

**Whole Organisation Approaches**  
Supporting *Skills for Life* in a School Context

**Resources for supporting a Whole Organisation Approach to *Skills for Life* in schools**

*Skills for Life*

### **Skills for Life Resources Guide**

As part of the Whole Organisation Approaches project, Tribal CTAD has produced a *Skills for Life* Resources Guide based on research and evaluation of *Skills for Life* learning materials recommended by good practice providers and other sector experts. The guide looks in detail at a range of *Skills for Life* resources and gives guidance on the intended audience, the content and how each resource can be used in teaching and learning.

### **Resources Menus**

Three packs of Resources Menus have been produced to accompany the guide. The menus have been designed as a handy reference tool to help teachers working on embedding *Skills for Life* to identify relevant materials to support literacy, language and numeracy needs. Each resource recommendation includes a suggestion for how to use it to help maximise effective delivery.

**This pack of Resources Menus contains four sets of menus to support *Skills for Life* in a school context.**

**1. Resources for supporting children's learning**

**2. Resources for supporting parents as learners**

**3. Resources for supporting non-teaching staff**

**4. Resources for supporting a Whole Organisation Approach to *Skills for Life* in schools**

The first pack of menus gives resource suggestions for **meeting common learning needs:**

- supporting writing in vocational areas
- supporting reading and understanding in vocational areas
- supporting calculation in vocational areas
- supporting measurement in vocational areas
- supporting speaking and listening for speakers of other languages
- supporting English grammar for speakers of other languages.

The second pack gives resource suggestions for **supporting *Skills for Life* needs in specific learning contexts:**

- catering
- performing arts
- **learndirect**
- working on Pre-Entry and Entry 1 skills
- health and safety
- initial teacher training.

The Resources Guide and the other packs of Resources Menus are on the CD that accompanies this pack, or they can be downloaded from **[www.woasfl.org](http://www.woasfl.org)**.

## About this menu set

A key aim of the *Skills for Life* Strategy is to support adults and young people who, for personal and/or work-related reasons, want to improve their literacy, language or numeracy skills.

Most *Skills for Life* programmes are delivered in formal adult education or other community settings, in the workplace or through **learndirect**. Many schools, too, provide formal family learning opportunities which embed language, literacy and numeracy.

The resources in this booklet, however, are suggestions to support the more *informal* contexts within the school and home environment – and may be of particular interest to those who:

- **meet and liaise one-to-one** with parents and get to know them and understand their specific needs; family workers have this as their key role
- **run events** in the school for parents, e.g. parents' evenings, open days, informal workshops; this is a role generally taken on by head teachers, teachers and support assistants
- **produce information** for parents (such as letters, reports, leaflets, reminders) or for teaching and support staff involved in continuous professional development – many members of staff will find themselves in this position.

