical of what can appear to be an innovation treadmill, if they already value what they are doing. In developing new family programmes, the projects have been encouraged to:

- build on existing knowledge of what does and does not work;
- improve and embed what already exists;
- extend the reach and scope of programmes;
- maintain rigour and quality;
- strengthen local capacity.

Skills for Families has provided the opportunity for innovation in its approach to some of the needs that have not previously been met. This has also been seen in trying different formats for existing programmes.

The innovative models will provide more flexibility for the development of programmes and the opportunity to fit in with current needs and planning.

Frances Cheetham, Skills for Families Consultant, Wirral
As well as securing new partnerships, the development of innovation has led to FLLN programmes being made available in new settings and to groups of learners who previously did not have access to family learning in Knowsley. The FLLN 0–3 and childminders programmes have been successfully piloted in the borough. However, although there has been some willingness from schools to pilot Financial Literacy programmes, they have faced difficulties with recruitment of learners. This reflects a general difficulty within Knowsley of establishing Family Learning within secondary schools. These schools are, however, still attempting to recruit and hope to run programmes in the summer term.

Keith McDowall, Skills for Families Consultant, Knowsley

Some of our new family programmes have been running in schools during Ofsted visits and the reports have been very positive.

Clare Meade, Skills for Families Consultant, Suffolk

7. Professor Catherine Snow is the Henry Lee Shattuck Professor at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education. Snow has carried out research on first and second language acquisition, and literacy development of children. She chairs a panel developing a research agenda in reading for the U.S. Department of Education.

In addition to the tried and tested family programmes, we asked the projects to pilot four of the following new delivery models. Each of the models listed in this section gives a rationale for development or challenge associated with it. Descriptions of pilot projects written by the Skills for Families consultants are also included.

• Playing with Language

Rationale

Children who hear a lot of languages, and children who are engaged in conversations a lot, are children who end up with the best language skills. Children with good language skills are likely to become good readers.

Professor Catherine Snow, Harvard University

1. Because, Catherine Snow is the Henry Lee Shattuck Professor at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education.
Playing with Language helps parents to understand, develop, and use the kinds of language interactions that research has identified as helpful in improving their own language skills. It dovetails with the findings from the Effective Pre-school Education (EPPE) research, the approaches set out in the Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage and the new Communicating Matters Project.

The programme is based on Project EASE (Early Access to Success in Education), a family programme developed in the USA that focuses on the ways schools and homes contribute to children’s emerging language and literacy abilities.

Playing with Language builds on the work of Project EASE and the findings from the national evaluation of Early Start. It provides opportunities for the families who need it most to develop their communication, language and literacy skills at home and in nursery or school. It focuses on the Foundation Stage (3–5 years) and includes five distinct areas: vocabulary (words, words, words), storybook reading (story time), narrative retellings (talking and thinking), letter recognition and sound awareness (linking sound and letters) and non-fiction text (where, who, why and how).

Each unit begins with a 45–60-minute parent session and a related hour-long parent–child activity session. Sessions can take place during the school day and the evening, to accommodate varying family schedules. Home Time follow-up activities would require at least 30 minutes a week.

The programme runs for 35–40 hours and includes advice on progression and further learning opportunities. All the parents involved can use their studies to work towards a qualification in language and literacy or numeracy, and if appropriate, the National Test, particularly as they are unlikely to have many existing qualifications. Even if parents do not wish to work towards a test, their achievement and progress should be recorded in line with national standards.

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Project Snapshot: Wakefield LEA/LSC

This has been an excellent course with outcomes that exceeded expectations in terms of parental and their enthusiasm towards learning, volunteering and working to support class reading. Parents have expressed feelings about 'being given a chance' and wanting to do 'more with their lives' — there is a raising of self-esteem and empowerment within the group. Improved and closer relationships and involvement with each other has been observed between children and parents.

Sandal Magna J&I – Deputy Head/Foundation Stage Teacher

Playing with Language has helped to strengthen partnerships with the Early Years service and the Younger Children Service. The feedback from the first pilot run of the programme was extremely positive. The course has had a dramatic effect on the personal and social development of the families involved, particularly boys and their mothers.

Anne-Marie Spencer, Skills for Families Consultant, Wakefield

A new course has been written specifically for EAL parents working towards Entry 3 speaking and listening qualifications and is mapped to the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The parent-only sessions include topics such as writing letters to school; instructions; planning children's television viewing; predicting stories; using a dictionary; making story tapes. The 'joint' sessions for parents and children include: role-play; making cards; Storysacks; singing; rhymes; puppet making. Enrichment activities include a visit to the library and planning a day trip.

Sandra Proctor, Action Research Team Leader
Playing with Language has run in several settings, including a primary school in the Felixstowe area of Suffolk. The course was advertised through fliers and posters inviting parents and carers to a taster event. The workshop involved lots of activities based around books, including making books and puppets, practising hand writing and telling stories. The course ran for 12 weeks and was aimed at parents. The course was held in the school as detailed on page 12. The course was planned by the adult teacher in close collaboration with the Early Years teacher. The children joined for 45 minutes each session for a joint activity, which was carefully planned linking in with the child and adult sessions. Communication and a portfolio of work were kept as evidence. All parents and carers were interested in further courses. A crèche was available in another room for younger children.

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Impact

- Literacy levels for adults with no previous qualifications improved with four going on to literacy test Level 1.
- Parents reported that their children had greatly increased in confidence with speaking and listening in the group and had developed a willingness to share in reading and writing activities at home.
- All the adults were interested in further courses if they were held locally.
- The school reported considerable improvement in speaking and listening skills for all the children involved in the programme.

Clare Meade, Skills for Families Consultant, Suffolk
Play and Language courses and workshops

Rationale

Babies don’t need teaching — at birth or at six months — but they do need talk and song and laughter and books; and scaffolding to help them surmount each new self-imposed challenge.

Penelope Leach, PEEP conference opening speech 2001

Play and Language is a short programme aimed at parents with no or few qualifications, and their young children from 0–3 years. It is based on the successful roll-out of the Language and Play programme, which was launched in Wales by the Basic Skills Agency in November 2002. (More information can be found at www.basic-skills-wales.org). It is designed to support parents and carers and their babies and children, with the broad aims of enhancing language development from birth to three and encouraging positive interactions. The focus is on communication, language, literacy and play. It also fits closely to the principles set out in Birth to three matters.

Support for learning in the early years is critical to giving children a good start in life. Play, talk and interaction between young children and adults (or older children) are the key activities at this stage. Play and Language is designed to give parents the skills and confidence to engage in these positive interactions with their children. The programme provides parents with information, advice and opportunities to participate in sessions with their children, and practical resources. It complements the Skills for Life strategy and the Early Years strategy by:

1. offering opportunities for families who need it; most to develop their communication, language and literacy skills;
2. contributing to creating Skills for Life strategies to reduce the number of adults who have difficulty with literacy and numeracy by building on the motivation that comes from helping your child;
3. attracting hard to reach families to programmes;
4. creating opportunities for partnerships in the most socially and economically disadvantaged communities;
5. giving parents with basic skills needs information and advice about care and health services and other learning opportunities.

References

1. Penelope Leach: “Babies don’t need teaching — at birth or at six months — but they do need talk and song and laughter and books; and scaffolding to help them surmount each new self-imposed challenge.”

