

The home learning environment

I. Activity type and description

This is a collection of talking points teachers can use with parents to encourage their involvement in their children's learning.

II. Material/resources needed

none

III. Instructions

The attitude towards learning in the home is vital for children's achievement. We need to support parents to keep that attitude positive and creative, so that at 15, young people are still as keen to ask the 'why' questions as they are at five. Some of the following will help ensure the home learning environment is as rich and supportive as the school environment.

- Let parents know that it's important they tell their children that they as parents value education and school. Parents set the tone at home with expectations about learning.
- Let parents know that they are already experts on their child and that you are picking up the baton when their child enters your classroom and building on the work that they have already done nurturing that child; both groups (school and home) need to work together.
- Give parents tips on how to support learning
- Let parents know it's ok to say 'I don't know— let's find out!'. Share with them how you encourage children to find out the answer in the classroom. What pointers can you give parents?
- Help parents understand the importance of play, songs, nursery rhymes and outdoor activity for learning. Without an understanding of the importance of these activities for children's cognitive, social and emotional development, some parents may not do them.
- When parents understand that they have a powerful role to play in shaping a child's educational outcomes, they are often more willing to engage with their children's learning.
- Creating a home learning environment shouldn't feel onerous for families. Reassure parents that it's the simple things that can make the biggest difference!

IV. References

'Eighty per cent of the factors affecting how well children do at school are dependent on what happens outside the school gates—whether it is in the home or in the wider community.'

Research shows that it's what parents do with their children, not what level of education they have or how much money they have, that makes a difference to children's learning.

Source: Goodall, J., & Weston, K. (2018). 100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Engaging Parents, Bloomsbury Publishing, Page 4-5

V. Alternatives

n/a