



## A new way of measuring child poverty

More support needed for young dads

Parents want more advice on child nutrition

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We welcome your comments on and contributions to our News Bulletin. Please address any correspondence to the editor, Rachel Tonkin:  
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Published by Parenting UK  
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Registered charity No 1076942. Registered in England and Wales No 3588930  
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## Welcome from Jeremy Todd, Chief Executive of Family Lives



I am delighted to be writing this introduction to the Parenting UK Bulletin after the successful merger of Parenting UK with Family Lives. People often talk about mergers as necessary evils within times of austerity and economic challenge. I am delighted to say though that Parenting UK and Family Lives emerged from similar visions many years ago, in which the organisations already collaborated and shared a value base, around the importance of enabling professionals to work effectively with families across the UK.

I was very fortunate to be able to attend the last Parenting UK annual conference on the eve of the merger and to witness the excellent range of speakers and discussion around matters impacting on professionals working with families today. This commitment of the membership in attending the conference, but more importantly in raising the very real issues you experience as practitioners in the field, was such an essential insight and addition to the work of Family Lives as we now are able to build on the strength of relationships that Parenting UK already has with each of you, and to offer a fuller picture as we draw on the extensive data of our direct engagement with families through our various services.

Membership is an important relationship and one that has been built up over many years of trust between you and Parenting UK. I very much hope that Family Lives can further develop this relationship to include additional access to resources

and services through our broader work with families. We are already talking about how we might begin to strengthen the training that we deliver as a merged organisation and I'm sure that some of you will have ideas about any gaps that you see within your own working and we would be grateful to receive your feedback.

There are also many new opportunities that we would like to highlight as resources for you as practitioners such as our free 24 hour helpline for families which also provides advice and support to professionals. Family Lives has a number of specific projects working with gender identity and sexualisation ([www.teenboundaries.co.uk](http://www.teenboundaries.co.uk)) and in addition a project that supports children and young people who experience bullying, ([www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)).

Finally, Family Lives seeks to highlight many of the issues that are common in your day to day practice through our press, policy and media. Should there be stories that you feel need to be told alongside people that you would like us to champion, please do use the normal channels to convey this, so that we can work confidently together in ensuring the voices of families are heard across the UK.

With my very best wishes

Jeremy Todd



## More support needed for young dads, says report by Family Strategic Partnership

A report by the Family Strategic Partnership warns that a culture shift is needed in 'mother-centred' family services which often treat dads as invisible. Currently services across the board, from pregnancy care to housing support, are driving fathers apart from their children through a 'culture where fathers are not valued'.

The report, released on 17 December, claims that maternity services and children's centres fail to even ask about fathers and that local authority housing benefit rules prevent dads from accommodating their children. There is a widespread lack of basic local authority data on the numbers and profile of teen fathers. The report, which has been funded by the Department for Education, calls for an 'attitudinal shift' in statutory services such as prisons, schools, and health services, towards a culture of support for young dads.

The report recommendations include:

- Every local authority should appoint a lead professional for young fathers
- A systematic approach to data collection on fathers should be developed by central government
- Relationship support should also help young parents maintain contact and value the father-child relationship.

Jonathan Rallings, Barnardo's Assistant Director of Policy and Research said, "For too long dads have been treated either as optional extras or completely invisible by mother-centred family services.

"Young dads want to play their part in bringing up their children. However, they all too often receive the message that they're worthless from services that ignore or marginalise them from the point of pregnancy onwards.

"To be properly involved in their children's lives, young dads need the same kind of support as teen mums. This includes easily accessible parenting

advice, help with housing, and special timetabling for training and study. "We are calling on local authorities to help lead a cultural shift in family care, by introducing practices across their services that universally support young dads' journeys into fatherhood."

Read the full report here: [www.barnardos.org.uk/are\\_we\\_nearly\\_there\\_yet\\_dad.pdf](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/are_we_nearly_there_yet_dad.pdf)

## Parentchannel.tv launches free videos for parents of babies and toddlers

Our free online video service, Parentchannel.tv, has now expanded to cover the 0-5 age range with 11 new videos already available for parents of young children. The videos, which were produced with support from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, cover topics such as planning for parenthood, changing relationships, early life skills and getting to know your baby. We also have a video on home safety (supported by DBDA) and one coming soon on healthy eating for toddlers (supported by the Infant & Toddler Forum).

As with all Parentchannel.tv videos, the new 0-5 section features expert support and advice and empathetic support from real families. The videos can be easily embedded in any website so if you want to share them with families who use your site, simply click on "embed video" at the bottom of the player on the video you want to use. More videos will be coming this year.

## Louise Casey calls for family intervention approach

Louise Casey, who heads up the government's Troubled Families programme backs family intervention as the most effective way to support 'problem families' in turning their lives around. Casey's new report *Working with Troubled Families* demonstrates the evidence of her research and is designed to be used as a tool for local authorities and partner organisations to provide

effective family intervention services. The report recommends a single dedicated family worker providing hands on support with a 'whole family approach' and supports the coalition's aim to turn around the lives of 120,000 'troubled families' by 2015 and aims to support the families worked with as well as the communities around them.

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles acknowledged the value of early intervention and the savings that can be made working directly with families instead of just reacting to their problems.

Dame Clare Tickell, chief executive for Action for Children also welcomed the report, calling it "a welcome resource which will help people understand the key features of the [family intervention] model". Download the full report ([www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)).

