

Family Learning Festival

planning guide

Family Learning Festival

The Family Learning Festival is a national celebration which inspires a love of learning in family life.

Learning as a family helps us to become confident, lifelong learners. It helps children develop essential skills and achieve at school. It helps parents to reconnect to learning and transform their lives. Family learning can help families tackle disadvantage and improve their life chances.

The Family Learning Festival promotes the positive effects on children, parents and carers of learning together as a family. Organisations of all types from schools and children centres, through libraries to museums provide intergenerational activities so families can try something new, be inspired and feel positive about learning. They provide ideas and showcase learning opportunities that families can continue to benefit from after the Festival.

Thousands of family members take part, with many events taking place in areas of disadvantage.

Why should we take part?

Participating organisations report a wide range of benefits for taking part in the Festival. Our last large scale survey indicated:

79% of Family Learning Festival organisers **reached new audiences** as a result of their activities.

74% of organisers **developed new learning opportunities** through involvement in the Festival.

55% of organisations **developed new partnerships**.

73% of organisers **ran events** that were **attended by disadvantaged families or families at risk of social exclusion**.

84% of organisations **highlighted further learning opportunities** as part of their activities.

96% of organisations **indicated they would get involved in Family Learning Festival again**.

Welcome to the Family Learning Festival planning guide.

In this guide you will find all you need to get started:

Step 1 Set your goals

Step 2 Choose your activities

Step 3 Think about Skills for Life

Step 4 Work in partnership

Step 5 Promotion

Step 6 Signposting and further Learning

Step 7 On the Day

Step 8 Evaluation

Step 1 Set your goals

Start your planning by deciding on your goals - what your organisation would like to achieve.

For example, these could be a mix of :

- Reaching and engaging different groups of people – e.g. dads
- Promoting specific types of learning such as digital skills or healthy eating
- Increasing the number of people visiting your venue
- Raising your profile of your organisation
- Opportunities to work with new partners

These will form your event's objectives.

Next, think about your target audience. For example, you may decide to target:

- dads and lads
- families from a particular ethnic background
- families who live in a particular area
- parents who don't usually engage in school activities

You may have a clear idea about the audience you wish to attract to your Family Learning Festival activities. If not, there are many different ways of finding about the people who live in your local area and decide who you want to engage see next page).

You may wish to think about:

- qualification levels of people in your area
- age ranges of children and adults
- employment levels

Step 2 Choose your activities

The Family Learning Festival website has a collection of activity ideas on our Pinterest page <https://uk.pinterest.com/fffestival>

Before choosing your activities you may wish to think about:

- Activities that family members can do together. Family Learning is all about intergenerational learning.
- The types of activities your target families are interested in. If possible ask them beforehand.
- What people will learn from the activity. If you run a face painting session you could look at make up through the ages or talk about the science of the skin.
- Incorporating a crowd puller. Some activities always prove to be popular such as football sessions, circus skills or car boot sales. These can be used to attract people, who may then go on to try a new family learning activity.
- Holding a competition. Competitions attract attention and can help you gain free publicity.
- Taking your event to your audience. This could include shopping centres, sports halls or the high street. People prefer to take part in events where they feel comfortable and which are 'everyday' venues. Outreach programmes are a good way to start a relationship that could have them stepping through the doors of your venue at a later point.
- How you can inspire further learning. The Family Learning Festival is all about encouraging people to carry on learning. To find out how to run activities that encourage families to carry on learning, download our guide *Discovering New Worlds: linking family activities to further learning*.

Choose a theme

Successful Family Learning Festival events usually have a strong theme. A theme can be used throughout the whole of an event, from the types of activities on offer, to the promotional activity, and even the evaluation techniques. You may wish to use one of our Family Learning Festival themes.

Engage your target audience

- Invite members of your target audience to join a planning group for your activities – they can then promote the event through word of mouth to their peers.
- Speak to organisations that already work with your target audience such as Children Centres or voluntary groups. Engage them in the planning process and delivery.
- Use the National Statistics website to find out the demographic data of those living in your area. Find out more by visiting www.statistics.gov.uk
- Your local authority will have a development plan for adult learning or a community plan. This information should help you see how you could widen participation. You should be able to access these by visiting your local authority website or contacting the local education department.

Step 3 Think about Skills for Life

Skills for Life (SfL) are essential skills that can help families in their day to day life. They include financial literacy, communication skills, English, Maths and Digital Skills

Family Learning Festival events are an ideal vehicle for embedding and promoting Skills for Life activities, as they are non-threatening, relaxed and fun.

