

# Raising aspirations

## I. Activity type and description

*Brainstorming ideas on how to raise the aspirations of children and their families*

## II. Material/resources needed

## III. Instructions

It is important that both parents and schools set high but realistic aspirations for children. There are lots of ways that schools can promote an 'aiming high' culture. Often, it is less about posters displayed in corridors and more about modelling goal-setting, sharing achievements and teaching children how to overcome an 'I can't' attitude.

- See if there are programmes/organisations that will support your school to encourage high ambitions and aspirations.
- Create opportunities for children to meet a variety of people in different job roles while they are at primary school. These can come from the parenting community, nearby universities or colleges, or from the wider community. Try to challenge gender stereotypical assumptions. One primary school that we worked with invited in a decorated (female) naval commander of a warship to address an audience of young boys. She certainly made an impression!
- Ask staff to share the dreams and ambitions they had when they were growing up.
- Consider making blue plaques, like the ones found on buildings, for successful alumni from the school
- Attracting alumni to any school is a fun way of showing pupils that there is a world beyond school and depending on the career pathway of the alumni, their stories will inspire parents and children.
- Every member of staff could visibly display a goal they are working towards on their classroom door. These could be related to learning (doing an MA for example) or something entirely different, such as attending obedience classes with a new puppy. Make aiming high visible!

## IV. References

Goodall, J., & Weston, K. (2018). *100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Engaging Parents*, Bloomsbury Publishing. Page 13

*Research has shown that most parents have high aspirations for their young children and that these aspirations need support to stay high as children grow.*

## V. Alternatives

n/a