

# Positive parenting

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## Welcome back...

The second edition of 'Positive parenting', the regular newsletter from Sunderland City Council's Family and Parenting Team is here.

In this edition you can find out about a new project for dads, learn about the support for parents whose children are making the transition from primary into secondary school and advice for families who may benefit from a little extra support.



Remember, if you miss any editions of the 'Positive parenting' newsletter, you can download them by logging on to [www.familiesinfoservice.com](http://www.familiesinfoservice.com) and clicking on to the Parenting section.

## New website offers ADHD support...

A support group set up by a Sunderland mum, who struggled to find help following her son's diagnosis with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), is steadily expanding and has launched its first-ever website.

The Sunderland ADHD Support Group is run voluntarily by parents and carers of ADHD children. The group launched the website to offer extra support to other parents facing similar situations and to widen the group's reach across the city.

The site offers support and advice on ADHD including symptoms, diagnosis and tips on how best to care for a child living with the condition.

The group aims to empower and provide understanding and information about ADHD and related disorders to families and raises awareness amongst public bodies and organisations.

Linda New from the Sunderland ADHD Support Group said: "Dealing with children who have complex learning patterns or challenging behaviour can stretch any parent to their limits. Seeking appropriate advice can help to prepare you and your family for the journey ahead.

"The website helps parents to easily access information while the meetings allow parents to support each other and provide the opportunity to speak to experts working in the field."

For more information visit the group's new website at [www.sunderlandadhdsupportgroup.co.uk](http://www.sunderlandadhdsupportgroup.co.uk) or call 0191 555 0109



# Calling all family men...



Parenting support for Sunderland's male parents and carers is set to receive a boost thanks to a new partnership between the Family and Parenting Team and Children North East.

The two organisations have teamed up to provide special activities specifically for males responsible for a child or young person aged from birth to 19 years. As part of the project Children North East will deliver a range of free individual and group activities which will be held in community venues across the city.

Some activities will be exclusively for adults, no matter if they are a dad, granddad, uncle, stepdad or foster father. Other sessions will bring together the family men and their children to help them enjoy spending time with one another.

Laura Johnstone, Parenting Strategy Officer at Sunderland Family and Parenting Team, said: "Our 2008 statistics showed only eight per cent of the



adults accessing a Parenting Programme were male. However, every month men were coming forward asking us for help. This project is designed to be attractive to all male parents or carers regardless of where they live in the city and whether they care for a baby, toddler, child or young person."

The project follows a number of requests from male residents, many of whom do not live with their children, to support them with their parenting skills. As a result divorced and separated fathers who are not a resident in the family home will be particularly welcome.

Research shows that children who do not have a positive relationship with parents living away from the family home are more likely to offend,



To get involved contact Children North East Fathers Plus on 0191 500 6205 or email [mydadmatters@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:mydadmatters@sunderland.gov.uk)

experience poorer outcomes, become involved in anti-social behaviour, have mental health problems in adulthood and are at a greater risk of teenage pregnancy.

Similar programmes have already run successfully across the region. A Durham child said: "I liked it when daddy wrapped me up in the (Egyptian) bandages, it was really cool and I really enjoyed it."

A granddad, whose grandchild attends a Hartlepool primary school, said: "This was a great exercise to bring us into school for the children and I hope it happens again."

The Family and Parenting Team and Children North East project will complement existing services that are available specifically for male carers, including Sunderland Children's Centres' Dads and Kids Clubs.



## Successful pilot strengthens families and communities...

The Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities programme will be launched across the city this term after a positive pilot in Houghton.

The 13-week programme is open to parents of young people aged over 12 years. It is designed to increase parental self-esteem, improve family relationships and reduce child behavioural problems.

The programme will be delivered at times to suit the needs of families in community venues and will complement the Family Nurturing programme which is aimed at parents with younger children.

Laura Johnstone, Parenting Strategy Officer at Sunderland Family and Parenting Team, said: "The Family Nurturing programme has been available to

parents in need of a little extra help to support their children for a number of years now however, it is best suited for parents of children aged from birth to 12 years.

"As children grow and change so does the level of support which parents need. We are delighted to launch Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities throughout Sunderland, which will provide suitable and relevant advice to help parents care for their teenage children."

Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities has been highly recommended by parents living in other areas of the country who enjoyed the programme's 'community' aspect.

Find out more by contacting the Family and Parenting Team on 0191 443 2908 or email [FamilyParentingTeam@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:FamilyParentingTeam@sunderland.gov.uk)

## New coffee morning gets parents together...

Red House Academy parents are now benefiting from a new school coffee morning whilst interest in existing parents' groups at the academy has also dramatically increased.