Research indicates that helping children with homework is a great motivator to get parents back into learning. So if you are trying to get adults to sign up for your course, a Family Learning taster session may help to get reluctant parents through your doors.

Key points to remember when embedding Skills for Life activities are:

Targeting your audience

Be aware that different types of learners will need to be treated differently. Some adults feel that learning just isn't for them. Whilst others may be keen but feel their skills aren't quite up to scratch.

Activities

SfL activities can be enjoyed by everyone, for example:

- Healthy living – working out calories used up for different activities.
 - Halloween – using shapes to create a picture.
 - Cookery– weighing, measuring, writing and reading to create a family cookbook.
- Remember to make it fun – one Family Learning Festival event organiser produced a newspaper to develop literacy and ICT skills.

Promotion

- Don't make it obvious that the activity involves English, Maths or ICT – this may put some people off
- Don't promote the activity as basic skills – some people may not feel they need additional help

When producing written materials remember:

- Keep sentences short and organise them in brief paragraphs
- Speak directly to the reader (e.g. use 'you' and 'your')
- Use a font size that is 12 points and above and spread text out
- Avoid using fancy fonts as they are often difficult to follow. Try Arial, Century Schoolbook, Plantin, Helvetica or Comic Sans
- Repeating appropriate words can be helpful, so don't try to paraphrase
- You may want to use a readability test. Try searching for the 'SMOG Calculator'

Follow up

- If you have an evaluation form, ask staff/volunteers to ask the questions and fill them in rather than handing them out.
- Ask a SfL tutor or support person from your local FE college or Local Authority Adult Learning Service to advise adults that need support.
- Do signpost further help, but don't single people out

Longer term Skills for Life

If you are organising a longer-term course, make sure that you highlight the fact that it will include SfL as participants may see it as being dishonest if they are not made aware of the content.

Think about motivators that may encourage different audiences to learn - 'helping kids with homework'; 'getting a pay rise' or 'help manage your finances'.

Step 4 Working in partnership

Linking with other organisations is a good way of reaching new people, sharing your resources and building a stronger community. Working in partnership can help each group to achieve its aims and objectives more successfully.

When you are thinking about who you should partner with consider the following:

- Which organisations within your area have similar objectives?
- Are there some local organisations who can reach the target audience you have chosen more easily? This could include employers, schools, clubs or groups.
- Who has the resources or facilities that may benefit your event and audience? Do you need a venue, equipment, activities or help with publicity? This could include local surgeries offering health checks or a local band offering drumming lessons.
- Find out if there is another organisation holding an event near you and team up with them to offer an even bigger event. Contact the Family Learning Festival team to find out more.
- Consider working with organisations that you don't usually work with e.g. doctors surgeries, health centres, cinema or shopping centre.

Once you have decided who you would like to work with, make sure that you can explain to them the benefits of working with you. They may have similar objectives to you and/or some specific ones that running a joint event will help them to achieve. Draw up an agreement of what each organisation will do and spend time with them planning, sharing knowledge and highlighting aims. Include methods of communication that each partner will use to promote the event. The Campaign for Learning also works in partnership with national organisations in order to increase the number of resources available to you.

Partners that are likely to be keen to work with you include:

- Local Authority Adult Education, Family Learning and Family Information Services
- Information, Advice and Guidance Services
- Libraries, museums and art galleries
- Children's centres
- Schools, nurseries and Parent Support Advisers within schools
- Local colleges and learning providers
- Local employers
- Community centres and organisations

Step 5 Promotion

Promotion can be carried out in a variety of ways with something for everyone's budget:

Word of mouth - this is the cheapest and most effective way of promoting your event. What could be better than having friends, family or colleagues talking positively about your event?

Partnerships - if you are working with a partner use them to their full potential. Use their newsletter, website or meetings. If you are working with a school as them to send out letters/flyers through satchel post (this is an effective way of reaching parents).

Write your own press release and send it to your local newspaper, radio and TV stations as well as 'What's On' websites. It is also helpful to have a case study of a family who enjoyed your event highlighting any further learning they took part in afterwards.

Posters and flyers - Downloadable posters and templates will be available for you to use to advertise your event from August. See our Posters and Graphics section. If you want to produce leaflets think about where you will distribute them. Once again take into consideration who your target audience is. Where do they go? Try places like fish and chip shops and local grocery stores.

Branded goods - order our promotional items to give your event consistent branding. Subject to availability.

Invite a celeb – to give your event a special touch. It could be an actor or the local mayor.

