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

Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy
a guide for Extended Schools

development for
education and skills
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills for Life: the national strategy for improving adult literacy and</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>numeracy skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family literacy, language and numeracy in schools: where do I start?</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out what’s involved</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out how it works in schools that are developing, or have developed</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extended services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out who is involved in similar initiatives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be clear about the level of need, and about how family literacy,</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>language and numeracy can meet it</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find out how to reach your parents</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start planning for the next stage</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The background to family literacy, language and numeracy</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How does family literacy, language and numeracy fit with the services</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by extended schools?</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milestones in the movement towards extended schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. A programme that crosses boundaries</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-agency working</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Evaluating the need</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Making the case for family literacy, language and numeracy</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evidence from research</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evidence from inspection</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evidence from the ground</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Recruiting parents</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruit your teachers, head of centre or other staff</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer taster courses</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use flyers</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make a promotional video</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use current learners</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendation, and moving on</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaching out to new learners</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other parents</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. The learning journey and moving on
   Signposting or referral
   Screening
   Initial assessment
   Diagnostic assessment
   Individual learning plan (ILP)
   Learning materials
   Formative assessment
   Summative assessment
   The learning journey
   Moving on
   Finding work
   Celebrating achievement

9. Who teaches family literacy, language and numeracy?
   Who funds family literacy, language and numeracy?
   Who provides family literacy, language and numeracy?
   The national qualifications framework
   Existing teachers
   Frontline training

10. What now for family literacy, language and numeracy?

Appendices

Scope and range of courses approved for LSC family literacy, language and numeracy funding, 2005-06
Useful resources for the learning journey
References
Useful websites and contacts
The DfES and the LSC would like to thank all the Skills for Families projects – and, in particular, Cornwall, Hampshire, South Tyneside, Suffolk and Wakefield – whose generous contribution of time, experience and comments helped to shape this publication. Thanks are also due to the Extended Schools Team at the DfES, who provided useful comments on early drafts of this document.

This is a companion publication to Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy - a guide for children's centres (FLLN/CC) and, with the exception of Section 3 and of certain other pages, contains broadly the same commentary.
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, which aims to help 2.25 million learners gain a national qualification by 2010.

Since 2001, a massive 2.4 million adults across England have taken up 4.8 million courses in literacy, language and numeracy skills. Over 750,000 of these learners have gone on to achieve nationally recognised qualifications – a commitment set out by the Government in the Skills for Life strategy.

Since the launch of Skills for Life, we have gained an even greater insight into the effect low levels of literacy and numeracy skills have on individuals, their families, on the economy and on society. 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, to live in a disadvantaged area or to be unemployed. They and their children risk being cut off from the benefits 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 an ambitious strategy that is designed to address literacy, language and numeracy needs of adults and young people. It covers all post-16 learners on learning programmes at levels from pre-Entry up to and including...
Level 2. These programmes range from discrete to embedded courses, and from classroom and community provision to voluntary and work-based learning. Achievement and progress in Skills for Life are recognised through certification of Key Skills, GCSE Maths and English, and adult literacy and numeracy. It is therefore crucial that the strategy supports and reflects the successful implementation of all other post-16 strategies. These strategies 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 and valued by employers. Our goal to improve the skills of young people is also central to the Opportunity and Excellence 14–19 strategy and the 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper.

Every organisation and individual has a contribution to make. We believe that the most important element for successful delivery of Skills for Life is partnership, together with the ownership of the strategy by all our key supporting and development partners.

Government departments, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Jobcentre Plus, the Prison and Probation Services, development and learning providers in the post-16 learning sector, businesses, the CBI, the TUC, Sector Skills Councils and many other organisations are working together to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of adults through:

- **boosting demand** for learning through 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 co-ordinating planning and delivery to meet learners’ needs

- **improving the standards** of teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy 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

Family literacy, language and numeracy is an integral part of Skills for Life and has already made a significant contribution to improving the literacy, language and numeracy skills of thousands of parents, carers and children throughout the country. This guide provides an account of family literacy, language and numeracy programmes that is tailored to the needs of people working in, and managing, schools that are developing, or have developed, extended services.

I hope that you will find the guide useful and that it will help you to provide learning experiences that will improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of the adults and children with whom you are working.

Barry Brooks

Head of the Skills for Life Strategy Unit
This publication is an attempt to give an account of family literacy, language and numeracy to someone who is managing, or working in, a school that is developing, or has developed, extended services. It is also, more crucially, an attempt to identify the journey such a person might take in order to arrange family literacy, language and numeracy provision in their school. In order to do this, it borrows heavily from the experience of people who have already been involved in such provision – managers, teachers, learners – whose voices are heard throughout the publication. And, as part of that process, this section plots the stages other people have identified as the key stopping points on the way to successful introduction of family literacy, language and numeracy programmes in their institutions.

**FIND OUT WHAT’S INVOLVED**

Although it is not a new idea, family literacy, language and numeracy is not necessarily a concept that everyone is familiar with. You will need to get some idea of what’s involved, and some sense of the benefits to your school, and to the agencies you are partnered with. The first two chapters of this publication give the background to family literacy, language and numeracy, explaining how its success has led to its being included in a broad range of government initiatives. There is also a reference section at the back of this guide, which indicates some of the literature you might find useful.
FIND OUT HOW IT WORKS IN SCHOOLS THAT ARE DEVELOPING, OR HAVE DEVELOPED, EXTENDED SERVICES

Yours will not be the first school to run family literacy, language and numeracy programmes; there are likely to be others in your LEA, and still others within relatively easy reach. Chapter 3 talks generally about the way in which schools and family literacy, language and numeracy programmes can work together. More specifically, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has funded a National Family Learning Network to collect information about these programmes, and related activities around the country. Details are available on its website (http://www.familylearningnetwork.com).

FIND OUT WHO IS INVOLVED IN SIMILAR INITIATIVES

Family literacy, language and numeracy shares similar agendas with a wide range of initiatives and programmes, nationally and locally, and anyone wanting to run courses in their school would find it useful to make contact with the agencies and organisations responsible for these linked programmes. Chapter 4 maps some of the institutions, government departments and other organisations involved in these programmes and gives an account of how to work effectively in this multi-agency way.

BE CLEAR ABOUT THE LEVEL OF NEED, AND ABOUT HOW FAMILY LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY CAN MEET IT

Being persuaded yourself is one thing; persuading others is another entirely. At some stage you will need to make a firm argument for introducing family literacy, language and numeracy courses into your school, and this argument will need to show how these courses can meet the literacy, language and numeracy needs of parents and children.
in your community. Chapters 5 and 6 provide solid support for such an argument and will give you guidance on how to make the case locally.

FIND OUT HOW TO REACH YOUR PARENTS

The process of recruiting parents to family literacy, language and numeracy is a challenge to which many have responded with imagination and enthusiasm over the last ten years. Talking to other schools that are developing, or have developed, extended services will give you many ideas; visiting the Skills for Families website (http://www.skillsforfamilies.org.uk) will give you many more; and Chapter 7 will give you a summary of the main strategies that have been tried so far with family literacy, language and numeracy in this country. Bear in mind, however, that family literacy, language and numeracy is a national programme delivered locally, and each community will need to be approached in a different way.

START PLANNING FOR THE NEXT STAGE

Even before you start running family literacy, language and numeracy programmes in your school, you will need to have a full understanding of the learning journey learners will undertake on these programmes, and on who is equipped to accompany them on the various stages of that journey. You will find this information in Chapters 8 and 9, which also direct you to resources that you will find useful for the various points along the way. These resources are gathered together in the Appendices, where you will also find a list of the courses approved for LSC family literacy, language and numeracy funding, and a set of useful websites to take you further.
When Skills for Life was launched in 2001, it was estimated that 7 million adults needed help with their literacy, language and numeracy. Research since then suggests that this figure underestimated the scale of the need. According to The Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, just under 18 million adults have literacy skills at Level 1 or below, and of these 5.2 million have literacy skills at Entry 3 or below. The picture for numeracy is starker still, with just under 24 million adults having skills at Level 1 or below, 15 million of these having skills at Entry 3 or below. These figures give the national level of need, but the reality is that there are areas, regions and communities where the need is much higher than elsewhere. Low levels of numeracy and literacy go hand in hand with socio-economic deprivation, and high levels of numeracy and literacy need tend to cluster in regions and districts with high unemployment and low average wealth. In addition, in those communities where English is not the first language the need is higher still: of adults surveyed who had English as an additional language, 46 per cent had literacy skills, and 69 per cent had numeracy skills, at Entry 3 or below.