Parents attending Play and Language courses and workshops have the opportunity to develop a portfolio of work during the programme. They record information about their child's language development, which is used as part of their preparation for a qualification.

Children are in high-quality provision within a language-rich environment, supported by skilled staff.

### Project Snapshot: Knowsley LEA/LSC in partnership with a local Sure Start

This is a 10-week course of 10-15 hours based on 10 one- or one-and-a-half-hour sessions.

Learners bring a loose activities and observations diary during the programme. They are offered a basic skills screening at the beginning of the course and basic skills assessment at the end of the course. A home activities and observations diary is used to support the learner

Keith McDonald, Skills for Families Consultant, Knowsley

### Project Snapshot: Croydon

We are piloting 10-hour introductory courses for parents with children aged 0–3. One of the courses is an introductory course for parents and the other focuses on developing language skills. The aim is to provide a variety of options for parents to choose from and to support their learning.

Musset Anwar, Skills for Families Consultant, Croydon

### FILM for children and families

**Background**

A series of workshops carried out by the Early Years National Training Organisation with the Children and Families National Training Organisation in the early 1990s found that more than half of the workforce had low or no qualifications. Many felt that they were not qualified to work with young children and were concerned about their future in the workforce. This led to the development of the FILM (Families Involvement in Language and Mathematics) programme, which aims to develop the language and mathematical skills of young children and their families.

**Basis for FILM**

The FILM programme is based on the work of the National Education Agency (NEA) and the Early Years National Training Organisation. It is designed to support parents and childminders in developing the language and mathematical skills of young children.

Musset Anwar, Skills for Families Consultant, Croydon

### REFERENCES

This programme is designed for childminders working in isolation who want to improve their own skills and the education service they offer to families but who are not sure of the best way to go about it. In many cases attending a workshop or a course could provide childminders with a first step to learning on their own account.

**Project Snapshot: Wirral**

The programme was set up in partnership with Wirral Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). A series of meetings was held to plan the programme to suit the needs of the target group. As childminders are self-employed and geographically spread out, we offered evening sessions at the LEA Professional Development Centre. With advice from the EYDCP training consultant, we planned six fortnightly evening workshops linked to the National Childminding Association (NCMA) Quality First scheme.

The planned programme includes:

- communication, speaking and listening, language development
- reading and books, Storysacks
- mathematical development
- creativity, games, play and learning
- markmaking and writing
- evaluation and progression.

Between the workshops there are home time activities to do with the children. We also arranged a Saturday Fun Day for the families to attend with their childminder to celebrate the work done with the children. We hope to put on extra workshops in ICT and the Move On project. A post-16 tutor runs the course with input from an Early Years specialist teacher.

Initially we targeted 17 childminders and recruited 11. There is quite a wide variation in the group, both in terms of childminding experience and the ages and numbers of the children looked after.

We are delighted by the response to join the course and the enthusiasm of the learners so far. We hope that the carers will take up the opportunity to plug any gaps in their CVs by progressing to the National Tests.

Frances Cheetham, Skills for Families Consultant, Wirral
Screening is used to find out whether or not someone might have a literacy, language or numeracy need. If a need is recognised, initial assessment can then provide a means of establishing a learner's level/s.

Project Snapshot: West Sussex

This is a 30–60-hour family programme, which specifically addresses the unique difficulties of uprooted families who are making a life in a new setting. In addition to the stresses of voluntary or involuntary resettlement, the many challenges include differences in the pace of language acquisition for the different generations. Children who have more exposure to English are often required to translate and solve other problems for their parents, reversing traditional roles and sometimes creating additional stress for all involved.

Project Rationale

The technology required for these courses has proved to be a major challenge as certain applications are required in order to access the website course in the evenings. In addition to computer access, there were concerns about parents' ability to log on. We overcame these by ensuring the websites were accessible and using mini sessions at the beginning of each course which enabled the learners to confirm to us that they knew how to access the website.

In order to ensure an active programme, we worked in partnership with EYDCP to target childminders by post, offering sessions at times and locations that childminders could attend, working with childminding network coordinators to promote the course, offering a course which childminders felt would contribute to their professional development and help them in their work.

The successful recruitment has been achieved through:

- working in partnership with EYDCP to target childminders by post;
- offering sessions at times and locations that childminders can attend;
- working with childminding network coordinators to promote the course;
- offering sessions which childminders felt would contribute to their professional development and help them in their work.

The technology required for these courses has proved to be a major challenge as certain applications are required in order to access the website course in the evenings. In addition to computer access, there was concern about parents’ ability to log on. We overcame these by ensuring the websites were accessible and using mini sessions at the beginning of each course which enabled the learners to confirm to us that they knew how to access the website.

Despite the fact that we set up our own server in advance, learners reported that they had trouble understanding the website. Many learners felt that they found it difficult to access the website, despite the fact that we had set up our own server in advance.

Other work with childminders is ongoing. Training in Family Fast Track 1 has been delivered to EYDCP staff who work with childminders. We are exploring the possibility of supporting childminders through the initial registration and certification process.

Jo Downes, Skills for Families Consultant, West Sussex
LLU+ has developed an activity pack with a storyline and matching activities that can be used within a family literacy/ESOL project. The pack includes activities for separate sessions for adults and joint sessions with their children. It is progressive and includes differentiation, with most activities at Pre-Entry level at the beginning, with a gradual increase to Level 1. These are cross-referenced as closely as possible to the ESOL Curriculum. For further information visit the Skills for Families website at www.skillsforfamilies.org.

Project Snapshot: Croydon

In Croydon, we piloted a 30-hour and a 60-hour model. The learners in the groups were at different levels and included primary and secondary children. In order to meet the needs of a very diverse group one of the courses focused on storytelling. The parents recounted a story from their country in their mother tongue. The parent and child then worked on converting the story into English and made story props. In the separate sessions parents worked on their own skills, focusing on the language of storytelling. This culminated in a session using stories from around the world. Families worked at their own level in terms of their language skills. The session was videoed to show the progress the children and adults made in terms of their spoken skills. The families also developed their writing skills by creating stories with different endings and produced bilingual text.
Project Snapshot: Cheshire

Cheshire has a very small ethnic minority population, but like any county there are specific areas where linguistic communities have developed. Due to the low numbers of these communities, Cheshire Family Education had limited experience of delivering family programmes to this target group. Chester has been working at strategic level and with the Chester Asian Council for the past 18 months with a focus on widening participation through Family Learning. When we were selected as one of the Skills for Families projects we were given the opportunity to develop the ESOL provision and to continue this strategy.

Initial identification of the school and partnerships

Woodfield Primary in Chester has a small community of Bangladeshi families and has a history of working with the Family Education team due to the work of Chester Asian Council. This had developed excellent relationships and trust with the Bangladeshi parents through their community worker, the Chester Asian Council Family Education worker, who had worked closely with them in the past. The Chester Asian Council employs a Family Project worker who also had good relationships within the community. The Chester Asian Council was approached to identify a school and college that would be interested in participating in the Family Programme and would be supported throughout by a member of the Chester Family Education team.

Engagement activities and publicity

Engagement was a slow process initially. All the agencies were involved in the initial planning and build activities. The following strategies were tested:

- 1:1 recruitment by Chester Asian Council Family Project worker and a follow-up letter in Bengali;
- an invitation to a Family Education workshop on choosing books held in school and led by a Family Education tutor, supported by a translator.

