

GETTING PARENTS ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING

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The home-school link is about more than just homework. Extended learning covers any learning that takes place outside of the classroom. It encompasses homework, lunchtime and after school clubs and school trips. This could be anything from learning at home with a family member to a family visit to a museum or taking part in extracurricular activities. Extended learning should be for everyone, not just the most gifted pupils. Your school probably has its own policy on homework, clubs and trips but how can you get parents to continue their child's learning outside of school?

| How to get parents involved

Get parents to give their feedback! When you send home projects for children to show their parents, include a feedback sheet for parents. You could ask some simple, guiding questions which will help them to appreciate what the child has achieved.

Get parents involved in homework! Give parents a task in the homework activity. Perhaps the child can ask their parents some simple, topic-based questions in their native language. On the other end of the scale, you could send home simple games for the child and parent to play together to aid vocabulary learning.

Get digital! Use social media and digital means to post simple tasks for parents to do at home. Communicating digitally will also mean they will be able to give you feedback more quickly and get in touch if they are finding something difficult and need a helping hand.

Prepare for the holidays! Send home activities and games children can do at home during holidays.

Use course materials! Check your course website to see if it has any resources for parents.

Remember not to expect too much from parents but help them to be more involved in their child's education.



| Keep displays in your classroom updated

Use new examples of student work, make sure displays are eye-catching and reflect the themes the class is learning. If a parent should make a visit to your school, the display will definitely catch their eye and they will be more aware of what their child is learning.

You could take this one step further and invite parents to a special exhibition of student work. Remember: showing student work can also take the form of a performance.





Games and activities for parents to support their child's learning at home.

It's a good idea to provide parents with a wordlist (ideally with translated meanings) that they can use for playing games with their child at home. Perhaps your course already has a word list you can use?

Word island: parent uses chalk to draw a series of large islands. Parent writes a word from the vocabulary list in each island and instructs child to 'step', 'jump' or 'hop' to each word.

Sticky notes: child puts sticky notes on objects around the home stating what they are in English to help them remember them.

Topic fun: child and parent photograph topic-related objects and look up the English words for each object at home.

Sentence shuffle: parent chooses a sentence from the coursebook, making sure they are choosing key language for learning (usually in a highlighted box). Parent writes the sentence clearly on a piece of paper, cuts out each word and shuffles them. The child has to arrange the sentences in the correct order.

Games and activities using flashcards and word cards

Parents and/or child write or draw a set of flashcards and/or word cards on target vocabulary. Create two of each card.

Snap: shuffle and divide cards between the parent and the child. They take turns to lay down a card. When a matching word or image appears twice in a row, they shout snap and take the cards from the middle. The player with the most cards wins.

Matching pairs: shuffle and place all cards with the pictures or words face down. Each player takes it in turns to select two cards. If they match, they can keep the cards. If they don't match, they need to replace them. The player with the most pairs wins. Talk about the picture and practise the English words as they play.

What's missing: Select some cards and put them face-up in front of the child. Child closes their eyes and the parent removes a card. Child must guess which is missing.

Many of the games that children play in their own language will also work in English. You can suggest parents reward their child with stars or stickers that they collect on a chart. This will encourage them to keep practising as they learn new vocabulary and grammar.

Encourage parents to share their interests and skills

For example, if you are teaching a topic about holidays and one of the parents is a holiday tour operator, they would make an exciting guest in the classroom. Or perhaps one of your parents is an actor and you are studying Shakespeare with your class. They could come into the lesson and help you to run an activity. You can also get extended family members involved too.

Family circumstances

You need to recognise that the families in your class have a range of financial circumstances from parents who can afford to send their child to private music lessons and take them on expensive trips to the theatre, to parents who struggle to put food on the table. You should avoid putting unnecessary financial pressure on families. Whilst there may be the perfect exhibition at the local museum, if it's expensive, try to think of a free alternative for parents to do with their child.



Topic-based learning

Helping children with topics at home or out and about is a great way that parents can extend learning without needing to speak English. There might be topic-related activities, for example, if the child is learning about newspapers and headlines in their English class, they could collect some newspaper cuttings in their own language and look at how headlines are written.

If they are learning about the environment, parents can go out with their child in their local area and collect photographs of anything that might fall into this category. They could then look up the English words together when they get home and label them.

Share with parents

Think about how you can share your ideas for extended learning with parents. It's really helpful if you make the syllabus available on the school website, and ensure that it is simple to understand and nicely illustrated. The most help you can possibly give to aid extended learning at home is to provide translated wordlists and make suggestions for activities and family days out.

Further resources

Visit [macmillanenglish.com/blog-resources/teacher-resources/young-learners](https://www.macmillanenglish.com/blog-resources/teacher-resources/young-learners) for more ideas, activities and flashcards. Many Macmillan courses also have features such as readers, parent zones, resource pages for parents, apps and Student Practice Kits with interactive games, videos and songs that parents can practice with their child.

Read the rest of Macmillan's Home-School Link articles at [macmillanenglish.com/blog-resources/teacher-resources/young-learners](https://www.macmillanenglish.com/blog-resources/teacher-resources/young-learners) and watch the short videos on YouTube (Macmillan Education ELT) – look for the playlist called [Macmillan's Home-School Link for young learners](#)

This article originally appeared as part of Macmillan's Home-School Link series by Aimee Bates.