

Family Learning News



September 2006

"Parental involvement has a huge impact on pupil achievement."

Education in the Community CHILDREN AND YOUNG



Best Practice in Family Learning

An important event during the SRB celebration was the launch of a guide illustrating best practice in Family Learning in County Durham. Jeanne Haggart of NIACE described it as "learning from the best, a treasure chest which demonstrates the breadth of Durham's experience and its commitment to quality improvement in Family Learning". All schools in County Durham have received a copy of this guide. Any organisation wishing to have a copy should contact Margaret Richards, Family Programmes Manager, on 0191 3733146.

This message was delivered by Professor Charles Desforges of Exeter University at a celebration of the achievements of Family Learning in the county. The celebration, held on Thursday 16th March at Durham County Cricket Club, marked the end of the Single Regeneration Budget in County Durham. SRB6 funded a Family Learning partnership project which brought new initiatives into the county. The gathering was very well attended by Family Learning providers, managers, tutors and a number of learners. Everyone enjoyed a day of interesting speeches and displays of current Family Learning programmes and activities. The Sage Gateshead gave a display of Family Learning through music with a group of young children.

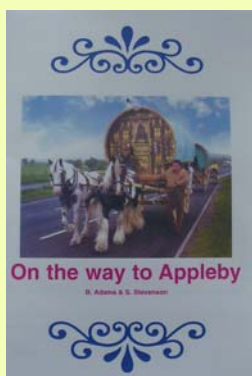


Professor Desforges (pictured left) spoke compellingly of the impact of parental involvement and put forward a sound case for well-funded Family Learning provision. His statistical research has shown that, to raise standards in schools now, funding should target parents and programmes to involve them in their children's learning and development.

The day was chaired by Neil Charlton, Deputy Director of Education, who gave a brief history of the project and

introduced the speakers. Professor Desforges is an emeritus professor at the University of Exeter.

Jeanne Haggart of NIACE talked of moving forward and June Davison, project co-ordinator until September 2005, showcased some of the SRB funded projects and introduced the displays set up around the room.



On the way to Appleby

This wonderful reading resource, introduced at the SRB Celebration event, was the work of a Traveller group at St Phillip's Park, Coundon Grange.

One of the Family Learning tutors from Focus on Learning, Sharon Stevenson, was invited to help the group make activities to promote their children's learning. The work was carried out with great enthusiasm over a period of four months. To begin with, the group sewed role play and dressing up clothes – a nurse's uniform, a Robin Hood outfit and more. This was followed by finger puppets and sock puppets for use in the group's puppet theatre. By then, the whole group (and the tutor!) were becoming very enthusiastic and confident and also completed a First Aid course.

Alongside the sewing, the group produced a scrapbook using portable laptops to reminisce about their trips during their summer holidays. One of the learners was easily able to piece together her fond memories of the annual horse fair in Appleby and this book was the result. The others made three children's board games to accompany it. The book has been reproduced with the assistance of the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service and sent to all primary schools. The board games will be available soon.



Family Learning Makes Learning Together Fun!

Family Learning News

Active Dads

Dads really do matter. Children need fathers (and father figures) to love them, to be interested in them and to respond to their needs, making them feel valued and understood.

The Active Dads course brings fathers and children together to complete eight different activities, ranging from reading a book and going for a walk in the park to visiting Sunderland Associated Football Club at the Stadium of Light. This last was the favourite activity for a group from Eden Community Primary School in Peterlee.

Kevin and Paul Waring took Corey and Courtney Waring of Eden Community Primary School Peterlee, East Durham, behind the scenes on their conducted tour of the stadium. Both children had attended matches at Sunderland before but this was their first glimpse of what the players experienced. A tour of the changing rooms was a great



photo opportunity. Taking a seat in the directors box gave the best view in the stadium; trying a seat in the players bar and running out of the tunnel were all part of the tour. It was a great experience enjoyed by all. Thanks go to Mark, the tour guide, and to SAFC.

Kevin and Paul Waring with Courtney and Corey at the Stadium of Light



Story sacks in the making



Parents make artefacts and games to go with a

children's book, extending, reinforcing and supporting their reading. Photographs taken at Thornley Primary School.