The well-attended coffee morning is held at the academy every Tuesday with parents meeting to socialise and discuss activities being run at the school, from driving taster sessions to dance classes. Members of the group are also becoming actively involved in arranging events and parties for the children.

The academy is currently working with the group's mums and dads to establish a forum so parents can work with the school to ensure the best outcomes for their children. Some of the parents have become so involved they are now applying for CRB clearance to allow them to volunteer at the school as well.



The successful launch of the coffee morning was due to the enormous interest shown during a series of events held at the school during National Parents' Week in October.

The academy secured funding from the Family and Parenting Team to run a series of events named 'Time for Me'. The special sessions, including Quick Cooking, Computers for Beginners and Hair and Beauty and Holistic Therapies were designed to give parents a moment to themselves so they could relax and experience something different.

For more information on parent groups at Red House Academy contact Loraine Humble on 0191 561 5511 or email [Humble.L@ Sunderlandlearning.net](mailto:Humble.L@ Sunderlandlearning.net)

## Parents see action after event...

A popular new young parent and toddler morning has been launched at Pallion Action Group.

The group runs every Monday from 10am and allows parents to come together to socialise and discuss raising a family in the area. The group runs with full parental involvement and is organised with the help of volunteers.

After some of the mums and dads expressed an interest in improving their key skills, many signed up to a parenting programme and have enjoyed creative arts, music sessions and basic learning workshops.

Karen Wood, Volunteer Coordinator at Pallion Action Group, said: "The group has been so well-received. Members are now working to secure



their own funding to ensure the sessions can run self-reliantly.

"The group came about thanks to the support we received from the Family and Parenting Team during National Parents' Week.

"We arranged a session to discuss what could be done to bring parents together and improve areas such as employment and family matters. We're thrilled the one-off event has developed into a regular forum to support parents in Pallion."

For more information on parent groups and volunteering opportunities at Pallion Action Group call 0191 541 2011

## Moving forward with the Transition Programme...



Parents and carers of children making the move from primary to secondary school can now get extra support thanks to the Transition Programme.

Moving between schools is often a difficult time for many youngsters so this eight-week programme aims to make the change of routine less stressful for families.

The Transition

Programme addresses lots of general issues, like identifying parents' responsibilities in school matters, and also offers parents the chance to talk about more specific issues they may be worried about, for example how to deal with girls beginning to wear makeup.

Norma Welch, the full-time carer of her three grandchildren, attended the programme. She said: "The Transition Programme was absolutely wonderful. So many things have changed since I was at school and the programme opened my eyes to what children go through today.

"It really supported me through the changes that come about during a school move and helped me to cope with Rebecca becoming an adult."

The programme runs in secondary schools and community venues and is led by each school's transition mentor. The mentors work with parents to choose the results they want to achieve from the course.

For more information contact the Family and Parenting Team on 0191 443 2908 or email [FamilyParentingTeam@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:FamilyParentingTeam@sunderland.gov.uk)

## Early bird offers early support for parents...

Parents of children affected by autism can often find it difficult to manage the symptoms of the condition alone.

The Early Bird Parenting Programme supports these parents and helps them to come to terms with their child's autism.

Jacqueline Walls' son Dominic (below) is affected by autism and said of his diagnosis: "I was relieved when, at two-and-a-half years, Dominic was diagnosed with autism as it finally provided a reason for his behaviour and meant I could begin to take steps to deal with it."

She was referred to the eight-week programme by the Autism Outreach Team and joined the sessions with her father Tom.

The programme helped them to work as a family to learn more about what could be done to further understand and help Dominic.

Tom added: "As Dominic's granddad I want to be as big a part of his life as possible. The Early Bird Programme helped to give me perspective on his condition and showed me how to better support him, which is our main priority. Our relationship is even stronger now and the great work that the team did with us is a massive part of that."

The programme works with parents to develop an understanding of autism, communication and behaviours.



To learn more about the Early Bird Parenting Programme contact the Autism Outreach Team on 0191 219 3863

## Extra support for families...



Sometimes families need a little extra help beyond the support offered by traditional parenting services. Sunderland Family and Parenting Team offers a number of programmes to ensure every family gets the right support for them.

Targeted support provides more in-depth or longer-term support from services such as Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, the Child and Family Service or Barnardo's Sungate Family Project. Here we explore three free targeted programmes.

## Triple P...

Triple P offers guidance for parents with children aged from three to 10 years and supports parents' existing skills to promote positive behaviour and emotional adjustment in children.