## Centre for Social Justice calls for a Department for Families

The Centre for Social Justice has released a new report, *Forgotten Families, A vanishing agenda?* which calls for the creation of a Department for Families. The Centre for Social Justice argues that the Government, although introducing policies such as encouraging flexible working, improving paternity leave and making childcare more affordable, is not doing enough to tackle what should be the main focus of Government policy on families. The paper says that the overriding priority of family policy should be tackling family breakdown, stating that "48 percent of all children born today will see the breakdown of their parents' relationship".

The report argues that the Government has failed to recognise the importance of marriage and sets out key areas where they believe the Government could make a greater impact on families, including through the establishment of a Department for Families.

Read the full report here at [www.centreforsocialjustice.org](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org)



## Child Poverty Measures Consultation - Summary

The consultation on the proposed new child poverty measures was released on 15 November. This article gives a summary of the main points on the proposed multidimensional measure to enable you to gain an understanding of how the way this country measures child poverty both nationally and locally may change. The latest child poverty statistics revealed that 300,000 children were moved out of relative income poverty between 2009-10 and 2010-11. The current Government explains this as being largely due to a fall in the median income nationally which lowers the poverty line. This means that children who were moved out of poverty were no better off or saw no significant improvement in their daily lives.

The current Government believes that just measuring income does not present an accurate picture of how children's lives are affected by poverty. The current way of measuring child poverty which was set out in the Child Poverty Act 2010 by the last government looks at income alone as the "significant cause and solution". (Measuring Child Poverty, p1) The current Government believes that just measuring income does not present an accurate picture of how children's lives are affected by poverty.

The consultation proposes a new multidimensional measure which takes into account more than just income. It includes whether a child's parents work or not; how stable their family structure is; how much debt a family has; whether they live in poor housing; and the skills and health of the parents. The consultation asks how we can best reflect the reality of child poverty using a multidimensional measure which will allow Government to draw together a broader picture of what it means to grow up in poverty. As a result of conversations with children, young people and charities, and analysis of academic evidence regarding factors that affect children's lives and life chances several dimensions have already been suggested.

The consultation is gathering views on which of these dimensions of poverty should be included, what others should be considered and how those measures should be built. A multidimensional measure will allow us to draw together our knowledge of what it means to grow up in poverty. It should tell us the total number of children growing up in poverty in the UK, show the severity of that poverty, show how poverty affects different groups of children, and "be methodologically robust and be widely accepted by the public as a meaningful

representation of child poverty in the UK". (Measuring Child Poverty, p6)

### How do we currently measure child poverty?

The Child Poverty Act 2010 uses four measures which focus on income:

- Relative income: household income less than 60 per cent of current median income
- Combined low income and material deprivation: children who experience material deprivation and live in households with incomes less than 70 per cent of current median income
- Absolute income: household income less than 60 per cent of 2010/11 median income adjusted for prices
- Persistent poverty: household income less than 60 per cent of current median income for at least three out of the previous four years.

### Proposed new measures

The Government are proposing a new multidimensional measure of child poverty. The consultation suggests eight dimensions which could make up the new child poverty measure to take into account the different elements of a child's experience of growing up with disadvantage. The suggested dimensions are intended to make up a more realistic picture of what it is like for a child to grow up experiencing things such as parents being out of work, high levels of family debt, or with parents who are unable to help them with their homework or read them a story.

#### 1. Income and material deprivation

This is defined as, "Income is the money coming into a household. This can be from salaries, benefits or returns on investments and savings. Children may be experiencing material deprivation if they lack the basic goods and services that they need". (Measuring Child Poverty, p19). The consultation recognises the impact income has on children's experiences of poverty and on their health and life chances, with persistent poverty having "a larger cumulative negative impact on children's development than episodic poverty" (Measuring Child Poverty, page 20).

The consultation acknowledges gaps in the current approach to measuring income. These include failure to consider source of income, that is whether money is earned or from benefits, how families budget and save, and housing costs. The UK currently has 21 items for measuring material deprivation for children, including whether a family can afford to have friends around for tea once a fortnight and to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays.

#### Consultation questions

- Q1: Are there other dimensions we should consider for inclusion in a multidimensional measure of child poverty?  
 Q2: How should we measure income as a dimension in a future multidimensional measure of child poverty? How important are relative and absolute income?  
 Q3: How does the ownership of assets such as a house affect our understanding of poverty?  
 Q4: How can an income dimension in a multidimensional measure of child poverty avoid the drawbacks associated with a simple income threshold?

## 2. Worklessness

Worklessness is defined as “households where no one is in work. The Office for National Statistics defines a workless household as a household where no one aged 16 or over is in employment. These household members may be unemployed or inactive”. (Measuring Child Poverty, p23) The consultation highlights evidence to indicate that growing up in workless families significantly impacts on children’s lives and the impact it can have on parents’ confidence, family relationships and general wellbeing. Evidence cited suggests relationships between worklessness and levels of challenging behaviour, academic attainment, self-esteem and independence.

### Consultation questions

Q5: How important is worklessness as a dimension in a future multidimensional measure of child poverty?

Q6: How should worklessness be measured?

Q7: Does the length of time for which a household is workless matter for measurement?

## 3. Unmanageable debt

The consultation recognises that unmanageable debt is difficult to define as each family’s circumstances are different. In the context of the consultation it is debt that has become a heavy burden, leaving families unable to pay their current bills and meet other commitments. Unmanageable debt can leave families without sufficient funds to meet their child’s most basic needs, can be a barrier to work and increase the risk of family breakdown and mental distress, the effects of which will be felt by the children.

