

Parental engagement : Mapping the Policy Landscape (critical perspectives) August 2023.

SCI focus and policy issue : Parental Engagement	SCI focus and policy issue : Parental Engagement
THEORY	POLICY
<p>James, D. (2021) <i>Why parental engagement has to be an all-school journey</i>. Times Education Scotland, available from: https://www.tes.com/magazine/sponsored/capita-sims/why-parental-engagement-has-be-all-school-journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argues that the benefits of parental engagement will only be fully realised if everyone in a school is on board and pulls in the same direction. Too often schools have a reactive approach to how they deal with parents. Argues for an all in one solution which adds to what is already offered, using technology as a bridge (not a wall). Schools need to invest in training all staff to feel comfortable using tools for parental engagement - 'An emoji is no replacement for a round of applause and a smiling face!' <p>Constantino, S. (2016) <i>Engage Every Family: Five Simple Principles</i>, Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argues that family engagement is not optional, but empowering - the 'first and most influential teachers of children are their parents'. Developed his logic model consisting of 5 principles to engage every family as a way to help schools harness the power 	<p>UNCRC, <i>United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation)[Scotland] Bill</i> (2020) Edinburgh, Scottish Parliament.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently being enshrined in Scottish law. It builds on the <i>Charter of the United Nations</i> (1945) and <i>The Universal declaration of human rights</i> (1948). Outlines the right to an education for all children and that both parents have responsibility for bringing up their children and should always consider what is best for the child (Article 18). It places on governments the responsibility to protect and assist families in fulfilling their essential role as nurturers of children (Article 5). <p>Scottish government (2006) <i>The Scottish schools (parental involvement) Act 2006</i>, Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Places the duty on schools, local authorities and ministers to help 'all parents' be involved in their child's learning, to be welcomed as 'active participants' in school and 'be able to express their views on Scottish education' generally.

of family engagement as a 'direct conduit of student achievement'.

- Logic model's 5 principles outline firstly the importance of

establishing a culture that engages families, then building relationships, followed by empowering families, involving them in decision making and then engaging the greater community.

Hornby and Lafale (2011) *Barriers to parental involvement in education: an explanatory model*. Educational Review Journal, Vol 63, No1, Routledge.

- Presents a model which has been developed in order to clarify and elaborate on the barriers to parental involvement in 4 key areas : parent and family,, child, parent-teacher and societal factors. .
- Argues that these barriers to effective parental involvement provide an explanation for the existence of the gap between rhetoric and reality with regard to Parental Involvement.
- Considers clarification of these barriers responsible for the rhetoric-reality gap and essential to be recognised if there is to be widespread development of effective practice with regard to Parental Involvement.

Mowat, J (2017) *Closing the attainment gap - a realistic proposition or an elusive pipe dream?*

- Argues that the problem is framed in terms of what schools and teachers can do as a means of redressing inequalities in society, rather than how redressing inequalities in society can lead to more equitable educational outcomes, including that of parental engagement.
- Questions the research base for the NIF key drivers, including parental engagement - 'little narrative or theoretical perspective'.

Hornby (2011) *Model for Parental Involvement in Education In : Hornby Parental Involvement in Childhood Education (First*

National Parent Forum (2016) *Review of the Parental Act 2006*. Edinburgh, available here: [Review of the impact of the Scottish Schools \(Parental Involvement\) Act 2006](#)

- The Review found major improvements in the last ten years in the way that teachers and headteachers communicate and work with parents.
- Identified that challenges remain in relation to a lack of awareness and appreciation among some teachers of the role and contribution of parents.
- Further partnership working is required to ensure that initial teacher education programmes and training and development courses keep pace with the very best practice and research evidence on parental involvement, parental engagement and family learning.
- More clarification needed regarding the current statutory duties on headteachers in relation to involving parents in the life of the school, and for modernising the relevant duties to stress greater collaboration with Parent Councils to ensure effective consultation.

Scottish government *School Handbook guidance - Information for local authorities and schools following the Education (School and Placing Information) (Scotland) Regulations 2012*. Edinburgh.

- Marks the completion of this Government's commitment to updating the School Handbook Regulations - changes introduced, based on direct consultation with parents, with the aim of ensuring that they will get the information they need and want from their child's school.
- The new requirements reflect the changes in Scottish education and recognise the important role that parents play as partners in their schools.
- Claims that this new School Handbook will support and strengthen the relationship between schools, local authorities and

Edition), Springer New York, NY, pages 27-42.

- Outlines various approaches to parent-professional relationships defined by a different set of assumptions, goals, and strategies.

