

Framework for practitioners

Supporting Parents and Carers in Edinburgh

2017–2020



Acknowledgements

This Framework for Practitioners was written and produced by the Parent and Carer Support team in consultation with over 50 colleagues from across City of Edinburgh's Families and Communities Department, NHS, Police Scotland and Third Sector. All are owed sincere thanks for their time and contributions as without them this framework would not have been possible.

If there are any omissions or suggestions for future updates please email supportingparentsandcarers@edinburgh.gov.uk and we will endeavour to include these in the next reprint if possible.

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Who is this for?

This document is primarily aimed at staff and volunteers in Edinburgh, working with parents and carers. It builds on the Framework for Action within Supporting Edinburgh's Parents and Carers 2009– 2012 and the Parental Engagement and Support Strategy 2013 – 2017 which served as a foundation to develop a wide variety of existing and new programmes, resources and information for families across Edinburgh.

This new Framework for Practitioners 2017– 2020 has been developed in line with current policies and legislation such as the National Parenting Strategy, Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2017, the Edinburgh Children's Partnership Children's Services Plan 2017 to 2020 and the Mental Health Strategy 2017– 2027.

It aims to highlight the ongoing commitment, aims and shared values of all our partners including: City of Edinburgh Council, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, Scottish Children's Reporter Administration and the Third Sector to supporting parents and carers at home, at work, in school and within the wider community.



'If a community values its children it must cherish their parents.' (John Bowlby, 1951)

Why are we doing this?

We can help to achieve the best start for children when we build positive relationships between families and the services that support them.

At every stage of a child's development, parents and carers may be interacting with a whole range of services and organisations within Health, Education, Housing, Police, Social Work, the Third Sector and the wider community (Appendix 1). The way staff interact with parents and carers will influence how families go on to engage with our services, and this has a direct impact on outcomes for children and young people. It is central to our work that we listen to what families want and need and that they are involved in shaping and improving our services accordingly.

This Framework for Practitioners aims to build on the immense variety of positive engagement with families that already takes place, and support all our staff to share common values and aims, develop their skills, and provide high quality services to parents and carers that help to inform local and city wide planning.

Together, we play a key role in providing support for families and helping their children and young people live healthy, fulfilling lives.



'Good parenting has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation'. (Desforges and Abourchaar, 2003)



What do we want to achieve?

Our key aims are to:

- 1** Develop a skilled and welcoming workforce that builds strong, respectful relationships with all parents and carers.
- 2** Provide opportunities for families to come together and engage with their children's health and wellbeing, play, learning and community.
- 3** Help parents and carers feel confident in their ability and skills to meet the daily demands of their parenting role.
- 4** Ensure professional support and help is available for families where there are wellbeing concerns or additional support needs.
- 5** Support parents and carers to access study, work and community life.



How will we do this?

1 **Develop a skilled and welcoming workforce that builds strong, respectful relationships with all parents and carers.**

The ability of all our staff to build positive relationships with families is absolutely key if we want to provide effective support and services. These relationships are fundamental to working alongside parents and carers in ways that best support and help them in their role and build on their individual strengths.

At all times parents and carers across Edinburgh will be interacting with a range of public and voluntary services and organisations which should be welcoming and supportive from the point of entry. This can help families feel comfortable in seeking information and advice, and maximises engagement and participation.

It is important that all staff are given opportunities to build their skills and confidence through training and development, particularly regarding engaging with parents and carers. There should also be an emphasis on practitioners in localities coming together to improve partnership working, share good practice and resources, thus addressing any barriers to better meet the needs of parents and carers in their area.

Examples include:

Multi agency training: Confident Staff Confident Children; Scottish Mental Health First Aid; Up, Up and Away; Connecting with Parents' Motivations; Getting It Right for Every Child; Safe for Parents to Say; Solihull Approach; Safe and Together Domestic Abuse Awareness; Teenage Brains and Behaviour. Solution-focused and restorative approaches.

'We know that parents want to remain in control of their family lives and be listened to.... Relationships are at the heart of the process. For a parent lacking in confidence and trust to access services, forming a warm and positive relationship with a practitioner can be a bridge to available help and information.' (Roberts, 2009)

2 Provide opportunities for families to come together and engage with their children's health and wellbeing, play, learning and community.

Parents and carers are the most important educators in their children's lives. Parental and family engagement in their children's learning is a key factor in ensuring successful outcomes.