Skills for Life has successfully begun to address these needs. By July 2004, 2.6 million adult learners had taken up over 5.5 million learning opportunities, far exceeding the target of 2 million learners by the end of 2004. The next target is to make sure that 1.5 million adults improve their literacy, numeracy or language skills by 2007 and a further 750,000 by 2010.

Five things family literacy, language and numeracy can do for adults

- It can lead to their first qualifications.
- It can help them understand how their children learn and why it is so important that they help them.
- It can help them build more positive and supportive relationships with their children.
- It can develop their confidence and self-esteem.
- It can change their lives!
These targets represent a significant, concerted attempt to put an end to a cycle of deprivation that has seen low expectations and achievements passed from one generation to the next. Lower levels of literacy and numeracy affect the life chances of adults, leading them to find low-paid work that fails to stretch them, causing them to play a less active role in their community and making it difficult for them to support their children’s learning fully. It is for these reasons that the Skills for Life focus is on adult needs. The effect of these needs, however, is equally dramatic on children. Parents with low levels of literacy and numeracy have greater difficulty supporting their children’s developing literacy and numeracy, and their children tend to underachieve at school. Underachievement at school typically leads to employment that pays little and interests less, and the children become adults with low self-esteem who fail to realise their full potential, thereby perpetuating the cycle of need.

Parental involvement is a significant factor in determining both a child’s educational achievement and also their behaviour. Children whose parents support their learning and are involved in their schoolwork perform better at school and in later life. All parents want their children to do well, in fact to do better than they did; but not all parents are equally able to help their children succeed in this way. According to the research quoted above, although most parents with children aged 5–16 attempted to help their children with their reading and numeracy (95 per cent and 87 per cent respectively), parents with literacy and numeracy skills at Entry 2 or below were significantly less likely to do so (63 per cent and 55 per cent respectively).

This is the background to family literacy, language and numeracy, a national programme established to help parents and carers improve their literacy and numeracy skills, so that they may be more able to help their children improve theirs.
2. Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes

Family literacy, language and numeracy is a strand of Adult and Community Learning which is funded by the LSC and sits in the same broad areas as wider family learning. There are significant differences between the programmes, however, as the following illustration indicates.

**Family programmes**

All family programmes encourage family members to learn together. They promote learning together as a family but also learning within the family. They should aim to allow adults and children to pursue further learning. The ‘inter-generational’ aspect of family programmes is important: the key principle is that children and adults learn together.

**Family learning programmes**

Programmes in this category aim to get adults and children learning as or within a family, or to help parents/carers learn how to support their children’s learning. They have two main aims:

- to develop the skills or knowledge of the adult and the child
- to help parents/carers to be able to support their children’s learning and development more actively and with greater confidence, and to be able to understand why that support is important

**Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes**

Programmes in this category have three main aims:

- to improve the literacy, language and numeracy skills of parents/carers
- to improve the ability of parents/carers to help their children
- to help children acquire literacy, language and numeracy skills
Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes are, by definition, always family learning and family programmes, whereas family learning programmes are not necessarily family literacy, language and numeracy programmes. One key distinction is that the parents/carers on family literacy, language and numeracy courses have literacy, language and numeracy needs themselves – and that the programme is directly addressing those needs.

The idea of parents and children learning together may not be new, but the first family literacy, language and numeracy programmes in England and Wales were run only ten years ago, in 1994, as a pilot project developed by the Basic Skills Agency (BSA, then the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit). The project was influenced by similar programmes in the United States of America, where work by organisations such as the National Center for Family Literacy had influenced federal legislation and led to the creation of national programmes for inter-generational learning.

In this country, the first four demonstration programmes developed and run by the BSA were evaluated by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and found to have led to improvements in the literacy, numeracy and language skills of both parents and children. They were seen to have had similarly positive effects on parents’ involvement in their children’s learning and had encouraged parents to go on to further training and to seek qualifications.

Aided by these positive outcomes, the profile of family literacy, language and numeracy grew, guaranteeing it a significant role in the national strategy, Skills for Life. Since 2002, family literacy, language and numeracy programmes have been co-ordinated and funded by the LSC as a strand within Skills for Life. As a measure of the success of the programmes, about
100,000 adult learners are expected to participate in family literacy, language and numeracy programmes in 2004/05.

Every local education authority (LEA) area in England is currently funded by the LSC to run some family literacy, language and numeracy programmes. This is not a legal obligation, but all LEAs, recognising the positive outcomes of such programmes and valuing their contribution to children’s and adults’ learning, have nevertheless opted to run some element of family literacy, language and numeracy.

All family literacy, language and numeracy programmes are targeted at adults, but run for the benefit of children and for parents or carers who themselves have literacy, language or numeracy needs. Beyond that, there are no further limits on who should attend them. They are for all ages: some courses will have grandparents working alongside their children and grandchildren, others will aim to attract teenage parents, giving them support, guidance and an opportunity to improve their own skills. Programmes are for women and for men (a number of programmes are targeted specifically at fathers), and they are for families from all ethnic backgrounds.

Family literacy, language and numeracy is a programme that straddles the phases of statutory education: programmes are run for pre-school, primary and secondary children, and could involve FE students, too. Settings for programmes are equally varied: while the majority take place in schools, or venues connected with education, others take place in the workplace, community halls, sports centres, libraries, health centres, study centres in football clubs, family centres, prisons.
In Cornwall, a Family ESOL programme is continuing to be successful among Portuguese families who have recently arrived in Bugle to work for local food manufacturers. The programme offers families support in learning English that they can use in their everyday lives: in the classroom, the workplace, as well as in situations such as attending a doctor’s surgery, or using a bank. The programme also aims to allow the families to access and be a part of their local community and, through building their relationship with the local school, it gives the parents an opportunity to be more involved in their children’s education.
The 2002 Education Act clarified the legal position of schools wanting to provide services beyond their statutory requirement to educate their pupils, and gave school governing bodies the power to provide family and community services and facilities. Although this is not an entirely new concept (there are precedents in other countries – most notably in Scotland and the USA – and in this country there have been community schools and colleges that have been extended schools in everything but name), the Government has signalled a commitment to ensure that by 2010 all parents will have access to affordable childcare through their children’s schools, and has stated its intent to encourage all schools to develop extended services.

An ‘extended’ school is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its children, their families and the wider community. The DfES Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners sets out the Government’s expectation for all primary and secondary schools to offer extended services over time. The strategy sets out a core offer of extended services that the DfES wants all schools to develop over time. The expectation is that all schools will be open from 8am to 6pm all year round, offering a core set of services around childcare, study support and parenting activities, as well as providing a gateway to specialised support services for children. Other services may be offered depending on the needs of the community, and

3. How does family literacy, language and numeracy fit with the services provided by extended schools?

Five things family literacy, language and numeracy can do for schools with extended services

- It can help you engage parents and their children together
- It can help you address skills needs in your area
- It can help you reach hard-to-reach parents
- It will help you with your delivery of the other core services you have to offer
- It will help to launch parents on their learning journey

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could include support for children or adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, advice centres, early intervention services for young people. The school with extended services is there for the benefit of the community, and for that reason there will be no single model of what such a school has to offer, beyond the core services mentioned above.

Schools that have developed extended services are built on exactly the same principles as family literacy, language and numeracy. Among these, the guiding principle is that a school that is an important part of its community has fewer problems with behaviour, attendance or motivation with its children than a school that is isolated from its community; it also has a better record in terms of pupil achievement and employability. Beyond the benefits to children’s education – which should of course be the main concern of all schools – schools with extended services also work on the understanding that a school that is linked to its community becomes a part of that community’s regeneration, strengthening important relationships, supporting adult and community learning, and improving health. The parallels with family literacy, language and numeracy are transparently clear.
Parenting support, childcare and study support are considered to be crucial elements of what ‘extended’ schools have to offer, and help to provide the gateway to a wider range of services, including legal, medical or employment advice. They also represent a means of ensuring that all children may be given the individual support that will allow them to achieve their full potential, but equally that issues or problems that might otherwise hold back a child’s learning can be dealt with in a unified fashion by school and home.

MILESTONES IN THE MOVEMENT TOWARDS EXTENDED SCHOOLS

- Part 3, Chapter 1 of the 2002 Education Act outlines the collaboration between schools, federated schools, and the provision of community facilities by ‘extended’ schools.

- The Schools Achieving Success white paper outlined the Government’s commitment to promoting and developing extended schools and to making sure that there are no barriers to schools’ developing such approaches. Pilots would be established to test out such ‘extended’ schools and to generate examples of best practice.

- Investment for Reform expressed the Government’s commitment to creating extended schools in the most deprived areas, and to supporting local delivery of extended services in many other areas.