The consultation states that measuring how much debt a family has is important as income measures do not reflect the fact that a family’s income may be spent on managing the debt rather than the children’s needs, nor does it reflect any stress that may be caused by not being able to pay bills on time.

### Consultation questions

Q8: How important is unmanageable debt as a dimension in a future multidimensional measure of child poverty?

Q9: What aspects of unmanageable debt should we be most concerned about capturing?

## 4. Poor housing

Poor housing is defined as housing that is cold, damp, overcrowded, poorly repaired or in an unsafe or isolated area. The consultation recognises that the impact of growing up in poor housing on a child’s outcomes is little understood but that it “clearly has an effect on health, the consequences of which can reach into adulthood. For disabled children, poor housing also means unsuitable housing, and this could impact on health and other outcomes”. (Measuring Child Poverty, p31) Evidence cited also acknowledges the importance of the area children grow up in with deprived neighbourhoods having a negative impact on education, employment and wealth.

### Consultation questions

Q10: How important is poor housing as a dimension in a future multidimensional measure of child poverty?

Q11: What aspect of poor housing should be captured in a measure?

Q12: How can we consider the impact of where children grow up when measuring child poverty?

## 5. Parental skill level

Parental skill is defined as “the level of education and employability of a child’s parents and it significantly impacts on children in poverty; low skills increase the likelihood of parents being unemployed, low paid and so in poverty, and also negatively impact on children’s development. Low skills are a key determinant of the length of time for which a family will be in poverty” (Measuring Child Poverty, p33).

The consultation refers to evidence that low parental skill level has a negative impact on children’s development and their educational attainment. It gives the example of “where parents have low qualification levels, only around one quarter of their children will have gained high level qualifications by the age of 34 compared with over two thirds of children of high achieving parents” (Measuring Child Poverty, p35).

### Consultation questions

Q13: How important is parental skill level as a dimension in a future multidimensional measure of child poverty? What level of skills matters?

Q14: How can we best capture parental skill level in a new child poverty measure?

## 6. Access to quality education

Access to quality education is defined as “a quality early years education and attending a successful school.” (Measuring Child Poverty, p36). The consultation recognises that children’s experience of school and their attainment has a long lasting impact on their future. The consultation highlights the long-term impact a child’s experience and attainment at school can have on their future. It refers to evidence of the negative impact of poor access to quality education (including early years education) can have on the home environment, how often children are read to, their intellectual and social/behavioural development as well as affecting their health and whether they do things such as smoke or are involved in anti-social behaviour.

### Consultation questions

Q15: What impact does attending a failing school have on a child’s experience of poverty?

Q16: What impact does attending a failing school have on a child’s life chances?

Q17: How should access to quality education be measured?

## 7. Family stability

This is defined as when children grow up in a stable family environment without experiencing family breakdown. (Measuring Child Poverty, p40). The consultation sets out that family stability affects children in terms of being more likely to experience income poverty, poor health and behavioural problems and negatively affects their outcomes as an adult. Children who grow up in a family where violence or domestic violence is present are also negatively affected by this.

### Consultation questions

Q18: How important is family stability as a dimension in a future multidimensional measure of child poverty?

Q19: How important is the long term involvement of both parents to their child's experience of poverty and life chances?

Q20: How important is the presence of a father to a child's experience of poverty and life chances?

Q21: Which experiences associated with family stability should be captured in a measure?

#### 8. Parental health

Parental health describes both the mental and physical health of adults with children (Measuring Child Poverty, p43). The last dimension suggested to be included in the child poverty measure highlights the impact a parent's health issues, such as drug or alcohol abuse or poor mental health, can have on children's outcomes. As a result of poor parental health children often become young carers. The consultation highlights research describing the impact of being a young carer on education and employment opportunities. It also acknowledges the link between parent's ill health and other dimensions of poverty such as disability, poor mental health, income poverty, worklessness and debt.

#### Consultation questions

Q22: How should we recognise young carers in a multidimensional measure of child poverty?

Q23: How should we recognise parental drug and alcohol dependence and mental health conditions in a multidimensional measure of child poverty?

Q24: How can parental disability and general poor parental health be reflected in a multidimensional measure of child poverty?

The last section of the consultation document sets out the Government's intention to create a multi-dimensional measure of child poverty which would combine a range of indicators (such as the eight dimensions summarised above) into one single number. The aim is to:

- give us a total number of children in the UK currently growing up experiencing multiple dimensions of poverty which we can track through time

- show us the severity of a child's poverty so that we can tell which groups need the most help show us how poverty affects different groups of children, for example ethnic minorities

or disabled children

- be widely accepted by the public and experts as being a fair representation of those children that are growing up in poverty and those who are not

- be methodologically robust and draw on the best data that is available. (Measuring Child Poverty, p45).

The consultation asks for views on whether any single dimension is particularly important and should determine whether someone should be counted as in poverty or not (referred to as a 'gateway'). It also states that the new measure will combine the range of indicators into a single number and asks whether certain indicators should be given greater weight to reflect their important role in child poverty. In terms of collecting the data needed, the consultation sets out that national surveys which already exist would be used to collect data on a national level. On a local level, it recognises that local child poverty measures can complement the national one but that there are no local surveys which could currently be used to complement a national one. The Government will have to look at different ways to get a picture of child poverty in local areas.

