



Gateshead Family Learning, Gateshead Council

Commended – Family Learning to Support
Health and Wellbeing Award

Gateshead Family Learning sits within the Learning and Skills Service at Gateshead Council. The team supports parents, carers, and families across the borough to build confidence, skills, and wellbeing through accessible, community-based learning.

They deliver a wide range of workshops, short courses, and accredited programmes in schools, family hubs, and local community venues. These include subjects such as early reading, maths, parenting, mental health and wellbeing, and practical life skills like cooking on a budget.

The service works with diverse communities, including families from different cultures and religions, ESOL learners, and those living in areas of deprivation or referred through social services. Many learners have previously had limited engagement with education, so the team uses a supportive, strengths-based approach to build confidence and reduce barriers.

Strong partnerships with schools, community organisations and external partners, including NHS peer support workers, ensure that programmes are relevant, inclusive and responsive to local need.

Family Learning to Support Health and Wellbeing: Building a Resilient Child

They delivered Building a Resilient Child, a six-week, community-based mental health and wellbeing programme for parents and carers, focused on supporting children's emotional development and mental wellbeing. The programme supported families to better understand children's mental health, behaviour, and emotional needs while building positive relationships and confidence in parenting.

In Gateshead, children and young people experience higher than average levels of poverty and increasing mental health needs, including anxiety and behavioural challenges. Long waiting times for specialist services highlighted the need for early, preventative support in a non-clinical setting that families could access easily.

The programme responded by offering practical, community-based learning in familiar settings, with a focus on helping parents understand emotions, behaviour, regulation, and communication, while building their confidence to support their children at home.

Gateshead Family Learning, Gateshead Council

Commended – Family Learning to Support
Health and Wellbeing Award

Each session explored themes such as mindfulness, communication, attachment, emotional regulation, and self-esteem. Learning was delivered through creative, hands-on activities rather than traditional teaching. Families took part in making sensory bottles, worry boxes, and emotion mirrors, alongside breathing exercises and group discussions. This interactive approach made complex ideas accessible and helped families practise strategies they could use in everyday life. Sessions also encouraged reflection on parents' own emotions and how these influence their children.

The programme prioritised inclusion, using simple language, visual tools, practical activities, and resources families could access at their own pace – so that ESOL learners and those with low confidence could fully participate. Sessions relied less on written materials and more on shared learning and demonstration. Group learning was a key feature, creating safe spaces where parents could share experiences, build peer support, and reduce feelings of isolation.

They promoted the programme through trusted community networks, such as schools and family hubs, helped engage families who might not normally access learning or mental health support due to financial pressures, low confidence, or language barriers.



"I have a better understanding and awareness of my child's way of communicating and how to communicate back. I am more conscious of my reactions when my son is expressing his emotions."



Gateshead Family Learning, Gateshead Council

Commended – Family Learning to Support
Health and Wellbeing Award

Impact and next steps

Building a Resilient Child led to clear improvements in confidence, emotional awareness, and family relationships. Parents reported a better understanding of their children's feelings and improved ability to manage challenging situations.

Families developed practical tools they continue to use at home, including mindfulness techniques, communication strategies and emotional regulation activities. This contributed to reduced stress and stronger relationships within the home.

Engagement was strong among families who had previously not accessed support, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds and ESOL learners. This helped reduce inequalities in access to mental health and wellbeing support.

The programme also strengthened partnerships with schools and family services, with learning being embedded into wider practice.

Going forward, the course will continue to evolve based on learner feedback. Content has already been adapted to support older children and will expand further with new resources and digital tools. The approach will continue to focus on early intervention, community delivery and practical, family-centred learning.

