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Introduction

This workbook is designed to empower parents and carers to support their child(ren) in overcoming barriers to learning and achieving educational success. It offers practical strategies that can be adapted to meet each child's unique needs, while also encouraging stronger, more collaborative relationships between families and schools.

Throughout this workbook, the term 'parent' is used in an inclusive way. It refers to anyone in a caregiving role who supports a child's education and wellbeing, including carers, foster parents, kinship carers, grandparents and other trusted adults. The programme recognises and values the diverse ways families are formed and supported.

By working through these sessions, parents can:

- Build confidence in supporting their child(ren)'s learning
- Explore how emotions, expectations, and identity shape educational experiences Learn simple, effective approaches to help child(ren) thrive
- Understand the value of healthy boundaries and positive self-esteem

Engaging with your child(ren)'s school can be a powerful part of this journey. Schools can offer practical insights into the curriculum, help demystify educational jargon, and provide opportunities for two-way listening where parents and staff work together to support child(ren)'s progress.

This workbook can be used independently or as part of a group. Group sessions often create a supportive space to share experiences, build connections, and strengthen relationships with the school. Whether used alone or with others, the workbook encourages a nurturing approach that helps children develop resilience, confidence and a strong sense of self, knowing that mistakes are part of learning, not a sign of failure.

Before you begin, the next page offers some guidance on how to use this workbook in a way that feels comfortable and manageable for you.

How to Use This Workbook

A supportive guide for parents, carers and community groups

This workbook is designed to be flexible, accessible and easy to use. You can work through it on your own, with a partner, or as part of a small group. There is no right or wrong way to use it. Take your time, pause when you need to, and return to sections whenever you want to reflect more deeply.

Each session includes:

- A clear purpose to help you understand the focus
- Supportive explanations that build confidence and understanding
- Reflective activities you can complete privately or discuss with others
- Closing reflections that summarise key ideas and help you make sense of your learning
- Questions for deeper thinking you can revisit at any time

You don't need to complete everything at once. Small steps count, and every moment you spend reflecting, noticing or trying something new makes a difference to your child(ren)'s learning journey.

Using This Workbook in Your Community

This resource is especially powerful when used in a group. Many parents find it easier to reflect, share experiences and build confidence when they are alongside others who understand similar challenges.

A group of parents who want to feel more connected to their child(ren)'s school can come together to run this course in a place that feels safe and welcoming, for example, a community centre, library, family hub, faith space, or a room in school if that feels comfortable.

Schools can support this by:

- offering a free space for sessions, or funding a local venue
- providing a small budget for refreshments (tea, coffee, biscuits)
- helping parents access information or signposting when needed
- encouraging staff to listen, not lead, allowing parents to take ownership
- supporting parents who wish to develop further as Parent Champions

Parent-led groups are often more successful at engaging families who feel disconnected from school, because they are built on trust, shared experience and community strength. This workbook is designed to help those groups grow with confidence.

A Note on Getting Started

You may find that some sessions feel more relevant to you than others, or that certain activities bring up thoughts and memories you want to spend more time with. Take things at a pace that feels manageable. You can pause, reflect, talk things through with someone you trust, or return to ideas later on.

There is no expectation that you respond in a particular way. You can write, draw, talk, or simply think, whatever helps you make sense of your experiences. This workbook is here to support you and your child(ren), and to help you build confidence as you explore each session.

Session One: Barriers and Benefits of Education

Understanding the Experiences That Shape Learning

Purpose of the Session

The purpose of this session is to help you explore how your own experiences of education, both positive and negative, may influence the way you support your child(ren) today. By reflecting on your memories, your attitudes, and the barriers you faced, you can begin to understand how these experiences shape confidence, expectations and involvement. This session also encourages you to recognise the wider influences on your child(ren)'s learning, helping you feel more informed, connected and empowered as you support their educational journey.

Reflecting on Your Own Educational Journey

Before we explore your child(ren)'s experiences of school, it can be helpful to pause and think about your own. The memories, messages and expectations we absorbed during our own education often shape how confident we feel when supporting our child(ren) now. This reflection is not about judging your achievements; it is about understanding the experiences that may influence your feelings, beliefs and expectations today. Taking a moment to notice your own journey can help you recognise your strengths, make sense of any doubts, and approach your child(ren)'s learning with greater clarity and confidence.

Our own experiences of school, whether positive, difficult or mixed, naturally influence how we feel about supporting our child(ren)'s learning. Some families grew up with education as a familiar part of life, while others faced barriers or fewer opportunities. Some parents return to education later in life, showing their child(ren) that learning is possible at any age. None of these experiences determine a child's future, but they can shape the messages, expectations and confidence that surround them.

Children's attitudes to learning are shaped by many influences, including the messages they receive at home, at school and in their wider community. With encouragement, support and belief in their potential, every child can develop a positive view of learning and see themselves as capable. What

matters most is the message they receive: that learning is for them, and that they are not alone on the journey.

