

# Parental Engagement

Family-led learning – engaging the whole family

## Progressing Parental Engagement Parent Fact Sheet

### Family-led learning – engaging the whole family

Parental engagement involves partnerships between families and schools to promote children's learning and wellbeing. A large part of this comprises family-led learning.

Many parents feel they should be doing more at school. For parents who are busy, it is important to remember that supporting learning at home matters. Providing opportunities for children to learn new things, reading and supporting their interests makes a big difference. Parents don't need to be an expert; supporting and encouraging learning is enough.

#### Who is family?

In this context 'family' refers to all the people who share in the caring and nurturing of a child. Immediate family, like Mums, Dads, step-parents, foster parents or adopted parents, and siblings, and extended family like grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins can all have a strong role. Additionally, 'family' may also be people who are not relatives, people who play a special role in the life of your child, such as a close neighbour or family friend.

#### What is family-led learning?

Family-led learning is focused on high aspirations for children, shared reading, a positive environment for homework, parent-child conversation, a cognitively stimulating home environment and support for social and emotional wellbeing.

#### Ideas for the whole family to engage in your child's learning

##### ***Read together every day:***

- Picture book with dad before bed, grandma's favourite story on Skype, a traditional family recipe, map and street signs with mum on the way to swimming, an email from grandpa, a text from a friend, a story on an i-pad with a sibling.

##### ***Write together every day:***

- A shopping list with mum, a letter to a teacher, an invitation to a friend, a secret message to dad, an envelope to a grandparent, a birthday card to a cousin, a scrap book of a family holiday, a story with a neighbour, record facts with an uncle, draw and colour in with brothers and sisters.

##### ***Talk together every day:***

- The message is talk, talk, talk, and then talk some more. Point things out, ask open questions, ring uncle and talk about the footy, talk about big ideas, passions, interests, favourite food, movies and books with aunty, current affairs with step-dad, family history with grandparents.
- Talk with the whole family at dinner time, travelling to and from school with dad, on Skype with mum on a business trip, whilst playing together. Make up stories – kids love making up "silly" stories and nonsense rhymes, include dress-ups, make a puppet show.

***Learn together every day:***

- Play a family game of cards, do a crossword or number puzzle with grandpa, build with Lego with sisters, cook and bake with aunty, set the table, sort the recycling, count, conduct internet research with a big brother, knit with grandma, care for a pet, construct a block tower, match shapes and pictures, string beads in a repetitive pattern.

***Play together every day:***

- Pretend, imagine, play games, construct, build a cubby with dad, dress up with cousins, hide and seek with friends, soccer with the neighbours, experiment with different sensory experiences like sand, water, rocks, and sticks, for sustained periods.

***Laugh together every day:***

- Tell a joke, make up rhymes and riddles, family concerts, watch a funny movie.

***Move together every day:***

- Go for a family walk or bike ride, dance, jump on the trampoline, swim, backyard cricket, plant a vegie patch with dad, swing and climb at the park, play ball games, run, skip.
- Go where there's room for children to run, explore, climb safely. Let kids try out different sports, and give them an opportunity to play team games – taking turns and learning rules, any opportunity for children to participate with encouragement in contributing to a team will strengthen self regulation and collaboration.

***Explore together:***

- Take grandma to the museum or art gallery, story time at the library with mum, National Park adventure with the family, a holiday at the beach, a bus ride to the city to go on the merry-go-round and buy an ice-cream, listen to a concert, shop together at the fruit markets, swim at the Cotter, camp in the backyard with cousins, fish and chips at the lake.



## **Where can I find more information?**

Launching into Learning - Parent booklets on home based learning activities and ideas for transition to school

[http://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents\\_carers/early\\_years/Programs-and-Initiatives/Pages/Launching-into-Learning.aspx](http://www.education.tas.gov.au/parents_carers/early_years/Programs-and-Initiatives/Pages/Launching-into-Learning.aspx)

Raising children – Ideas for learning and play with primary school aged children

[http://raisingchildren.net.au/play\\_learning/school\\_age\\_play\\_learning.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/play_learning/school_age_play_learning.html)

Transition to school - Engaging with schools and choosing schools

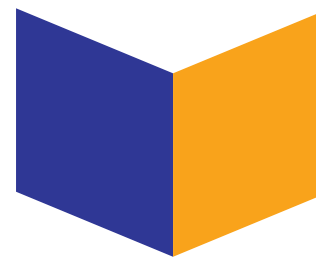
<http://www.transitiontoschoolresource.org.au/tts>

Schoolatoz: Practical help for parents – A comprehensive guide for parents of school aged children

[www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/](http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/)

Parent involvement toolkit – Information on parental engagement and family-school partnerships

[www.peopleforeducation.ca/how-does-education-work/training-and-resources/helping-children-succeed-the-parent-engagement-toolkit/](http://www.peopleforeducation.ca/how-does-education-work/training-and-resources/helping-children-succeed-the-parent-engagement-toolkit/)



## About this project

The ACT Directorate for Education and Training partnered with the non-profit Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), The Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT, the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations, the Catholic School Parents Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn and the Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools. Together, the alliance developed a shared understanding of parental engagement in the ACT, based on what the evidence shows has the biggest impact and the things that matter most to ACT families and schools. The international evidence has been reviewed and parents and teachers have been consulted on what is important to them.

## Our Partners

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More resources will be available in 2015.



**ACT**  
Government  
Education and Training



**CATHOLIC EDUCATION**  
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