

Making the difference

Out of school learning



Parents, carers and family members are by far the most important influences on their children's lives. You can make a difference not only by supporting what your child learns at school, but also by helping them to learn out of school hours. One of the ways you can do this is by encouraging them to attend some of the out of school learning activities that are available.

Some out of school learning activities take place in school, but others may be held in libraries, museums, art galleries, football clubs, sports centres or outdoor settings. They may take place before school, after school, at lunchtimes, weekends or during the school holidays. Taking part is of course voluntary.

How will my child benefit?

Out of school learning activities promote learning, healthy lifestyles and fun outside normal school hours in a safe and stimulating environment. The benefits include:

- › learning new things in a fun way
- › boosting confidence and self-esteem
- › increasing motivation to learn
- › improving school attendance
- › doing better at school
- › making new friends
- › keeping fit.

Between the ages of 5 and 16, children spend only 15% of their lives in school so helping them to learn out of school hours really improves their chances of success.



What activities are available?

Many schools now offer breakfast clubs before school or after-school activities. These activities are more informal than 'normal' school lessons, and may range from clubs where your child can get help with their homework, to opportunities for them to learn new skills such as music, cookery, dancing, sports, drama, writing, computing, photography, and so on. There are bound to be some activities in your area that your child will enjoy, and many are free!



How can I find out what's available?

Your child's school will be able to provide information about the range of activities offered by the school, where and when they take place and the person to contact. You may find this information in the school handbook, website or newsletters, or simply phone the school to ask.

What other ways can I help my child's learning?

If organised activities are not available, there are still lots of informal ways your child can learn out of school hours, both at home and when they're out and about. Taking your child to a local museum or visiting new places at weekends or during the school holidays are educational for instance, but ordinary, everyday life also provides your child with learning experiences. For example, they can learn a lot from simple things like:

- ▶ talking about what they have done at school
- ▶ hearing about the experiences of other family members e.g grandparents
- ▶ discussing something they have seen on television
- ▶ helping with food shopping and the preparation of meals
- ▶ using the internet to find information such as train times, travel directions, films showing at the local cinema
- ▶ helping to measure a room for paint, wallpaper, a new carpet, curtains or furniture
- ▶ working out how much things cost on holiday by converting euros or dollars into pounds; and so on.

For younger children, some schools have packs of materials (sometimes called Story Sacks or Curiosity Kits) that you can borrow. These contain books, toys, games and puzzles that you and your child can enjoy together.

If you would like more information on what activities are available and on other ways you can help your child's learning, contact the school. Information about local clubs and activities for children may also be available from your library, community centre or local authority. Libraries usually offer internet access and help with using the internet. Your local authority's Childcare Information Service can provide information about childcare provision including out of school care.

You can find more information about out of school learning, or any aspect of Scottish education, on Parentzone. **www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk**



Useful links and contacts

Parentzone – www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Childcare Link

Tel: 0800 096 0296 www.childcarelink.gov.uk

BBC Parents – www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

One Parent Families Scotland

13 Gayfield Square, Edinburgh, EH1 3NX

Tel: 0800 018 5026 www.opfs.org.uk

Parentscentre – www.parentscentre.gov.uk

ParentLine Scotland

Tel: 0808 800 2222 www.children1st.org.uk/parentline

Parent Network Scotland

Tel: 0131 555 6780 www.parentnetworkscotland.org.uk

Enquire (The Scottish advice service for additional support for learning)

Helpline: 0845 123 23 03 Textphone: 0131 222 2439

www.enquire.org.uk

This leaflet is the sixth in a series. It highlights the real difference parents can and do make to their children's learning. Together with the local advice you will have on the arrangements in your child's school, this series will offer information to help you become better involved in your child's education. Other published leaflets are on Homework, Sharing information, Parents' evenings, School holidays, Starting a new school year and Healthy choices. The series also includes materials for schools and teachers on these topics.

If you would like to contact us, or suggest topics for future leaflets, please visit www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk, or telephone 0131 244 0956. This leaflet will be available in community languages and alternative formats from your child's school and the Parentzone website.

This series is prepared in partnership with the Quality in Education Centre (University of Strathclyde) and Children in Scotland.



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