- A New Specialist System: Transforming Secondary Education developed a three-year plan to work closely with 240 schools to enable them to provide a more comprehensive range of extended services for their communities, and to support all local education authorities and schools in setting up extended services in other schools.
In March 2003, the DfES announced that up to 240 full-service extended schools, providing a full prescribed range of services (childcare, health and social care, lifelong learning and family learning, parenting support, study support, sports and arts facilities and access to ICT) would be created by 2006, with at least one in each LEA.

In September 2003, the Every Child Matters Green Paper was launched (see page 22). This sets out a framework for improving outcomes for all children and their families, to protect them, to promote their well-being and to help all children to develop their full potential. Co-location of services is one important way of achieving this, and extended schools are an obvious choice for this co-location of services.

In September 2003, details were announced of LEAs that will set up the first wave of full-service extended schools in 2003–04, along with the names of the nominated schools.

In March 2004, the Children’s Bill was launched, outlining the Government’s commitment to place children and families at the heart of services. The Bill reaffirms the important role schools offering extended services can play and recognises the need to support all schools to develop extended services that are right for their school and community.

In May 2004, a further 46 areas that would receive funding from 2004 to 2005 to develop full-service extended schools were announced, along with their nominated schools.

In July 2004 the DfES published the Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners, which included the Government’s vision for extended schools at both primary and secondary level.
In December 2004 the Government launched its 10-year strategy for childcare. The Government’s vision is that by 2010 all secondary schools will be open from 8am to 6pm on weekdays all year round, offering a range of activities either themselves or in partnership with private and voluntary sector providers.

With their common focus on children and parents, schools with extended services are the natural site for family literacy, language and numeracy programmes. These programmes have clear advantages for these schools. They help to ensure that children are fully supported by their parent or carer. The programmes introduce parents to the learning journey of their children, and connect them to the key players who are accompanying them on that journey; and they create an invaluable contact between parent and teacher. Moreover, by improving parents’ own literacy and numeracy skills, these programmes increase the parents’ ability to support their children’s developing literacy and numeracy.

There are practical benefits, too. Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes are run by a team of trained professionals. Typically, a school teacher will work with the children during the separate sessions, while a specialist adult literacy, numeracy or ESOL teacher with understanding of family programmes will work with the parents or carers; other support staff will be present to work with either children or adults, as need demands and resources allow. In most cases, the local authority is responsible for providing this staff, and for providing any cover for schoolteachers who are involved in the programmes.
The programmes are most effective where teachers of children and adults are allowed the time to plan the course and the sessions together. Applying the same principle of partnership, the adults’ and children’s teachers would normally run the joint sessions together, although these sessions might be led by either of them.

A further benefit is that the programmes provide continuing professional development for teaching staff – providing them with important skills for when the school develops extended services, or for retraining to work as specialist family literacy, language and numeracy teachers. And another important benefit is that, by making the school a focal point of the community, these programmes help to bind the community closer to the school, breaking down the barriers between schools and parents that have often in the past inhibited the progress of children and the performance of schools.

It is, of course, impossible to measure the effect on a community of family literacy, language and numeracy programmes, but it is nevertheless possible to talk about indications. If, as is certainly the case, the positive effect of these programmes can lead to individuals beginning to believe in themselves and to engage with their children’s school and the wider community; and if, as people maintain and inspectors report, the effect of these programmes can be to reconnect schools with their parents and their communities – then it may well be that family literacy, language and numeracy belongs, with the extended school movement itself, to that set of initiatives which have the combined effect of arresting social decline and helping to begin the rebuilding process.

Financially, the school has nothing to lose – in our case, it’s the authority that pays for the teaching and the teaching cover. And it’s got everything to gain, I think, from the continuing professional development of its staff. In a way, these are really good training opportunities for teachers. But you still have to approach schools sensitively: with all the league tables around, the various SATs and other exams, some schools don’t like the idea of their children’s dedicated teacher being taken away from them on a regular basis, however good the cover.
As a strand of Skills for Life, family literacy, language and numeracy is delivered by the LSC under the supervision of the Skills for Life Strategy Unit within the DfES. However, with its twin focus on children and adults – and the positive results it has delivered in terms of adults’ employability, qualifications and community involvement – it is a programme that affects all government departments, and in which all have an interest. This is all the more so on a regional or local level, where family literacy, language and numeracy programmes are often delivered in consultation with health representatives, social services and Jobcentre Plus – and with others outside the sphere of local or national government: employers, voluntary agencies, trade unions, libraries, museums, sports centres. In the light of this overlapping of interests, it is no surprise that a key factor in the successful delivery of family literacy, language and numeracy is the ability to forge links with other agencies.

**MULTI-AGENCY WORKING**

Partnerships with agencies and organisations that can recognise a shared agenda with family literacy, language and numeracy programmes lie at the heart of all successful provision; indeed, without partnerships of this kind, it would be virtually impossible to provide such programmes at all. Every organisation or department with a concern for child development, parenting or adult basic skills represents a potential partner: the statutory agencies engaged in childcare settings, schools, health services, social care, youth services, the police and criminal justice system, and culture, sports and play organisations; voluntary agencies similarly involved in child development and child protection (such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, the NCT, NSPCC); and any commercial organisations involved in providing services and facilities for children and young people.

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**Five things family literacy, language and numeracy can do for children**

- It can help develop their literacy and numeracy skills at an essential stage of their lives
- It can make it easier for them to work with other adults and other children
- It can show them that learning with their family is fun
- It can make it easier for them to settle down at school
- It can give them activities to do at home with other members of their family, thereby building stronger relationships with them
The process of establishing links with these agencies and organisations - and showing where family literacy, language and numeracy can help them deliver an element or elements of their agenda - requires considerable time and energy. This goes beyond identifying the departments and colleagues who might be interested in what family literacy, language and numeracy can offer to being prepared to listen patiently and to attempt to understand the detail of what others are attempting to deliver. Finding a role for family literacy, language and numeracy in the activity of other departments requires meticulous understanding of the plans of those departments and of the particular issues that concern them. And it is often only when other departments can recognise this level of understanding that they can begin to realise the match with their agendas.

In this context, it helps to be able to demonstrate that a local programme can deliver local benefits but at the same time be part of a national picture. The centrality of family literacy, language and numeracy to Skills for Life helps here, providing obvious links to other statutory agencies (youth agencies, Jobcentre Plus, probationary services). Another current Government initiative of key importance in this respect, however, is Every Child Matters, which, like Skills for Life, requires agencies to work in co-operation to deliver mutually agreed goals.
The Green Paper, Every Child Matters, published in 2003, lists five outcomes that children and young people felt were vital to well-being in childhood and later life; these outcomes have since been given legal force in the Children Act 2004. The Government’s ambition is to improve these outcomes for all children and by doing so to ‘narrow the gap in outcomes between those who do well and those who do not’. The central importance of parents and carers to this ambition is flagged up on every page of the Green Paper and underscored as one of the important factors in the achievement of the 25 specific aims related to these five outcomes:

- **Being healthy** – enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle
  Parents, carers and families promote healthy choices

- **Staying safe** – being protected from harm and neglect
  Parents, carers and families provide safe homes and stability

- **Enjoying and achieving** – getting the most out of life and developing the skills for adulthood
  Parents, carers and families support learning

- **Making a positive contribution** – being involved with the community and society and not engaging in anti-social or offending behaviour
  Parents, carers and families promote positive behaviour

- **Economic well-being** – not being prevented by economic disadvantage from achieving their full potential in life
  Parents, carers and families are supported to be economically active.

The five outcomes identified in Every Child Matters broadly reflect the four major impacts of poor basic skills identified in A Fresh Start (1999), which were on:

- the individual
- families
- communities and society
- the economy.
The Children Act 2004 represents an opportunity and a challenge. Until recently it has been possible for different agencies, departments and organisations to be approaching essentially the same issues in subtly different ways, or to be developing similar agendas without letting related organisations know about them. The Children Act 2004 requires a greater degree of consistency from all working in the same field, and systematic sharing of information, initiatives and issues. All of this should benefit family literacy, language and numeracy, since the advocates of family learning have been striving for precisely this inter-agency approach and collective endeavour for the last ten years or so. It should also work to the advantage of schools that have developed extended services: an inter-agency approach is best delivered by services that are located in the same place, and ‘extended’ schools are obvious places for such co-location of services.

By compelling all statutory agencies to co-operate in improving children’s well-being, the Children Act 2004 is not only exacting a multi-agency approach but also creating an independent agenda focused on children and young people – an integrated programme, in other words. For this programme to succeed, integrated management and integrated funding are likely to be seen to be its necessary attributes, but the existence of the programme itself is advance enough for the time being.
The early family literacy, language and numeracy programmes, like the first schools to develop extended services, clustered in the areas of greatest need. The commitment now is to extend the extended school principle from its current concentration in the most-deprived areas of the country and to create them in every community. This commitment is to the long term, however, and in the meantime the focus will inevitably be on areas where the need is greater. Establishing the scale of the need therefore becomes an important first step in the development of family literacy, language and numeracy programmes.

