



Reducing the stigma of parenting support

**Plus all the latest news,
training, resources and events**

In this issue

3–7 Focus:
Reducing the
stigma

8 News

9 Resources
new books and
online resources

10–11 Training
and funding

12 Conferences

Understanding the benefits of good parenting – a national campaign

In Graham Allen's review on early intervention, published in January 2011, one of his key recommendations was a national parenting campaign which would constitute the "creation of a broad-based alliance of interested groups, charities and foundations to ensure that the public, parents, health professionals and, especially, newly pregnant women are aware of the importance of developing social and emotional capability in the first years of life, and understand the best ways of encouraging good later outcomes for their children."¹

Among the topics Allen sets out as wishing to influence are the early home learning environment, the importance of talking to and engaging with your baby, recognising their signals, and understanding the importance of the early years in terms of development.

As Allen says, it's essential that this type of campaign is led not by Government, but by organisations which people will trust and turn to in times of need. We would agree that "media, retailers, employers, charities and foundations" need to come together firstly to pool their expertise and secondly to promote, share and foster the core messages of the campaign to everyone they come into contact with.

There is already some work going on in the voluntary sector to reduce the stigma around seeking help with parenting. Some examples of this include Family Lives' 'Instructions Not Included' campaign which focuses on increasing access to support and encouraging parents to help each other, and now the work of Families in the Foundation Years hosted by 4Children and the work of Netmums' campaign and WAVE Trust's Early Years Champions. The 'Talk to your Baby' campaign by the National Literacy Trust has been underway for several years and supports parents on the benefits of talking to your baby. And this is a reason why Parenting UK recently launched our corporate membership to encourage private organisations to support employees in their role as parents.

However, perhaps what such a campaign needs to stress more is the importance of happiness and wellbeing on children's outcomes and how parenting impacts on this, focussing on the big picture first and then educating about the specifics. You could argue that we need something as hardhitting as the campaign to tackle HIV and AIDS in the 90s; if we look at poor child outcomes and the knock-on effect to their lives and society as a whole it could

certainly be called an epidemic. The fact that the United Kingdom came bottom of a league table comparing child wellbeing in 20 OECD countries is surely testament to this.

This type of campaign cannot be done piecemeal. If we truly are to make a difference at a national and long-term level, then a whole-population approach must be taken. Examples of where this approach has been adopted with success are hard to find, but SKIP (Strategies with Kids, Information for Parents) in New Zealand seems to be having an impact. It is a national approach but driven forward at community level, based on positive messages and the belief that parents can learn from and support each other.

As mentioned earlier, there is a lot of work going on in this area, the crucial part now is to ensure it is all joined up towards the common goal. We recommend that an alliance of relevant organisations get together to form a campaign group which works with parents to decide the best approach, key messages and how to take this forward to have a major impact on children's futures.

This level of awareness raising would have to harness the power of mass media to influence the public. As parenting expert and Parenting UK patron Eileen Hayes said recently at a seminar, you only have to look at how many parents use the concept of the 'naughty step' to discipline their children to see how powerful television can be in reaching millions of parents.

We need to ignite the public's understanding of and excitement in the brilliance of babies. When you look at the work of the Brazelton Centre in Cambridge, based on the work of Dr T Berry Brazelton from the United States, it is clear to see that working with parents in the very first days of their baby's life can have a dramatic impact on parents' understanding of their baby's needs, the bond they share and how best to help their baby.

Understanding how children grow and develop and the impact their family, school and community has on the type of adult they become is probably the most important thing that we as a society should focus on, and raising public awareness of this fact has to be the first starting point.

¹ Early Intervention: The Next Steps. Cabinet Office, 2011, p 58

Why so few parents complete evidence-based parenting programmes and what can be done about it?

By Matthew R Sanders, PhD, Professor of Clinical Psychology, The University of Queensland
& Leanne Wilkinson, Head of Communications, Triple P International

Most parents raise their children without any professional help. Despite almost universal participation in antenatal classes, only a minority of parents complete an evidence-based parenting programme after the birth of a child. It is still not socially normative to undertake formal training preparation as a parent and as a result many parents begin their parenting careers ill prepared for the task. What makes this situation puzzling is that surveys of parents show that most support the idea of completing a parenting programme and those that do overwhelmingly perceive them as helpful. Despite this many practitioners struggle to fill free parenting groups or classes. Laudable calls to make parenting programmes more readily available to a wider range of parents will not work without a carefully planned strategy to enhance parenting involvement. This will require a blending of mass communication strategies and techniques (social marketing), and a renewed focus on engaging “parents as consumers” or “end users” so that programmes offered are seen as responsive to need.

The first element involves a carefully planned social marketing strategy that targets a population in a defined location or geographical catchment area. Such an approach should aim to de-stigmatise and normalise seeking help for parenting and to increase the visibility of programmes on offer in a local community. A social marketing strategy is also needed to counter alarmist, sensationalised and parent-blaming messages in the media.

A social marketing strategy needs to emphasise the benefits of positive parenting including helping children learn vital social and emotional skills which enable children to succeed at school and in life. The key messages need to empower parents rather than make them feel guilty or incompetent. An effective population communication strategy needs to recognize and respond to the evolving nature of mass communications. A creative, dynamic strategy is required that recognizes the importance of capturing and retaining parents' attention across a diverse range of communication mediums. Parents are already bombarded with many messages that compete for their attention. The strategy needs to use well-planned public relations, advertising and promotional activity through multiple communications channels, across an entire population.

A sophisticated example of a population communication strategy that increases parental engagement and reduces stigma is Stay Positive (<http://glasgow.triplep-staypositive.net/>). This campaign was first employed in Amsterdam (funded by Amsterdam City Council) to promote the introduction of the Triple P-Positive Parenting Programme as a multilevel system of parenting support. Stay Positive was designed as an integrated communications strategy. It uses a variety of communication techniques including print, electronic and web components.

Its key features include: 1) the use of distinctive Stay Positive materials that use a unique style and tag line and a range of promotional materials that can be localised to suit regional needs; 2) a cohesive four-phase strategy for the distribution, launch and implementation of materials; 3) A localised Stay Positive campaign with capacity for website localisation. Website localisation provides access to approved and updated Triple P content from developers with the added advantage of a locally administered CMS (content management system) for organisations/regions to upload local content for both parents and trained practitioners. An independent evaluation of the campaign by the Trimbos Institute showed that it successfully increased parental awareness and favourable attitudes to completing a parenting programme. It has been subsequently used in various English speaking locations in the UK, Europe and North America where a public health approach to parenting support has been adopted.

A Stay Positive type of approach can be strengthened further by incorporating a dynamic, news-responsive element using partnerships with local media. This requires fostering good relationships with specific journalists interested in parenting, mental health and family issues and the identification of “talent” that can be made available to the media for interviews. A mix of local practitioners and leading parenting experts can be used.

We have used a variety of engagement strategies in large scale public health roll outs of parenting programmes. These include the use of regular spots on talk radio (e.g. talk back) or regular topic specific parenting segments that can be podcasted on the web (www.abc.net.au/triplepparenting), television advertisements, television programmes (e.g. observational documentaries), webinars for parents on specific topics, school newsletters, parents columns in local newspapers, and voxpops from parents and practitioners to provide testimonial advocacy.

A comprehensive population communications strategy must include the implementation of a range of techniques and elements, over a sustained period of time, to ensure parents receive layered messaging with sufficient reach and frequency to be memorable. Layered messages include public awareness raising activity about the importance of parenting, story sharing through multiple mediums about parents successfully using evidence-based programmes, information through multiple mediums about the programmes on offer in the local area and clear direction on how to access these programmes. All population communications materials must cut through the advertising clutter and must be benefit oriented rather than product oriented. A common mistake is to focus on program features rather than programme benefits. The first question a consumer will ask when confronted with a new message is, “how relevant is this to me?”. If the answer is “very relevant”,

the next question is “how will this benefit me?”. If the message is relevant and has clearly articulated parent benefits, the next question is “how do I access it?”. Finally, programme access must have as few barriers as possible – how easy is it to find out details/how long will it take to do/where will it be held/will it cost anything/how can I get there/what will be provided to make it easier for me to attend. Attendance numbers will be affected by how many of these boxes a parent can successfully tick. Layering of messaging/sustainability of messaging/reach and frequency of messaging/relevance of messaging/benefits articulated in messaging and ease of program access will all contribute to the number of parents who will decide to attend an evidence-based parenting programme.

The second element involves working with groups of consumers to ensure better tailoring of existing evidence-based interventions. In our own work we have used focus groups and web-based parent surveys to gauge parents views on programme content (e.g. a prototypical episode of a new video series on positive parenting). A similar consumer enriched approach has been used to develop new versions of an existing group programme (Group Triple P) for grandparents, working parents, parents of children with cerebral palsy and parents from an ethnic minority. In each case, before programmes variants were subjected to clinical trials parents provided input into the cultural acceptability, relevance, usefulness and effectiveness of the existing programme to identify adaptations needed (if any) in examples, resources and materials for use with a new target group. In most instances consumers reported that the existing programme was suitable with only minor changes in how it was delivered. At other times parents identified additional content that would be useful (e.g. communication and conflict management skills for grandparents).