#### Consultation questions

Q25: Are there other criteria that we should evaluate a new measure against?

Q26: In creating a new measure, should any dimension be a gateway?

Q27: Should the indicators be weighted and, if so, what factors should influence the choice of weighting?

Q28: Which indicators should be weighted more or less?

Q29: How could we measure child poverty at the local level?

Q30: How should we check the robustness and simplicity?

Q31: What would you use a multidimensional measure of child poverty for?

The closing date for the consultation is 15 February. You can view the full consultation on the Department for Education's website.

## Government introduces new measures to speed up adoption

The Prime Minister has announced a new package of support for people who want to adopt to ensure more children get a stable, loving home without delays.

The Government has made sorting out and speeding up adoption a priority, overhauling the system to make it swifter, more effective and robust, saying, "We have made good progress and some encouraging signs of improvement have emerged." For example, the number of children available for adoption has risen from 3000 in 2010 to more than 4000 in 2012. Court processes have moved more swiftly too. But we need hundreds more people to come forward to adopt.

So measures outlined today go even further to ensure potential adopters are welcomed with open arms, given a much more active role, including in the matching process, and greater support with this life-changing decision.

They will also ensure that once people have gone through the adoption process, they will get more ongoing support.

## Parents want more advice on child nutrition

Parents feel that they are 'in the dark' as child nutrition advice isn't getting through. A survey of 1,800 mums revealed that over half feel advice on weaning is confusing and contradictory. Three quarters of parents said they were never informed of government recommendations on vitamin supplements for babies and toddlers and four times as many mothers would visit online parenting clubs and forums over government websites. According to a report by the think tank Demos, child nutrition advice should be displayed on supermarket shelves and online parenting forums to make it more accessible to parents.

The report, titled *For Starters*, found more than half (54%) felt information they received on weaning to be confusing or contradictory. In focus groups, parents said health professionals and food packaging gave contradictory messages about the age at which a baby



can start eating solid foods. Confusion amongst parents is unsurprising as current Government guidance says babies should not start eating solid food until 'about six months' while many baby food jars are labelled 'from 4 months plus'.

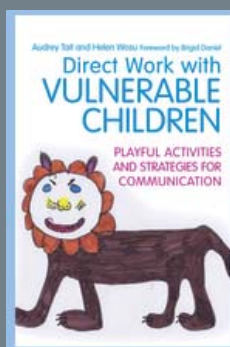
Half of the mothers surveyed were also unsure about correct portion sizes for their babies and toddlers as they are growing up. This has clear implications for rates of childhood obesity in the UK. Figures from the National Child Measurement Programme show approximately a tenth of 4-5 year olds are currently obese. For 10-11 year olds the figure rises to almost 1 in 5. A staggering three quarters (73%) of mothers also revealed they had never been advised to give a vitamin supplement to their baby or toddler, despite it being an official government recommendation that babies aged 6 months plus should have vitamin drops with vitamins A, C and D.

Recent medical research warns of a resurgence in rickets and other vitamin D deficiency diseases among young children in the UK, highlighting the importance that parents be made aware of this advice. This evidence of anxiety among parents and gaps in their knowledge of babies' and toddlers' nutritional needs highlights the need to strengthen government public health campaigns such as Start4Life, which are specifically targeted at parents of young children.

Four times as many mums said they would go first to an online parenting forum rather than an official government website for advice on how to feed their children (16% vs 4%). This leads Demos to call for government to actively publicise child nutritional advice through trusted channels that fit into parents' daily lives, such as internet forums and supermarket aisles.

The report goes on to recommend that:

- The government should embed early childhood nutrition indicators in key developmental checks and frameworks measuring child poverty and health inequalities.
- The Department of Health should conduct a national public health campaign to inform parents of the risk of vitamin D deficiency and the benefits of vitamin supplementation for mothers, infants and toddlers.
- Health and wellbeing boards should have a statutory duty to commission services



### **Direct Work with Vulnerable Children Playful Activities and Strategies for Communication**

By Audrey Tait and Helen Wosu  
Foreword by Brigid Daniel  
Published: Jessica Kingsley, £16.99

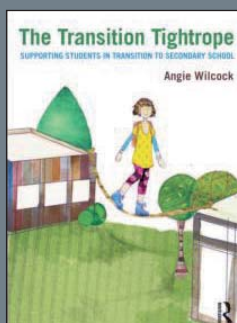
For many vulnerable children, the idea of talking to an adult about their experiences and feelings can be a daunting prospect. This book demonstrates how the introduction of playfulness when working with neglected or abused children helps to build a trusting relationship by openly engaging with the child's world. The practical activities and resources provided have been developed over 20 years of working with vulnerable children and are proven to help reduce feelings of stress and open up the lines of communication between adult and child. The straightforward, accessible style makes them easy to follow and ideal for reference in everyday practice. With plenty of tried and tested advice, this book is essential reading for all those working with vulnerable children, including social workers, child protection workers, therapists, teachers and police interviewers, who are looking for effective ways to engage with them.



### **Violence Against Women Current Theory and Practice in Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Exploitation**

Edited by Nancy Lombard and Lesley McMillan  
Published: Jessica Kingsley, £22.99

Violence against women is a pervasive problem in society and responding appropriately to those who experience it and those who perpetrate it is a constant challenge for social work, health and related professions today. This volume seeks to address issues surrounding violence against women at all levels, from its root causes to the specific needs arising in victims of gendered abuse from a particular social or ethnic group. Drawing on the expertise of a range of 'front line' service providers and practitioners as well as academic researchers, it seeks to provide those working in social work and related professions with up-to-date coverage of the major issues pertaining to violence against women, and suggest ways to tackle the rise in violence against women by translating knowledge into effective training and practice.