There are standard measures for this activity, which will provide a useful starting point – for example, given the close association of socio-economic deprivation with low literacy and numeracy skills, any system that determines the socio-economic status of a community. Indicators of unemployment levels, benefit claims, schools that score below average on performance tables – all these will go some way towards identifying areas of need. But there are always anomalies that these research methods will fail to pick up: the highly affluent postcode that has a small community of great need within it; the area of great deprivation that has a school with a high proportion of children from more-affluent families. There is ultimately no substitute for evidence from the ground, the word-of-mouth account of people who live and work in the area. Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes have to be locally determined, locally organised and locally run – or else they will not succeed.
Determining the level of local need with the help of those who live and work locally has the added advantage that it forges relationships that will help to shape the future delivery of the programmes. Identifying others who are attempting to address a particular need, or who are operating a related programme, serves to build up a network of shared concerns and common agendas.

It is one thing, however, to identify the scale of the need, another entirely to get others to recognise this or, more significantly, to persuade them that funding and resources should be directed to family literacy, language and numeracy programmes as a major means of addressing this need.
In regions where family literacy, language and numeracy has been running for some time, there is little need to persuade people of its merits (organisations and individuals who have become involved in family literacy, language and numeracy programmes tend quickly to become as passionately enthusiastic about them as the teachers who run them) even if there will be a continuing challenge to secure adequate funding and resources. In regions or establishments that have not run family literacy, language and numeracy before, however, a case will need to be made for it, and this case will need to include evidence not only of the need but also of the effectiveness of such programmes in meeting this need.

THE EVIDENCE FROM RESEARCH

Strong evidence for the effectiveness of family literacy, language and numeracy programmes emerges from a limited number of national surveys focusing specifically on this provision (NFER/University of Sheffield, 2003; NFER/BSA, 1996; NFER/BSA, 1998; Brooks et al, 1997). These reveal immediate and longer-term gains as a result of parents and children attending these courses, gains that even the constructively critical publication Family Learning: a survey of current practice (Ofsted, 2000), which talked of the ‘largely unsubstantiated claims often made for [the] potential [of family learning]’, could not discount. The Ofsted publication found that, for children, the best work resulted in:

- accelerated development of oracy and pre-literacy skills;
- improvement in existing standards of literacy and numeracy;
- positive behaviour and attitudinal changes;
- enhanced confidence and self-esteem as a result of the individual support and interest offered by their parents and other adults;
- an awareness that learning is a normal activity in which adults also engage throughout their lives;
- an appreciation of the pleasure to be gained from collaborative learning.

In the same section, the report found that, for parents, this work:

resulted in a greater understanding of child development and children’s learning, improved skills in literacy, numeracy and parenting, increased confidence in school contacts, and progression, in over 50% of cases, to FE or further training, or a better job.

A certain amount of research into the effectiveness of family literacy, language and numeracy has been undertaken at a regional level. A report undertaken for Hampshire County Council (Stepien and Murray, 1997), for example, found that ‘There was a startling improvement in children’s average reading and writing scores during the courses, which were sustained in post-course testing’ and that, in addition, ‘Class teachers and parents stressed the children’s improved attitudes and motivation to learning generally’. Presenting to a conference in Vancouver, the Head of Family Learning for Birmingham City Council reported that parents ‘have now taken a very positive role in supporting their children and the class teacher, now enjoy sharing time with children and feel more confident to do so’ and that children’s reading ages had improved, over the course of the programmes, by from three months to three years (Bateson, 2004). And a report by NIACE into the provision of family learning in Lancashire found that
parents who had been on courses were more involved in their children's learning development, in their schools and in the broader community; their confidence had grown; they were more likely to move on to further learning as a result of the course; and both the performance and the behaviour of their children had improved (Horne and Haggart, 2004).

THE EVIDENCE FROM INSPECTION

Family literacy, language and numeracy is a strand of Adult and Community Education (ACL) and therefore features in inspections carried out by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). In its 2005 report on Cornwall LEA, ALI commented that ‘many learners on foundation programmes make good use of their improved literacy and numeracy skills in their work and daily lives. Very effective partnerships have successfully led to foundation and family learning programmes being offered in locations with high levels of unemployment and economic and social disadvantage’. Another authority, Suffolk, was similarly praised for its family literacy, language and numeracy provision in ALI's 2004 inspection, which reported that ‘Most learners gain substantially in self-confidence and develop their personal skills … and … are able to talk eloquently about the positive effect of their courses on their daily lives’.

From 2005, family literacy, language and numeracy (or at least family learning) has become an implicit element of all ALI inspections, since the Common Inspection Framework, the basis for ALI inspections, now requires that ‘inspectors should evaluate, where appropriate, the involvement of parents and carers in their children’s learning and development’.

There is a similar requirement for school inspectors to assess the effect of a school’s programmes for parents. Under the seventh question of the school ‘Evaluation Schedule’ (‘How well does the school work in partnership with parents, other
Schools and the community?

inspectors are required to evaluate and report on:

- **the quality of any links with the local community,**
  assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which the school:
  - provides a resource for, and draws from, the community;

- **the effectiveness of extended school services and educational and support programmes for parents, families and members of the community, if included in the inspection specification,**
  assessing, as appropriate, the extent to which provision:
  - is of high quality;
  - meets identified needs;
  - results in educational benefits to pupils enrolled at the school

School inspections increasingly refer to such programmes (and in some authorities, school inspectors are even specifically requested to do so). In its 2004 inspection report on Siskin Infant and Nursery School, Gosport, for example, Ofsted said:

> The school is very effective in trying different ways of encouraging the parents and carers to learn about literacy, and to give them the skills and confidence to help their children achieve their best. A very good feature of this work is the interesting and well-attended family learning programme that the school provides on literacy and numeracy.

> The school develops particularly good systems for helping the pupils who find learning difficult, and gives them extra assistance with their literacy and numeracy work. Because of programmes like the family literacy and numeracy courses pupils and parents feel that they are valued and supported.
And it had this to say about Piper’s Vale School, Suffolk, which its inspectors visited in 2003:

One of the major influences on parents is the well-established and flourishing Family Learning Group. Work is carefully linked to what the children are doing in class through close communication between the course tutors and teachers. Both organisers and parents can see the clear gains in progress made for everyone involved. Parents speak positively about the difference these courses have made to their lives and in the way they can support their child’s learning at home.

Many mothers have gained qualifications in numeracy, literacy and ICT. Numbers attending courses ... are growing. Future plans involve visiting the local college ... for some parents who wish to further their own education. As a result of these learning groups, some parents have found employment in school and some have put themselves forward as parent governors. Many agree it has helped their confidence and given the area an improving sense of community.

**THE EVIDENCE FROM THE GROUND**

In addition to this objective evidence of the impact of family literacy, language and numeracy, there is the more subjective evidence of those who have been on courses or of those who have observed the effects of these courses on children or parents. This qualitative and largely anecdotal evidence on its own makes a very strong case for family literacy, language and numeracy; it shows, for example, how parents’ self-esteem has grown as a result of these courses, how parents have moved on to other courses, or become employed, or in some other way positively changed their life experience.

*Before I did this course I used to think that I was thick, that I couldn’t do anything, but now I know that I can. All this learning, I thought it wasn’t for the likes of me, but now I think ‘I can do that too!’*
As further evidence of this local support for these programmes, two teachers, asked what advice they would give other schools or centres thinking about running courses in family literacy, language and numeracy, commented:

**Move heaven and earth to get it going!** Parents were able to offer more effective support for their children, were much more confident not only about supporting the children but also about their own maths skills. Very good PR: Ofsted was very impressed!

**Do it!** There is so much positive feedback it is worth making whatever changes are needed to accommodate the course.

Establishing the case for family literacy, language and numeracy needs to be a perennial activity; schools with extended services and other organisations where these programmes are run should construct systems for catching all evidence documenting the achievement of parents and children attending their courses. National research findings and anecdotal accounts compellingly make the case for family literacy, language and numeracy, and the programme’s effects on parents, children, schools and communities are impressive and well-documented – few other initiatives deliver in such a range of important areas. But the argument needs to be made at the local level, too, and as part of a case that not only shows the potential for the programme to deliver results but also outlines a strategy for reaching the parents and children who stand most to benefit from it.