Even with better social marketing and consumer engagement a parent who is initially receptive to undertaking a parenting programme may not complete a programme. This can result for many different reasons including competing demands and priorities such as work commitments, health crises, housing problems or financial worries. Some parents also lead such chaotic lives that any regular commitment is challenging. Other parents lack support from partners or extended family. For parents with drug, alcohol or serious mental health problems, the task of completing a parenting programme competes with other major life events and crises. However, not all parents want or are able to complete group programmes and there is a clear need for more flexibility in delivering parenting programmes. This was behind our development of many different formats for parenting advice (large group, small group, individual, over the phone, guided self-help and web-based delivery of programmes). When parents are empowered with the tools for personal change they require to parent their children positively, the resulting benefits for children and the community at large are immense.

Government focuses on approaches to shared parenting in its response to Family Justice Review

In its response to November’s Family Justice Review, the Government has agreed to the majority of the recommendations, aiming to create a “simpler, more straightforward system” for parents that they can understand and have confidence in.

A large part of the report looks at support for separated and separating parents. The response, published by the Department for Education and the Ministry of Justice, states that “where there are no significant welfare issues... it is in the best interests of the child to have a full and continuing relationship with both parents”.

The response calls for a reduction in bureaucracy to take strain away from the thousands of families who enter the justice system each year, and the government has pledged to work with local authorities to encourage consistency in social care assessments.

The government’s aim to increase parents’ confidence in the system includes presenting a clearer message on shared parenting with an increased focus on mediation, and links to better information. Formal court orders are to be considered a last resort with disputes being settled through mediation wherever possible.

The Government will put together a Family Justice Board from April 2012. This new board will help create age appropriate information to help children understand the family justice system and the impacts it might have on their families, as well as developing national guidelines to empower professionals to feel more confident when providing support in this area.

The government’s review of the family justice system includes the following principles:

- That the welfare of the child remains the paramount consideration in any proceedings determining the upbringing of the child;
- That the family is nearly always the best place for bringing up children, except where there is a risk of significant harm;
- That in private law, specifically, problems should be resolved out of court, and the courts will only become involved where it is really necessary

Shared parenting

The government’s response highlights a strong belief in shared parenting following a separation. Their approach to private law will therefore focus on encouraging both parents to have a continuing parental relationship with their children. This process is to start with parents working together to come to an agreement about their children’s lives, with a continued involvement that supports the needs of their child.

The aim of this approach is to keep court involvement to a minimum in family cases, avoiding it altogether where possible. Parents will undergo a Mediation Information and Assessment Meeting to determine the value of mediation to their particular circumstances.

The government has acknowledged in its response that a presumption of shared parenting is a hotly debated issue and will make no move to issue legislation to this effect. However, they have established a working group of ministers to develop proposals for a legislative “statement of importance” regarding a child’s ongoing relationship with both parents. In other words, shared parenting is to be encouraged but not enforced.

This encouraged assumption is designed to “enhance the prospect of an agreement between parents”, in cases where there are no welfare concerns. This is in response to the review’s recommendation for a process that “promotes joint parental responsibility... enabling people to resolve their disputes safely outside court wherever possible”.

The government announced an intention to commission a new online and telephone support service for separating and separated parents, to provide “trusted, independent information... and direct [parents] to services relevant to their need”.

Separating parents will be made more aware of specialist parenting programmes that will help them understand the implications of their decisions and support them in resolving disputes.

The response acknowledges the importance of grandparents in times of stress, such as a separation, but makes clear that there will be no change to the current requirement for grandparents to seek permission to apply to the courts for parental rights. Despite some calls for a removal of this requirement, this decision reflects the recommendations of the review.

The new Family Justice Board is expected to deliver its first annual report in the summer of 2013.

To download the full response in English or Welsh, go to: www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/CM-8273

Nutbrown review on early years and childcare recommends working in partnership with parents

The Government has announced an independent review, led by Professor Cathy Nutbrown, to consider how best to strengthen qualifications and career pathways in the foundation years. The purpose of the review is to work towards building “a stronger foundation years experience for all children by creating a high qualified early learning workforce of skilled, knowledgeable professional practitioners who are child and

family centred as well as confident and ready to work with families”.

The Nutbrown review supports the recommendations set out in Dame Clare Tickell’s review of the Early Years Foundation Stage which highlighted the importance of having qualifications that are of a high standard and meet the needs of all learners. They need to have specialist knowledge of child development and learning theories, of working with parents, of understanding different needs of babies and children, of recognising the benefits of different approaches, of working with a range of professionals, and of responding to changing Government policies and developments in other sectors.

The importance of working and communicating with parents is highlighted throughout the report, and respondents to the initial consultation expressed the importance of working in partnership with parents to have the maximum impact, “Where early years practitioners share their knowledge with parents, parents are better positioned to support their children at home, thus enhancing their development and learning opportunities outside of the setting. We need to ensure that the early childhood workforce is equipped and confident to share knowledge and understanding with parents.”

