

A Families Connect STORY



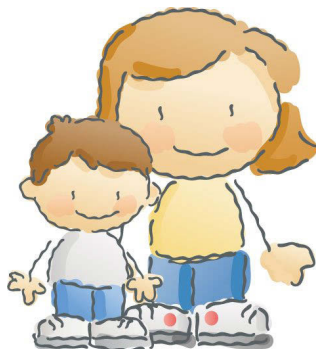
WHAT WAS THE PLAN?

There is a clear link between how children play and learn with their parents at home and how well they do in school. We want to find out about ways that parents, children and schools can learn to do this together in a way that is fun and has a positive effect on learning in and out of the classroom.

Save the Children wanted to understand how Families Connect impacts on

- children's learning at school
- children's learning at home
- parents' confidence to support their child's learning

The research was funded by The Nuffield Foundation to partner with National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and Queen's University Belfast to evaluate the Families Connect programme and how it was being delivered. The research was carried out in 2019.



I'd really love some one to one playtime with my boy.

I can't wait to see my mum, in school!



HOW WE DID IT

499 children aged 4–6 from
483 families attending
31 schools

were involved in the independent evaluation of Families Connect.

The research project was a 'randomised controlled trial', looking at the difference between families who attended Families Connect and those that didn't, from across the UK.

WHAT WE FOUND OUT

1 Social and emotional

Parents say

It helped us focus on his social and emotional needs.

Teachers tell us

We saw improvements in children's social and emotional behaviour and wellbeing six months later.

"It helps me when I feel sad."

– a Families Connect child

I liked making the Superstar award!



2 Literacy and numeracy

I love having snacks with my friends.



Parents say

We do more learning at home now and I know how to help her.

"I feel like you actually know [the teachers] ... chatting more, and more connected."

– a Families Connect parent

Teachers tell us

We communicate with parents more about their child's progress now.



3 Supporting other parents

Parents say

Chatting with other parents makes you realise you're not alone. I am a better parent now.

"Just knowing that maybe I'm doing the right thing."

– a Families Connect parent

I liked catching a star and putting it in my pocket!

Teachers tell us

Parents have developed strong friendships with each other, some didn't know anyone when they started.



6 THINGS WE LEARNED

The research showed that:

- ✓ Parents' engagement in their children's learning increased
- ✓ Parents' skills and confidence had improved
- ✓ Families Connect supported areas of children's social and emotional development
- ✓ The programme supported parents to strengthen the home learning environment

The research also found that

- Families Connect could be improved in some areas
- No impact was seen on children's language or numeracy skills after 6 months

You can read the research report at

savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/uk-work/in-schools/families-connect

WHAT NEXT?

Save the Children has made adaptations to the Families Connect programme based on learning from this research, including strengthening the numeracy module and increasing the focus on play as a foundation for learning.

The project has been funded by the Nuffield Foundation, but the views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily the Foundation.

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THANK YOU to all of the children and families who have taken part in Families Connect. It would not have been possible without you.



Save the Children