



Making a difference where you live



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A New School Brochure for New Brancepeth



A group of parents from New Brancepeth have produced their own school brochure to tell parents what they want to know about helping with the development of their children's literacy skills. Parents and children from Nursery and Reception classes worked with Family Learning tutor, Sharon Stevenson, for ten weeks looking at ways to make speaking, listening, reading and Jolly Phonics fun. Progress was recorded on camera and then the group went on to write a short booklet to share their findings and ideas with new parents. Mums, Lorraine Linskill and Julie Hall, said, "We hope this will give parents and carers an idea of the sort of things that happen in school. Maybe they could try some of the things that we did."

Rock Climbing at Stanley Community Centre

Parents from local schools in Stanley were invited to attend a rock climbing course in order to promote health and fitness in their children. Over the last six months, seventeen parents have gained new skills and climbing wall accreditation, which will enable them to take their children climbing. The course was led by two very experienced mountain rescue climbers who can teach from basic to advanced climbing and it has encouraged four parents to seek further training to enable them to gain employment in outdoor leadership.

Storysacks for Nursery and Infant Children

A six week Storysack course held at Murton Children's Centre with tutor Joanne Thompson produced lots of creative resources about farms to support and develop children's literacy, language and numeracy skills. The theme was chosen by the parents who made peekaboo barn pictures, animal flash card matching activities, the Dingle Dangle Scarecrow and mini books.

These exciting resources were used in an entertaining role play session for the whole group. A crèche was provided for the younger children.

Tots Can Come Too!

EiC's mobile crèche works alongside Family Learning and Skills for Life courses, providing high quality childcare from skilled and experienced staff under the direction of Crèche Co-ordinator, Helen Huitson. Learners can leave their children in the hands of our fully qualified crèche workers, with their provision of toys and arts and crafts activities, and rest assured they will be happy, safe and having lots of fun!



The crèche is available free of charge for EiC courses and at a subsidised rate for our partners.

Mams meet Mams Group

A "Mams meet Mams" group provided the opportunity for Mums to have a chat, relax and have time for themselves. Sure Start Family Workers, Laura Garraghan and Nicola Shepherd organised eight weekly sessions at Howletch Children's Centre. They covered topics like stress, relaxation, self-esteem, post-natal depression, assertiveness and foods and moods. A pamper session was delivered by a complementary therapies expert and, at the end of the course, the group celebrated by going out for lunch together. A crèche was provided each week to leave the Mams free to relax and learn.

"I have enjoyed and learnt a vast amount with my child. It has also been useful for myself to brush up on different areas I have struggled with."

Parent commenting on a Family Learning Share course.

Dads and Kids Have a Weekend Away!

Dads and their children enjoyed exploring the environment around Moorside Children's Centre. Brendan Rafferty, a tutor from Return to Learn, explained the surrounding countryside with its beauty and its dangers. As part of the course the dads and children had a weekend of fun and experiences at Earls Orchard. One of the star attractions there was pond dipping and examining the results under microscopes. Earls Orchard is in a beautiful setting near Richmond and the group enjoyed a visit to the castle on the Sunday.



Some of our Family Literacy and Numeracy Tutors



Sharon Stevenson



Gill Seed



Emma Foreman



Jo Thompson



Shelagh Sharkey



Stephen Allen



Janice Cartwright



Hilary Hawkins

Equal Opportunities

We aim to ensure that everyone involved in Family Learning will be respected regardless of gender, age, race, culture, religion or disability.

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Summer 2008 Education in the Community CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

From the Editor

Welcome to the Summer 2008 edition of the Family Learning Newsletter. We have stories from across County Durham showing how adults and children have benefited from learning together. I hope you enjoy reading about their successes.

Heather Solan

Family Learning Promotes Healthy Living

Gardening at Peases West

Eight adults and ten children from Reception to Year 6, prepared and planted a variety of vegetables, herbs and flowers in newly built raised beds at Peases West Primary School last Autumn. Practical numeracy, literacy and science activities were incorporated into the sessions.



Typical sessions involved measuring, drawing scale plans, estimating seed numbers, calculating numbers of seeds to fit into a bed, and keeping tallies of mini-beasts seen. They also held a tasting session to find the most popular variety of apple, and a 'What's that Smell?' activity to identify herbs.