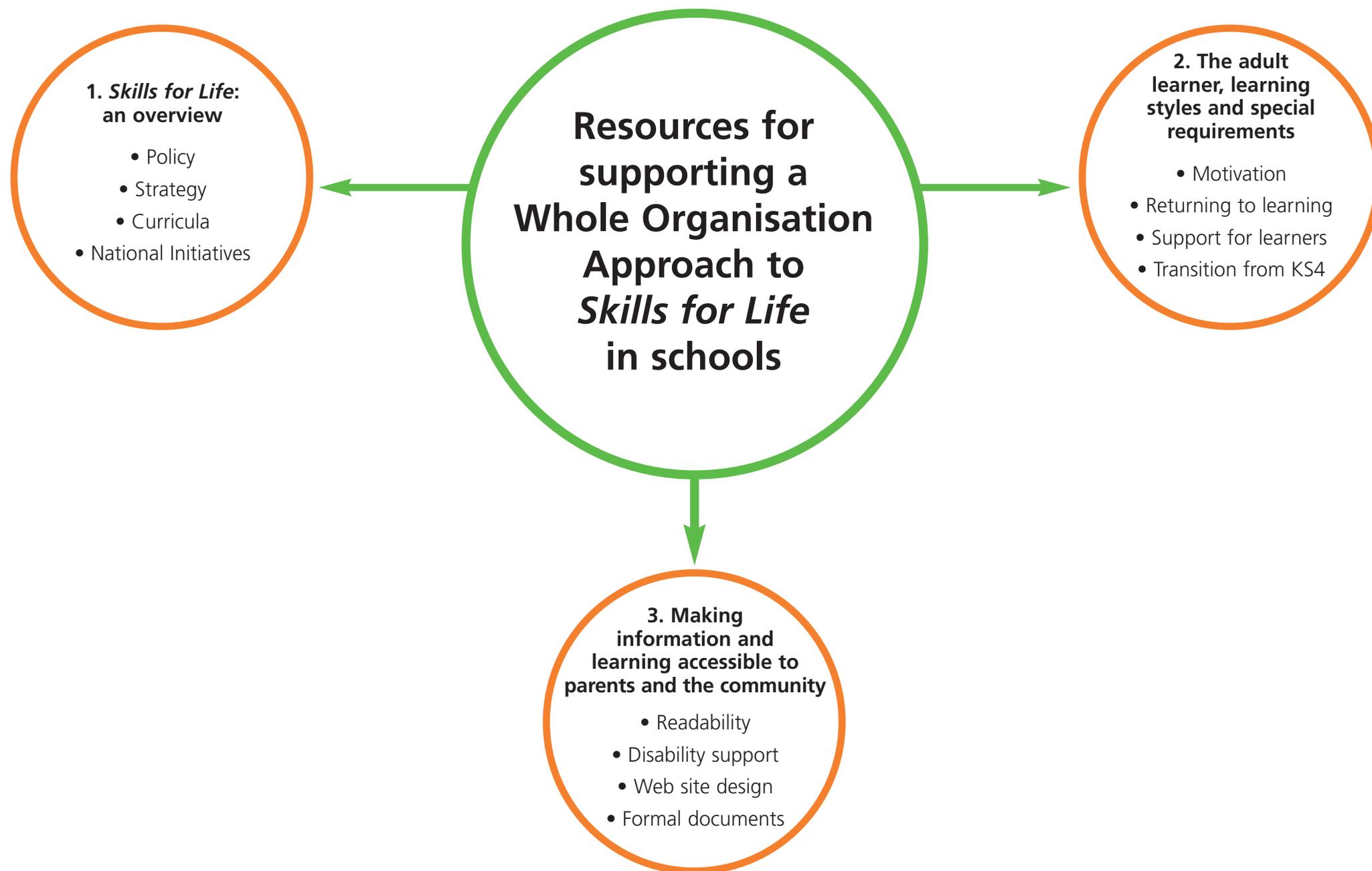
## The menus

1. ***Skills for Life*: an overview**
2. **The adult learner, learning styles and special requirements**
3. **Making information and learning accessible to parents and the community**

The resources recommended in the menus:

- provide an overview of the *Skills for Life* strategy
- signpost information and resources about adult learning styles and areas where adults may need additional support (e.g. those who have dyslexia or are on the autistic spectrum); some of this information may also help parents understand both the implications for learning of certain inherited conditions and their child's preferred learning style
- signpost some of the guidelines on how to make information (for parents, staff, etc.) as accessible as possible.

There is a brief description of each resource with suggestions to maximise effective use and, where appropriate, specific reference to suitable activities.



