

Making the difference

New technology in learning



Parents, carers and family members are by far the most important influences on children's lives. We live in a fast-changing world where computers and other types of new technology are an important part of everyday life. It's everywhere – in homes, schools, workplaces, shops and even in the streets. Children are naturally curious and enthusiastic about new technology, and it can really help their learning and understanding. You can support your child's learning by encouraging them to become comfortable and confident with it from an early age. You yourself might not have experienced this at school but it doesn't have to be scary and help is available – there are some contacts on the back of this leaflet.



We mean more than just computers!

Schools often refer to Information and Communications Technology (shortened to 'ICT'). This is not just about computers – it refers to the wide range of new technologies that we use to access and handle information and to communicate electronically. It includes computers, the internet and e-mail, but also mobile phones, digital cameras, camcorders, MP3 players, iPods, and so on.

What are schools doing?

At school your child will learn **about** ICT – how to use the technology – but they will also learn **through** ICT – for example, using the internet to research a topic, or speaking to children in another country via video-conferencing.

Many schools now have interactive whiteboards, digital video cameras and other modern equipment in addition to computers with internet and e-mail access. These are used to support and extend your child's learning in a variety of different ways across the whole curriculum. Examples range from using the internet for lessons, homework and revision, to some schools beginning to use iPods and weblogs (web-based diaries) to help children learn.

How will my child benefit?

Learning through computers and ICT can:

- › increase their motivation in the classroom
- › increase their enthusiasm for learning, both in and out of school
- › encourage your child to share their ideas and work with others
- › enable them to produce high quality work that they are proud of
- › improve their communication skills
- › help them to become more independent
- › encourage them to be more creative
- › develop skills they will need in the world of work.



What can I do?

You can help your child become familiar with the new technology around them by pointing out everyday examples and letting them try them out. For young children, a visit to the shopping centre could provide opportunities such as:

- ▶ traffic lights and 'Green Man' crossings
- ▶ supermarket scanners
- ▶ lifts and escalators
- ▶ cash dispenser machines
- ▶ photo booths.

At home, you can help your child learn to use technology such as:

- ▶ computers
- ▶ DVD players
- ▶ digital TV
- ▶ digital cameras
- ▶ mobile phones
- ▶ microwave ovens.

Your child may well know more about these new technologies than you do, so why not ask them to show and explain things to you, help set up equipment such as DVD players, demonstrate the functions of your mobile phone, and so on? Learning together will benefit both of you!

A recent survey found that 90% of Scottish schoolchildren used computers outside school, and most of them said they had one at home.



If you have a home computer, encourage your child to use it to help with their homework and revision, discuss what they are doing and be on hand to help with any problems that may arise. Make sure that you and your child know how to make safe use of the internet. Think about the best place for a computer in your home to make sure that you can easily supervise your child's time on it and their use of the internet.

For computer training contact your local library, college or Learn Direct. Advice on computers, software and the internet can be found on the Parents Information Network Website. Contacts details are on the back of this leaflet. For more information about how you can help your child at home, contact the school.

How can my child get access to a computer if we don't have one at home?

If you don't have a computer at home, your child may be able to use one at a friend or relative's house, at an after-school club, a community centre, an internet café or the local library. Libraries usually offer free and safe internet access and help with using the internet.

If you're not sure how to use a computer, it's never too late to learn! You could go to your library, enrol at an evening class or sit alongside your child... and learn together.

You can find out more information about learning with computers and other new technology, or any aspect of Scottish education, on Parentzone.

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Useful links and contacts

Parentzone

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Learn Direct Computer training courses

Tel: 0808 100 9000

www.learnirectscotland.com

Parents Information Network (advice on computers and software)

www.pin.org.uk

Safe use of the internet

www.chatsafer.co.uk

www.parentscentre.gov.uk/usingtheinternet/internetsafety

www.nch.org.uk/information/index.php?i=134

Guide to using the internet

www.bbc.co.uk/webwise

Standard Grade and Higher revision material

www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/education/bitesize

Specialist technology for additional support needs

Tel: 0131 651 6235

www.callcentre.education.ed.ac.uk

BBC Parents

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

Childcare Link

Tel: 0800 096 0296

www.childcarelink.gov.uk

One Parent Families Scotland

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 ninth in a series which 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, Healthy choices, Out of school learning and Enterprise in education. 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.



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE