

INFORMATION EVENTS, COMMUNITY LEARNING AND FAMILY LEARNING

Information events can be arranged in collaboration with the school. These can be themed, with a focus on a range of topics relating to learning in school, to support parenting in general or to gain wider knowledge eg about personal finances or trying new activities. For example, an information event might look at reading together, homework, learning at home, additional support for learning, online safety, using technology, managing screentime, healthy eating and sleeping, mental health, and much more!

Family learning is generally led by the school, to enable families to learn together – this might be about literacy (reading and writing), numeracy (maths and numbers) or using computers. Bringing young people and their families together outside school hours to learn alongside each other, or try new activities is fun too!

Parent and Carer Workshops and Information Events

Working alongside the school team, parent groups can lead on organising themed talks and information events, either online or in person. These can cover topics such as health and wellbeing (healthy eating, sleeping etc), specific subject areas (maths, reading and writing, languages etc), curriculum choices, strategies for learning, technology, online safety and more.

Family Learning Festival

A 'festival' or series of events and activities creates an opportunity for families to learn together in a relaxed setting, encouraging a lifelong love of learning for everyone. Covering any topic or subject (see above), your group could reach out to the wider community for support (eg a local library, museum, community group, local businesses etc). The Learning Festival could focus on one day of learning or could involve a programme of events over a few weeks or even a whole term. This creates a great opportunity to be fun, informal, and inclusive – with everyone welcome from parents/carers to grandparents and friends.

Careers Education

Careers fairs or events can be arranged by the school and the Parent Council, working together to involve parents and the wider community. Whilst careers education itself is led by the school with Skills Development Scotland, parents are a great source of information too! They can give talks on types of jobs, careers, skills at all stages of education and interests can be explored from nursery and primary onwards. Using your personal knowledge of the community and local networks, perhaps your parent group can help to approach a wider range of businesses and companies to provide speakers to talk about their pathways into work, their current roles, skills and experiences? This could be an in-person one-off event or a series of

events. Short, recorded films made by parents or businesses about different jobs and workplaces would be very helpful for school careers education too.

Parents can also help the school to build a database of companies and contacts for careers education talks, work placements or events. Parent volunteers can also be recruited to support young people as they write their CVs or to practise for job interviews.

Learn Something New for All Ages

Parent groups can lead on 'Learn Something New' projects. As well as encouraging positive attitudes to lifelong learning, and supporting family learning too, these are a fun opportunity to gain new skills! By reaching out into the wider community, you can invite local residents to share their skills and talents. This could be anything from decorating biscuits, knitting/sewing, painting, computing, dancing, chess, maintaining and repairing bicycles, flower-arranging, yoga, basketball, cooking, gardening, woodwork, upholstery, upcycling and much more! Some activities may require utensils or equipment. You may be able to fund these, or more sustainably, reach out for donations or borrow items locally.

After-school Activities for Children and Young People

Are there parents or local residents with specific skills who could offer after-school activities for children free of charge? Modern languages, music, board games, singing are popular options for children and young people to learn new skills, develop talents and try something new. Perhaps community development or youth workers can set up a youth club or a homework club?

Games or Book Swap/Sale

This can be very flexible – it can be a larger community event or a small in-school informal swap. It can take place over a longer period (if you have storage or a designated shelf in school) or be a special one-off event. Great for sustainability, encouraging reading, and it is also an equitable event.

Families can swap, exchange, or donate books, magazines, board games, jigsaws and even DVDs in decent condition.

Book-a-thon

This is a competition or reading challenge with prizes for winners, or for reading a particular number of books, pages, or chapters. It is important to consider all types of readers and abilities.

Perhaps you could add some extra fun elements to encourage learners to take part, for example, a prize for reading in the most unusual place or for listing the highest number of different types of reading materials (road sign, magazine, comic, cereal box, leaflet).

Maths Café

A Maths Café is a social event to allow families to explore mathematics in a comfortable, informal setting. There could be maths explainers, quizzes and puzzles or numbers-based activities set up for families whilst they enjoy refreshments.

Explore Science Club

There may be a teacher, local resident, or member of staff at a local college or business who might be able to share some basic science in fun ways with learners and families at your school. This could be growing some plants, or simple crafts that demonstrate scientific principles.

Explore Money Club

Do you have a local business, bank or building society whose staff can help children and families learn more about personal finance and managing money? Your local Citizens' Advice Bureau might be able to help too. It would work well as part of a Maths Café.

Awareness Days/Weeks

There are dedicated awareness days or weeks which create a focal point for planning events and activities eg Walk to School Week. Your school community can also create its own special focus weeks eg Sports Week, or International/Global Awareness Week, around which events can be planned by the school, parent groups and the wider community.

You are welcome to use information from this resource. However, if you do, please acknowledge Connect. We welcome your comments and feedback.

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