Debbie was in a Keeping Up With The Children course that I visited the other day, looking after this boy whose mum had been unable to attend. I was thrilled to see her. She had come on an early family learning course when her life was in a complete state and her son was living in care. We had managed to get that time for her on the course as access time for her son, largely thanks to good links with social services. It turns out that she’s now studying English and her son is back living with her again. The first thing she said to me was ‘I’m doing my English at the college’ – it’s funny, they all want to tell you what they’ve achieved straight off. Of course, I can’t claim that the course itself was responsible for that change in her life but I’m absolutely positive that we were one of the factors that helped to bring it about.
The challenges involved in recruiting parents to family literacy, language and numeracy courses seem to be immense: these are learners for whom schools are likely to have negative associations, and who are unlikely to have emerged with many qualifications (if any) or with any sense of fulfilled potential; their experience of school is likely to be one of repeated failure to master many of the basic skills needed in adult life, and of teachers who were unable to help them find a route through the elements of writing, reading and mathematics that they found difficult. Now, some time after emerging from school with limited qualifications and a sense of unfulfilled potential, they are being asked to resume their education and attempt, one more time, to master skills that had continually eluded them before.

Certainly, it is likely that few parents would be recruited to family literacy, language and numeracy courses if these were associated with a deficit model of education similar to the one outlined above. That model, focusing on what learners cannot do and on how far short they fall of national targets, is the polar opposite of the model used by family literacy, language and numeracy programmes. The model used by these programmes is of learner ability and learner need, and a crucial element is to allow parents to recognise their literacy and numeracy needs for themselves - although all courses need, of course, to assess the literacy and numeracy needs of parents. Just as crucially, parents need to be able to recognise not necessarily the need, but also the opportunity, to do something about this. In this respect, the fact that they are parents is hugely significant. As one co-ordinator put it:
You have to be upfront about it. I start by pointing out the obvious, that we’re all parents, and then asking ‘Do any of us here not want our children to do well for themselves, to do better than we have?’ From there it’s easy, really, to show that we’re only going to be able to help that happen if we are able to support their learning, help them with the questions that they throw at us. And, if we’re going to be able to do that, we’re going to need to have certain skills ourselves, at the least to have enough to be one step ahead of the children. When I present it like this, there are very few parents who don’t feel completely OK about admitting to poor skills in some area or another. But it’s the children who clinch it: all parents want to do well by their kids; the key thing is just to link the development of their own skills with the development of their children’s.

The basic principle here – of demonstrating the benefits to be gained from enhancing the literacy, language and numeracy skills of these learners, as opposed to focusing on their current inability to perform certain skills – applies to all areas of adult literacy, language and numeracy. Most people – if approached in that way and told that a certain course or programme will help provide them with better health, employment or more rewarding employment, a greater sense of involvement in the lives of their children and/or the community in which they live – would not hesitate to sign up to that course. But extended schools are located in areas of greatest need. These areas are often associated with collective low aspirations; indeed, the very idea of ‘improving yourself’ is suspect in certain of these communities. How can parents from such communities be recruited on to family literacy, language and numeracy programmes?
There will be different answers to this question, depending on who is recruiting and whether a particular parent group is being targeted (i.e. recruiting fathers would involve a different strategy from recruiting parents from one particular language group). The following suggestions represent strategies that family literacy, language and numeracy providers have found effective in recruiting parents; they do not represent a hierarchy or a sequence and all of them, of course, assume that the parents targeted have literacy, language and numeracy needs.

**RECRUIT YOUR TEACHERS, HEAD OF CENTRE OR OTHER STAFF**

If a family literacy, language and numeracy course is to be run in a school that is developing, or has developed, extended services, explaining to other staff what is involved in these programmes is essential. One of the first advantages of this is that it will demonstrate to other professionals that the courses are complementary to school activity, not contradictory; the second is that it will allow teachers and other staff to act as recruiters in their own right, passing on information about courses to parents they feel might get a lot out of them; and the third is that it may be the first step in recruiting teachers to the cause, not only in terms of their support for the programme but also as potential teachers or teacher support in the future.

**OFFER TASTER COURSES**

The kind of parents family literacy, language and numeracy courses are trying to reach are unlikely to sign up to them immediately. What often works are taster courses, which may be offered on site or in some other venue like a ‘learning fair’ (where a range of options and courses are displayed for prospective learners).
USE FLYERS
All schools with extended services will have established channels of communication with parents; these should be used to recruit parents to family literacy, language and numeracy programmes. Announcements placed in newsletters, posters pinned on boards, flyers handed out in the reception area - all are opportunities to reach parents.

MAKE A PROMOTIONAL VIDEO
Promotional videos can serve the dual function of drawing the attention of parents and other colleagues to the existence of family literacy, language and numeracy. They have the added convenience of versatility: they need not be limited to one exhibition or a single day’s display of learning possibilities, and they can be used in a range of settings (libraries, Jobcentre Plus, health centres). To make the most of this versatility, however, the content, style and length of these videos need to be appropriate to the various venues in which they are to be displayed and to the audiences that they are intended to reach.

USE CURRENT LEARNERS
The best ambassadors for family literacy, language and numeracy programmes are often the parents themselves. An overwhelming proportion of parents speak positively about the courses they have been on, and they should be encouraged to spread the word. Comments collected at the end of courses can form a very effective part of a display, and parents are often happy to speak about the courses to other parents, whose description of how they have benefited from a course quickly removes any lingering stigma such courses may have.
In the newly created Freeston Business & Enterprise College, one of the first courses to get off the ground was the adult computer club. The main motivation of parents joining this club was to be able to play computer games with their children, or not to be left completely stranded by their children’s greater computer literacy. With the club in place, it would prove relatively straightforward to direct learners to linked areas of literacy or numeracy that would benefit them in other areas of their life.

**RECOMMENDATION, AND MOVING ON**

Beyond the means of recruitment listed above, there are a number of other ways in which parents commonly come to attend family literacy, language and numeracy courses. In certain instances, and in interviews with other statutory agencies, parents may be told about courses and advised that going on them might benefit them in a number of ways. This applies particularly to parents whose parenting skills are in question; to these parents the courses may offer huge incentives, such as greater access to their children.

In schools with extended services, parents may also be signposted towards family literacy, language and numeracy courses by frontline staff. More straightforwardly, other parents move on to family literacy, language and numeracy courses from other family learning courses. This might involve moving from a taster course or introductory programme to an intensive programme, from a literacy programme to a numeracy programme, or from a wider family learning programme to a specific family literacy, language and numeracy course. This last form of progression is a common means of recruitment in areas where there has been no previous experience of family literacy, language and numeracy courses or where there is some resistance to the idea, either from the parents or from those responsible for provision. In such circumstances, parents should be provided with the courses they feel they need (or want); once they are comfortable on these courses, either the literacy and numeracy can be embedded in the courses or the parents can be pointed in the direction of other literacy and numeracy courses.
There’s no magic involved – there will always be parents out there who you know desperately need your courses. It’s a case of more of the same: more time, more getting to know the people in the area, more working with the other people and agencies who are out there trying to reach the same people. And maybe also it’s a case of knowing that there are always going to be parents who you won’t be able to recruit onto your courses, however great their need and however hard you try.

The evidence from other Skills for Life activity suggests that embedding literacy and numeracy in other courses leads to more significant and longer-term benefits than providing discrete literacy and numeracy courses. Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes might prove the exception to this rule; after all, the development of children’s and adults’ literacy and numeracy is the particular objective of these programmes. Nevertheless, in order to secure a more permanent position for family literacy, language and numeracy courses in venues or in areas where they are not yet established, it may prove strategic, in the shorter term, to embed literacy and numeracy in other family learning courses.

REACHING OUT TO NEW LEARNERS

One of the current challenges for family literacy, language and numeracy programmes, as for all other Skills for Life programmes, is to recruit parents who are hard to reach, and who live in the wards with the lowest level of literacy, numeracy and/or language skills. The greater needs of these parents call for a greater effort on the part of those providing the courses, but an effort for which the combined services of the extended schools may be able to provide vital support. With social services, health and education working in an integrated manner from an integrated base, and linking where appropriate with voluntary agencies, the scope for reaching parent groups that had hitherto proved beyond the reach of family literacy, language and numeracy should be considerably increased.
OTHER PARENTS

Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes were developed to support adults with literacy, language and numeracy needs. The adults on these courses, however, may have very varied levels of need – there is, after all, a considerable difference between Level 1 skills and Entry 1 skills – and may themselves have a ‘spiky’ profile of needs, which means that they are, for example, much better at reading than their writing would suggest. Inevitably, this means that family literacy, language and numeracy groups are very much mixed-ability groups, and that the individual learning plan (ILP) is the crucial element of successful delivery. But the fact that parents in a group do not have the same needs profile can often be an advantage. It helps to remove the stigma of ‘returning to education’ by showing that it is not a sign of failure so much as a recognition of the need to improve – in the process, this advances the recruitment process.