Tutor, Joan Watson, held separate sessions with parents and carers and a teacher from the school worked with the children to prepare them for the joint sessions where they worked together on the gardening activities. Joan's sessions with the parents and carers covered numeracy topics to enable them to support their children better, both during the sessions and more generally with numeracy in school.

It is hoped that the taste of homegrown vegetables & herbs will encourage the children to be more adventurous in their eating habits. The course has been so successful that the school intends setting up a gardening club in order to continue the good work in the future.



Big Cooks and Little Cooks Cook up a Healthy Storm.



Children with their parents, grandparents or carers have been finding out how to cook simple, healthy meals together. Many schools across County Durham have taken

part in a project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF).

Wendy Charlton, EiC's ESF Project Co-ordinator, organised and introduced courses in different schools and Children's Centres across the County.



The sessions were led by a Family Learning tutor who provided new recipes and fresh ingredients for the groups to make into tasty, healthy food. Parents were delighted that the children were not only finding that healthy food was fun but also learning and improving their literacy and numeracy skills.

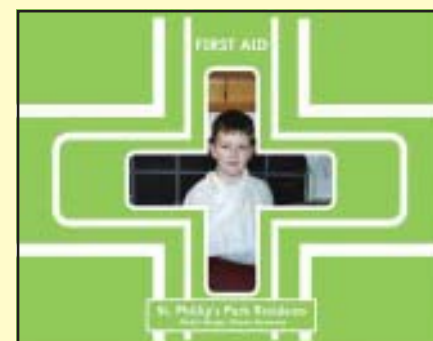
After taking part in these courses many of the adults have gone on to take the National Tests in Literacy and Numeracy and have been awarded City and Guilds certificates which are qualifications for employment.



First Aid for All

An easy to understand guide to basic first aid has been published with the help of families at the St. Philip's Park traveller site in Coundon Grange. The group worked with Durham County Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service and the Family Learning team to produce a clearly written and illustrated book, aimed at both adults and children. It includes advice on how to stay safe, treat injuries and deal with emergencies.

Copies of the book, priced £6.50, are available from the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service on 01740 656998



Clear information about treating an unconscious child

Goodbye Joan

This issue sees the retirement of Family Learning News Editor, Joan Sutherland. Joan has been a Family Learning Development Worker with Focus on Learning for 6 years and began editing the newsletter just over 2 years ago.



Her plans for the future include a trip to Peru, continuing with her Spanish lessons and keeping up her long time hobby of walking. We wish her a very happy and fulfilling retirement.

A Family Learning Success Story



Audra Jennison is a perfect example of how Family Learning can encourage and inspire learners to go on to do more. Audra attended her first Family Learning course more than 10 years ago at Coundon Primary School with her 5 year old daughter, Jade. Since then, she has been a regular

participant in both Family Learning and FE courses with Jade and younger son Andrew.

Carol Neville of LEAP, who was Audra's first tutor, has been particularly impressed with her progress. "Audra was always the first to put her name down for a course, whether it was Paper Crafts and Card Making or Keeping up with the Children in Numeracy" It is this enthusiasm for learning that has helped Audra to achieve National Test passes at levels 1 and 2 in both Literacy and Numeracy.

Audra's present tutor, Janice Cartwright, has encouraged her to share her love of learning and Audra has decided to become a volunteer tutor with LEAP. She is looking forward to starting the C&G 9297 Certificate in Learning Support in the Summer Term.

We feel sure she will make a great contribution to our Service and have empathy with other learners who are just discovering the possibilities of lifelong learning.

Family Learning in Nettlesworth

The Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund has enabled Focus on Learning to work with new parents on Family Learning courses at Nettlesworth Primary School. The project, named Families into Learning, used a Family Engagement Worker, a Family Learning tutor and EIC's Creche provision to attract parents to activities.

Several parents came into the school to join in cooking sessions with their children, which boosted their confidence enough for them to wish to go on to further learning. As a result, "Keeping up with the Children in Numeracy" is planned for next term which may be followed by a Share Plus course. Focus on Learning Co-ordinator, Michelle Stone, says, "We hope this will lead to an ongoing relationship with Nettlesworth School, leading to greater achievement by both pupils and their families".

Everyone is Equal at Woodhouse Close

Woodhouse Community Primary School has been the first school in County Durham to be given the opportunity to run the Family Learning course, "Everyone is Equal". 15 parents/carers and their children, from Years 5 and 6, enrolled on the course to join in sessions on cultural storytelling, foods from around the world and a trip to a Hindu temple and a mosque in Newcastle. Discrimination and racism were discussed and the group's scrap books recorded their thoughts on the issues raised.