*Skills for Life Resources*

DfES Ref. RSQA

Tel. order line: 0845 60 222 60

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/  
Publications](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Publications)

## Access for All

DfES Ref. A1211

Tel. order line: 0845 60 222 60

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/  
Publications](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Publications)

## Access for All Introduction

DfES Ref. IAFA

Tel. order line: 0845 60 222 60

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/  
Publications](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Publications)

## Pre-Entry Curriculum Framework

DfES Ref. A1212

Tel. order line: 0845 60 222 60

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/  
Publications](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Publications)

## Readability

Basic Skills Agency

Ref. A1880

Tel. order line: 0870 600 2400

[publications.basic-skills.co.uk/cgi-bin/bsa](http://publications.basic-skills.co.uk/cgi-bin/bsa)

## Making Reading Easier for Schools

Basic Skills Agency

Ref. A658

Tel. order line: 0870 600 2400

[publications.basic-skills.co.uk/cgi-bin/bsa](http://publications.basic-skills.co.uk/cgi-bin/bsa)*Skills for Life Materials for Embedded*

Learning: Early Years (Birth to 7)

DfES Ref. embedded/EY

Tel. order line: 0845 60 222 60

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/  
Publications](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Publications)Special Educational Needs: A Guide for Parents  
and Carers

Ref. DfES 0800/2001

Tel. order line: 0845 60 222 60

[www.dfes.gov.uk/publications](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications)DfES *Skills for Life*[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/)

## Whole Organisation Approaches

[www.woasfl.org/](http://www.woasfl.org/)

## Training and Development Agency for Schools

[www.tda.gov.uk](http://www.tda.gov.uk)

## Get On

[www.dfes.gov.uk/get-on](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/get-on)

## Move On

[www.move-on.org.uk](http://www.move-on.org.uk)

## Skills for Families

[www.lsc.gov.uk](http://www.lsc.gov.uk)

## National Literacy Trust

[www.literacytrust.org.uk](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk)

## Teachernet

[www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)

## Direct Gov

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

## RaW Campaign

[www.bbc.co.uk/raw](http://www.bbc.co.uk/raw)

## learnirect Centre

[www.learnirect.co.uk](http://www.learnirect.co.uk)

## Basic Skills Agency

[www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk)

## Web Accessibility Initiative

[www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI)

## Abilitynet

[www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)

## BBC Learning

[www.bbc.co.uk/learning](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning)National Research and Development Centre  
(NRDC)[www.nrdc.org.uk](http://www.nrdc.org.uk)National Institute for Adult Continuing  
Education[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

## Support for learning

[www.support4learning.org.uk](http://www.support4learning.org.uk)

## British Council

[www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk)

## Joint Council for Qualifications

[www.jcq.org.uk](http://www.jcq.org.uk)SKILL National Bureau for Students with  
Disabilities[www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)

## Parents Centre

[www.parentscentre.gov.uk](http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk)

## TUC Education Schools Programme

[www.tuc.org.uk](http://www.tuc.org.uk)

## Plain English Campaign

[www.plainenglish.org.uk](http://www.plainenglish.org.uk)

## Royal National Institute of the Blind

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

## British Dyslexia Association

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk)

## Royal National Institute for the Deaf

[www.rnid.org.uk](http://www.rnid.org.uk)

## Easy Info

[easyinfo.org.uk/index.jsp](http://easyinfo.org.uk/index.jsp)

## Skills for Life: the big picture

## Suggestions for use

## 1. DfES Readwriteplus

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus)

*Skills for Life (SfL)* is the government strategy to improve the literacy, numeracy and language skills of all post-16 learners from Pre-Entry to Level 2 (which is equivalent to grades A\*–C at GCSE). It covers provision in a variety of contexts, including adult and community education, family learning, FE colleges, workplaces, the voluntary sector and offender institutions. The Readwriteplus web site is the main DfES site providing information about the strategy and its implementation. This is really for background reading/browsing. The best place to start is the Teaching and Learning section. The site also has a Publications section where you can order many of key materials/resources (including the core curricula) free of charge. To find out more about how *SfL* fits within the National Qualifications Framework, have a look at the table in [www.lifelonglearninguk.org/currentactivity/skills\\_for\\_life\\_faqs.html](http://www.lifelonglearninguk.org/currentactivity/skills_for_life_faqs.html).

## 2. Skills for Life Resources

DfES Ref. RSQA

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Publications](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/Publications)

This publication summarises all key *Skills for Life* materials; the great majority of the materials listed are free. It is a useful document to have in a school for reference. There is a key which identifies resources for particular contexts, for example family literacy, language and numeracy. Many of the materials and resources can be ordered or downloaded online from the Readwriteplus web site.