The first workshop took place in May and only attracted two parents to it, because the organisation and delivery were not seen as appealing. The following strategies were then tested and implemented:

- use parent advocates to recruit other parents to a 'meet the head teacher' workshop;
- offer additional follow-up taster sessions and encourage parents to bring a friend;
- translate all invitations and use Bangladeshi family images on publicity.

The course

The taster session was planned in detail but demonstrated the need to be flexible. This time two mothers arrived, but not until 10am. Discussions revealed that the role of the mother was such that they needed to go home after dropping their children at school, and that it would be impossible for them to stay all day. It was agreed to continue the next week with a morning-only session. The following week six mothers arrived and by the third week there were eight who continued to attend regularly.
The sessions were structured so that every week the parents were introduced to a theme based on everyday life and the relevant vocabulary was introduced. They were then able to practice this new vocabulary during the week and consolidate it in a fun intergenerational session with their children. For example, one week the group identified that they needed support with doctor and hospital visits, so the parents worked on vocabulary related to body parts and then consolidated this in the intergenerational session.

Early on in the course a trip out was suggested as a treat, but this was not well received as family obligations and domestic routines could not be easily changed. In fact, the Asian children were not allowed to go on residential visits organized by the school. However, by the end of the course the group were happy to have a trip to the Blue Planet Aquarium and subsequently the children have been allowed to attend their first school residential visit.

Ramadan came during the course and it was agreed to stop sessions during this time but to continue afterwards. A meal was planned for the last session before the break and a school café was created. The parents brought in typical Bangladeshi food and everyone joined in. We were delighted that the parents came back after the break and continued with the course. There was one parents’ evening and suggestions for further support included English classes, ESOL and a computer course. The group also expressed interest in a dual language book that could be used by all the children in the school.

Lessons learned

- Be flexible regarding start and finish times – cultural differences around preparation of food limits the time available. A whole day model simply doesn’t suit the needs of the target group.
- Timing is crucial – take note of dates of Ramadan for example.
- Be prepared for attendance to increase gradually – don’t give up!
- Use speaking and listening as a focus in intergenerational sessions.
- Exploit the chance for both adults and children to achieve learning outcomes in the intergenerational sessions.
- Food can be a good focus for a celebration session and provide opportunities for role-play café with Asian cuisine.
- Offer a family trip towards the end of the course – parents will take part provided they have built up trust.

Anne Pedley, Skills for Families Consultant, Cheshire
Project Snapshot: West Sussex

Evaluation of Family ESOL course for Portuguese parents and carers

Background information

The project developed from an initial meeting between Family Learning, the Support Team for Ethnic Minority Pupils (STEMP) and the Community Learning Improvement Projects, which facilitated the meeting. STEMP supported a sizeable group of Portuguese-speaking children (from Madeira) in Littlehampton, who started school with poor language skills. Through discussion, the needs of the parents and carers were identified and funding from Family Learning for a family ESOL course was agreed, using the model developed by the LLU+ as part of the Skills for Families programme. It was also agreed who would be responsible for the actions needed to recruit suitably qualified and experienced staff (language support assistant, teacher, crèche staff), negotiate a venue with schools and make approaches to parents. STEMP was crucial to the recruitment of parents.

Follow on meetings were set up to plan the content of the course using the plans developed by LLU+ for a new model to be tested by Skills for Families projects. This seemed to meet the needs of the parents and children and an initial date was set. However, problems met with a lack of attendance at this date were addressed, and with the help of STEMP, the initiative was continued, with a revised start date for the course. The course was a success beyond all expectations as the majority of families approached agreed to join, including one father and a grandmother of children from several families. Retention has been high and feedback from the parents and children has been positive.

Why was the course successful?

• The teacher for the course worked with STEMP as an EAL teacher and was already working with some of the children in the school. Being familiar with some of the children was a great advantage in setting up the project.
• The course was a new concept, and STEMP was able to provide initial support to the project.
• Responsibilities were clearly allocated and agreed with all parties involved in the project.
• The course was held in the school where the parents and children felt comfortable.

The schools are pleased with the improvement in communications with this group of parents and their new involvement with the school.
The partners had interlinked aims: Family Learning to recruit more ethnic minority learners and STEM to support the children in school.

All partners kept in frequent but informal contact to ensure decisions were made swiftly without waiting for formal meetings.

The staff involved were committed and enthusiastic.

All partners provided support for the staff delivering the project.

A progression strategy for the group had been identified at the outset.

Conclusion
Establishing a range of partnerships is an essential part of developing the provision of FLNN. Partnerships can enrich the provision and reach less accessible groups of learners. However, care has to be taken to ensure that all members of the partnership play an active role and adhere to clear responsibilities established at the outset.

Jo Downes,
Skills for Families Consultant, West Sussex

Family literacy, language and numeracy

As well as piloting models of family programmes, we suggested that projects could be innovative in developing aspects of FLNN that varied in the improved, extended or updated. The training programme was to develop for the structure of the mountainous, climate, culture and family learning experiences and was designed to provide training in basic literacy, language and numeracy for a total of 4 weeks to 30 hours, with a total of 12 hours for families and 90 hours for children in achieving their aims in addition to traditional 20 hours for Home Time (a distance learning module).
For example:

- **Module 1:** Parents' time – time for parents to improve their own literacy, language or numeracy skills.
- **Module 2:** Play and language at home and at school/nursery – time for parents to extend their support for their children's language development at home and in school.
- **Module 3:** Children's time – time for children to develop their language skills, in addition to usual classroom provision.
- **Module 4:** Joint time at nursery or school – time in school or nursery for parents and children to work together on literacy, language or numeracy.
- **Module 5:** Home time – time for parents and children to work together on activities at home.

We suggested the following themes:

- Language for communication and thinking
- Linking sounds and letters
- Reading
- Talking and writing
- Talking and pretending
- Remembering and talking
- Talking about stories together
- Drawing books and talking
- Calculating
- Shapes, space and measures

We also encouraged projects to include a family learning component to support a family learning center and to use ICT to support the delivery of FLLN.
Launched in 1998 by the DfES and managed by the Basic Skills Agency and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education.

Project Snapshot: Derbyshire

"Read On–Write Away!" has a history of successfully organising residential learning weekends for families, including those from Sure Start areas, at Northern College, near Barnsley. The Skills for Families project offered the opportunity to further develop residential courses and provided a link with the Lincolnshire LSC Skills for Fun Centre at Butlins in Skegness. Butlins offered families the chance to experience learning in a formal setting while enjoying the activities provided in their "Breakaway" season.

The families were recruited by Sure Start in Buxton as part of its agenda to:
- improve family, language and early learning skills;
- encourage reading;
- ensure disabled families have every opportunity to organise their daily lives; and school.

Karen Hanson, Skills for Families Consultant, Derbyshire

Community-based Family Programmes

Voluntary and community organisations with grassroots knowledge can play a key role in developing new opportunities for family literacy, language and learning.

The Adult and Community Learning Fund (ACLF) programme has enabled a range of organisations, other than schools, to develop literacy, numeracy or ESOL work with families.

1. Adapted from one of the CLLF case-studies by Dr HE Day, Social Policy Unit, University of Bath.
These have included:

- National voluntary organisations, e.g. Gingerbread, Highscope, National NEWPIN;
- Local voluntary and community organisations, e.g. local branches of NCH Action for Children, Family Service Units, Family Centres and community groups;
- Some LEAs and colleges which have been funded to develop provision in family centres, playgroups or with organisations working with families such as Homestart;
- Other projects have focused on 'outreach' literacy, numeracy or ESOL work with families, such as travelling workers, parents at work, fathers in the community or mothers from linguistic minority groups.

These projects have often been able to engage parents who would be hard to reach through the schools’ route. Some have targeted young parents including teenage, single parents and parents from minority ethnic groups, including refugees, as well as families with particular problems. Many have added a learning strand to other work that the organisation is already carrying out to support the families. In these cases it has not been a matter of getting parents to come to existing services to include basic skills development.

The key points for effectiveness in developing new models in community contexts include:

- Planning and implementation through an equal partnership between an organisation already in contact with, and trusted by, families and a quality literacy or numeracy or ESOL provider;
- A familiar, accessible location;
- A clear focus on literacy and numeracy development for parents and children, but within a context where engagement activities can also draw in new learners who may not yet be ready to recognise those learning needs;
- Recognition of the additional support needs of many of the families involved and funding to meet these;
- Free childcare;
- Supported progression routes to further learning.
Based on the findings from the external evaluation of ACLF, we invited projects to propose plans to integrate or develop engaging formal courses and training, and embed the

**Project Snapshot: West Sussex**

West Sussex LEA is currently implementing a community-based school improvement strategy (CBSI) which has been running successfully in two areas of identified underachievement in the county. This has provided a strategic link, as Family Learning has been able to work with the initiative to offer families in these areas FLLN opportunities. The development workers involved have backgrounds as LEA advisors and have been able to work with schools to promote family learning. The impact of this has been that demand for courses in these schools has been exponential.

The CBSI also holds regular steering group meetings, attended by partners from a range of statutory and voluntary agencies in the area. These meetings provide a forum for the promotion of FLLN. The impact of working with this initiative has been to embed FLLN in an effective way, by using the resource of the initiative’s proven strategies and avoiding duplication of approaches to schools. The initiative is now being rolled out to other areas of the county where there is identified underachievement.

Jo Downes, Skills for Families Consultant, West Sussex
Family initiatives in secondary schools

Rationale

Family programmes in secondary schools are much less common than in the primary sector because parents are more dispersed; the level of work is harder and young people are more independent.

In 1997/8 the Agency extended its intensive family literacy programmes to Year 7 children and their parents. The programmes were evaluated by NFER and were found to be largely unsuccessful. The reasons for this seemed to be that secondary schools are much larger than primary schools and their size caused greater difficulties in communication and timetabling.

However, secondary education is transforming; many schools are providing extended services including adult education, study support, ICT facilities and community sport programmes. Schools and their partners are being encouraged to build on existing provision and consider what additional activities they might offer. The most parents who come to the school site to access services are from families with children and young people.

The best examples of family programmes show links to school action plans and the Key Stage 3 strategy, offer parents training, have experienced teachers and also proactive LEAs, which encourage a strategic approach, demonstrating best practice.
organising training and tailoring courses to local need. Some LEAs, with well-developed policies or centres, have organised a range of courses including stepping up with the Children.

National initiatives, such as Excellence in Cities, Specialist Schools and the Extended Schools programme, give schools the opportunity to be creative in how they decide to involve parents and the community.

We invited projects to propose ideas to develop Family Involvement in secondary schools. We were interested in exploring a variety of approaches to family finance. The report of the Adult Financial Literacy Advisory Group in July 2000, provided evidence that significant numbers of adults make little or no effective use of financial advice and services. The report recommended that efforts should be made to engage with socially excluded adults and find effective ways of involving them in financial literacy programmes.

West Sussex is the only project to pilot Family Finance in an early years setting.

**Project Snapshot: West Sussex**

As part of the Skills for Families initiative, we have been working to extend the number of FLLN courses that we offer in secondary schools. At the start of 2003-4, only one secondary school was running a family course. Now six secondary schools are running a variety of initiatives.

We have built partnerships with these schools by supporting existing initiatives with which they are involved. A key factor in introducing family learning to schools has been liaising with them when they are seeking specialist status. Working with the community is an important aspect of their proposals and family projects fit very well under this heading. Also, adult education in West Sussex is part of the School Improvement Service, which has enabled us to link with community-based school improvement projects, taking place in two of the most deprived areas of the county. Family learning has been part of the resource on offer to the schools involved, thus providing us with an excellent route into them. We have tried hard to ensure that introducing family learning has not resulted in an additional workload for staff.

The programme of most interest to secondary schools has been Keeping up with the Children, particularly with a numeracy focus. In the primary schools, school-based workshops and follow-up have been targeted at dinosaurs, as far as we know one set of facts is not associated with the programme. In one of the schools, a progression group has been set up to focus on the needs of parents whose children are not achieving, with the aim of developing their vocabulary.

We intend to continue to promote family initiatives among the secondary schools and are already working with a particular focus on the community, particularly with initiatives already under way.

Jo Downes, Skills for Families Consultant, West Sussex.
Project Snapshot: Hampshire and Portsmouth

Hampshire and Portsmouth LEAs are working jointly to develop family programmes within secondary schools. The schools are keen to take family learning on board and to develop programmes through their existing infrastructures. Hampshire has a number of community secondary schools that already deliver adult and community learning and which are beginning to develop family learning as part of their extended programmes. Schools across both authorities are being encouraged to consider family initiatives as part of their school development, school improvement agendas and as an integral part of the implementation of the Key Stage 3 strategy. A range of approaches is currently being explored through inclusion initiatives, parent information evenings, homework clubs, Key Stage 3 transition work with feeder schools and half-term holiday events. Examples of the subject areas covered include literacy and numeracy through sport, ICT, family modern language courses and financial literacy. One Hampshire secondary school offers parents the opportunity to study a GCSE subject alongside their children.

The Skills for Families pilot project has given both authorities the opportunity to explore some of the very specific issues and challenges around working with families at secondary school level. It has also provided additional funding that has allowed us to have a development worker to identify and work with key staff in designated schools across the two authorities.

As with all such programmes, it is essential that there is a whole-school approach to working with parents and families. This overview makes it possible to embed good practice and establish sustainability in this exciting and important area of work.

Kerry Longhorn, Skills for Families Consultant, Hampshire
Romy Warren, Skills for Families Consultant, Portsmouth
Project Snapshot: West Sussex Family Finances (Early Years)

The remit for the West Sussex pilot scheme for financial literacy was to run four 12-hour courses to parents of pre-school children. Each course was to be placed in Sure Start centres, nurseries or in family centres and targeted at their client group. The course was to be for parents and was to be aimed at families on low incomes. One of the requirements of the course was to include an element of how to save with children and to prepare parents for managing the 'baby bond' when it is introduced. Potential partner organisations within the locality were identified, contacted and informed of the content of the course. Consideration was given as to how it might benefit their own client groups and how they could act as potential recruiters. The name of the course was changed to Money Matters.

