



STEM with Mr N

Commended – Family Learning Innovation Award

[STEM with Mr N](#) is a voluntary, self-funded educational initiative focused on widening access to practical, inclusive STEM learning for children, families, and educators. Established in 2020 in response to declining access to hands-on science during the COVID-19 pandemic, the initiative provides free videos, downloadable packs, and family-friendly STEM resources designed around everyday household materials.

Working with over 25,000 people every year, STEM with Mr N's long-term vision is to build a culture where science is seen as accessible, inclusive, and part of everyday life for all families – regardless of background or income.

All resources are open access, require minimal equipment, and are designed to encourage discussion, questioning, and shared problem-solving between adults and children. The initiative operates both within a primary school setting and internationally through digital platforms, and environmental sustainability is embedded both in content and delivery.

Family Learning Innovation: [STEM with Mr N – Low-Cost Family STEM Learning at Home and School](#)

Families across the UK have shared they want to support their children's science learning but felt excluded by cost, lack of confidence, and limited subject knowledge. STEM was often seen as requiring specialist equipment or expertise, creating barriers for lower-income households and those without STEM experience. These challenges intensified during and after COVID-19, when access to hands-on learning and family engagement opportunities declined. The Low-Cost Family STEM Learning at Home and School project was created to make science accessible, affordable and easy to embed in everyday family life.

This project redesigned family STEM learning around everyday materials, clear guidance, and shared participation. A suite of free, open-access resources was developed – including short demonstration videos, printable activity packs and family workshops – to support parents and carers to act as learning partners rather than passive observers.

Activities were selected through research into effective primary science pedagogy, with a focus on inquiry, talk, and hands-on exploration. Each activity was trialled in classrooms and family settings to ensure clarity, accessibility, and safety. Where barriers were identified (cost, complexity, time), activities were redesigned with simpler materials or alternative methods. This testing phase ensured the resources worked equally well for families with limited time, space, or confidence.



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What made the project unique was its emphasis on sustainability and independence. Rather than one-off events, families received reusable resources they could revisit, adapt, and share. The innovation was refined through direct feedback from parents, carers, teachers, and children, allowing the approach to evolve. This ensured the final model was practical, scalable, and culturally inclusive, ensuring it worked across diverse settings and communities.

Impact and next steps

The project increased access to STEM learning and transformed family confidence. Parents and carers reported greater confidence supporting science at home, particularly those who felt previously they were 'not science people', with many engaging in STEM activities together for the first time. Children demonstrated improved curiosity, scientific vocabulary, and willingness to experiment, with teachers noting increased participation and confidence in class.

Reach included families across multiple regions and countries, tracked through downloads, resource requests and workshop attendance. Qualitative feedback showed sustained engagement, with families revisiting activities and sharing them with others.

STEM with MR N collaborated with organisations such as the Royal Society of Chemistry, Twinkl, and Summerlee Museum to extend the reach of family STEM learning and embed this project into wider family learning. Industry and research collaborations, including satellite-data partners and space-sector contributors, have helped connect family learning activities to real-world applications, ensuring authenticity while keeping resources accessible.

STEM with Mr N will continue to expand access to free, inclusive STEM learning opportunities for families through the development of new activity packs, videos, workshops, and STEM career resources. Future plans include growing international collaborations, increasing opportunities for families to engage with real-world STEM challenges, and developing further resources. The long-term aim is to continue removing barriers to STEM participation and ensure that families, regardless of background, can explore science, technology, engineering, and mathematics together in meaningful and inspiring ways.

"It is an honour to receive this recognition from the Family Learning Awards. STEM with Mr N was created to help make STEM learning accessible, affordable, and enjoyable for all families, regardless of their background or experience. Seeing parents, carers, and children explore science together, ask questions, and build confidence through simple hands-on activities is what inspires me to continue this work. I am grateful to everyone who has supported the initiative and helped share these resources with families around the world."