To find out more about the review
www.education.gov.uk/nutbrownreview

Government to reward local authorities for improving children’s lives

Local authorities will be paid according to the prevalence of breastfeeding and the take up of free nursery care, under a new scheme being trialled by the Government.

Children and Families Minister Sarah Teather announced recently that trial local authorities will test a range of measures which aim to reinforce the role of Sure Start Children’s Centres in improving outcomes for all children, while focussing on reaching those who can most benefit from their services. The draft revised guidance sets out that local authorities must have sufficient children’s centres to meet the needs of young children and parents living in the area, particularly those in greatest need of support.

The purpose of payment by results is to reward progress against the main aim of Sure Start: to reduce inequalities in child development, school readiness, health and life chances, and to improve parenting aspiration and skills.

The measures announced for the payment by results trials are

- Increasing the school readiness of young children
- Improving health and child development by:
 - Increasing the prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks
- Improving parenting skills and support provided to families in need of children’s centre services by:

- Increasing the proportion of families in greatest need completing evidence based parenting programmes
- Increasing the proportion of families with children under 5 years who are identified as being “in greatest need” and have “sustained contact” with children’s centres in the local authority area.

Local authorities running the trials are also developing local measures to test payment by results arrangements with their children’s centres. The trials will be evaluated to inform a decision about potential national rollout and the most suitable measures for a national payment by results scheme.

Children’s Workforce Development Council closes

As CWDC closes its doors at the end of March, they have published a summary of the learning from seven years of supporting the children, young people and family’s workforce.

The documents focus on three key delivery areas in early years, residential care and integrated working, and draw together views from the across the sector, CWDC’s Board and members. They set out recommendations to help support the Department for Education and other agencies to take this work forward in the future.

CWDC closed on March 31 and its work has been transferred across the Department for Education and other agencies. Sir Paul Ennals, Chairman at CWDC, said: “These three papers demonstrate what progress has been made across some of the most challenged sections of our workforce. Since our formation in 2005 we have strengthened the children’s workforce through improved qualifications and skills, increased support for employers, and wider integrated working.

“We have been deeply proud of our partnership with employers and the workforce. Views from across these important stakeholders are very much reflected in these papers.

“We have worked hard to transform the early years workforce, we have supported local authorities to become much more effective in planning for their workforce and we have established new systems to allow voluntary and private sector employers to access workforce support.

“We know that professionals and volunteers benefit from working together in integrated teams and we are clear the sector will continue to give a strong focus to workforce development and integrated working in the future.

“Our motivation in CWDC has always been to do what is best for children, young people and families and I know that our sector has shared this vision.”

You can find these papers on our website www.parentinguk.org

Government invests £20m in support services for separated parents

An extra £20 million will be made available to support separated and separating families as part of the radical overhaul of the Child Maintenance system. The money, which doubles government spending on relationship support in 2012/13 is part of the radical reforms to mend the broken child support system.

It will help families work out their own arrangements, rather than trapping them in the current outdated system, which has been shown to be expensive and divisive and does not put children first.

A typical case in the CSA can cost the taxpayer around £25,000 rising to around £40,000 if enforcement action is needed. Many parents already share the care of their children and it is estimated that if those made their own arrangements for maintenance this could save the taxpayer £45m per year.

Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, said: “This is about helping to put children first in what is a difficult and traumatic time for all concerned. Most parents want to come to arrangements with a minimal disruption to their children and by offering them the right support we can help make this the case.

“We need to radically re-think the support we provide to separating parents to place family responsibility and the welfare of children at its heart. Our plans to reform the child maintenance system will enable parents to come to their own family-based arrangements which work far better for children.”



Parentchannel.tv DVDs now available

You can now order DVDs featuring a selection of Parentchannel.tv videos. There are three different DVDs available, one for each age category: 5-9 yrs; 9-14 yrs; and 14-19 yrs. They cost £8 each or you can buy all three for £20.

Please see www.parentinguk.org for details on how to order.

Social justice: transforming lives

The Department for Work and Pensions has just published its report on social justice and how this can help to transform the lives of Britain's families. The report sets out the various ways the Government is helping families to "ensure that families at risk and families who experience difficulties can get the help they need to stabilise and improve the quality of their relationships, and provide a stable environment for raising children".

As well as setting out how they are going to support people back to work, reduce reoffending, and stimulate both local and innovative delivery of support *Social justice: transforming lives* sets out how their concerns about the trends in family breakdown such as the increase in lone parent households. This report lists the many initiatives the current Government has put in place to support families.

Supporting couple relationships and separating couples

- £30 million pounds to support couple relationships – involving specialist providers to deliver relationship support activities such as marriage preparation classes and information for first-time parents
- £20 million over the next three years to help separated and separating parents to work together in the best interests of their child and making changes to the family justice and child maintenance systems to limit the damage and disruption which can prevent parents from putting the needs of their child first.