Angles and Direction

Family Numeracy groups at Bishop Ian Ramsey School, Medomsley and Annfield Plain Junior School went on a joint outing to Hamsterley Forest. Both groups had been studying angles and direction and children and their parents found orienteering to be a fun way of applying their new found knowledge.



Castleside Primary School

A numeracy workshop was held at the beginning of the autumn term with 20 adults and 28 children attending.

This was a new venture into Family Learning for the school. Following the workshop, "Keeping Up With The Children" in numeracy was organised, for Years 3 to 6. Fourteen adults and twelve children took part with great enthusiasm.

A similar course for Reception to Year 2 parents and children is planned for the spring term.



What a Weekend!

The Family Learning residential weekend at Orchard House, Richmond, was a great hit according to seven families from Annfield Plain Junior School. Imagine designing, building and racing your own boats! Preparation was carried out in school beforehand and follow up sessions were held afterwards. The families, led by Return to Learn tutor, Audrey Scott, and teacher, Steve Griffin, produced excellent scrapbooks telling their stories of the weekend. Other activities in Richmond included orienteering, following a town treasure trail and enjoying a visit to the castle.

Story Sacks

Story sack courses are always popular and a recent one held at Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, Esh Winning, proved a great success.

Six volunteers worked with Focus on Learning tutor Sharon Stevenson to produce several sacks of very high quality. Taking the theme of developing young children's language, the sacks provide games, tapes, dressing-up clothes and props to tell well-loved tales. Says Sharon, "These sacks are so good they should be on sale but I know the school will treasure them and use them a lot."

Taking part in the course was Betty Emery, almost 80 and a former pupil of the school. During her working life she became the school secretary and now, although having retired years ago, she maintains her links with the school through her grandchildren and as a volunteer. Her sewing prowess helped produce some wonderful results.

Several members of the group, including Betty, are now also participating in a Family Learning computer course.

"It doesn't matter how young or old you are, Family Learning is so important and so much fun."

Family Learning News

Keeping Up With Very Young Children



Our Lady of Lourdes, Shotton Colliery, brought together an enthusiastic group of learners who have children in either Nursery or Reception classes. They worked with Cheryl Auton from Learn East to learn about the Foundation stage of their children's education. They examined the early learning goals and found it really useful to

explore the six areas of learning covered by the curriculum:

- * personal, social and emotional development;
- * communication, language and literacy;
- * mathematical development;
- * knowledge and understanding of the world;
- * physical development;
- * creative development.

21st Century Family Schools

This project is being piloted across Durham county. It focuses on 4 clusters, each consisting of a secondary school and its feeder primary schools. Its aim is to establish centres of excellence for the delivery of family learning in schools and to work with the wider community and other partners to

develop a full range of family learning activities

A Family Learning development worker has been based in each cluster to develop innovative ways to deliver Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy along with Wider Family Learning and is helping to establish clear progression routes for learners. The development workers also provide an essential link between Skills for Life and ACL family learning.

Success has been evident through the increase in Learner numbers, in some cases by as much as 100%. New courses are being developed, e.g. there is one based on renewable energy. The workers are forging closer links with Extended Schools and the project has also ensured continuing partnership with Sure Start, Children's Centres, colleges and other partners. Although the pilot is due to end in July 2006 its work will continue within Education in the Community.

New and Old in Teesdale

Teesdale is an area of outstanding natural beauty and Family Learning in Teesdale is vibrant and growing fast.

The 21st Century Schools Project has responded to the schools and local needs by developing new and exciting courses alongside the traditional ones for all the family to enjoy.

New courses include: Renewable Energy; E-learning; Teesdale Maths Challenge; Family Spanish; Big Cook, Little Cook.



Teesdale School shows its commitment to Healthy Eating as the chef prepares paella for the Family Spanish group.

Family Learning through Football and Football Fitness

Fun and informality are the key ingredients of the popular Family Learning through Football courses run by SAFC Foundation's Family Learning programme in partnership with Durham County Council. Recently the scheme has run in eight schools in Teesdale, Bishop Auckland, Easington and Central Durham working with 81 families. All courses have



ended with presentations of certificates and a tour of the Stadium of Light.

A new course, Family Learning through

Football Fitness, was launched with great success at Cotsford Juniors and Our Lady of the Rosary working with 12 and 15 families respectively. The course is about healthy living, the benefits of physical activity, diet and how our bodies work.