Involvement in Education

Take a moment to reflect on how much direct educational support you are able to offer your child at home. This can be challenging, especially if you're juggling work, caring responsibilities, or if your own experience of education left you feeling unsure or underconfident.

It's common for parental involvement to shift as children move from primary to secondary school. Support may decline for many reasons: time pressures, changing routines, or a belief that children are becoming more independent. For some families, traditional forms of involvement, such as attending Parents' Evenings or joining the PTA, may not feel accessible or relevant.

But involvement doesn't have to follow a set formula. Every family's circumstances are different, and every small act of support counts. Whether it's asking about your child's day, helping them organise their homework, or simply showing interest in what they're learning, your encouragement makes a difference.

This workbook offers practical ways to reconnect with your child's learning journey in ways that work for you.

Reflecting on Your School Experiences

Our own experiences of school can shape how we feel when supporting our children, especially when things go wrong. If school wasn't a positive place for you, it's understandable that you might feel unsure or disempowered when dealing with issues that affect your child.

Take a moment to think back to your time at school and complete the activity sheet overleaf. What memories stand out? Are they mostly positive, or do some bring up difficult feelings?

If you're working in a group, sharing these reflections can be powerful. You might find common ground with other parents, for example, shared experiences, similar feelings, or new perspectives. This kind of connection

can help build confidence and remind us that we're not alone in wanting the best for our children.

Memories of School

Jot down your memories of school here

**Think about one time that was a difficult learning experience for you.
What hindered your learning?**

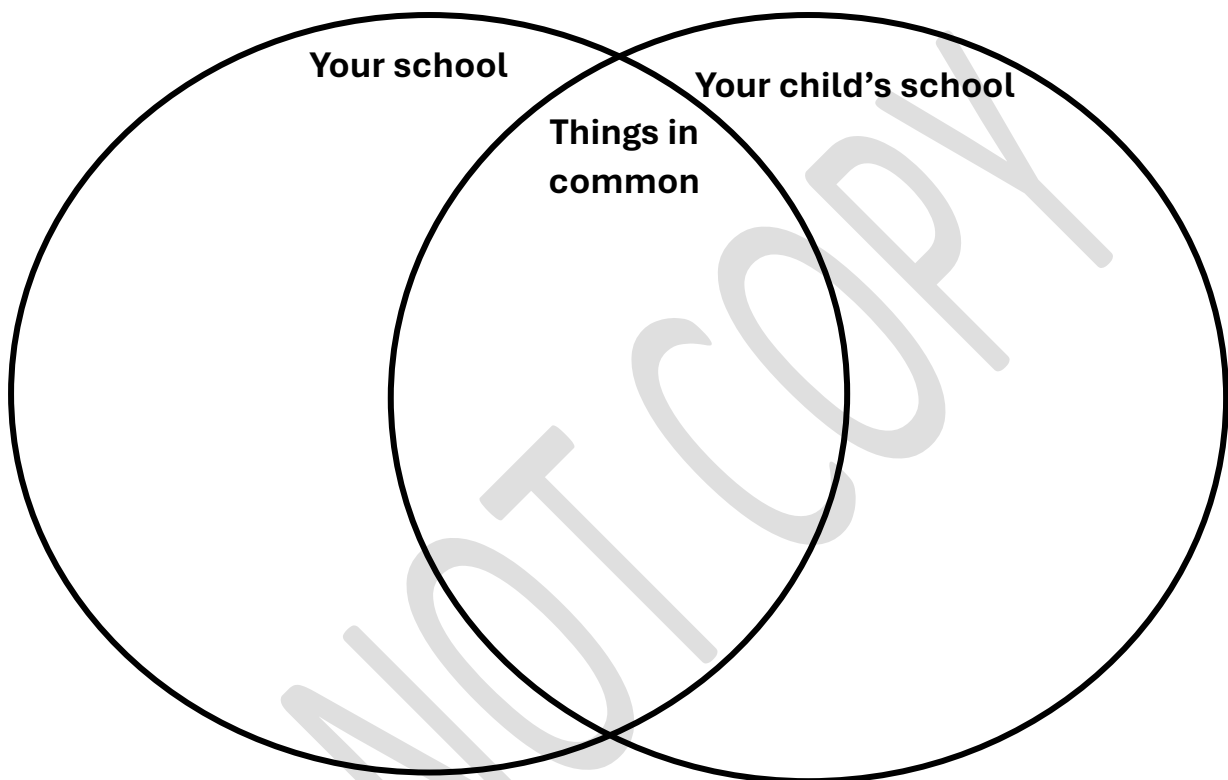
**Think about another time when you had a good experience of learning.
What helped you to learn?**

Blank lined paper with a large, faint, diagonal watermark reading "COPY" across the center.

[illegible]

Your child's school v. your school

In the left-hand circle write down what school was like when you attended and in the right-hand circle write down what school is like for your child(ren). Think about what there is in common between your own and your child's schooling and write this in the overlapping part of the circles.



Did you find many things in common?

Is their attitude more positive than your own attitude when you were at school or vice versa?