### **The Transition Tightrope: Supporting Students in Transition to Secondary School**

By Angie Wilcock  
Published: Routledge, £19.99

The transition phase from primary to secondary school is a time of massive personal, physical, psychological and social change. Not only is it a difficult time for the young adolescent, but it is also a challenging time for parents, teachers and anyone working with young people experiencing such substantial changes in their lives. In this highly accessible book, Angie Wilcock offers clear, practical, and realistic tips and strategies to support teachers' and parents' understanding of this difficult transition stage.

to give parents access to information and support with breastfeeding, introducing solid foods and toddler nutrition.

- The Department of Health should also refresh its Start4Life and Change4Life strategies to develop clear messages on healthy eating for the toddler age group.

The Bounty 'Word of Mum' survey, conducted for Demos, also found:

- Many parents are anxious about feeding their baby or toddler and would like more advice and support from professionals.

1 in 8 mothers responding to the survey were unsure about what is healthy for their baby or toddler to eat. A third also said they had not received enough information and advice on toddler nutrition.

- Over a third (36%) of mothers felt they didn't have time to provide the foods they would like to for their baby or toddler, whilst 28% agreed that they could not always afford the foods they would like.

- Younger mothers were particularly likely to be unaware of government advice on subjects such as toddlers' need for full-fat dairy products (20% of mothers aged 16-24), the benefits of eating oily fish for young children (a third of mothers aged 16-24) and the risk of tooth decay posed by fruit juice (almost 2 in 5 mothers aged 16-24).

### Regular eating and behaviour

As part of the Demos study, researchers analysed the Millennium Cohort Study, which includes 15,000 UK families, to see how eating habits in the early years affected behavioural development and cognitive attainment in later childhood. Demos's analysis showed that children who had regular mealtimes at age 3 were 88% more likely to have top scores for emotional and social development at age 7 than children who did not eat regularly.

Children who had regular mealtimes at 9 months, 3 years or 5 years were in each case more likely to have top test scores in reading and maths at age 7, underlining the importance of regular mealtimes to children's educational achievement and subsequent social mobility.

Louise Bazalgette, author of the

report, said: "This research shows that important public health messages about children's nutrition just aren't reaching enough parents. It paints a worrying picture of mums who are anxious about a lack of advice and also conflicting advice when it comes to feeding their baby or toddler healthily. We spoke to some parents who were confused about whether they should trust what they read on a food packet, or what their health visitor said."

"While the Government has in recent years has increased its focus on encouraging breastfeeding and providing good nutrition in school and nurseries, too many children are still not getting the nutrition they need at home. This has long-term consequences for their future health, development and attainment."

"People often raise concerns about the 'nanny state', but this research shows that more Government advice and support in this area would be welcome. Parents are crying out for clear and consistent advice on breastfeeding, weaning and healthy eating for toddlers."

Roger Clarke, Director General of the British Specialist Nutrition Association (BSNA) said:

"Balanced, evidence-based, clear and accessible information on infant nutrition is essential for improving standards and outcomes, and for parents to make the best possible choices for their children."

"BSNA is pleased that this research will add to the body of evidence assisting policy makers in developing the right tools and methods for ensuring that this happens in a timely fashion. Parents should feel confident that they have the full facts at their disposal when deciding how best to feed their children."

## 4Children and LGA consortium to run Early Intervention Foundation

A consortium led by the charity 4Children has been selected as the preferred bidder to run the first Early Intervention Foundation, the Department for Education has confirmed.

The Early Intervention Foundation

Consortium, which is chaired by the government's adviser on early intervention and Labour MP Graham Allen, incorporates 25 national partners, including the Local Government Association, the charities Action for Children and Achievement for All, and the improvement body C4EO.

Allen said "pre-contract negotiations" are set to take place immediately, with a view to signing off their work "at a ceremony in the very near future".

The Department for Education is to provide £3.5m to fund the foundation for a two-year period, after which it will become self-financing. It will act as a central point to help local commissioners decide which services to fund based on "robust evidence of cost, benefits, risks and projected outcomes".

According to the Early Intervention Foundation Consortium's mission statement, it will "be an independent, authoritative voice campaigning to change the culture from late intervention to early intervention at national and local level" and "will champion and promote early intervention across the UK".

"We are thrilled with this news and ready to begin work immediately," Allen said. "We see it as confirmation of the commitment of the Prime Minister and the Education Secretary to realise the potential of early intervention in children's lives."

He added that the work of the foundation would help "achieve lasting savings in public expenditure and lasting gains for local communities and for British society as a whole".

"Everyone involved in the consortium, including our 25 national partners and hundreds of local councils, individuals and well-wishers, is eager and ready to begin this vital work," he said.



## Family courts ‘ignoring needs of domestic violence victims’

A report by the charity Rights of Women found that women are frequently put in unsafe positions during proceedings, and government plans could make matters worse.

The needs of victims of domestic violence in family proceedings are regularly ignored and plans to prioritise “shared parenting” could worsen the situation for many abused partners, according to a report by the charity Rights of Women.

