



newsletter

Harpenden Children's Centres – Spring 2011

A Sure Start Children's Centre

I can hardly believe it is a year ago since I last shared my joy about the glorious season that is spring; how time flies!

At home feeding the birds is year-round activity and spring is wonderful because our feathered friends bring their youngsters to feed in the garden. Whilst watching our resident family of blackbirds visiting for their regular feast of mealworms it reminded me of how circumstances outside our control can impact on the well-being of our families. The ground is rock hard and worms are staying deep, well out of the reach of the hungry birds, and I wondered how this blackbird family would fare without our mealworm supplements. The next thought that struck me was that our fast food outlet was short term solution but might be creating a culture of dependency. How were these baby birds going to learn how to search for earthworms, how would they survive out in the big wide world? My solution to this was turn on the garden sprinkler. Oh joy, now we now have mum, dad and three baby blackbirds happily searching for and dining on big fat earthworms (still supplemented by mealworms).

This is a nice (true) story about spring, but the point is we all need a little help sometimes, that's life and that is why we are here for you. Where we can, we will work with you to find solutions, enabling you to ensure the best possible outcomes for your children. It could really be about putting food on the table, (but probably not mealworms!) perhaps by supporting you in managing money or giving nutritional advice. It might be that a parenting course would give you new strategies and a deeper understanding of why children behave as they do. Try us out, you may be surprised what we can do, and what we can't do, you can be sure we know somebody who does.

Have a great spring, get out there with your children and enjoy the awe and wonder of nature. If your children learn to love wildlife, they will love life and become caring responsible adults.

Pat Everett
Harpenden Children's Centres Manager



Would you like to speak to the Educational Psychology Team about your child's development and progress?

To book your 45 minute session to discuss your child's development and progress please call 01442 453904/453825. Appointments are available at local venues on dates throughout the summer term.

The Parenting Puzzle – do you want more from your family life?

If you would like to learn new skills and tips for nurturing your family; boost your confidence; meet other parents and get on better with your children – book a place on this fun and supportive course. Starting on Wednesday 14th September from 7.15-9.15pm and running for 10 weeks, the course is open to any parent with a child aged between two and 10 years old. Places are limited, please call 01582 714 210 or email the children's centre to register.



Helping families to:

- Be Healthy
- Stay Safe
- Enjoy & achieve
- Make a positive contribution
- Achieve economic well-being

Baby Clinic: new times from 1st May 2011

Monday: Harpenden Memorial Hospital,
Carlton Road, Harpenden, AL5 4TA . 10-
12noon

Thursday: Harpenden Memorial Hospital,
10-12 noon

Saturday: Principal Health Centre, Civic
Close, St Albans, AL1 3LA. 10-12 noon

There will also continue to be a drop-in
postnatal session on Fridays at
Harpenden Children's Centre from 10-12
noon. A Health Visitor will be present at
these sessions for health queries.

For those already registered....

Please keep an eye out and complete
our new bi-annual data check form.
This should be used to inform the
Children's Centre of recent family
changes for example – new baby,
change of address or other
circumstances.

This will ensure that Harpenden
Children's Centre can keep you up to
date with details of our events,
courses, information sessions and
other local events.

What are the benefits of play in a child's life?

Children do not come with an owner's manual. Adults often talk and guide rather than listen and observe. As grown ups it is important that we are sharing in our child's play, following the child's lead. Sharing their play enables us to experience their joy and successes with them and lets our children know we value their efforts and ideas.

We can support our children's emotional wellbeing through play. Allowing children to explore and make mistakes in a safe and enabling environment helps them to become secure and capable learners, who are able to be relaxed, decisive and confident .

Play also promotes joy, which is essential for self-esteem and good mental health. Play and exploration give children a greater knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live.



Emotional benefits of play:

- Reduces fear, anxiety, stress, irritability
- Creates joy and happiness
- Enables us to feel good about our thoughts and ideas
- It's a great way to connect with others and make friends.
- And it is great fun
- It makes us laugh and smile

Simple tips to enhance the quality of play with your child:

- Be open, follow your child's lead
- Be kind and gentle
- Be inclusive, value all ideas
- Be accessible
- Get down to your child's level
- Use open questions to explore with your child and extend learning
- Observe, listen.
- Be flexible, it's okay to bend the rules in game play.

Children do not make a definition between learning and play neither should we.

Weekly events taking place at Harpenden Children's Centre

Day	Session	Venue	Information	Time
Mon	Monday Group	Magpie Room	Invitation only	9.45-11.45am
	Opportunity Class	Magpie Room	Supporting young children with significant delay or learning difficulties Referrals only.	1.00-3.00pm
Tues	Monkey Club	Magpie Room	Supported Mother & toddler group. By application only.	9.30-11.30am
	Postnatal Group	Chaffinch Room	A series of information and advice sessions with a different topic each week, usually led by a Health Visitor or Doctor.	Call/see website for the programme.
Wed	Toy Library	Magpie Room	An opportunity for your child to try out new toys. Registration fee & hire costs apply.	9.30-11am
	Opportunity Class	Magpie Room	As above	1.00-3.00pm
Thurs	Monkey Club	Magpie Room	As above	9.30-11.30am
	Opportunity Class	Magpie Room	As above	Every 2 weeks 1pm-3pm
	New Mum's Drop-in	Southdown Centre	Drop-in group providing an opportunity to talk to our outreach team and meet other local families.	1.15-2.45pm
Fri	Postnatal Drop-in	Chaffinch Room	Meet other parents over a coffee and chat to a health visitor if you have any queries.	10am-12pm
	Parenting Support Sessions	Southdown Centre	One to one and small group sessions. By appointment.	10am-12pm

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