- Approaches conceptualised in the form of six common models for the practice of parental involvement - the protective, expert, transmission, curriculum enrichment, consumer and partnership models.

Epstein, J. L. (2011) *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools (2nd edition)*, Philadelphia: Westview Press.

- Articulates her theory of 3 overlapping spheres of influence - school, family and community - that change the 'narrow focus of parental involvement' from what an individual parent does, to a broader representation of how children move continuously in and out of several contexts (the 3 spheres).

- Highlights how influential people in these contexts may work together to contribute to Children' education and development arguing that school, family and community share responsibility for students learning and development.

parents.

Scottish government (2014) *The children and Young people (Scotland) Act 2014*

- Puts the UNCRC into a Scottish statute for the first time.
- Gives more powers to the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland.
- Empowers children and their parents to have their rights upheld

Scottish government (2016) *National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education*. Edinburgh.

- Sets out a vision based on achieving excellence and equity for all learners.
- Outlines Parental Engagement as one of six key drivers for educational improvement. This driver includes actions to support improvement in parental engagement, parental involvement, family learning and learning at home.

Scottish government (2016) A blueprint for fairness, available here:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/blueprint-fairness-final-report-commission-widening-access/pages/2/>

- Recognises family learning is limited in higher institutions qualifications
- Calls for new models which are more flexible and increase accessibility to a broader range of courses and institutions to improve attainment through new approaches to learning in family homes.

Scottish government (2018) *Learning together : Scotland's national plan on parental involvement, parental engagement, family learning and learning at home 2018-2021*. Edinburgh.

- National plan influenced by the National Parent Forum of

	<p>Scotland's review of the impact of Scotland's 2006 parental involvement act. Has 13 goals and 52 National actions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines vision for parental involvement and engagement from birth to 18yrs, based on the guiding aim of GIRFEC. • Articulates view that 'parents are the primary educators of their children'. • Shifts the emphasis from "involving" to 'collaborating with' parents and families. National actions include a commitment to ensure Headteachers work collaboratively with their parent council and SG to improve statutory and best practice guidance on parental involvement and engagement. <p>Scottish government (2020) <i>2021 National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan</i>. Edinburgh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the vision and priorities for Scottish education and the improvement activity that needs to be undertaken to help deliver government key priorities. Includes a focus on supporting parents and the wider family to engage more with learning at home. <p>Scottish Government (2022) <i>Achieving Excellence and Equity : National Improvement Framework and Improvement plan</i>. Edinburgh. This replaces 2021's NIF and Improvement plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets out some new national improvement activities that need to be undertaken to deliver key educational priorities. • These includes actions to enhance parental empowerment and engagement. Also to ensure the key role of parents as partners to their child's learning is recognised and to identify additional avenues for engagement to develop and deliver ways of working together that support and promote positive relationships, communication and cooperation. • Articulates that in early 2022 the SG will review the 'learning together' plan (2018-2021) and publish a refreshed policy framework on parent and carer involvement and engagement.
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	<p>General Teaching Council for Scotland (2021) <i>Standard for Headship</i>. Edinburgh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly articulates the expectation and commitment of headteachers to lead, engage and develop parental engagement across the whole school community. Emphasis on working strategically to develop trusting relationships with parents/carers and families. Outlines importance of headteachers seeking the views from all across the learning community including parents/carers, and actively building inclusive practices within the school with colleagues, parents/carers/families and partners. <p>UNESCO(2013) <i>Handbook on Education a policy analysis and Programming</i>, volume 1, Education policy Analysis. Bangkok.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This report outlines 'Education for all' as an international commitment to provide high quality education for everyone- children, youth, adults, parents, wider family. Links to other international agreements that help shape country-led thinking on education and reform. Articulates that education cannot be sustained without social stability - employment, housing, targeting support for the marginalised. <p>UNESCO (2015) <i>A guide for ensuring Inclusion and Equity in Education</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outlines The Education 2030 agenda with key message of "leaving no one behind" Education is viewed as essential to meet SDG's , promoting inclusive, equitable education, and 'lifelong opportunities for all', including parents and young people. It's central message is simple, not easy: 'every learner matters and matters equally'. This applies to all - parents, carers, young people.
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	<p>Schleicher, A. (2014), <i>Equity, Excellence and Inclusiveness in Education: Policy Lessons from Around the World</i>, International Summit on the Teaching Profession, OECD Publishing, Paris, Equity, Excellence and Inclusiveness in Education : Policy Lessons from Around the World International Summit on the Teaching Profession OECD iLibrary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observes that many economic social problems are linked to lower educational attainment but fail to recognise that it may be underlying societal and structural issues (such as inequality) which underpin both. • Articulates that decades of research indicate that the 'school effect' (what schools can achieve when account is taken of other variables) is very limited within a region of 8 - 15%, concluding that the attainment gap problem is framed in terms of what education systems, schools and teachers can do as a means of redressing inequalities in society rather than how redressing inequalities in society can lead to more equitable educational outcomes.
RESEARCH	PRACTICE
<p>Sime and Sheridan (2014) <i>'You want the best for your kids': Improving Educational Outcomes for Children living in Poverty through Parental Engagement</i>. Strathclyde University, available here: 'You want the best for your kids': Improving Educational Outcomes for Children living in Poverty through Parental Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines view that schools need to address the achievement gap among children from deprived backgrounds in order to tackle social disadvantage and increase social mobility. Parents' engagement remains key to this process, given the benefits of their involvement for children's education and long-term achievement. • Policies need to recognise the power relationships 	<p>City of Edinburgh Council (2022) <i>Parental engagement in Edinburgh</i>: /www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/29964/summary-parental-engagement-groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines the various parental engagement supports available to parents of young people attending CEC schools. <p>Parentzone, Education Scotland (2022) : https://education.gov.scot/parentzone/.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminates practical ways parents can engage with schools and 'be at the heart of their (<i>your</i>) child's learning'. <p>Burnage, S (2017) <i>Parental engagement : Some ideas and</i></p>