We want to build on the many meaningful ways in which education, community and health settings are encouraging parents and carers to engage in children's learning through play, reading, creative and physical activities.

Families learning together helps to build relationships, support children's wellbeing, encourage achievement and attainment. It can foster positive attitudes to lifelong learning.

Furthermore, parents and carers coming together to support and interact with each other in this way can also help reduce social isolation and strengthen community involvement.

It is important that we continue to maximise parental engagement and family learning in all our settings and services.

Examples include:

Baby Massage; Bed Time Stories initiative; Bookbug sessions; Peep Learning Together Sessions; Stay and Play opportunities; Family Learning in schools and nurseries; Family projects with museums and galleries; Read, Write, Count book gifting in schools; Scottish Parent and Teacher Council Partnership Schools Scotland initiative. Five to Thrive; Up, Up and Away; Building Resilience resources.



'Parents are the most important people in children's lives. It is from parents that children learn most, particularly in the early months and years.' (Ball, 1994)



3 Help parents and carers feel confident in their ability and skills to meet the daily demands of their parenting role.

Most parents and carers are aware that they play a key role in supporting their children's wellbeing but often acknowledge that this can sometimes be hard. As children develop from pre-birth to teenage years, relationships can change and families may face several different challenges. These are often addressed through the presence of family members, peers, supportive groups, inclusive communities and professional services. Where these work well they are hugely valued.

There is strong evidence that parenting programmes can help increase parents' and carers' confidence and contribute positively to family relationships and children's wellbeing. Additional benefits include decreases in child behaviour problems, social isolation and family stress. In Edinburgh there are six key parenting programmes being run citywide (see Appendix II). These programmes include opportunities to learn more about ante-natal support, attachment and relationships, early child development, managing children's behaviour and supporting teenagers' mental health and wellbeing.

In order to ensure parity and continuity of availability, services need to commit to resourcing and staffing parenting programmes in their localities in order to sustain the wide variety and provision currently offered.

Examples include:

Universal: NHS antenatal and parent craft classes; Peep Learning Together; Raising Children with Confidence; Raising Teens with Confidence courses.

Targeted: The Incredible Years; Triple P; Teen Triple P; NHS Confident Parenting for parents of children with a disability.

'The key benefits of attending a programme from the parents' point of view were the support they received from other parents, the increase of self-efficacy in the parenting role, better understanding of the factors which motivate their children to behave in particular ways and increased ability to empathise with them.' (Barlow and Stewart-Brown, 2001)

4 Ensure professional support and help is available for families where there are wellbeing concerns or additional support needs.

There are times when parents and carers may experience highly stressful situations and the impact can be severe and enduring for both themselves and their children. In many of these extremely difficult situations the lives of families are disrupted and basic family responsibilities may not be met.

Staff are well positioned to identify families facing difficulties and play an essential early intervention role that can involve signposting to targeted and professional services where appropriate. These services should be flexible and accessible to make sure that parents are offered the right support, at the right time and in the right way.

It is recognised that preparatory work often needs to take place to build up confidence of parents and carers to access and make use of professional support and services. Much of this work takes place within the home by staff from a range of sectors including the Third Sector, Education, Health, Family and Household Support, and Social Work. Where possible, staff should be working alongside parents and carers to build their individual capacity and strengths to make changes where necessary, especially where children may be at risk or have unmet needs.

The locality working model should offer partners the opportunity to better understand and value the varying parts different services play in this continuum of support.

Examples include:

Additional Support Access Point (ASAP); Child and Young Person planning meetings (GIRFEC); Family Group Decision Making; Social Work Parenting Assessment Framework; Family Nurse Partnership; Multi Systemic Therapy; Rivers Centre for trauma.



'Building on strengths as well as identifying difficulties emphasises the importance of seeking out ... resilience, and potential resources in children and families on which to build.'
(Bentovim, 2009)

5 Support parents and carers to access work, study and community life.

Many parents and carers want to engage with local community activities, take part in further education and work opportunities and we should strive to support them to do this. An important component of supporting parents and carers to engage with these opportunities is helping them to feel comfortable in seeking information and building their confidence. Providing and sharing accessible information in a variety of formats, including face to face discussions, is key.

Staff within localities should play a proactive role in raising awareness of what is available. This includes signposting as well as having meaningful conversations with parents and carers as to how best to address barriers to accessing services, work, education and community life. Staff should also aim to raise parents' and carers' confidence, skills and knowledge to allow them to take up these opportunities.

In addition, all Edinburgh partners need to renew their commitment to ensuring families are accessing the benefits, grants and childcare they are entitled to and are taking action to minimise the impact of poverty.

Examples include:

Early Learning and Childcare; Breakfast Clubs; After School provision; Programmes, Activities and Groups for parents and carers, locality booklets; 1 in 5: Child Poverty Cost of the School Day initiative; Adult learning programmes; English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) courses; Information in community languages.



'The sheer diversity of family life now means that 'one size fits all' approaches are unlikely to be successful and that instead, giving families access to information, advice and support of various kinds that they can make use of as and when they think best is much more likely to be effective.' (DCSF, 2010)

Signposting

Health Concerns: Please support parents and carers to contact their GP or Health Visitor

Education Concerns: Please support parents and carers to contact their school or early years setting.

Additional Support Needs: Signpost to the website www.aslserviceedinburgh.com for information on support services available for children and young people with additional support needs or English as an Additional Language.

Social Work Concerns: For parents and carers who need help due to illness, disability or have concerns about the safety of an adult or child at risk of harm should be directed to Social Care Direct 0131 200 2324.

Programmes, Activities and Groups for parents and carers: Download locality booklets from www.edinburgh.gov.uk/pacs or signpost parents and carers to www.joininedinburgh.org

Family Support Organisations signpost to Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC) website www.evocredbook.org.uk

FREE parenting helpline, email and web-chat service: for anyone caring for or concerned about a child – open until 9pm Monday to Friday. 08000 28 22 33 parentlinescotland@children1st.org.uk

Parenting website: access FREE parent resources, support networks and parent help lines on a range of topics. www.parentingacrossscotland.org

For further information and signposting within your locality.

Please contact your Lifelong Learning Development Officer for Parent and Carer Support.

North West: Sue.cameron@edinburgh.gov.uk

North East: Jillian.hart@edinburgh.gov.uk

South East: Helena.reid@ea.edin.sch.uk

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Appendix I

Support for parents and carers comes from many sources, in a variety of formats and can be of differing intensity. Here are a few examples from our partners, this list is not exhaustive and is subject to changing priorities so can only be a snapshot. It is being provided here as a starting point for partners to build on and share as we move forward.



Appendix II

Peep Learning Together Programme is a universal parenting programme for parents/carers of 0–5 year olds. The programme supports parents and carers to value and build on the home learning environment and attachment relationships with their children, by making the most of everyday learning opportunities – listening, talking, playing, singing, sharing books and stories together. Specially trained group practitioners share session topics covering five strands of learning and development.

Triple P (PoPP) is an 8-week positive parenting programme for parents and carers of 3–6 year olds. The courses offer help to adults to strengthen their relationship with their child and encourage positive behaviour. The courses look at effective techniques for dealing with common childhood behaviour problems. Specially trained group leaders work with parents and carers on goals for themselves and their family. There is also 1:1 phone support.

Incredible Years (PoPP) is a 14-week positive parenting programme for parents and carers of 3–6 year olds. The courses look at effective techniques for dealing with common childhood behaviour problems. Strategies to manage behaviours such as aggressiveness, tantrums, shouting, answering back and refusing to follow rules are also explored. Specially trained group leaders work with parents and carers on goals for themselves and their family.

Raising Children with Confidence is a universal 7-week course which gives parents and carers of children aged 0–11 years, the chance to explore emotional health and wellbeing and how best they can promote it in themselves and their children. Topics include wellbeing, resilience, brain development and attachment.

Raising Teens with Confidence is a universal 6-week course which gives parents and carers of children aged 11–18 years, an opportunity to explore ideas of how they can help their teenage children navigate adolescence. Topics include mental health and wellbeing, stress, risk and resilience and adolescent brain development.

Teen Triple P (Positive Parenting Programme) is a 9-week practical parenting programme for parents and carers of 11–16 year olds. The course gives parents an opportunity to explore ways they can build a stronger relationship with their teenager, resolve conflict, manage problem behaviours and help their teen stay safe. Specially trained group leaders support parents during group and individual sessions.

For more information on any of the above programmes please see www.edinburgh.gov.uk/supportforfamilies