Most troubled families

- £448 million made available over the next three years to turn around the lives of families whose lives are blighted by crime, worklessness, drug and alcohol dependency, low aspirations and educational failure. The programme will focus on getting children back into school, supporting parents to get back on the road into work and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

Early intervention

The Department for Education Early Intervention Grant is worth more than £2.2 billion per year and can be used to fund early intervention and preventative services such as universal programmes and activities available to all children, young people and families, as well as specialist services where more intensive support is needed.

The Government will also be investing in an Early Intervention Foundation, the aims of which are to:

- providing advice and support to local commissioners on evidence, social finance and payment by results relating to early intervention to assist their own procurement and evaluation,
- building the evidence base on what works in early intervention in the UK.

Schools

The report also recognises the important role of schools in supporting young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds by helping schools support their poorest pupils

and keeping children engaged in mainstream education. The Government has introduced the Pupil Premium to make it easier for schools to address absenteeism and tackle bad behaviour: restore teachers' authority in the classroom; considering putting measures in place to incentivise schools to improve attendance and encourage parents to take responsibility for their children's poor attendance.

Exclusion can have a dramatic impact on children's life chances. In order to ensure that schools keep working with the most difficult children the Government are:

- trialling a radical new approach to the exclusions process in which schools will retain accountability for the pupils they exclude, commissioning appropriate provision for them and being responsible for their outcomes.
- revising guidance to schools on exclusion to reinforce the importance of intervening early to identify and address the underlying causes of disruptive behaviour.

Mental health services for young people

Government is committed to transforming NHS mental health services for children. In October 2011, they announced £32 million funding for the children and young people's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies project.

Children in care

Making improvements to the adoption, fostering and care systems that look after our most vulnerable children, to provide the best alternative structures when staying in the care of biological parents is not an option.

Gangs and youth offending

The report recognises that strong, stable families, and effective schools can provide an important buffer between vulnerable young people and the influence of violent street gangs and criminal activity.

The Government has committed £10 million in Home Office funding in 2012/13 to support up to 30 local areas to improve the way mainstream services work with the young people most at risk of violence. This is about recognising that gang activity is most clearly understood and best tackled at a local level.

At the same time they are establishing a new Ending Gang and Youth Violence Team, working with a virtual network of over 100 expert advisers to provide advice and support to local areas.

The Home Office is providing £5 million in 2012/13 to 91 local projects as part of the Positive Futures programme which aims to deliver prevention and diversionary activities for vulnerable young people. In this report the Government sets out that it is "determined to encourage, protect and support families of all shapes and sizes, and to champion their importance to individual communities and to society more widely."

It wants the outcomes to include an increase in the number of families staying together, and conversely a reduction in divorce and separation rates, especially where children are involved; a reduction in conflict and an end to domestic violence, both within families and when families separate; fewer families experiencing multiple problems.

New 4Children research finds 60% of families report serious conflict in the home

4Children's survey of more than 1,000 parents with children aged under 18 found that 60 per cent of respondents had experienced serious or frequent conflict. Family violence often just refers to violence between partners, commonly called domestic violence. However 4Children's research shows that conflict and violence can encompass the whole family – where children and parents can be both victims and perpetrators.

The report highlights that although the impact of domestic violence is widely recognised by public authorities and charities, the awareness of family violence – including child on parent abuse, sibling abuse and in the wider extended family – remains low.

The Enemy Within stresses that violence within the family threatens lives, breaks up families and has severe ongoing psychological and physical effects on hundreds of thousands of parents and children every year.

The report looks at the measures in place in Local Authorities and found that even where excellent family violence support services exist, parents often do not know how to access it.

4Children says that it is clear that a new approach is necessary which focusses on prevention and early intervention and covering the breadth of family violence. Children who are exposed to violence and maltreatment at an early age are more likely to become perpetrators of crime, including domestic violence, in the future.

The report calls for certain changes to be made to deal with the issue of family conflict including:

- Local authorities, police forces, health professionals and children's centres must embrace a definition of violence that specifically refers to violence committed by family members – and ensure that that definition influences the delivery of all their domestic violence services.
- A whole-family approach to dealing with family violence must be embraced to ensure that people are given the relationship and parenting skills that they need to deal effectively with family conflict and recognise the signs of an abusive relationship, and respond appropriately.
- Sufficient funding should be made available to services which deal with the sharp end of family violence, such as refuges, shelters, and violence prevention programmes.
- Family violence provision must be mainstreamed into current government policy, to ensure that those who really need help get access to it, early and often.