Domestic violence victims often felt unsafe and sidelined in family courts and proposed new laws would compound the problem, said Emma Scott, director of Rights of Women, which carried out in-depth interviews with 34 women and 113 family law professionals.

“Women and children are being put at risk because of contact put in place by the court. They continue to be exposed to violence because of those decisions,” she said. “Women still feel their safety is not taken into consideration despite clear guidance in courts to prevent that happening.”

The report follows recent criticism of Essex police over failings before the murder of a woman by her violent ex-partner. On the day of Jeanette Goodwin’s murder police failed to make sufficient links with previous domestic violence incidents and did not fully appreciate the danger she was in, a report by the Independent Police Complaints Commission found.

The report concentrates on perceived failings in the family court system, stating that women are frequently placed in unsafe or intimidating positions with violent ex-partners, with 52% of women during family proceedings had been cross-examined by, or had to cross-examine, men who had been violent to them.

One woman who was interviewed by the researchers said: “He said he’s fired his lawyer and he would be representing himself. It’s scaring the life out of me because it means he will be interrogating

me, asking questions, intimidating me.” Three-quarters of respondents said they had concerns for their safety at court. One woman, identified as Suzanne, described being in the open waiting room: “He stood and stared at me for 15 minutes. My barrister told this to the judge, and the judge didn’t take it seriously.”

Another woman described being forced to attend mediation sessions with her former partner, despite a restraining order against him. “In the beginning I was saying: ‘Why is he here, when there’s an order that he’s not to be within 5km of me?’ [The answer] was that he’s here because he has parental responsibility and it’s a separate matter,” she said.

The report stated that facilities such as screens in court and separate waiting rooms were often not provided, with almost 50% of the legal professionals surveyed reporting that special facilities were not advertised for intimidated court users, while 37% did not know whether they were available.

The majority of women interviewed wanted their ex-partner to have contact with their children, said Scott. “According to case law, where contact is possible it should happen, and we entirely agree with that as long as it is safe,” she said. “There was a lack of understanding of domestic violence among judges, she added. Rebecca, whose partner regularly screamed at her in front of her daughter and threatened to kill her, said: “I was advised that in court I need to be seen as being reasonable and not obstructive, you know, not one of ‘those women’. He can be as abusive as he wants, but I’m not allowed to react.”

The report calls for a change in the way victims of domestic violence are treated in court, including better special facilities, more data recording from the Ministry of Justice on instances of domestic violence in the family courts, the flagging of domestic violence on family court databases and domestic violence training for all legal professionals including judges.

The key recommendation in the report is for “an urgent review of the decision to restrict legal aid in family law cases”, said Maddy Coy, co-author of the report. “In the aftermath of the Family

Justice Review, proposals around shared parenting and cuts to legal aid have a raft of implications. Legal aid is a lifeline to many domestic violence victims who rely on it. We are hoping that with this report there is a window to influence decisions currently being taken.”

Earlier this year ministers rejected the advice from the economist David Norgrove, who led an independent official review into family justice, not to enshrine “shared parenting” rights in law after similar laws in Australia led to a series of legal claims and counter-claims and severe delays in child custody cases. Nick Clegg stated that the “proposals [will set] out that, where it is safe and in the child’s best interest, the law is clear that both parents share responsibility in their upbringing”, but O’Connor argued the wording left fathers powerless and failed to satisfy either camp.

“It will not change anything for fathers and it is likely to make things worse. There is too much room for manoeuvre,” she said. “More than 3.8 million children are growing up without their fathers in this country not because they are at risk from their fathers, but because they are denied contact, more than 50% of contact orders are broken and 93% of residencies are awarded to mothers. Are we really saying that 93% of fathers are unfit to share in the parenting of their children?”

The Family Justice Review recommended that judges should be enabled and encouraged to specialise in family matters and receive enhanced training. Extending this training to all professionals in the family justice process and including within it specialist training on domestic violence is a vital step to ensuring coherent and consistent responses to victim-survivors of violence and their children.

Read the full report at [www.rightsofwomen.org](http://www.rightsofwomen.org)

## Physical illness

### Working with Families with Physical Illness: A Systemic Approach

Date: March to April 2013

Provider: Tavistock and Portman

Booking: [www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/cpd57](http://www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/cpd57)

This course is designed to assist professionals in engaging with families and working across the many different professional agencies that may be involved. The NSF Commissioning children's and young people's palliative care services recommends offering psychological support and therapy to families. NICE guidelines for long term chronic illness also recommend emotional and psychological support for children, parents and carers.

## Trauma

### Trauma: The Child, The Family and The Worker

Date: 1 February 2013

Provider: Tavistock and Portman

Booking: [www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk](http://www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk)

Children and their families are often referred following traumatic events. These events resonate through the family, and workers themselves can feel traumatised by constant exposure to clients' distress. The day will include a theoretical perspective on trauma, the experience of children who come into care, who may be traumatised and face further moves in the system and also the effects of traumatic separation. We will discuss the way different children react to this and what workers can do to offset this. This day will be of interest to all professionals working with children and their families.

## Parent-Infant relationships

### Using groups to strengthen Parent-Infant Relationships: A Training Workshop

Date: 8-9 February 2013

Provider: Anna Freud Centre

Booking: [www.annafreud.org](http://www.annafreud.org)

In recent years there has been enthusiasm amongst professionals to offer parent and infant groups for help with early emotional and attachment difficulties. In practice leadership of these groups requires understanding of

group processes and training in skills to engage infants equally as participants.