A leaflet outlining the course details was produced. Following feedback it was realised that the language used was complex and the tips for parents and organisations were lengthy. A simpler message was considered essential so many of the adults in the target groups already had negative aspirations and low self-esteem. Each partner organisation received copies of the course information and were encouraged to distribute it to their client group. The leaflet was simplified and its appeal increased. Each partner organisation was invited to attend introductory sessions at local venues to discuss the course and how to promote it. The leaflet was amended, the terminology simplified and the logos of each partner organisation were added. A positive message was considered essential as many of the adults in the target groups already had negative aspirations and low self-esteem. Each partner organisation responded positively to the content of the course, but recognised that the problems associated with poor money management might deter members of their client group from attending. Discretion, sensitivity and reassurance were required at all stages.

Each of the families within the partner organisations received a promotional leaflet or details of the course via a newsletter. Some potential students spoke individually with members of staff who were able to reassure them and address any fears. Recruitment varied from one area to another. The most successful recruitment happened in a nursery which ran confidence-building courses for parents and which was known to have a good reputation in the locality. Several of the recruits had already attended a variety of confidence-building courses and as they knew a member of staff, they were not intimidated by a potentially threatening situation.

Recruitment in two of the other areas proved more difficult. Both are socially deprived areas where, historically, students have shown reluctance to be involved in self-improvement or basic skills courses.

The six-week programme was planned around budgeting, banking, non-cash payments, salaries, savings, borrowing and value for money. The following resources were used to create a bank of worksheets, activities and tasks related to these topics.

- Making the most of your money
- Money-go-round CD ROM
- Collosal Cards
- Skills for Life – Numeracy and Literacy
- Skillsheets
When each course was evaluated, specific issues related to recruitment became evident. In each of the pre-school centres, provision of a crèche facility was an essential requirement. Courses needed to be held in centres where potential students regularly met and where they trusted the staff. Centres needed to be associated with providing educational courses for the local community. The classroom environment had to be relaxing, welcoming and the course delivery flexible enough to accommodate parent responsibilities and varying a design that met the availability of time commitments. The timing of courses was important, introducing a course of this nature too early may make that year’s recruitment difficult.

The course content needed to be relevant to the students’ own financial situations. The programmes needed to be planned and well thought out using a variety of teaching styles, visual aids, supportive materials and equipment. Information needed to be self-explanatory, easy to follow and provide good advice, as well as being stimulating, interesting, educational and stretching. Providing every student with a folder helped develop good organisational skills and produced a useful resource for future reference. From the student’s point of view, prior knowledge of the tutor, or personal recommendation from members of staff, helped to alleviate inner fears. Discretion and sensitivity to individual personal circumstances was essential at all stages. As each course had students of differing academic abilities, a supportive and understanding tutor who was prepared to work individually if required was essential.

The main aim of this course was to make adults feel more confident and in control of their own finances. By increasing knowledge and understanding of budgeting, banking, salaries, spending, savings and borrowing, the students gained awareness and understanding of financial literacy, and the topic was a vehicle for reinforcing basic skills. All of the courses were successful although some students gained more than others. All students reported that the course was far less intimidating than expected and they appreciated the opportunity to review some of their existing and current skills.

Jo Downes, Skills for Families Consultant, West Sussex
FLLN in the workplace

The childcare review showed that children and their families are best served by integrated services and that childcare helps reduce child poverty by helping families, in particular lone parents, back into work. Much can be learnt from the Sure Start approach where services around health, education and improving the community are integrated.

We invited projects to pilot family programmes that integrated literacy and/or numeracy with ICT, job training, parent support, health care, etc. to help reach more families and recruit more fathers. We encouraged the projects to work with careers centres, JobCentre Plus and local employers to increase the job opportunities available for parents attending courses as they seek to increase their skills.

In Hampshire, workplace family learning was chosen as the area of development to complement Hampshire’s successful Valu£able Skills project. The project also worked with the Hampshire Association of Local Education Advisers (HASEA) to develop the programme.

However, most of the projects found the workplace programme the most difficult to set up. In Coventry, the project worked very hard to establish partnerships with local employers and Careers Centre Plus but found it difficult to work with the employers. The project adopted a more organisational approach in other parts of the city but did not persuade the employers of the case, perhaps as part of a business excellence model.
It often takes seeing information more than once and in different settings for people to
make sense of it. We decided to publicise FLLN with a flier in the County Council payslip envelopes
as doing so would ensure we reached every employee, including teachers, teaching assistants,
mentors, and all of the other department. This would then reach staff and parents/carers, and would back up and reinforce information
already sent out.

The cost of the fliers was in the region of £1000 which covered design, printing, folding
and posting. This worked out at approximately 0.04p per flier.

We received several responses almost immediately from the fliers and the contacts are still
coming in. We decided to make the logo visible and clear on the envelope so that it could be
readable when the envelope was opened. The logo was printed in a bright, colourful background
on a white envelope.

Clare Meade, Skills for Families Consultant, Suffolk
Key action points for success

The main impact of the project in West Sussex has been to extend the range of provision we offer beyond the schools who have been hosting FLLN for some time. We have extended and embedded the work we do with partners in order to reach new learners beyond our traditional groups. The piloting of a range of programmes has been challenging and rewarding, and it has allowed us to successfully extend our work with ESOL learners, parents and members of pre-school children and childminders. It has helped us to take the first steps towards providing a programme of courses for secondary schools, which we will develop in the coming year. The dissemination and training aspects of the project have facilitated the development of potential partners who we can work with in the future.

Jo Downes, Skills for Families Consultant, West Sussex

In drawing on the key lessons learned in 2003–04, we believe that there are some key elements that play an important part in ensuring that family literacy, language and numeracy programmes are effective. These include:

- A commitment to, and practical support for FLLN from the LEA's directorate and senior management team that will ensure reach across sectors.
- An effective strategic plan for FLLN with a timetable for action and outcomes, which meets local needs.
- Quality assurance – the ability to reflect on performance and quality, and accurately self-assess strengths and weaknesses.
- The critical role of good management in FLLN.

See Annex 2 for job description and person specification for Skills for Families consultant.
For delivery models the following elements are important:

1. Successful partnership working. Partnerships at all levels are the key to a better infrastructure for family literacy, language and numeracy. Programmes need to take account of cross-cutting local interests in health, social services, planning and regeneration and employment.

2. The opportunity for persons with low or no qualifications to gain qualifications.

3. Suitable accommodation with sufficient space for a range of activities and appropriate equipment.

4. An excellent range of family literacy, language and numeracy and ESOL teaching and learning materials. It is important to reflect a diversity of home literacy practices.

5. Suitable tools and processes for assessment, initial and diagnostic assessment.

6. An effective system for developing individual learning plans, tracking progress, recording, verifying and reporting achievements for parents/carers and children.

7. Effective advice and guidance for parents on progression routes.

8. Agreed monitoring procedures working with common templates, which enable key data on programmes, including recruitment, retention, achievement, local growth, to programmes, the effectiveness of new approaches and learner progression. It is important to systematically collect evidence on the impact of programmes, know why and how they work and to collect secondary evidence that shows intergenerational impact.

9. Effective operational planning for continuing professional development for full- and part-time teachers, support staff and front-line workers, taking account of the findings of Ofsted and ALI inspections.