## 3. Whole Organisation Approaches

[www.woasfl.org](http://www.woasfl.org)

An aim of the *Skills for Life* strategy is to encourage all organisations, businesses and institutions to embed the development of literacy, language and numeracy skills throughout their organisations. This web site provides more information about the 'Whole Organisation Approaches' project. These Resources Menus were developed as part of this project and there is other useful material on the site, including case studies of the pathfinder providers involved and access to all the training resources produced as part of the project.

## 4. Skills for Life Planner

[www.tda.gov.uk/leaders/skillsforlife.aspx](http://www.tda.gov.uk/leaders/skillsforlife.aspx)

This planner is designed to help anyone responsible for staff development in a school or local authority to develop *Skills for Life* across the whole school workforce. It provides advice on raising awareness in governing bodies and managers, identifying needs, planning and evaluating effective learning.

## Some of the national campaigns

## Suggestions for use

## 5. Get On

[www.dfes.gov.uk/get-on](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/get-on)

Move On

[www.move-on.org.uk](http://www.move-on.org.uk)

Skills for Families

[www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/PolicyandDevelopment/SkillsForFamilies](http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/PolicyandDevelopment/SkillsForFamilies)

[www.literacytrust.org.uk/socialinclusion/parents/families.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/socialinclusion/parents/families.html)

Get On: The Gremlins TV adverts are perhaps the best known 'face' of the national *Skills for Life* campaign, but they are just one element. The Get On campaign also offers marketing resources to promote *SfL*. You could order some of these free resources (z-cards, leaflets, pens, etc.) to set out at parents' evening or workshops.

Move On: This campaign is aimed at those who would like a qualification in literacy and/or numeracy and who just need to brush up their skills to bring them up to Level 1 or Level 2. It offers a free skills check and free brush-up course focusing on skills needed to pass the National Tests in Adult Literacy/Numeracy. Many workplaces now require employees to have a Level 2 qualification.

Skills for Families: This initiative has piloted different local ways of planning, managing and delivering family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) programmes. The FLLN Policy Guides are free to download. Chapter 7 in both the Children's Centres and Extended Schools guides gives ideas on how to recruit parents.

## . . . and how they impact locally

## Suggestions for use

### 6. In nurseries and schools

[www.teachernet.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk)

Select Whole School Issues → Extended Schools → Core Offer Services → Adult and Family Learning.

Within the Extended Schools initiative, many schools are already running family learning programmes and working with parents in a variety of contexts to develop their literacy, language and numeracy skills. The site offers school-based case studies, links to relevant documents and national initiatives.

### 7. In local colleges and adult education centres

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

Select Education and Learning → Adult Learning → Improving Your Skills.

Most local FE colleges and adult education centres offer discrete *Skills for Life* classes or *Skills for Life* embedded in vocational and other courses. The Direct Gov web site provides useful information about types of *Skills for Life* classes and information about local providers. It would be useful for schools to have the contact details of one or two key local providers for referral. The Get On freephone national advice line is on 0800 100 900 and can be given to parents when appropriate.

### 8. In local libraries

[www.bbc.co.uk/raw](http://www.bbc.co.uk/raw)

Libraries are actively involved in many of the national initiatives for promoting *Skills for Life*. RaW – Read and Write campaign – is a three-year project with the BBC (which started in 2005) to engage those who struggle with reading and writing to ‘inspire and motivate them to read and write more’. Resources include online activities, based on TV and radio programmes and characters, a regular magazine and a coaching advice line.

### 9. In the workplace

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

Select Education and Learning → Adult Learning → Training and Workplace Learning.

As part of the *Skills for Life* strategy, there has been a significant push to drive up literacy, language and numeracy skills in the workplace. On-site courses are offered by appropriate *Skills for Life* providers. The Get On freephone advice line on 0800 100 900 can give more information on local schemes.

