



West Lothian
Council

Welcome to the Third SureStart Newsletter

Website

One of our most significant developments since the last newsletter has been the creation of our own website, for which we are very grateful to Management Information Services, who have also assisted us in the production of a range of information leaflets. The website explains a bit about Sure Start, gives information on many of the activities that we run throughout West Lothian and contains previous newsletters. In addition, the local information booklets for under 5s which we produced last year on every area of West Lothian are reproduced on the website and this will enable us to keep the information as up to date as possible. If you don't have access to the internet and want local information, contact us and we will send you a copy. Any comments or suggestions for developing the website will be welcomed.

Web address: www.wlcsurestart.org.uk

EARLY YEARS EXHIBITION AND SEMINAR

In November, we organised a seminar and exhibition of early years services at Howden Park Centre in order to bring together those who are involved in providing services to young families. Fifteen agencies contributed

to the exhibition and the topics addressed in the seminar included engaging with men, mental health, the work of the social inclusion partnership and patterns of learning in young children. Professor Norma Baldwin from Dundee University opened the day with a talk on the importance of early intervention to support families. We intend organising a similar event later this year and would welcome any suggestions or ideas for the seminar.

LOCALITY GROUPS

Currently we are running groups in: Addiewell, Armadale, Bathgate, Boghall, Bridgend, Craigshill, Dedridge, Deans, Howden, Ladywell, Fauldhouse, Polbeth, West Calder, Winchburgh and Whitburn . A group is now running in the Child Development Centre, which provides activities for children with special needs and their parents as well as parents and children from the local area.

Activities include baby massage and baby groups, creative crafts, music and movement, and parent and toddlers, as well as a range of groups for parents (with creche). More recently we have widened the range of activities on offer to include the following.

- Singing for parents and toddlers (Venturous Voices) is delivered in partnership with the National Youth Choir of Scotland and aim to enhance children's cognitive development as well as promoting and developing parent/child interaction.
- Nutrition (Cooking with Tots) similarly develops parent/child interaction and provides important information on nutrition in a fun way. A scheme to enable parents to prepare their own baby food is a joint venture with Fiona Bayne, Food and Nutrition Project, and Scotmid, who are generously providing all the food for our various nutrition groups as well as a free hand blender for parents who complete the course.

Sure Start staff running the locality groups also provide individual support to parents attending the groups where requested. In addition, there is a range of support on offer for individuals or groups of parents, which offer parents opportunities to improve their knowledge of child development and enable them to be more confident parents, to develop their own confidence and self-esteem and to consider their own emotional, developmental and practical needs. For example, a group for parents of children who are accommodated by the authority was recently facilitated by Sure Start and Barnardos FASS. This was evaluated positively by those who attended. We are also considering ways in which we can offer, with other agencies, a more comprehensive service to very young girls who become pregnant, particularly those still in school.

CAREERS ADVICE

Sure Start careers advisers are available to help parents explore ways in which they can return to education or employment and to consider the options and choices which are available to them. Ten parents in Addiewell recently completed a creche worker training course, run by Sure Start, community education and Barnardos, which provided useful child care advice as well as enabling some of them to take the first step on a career path. A second creche worker training course is being delivered in Bridgend by Sure Start early years worker and careers adviser, who will then be on hand to assist those parents who want to develop childcare as a career.

NEW INITIATIVES

Dads' Phonenumber – the provision of advice to dads on aspects of parenting

Help Rather Than Punishment – with the introduction of a bill to make it illegal to smack children under 3, what alternative strategies can parents employ? We shall be piloting input to parents on this topic

If you would like to know more about our work, or have any ideas for future developments, please contact any one of the team on 01506-775836, or you can e-mail staff individually or on: surestart@westlothian.gov.uk

DON'T FORGET THE WEBSITE
www.wlcsurestart.org.uk