and structural inequalities which restrict parents' ability to get involved and lock them in cycles of multiple disadvantage, otherwise the excluded poor will continue to be seen as unwilling and unable to support their children's learning.

- Argues that a more positive discourse on parenting Choices and engagement, which acknowledges families' challenging circumstances, and a more constructive approach to parental engagement is needed, to ensure that parents affected by disadvantage feel valued and enabled to take an active role in their children's education.

Jiang et al (2019) *The discrepancy of parents' theories of intelligence and parental involvement*. Frontiers in Psychology, volume 10, article 1231.

- Describes a detailed picture of the relationship between parents' theories of intelligence and parental involvement, and examines how both parents' theories of intelligence influence maternal and paternal involvement separately.

- Parents who hold an incremental theory of intelligence ('growth mindset') emphasise the role of effort and are more involved in their children's education. Parents who hold an entity theory ('fixed mindset') believe strongly in the preeminence of ability over effort lack confidence, often believing children's difficulty with learning reflects low ability, which can lead to decreased parental involvement.

- Reveals the significance of the mother's role in education, concluding that the mother's intelligence theory is positively related to both paternal and maternal involvement whereas the father's intelligence theory only positively relates to paternal involvement. Where the parents' theories of intelligence have discrepancy, the maternal involvement is higher while the mother's theory of intelligence is more incremental than the father's.

Harris, A and Goodall, J. (2007) *Do Parents Know They Matter?*

Approaches. SecEd, available here :

<https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/parental-engagement-so-me-ideas-and-approaches/>

- Partnerships between parents/carers and school in terms of learning and welfare result in more successful outcomes in learner journeys and wellbeing.
- Outlines 'quick win' improvements that can be made in practice.
- Identifies 8 ideas to overcome barriers to effective parental engagement.

United learning *Effective parental engagement : A handbook for schools* available here :

https://unitedlearning.org.uk/Portals/0/Parental%20Engagement%20Handbook%20-%20United%20Learning%20%28v3%29_1.pdf

- Brings together a summary of the academic research in this area with a detailed look at what various schools in UK are doing to create and support effective parental engagement in learning.
- Articulates view that parents are 'the most powerful influence on their learning' at home.

Education Scotland. *How Good is our School? Fourth edition*, available here :

https://education.gov.scot/improvement/documents/frameworks-selfevaluation/frwk2_nihedithgios/frwk2_hgios4.pdfHGIOS4

- A working document designed to promote effective self-evaluation of practice in schools as an initial stage in a process of achieving self-improvement.
- Uses 15 quality indicators including that related to parental engagement (QI 2.5 Family learning - Engaging families in learning, Early intervention and prevention, Quality of family learning programmes).

Engaging all parents in learning, Educational research volume 59, 2008 issue 3 p 277-289. London: Continuum.

- Explores the relationship between parental involvement and pupil achievement.
- Parental involvement can be the worst problem and best solution. Worst problem because it can be difficult to answer and the best solution in terms of raising student performance.
- Research highlights barriers facing certain parents in supporting their children's learning - in particular powerful social and economic factors.
- Further articulates that it is often schools rather than parents that are 'hard to reach'
- Concludes while involving parents in school activities is an important social and community function, it is only the engagement of parents in *learning in the home* that is most likely to result in a positive difference to learning outcomes.