4Children recommends that both local and national Government, charities and statutory professionals must provide specific early intervention support including bespoke programmes addressing adult or adolescent violence, programmes designed to develop relationship and parenting skills, to enable parents to resolve conflicts with each other and with their children and awareness raising programmes, and to equip young people and adults to recognise unhealthy and abusive relationships, and identify the route to improve or leave them.

The report also calls for local authorities' new health and wellbeing boards to ensure that families receive joined up support and that a "whole family approach" is adopted towards family violence from contact with the police to support from family workers.

4Children's Recommendations

Widen the definition:

Definitions of domestic violence should be expanded in all statutory services to fully encapsulate family violence. The definition should stretch beyond intimate partners to include parent-on-child violence, adolescent-on-parent violence, extended family violence and domestic violence carried out by perpetrators under the age of 18.

Make family violence a high priority locally and nationally:

Make family violence a key interdepartmental priority for national government and for local authorities' new health and wellbeing boards, to ensure that families receive the joined up support they need.

Introduce a 'whole family approach' to responding to family violence:

From contact with the police to support from family workers, to ensure that the whole family is strengthened and has the support they need to overcome their problems.

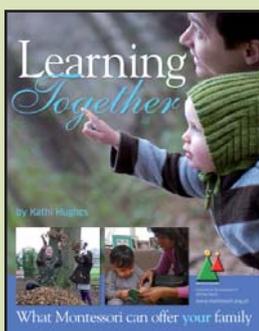
Raise awareness among professionals about the extent of family violence:

To ensure that victims of family violence can receive the support they need at the earliest opportunity, and that opportunities for intervention are not missed.

Recognise the impact of family violence in national initiatives to strengthen families and turn around crisis:

Make family violence a national or local measurement in the payment by results criteria for turning around 120,000 troubled families.

To read the full report visit www.4children.org.uk



Learning Together: What Montessori can offer your family

By Kathi Hughes

Montessori St Nicholas, the UK's Montessori charity, is delighted to announce the publication of its first parenting book.

The book takes a fresh look at family life to help parents put the child at the heart of the home and unlock their amazing potential. Packed with

ideas and advice, it is relevant to parents of young children from birth upwards.

Better parenting starts from birth and is central to the life chances of every child. The book starts out exploring the first year of a baby's life as a time of extraordinary growth and development. It stresses the key roles played by attachment, movement and communication.

The book explains what the Montessori philosophy of "follow the child" means and discusses key elements of the approach which embraces child-led, natural and favourable learning environments.

There are lovely personal insights from parents on how to promote a child's independence through the daily routines of everyday family life: from getting dressed, personal hygiene, eating, and packing a bag to ideas on how to adapt a living space around the needs of the child.

The book includes personal voices of parents from a range of different perspectives talking about parenting and encouraging a child's independence. Author, Kathi Hughes attended Montessori schools in the US building a foundation that has stuck with her throughout her life. She trained as a Montessori teacher at Montessori Centre International. www.montessori.org.uk

Published: Montessori St Nicholas Charity

Think child, think parent, think family: final evaluation report

By Social Care Institute for Excellence

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) has published the final evaluation report on its guide to parental mental health and child welfare. The mental health and wellbeing of children and adults in families where a parent has a mental health problem are closely linked. Not all families need health and social care services. However, those that do often struggle to get accessible and effective support that addresses children's needs and recognises the parental responsibilities of many adults with mental health problems.

In July 2009, the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) published a guide entitled *Think child, think parent, think family: a guide to parental mental health and child welfare* to help services improve their response to parents with mental health problems and their families. This document and its overall ethos are here referred to as 'think family'. This is the final evaluation report of the project, documenting the progress made by the sites involved, and making recommendations for future activity.

www.scie.org.uk/publications/reports/report56.asp

Published: Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2012

High Need Families Project: Development and piloting a new parenting intervention (The Helping Families Programme) for children with severe and persistent conduct problems - Final report

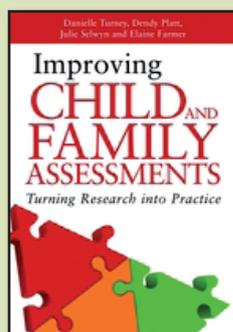
The High Need Families Project was one of a suite of projects funded by the Department for Education until March 2011.

Using a conceptual map and existing interventions, the Helping Families Programme was developed. The programme is targeted specifically at the small but significant number of families with multiple problems, where chaotic parenting is likely to give rise to disruptive anti-social behaviour.

The Helping Families Programme aims to improve the outcomes of children who live in some of the most complex and disadvantaged families in the UK. Children and families with such difficulties offer significant challenges to service providers and are the least likely to benefit from existing parenting programmes. Multi-stressed, high need families are particularly difficult to engage, retain and treat.

This report provides an overview of the phases of the High Need Families Project, drawing together the lessons learned and describing dissemination of the Helping Families Programme to date.

