



Sure Start

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Sure Start Website www.wlcsurestart.org.uk

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GETTING IT RIGHT FROM THE START

The 6th annual early years conference, entitled "Getting It Right From The Start" took place in Strathbrock Partnership Centre on Wednesday 8th November and was attended by 130 staff who represented all areas of early years work.

Speakers included Boyd McAdam from the Scottish Executive who heads the Getting It Right For Every Child team, and Professor Norma Baldwin from Dundee University who spoke on integrated assessment. There were also presentations from a range of other local providers, including Gillian Wilson, the team leader for the new perinatal mental health unit at St. Johns; Lynne Binnie who spoke about nurture groups; Jean

Lugton, health visitor, who spoke about a pilot intervention with new mums, and the Hearth Project who work with families affected by drug abuse. The Youth Justice manager, Bobbie Miller, gave an insight into the work of her team, stressing exactly why we should do as much to intervene early in the lives of vulnerable children to prevent later difficulties.

Workshops on

Promoting Attachment
Through Baby
Massage,
Child Development
Through Play, and
Teenage Parents

were delivered by Sure Start workers, and a Family Centre Experience workshop was delivered by Whitdale Family Centre staff

One of the highlights of the event, however, was the presentation by Peter Johnstone, Sure Start, whose

session "Keeping The Beat" gave us an idea of how traditional nursery rhymes could be brought up to date and made more relevant to today's young dads through using modern music styles such as rap and hip hop. The participation of one of our young dads who treated us to a wonderful display of break dancing along with Pat-a-Cake, Pat-a-Cake Baker's Man as you have never before heard it, was truly inspirational.

Sure Start Information Sessions

- ☺ Wednesday
31st January 2007
- ☺ Friday,
30th March 2007
- ☺ Wednesday
30th May 2007

These sessions are held in the Sure Start Office, Unit G, Kirkton Business Centre, Livingston Village

Sessions start at 9am and last 1 hour approx.

For information on our current groups please check out
our website at www.wlcsurestart.org.uk

The question has been put on several occasions, "How does Sure Start get money for groups when other agencies don't"?

Well, the answer is, **"We don't"**. Sure Start run groups in other Council premises which mean that there is no cost for accommodation. As groupwork was seen as a big part of what we do it was agreed that one designated post would not be filled, and this money would be used to fund our crèche worker bank. Sure Start staff have run their own crèche worker training for several years, and we have steadily built up a bank of highly capable and committed workers who support our groups. However, for some this is a pathway, supported by our career advisers, to returning to work or developing a new career. Consequently we have a big turnover and are regrettably not able to meet the needs of other organisations.

The good news, however, is that work is in hand, led by the Communities Team, to set up a crèche worker bank from which all agencies will eventually be able to buy the services of crèche workers.

"MUMZ R UZ" GRAND CHALLENGE

MUMS DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES

The Grand Challenge was held on 7th December at Whitburn Community Centre. Great fun was had by all. But what was the challenge all about? And why was it held?

Sure Start runs groups for parents so they can help each other feel better in themselves and find ways of helping their children's behaviour and development. All this is hard work but worth it.

On finishing the "Getting through the Day" parenting course, the parents in Whitburn asked if they could continue to meet, because they wanted to make sure all they had learned could carry on being put into practice.

They also wanted to be able to get more support for themselves. Sure Start encouraged the parents to think about their own needs. For instance, in what they might want to do for themselves, like going to College, or finding a job.

The parents also wanted to get fitter, and started to do some exercises, and think more about their diet. Then they asked if they could challenge other groups of parents. And so the Grand Challenge was planned.

Six teams of parents competed from all over West Lothian. Part of the competition was about teamwork-like the spider-web. Teams had to get through, the dry-ski-ing, the pipe-run, the Channel Tunnel. Then there were games - basketball, etc, and finally team races.

This sort of thing gives mums a chance to do something which is fun, where they can meet other mums, and forget for a moment, some of their worries. Meanwhile the children were looked after in a Sure Start crèche.

Here are some of the things parents said about the day and about being in the Mumz R Uz group. "The open day brought all the mums together to have fun and show there are more people the same as me".

"The Mumz R Uz group has helped me so much on dealing with my son and helping my self confidence. It really helps to be listened to".

Sure Start were very grateful for the work put in by the Communities Team, and Whitburn Community Centre, staff from other services, and especially to all the mums. And thanks to Provost Joe Thomas, who kindly presented awards to all the mums.