Parent/carers and children all agreed that the course gave them an awareness of different cultures and religions, yet was also fun and enjoyable.

The group is now keen to continue with Family Learning and has opted for a basic IT course before going on to study and take National Tests in Maths and English.



ICT— No Problem!

Grandmothers from the Our Lady of the Rosary School completed a ten week programme covering basic ICT, including Microsoft word. They gained accreditation by working through a pack called "How to use a Computer" and built up impressive portfolios. All enjoyed the course and progressed from being complete beginners to producing letters, using editing functions and various additional tasks, such as card making.

Sure Start Makes a Difference in Shotton



A "You Make a Difference" programme was held at Shotton Children's Centre for nine weeks, targeting early years parents and carers and their children.

The course provided parents with the skills to improve their children's language, interaction and social skills through everyday experiences, daily routines and play.

The sessions at Shotton had the parents and carers working and preparing with the Family Learning tutor for the first part, with the children joining them in the second part, when the families were videoed putting their learning into practice. The videos were given to the families at the end of the programme.

One of the parents commented "I really enjoyed the course, it was well worth doing. It taught me some new ways on how to interact and play with my 2 and 3 year old sons".



The Iron Man Appears in Lumley

Residents of Lumley may have been surprised to see the Iron Man in their community recently. And a fearsome sight he was too, as you can see.



This startling event was the result of ten weeks' work. Seven boys and their parents and carers worked



with tutor Anne Murphy, from Return to Learn, on a family literacy course and produced their own version of the "The Iron Man" on DVD.

Parents and carers supported the boys' reading of the popular Ted Hughes story and then worked together reading, collaborating in

producing a script and making costumes, props and sound effects. Finally, the boys acted out the story to make the DVD.

As a result of this course all the children have become better readers and performers and have learnt excellent collaborative skills. Parents and carers have progressed to further family learning courses. Four have even studied for and taken the National Test in Literacy at Level 2. Now they are going to take a course to improve their own numeracy skills.



Moneybox Mayhem!

Moneybox Mayhem, run by Jancie Cratwright at Coundon Primary School, is a family numeracy course with a crafty theme. Parents and children have enjoyed learning maths through craft activities.

The course was created in response to the school's need to introduce more creative activities into the curriculum and has been a big hit with both parents and children. The school's Parent Support Adviser is so thrilled with the response from the families that she intends to showcase the course at the Bishop Auckland Cluster meeting.

Word of its success has spread so quickly that there is now high demand for the course from other schools in the area!



Active Dads at Willington Sure Start enjoyed an eight-week course looking at nature. The group focused on their local environment and built bird boxes. Dads and children had great fun learning together and ended the course with a full day trip to Washington Wildfowl Wetlands. The group enjoyed exploring the different aspects of the wetlands, using their senses of smell, touch and taste, comparing habitats and investigating the water feature, water wheel and Archimedes screw.

Indian Cookery in East Durham

Eastlea Community Centre's popular Indian Cookery class has returned after a short break, attracting four new families to the group. As well as cooking, the course also examines the Indian sub-continent and its religions and cultures.

At the end of the course the group enjoy a banquet where each family prepares a recipe learnt during the course.

Traditional Indian music is played and Tabla, Indian drums, are made available for the class to try.



Keenan House gets Crafty

Art and Craft sessions at Keenan House have been so popular that there are now three sessions a week! The sessions begin with a story and continue with arts and crafts based around the story just told.

Although the classes are open to all, most of the learners are from ethnic backgrounds which has resulted in the group learning a great deal about other cultures and religions. It also helps with their English speaking and listening practice as the learners converse with each other throughout the sessions.

Culture and Diversity in the Dales

During Summer 2007 two events were organised with Dales guest, Francis Firebrace, a Master Aboriginal Storyteller from the Yorda Yorda tribe in Australia. Francis took everyone on a journey through the Australian bush and mystical Aboriginal Dreamtime.



Workshops were offered in art, dance and music where participants learnt to dance like a kangaroo (badagarang) or even an emu!

Both events were well attended and the art work produced followed the true traditional aborigine style, reflecting aboriginal history and culture.



2238 parents and carers enjoyed Family Learning activities with EIC in Durham during 2006/07

"It is so nice attending the course with my 13 year old daughter. I feel it has brought us back together again" A mum from West Cornforth Hair & Beauty course