

Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre News

September 2008

Issue no.1

Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre runs a year-round programme of activities to support local families with children under 5. We provide information about local services for young families, with the joint aims of giving children the best start in life and meeting the needs of the local community. We listen to young families' needs, identifying any gaps in local service provision and work towards fulfilling this unmet need.

Open Day Celebrations...

The Open Day at the Children's Centre was an overwhelming success. It was held on 10th July and families flocked to the centre to see the new facilities and find out more about what services and support could be accessed for children under 5 and their families.

Children were entertained with story telling, magic and a puppet show (with Dizzy Wizzy), Caterpillar music, face painting, balloon modelling and arts and crafts activities.

A variety of local service providers were on hand at the Open Day to talk with families about their services. These included Homestart, the District Council's Health Promotion Team, the PCT's Smoking Cessation Team, Health Visitors, Jobcentre Plus, the Hertfordshire Adult & Family Learning Service, Parentline Plus and the NCT.

Jane Pitman, Hertfordshire County Council Lead Member for Children's Services officiated the opening of the centre, which was marked by a balloon release.

Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre
Mandeville Drive, St Albans, AL1 2LE

www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk/sopwellverulam

tel 01727 774090

Manager: Pippa West, Administrator: Kathryn Puddy



Courses & sessions ...



Baby massage courses

2 courses will be running at the Children's Centre;

Course A 25th Sept, 2nd, 9th, 16th and 23rd October

Course B 6th November, 13th, 20th, 27th and 4th December

Benefits include:

- ☆enhancing the bond between parent/carer and baby
- ☆can relieve colic, wind, constipation and teething pain;
- ☆can soothe restless babies; ☆can improve babies sleep.

Courses are currently free of charge. Please contact Kathryn at Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre for further details and an application form.

Tel: 01727 774090, email: kathryn.puddy@watlingview.sch.uk



Stay & Play

Thursday mornings from 11th September: 10.00am – 11:45am

Come along with your child/ren for drop-in stay and play sessions. The sessions will be open to all children aged 0 – 4 years and their parents/carers. They are free to local families, with admittance on a first-come-first-served basis. Donations towards refreshments and equipment would be greatly appreciated.

An opportunity to: ☆ play ☆ read ☆ sing together ☆ make friends
☆ take part in a variety of fun play activities ☆ meet other parents

For further details please contact the Children's Centre (01727 774090).



Parenting Course

'From Pram to Primary'

6 week course from Monday 29th September 2008, 7:30 – 9:15pm
(excluding Half Term - 27th October)

For parents with children aged 0 to 6 years. Aimed to give parents the tools to boost your children's confidence and self-esteem, improve relationships and increase cooperation.

Please contact Sarah Barrett (Health Visitor) for details. Tel: 01727 853025

Coming soon...



Families with New Arrivals

Wednesdays 10.00 – 11:30am (term time only)

Starting from 10th September 2008

Whether it is your first, second... or fifth baby, come along to this new group at the Children's Centre and enjoy:

✧ Meeting other parents with new babies (under 12 months)

✧ Supporting each other ✧ Age appropriate toys ✧ Relax with refreshments

For further information please contact Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre



Saturdays... for Stay & Play

Ideal for working parents, fathers and grandparents.

Once up and running this session will be held on the **first Saturday** of each month (start date to be confirmed).

Come along with your child/ren or grandchild/ren and enjoy a play session at the Children's Centre.

Especially for those parents who are unavailable during the week due to work or study.

These sessions will run for a trial period, and will initially be free, although donations towards refreshments and equipment would be appreciated.

Admittance will be on a first-come-first-served basis.

Salaam Parent & Toddler Group

Every Monday in term-time, 1.00 – 3.00pm

Starting 15th September 2008. Coordinator: Bethan 01727 850115

Multicultural families especially welcome. Informal English language learning available.

Other services...

- Drop-in information sessions at the centre: Mondays 9.00am-12.00pm, Tuesdays 2.00pm-4.00pm, Thursdays 9.00am-12.00pm. Pop in for information about local services available for families with young children. No appointment necessary;
- Antenatal Classes and Early Contact Classes run by Midwives;
- Services run by the local Extended Schools Consortium. Contact Helen Thorpe (Extended Schools Coordinator) for details. Tel: 07946 137130;
- The Centre is regularly used by other local professionals to run courses;
- The Centre is also available for booking.

ContactPoint – Making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people

ContactPoint is part of the work the Government and Hertfordshire Children's Trust Partnership are doing to make sure that all children and young people fulfil their potential, whoever they are, and no matter what problems they may face.

At the moment, it can take a long time for a professional (e.g. a doctor, a teacher or a social worker) to find out who else is working with the same child, which means a child and their family may have to wait a long time to get the help they need.

This is where ContactPoint will help. It will be an online directory which will hold the names and basic details of every child in England from 0-18 and will only hold basic details, like their name, age and where they live. It will also show the contact details of other professionals who are currently working with the child. It will **not** hold more detailed reports such as case notes or school reports.

ContactPoint will be used by professionals who work with children and young people and need it to do their jobs. Everyone who uses it must pass strict security checks and will be properly trained. They will need a password, PIN and security fob in order to access it and the system will be monitored closely to make sure it is used properly.

You can find out more about ContactPoint and other ways children's services are working together to help children, young people and their families by visiting www.hertsdirect.org/caf or <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/deliveringservices/contactpoint/>

We want to hear your views!

The services that Children's Centres provide are customer focussed and user led.

Feedback from local young families (with children aged 0-4 years) is continually required and really valuable, in order to ensure that the services we offer are useful.

We always want to hear your views and to know if there are any services that you think would be useful to you that are currently not available in your local area.

If you have any suggestions, please contact Pippa West, Sopwell & Verulam Children's Centre Manager on 01727 774090, or alternatively pick up a leaflet from the centre and complete the enclosed questionnaire.

We look forward to hearing from you.