Treanor, M (2017) *Can we put the poverty of aspiration myth to bed now?*

- Argues the poverty of aspiration is a myth and transfers responsibility for aspirations and achievement to parents and children, from the government and schools.
- Children and parents living in poverty do have high aspirations but lack the confidence and knowledge in how to go about achieving them.
- Staff need to be aware of this and educated on the risks, causes and consequences of poverty which are often conflated and misconstrued.
- For effective parental engagement parents and young people need knowledge of both the opportunities, and the route, to achieving their aspirations, and not just to be 'inspired'.

Scottish government (2016) *Review of family learning supporting*

Education Scotland (2019) *Engaging parents and families : A Toolkit for practitioners*. Available here

<https://education.gov.scot/media/eyula5af/section-7-family-learning.pdf>

- Provides an overview of some key national policies relating to family learning and subsequent reviews - the policies provide the overarching framework and guidance within which local authorities, schools and practitioners should work.
- Highlights examples of best practice family learning.

Feasey, S.M. (2017) *Community capacity building : a relational approach for authentic partnership*. (28th September 2017) Blog. Available here : [Schools, Families, and Community: Overlapping Spheres of Influence](#)

- Articulates that in daily practice school leaders need to better recognise and embrace the concept of communal leadership and community capacity building. Family engagement is at the heart of this.
- Agrees with Epstein's view that school, family and community partnerships is a better term than parental engagement to recognise that students' learning and development is a shared responsibility.

excellence and equity. Edinburgh.

- This review of family learning is 'first of its kind' in Scotland.

- Key message from review is that family learning as an early intervention and prevention strategy works in reaching disadvantaged families to improve their life chances. Includes Case studies of effective family learning from Scotland and across other parts of the world - although nearly all the case studies are focused on primary and early years.

Goodhall, Vorhaus Harris et al (2010) *Review of best practice in parental engagement*. UK Department for Education (DEE), London, available here :

https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alma-Harris/publication/265673055_Review_of_best_practice_in_parental_engagement/links/58bd6dd9a6fdcc2d14eb0d11/Review-of-best-practice-in-parental-engagement.pdf

- Report presents a review of studies of interventions aimed

at supporting and improving parental engagement which also offer evidence on educational outcomes.

- Identifies the features of interventions that are most effective in supporting parental engagement and improving children's outcomes.

- Crucially highlights the fact that there are 'numerous gaps'

in the evidence base around parental engagement - much of it is weak or poor quality. Little robust evidence on many academic and learning related outcomes.

Green and Walker (2007) *Parents' motivations for involvement in children's education : an empirical test of a theoretical model of parental involvement*. Journal of Educational Psychology, Vol 99, No 3, Academia.

- Although parental involvement is an important contributor to childrens' positive school outcomes, much less is known about the factors that motivate parents' involvement practices.
- The study examined the ability of a theoretical model (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005) to predict types and levels of parental involvement.
- Predictor variables included parents' beliefs about involvement, parents' perceptions of invitations to involvement from others and parents' perceived life context variables.
- The study concludes that model constructs predicted significant portions of variance in parents' involvement even when controlling for family socio-economic status.

Simon, B (2004) *High school outreach and family involvement*. Social Psychology Journal, 7(2), p 185-209.

- Addresses question: when high schools reach out to involve parents, are parents more likely to be involved in their teenagers' education?
- Findings revealed that regardless of students' background and achievement, high schools' outreach positively and significantly predicted parents' involvement in a range of parenting, volunteering and learning at home activities.
- Data suggests that high schools have the capacity to conduct activities that encourage families' involvement in teenagers' learning and development.

Education Scotland (2020) *Engaging families in Learning : a thematic inspection of family learning*.

- Outlines key strengths of family learning, parental engagement, parent. Involvement and learning at home in school communities across all local authorities.
- Clarifies areas for development going forward (e.g. establishing more robust arrangements for measuring the impact of family learning on pupils, developing a stronger understanding

of the key features of family learning and more progression routes for adult learners).

Goodhall (2017) *Narrowing the achievement gap : Parental involvement with Childrens' learning*. London, Routledge.

- Proposes a radical change to conception of learning, education and schooling by arguing that parental engagement is the best lever we have for school improvement and closing the achievement gap.
- Explores how schools can actively engage with parents to reinstate education in the home
- Argues that while schools have an important role to play in this, parents and society must reconsider their own educational responsibility too.