



Reading Champions

Involving dads - A case study Family learning and libraries, Cumbria

Family learning manager Sue Doyle describes how the Adult Education Service and Library Service in Cumbria joined forces to encourage dads involvement in learning and library use.

Family Learning (Cumbria Adult Education Service) and the Cumbria Library Service ran a series of joint workshops across Cumbria at the beginning of Family Learning week. It was agreed to use these sessions, to encourage more Dads into participating in Family Learning courses. We targeted parents and children aged 7+. The sessions would give participants the opportunity to build their own robot from scratch. You can download the leaflet that was used to advertise the session [here](#).

We went ahead with the robotics workshops, delivering them on a Sunday, as the Library services were piloting Sunday opening in their six main libraries. Sundays were chosen for a number of reasons

Dads would perhaps not be at work, and therefore able to attend. If the family was separated, it is often at weekends that the Dads get access to their children



Dad and lad making a model

The robotic kits were sourced from the Open University as we thought that this would be a dad friendly subject. They had a number of free kits, but subsequent kits cost £5 each. A training session was held with both Family Learning Tutors and selected library staff, this was to enable the staff to work in a joint session. The sessions took place and were very successful; the sessions at all six libraries were full.

Here are some comments from dads. "I rarely get time to sit down and do something with the kids at home. My work means I do a lot of silly hours and it's usually my wife Bridget who helps with schoolwork. We do as much as we can with the kids at home - anything that helps their education is well worth it." "It was good to work together as a father and son building something. We enjoyed working out how to build the robot together and wiring up the electrics

to get it to move.”

We have now put together a scheme of work and lesson plans to deliver Robotics as a longer course, this has yet to be delivered.