### 10. At a local learndirect centre

[www.learndirect.co.uk](http://www.learndirect.co.uk)

**learndirect** offers over 140 *Skills for Life* courses which can be accessed at local centres and at home through online learning. Publicity and information about the courses can be obtained from **learndirect** on freephone number 0800 101 901 or the web site address.

## Keeping up to date

## Suggestions for use

### 11. Basic Skills Agency

[www.basic-skills.co.uk](http://www.basic-skills.co.uk)

The Basic Skills Agency is involved in many national projects in both schools and the post-16 sector, for example Learning with Grandparents and Financial Literacy. It has a wide selection of resources which could be used at parents’ evenings, workshops or home visits, for example Key Word dictionaries for literacy and numeracy.

### 12. NIACE

[www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)

The National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is a key web site with information on policy changes and current issues in the field of adult learning. Some topics in the Campaigns section could provide a stimulus for discussion at parents’ evenings. NIACE initiatives include Adult Learners’ Week, which is run in May. This is a high-profile celebration of adult learning achievement with publicity available. It can be used as a focus for work with parents in schools.

### 13. National Literacy Trust

[www.literacytrust.org.uk/index.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/index.html)

This is a very comprehensive web site, offering an overview of adult literacy, information about reading campaigns and information about *Skills for Life*. It also has a comprehensive ‘Resources’ section including:

- parents’ resources – ideas on how to support children’s reading
- reading groups and individuals – ideas on how to set up reading groups (for adults or children), plus suggestions for books to read.

The prime concern of any school is, of course, the learning of the pupils; but increasingly schools are also places of learning for adults connected with the school and for the wider community.

This menu looks at adults as learners – what motivates them and what it means to return to learning.

Parents may become learners for a number of reasons:

- to participate in family learning programmes
- to take up the opportunity for independent study once their children are at school.

Parent helpers may become learners in order to:

- study for part-time qualifications to become teaching assistants
- refresh their skills to help the children more confidently.

Those already employed as support workers may want to move on towards the Higher Level Teaching Assistants qualification.

Information is given about the support which might be needed for adult learners, including special requirements for those with a disability or learning difficulty. The final resources look at supporting a school leaver into the post-16 education sector and could be of use both for the student and parents.

## The adult learner

## Suggestions for use

### 1. BBC Learning

[www.bbc.co.uk/learning/readytolearn/yourturn](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/readytolearn/yourturn)

[www.bbc.co.uk/learning/returning/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/returning/index.shtml)

Adults returning to learning can face two major challenges: they can lack confidence and feel that their skills are very rusty; and they may lead very busy lives and struggle to balance demands on their time. Practical advice and suggestions are available from the BBC Return to Learning site. There are case studies, tips for organising time and family/work commitments and advice about study skills. As recommended elsewhere in these menus, it might be worth encouraging learners to find a 'study buddy' with whom they can discuss different approaches, share activities and offer mutual support during studying.

### 2. National Research and Development Centre (NRDC)

[www.nrdc.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=424&ArticleID=380](http://www.nrdc.org.uk/content.asp?CategoryID=424&ArticleID=380)

The NRDC was set up as part of the *Skills for Life* strategy to be a national research centre in the fields of adult literacy, numeracy and ESOL. *Models of Adult Learning: a literature review* provides an overview of current thinking about how adults learn. The research document on adult education gives a useful summary of the different theories and their implications for the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ESOL highlighting, for example, the importance of giving learners time to reflect on their learning.

### 3. National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE)

[www.niace.org.uk/information/Briefing\\_sheets/motivationjan99.htm](http://www.niace.org.uk/information/Briefing_sheets/motivationjan99.htm)

What motivates people to learn? The school is the perfect context to spur parents into learning. As the article here shows, there are two key motivators for adults: a desire to achieve specific goals, and an interest in the subject. These two motivations come together for parents when their children start school. This article on adult learning lists some of the other factors which affect motivation.

