

SURE START
GROUP-BASED PARENTING COURSES
ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

Introduction

This report summarises the work we have done with groups of parents. It also shows the work done in training professionals **and parents** to run the courses and groups.

Parenting can be hard work, and very draining for parents. We believe in the value of offering support and ideas for parents, always remembering that parents themselves are the experts on their own children. Sometimes parents are baffled as to what to do next with their child's behaviour. Sometimes it is the parent who needs a bit of support for. We have found parents are good at helping each other, and although some of what we talk about is personal, what is said in the groups is confidential.

Parenting West Lothian is a group of professionals from various agencies who meet to plan how best to promote support for parenting.

There is a website (www.parentingwestlothian.org.uk) which anyone can use and which has all sorts of advice on things that concern parents. It also lists the courses and groups being run in West Lothian

Description of courses and groups

1. Getting Through The Day

"Getting Through The Day" (GTTD) was developed with a group of mothers in 1994, and has been changed when parents made suggestions about improvements. It aims to give parents a bit more confidence and have more ideas on managing the children's behaviour.

The group lasts 10 weeks and each session is 2 hours. Mostly we discuss what is going on at home, and what we might do to make things better. There are a range of ideas that parents have found helpful. We try and run courses regularly all over West Lothian, so there should be a course near you. Basically we try and get parents to help each other.

2. Mellow Parenting

This course is very intensive, lasting 14 weeks, each session starting in the morning at 9.30, to be followed by a shared lunch, and a play session involving the parents and their children. It carries on into the afternoon, when there is a parenting workshop.

The course offers parents the opportunity to meet their own needs and feel better in themselves. Parents also get the chance to put the ideas into practice in the play session, and there are a lot of ideas for parents on helping their children's behaviour in the afternoon. Again, the idea is to get parents to help each other.

3. Support Groups

These groups have been offered to "graduates" of the above courses so as to offer on-going support and keep the momentum going. Some of these groups have been running for several years, and parents like the chance to get things off their chests and get support from people they know and can trust.

4. The Dad's Club

This is a chance for dads to meet other dads and play with their children. When we meet the dads have a coffee and a chat and then go and join the children in the playroom, for the play session, which we film. We then go back to the parents' room and watch the film to see how we are getting on with our children, and what the child was getting from the play.

Groups run

The groups run have included workers from various agencies, including Sure Start, The Children & Young People Team, Social Work, the Family Centres, Community Education.

For some of the courses we have tried to see if they worked well for the parents. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale measures how confident parents were at the start and then at the end. The difference, (hopefully an improvement) are what you see on the table. The Eyeberg Behaviour Inventory shows whether or not there were improvements in how the parents saw their children's behaviour.

GTTD stands for "Getting Through The Day". MP stands for Mellow Parenting. SG stands for support group. DC stands for the Dad's Club.

| Group | Where and When run | No. of parents | Confidence self-rating | Rosenberg | Eyeberg | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | | | Intensity | Frequency |
| GTTD | Sept-Nov Strathbrock | 4 | +50% | +18% | +54% | +98% |
| GTTD | Feb-April 2008 Bathgate EYC | 4 | +400% | -- | -- | -- |
| GTTD | Craigshill | 7 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| GTTD | Craigshill | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| GTTD | Whitburn | 7 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| GTTD | April-June 2007 Strathbrock | 9 | -- | +117% | +43% | +68% |
| GTTD | April-June 2007 Bathgate West NS | 6 | -- | +103% | +16% | +44% |
| GTTD | Jan-March 2008 Armadale PS | 5 | +200% | 37% | 0% | +48% |
| GTTD | Sept-Dec 2007 Lanthorn | 7 | +124% | +39% | -3% | +211% |
| GTTD | Sept-Nov 2007 Blackburn Com C | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mumz R Uz | On-going | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Friday Support Group | Jan-March 2007 | 10 | +110% | +34% | -- | -- |
| Mellow Parenting | Deans PS Jan-May 2007 | 6 | +217% | +34% | +55% | +88% |
| Mellow Parenting | Whitdale FC Jan-May 2008 | 7 | +172% | +181% | +49% | +69% |

What parents said about the courses

"I loved this course. It helped me a lot with myself and my kids. It covered everything and was very helpful".