10. Effective promotional materials for families, schools and organisations. The aims of these materials should be to raise awareness and encourage local action. Promotion is most successful when it builds on what parents already do, explains the reasons for support at home in terms of the major roles parents have in the different stages of children’s development.
Next Steps

National policy in England, in particular, Excellence and Enjoyment and Every Child Matters, shows a commitment to increasing families’ involvement in, and impact on, their children’s education. In Every Child Matters this focus is particularly on the most disadvantaged families. Schools, LEAs and local partnerships are being encouraged to take a more strategic approach and provide more integrated services.

Through schools, early years programmes, child and family care, the Probation Service and other measures, the DfES is keen to ensure that the literacy, language and numeracy needs of parents are identified and met.

In a recent conference speech about the future for education in Knowsley, Director of Education, Steve Munby asserted that ‘our adult population continues to have far too many with low basic skills’. However, he pointed to the 2,850 basic skills enrolments through the LEA’s adult education service, the increasing embedding of basic skills in adult vocational programmes, the significant increased in the number of foundation modern apprenticeships and the 900% increase in the number of learners engaged in LEA Family Learning programmes over the last three years. He identified ‘Extended Schools/Schools At The Heart Of The Community’ as one of five key future priorities for education in Knowsley. He stated, ‘We need to be resolute in our support for the principle of Extended Schools and then make it happen.’

Skills for Families is providing a very worthwhile and unique opportunity for LEAs and LSCs to come together nationally to share good practice and work together to address the challenges.

Dave Skinner, Skills for Families Consultant, Portsmouth
The lessons learned from the projects have been very positive and it will be important to see if the views expressed by the Skills for Families consultants and project staff can be generalised more widely.

Following the success of Skills for Families in 2003–04, the LSC is developing Skills for Families phase 2 from August 2004 to include up to 25 Local Authority/local LSC partnerships. Some of the first phase projects will be able to apply to continue into the second phase, but it is hoped that up to nine new projects will be recruited to build on the experience of Skills for Families.

The project’s priorities in 2004/5 will include:

• extending the piloted local infrastructures for planning and managing family literacy, language and numeracy;
• developing and testing a range of delivery models, using LSC funding and based on the Skills for Life learning infrastructure and the national curriculum, to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents and children;
• developing additional materials to support literacy, language and numeracy provision undertaken in family groups;
• disseminating effective practice to other Local Authorities, local LSCs, voluntary organisations and other relevant agencies.

The successful organisations will need to be committed to working in partnership with other local agencies and voluntary and community groups. They will also need to be committed to the objectives of Skills for Life. This will involve increasing participation and raising the quality and planning. It will involve ensuring that all LSC partners use the learning infrastructure and the learning frameworks, and that the learning is delivered in local authority and local LSC areas.
Resources and further reading


BSA, (2003). Reaching Out with Basic Skills: A practical guide to community-focused basic skills work with socially excluded groups. ISBN 1 85990 253 7


BSA (2001). Reaching Out with Basic Skills: A practical guide to community-focused basic skills work with socially excluded groups. ISBN 1 85990 253 7

Resources and further reading
Basic Skills Agency publications

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Family literacy, language and numeracy – a guide (Booklet) for policy makers

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<td>Early Promise: An evaluation of Early Start by the University of Sheffield</td>
<td>Early Promise: An evaluation of Early Start by the University of Sheffield (ref: A1602)</td>
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<td>Family Numeracy Adds Up</td>
<td>Family Numeracy Adds Up (ref: A803)</td>
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<td>Family Numeracy Adds On</td>
<td>Family Numeracy Adds On (ref: A1256)</td>
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<td>Keeping up with the Children Literacy and Numeracy Videos</td>
<td>Keeping up with the Children Literacy and Numeracy Videos (ref: A1294, A1295)</td>
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<td>Key Word Dictionary – Literacy</td>
<td>Key Word Dictionary – Literacy (ref: A1245)</td>
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<td>Key Word Dictionary – Numeracy</td>
<td>Key Word Dictionary – Numeracy (ref: A1246)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read and Write Together activity pack for parents and young children</td>
<td>Read and Write Together activity pack for parents and young children (ref: A524)</td>
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<td>Read and Write Together video for parents</td>
<td>Read and Write Together video for parents (ref: A610)</td>
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<td>Talk and Listen Together activity pack</td>
<td>Talk and Listen Together activity pack (ref: A1374)</td>
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Primary Strategy teaching resources to support the teaching of literacy and numeracy – available in downloadable format from the DfES Standards website – www.standards.dfes.gov.uk follow the relevant links for literacy and numeracy and specific year groups/key stages. The resources include frameworks for teaching literacy and numeracy and teacher training packs such as Grammar for Writing, a phonics handbook, how to teach calculations, and the role of mental maths, as well as planning frameworks and ideas for sessions which can be adapted to meet adult learners' needs.
Family Programmes

Family literacy, language A3 leaflet/poster to FLLN1

Promote family literacy, language and numeracy

Why not learn together? A5 size scratch card to FLLN2

Promote family literacy, language and numeracy to working parents

Why not learn together? A5 size scratch card to FLLN3

Promote family literacy, language and numeracy to lone parents

Strategy

Skills for Life – the Executive summary SFLLN

National strategy for improving adult literacy and numeracy skills

www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/publications

Skills for Life – the New strategy document SFLNS2

National strategy – published in March 2003

Focus on delivery to 2007

Snapshot version SFLNS2 SS


Research

The Skills for Life survey: Full report RR490 The Stationery Office

A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills

Tel: 0870 600 5522

www.tso.co.uk/bookshop

Research Brief Summary of report RB490 DfES Publications

Update newsletter

Skills for Life Update

Quarterly newsletter for everyone involved with the improvement of literacy, language and SFL