## Learning styles/preferences

## Suggestions for use

### 4. Support for learning

[www.support4learning.org.uk/education/learning\\_styles.cfm](http://www.support4learning.org.uk/education/learning_styles.cfm)

Many parents will not be aware of learning styles and the importance of them for their children. This site provides links to a range of learning styles questionnaires and related online activities. One of two of these could be used at a parents' evening as a 'bit of fun'. But, by talking about the results, parents can be encouraged to think about their own children's learning and how they can best support it. In the 'Mainly for Learners' section, they could try one of the following:

- Multiple intelligences
- Vark
- What kind of learner are you?

### 5. British Council and BBC

[www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/learning\\_style.shtml](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/methodology/learning_style.shtml)

This site provides a handy printed overview of learning styles and the teaching that suits each of these styles (the teaching in this case relates to teaching English). This could be used as a reference or reminder, included in a newsletter or sent home as a handout to parents.

Learning styles/preferences	Suggestions for use
6. LSDA	
<p><a href="http://www.lsda.org.uk/files/PDF/Unplearnstylespost16.pdf">www.lsda.org.uk/files/PDF/Unplearnstylespost16.pdf</a></p>	<p><i>Learning styles for post-16 learners: What do we know?</i> A summary of the report to the Learning and Skills Research Centre by the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at The University of Newcastle (Feb 2004). It summarises the critical review of literature carried out about learning styles in adult education and what research reveals about using learning styles.</p>
Special requirements	Suggestions for use
7. DfES: Access for All	
<p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus">www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus</a> A hard copy can be ordered from the Publications section (quote Ref. A1211).</p> <p><b>Introducing Access for All</b> <a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureCurricula">http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/LearningInfrastructureCurricula</a> A hard copy is available (quote Ref. IAFA).</p>	<p><i>Access for All</i> provides guidance to literacy and numeracy tutors on ways of making the adult literacy and numeracy curricula accessible to a range of adult learners, including those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. It may be useful to have a copy in the school, simply as a reference, since it combines both the literacy and numeracy adult curricula and the guidance on how to make the learning accessible. There is a separate ESOL <i>Access for All</i> curriculum and guidance.</p> <p>The Introduction is also published as a separate booklet, <i>Introducing Access for All</i>. It summarises the impact of a disability and/or learning difficulty on learning, and suggests 'Approaches to consider'. It could provide a focus for a CPD/staff development session for teaching staff and family workers and provide an opportunity to review ways of making parents' evenings and workshops as accessible as possible.</p>
8. DfES: Pre-Entry Curriculum Framework	
<p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/curriculum_preentry">www.dfes.gov.uk/curriculum_preentry</a> A hard copy can be ordered from the Publications sections (quote Ref. A1212).</p>	<p>The Pre-Entry Curriculum Framework sets out a curriculum and describes milestones for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who range in skills from the earliest stages of communication to those who may have some literacy and numeracy skills but at a level below Entry 1 of the adult core curricula. The milestones in the PECF were based on the P scales within schools – so you may find it interesting to see how they have been adapted for adult learners.</p>
9. Joint Council for Qualifications	
<p><a href="http://www.jcq.org.uk/access_arrangements">www.jcq.org.uk/access_arrangements</a></p>	<p>It may be useful to refer teaching assistants or other colleagues who are taking the National Tests in Literacy and/or Numeracy as part of their CPD to this site, which outlines access arrangements and special considerations for people with a disability that requires adjustments to be made (e.g. a modified paper for a candidate with a visual impairment). The person enrolling candidates on the tests should notify the centre at which they will take the test of any special requirements (supported by documentary evidence). This notification should be made well in advance of the candidate taking the test.</p>
Supporting the transition into adult learning	Suggestions for use
10. SKILL National Bureau for Students with Disabilities	
<p><a href="http://www.skill.org.uk/index.asp">www.skill.org.uk/index.asp</a> Select Information.</p>	<p>Whether students move from Year 11 into further education or to the workplace, the transition usually requires support. This is particularly true if the student has a disability. This web site is packed with relevant and easily accessible information which can be printed off for reference. There is a section of students' experiences, benefits available, HE, FE and employment.</p>
11. Parents Centre	
<p><a href="http://www.parentscentre.gov.uk">www.parentscentre.gov.uk</a> Select Information for Age 16+.</p>	<p>This is a supportive, comprehensive web site providing information on funding for further study, where to get advice and guidance and an overview of new national reforms. This site should be of interest to parents and could be a source of information sheets at parents' evenings.</p>
12. TUC Education schools programme	
<p><a href="http://www.tuc.org.uk/organisation/index.cfm?mins=505&amp;minors=505">www.tuc.org.uk/organisation/index.cfm?mins=505&amp;minors=505</a></p>	<p>This site offers support with preparing young people for the challenges and opportunities of employment. This support can include a TUC speaker, resources and events to introduce young people to trade unionism. There are some very useful teaching and learning resources which could be used in workshops for Key Stage 4 pupils and parents.</p>

