ROLE OF THE FAMILY CRUCIAL IN IMPROVING PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS

Responding to the publication of the OECD PISA results in Wales, Kay Smith, Programme Manager for NIACE Dysgu Cymru, said,

“There is no doubt that many of our young people are not as well equipped in essential skills as their peers in other nations across the world. We have far too many who leave school with poor skills. We know that there are 4-year-olds starting school who haven’t been read to. We also know that children going to secondary school without the necessary skills will very quickly fall even further behind. Too many children leave school too early and then find themselves out of work, with no chance of a fulfilling career and dangerously close to living on the margins of society."

Welsh Government has set a course for school improvement, to deal with some systemic issues and to raise standards in the sector. NIACE Dysgu Cymru is convinced that Schools cannot do it all on their own.

Children spend less than 15% of their time in school. We have to stop blaming teachers and make use of what parents, the community and employers can offer as well. Every school must engage their parents in learning - family learning develops the skills of children and adults, helping to break the intergenerational cycle of poor basic skills, and develops a culture of families who are positive about learning.

Welsh Government is supporting family learning programmes across Wales, but more could be done strategically and practically to realise the potential of this intervention. We’d like to see family learning in every school and community.

“We showed at the recent launch of the final report of our Inquiry, family learning can increase the overall level of children’s development by as much as 15 percentage points for those from disadvantaged groups. We must realise that what happens in the first 3 years of life has the most overwhelming effect on how well children
perform. Parents must have the skills to support their children's development and this isn't solely through teaching ‘parenting skills’.

We must pull together, and this means government departments as well as providers, teachers and employers, if we are going to help this and the next generation of children to get the skills they need for prosperous and fulfilling lives.

**Ends**

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**Notes to Editors**

1. The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is an independent charity which promotes adult learning across England and Wales. Through its research, development, publications, events, outreach and advocacy activity, NIACE works to improve the quality and breadth of opportunities available for all adults so they can benefit from learning throughout their lives. [www.niace.org.uk](http://www.niace.org.uk)