One-to-one support is also available to parents who do not feel ready to complete a group parenting programme.

The eight-week programme is delivered termly across the city in Children's Centres and schools. It works to cover a range of issues that parents regularly face from bedwetting and truancy to smoking and anxiety.



**Homework and friendships are often key causes of children's distress. The Family and Parenting Team has devised its top Triple P tips to help you deal with the challenges these issues create.**

1. Always take an interest in your child's friends
2. Try and meet the parents of your child's friends
3. Allow your child to relax after school
4. Set a regular time and place for doing homework
5. Show you are interested in your child's work
6. Provide plenty of praise during homework time
7. Encourage your child to work out homework problems for themselves
8. Offer clear guidance to identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
9. Don't just say no, take time to explain your decisions
10. Regularly talk to your child to find out how they are feeling and if anything is bothering them

## The Incredible Years...



'Play, praise and rewards' are at the heart of the 12-week parenting programme, The Incredible Years.

Sunderland parents and carers are able to access two variations of the programme – the first is for parents with children aged up to five years while the second is for parents of children aged from five years to 12.

It pays particular focus to children at risk of developing disruptive behaviour disorders.

By aiming to improve relationships between parent and child, The Incredible Years can help parents cope with the pressures of bringing up children by encouraging positive behaviours while decreasing negative behaviours and supporting the child's education.

The relaxed sessions see parents discuss play, praise, rewards and handling misbehaviour. The programme lets parents share ideas as well as offering a chance to practice new techniques. Parents are also advised to complete home activities and given refrigerator notes as useful reminders of the topics discussed.

Sam\*, parent of Mark, seven, said: "The thing I liked most about The Incredible Years was that everyone in the group was supportive and understanding, it made me feel like I wasn't alone."

After completing the programme parents are offered the opportunity to attend a catch up booster session, which is designed so that they can access additional advice and support with any recurring problems they may be facing.

\*Names have been changed.

For more information on The Incredible Years contact the Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service on 0191 514 1622

## Strengthening Families...

Young people and their parents are being invited to take part in a special programme designed to make families stronger.

Strengthening Families, a seven-week programme can help youngsters say 'no' to peer pressure and encourage them to avoid alcohol and drugs. It can also help parents of children aged from 10 years to 14 set appropriate boundaries, improve family relationships while boosting self-esteem.

The programme is available in selected schools and uses videos, role-play, discussions, games and family projects to engage young people.

Strengthening Families is delivered in the city by the Family and Parenting Team, Impact, Wear Kids and the Youth Drug and Alcohol Project.



## Choice advice for school applications...



Applying for a school place is one of the most important and stressful decisions that you make for your child. For some parents having someone to support them throughout the process can be useful. This is where the Families Information Service's Choice Adviser can help. The scheme helps ensure you have all the details you need to make the right choice.

This could involve help with applications including explaining how the admissions process works, support to complete forms, help to find out which schools may be best suited to your child and providing information about schools.

If your child does not receive a place at your preferred school a Choice Adviser will explain the options open to you and provide guidance to help you appeal.

The information offered is impartial and confidential. Advisers offer information to help you make a decision, however they cannot make a decision for you, or recommend or guarantee a school place.

To contact a Choice Adviser call 0191 520 5505 or email [fis@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:fis@sunderland.gov.uk)

### Contact Us

To find out what's on offer for families in Sunderland contact the Families Information Service on 0191 520 5505 or email [fis@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:fis@sunderland.gov.uk) or log onto [www.familiesinfoservice.com](http://www.familiesinfoservice.com). Alternatively contact the Family and Parenting Team on 0191 443 2908 or email [FamilyParentingTeam@sunderland.gov.uk](mailto:FamilyParentingTeam@sunderland.gov.uk)

## Helping families get online at home...

The Home Access Grant can help families on low incomes gain access to a computer and the Internet in their own home.

Depending on individual needs the grant will allow families to buy either a full package (including a computer, a year's Internet access, service and support), a computer with service and support only or one year's Internet access only. There are extra packages available for children with additional needs from adaptive mice to software.



If you are a low-income family and receive certain benefits you may qualify for the grant. To find out if your family is eligible contact your child's school or the Families Information Service on 0191 520 5505

## Your chance to win...

Why not enter our new competition to win one of 10 gift vouchers for Rosebud Ceramics worth £10. Simply answer the following question at [www.familiesinfoservice.com/familyandparenting](http://www.familiesinfoservice.com/familyandparenting)

How long does the Strengthening Families, Strengthening Communities programme last?

- a) 13 days
- b) 13 weeks
- c) 13 months