The fact that there may be a broader range of parents on family literacy, language and numeracy programmes run in schools with extended services than on those run in other settings may well turn out to be to the programme’s benefit: it will help to raise the profile of these courses and it will reduce the risk of their being ghettoised – which is often the point at which funding begins to dry up, and collective enthusiasm for a project begins to evaporate. Both of these outcomes should, in turn, increase the chances of the harder-to-reach parent finally being recruited onto a family literacy, language and numeracy course.
8. The learning journey and moving on

Whichever course parents or carers decide to attend (and the full range of courses approved for LSC family literacy, language and numeracy funding is given in the Appendix of this booklet, pages 54–55), the process they will then go through will be essentially the same, although different courses will be organised in different ways. This learning process, which the Skills for Life Strategy Unit calls a ‘learning journey’, follows the same broad stages along the way. These are listed below and illustrated on page 42. (There is a list of resources that teachers might find useful for these separate stages in the Appendices, pages 56–58.)

**SIGNPOSTING OR REFERRAL**

**Signposting** is when a parent is told where to find further information, advice, guidance or learning provision – which they then follow up on their own.

**Referral** is when a parent is told where they can find more-detailed information, advice, guidance, related services or learning provision. This time, the adviser makes an appointment for the parent or gives their details to a provider, afterwards contacting the provider to make sure that the referral has taken place. The parent always has to agree to being referred.

The first unit of the Level 2 Adult Learner Support Qualification provides ideal training in Skills for Life awareness and signposting.

**SCREENING**

**Screening** takes about 10 minutes. It is a way of seeing whether a parent has a literacy, language or numeracy need, and whether they might benefit from more in-depth assessment.
A family-friendly screening tool has been developed through Skills for Families.

Only a practitioner trained in the use of the screening tool they are using may administer screening, and some screening will be delivered ‘in house’. The Level 2 Adult Learner Support Qualification also provides practitioners with screening skills.

**INITIAL ASSESSMENT**

**Initial assessment** is a way of helping to place parents in learning programmes that are at the right level for them. The process takes about 30 minutes and identifies a parent’s skills against a level or levels within the national standards, establishing whether the parent has different levels of reading, writing, numeracy and language skills. It should be administered by a practitioner trained to at least Level 3, with the support of a Level 4 subject specialist teacher.

Initial assessment is usually followed by detailed diagnostic assessment.

**DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT**

**Diagnostic assessment** identifies a parent’s strengths and weaknesses and highlights any gaps they may have in their skills. Using the national standards and the curriculum documents, it helps to provide a detailed profile of the parent’s needs and the basis for their individual learning plan (see below), which will be the starting point for their programme of study. The process takes several hours and should be carried out, as part of a parent’s learning programme, by a Level 4 subject specialist.
INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN (ILP)

An individual learning plan (ILP) is drawn up when a parent has been through the processes of initial and diagnostic assessment. An ILP sets out what a parent needs to learn, the timetable for this learning, which ways of learning to use and the resources required.

A Level 4 specialist teacher will compile, review and develop the ILP, in consultation with the parent.

LEARNING MATERIALS

Learning materials need to be referenced to the curriculum and linked to a context that is meaningful and motivational for the parent.

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Formative assessment is a central part of the learning process, helping the parent and teacher (in this case, a Level 4 subject specialist) to see what progress the parent has made towards the learning goals set out on their ILP. It needs to be a regular feature of the learning programme and, each time, progress should be recorded and new learning goals identified.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Summative assessment shows what a parent has achieved at the end of each learning episode. It gives the parent and teacher (again, a Level 4 subject specialist) evidence of what the parent has achieved in relation to the national standards and the curriculum documents, and could involve a record of achievement, a unit of qualification, a whole qualification or a test.
One that I feel we’d got wrong was this mother who came to us after a particularly fraught time in her life. If she hadn’t had a nervous breakdown, she had certainly come close to it, and she came to us with no confidence at all, no belief in herself, as a mother nor as a person in her own right. And you could see the course give her back some of the self-belief she’d had beaten out of her, watch her making steady progress. Her literacy skills, which had been borderline Entry 3 when she started, really improved, too, so that she was comfortably Level 1 and still making progress. I was convinced she could go to college, or go on to get a really interesting job, but before I’d had a chance to talk to her I was told that she’d taken up a job as a check-out girl in the local supermarket. It’s a result of a kind, of course it is, and I’m glad she’s got confident enough to get a job, but I just feel we should have got to her a bit earlier, encouraged her to try something else.

THE LEARNING JOURNEY

MOVING ON

As the illustration above shows, the end of the learning journey may be the start of another journey. It may equally, of course, be the start of a new job, or it may be the point where the learner decides that their main purposes for coming on the course have been achieved. Whatever the outcome, it is important that time is built into the course programme to allow learners and teachers to explore the full range of possibilities.
The half-way point of a course is a good time to start talking with learners about what they might do at the end of the course, perhaps raising the idea with the group first (often a whole group decides on which course they would like to go on to) before checking individual aspirations. Progression may involve moving from a taster course to an introductory programme, or from a short programme to an intensive programme; it may involve moving from a literacy or language course to a numeracy course (it is generally easier to recruit parents to numeracy programmes if they have already attended literacy programmes); and it may involve developing the skills learned in one particular area (for example, moving from a Family numeracy course to a Family finance course, which extends the scope of the earlier course’s numeracy work).

**FINDING WORK**

Among the core services that schools with extended services need to offer are effective links with Jobcentre Plus, other training providers and further and higher education institutions. Whether these links involve regular visits to the school from an adviser from Jobcentre Plus (for example) or are based on one person at the school with responsibility for mediating between the school and other institutions, they allow teachers on family literacy, language and numeracy programmes in schools with extended services to move learners on to the next phase of their journey, while still being able to monitor the transition. The clear advantages to this arrangement are that learners can plan their next move with a certain degree of security and that teachers can monitor arrangements and intercede on their behalf if the situation requires it.
CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT

Whatever a learner goes on to do on completion of a family literacy, language and numeracy programme, they should not be allowed to come to the end of their learning journey without acknowledgement of their achievement in doing so. For the majority of learners on these programmes, the experience of being awarded a certificate, or of having people formally congratulate them on their successful completion of a course, will be entirely novel, and all the more important for that.

We do it for the parents’ benefit, of course, first and foremost. It’s a way of making them feel good about what they’ve done, and also sharing that with other people — they’ve mostly had no experience of that. But we do it for us, too. We try to get the local press in as often as possible, get it into the local newspaper. It’s good for everyone: for the individual, for the centre itself, for the courses we run, for the community. It’s saying ‘Look what we’ve been able to do. You didn’t expect that of us, and, tell you the truth, nor did we. But if we can do this, we can do other things too, and so can you!’
As family literacy, language and numeracy programmes expand – and as more organisations, authorities and people become persuaded of the benefits they have to offer – there is a growing need for skilled and appropriately trained teachers to deliver the programmes. Where will these teachers come from?

**WHO FUNDS FAMILY LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY?**

All family literacy, language and numeracy programmes are funded by the LSC, which is the organisation responsible for delivering Skills for Life, and for funding and planning all education for over-16 year olds in England. In 2004/05, the Skills for Life Strategy Unit transferred £23 million to the LSC for these programmes, with a comparable amount envisaged for 2005/06.

LSC funding is concentrated on those LEAs that are among the most deprived in England (which, by definition, is where the schools with extended services are also likely to be), with proportionately less money going to the less-deprived LEAs. However, in order to benefit from LSC funding, LEAs have to fulfil certain requirements, which are laid out in the detailed guidance available from the LSC (Joanne.bratby@lsc.gov.uk).

Under these requirements, LEAs are:

- expected to work in partnerships (e.g. with community organisations, voluntary groups, commercial associates) on some of the programmes
- encouraged to work from pre-school and across the statutory educational phases
asked to concentrate on access, quality, progression and qualifications within the programmes they run.

Skills for Life has also identified the following as target groups for all programmes:

- unemployed people and benefit claimants
- jobseekers
- prisoners (funded by the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit) and those supervised in the community
- public sector employees
- low-skilled people in employment
- young adults
- other groups at risk of exclusion
- parents
- people who live in disadvantaged communities.

The menu of courses approved by the LSC for family literacy, language and numeracy programmes is given on pages 54–55 of this guide.