Issue 1 Autumn 2001 SFL UN 1

Issue 2 Winter 2001 SFL UN 2

Issue 3 Spring 2002 SFL UN 3

Issue 4 Summer 2002 SFL UN 4

Issue 5 Autumn 2002 SFL UN 5

Issue 6 Winter 2002 SFL UN 6

Issue 7 Spring 2003 SFL UN 7

Issue 8 Summer 2003 SFL UN 8

Issue 9 Autumn 2003 SFL UN 9

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<td>Adult ESOL Core Curriculum</td>
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<td>Adult Pre-Entry Curriculum Framework</td>
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<td>Access For All</td>
<td>Guidance on making the Adult Literacy and Numeracy Core Curricula Accessible</td>
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<td>Adult Literacy Core Interactive CD ROM CDALCC</td>
<td>Curriculum and version of the Adult Access for All CD ROM Literacy Core Curriculum, searchable and cross-referenced to Access for All</td>
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<td>Adult Pre-Entry Interactive CD ROM of CDAPCF</td>
<td>Curriculum Framework Adult Pre-Entry for Literacy and Numeracy CD ROM</td>
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<td>Delivering Skills for Life</td>
<td>A shelf-top library box DSFL (toolkit) containing nine publications and a CD ROM to aid the delivery of Skills for Life</td>
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<td>Standards and curriculum</td>
<td>Delivering Skills for Life - A briefing pack designed to assist organisations</td>
<td><a href="#">DSFL/</a></td>
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<td>as they prepare to deliver the new teaching and learning infrastructure</td>
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<td>Pathways to Proficiency - The alignment of PTP language proficiency scales</td>
<td><a href="#">SFLMS</a></td>
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<td>for assessing competence in English language</td>
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<td>Quality and training - Subject Specifications for Adult Literacy and Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)</td>
<td><a href="#">SS01/2002</a></td>
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<td>Numeracy - Subject Specifications for Adult Literacy and new teachers of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)</td>
<td><a href="#">ESOL/SS01/2002</a></td>
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<td>Managing Success - A study of the management systems and styles that promote successful teaching of literacy and numeracy for adults</td>
<td><a href="#">SFLACL</a></td>
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<td>Inspection Guide - Five publications giving guidance on the inspection of literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision</td>
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<td>Success in Adult Literacy - A guide to support the Adult and Community Learning of learners in Adult and Community Learning</td>
<td><a href="#">GCIF02/</a></td>
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<td>Raising Standards – A guide to help providers achieve excellence for e-learning learners using e-learning and in e-learning contexts.</td>
<td><a href="#">SFL</a></td>
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<td>Workshop tapes</td>
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<td>Pathfinders</td>
<td>Working with other agencies – Lessons from the Pathfinders, to promote the benefits of working in partnership with other agencies</td>
<td>DVD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning difficulties and disabilities</td>
<td>Introducing Access for All Guidance to support IAFA teachers who have adult learners with learning difficulties and disabilities</td>
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<td>Living our Lives</td>
<td>Life stories of 10 people with learning difficulties. A resource for learners and tutors, includes an audio CD</td>
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<td>Yesterday I Never Stopped Writing</td>
<td>Guidance on developing community-based provision for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities</td>
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<td>Self-advocacy Action</td>
<td>A pack written for adults with learning difficulties on speaking up and self-advocacy, includes an audio CD</td>
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Learning difficulties and/or disabilities
Skills Explorer for British Practical literacy activities SEBSL
Sign Language Users for British Sign Language users at Entry Level
Basic Skills for Adults A resource pack to RPST with Learning Difficulties support staff and/or Disabilities development
CD ROM version CDRPST
Workplace Employer Toolkit Materials for employers ETKV1-2002 aimed particularly at larger businesses with an existing training infrastructure to improve literacy and numeracy at work. Also contains a video with case studies.
CD ROM version ETKV1/CD2002
SME information pack An information pack for SME/businesses without a info-202 training infrastructure
Skills for Life – improving literacy and numeracy Executives, Managing Directors and Senior Management which outlines the problems poor literacy, language and numeracy can cause in the workplace
Funding A Guide to Learning and SFL FG0304 Skills Council Funding 2003/04
Promotion Promotions and Skills for Life SFL CP0304 Communications promotion and Strategy communications strategy for 2003/2004
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<td>Working with Refugees and Asylum Seekers – Support Materials for ESOL providers</td>
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<td><em>Learning materials</em></td>
<td>Other Skills Explorer CD ROM with literacy SEABS (CD ROM) and numeracy activities for learners at Entry level</td>
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<td><em>Diagnostic assessment materials</em></td>
<td>Learning materials Teacher Pack for Literacy Learning Materials This comprehensive pack SFL TPLM/L For additional Learner Teacher Pack for contains the teacher Mater ial/s, please call Literacy files of learning resources DfES Publications from Pre-Entry to Level 2 and the teacher notes Learning Materials As above SFL TPLM/N Teacher Pack for Numeracy Learning Materials As above SFL TPLM/E Teacher Pack for ESOL Learning Materials As above</td>
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<td><em>Diagnostic assessment materials</em></td>
<td>Diagnostic assessment materials Pack for Literacy Assessment pack designed to provide a detailed assessment of the learners' skills and abilities in numeracy, literacy, ESOL, and dyslexia. Pack for Numeracy Assessment pack designed to provide a detailed assessment of the learners' skills and abilities in numeracy, literacy, ESOL, and dyslexia. Pack for ESOL Assessment pack designed to provide a detailed assessment of the learners' skills and abilities in numeracy, literacy, ESOL, and dyslexia. Pack for Dyslexia Highly efficient CD ROM Interactive CD ROM which assesses the learners' abilities for literacy, numeracy, ESOL and dyslexia. CD ROM which contains DAM7 CD ROM the Acrobat PDFs of all four subjects</td>
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Useful websites

- LSC: www.lsc.gov.uk
- DfES: www.dfes.gov.uk
- ABSSU: www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus
- BSA: www.basic-skills.co.uk
- The Basic Skills Observatory: www.basic-skils-observatory.co.uk
- NIACE: www.niace.org.uk
- ALI: www.ali.gov.uk
- Ofsted: www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Sure Start: www.surestart.gov.uk
- Family Programmes: www.familyprogrammes.org
- Skills for Families: www.skillsforfamilies.org
- Step in to Learning: www.stepintolearning.org
- Financial Literacy: www.money-bsa.org.uk
- National Literacy Trust: www.literacytrust.org.uk
- LLU+: www.lsbu.ac.uk/LLUplus
- Pre-school Learning Alliance: www.pre-school.org.uk
- Teachernet: www.teachernet.gov.uk
- NFLN (from April): www.familylearningnetwork.com
- Move On: www.move-on.org.uk
- Extended Schools: www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/briefing/extendedschools/1

Useful contacts

The Basic Skills Agency, e-mail: familyprogrammes@basic-skills.co.uk
The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit, telephone: 020 7273 1223
National Learning and Skills Council, telephone: 024 7682 3372
Step in to Learning, e-mail: stepintolearning@basic-skills.co.uk, telephone: 020 7440 6500

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15. A website with information about research, policy and good practice relating to literacy, language and numeracy teaching.

16. Step in to Learning aims to equip nursery staff with the knowledge and skills required to help them identify parents/carers with a literacy, language and/or numeracy skills need. For information about training in your region and to see online resources take a look at www.stepintolearning.org.
Regional partnerships

Cheshire
The Skills for Families project is managed by an experienced team that has been involved in family learning for the past 10 years. The LEA has piloted a number of new delivery models including ESOL Family Learning workshops delivered in partnership Chester Asian Council. For information on Skills for Families in Cheshire, please contact Anne Pedley on 01244 603078 or e-mail her at pedleya@cheshire.gov.uk.

Coventry
Coventry LEA has over 25 years' experience of developing and delivering family learning and_ESOL programmes, creating pathways to employment. The project has created partnerships throughout the region with local employers and businesses to encourage workplace learning. For more information on Skills for Families in Coventry, contact Dorothy Hunter on 024 7640 5700 or e-mail dorothy.hunter@westcafes.coventry.gov.uk or Margaret Deaville on 024 7660 2590 or e-mail margaret.deaville@eastcafes.coventry.gov.uk.

Croydon
Croydon LEA has piloted a number of innovative delivery models. These include ICT courses, programmes for bilingual families and family finance in primary and secondary schools. Since the beginning of the project over 300 adults and 170 children have attended family programmes. For information on Skills for Families in Croydon, please e-mail Musseret Anwar at Musseret_anwar@croydon.gov.uk.

Derbyshire
Derbyshire LEA, through Read On – Write Away! has a comprehensive, well-developed and strategic approach to family, literacy, language and numeracy. ROWA! is a partnership of local and national agencies, hosted by the authority but acting independently from it. To find out more about Skills for Families in Derbyshire you can visit the website at www.rowa.co.uk. For information on Skills for Families in Derbyshire, please contact Karen Hanson on 01773 539425 or e-mail her at khanson@rowabridgecentre.fsnet.co.uk.