Claire Balmforth from Our Lady of the Rosary said, "I came on the course because of my son. By learning new skills I really built up my confidence over the ten weeks. I thought it was a good idea to get involved with him and it was a good opportunity to meet other parents. I would recommend this course to anyone."



SAFC Foundation and Durham Education in the Community would like to thank all those who took part in these and previous courses and the parents and children who made it so much fun.

The most recent set of courses started on 8th May and have been running at Tanfield School College of Science and Engineering, Catchgate Primary, Collierley Primary, Ingleton Primary and Startforth Morrit.

For more information about courses in the future please contact Paul Power at SAFC Foundation on 0191 5515067.

"It's what parents do rather than who they are that counts."

Charles Desforges

"We all want the best for our children but we don't always have the time, understanding or opportunity to do it. Family Learning does!"

Introducing some of the tutors

Sharon Stevenson, Focus on Learning



"It is a real pleasure to have this role as it is so diverse and rewarding. No two days are the same and no two groups want to learn the same thing; our learning aims come straight from the parents and children themselves. I have been welcomed into schools and community centres, also Gypsy and Traveller sites and have worked in conjunction with other services across the county. I am passionate about the need for family learning. By the end of each course everyone has grown in confidence and in practical expertise. I can't think of a better job to do."

Traveller sites and have worked in conjunction with other services across the county. I am passionate about the need for family learning. By the end of each course everyone has grown in confidence and in practical expertise. I can't think of a better job to do."

Patrick Langdon, LEAP



"One really positive aspect of Family Learning in County Durham is its flexibility of ways in which the needs of parents are met. We can shape the curriculum to suit the learners and this is really valuable. I believe it was Duke Ellington who said, 'The real learning starts when you know what you want to know.' It is exciting when learners get involved and it's really wonderful when you see the light beginning to dawn."

Shelagh Sharkey, Return to Learn



"I've worked in education for a long time now and have been involved in both primary teaching and adult basic skills delivery. Finally I have found the ideal job. Working with parents and children together allows for total flexibility and the satisfaction of giving people what they want. The difference we make is both visible and appreciated. Who could ask for more?"

Cheryl Auton, Learn East



"I have worked for Learn East for the past 6 years and watched the variety of programmes we offer grow significantly. It's an absolute joy to see learners develop and often gain employment due to their own hard work and the time they spend with us. My role as a Family Learning Tutor has also begun to expand into other areas. I train Level 2 Teaching Assistants and I now also work as a Dyslexia Support Tutor. In the future, I am hoping to link this with Family Learning and develop a course which will help parents to support their children with Dyslexia. Each day brings a new challenge and I'm loving every minute of it!"

ACL Family Learning News from Sedgefield, Dales, Easington, North Durham and Mid Durham

The team in Sedgefield has delivered a variety of innovative Family Learning courses during the academic year. These included "On the Farm", Family French and Spanish, Family Reiki and,



as the photograph shows, parents and children enjoyed Christmas craft activities at Sedgefield Community College.

The Dales ACL Family Learning courses have been well received too. There is evidence that the development of family learning opportunities has impacted on mainstream provision of both adult education and youth work.

Family Learning has enabled Education in the Community's ACL Programme to go into new venues instead of just community centres. At present ACL is actively working with two community centres and also five primary schools and the new Horden SureStart Children's Centre.

Family Learning Facts and Figures

- Last year Education in the Community's (EiC) Family Learning tutors worked with 1600 adult learners.
- Between September 2004 and August 2005 EiC delivered 256 courses in 134 schools, showing an increase over the previous two academic years
- Work extended into 12 SureStart groups, involving parents and very young children.

Equal Opportunities

We aim to ensure that everyone involved in Family Learning will be respected regardless of gender, age, race, culture, religion or disability.

Contact **Margaret Richards**,
LEA Family Programmes Manager

Telephone/Fax: 0191 3733146
E-mail: m.richards100@durhamlea.org.uk
Focus on Learning
Durham Community Business College
Ushaw Moor
Durham DH7 7NG

The Family Learning website is currently being updated.

"I enjoyed sharing the learning experience with my son and you don't often get the chance to do that". Parent

Family Learning Works!