## Young People

### Take 3

Date: 4-6 March 2013 (3-day course)

Provider: Take 3 Parenting

Booking: [www.take3parenting.co.uk](http://www.take3parenting.co.uk)

Accredited training that equips participants to run the evidence-based Take 3 parenting course. The Take 3 programme (originally published by the Trust for the Study of Adolescence) is used nation-wide to support parents of at-risk and vulnerable young people aged 10-18. It can be used in groups and also on a 1-2-1 basis. Training cost includes the comprehensive Take 3 manual (worth £135), described as "a really well thought out exposition of life for teenagers and the way in which teenagers develop and therefore the way in which as parents we need to develop too", Kathy Peto, Parenting Development Manager.

## Relationships

### Understanding Couples

Date: 15 February (half day)

Provider: Tavistock and Portman

Booking: [www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/cpd55](http://www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/cpd55)

This half-day workshop is designed for counsellors and psychotherapists who are concerned with couples in the course of their work and professionals working with parents. The course aims to develop your understanding of couple interaction; to consider the impact on the worker of meeting both partners together and to consider the difficulties in responding to distress in such a private area of life.

## Mindfulness

### Mindfulness & Solution Focused Brief Therapy

Date: 28 February

Provider: Eileen Murphy Consultants

Booking: [www.brief-therapy-uk.com/](http://www.brief-therapy-uk.com/)

This one day event will equip delegates with the skills to maintain a Solution Focused, curious mindset, about the experience and self-expertise of the individual, the real expert on what works and what doesn't work for them. It is in harnessing the expertise of the individual

that will help workers to map out a journey for change and recovery.

Dr Danny Penman, the award winning journalist will provide a rare opportunity to experience "the chocolate meditation" Mindfulness exercise. Mindfulness has been clinically proven to be at least as effective as drugs for depression and is recommended by the NICE.

## Communication

### Video Interaction Guidance

Date: 20-21 February

Provider: Tavistock and Portman

Booking: [www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/cpd108](http://www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/cpd108)

This two day course provides introductory training in the approach of VIG for professionals who work with parents and carers who are experiencing difficulties in communication with their children and wish to develop better relationships with them. At the end of the two days participants will understand how and why VIG works, will be able to describe the principles of attuned communication. Participants will also be able to take their new awareness of initiatives and reception and other principles of attuned interactions into their professional observations of parent-child or teacher-student communication. Having seen themselves on video and experienced supportive feedback about their communication style from peers, participants will also be able to describe their own strengths in communication with clients and identify for themselves a working point or goal for change in communication. Participants will also have practice in using a camcorder and downloading video on to a laptop.

If you run training courses make sure you add them to our website. Just go to [www.parentinguk.org](http://www.parentinguk.org) and click on 'Your work - training directory' and you can add the courses yourself.

To see more courses available, just visit Parenting UK's website: [www.parentinguk.org](http://www.parentinguk.org)

Please note that inclusion of courses here does not imply endorsement.

## The Suffolk Foundation, Suffolk Fund

### Tackling disadvantage

Website: [www.suffolkfoundation.org.uk](http://www.suffolkfoundation.org.uk)

The Suffolk Foundation helps support local charities, voluntary and community groups who are tackling disadvantage and need across Suffolk.

We do aim to make the application process as simple and transparent as possible - if you are applying to us for the first time, we recommend you read our grant policy guidelines.

Our main endowment fund is called The Suffolk Fund, which awards grants four times a year. In addition, we manage a number of other charitable funds on behalf of our donors. To check your group's eligibility for a grant, please see the criteria and guidelines for each fund on the website. Application forms, guidelines and grant monitoring forms for each of the funds can be downloaded from the website.

## County Durham Community Foundation

### Local support

Website: [www.cdcf.org.uk/](http://www.cdcf.org.uk/)

County Durham Community Foundation provides grants that make a genuine difference to the lives of local people. They manage charitable funds donated by local individuals, families, businesses and trusts, building up a source of long-term support for the community and acting as the vital link between donors and local needs, enabling people to achieve far more than they could by themselves. They are dedicated to helping communities grow by creating opportunities and tackling issues of disadvantage and exclusion.

## Cornwall Councillor Community Grant Scheme

### Local support

Website: [www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

Cornwall Councillors each have a small grant allocation to assist projects in the Cornwall Council area run by voluntary/community groups.

The grants aim to benefit a wide range of people and activities, such as

vulnerable children or adults, young people, facilities for older people, community facilities, local environment projects, and community safety.

For details of this scheme please see the website. Groups and organisations can apply for these small grants, which range between a minimum of £100 and a maximum of £1,000.

## Community Foundation for Merseyside

### Local support

Website: [www.cfmerseyside.org.uk](http://www.cfmerseyside.org.uk)

The Community Foundation for Merseyside is for donors, for communities and for Merseyside.

As an independent registered charity we are part of a national movement of community foundations that undertakes strategic social investment, facilitates philanthropy and contributes to achieving positive social change in local communities.

## Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

### Local support

Website: [www.cambscf.org.uk](http://www.cambscf.org.uk)

The main grant making is directed to five core grant programmes which have identified themes and listed priorities. Under each theme you will see the impact each funded projects should have.

CCF supports projects and initiatives that aim to improve the quality of life for children, young people and families and provide opportunities to gain life skills. This work is specifically targeted at people facing disadvantage through economic crisis, disability, family hardship, bereavement, family breakdown. CCF supports Every Child Matters, a shared programme of change to improve outcomes for all children and young people.