**WHO PROVIDES FAMILY LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY?**

Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes are organised and co-ordinated by the person or team, usually within the LEA, with responsibility for family literacy, language and numeracy. This person will be responsible for managing the LSC funding available for these programmes, for combining with wider family learning programmes, and for organising the teachers who will be running the courses.
A school that is developing extended services (or has already done so) and which decides to run a family literacy, language and numeracy programme should first contact the LEA co-ordinator for such programmes. The co-ordinator (in conjunction with the local LSC representative) will listen to the school manager’s requirements, discuss the range of programmes available, and recommend the most appropriate course. The co-ordinator will also be responsible for providing the specialist literacy, language and numeracy teacher who will lead the teaching.

Most family literacy, language and numeracy courses involve joint sessions with parents/carers and children, and separate sessions where the parents/carers and children are taught separately. The school is therefore likely to be responsible for providing the teacher for the children; the LEA may arrange and fund cover. The fact that there are two teachers, and two separate elements to a family literacy, language and numeracy programme should not, however, mean that there is anything disjointed about the sessions. What is clear is that the best sessions are those that have been jointly planned by the parents’ teacher and the children’s teacher, and time should be made available to allow this to happen. The joint sessions may be jointly taught by the parents’ teacher or the children’s teacher, or may be led by one or the other, depending on the activity.

These programmes involve two teachers with separate specialisms working together; they require children’s teachers to work with parents, and literacy, language and numeracy teachers to work with children – something that may be new territory for one or other of the teachers, and possibly for both.
This is by no means straightforward: it is worth emphasising that a subject specialist may have the necessary qualifications to teach family literacy, language and numeracy courses but still not be an effective family literacy, language and numeracy teacher; the same is equally true of children’s teachers.

It is difficult to define precisely the specific mix of skills required to be a family literacy, language and numeracy teacher, but headteachers, centre managers and parents/carers recognise it when they see it, and value above it most else:¹

The quality of the teachers has been high. … Non-threatening approach of the teacher made the project a success. … Teacher’s expertise and warm personality made parents feel very much at ease. … Course teachers and their excellent rapport with parents and staff. … Staff worked closely in liaison with family learning staff. This involved commitment and willingness to give their time (on both sides). … Knowledge and teaching style of teachers. … The teacher’s quiet enthusiasm and encouragement. …

Ten years ago, the success of these programmes depended on the apparently inexhaustible enthusiasm, commitment and energy of a relatively small number of teachers who were convinced of the benefits of family literacy, language and numeracy. As the programmes have grown, the cohort of teachers has had to expand too. Given the point made earlier about the highly specialist skills involved in this work, this has been no easy task, but it has been helped in recent years by the development, as part of Skills for Life, of a national qualifications framework and a teacher training programme for the first time specifically focused on adult learners.

¹ A handbook on planning and running joint adult and child family literacy, language and numeracy sessions is available on the Skills for Families website (www.skillsforfamilies.org).
THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The new framework of qualifications came into effect between September 2001 and September 2003. This framework has meant that, since 2001, all new teachers in Further Education (FE) have received a teaching qualification; since September 2002, all new specialist literacy and numeracy teachers have received subject qualifications; since September 2003, all new specialist ESOL teachers should also have received a subject qualification.

These qualifications are specified at three National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels:

- **NQF Level 4: subject specialist** - leads the teaching and learning with responsibility for:
  - individual learning plans (ILPs)
  - full diagnostic assessment
  - teaching
  - guiding and supporting teaching assistants (subject support) and learner support.

- **NQF Level 3: subject support** - supports the teaching process by:
  - screening and contributing to initial assessment
  - contributing to ILPs
  - contributing to teaching.

- **NQF Level 2: learner support** - supports the learner by:
  - screening
  - signposting to teaching provision
  - supporting learning activities under the guidance of teacher.
These qualifications apply only to new teachers of adult literacy, language and numeracy. If you are already teaching, the expectation is that, over time, you will bring your qualifications into line with the new qualifications through opportunities to take up professional development.

**EXISTING TEACHERS**

Just as many of the teachers who spearheaded the first family literacy, language and numeracy courses had previously been schoolteachers, so it is quite likely that a number of the schoolteachers who co-teach programmes with a literacy, language and numeracy specialist teacher will want to sound out the possibility of training as a specialist teacher. These teachers should be encouraged to retrain as Level 4 subject specialists. In a similar way, existing adult education teachers, who do not have to retrain or acquire Level 4 qualifications, may nevertheless be encouraged over time to retrain so as to bring their skills in line with the new framework. In both these cases, teachers should investigate the possibility of having their previous experience and qualifications given the status of accreditation of prior learning (APL).

The procedure for APL, and for the training and qualifications framework discussed above, is further explained in a set of three ‘route maps’ (for new teachers, existing teachers and those who support learning) published by the DfES (see page 61).
FRONTLINE TRAINING

There are a number of training programmes (some offered by family literacy, language and numeracy staff) that are designed to provide people with the skills to enable them to help on family literacy, language and numeracy programmes. Step in to Learning, for example, is a training and development programme designed to give staff working in Sure Start local programmes, 60 children’s centres and nurseries in financially disadvantaged areas the skills to operate as Level 2 learner support. Working in this way, they will be able to identify parents and carers with a literacy, numeracy and/or language need, and then encourage and signpost them to take up appropriate local learning opportunities to improve these skills.

Step in to Learning is moving from being a fully funded contracted form of front-line training to a locally sustainable and accessible model – one that forms part of the mainstream policy of the DfES, the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), the LSC and regional and local agencies. For further information on this programme, and on other frontline training programmes, contact your local LSC representatives or your LEA.
Within the space of ten years, family literacy, language and numeracy has established itself as a programme within every LEA in the country. This is a dramatic development, and one that carries its own sets of challenges as well as opportunities.

The movement to the current position has been assisted by a combination of centrally provided funding and initiatives that explored the best ways of setting up provision, running programmes and disseminating information about the programmes. In this respect, the linked activities of the national strategy, Skills for Life, and Skills for Families, the programme that sought to embed family literacy, language and numeracy in local and regional partnerships, have been hugely influential.

Over the past ten years, family literacy, language and numeracy has secured a strong position for itself on the national stage. The challenge now is for it to secure an equally robust presence at the local level. To do this, it will have to replicate the information sharing that everyone recognises as an important aspect of Skills for Families; it will have to continue to build partnerships and develop networks with agencies that share its agenda, in the way that its pioneers have so successfully and painstakingly done over the last ten years; it will have to continue to find the evidence that points to the success of its programmes and to proclaim this evidence loud and clear; and it will need to continue to take full advantage of new developments, such as those posed separately by the expansion of the extended schools programme and the Children Act 2004.
Schools with extended services represent a golden opportunity for family literacy, language and numeracy. There is an obvious fit between them: they have exactly the same basic rationale, which is to regenerate the whole community by focusing on the specific and highly localised needs of individuals and their children. And this rationale also infuses the Children Act 2004, which rightly places responsibility for the safety, health, enjoyment and achievement of our children in the hands of everyone – statutory agencies, families, voluntary agencies, communities – who is at all involved in their welfare. Family literacy, language and numeracy should be a programme at the very centre of this network of programmes and partnerships.
### SCOPE AND RANGE OF COURSES APPROVED FOR LSC FAMILY LITERACY, LANGUAGE AND NUMERACY FUNDING, 2005–06