Published: Department for Education, 2012



Improving Child and Family Assessments: Turning Research into Practice

By Danielle Turney, Dendy Platt, Julie Selwyn and Elaine Farmer

This book brings together findings from 10 years of UK research that shed light on different aspects of child and family assessment, and examines the evidence for what works in promoting the best outcomes for

children. It covers thresholds for assessment and intervention, what information should be collected in assessments, and assessments in different contexts. It also examines key aspects of practice and the factors that can help or hinder good quality assessment. These areas include analysis, critical thinking and reflection; engaging with children and families; and inter-professional working. Structural, procedural and organisational factors are also considered.

Published: Jessica Kingsley, 2012

Training Together

www.trainingtogether.org

ESCAPE and Parallel Lines

We are pleased to announce that the evidence based parenting skills programme 'ESCAPE & Parallel Lines' will continue to be available through Training Together following the closure of Young People in Focus. ESCAPE is an evidence-based parenting programme which offers a flexible framework for working with parents and young people, and it has been widely used with parents in the youth justice system and elsewhere. This programme promotes a problem-solving approach in helping parents establish a positive relationship with their teenagers.

15 May, London (3 days), £475

To book a place email
chris_kent@btinternet.com

The Parent Practice

www.theparentpractice.com

Training for trainers - positive parenting

The TTP is an intensive 5-session training programme for people who want to further their own parenting skills and/or are interested in adding these skills to their existing professional repertoire. No previous experience of The Parent Practice's work is required to take this training although anyone who has already taken one of the courses will get an opportunity to deepen their understanding and skills. This is a certified course satisfactory completion of which will be by attendance, short written assignments and a practical presentation.

17 May, (5 days across consecutive Thursdays), £500

Contact: melissa@theparentpractice.com

Children in Scotland

www.childreninScotland.org.uk

Joined-up Thinking: supporting brain development in the early years

A one-day training seminar facilitated by Dr Suzanne Zeedyk, Honorary Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology, University of Dundee

This session will explore what we now know about children's brain development, focusing in particular on the impact of social interactions. We will look at how experiences of abuse and neglect, as compared to predictability and calm, can have long-term consequences for the lives of children and adults. We will think in depth about what can be done, in families and daycare settings to help create resilience and emotional stability
Contact: [Antonia Clark](mailto:Antonia.Clark@brazeltoncentre.co.uk)
0131 222 2446

Brazelton Centre

www.brazeltoncentre.co.uk

Neonatal Behavioural Assessment Scale (NBAS) and Newborn Behavioural Observations (NBO)

The Brazelton Centre is a charity whose primary goals are to promote an understanding of infant development through fostering strong infant-parent relationships by focusing attention on the infant's behavioural abilities, and the important role their babies play in cementing healthy infant-parent relationships.

The NBAS scale is used for infant assessment and research, and as an intervention with parents. It provides detailed information about the individual infant's self-regulatory abilities and how the infant manages crying, sleep, alert states, and feeding.

The NBO is a relationship-building tool between practitioner and parent, that supports the developing parent-infant relationship, and provides an introduction to their infant's behaviour.

Both the NBAS and NBO have proved to be valuable ways of sensitising both parents and practitioners to the extraordinary behavioural capabilities of the infant. They show the individuality of the newborn and the infant's powerful impact on the establishment of the infant-parent relationship.

Those who have completed the NBAS training can take the NBO training for a reduced fee.

£650 (reduced fees apply)

Contact: info@brazelton.co.uk

Race Equality Foundation

www.raceequalityfoundation.org.uk

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities

The Race Equality Foundation offers training to facilitate the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities (SFSC) parenting programme, as well as development training for SFSC Facilitators. The programme aims to raise the consciousness of parents and help families develop or promote strong ethnic and cultural roots, including: positive parent-child relationships; a range of life skills; self-esteem; self-discipline and social competence, and an ability to access community resources.

Course length: 5 days

Cost: £975

Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust

www.tavistockandportman.ac.uk/InfantMentalHealth

Early Years Development, Infant Mental Health (Diploma/MA)

This course aims to enhance participants' observational skills and understanding of infant's and young children's emotional development based on a psychodynamic framework. To be eligible for the course you should be working in a professional context with infants and pre-school age children and their families, enabling you to bring appropriate case material to seminars and work discussion groups. It is open to non-graduates with professional qualifications and experience in related fields. The programme runs over two to three years, a combination of day and evening seminars is possible. The training is available in London and Bristol.

Course length: 2-3 years

Contact: olcadmin@tavi-port.org

Entries are provided by individuals/ organisations offering the training. Inclusion here does not imply endorsement by Parenting UK.