## The Children's Foundation

### Regional Small Grants

Website: [www.thechildrensfoundation.co.uk](http://www.thechildrensfoundation.co.uk)

The Children's Foundation Regional Small Grants programme supports community projects that benefit children and young people in the North East area in line with our aims and objectives. Grants awarded are up to a maximum of £1,000.

The Regional Small Grants panel meet three times a year: March/July/November. The next Regional Small Grants panel will be taking place in March. All applications for this grant round need to be submitted no later than the end of February.

## Where to find funding

You can find further information about funding on Parenting UK's website.

The following provide general guidance and information on funding:

Association of Charitable Foundations – [www.acf.org.uk](http://www.acf.org.uk)

Charities Aid Foundation – [www.cafonline.org](http://www.cafonline.org)

Charities Information Bureau – [www.fit4funding.org.uk](http://www.fit4funding.org.uk)

Directory of Social Change – [www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk)

Funderfinder – [www.funderfinder.org.uk](http://www.funderfinder.org.uk)

Grants 4 Funding Portals – [www.grants4.info/portal/index.asp](http://www.grants4.info/portal/index.asp)

GrantsNet – [www.grantsnet.co.uk](http://www.grantsnet.co.uk)



## February

### Modern Marriage: Myths, Realities and Prospects

Date: 15 February 2013

Venue: Notre Dame University, London

Booking: [www.marriagefoundation.org.uk](http://www.marriagefoundation.org.uk)

The speakers will include: Sir Paul Coleridge, Baroness Deech, Professor Rebecca Probert and Professor Anne Barlow. During the course of the day there will be opportunities to interact with speakers and other attendees.

### Growing Up In Scotland - annual conference

Date: 19 February 2013

Venue: Trades Hall, Glasgow

Booking: [www.cfr.ac.uk/gus/annualeventbook.html](http://www.cfr.ac.uk/gus/annualeventbook.html)

GUS is the longitudinal research study following the lives of thousands of children and their families from birth through to the teenage years and beyond. GUS provides new information that is helping to develop policies and services to make sure that children in Scotland get the best start in life. The new findings will explore the circumstances and experiences of babies at age 10 months and will make comparisons with the previous Birth Cohort, born 6 years earlier. Who should attend: Anyone working with and for children and their families – midwives, health visitors, voluntary sector, national and local policy makers and service planners, academics and researchers.

## March

### Early intervention for families with children at risk of anti-social behaviour

Date: 1 March

Venue: London

Booking: [www.parentinguk.org/events](http://www.parentinguk.org/events)

A review by the Youth Justice Board on international evidence on parenting support within the youth justice context found that the research convincingly demonstrates that parenting support can provide an effective mechanism for preventing and reducing youth offending and anti-social behaviour; that working with parents is almost certainly a

prerequisite for effective intervention with young people who are offending or at risk of it; and that interventions can be effective at all stages.

Research shows that the most successful work in this field takes a strengths-based approach, building on families' own understanding of 'what works' and their existing skills and abilities, not focusing solely on problems, risk factors and deficits in parents' skills and circumstances. This event looks at examples of good practice of interventions for the whole family for children at risk of anti-social behaviour.

### Quality in the Foundation Years What does quality mean for you?

Date: 5 March 2013

Venue: London

Booking: [www.4children.org.uk](http://www.4children.org.uk)

Quality is at the heart of early education and childcare. With the present focus on quality for all children in the foundation years but especially two year olds, this series of one day seminars will bring together key authors of the EYFS guidance and a national and local perspective on continuous quality improvement to support practitioners in ensuring delivery of the EYFS and improving children's outcomes.

This event is also running on the following dates:

Birmingham – Friday 8 March

Leeds – Monday 11 March

### Enhancing Communication With Children: Using developmental Psychology to understand relationships in child protection

Date: 8 March 2013

Venue: Leeds

Booking: [www.baspcan.org.uk](http://www.baspcan.org.uk)

Research demonstrates that knowledge of child development is vital for good assessments and interventions. This is because communication and understanding are improved when children's specific developmental needs are recognised and addressed.

This day demonstrates how psychological theory can be used to improve practice in child protection by identifying key psychological components of effective, developmentally appropriate communication. All sessions will be interactive and there will be opportunity for questions throughout. The day will

be relevant to practitioners at all levels, including their supervisors and managers, in all key agencies and organisations working in the safeguarding children arena. This includes practitioners who provide assessments, conduct investigations, provide placements or offer support, counselling or therapy.

## May

### Implications of Research on the Neuroscience of Affect, Attachment and Social Cognition

Date: 18-19 May 2013

Venue: UCL, London

Booking: [www.ucl.ac.uk](http://www.ucl.ac.uk)

Leading neuroscientists from Europe and the USA will once again host this unique forum exploring the latest neuroscience research with reference to treatments of mental disorders including autism, depression, personality disorders and attachment disorders.

The biannual conference attracted over 300 delegates in 2011. There will be two separate sessions within this conference which will focus on a developmental perspective:

Please let us know about any events you are running about parenting and families by emailing us at [info@parentinguk.org](mailto:info@parentinguk.org)

We welcome your comments on and contributions to our News Bulletin. Please address any correspondence to [rachel@familylives.org.uk](mailto:rachel@familylives.org.uk)

Published by Parenting UK, part of Family Lives, CAN Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH

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Registered charity No 1076942.

Registered in England and Wales No 3588930

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