The menus in **Supporting Skills for Life in a School Context** include recommendations for a wide variety of resources and learning materials for use with adult learners. Some of the resources will be suitable to be given straight to an adult learner, but others will need some kind of mediation.

The focus for this menu is on how to make 'reasonable adjustments', if necessary, to ensure that these resources are accessible to those parents who are not confident readers or who have particular requirements. As many schools are developing their own web sites, guidance is also offered on making Internet information accessible. Much of the guidance here will not be new to you – when you develop your own materials for use in class you will already take account of many of these issues. This menu therefore serves mostly as a reminder of 'reasonable adjustments' that can be made to support adult learners.

Materials and resources suggested in this menu could be used as part of an in-service training workshop for support assistants and family workers to help them consider all the readability and accessibility factors in the materials and documents that they produce for learners and parents.

There are some documents that parents need to read which cannot be simplified or made easily accessible, so at the end of this menu are resource suggestions for a workshop to help parents and carers develop skills to access formal documents more confidently.

The resources and web sites included in the menu are just a selection from the many useful ones available. It is also important to say that, while many links are to disability organisations, the guidance these sites provide is often good practice for all audiences.

## Information as text: design and readability

## Suggestions for use

### 1. Basic Skills Agency

(a) [publications.basic-skills.co.uk/cgi-bin/bsa/A1880.html](http://publications.basic-skills.co.uk/cgi-bin/bsa/A1880.html)

Free leaflet to download (or order a pack for the cost of p+p).

(b) [publications.basic-skills.co.uk/cgi-bin/bsa/A658.html](http://publications.basic-skills.co.uk/cgi-bin/bsa/A658.html)

Free leaflet to download (or order a pack for the cost of p+p).

Communication using clear, readable texts is particularly important for parents whose own literacy skills are not strong and for those whose first language is not English. These resources together with those listed below (Nos. 2–7) provide practical guidance and examples of good models.

(a) Readability: How to produce clear written materials for a range of readers. The leaflet describes ways of ensuring that written materials are accessible by considering both the design and the readability of the text. It covers a variety of design criteria and also gives instructions on how to do a SMOG check.

(b) Making Reading Easier for Schools: This leaflet provides guidelines about design and readability, similar to the guidelines above, though with a particular focus on those teaching at Key stages 3 and 4.

### 2. National Literacy Trust

[www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/SMOG.html](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/campaign/SMOG.html)

SMOG calculator: This is one of several online calculators available. Type or paste a block of text into the box, then click on the Calculate SMOG grade. The levels are only approximations and do not equate to reading age. Try comparing and contrasting the results obtained from doing a SMOG test using this calculator with the results produced by using the step-by-step formula described in the Basic Skills Agency leaflets.

### 3. Plain English Campaign

[www.plainenglish.org.uk](http://www.plainenglish.org.uk)

The Free Guides section has very useful guidance on the design of accessible reading materials, combining general advice and more specific advice on topics such as writing reports and proofreading. The campaign's 'Crystal Mark' is a well-known standard for public information. It is an award which can be applied for by organisations, including schools!