(It is) "A happier household all round"

"Homework (has been sorted by) not shouting, being patient and relaxed more. Asking more. Getting along better. Being less negative about myself. Trying more"

"It makes you feel you can do anything when you set your mind to it"

(The) "Benefits are amazing, brilliant and priceless"

"My son's behaviour has been completely transformed and he no longer has behaviour issues at school" This was done by "Gained confidence and stood up for myself more".

"I'm using a different tone in voice. Explaining things properly instead of rushing around. Listening more instead of half-listening".

"I didn't expect the course to be such a support for all kinds of parents. Highly recommended".

"I was such an angry mum before (doing Getting Through The Day), now I am calmer and it has changed the way I live my life".

"It helps you realise that you are not the only one and the support you can get from the others in the group. The tips you get help you understand your child".

"The people who run the group are really friendly and I would like to continue the group".

"Thank you for changing my life with my kids".

"(I learned that) "I am not a bad mum, just a stressed one".

"It's fantastic! Helped my confidence, made me realise I am important too and it's OK to say, "No"! Every parent needs to know".

"I would love to be involved in running groups like this. It made a difference to the way I live".

(The handouts) "were useful. Didn't just leave and forget about what the issues were. I could go back to the handouts for support and remind myself what my goals were, make myself stronger with the info. Finally I had the answers to my problems".

"The course was really helpful at delivering ideas and info"

"You have to change, not the child. You have to change your behaviour, not the child's".

Spending more time together, baking, listening to what my child is saying more".

"My child is closer to me now (because I play more with him)".

(The course) "helps you get through a lot and builds a better relationship with your kids".

"Didn't think I would get out as much as I did. I didn't believe my situation could be helped. It was".

"I have totally enjoyed coming to this group, it has helped me enormously".

"It was nice to know I was not alone".

(The course) "is very friendly and has helped me 100%".

"I think this group has helped me immensely with confidence and keeping calm (less stressed)".

"It just shows you that you are not alone".

"I can talk to my son and he can come and speak to me without getting in an argument because I had the help and advice from the workers and the people who went to the group".

"What a difference it has made to me. I have more confidence and I stick up for myself more".

"I tell everyone I know this course is good to come to".

"I enjoy my child more".

"Me and the kids are good, now there is more love in the family".

"I play with him a lot more, so he is better behaved".

"It was a joy to be part of this group".

Training done over the year for staff and parents

The courses listed below each lasted one day.

a). Groupwork Training

1. 27th November 2007-----11 participants, (including Social Work, Children And Young People, Sure Start, Nursery School Health, Barnado's).
2. 31st March 2008-----16 Participants (including as above)

b). Getting Through The Day

1. 12th June 2007 12 participants (including Health Visitors, Children and Young People, and a parent.
2. Training was also offered to a). 2 Children and Young People workers, and b). To a Community Education worker.

c). Working with Parents

20th April 2007
Offered to 25 workers from private nurseries

Summary

Being a parent is hard work, and sometimes it can be a real help to meet other parents. Sometimes it is good to meet doing a course and at other times it is good to get support.

In Sure Start we recognise parents have a lot to offer each other, and we aim to train parents to help run courses and groups, so aiming for a situation where parents are helping parents.

Parents get a lot from the courses and groups and a lot of them say we are not good enough at letting people know the courses are running.

When people go to the courses, they get a lot from them, as the comments from parents show. Where we have been able to collect other ways of seeing if the courses work, (The Rosenberg and Eyeberg questionnaires), the results are very encouraging. The courses seem to work!!

You are welcome to join our courses and groups. Just give us a ring. If you have any ideas yourself about how we can improve our service, please let us know. And do try the website for Parenting West Lothian