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taster courses and workshops</th>
<th>Introductory programmes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Play and language taster</strong>&lt;br&gt;(children aged 0-3 years)</td>
<td><strong>Play and language</strong>&lt;br&gt;(children aged 0-3 years)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Encourages parents with no or few qualifications to talk to and play with their babies and toddlers, and sets out the importance of play in early language development. | Supports parents and carers and their babies/toddlers with language development and positive interaction, and shows parents/carers how improving their own skills can help their children. |
| **Family Literacy Workshop**<br>(children aged 3+) | **Skills for Families Springboard**<br>(parents/carers only) |
 Raises standards of literacy for both parents and children, extends parents’ skills in supporting their children’s developing literacy skills and provides opportunities for parents to go on to further programmes. | Introduces parents and carers to the range of family services and programmes available in their locality and points them in the direction of the most appropriate progression route. |
| **Family Numeracy Workshop**<br>(children aged 3+) | **Keeping up with the Children**<br>(parents/carers of school-age children only) |
 Provides opportunities for parents and young children who need it most to improve their numeracy skills. | Introduces parents and carers to how their children are taught in the literacy hour and the daily maths lesson at schools, so that they can be confident in supporting them; develops adults’ own literacy and numeracy skills. |
| **Combined Family Literacy and/or Language and/or Numeracy Workshop**<br>(children aged 5+) | |
 Provides and explains opportunities for parents and children to improve their literacy/language/numeracy skills. | |
| **Keeping Up with the Children Taster**<br>(parents/carers of school-age children only) | |
 Explains how parents/carers can become more involved in their children’s education by understanding the literacy/numeracy curriculum and improving their own skills. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Short programmes</th>
<th>Intensive programmes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Start (children aged 0-3 years)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Family Literacy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhances language development from birth to 3 years old, encourages strong</td>
<td>Raises standards of literacy for both parents and children, extends parents’ skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>attachments and positive everyday interactions among parents/carers and their</td>
<td>in supporting their children’s developing literacy skills and provides opportunities</td>
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<tr>
<td>babies and young children; helps parents and carers explore ways of playing and</td>
<td>for parents to achieve Entry-level qualifications and/or national tests as appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>talking with and listening to their children and enhances early language</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>development.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Playing with Language 3–5 years</strong></td>
<td><strong>Family Numeracy</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps parents understand, develop and use language interactions that have been</td>
<td>(school-age children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researched and shown to be useful, improves parent/carer skills, helps parents</td>
<td>Raises standards of numeracy for both parents and children, extends parents’ skills in</td>
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<tr>
<td>or carers prepare for their child’s entry to school, provides opportunities for</td>
<td>supporting their children’s developing numeracy skills and provides opportunities for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parents and carers to work towards the national tests.</td>
<td>parents to work towards Entry-level qualifications and/or national tests as appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family Literacy (school-age children)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Raises standards of literacy for both parents and children, extends parents’</td>
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<td>skills in supporting their children’s developing literacy skills and provides</td>
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<td>opportunities for parents to work towards Entry-level qualifications and/or</td>
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<td>national tests as appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family Numeracy (school-age children)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Raises standards of numeracy for both parents and children, extends parents’</td>
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<tr>
<td>skills in supporting their children’s developing numeracy skills and provides</td>
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<tr>
<td>opportunities for parents to work towards Entry-level qualifications and/or</td>
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<td>national tests as appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Family Finance</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develops parents’ literacy, language and numeracy skills and their knowledge and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>understanding of everyday financial matters; provides opportunities for parents</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and school-age children to develop financial literacy skills.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Keeping up with the Children +</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(parent/carers only)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extends parents’ skills in supporting their children’s literacy and numeracy (by</td>
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<tr>
<td>understanding more about the school curriculum) and provides opportunities for</td>
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<tr>
<td>parents to develop their own literacy or numeracy skills.</td>
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Useful resources for the learning journey

For those wanting to order these resources, an order reference is given in brackets after each resource. All resources are available from DfES Publications (for details, see page 59).

1. SIGNPOSTING/REFERRAL
   The first unit of the Level 2 Adult Learner Support Qualification provides ideal training in Skills for Life awareness and signposting.

2. SCREENING
   The ESOL Screening Tool (STESOL) can be administered by non-specialists and specialists alike. Good Practice Guidelines in Screening and Initial Assessment (SfLGPG) is extremely useful, containing a number of case studies to show the range of approaches taken, including one for family learning.¹

3. INITIAL ASSESSMENT
   The National Literacy and Numeracy Standards (NSALN) define the levels against which parents' skills will be assessed; the ESOL Initial Assessment Tool (IAESOL) will assess the speaking and listening skills of bilingual parents; Pathway to Proficiency (PTP) uses language proficiency scales to assess competence in English language; Good Practice Guidelines in Screening and Initial Assessment (SfLGPG) offers solid guidance and useful case studies.²

4. DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT
   There are diagnostic assessment packs for literacy (DAM1), numeracy (DAM2), ESOL (DAM3) and dyslexia (DAM4). These are also available on CD-ROM (DAM7) and as an interactive CD-ROM (DAM6). There is also a diagnostic assessment training manual (DAM5).

¹ The BSA’s Family Fast-track is a very useful resource for screening in family settings and may be downloaded free of charge from the Skills for Families website (www.skillsforfamilies.org/resources).

² A series of ‘assessment tools’ has also been developed by the Skills for Life Strategy Unit. For details of the publications, visit the Skills for Life Strategy Unit website (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/).
5. INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN (ILP)

Access for All (A1211) provides invaluable guidance on differentiating the core curriculum documents for parents’ individual learning styles and needs. There are interactive versions of Access for All available for literacy (www.dfes.gov.uk/curriculum_literacy) and numeracy (www.dfes.gov.uk/curriculum_numeracy). For those working with dyslexic learners, A Framework for Understanding Dyslexia (AFDD2) will prove an invaluable resource; it is also available for downloading (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/understandingdyslexia).

6. LEARNING MATERIALS

Three sets of resources will be of particular value here – the Learning Materials Teacher Packs (available at all levels for literacy, numeracy and ESOL), Learning Materials shrink-wrapped packs (available at all levels for literacy, numeracy and ESOL – see References, pages 59–60, for details), ESOL Learning Materials for Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy Programmes (FLLN/ESOL) and Skills for Life Materials for Embedded Learning: Family health (Embedded/FH). The Skills for Life Materials for Embedded Learning is also available on-line on the Embedded Learning Portal (www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/embeddedlearning/).

7. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Teachers will find Planning Learning and Recording Progress and Achievement – a guide for practitioners (PLRA1) a useful document to help with this stage of the learning journey.
8. SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Three documents will be particularly worth consulting here – A Guide to National Certificates in Adult Numeracy and Adult Literacy (DSFL/NTL), the National Test Toolkit (NTT/NTT04) and A Guide to the National Tests in Adult Literacy and Numeracy (DSFL/NT). There is also a promotional leaflet, Success in English Language (QLESOL), which is aimed at ESOL parents at Levels 1 and 2 who are interested in gaining ESOL Skills for Life qualifications.

AND GENERALLY

In addition to the resources listed here below each stage, teachers will find it worth consulting Raising Standards – A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision: Adult and Community Learning (SFLACL) and Raising Standards – A Contextual Guide to Support Success in Literacy, Numeracy and ESOL Provision: Family Learning (SFLFL) at any stage of the learning journey. 3

1 There is also an impressive range of guidance and support materials on the BSA’s Skills for Families website (www.skillsforfamilies.org/resources), including Strengthening Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy – two handbooks produced by the BSA: Planning for Quality and Extending the Reach and Scope of Programmes – both of which may be downloaded.
References

All DfES resources are available free, subject to stock and availability, and unless otherwise stated. Contact DfES Publications on these numbers, quoting the reference number of the resource:

tel: 0845 60 222 60
fax: 0845 60 333 60
Textphone: 0845 60 555 60
e-mail: dfes@prolog.uk.com


DfEE (1999) Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A Fresh Start (The report of the working group chaired by Sir Claus Moser). London: DfEE.


DfES (2003) Learning Materials shrink wrapped packs:
- Literacy Entry 1 (SfLLM/LE1);
- Literacy Entry 2 (SfLLM/LE2);
- Literacy Entry 3 (SfLLM/LE3);
- Literacy Level 1 (SfLLM/LL1);
- Literacy Level 2 (SfLLM/LL2);
- Numeracy Entry 1 (SfLLM/NE1);
- Numeracy Entry 2 (SfLLM/NE2);
- Numeracy Entry 3 (SfLLM/NE3);
- Numeracy Level 1 (SfLLM/NL1);
- Numeracy Level 2 (SfLLM/NL2);
- ESOL Entry 1A (SfLLM/EE1A);
- ESOL Entry 1B (SfLLM/221B);
- ESOL Entry 2 (SfLLM/EE2);
- ESOL Entry 3 (SfLLM/EE3);
- ESOL Level 1 (SfLLM/EL1);
- ESOL Level 2 (SfLLM/EL2). London: DfES.


Useful websites and contacts

WEBSITES
Skills for Life Strategy Unit  www.DfES.gov.uk/readwriteplus
Adult Learning Inspectorate  www.ali.gov.uk
Basic Skills Agency  www.basic-skills.co.uk
Campaign for Learning  www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk
Department for Education and Skills  www.DfES.gov.uk
Extended Schools  www.teachernet.gov.uk/educationoverview/briefing/extendedschools/
Family Programmes  www.familyprogrammes.org
Learning and Skills Council (LSC)  www.lsc.gov.uk
Move On  www.move-on.org.uk
National Family Learning Network  www.familylearningnetwork.com
NIACE  www.niace.org.uk/Research/Family/Default.htm
Parent Centre  www.parentcentre.gov.uk
Skills for Families  www.skillsforfamilies.org
Sure Start  www.surestart.gov.uk
Teacher Training  www.teachernet.gov.uk

CONTACTS
Skills for Life Strategy Unit
Tel: 020 7273 1223
The Skills for Life Strategy Unit has contacts in each of the nine government regions.

Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
Tel: 0870 900 6800
The LSC has 9 regional offices and 47 local Councils. Please see website (above) for details.

Basic Skills Agency
Email: familyprogrammes@basic-skills.co.uk
Tel: 020 7405 4017