The Oak Foundation

Grants are available to not-for-profit organisations for projects that address issues of global, social and environmental concern, particularly those that have a major impact on the lives of the disadvantaged.

www.oakfnd.org/node/4006

Community Builders

Community Builders aims to make sustainable investments in community enterprises to build their long term financial viability and increase their ability to deliver significant social impact in their communities.

Feasibility grants of a total of half a million will be available for organisations looking to research and develop a sustainable and entrepreneurial idea that meets social needs of their local community.

They are looking to award between 20 and 30 grants and up to 5 days business support to high quality applicants with a proven track record. Organisations can apply for a maximum of £25,000 and minimum of £10,000 in this round of the Fund. www.communitybuildersfund.org.uk/apply/

Mothercare Group Foundation Grant

The Mothercare Group Foundation Grant is intended to support registered charities undertaking projects in the following areas:

- Ensuring the good health and well-being of expecting mothers, new mothers and their children.
- Special needs of babies and premature babies.
- Parenting initiatives for family well-being.

For further information on how to obtain this funding opportunity locally, and to ask for application form, please contact Mothercare PLC, Cherry Tree Road, Watford, WD24 6SH.

Sainsburys Family Charitable Trust

The Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts is the operating office of 18 grant-making trusts established by three generations of the Sainsbury family. The trusts' donations to charitable causes over several decades represent one of the leading examples of sustained philanthropy in Britain. The trusts only fund registered charities or activities with clearly defined charitable purposes.

www.sfct.org.uk

Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

Children, young people and families is one of five areas supported by this local foundation. It 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.

www.cambscf.org.uk/core-grant-programmes.html

Children's Foundation Regional Small Grants

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. www.thechildrensfoundation.co.uk/2011/06/07/regional-small-grants/

Where to find funding

You can find further information about funding on the Parenting UK website. The following provide general guidance and information on funding:

Association of Charitable Foundations – www.acf.org.uk

Charities Aid Foundation – www.cafonline.org

Charities Information Bureau – www.fit4funding.org.uk

Directory of Social Change – www.dsc.org.uk

Funderfinder – www.funderfinder.org.uk

April

After Adoption's Annual National Conference: Making the connections – attachment, adoption and children

After Adoption
24 April, Cardiff

The After Adoption 2012 conference will focus on the issue of attachment in adoption, looking at research that informs practical parenting and attachment theory. The conference will be of interest to those working in the fields of adoption, fostering, childcare, youth work, mental health, CAMHS, play therapists, academics and psychologists.

www.childreninwales.org.uk

Building sustainable family futures: preventing crisis

4Children
25 April, Westminster

The conference will address the challenges facing children and families in the current economic climate and look at how the children and families services sector is evolving to ensure the best outcomes for children and families. It will also look at how the sector can work with children and families across the spectrum to ensure support at all stages of development.

www.4children.org.uk

May

Light on parenting: From conception to the early years

Institute of Child Health
5 May, London

The conference is a call to parents and those who are passionate about their work with parents, infants, and around pregnancy and birth to get together and affirm the benefits of support – rather than advice or information – for confident early parenting. This conference uniquely embraces the whole spectrum of early parenting – from conception through birth to the early childhood years

www.lightonparenting.com

Thriving for life: combating neglect through childhood and beyond

Children in Scotland
8 May, Glasgow

This seminar will look at the impact of neglect at all stages of a child's life, allowing delegates to share experiences and good practice, and to discuss the way forward with experts from across the sector.

www.childreninScotland.org.uk

Early intervention and the couple – the foundation of family wellbeing

Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships
11 May, London

Speakers include:

- Professor Carolyn Pape Cowan Adjunct Professor Emerita, University of California, Berkeley
- Professor Philip Cowan Professor Emeritus, University of California, Berkeley
- Graham Allen MP, author of 'Early Intervention: The Next Steps' and the recent 'Early Intervention: Smart Investment, Massive Savings'.
- Susanna Abse CEO, Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships
- Krisztina Glausius, Dr Damian McCann and Viveka Nyberg: Early Intervention for Couples Team, Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships
- Dr Christopher Clulow Senior Fellow, Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships

www.tccr.ac.uk

Two is too late: a conference on the impact of early attachment

Northamptonshire Parent Infant Project
18 May, Whittlebury

This seminar will look at the impact of neglect at all stages of a child's life, allowing delegates to share experiences and good practice, and to discuss the way forward with experts from across the sector.

www.eventelephant.com/norpipconference2012/

June

ICCFR 59th annual conference

Inside Government
15 June, Boston USA

The coalition government has set out its ambition to try to turn around the lives of every troubled family in the country, and create a better future for their children. There are around 120,000 families in England who have complex social, health and economic problems.

www.iccfr.org

We welcome your comments on and contributions to our News Bulletin. Please address any correspondence to rtonkin@parentinguk.org

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