### 4. RNIB

[www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public\\_printdesign.hcsp](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_printdesign.hcsp)

RNIB Clear print guidelines: Online practical information and advice about producing text for people with visual impairment. Many of the guidelines here and provided by the organisations below have much in common with each other and with the Basic Skills Agency guidelines above, but they also give more detailed information relevant to specific needs. These guides may be useful references for family workers.

### 5. British Dyslexia Association

[www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/extra352.html](http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/extra352.html)

The BDA's Dyslexia Style Guide explains how a person with dyslexia reads and processes information, and the steps to take to ensure that the text produced is accessible to these readers.

## Information as text : design and readability

## Suggestions for use

### 6. RNID

[www.rnid.org.uk/information\\_resources/factsheets/deaf\\_awareness/factsheets\\_leaflets/](http://www.rnid.org.uk/information_resources/factsheets/deaf_awareness/factsheets_leaflets/)

The Producing Information for Deaf People leaflet highlights what to do to make text accessible to people who are deaf, particularly those who have BSL as a first language.

### 7. Easy info

[easyinfo.org.uk/index.jsp](http://easyinfo.org.uk/index.jsp)

The Guides section has a series of free downloadable documents outlining ways of ensuring that information is accessible to people with learning difficulties.

## Other formats for information

## Suggestions for use

### 8. Direct gov

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

Select People → Disabled people → Health and Support → Disabled Parents.

To communicate with all parents it is sometimes necessary to provide information in an alternative way, for example by a phone call for those who are visually impaired or by e-mail if they have a computer. If information is provided online via a web site, then in addition to layout and readability issues, it is also important to ensure that the web site itself is designed to be accessible (see below).

### 9. WAI

Web Accessibility Initiative  
[www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI)

This site offers support to ensure that the design and content of any web site is as accessible as possible. There is guidance on translating documents for a web site which would be of particular use for schools where community languages are spoken.

### 10. Abilitynet

[www.abilitynet.org.uk/myway](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk/myway)

Tel. 0800 269545 or e-mail [enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk)

Among the services it offers, AbilityNet provides a lot of free advice and guidance on how to ensure effective access to electronic information. *My computer My Way!* gives clear advice on how to customise a computer, keyboard, mouse and internet settings to suit an individual's needs. Excellent skillsheets and fact sheets, which would be suitable for supporting parents in using computers with their children, are available from Abilitynet's homepage by selecting Fact sheets.

## Understanding formal documents

## Suggestions for use

### 11. *Skills for Life* Materials for Embedded Learning: Early Years (Birth to 7)

Module 1:9–1:13, pages 115–117 and  
Module 4:2–4:3, pages 255–256.  
(Ref. embedded EY)

View and download from:

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/learning\\_material/portal/ey\\_module1.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/learning_material/portal/ey_module1.pdf)

[www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/learning\\_material/portal/ey\\_module4.pdf](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/learning_material/portal/ey_module4.pdf)

Schools know the benefits of parents being well informed and supportive of their children. This is particularly so when a child has been identified as having special needs, but, IEPs, SEN Statements and Statutory Assessments can prove a barrier to parents. Informal workshops could be a way of supporting parents through the process of getting the gist of a document, understanding the use of headings, subheadings and bullet points, and, perhaps most importantly, learning how to cope with jargon and unknown vocabulary. Parents find it reassuring to know that they are not alone in not always understanding such formal language.

The materials suggested come from Early Years documents but would provide a model for applying to other formal texts that parents need to access.

### 12. Special Educational Needs: A Guide for Parents and Carers

Ref.DfES 0800/2001

View and download from:

[www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/parentcarers](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/parentcarers)

Special Educational Needs can be surrounded by vocabulary and use a language style which parents may find difficult to cope with, especially if their first language is not English. This parental guide provides a breakdown of the process and on pages 20–21 sets out clearly the six sections of a statement. Together with the glossary of terms linked at the bottom of the web page, this could be used to support parents through the process. The guide is also available in several community languages.