Let us know

By registering your event with us online or by calling 0207 798 6067, we can promote your event to the general public:

- via our media campaign
- via our Family Space

Let others know

Once you have decided who you want to target, what activities you will be running and who you are going to work with, you need to promote your events to your target audience. Consider:

Where your audience go – e.g. shops; leisure venues; workplace

What they read – e.g. local paper; council website; school letters

Who they listen to – e.g. teachers; local radio; religious leaders

Speak to your target audience and ask them where they would pick up information.

Step 6 Signposting and further learning

Your Family Learning Festival event is an ideal opportunity to promote future learning opportunities. Our downloadable guide [Discovering new worlds: linking family activities to further learning has lots of information on how to do this effectively.](#)

Here are some other tips that may help:

- Other information about future events in the community linked to your activity e.g. if you ran an event on arts and crafts have information about a local gallery or painting class available.
- Invite local training providers to provide information about courses they offer. Ask them to be on hand to talk to people about what they could do.
- Have a display area with information about courses and learning opportunities.
- Ask a Skills for Life tutor or support person to come along who might be able to identify adults who need support.
- Organise a taster session linked to the activities you have put on. For instance, if your Family Learning Festival theme is 'Language', set up tasters in French or Sign Language. Take contact details straight away so that you have a ready made class.

- Talk to families and find out what else they would like to do. They may have specific interests, such as gardening or sport. Arrange to hold another family learning session in the near future.
- Invite your local careers service to come along.
- Include the National Careers Service helpline **0800 100 900** and website www.gov.uk/improve-english-maths-it-skills on your publicity for anyone who is too shy to talk about maths or English issues.



Step 7 On the Day

You've followed our planning tips, organised your activities, promoted the event ... so now it's here - what now?

Is your venue accessible?

For more information on making your venue accessible for disabled visitors visit www.disabledaccessday.com. You should also consider carrying out a risk assessment. Go to the Health and Safety Executive site at www.hse.gov.uk

Is everyone taking part?

On the day keep everyone involved. Don't let adults sit back or take over. Family learning is all about parents/carers and children learning together. So, get all family members thinking, talking and having fun. Assign roles to parents and children if this helps.

Do you have enough staff helping out?

Do staff know where everything is including toilets, refreshments and activities? Can they be easily identified? Can they help fill forms out for people with Skills for Life issues?

Does your venue look inviting?

Use branded balloons and posters to decorate your venue. This will help people to see where the activities are being held as well as making it more attractive and approachable. Signpost activity areas, draw maps, play some music and offer refreshments.

How did you do?

Talk to people, obtain feedback using some of the evaluation methods on the next page and count heads. Try to get contact details so that you can keep in touch. You may want to carry this out yourself just in case someone doesn't feel comfortable filling in a form. We always send out our own evaluation forms before the festival, so this may help you decide what information to collect.

Step 8 Evaluation

The Campaign for Learning will be evaluating FLF and welcomes your comments and feedback in order to develop the campaign and improve our support. The evaluation survey can be completed in a few minutes and will be available from September.

You should also evaluate and review your event as it will help you to improve for next year! When you are evaluating you will need to consider how well you met your original objectives.

Choose a non-threatening, fun way of getting feedback. Try not to use a form with lots of questions as this can put people off completing the survey.

Be creative! Here are a couple of ideas (taken from organisations who have been involved with Family Learning Festival in previous years):

- Turn children into journalists. Make the evaluation process an integral part of the event. Get dictaphones or tape recorders and ask children to go around the adults to ask questions about the event. Ask the adults to change places so that you capture the children's views as well.
- Family feedback tree. Make a tree out of corrugated paper and put it on the wall, close to the exit. Supply post-it notes and ask everyone to make a comment, or face on it and stick it on the tree on leaving.
- Smiley faces. Prepare a batch of round faces with different expressions that families can leave at every session they attend.

- Use the Family Learning Festival as an opportunity to collect information so that you can keep in touch with your families.
- Some people may be nervous about passing on information. To try and encourage them you could hold a prize draw. But don't push too hard.
- Ask local community groups to help you collect information, for example [University of the Third Age](#)
- Make sure you abide by the [Data Protection Laws](#)

Now that you have completed your Family Learning Festival event you can start to think about what happened, what could be improved and what you would like to do for next year!

Remember, we will be sending you our evaluation survey so that we can review how we can best support you throughout your planning process.

The Family Learning Festival is organised by the Campaign for Learning, an independent charity promoting learning for families, workplaces, schools and communities.

Get in touch:

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