Annex 1
Gloucestershire
Working collaboratively with the local LSC, and in partnership with Gloucestershire LEA, is the South West’s Skills for Families project. For information on Skills for Families in Gloucestershire, please contact Joanna Jackson on 01452 268400 or e-mail jjackson@gloscc.gov.uk.

Hampshire and Portsmouth
Skills for Families enables Portsmouth and Hampshire to share, develop and embed their strengths and expertise in various aspects of delivering and managing FLLN provision. Examples of innovation by this partnership include work with teenage parents. For more information on Skills for Families in Portsmouth, please contact Romy Warren at rwarren@portsmouthcc.gov.uk. For information on Skills for Families in Hampshire, please e-mail Kerry Longhorn at kerry.longhorn@hants.gov.uk.

Knowsley
Capacity-building events in 2003–04 for key groups and agencies have focused attention on some of the key priorities for family learning in Knowsley, such as developing provision in early years, the Extended Schools programme, and increasing the participation and engagement of men in FLLN. For information on Skills for Families in Knowsley, please e-mail the Skills for Families Consultant, Keith McDowall at keith.mcdowall@knowsley.gov.uk.

Newcastle and South Tyneside
Skills for Families in Newcastle and South Tyneside is a partnership between Newcastle LEA and South Tyneside Family Learning Services and Tyne and Wear LSC. Building upon the extensive FLLN programmes running in both areas, this partnership has developed new programmes in Family Finance, ESOL, Play and Language, and Family Literacy in secondary schools. To find out more information on Skills for Families in Newcastle, contact Una McNicoll on 0191 211 5335 or email una.mcnicholl@newcastle.gov.uk. For more information on the project in South Tyneside, contact Debbie, Skills for Families Consultant, on 0191 519 1909 or email debbie.murphy@s-tyneside-mbc.gov.uk.

Suffolk
In Suffolk, the Skills for Families project has enabled the LEA to work in partnership with other departments and organisations. In 2003–04, the Skills for Families project hosted a series of capacity-building events in order to raise the profile of FLLN in schools across the county. For information on Skills for Families in Suffolk, please e-mail Clare Meade at clare.meade@educ.suffolk.gov.uk.
Wakefield
Wakefield LEA is committed to strategic planning. Its strong local partnerships include West Yorkshire LSC, Wakefield EAZ, Sure Start, the Local Strategic Partnership, and community partners. Wakefield has developed a Skills for Families website: www.wakefield-sff.org.uk. This centres on the programme’s development in the region, new studies and trends, and links to useful resources for families and professionals. For more information, contact Anne-Marie Spencer at amspencer@wakefield.gov.uk.

West Sussex
West Sussex has extensive experience of delivering family literacy, language and numeracy programmes in schools across the county. West Sussex is ideally placed to run the Skills for Families programme. It works with a wide range of partners across the county, including the LSCB (Local Strategic Community Board), Sure Start, the National Numeracy Strategy, the National Literacy Strategy, and many others, to ensure the development of programmes that support families in literacy and numeracy. For more information, contact Jo Downes at jo.downes@westsussex.gov.uk.

Wirral
Wirral LEA, through Skills for Families and Wirral LSC, has developed a range of innovative family literacy programmes that include promoting the use of language and reading for all children. These include programmes that support parents with English as an additional language, and schools that focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills in primary schools. For information on Skills for Families in Wirral, contact Frances Cheetham on 0151 346 6503 or email francescheetham@wirral.gov.uk.

West Stirlingshire
West Stirlingshire has extensive experience of delivering family literacy, language and numeracy programmes in schools across the county. West Stirlingshire is ideally placed to run the Skills for Families programme. It works with a wide range of partners across the county, including the LSCB (Local Strategic Community Board), Sure Start, the National Numeracy Strategy, the National Literacy Strategy, and many others, to ensure the development of programmes that support families in literacy and numeracy. For more information, contact Jo Downes at jo.downes@westsussex.gov.uk.

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Annex 2

The role of the Skills for Families consultant
(April 2003 – March 2004)

Job description

- To work with and support the strategic direction of Skills for Families
- To develop the work programme for the LEA/LSC and ensure that it is delivered
- To work closely with senior managers and key staff as well as with stakeholders and partners
- To support and give advice on the priorities for programme design, development and implementation including the use of Skills for Life learning and teaching infrastructures
- To work with the LEA/LSC partnership to establish in CPD centres
- To advise and support organisations in developing new programmes including Sure Start
- To work with the Pre-school Learning Alliance, Early Excellence Centres, schools and basic skills providers, in conjunction with the National Coordinator
- To advise and lead on Family Literacy, Language and numeracy training courses, including resource and materials building programmes
- To contribute to the development and production of training materials, in line with the ABSSU guidance on quality assurance and endorsing teaching and learning materials
- To implement quality assurance and monitoring systems in the work for Skills for Life
- To brief colleagues, partners, LEA and partners ABSSU and LSC on programme
- To advise and support colleagues in the delivery of programmes, ABSSU, LSC and the National Research and Development Centre and partner organisations concerned with teacher education and teacher qualifications
- To write reports for internal, external and ABSSU, DfES, LSC audiences
- To contribute to publications and articles
- To evaluate and carry out effective strategies to disseminate lessons distilled from the programme
- To give presentations, seminars and workshops
- To contribute to the overall development of Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy
- To evaluate developments and the impact of Skills for Families
Person specification

- Has a strategic vision in the context of family literacy, language and numeracy.
- Has experience of developing collaborative working relationships with a variety of partners and stakeholders in different contexts and at different levels.
- Is able to design and deliver innovative and creative family literacy, language and numeracy programmes.
- Has experience of planning, setting and delivering targets.
- Has experience of training and consultancy.
- Has extensive experience of teaching language, literacy and numeracy and/or ESOL working with children, young people and adults.
- Has a good understanding of the training needs of staff involved in literacy and numeracy and has skills in a wide variety of settings in the post-16 sector or in school settings.
- Has a sound understanding of current theory and pedagogy and familiarity with major developments in the teaching of literacy, language and numeracy. This should include knowledge of developments in initial teacher training, Skills for Life and the Primary Strategy.
Acknowledgements

The Basic Skills Agency would like to thank the Skills for Families consultants and project staff who have given invaluable support, time and expertise through:

• feedback;
• trialling materials;
• piloting programmes;
• participating in development seminars;
• debate and discussion.

Their ideas, knowledge and skills have helped enormously in strengthening the local infrastructure to develop, support and sustain family literacy, language and numeracy.

The BSA would also like to thank LLU+ for their specialist input on ESOL, the Pre-school Learning Alliance for their specialist contribution to the development of local partnerships, and the National Literacy Trust for their work in promotion and dissemination.

For more information

If you would like further information on Skills for Families please visit www.skillsforfamilies.org.

Visitors to the website can read case studies from the partnerships, join in with the interactive discussion forum, read up on the latest Skills for Families news and events, and gain access to useful resources.

All general enquiries should be sent by email to the helpline address:

familyprogrammes@basic-skills.co.uk
For further information on the Skills for Families project which ran from April 2003 to March 2004, please contact:

Family Programmes, The Basic Skills Agency,
Commonwealth House, 1–19 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1NU
Tel: 020 7440 6501 • Fax: 020 7440 6626
E-mail: familyprogrammes@basic-skills.co.uk