



For more information in your own language please see details in the box below.

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Arabic	لمزيد من المعلومات بلغتك، يرجى الرجوع إلى تفاصيل الاتصال الموجودة في المربع أدناه.
Bangali	যদি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় আরও তথ্য চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে নিজের ঘরে মোলায়েমের বিস্তারিত তথ্য দেখুন।
Cantonese	有關您需要繁體中文列印的材料，請參見下方方格內提供的聯絡詳細信息。
Mandarin	有关您需要简体中文印成的材料，请参见下方方格内提供的联系详细信息。
Pasuti	ਸੁਣਨਾਸੁ ਚੁਠੇ ਤੇ ਕੁਸੁਬੁ ਚੁ ਨੂਰੂ ਮੇਲੁਮਾਨੁ ਲੇਖਾਰੇ, ਹੇਠਲੇ ਕੋਰੇ ਚੁਬੁ ਲਾਨੁਦੁ ਚੁ ਕੁਰੁ ਸੁਠੁਕੁ ਚੁ ਕੁਸੁ ਕੁਸੁਬੁ ਚੁ ਚੁਰੁਕੁ ਨੂਲੂ ਲੇਖਾਰੇ ਨੁਫੁਲਾਤੁ ਚੁ ਕੁਰੁਕੁ.
Polish	Aby otrzymać więcej informacji w języku polskim, prosimy o kontakt z numerem podanym w ramce na samym dole.
Punjabi	ਅਪਣੀ ਖੁਦ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ, ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਣੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਵੇਖੋ।
Slovak	Pre viac informácií vo vašom jazyku pozrite kontaktné údaje nižšie.
Somali	Wixii warbixino dheeraad ah oo ku qoran luuqaddaada, faclan arag faahfaahinaha wada xidhiidh ee sanduuqa hoos ku yaal.
Urdu	اپنی زبان میں مزید معلومات کے لیے، برائے مہربانی نیچے کے خانے میں رابطے کی تفصیلات ملاحظہ فرمائیے۔

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) 0114 275 6699
www.sheffinfolink.org.uk • www.asksid.net

Parenting Handbook



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A guide for mums, dads and carers of birth-5 year olds in Sheffield

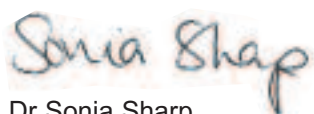


Welcome to our Parenting Handbook, a guide for mums, dads and carers of birth-5 year olds in Sheffield.

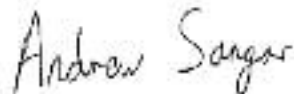
Being a parent is the most rewarding experience, but it can also be tough. Every child is different and at every age we are faced with new challenges and situations to handle. There is no such thing as the 'perfect parent' and we all need a little help and support at times.

This handbook aims to offer practical advice and positive ways to manage some of the challenges you may encounter. You'll find information, warning signs, as well as ideas and tips that can be used to tackle specific issues. There is also information on how to get further support.

We do hope you find this guide helpful.



Dr Sonia Sharp
Executive Director
Children and Young People's Services
Sheffield City Council



Councillor Andrew Sangar
Cabinet Member for
Children's Services and
Lifelong Learning



There is also an additional Parenting Handbook available for mums, dads and carers of 5-19 year olds in Sheffield

Key contacts

- Sheffield Information Link (SIL) 0114 275 6699 www.sheffinfoolink.org.uk
www.asksid.net
- First Point your one stop shop for all council services 0114 272 6444
www.sheffield.gov.uk
- Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) A team of professionals from education, health and social care, supporting families 0-19 in your local area.
0114 205 3158 www.sheffield0to19.org.uk/servicedistricts
- Parent Know How www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow

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Feedback - we want to know what you think!

Have you found it useful, is there anything we could have improved or was there anything else you would like to have seen included? If you have any comments or feedback about this handbook you can contact us in the following ways:

Telephone: 0114 281 1881 **Email:** eyecs@sheffield.gov.uk
Web: www.sheffield.gov.uk/parenting
In writing to: Sheffield City Council, Children and Young Peoples Directorate, Early Years Education and Childcare Service, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, Sheffield S1 2HH.





"When Fiona was born I had a few problems breastfeeding at first, but I'm glad I stuck with it - it is good for her and makes me feel so close to her."



WARNING SIGNS

Once established, breastfeeding is easy for most mothers and babies. However in the first few days both you and baby are learning how it works. It is important your baby learns to attach properly to your breast as this will help you both to breastfeed well.



ACTION

It is important to feed your baby whenever they seem hungry. This will make sure you produce plenty of milk to meet their needs. This is because each time they feed, messages are sent to your brain, which then sends signals to your breast to produce more milk.



WHAT TO SAY

Don't be afraid to talk to your midwife, health visitor, volunteer breastfeeding counsellor or breastfeeding peer supporter or visit one of the local breastfeeding support groups where mothers share helpful tips and ideas about feeding their babies.



PREVENTION

Breast milk contains all the food and water your baby needs. Giving other food or drink may also make them less interested in breastfeeding. If they do not breastfeed often enough, you may not make enough milk to meet their future needs.








CONTACTS

- Your midwife, health visitor or local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Association of Breastfeeding Mothers Helpline 08444 122 949
- National Childbirth Trust 0300 33 00 771 (Breastfeeding Line)
- La Leche Breastfeeding Helpline 0845 120 2198

WEBLINKS www.nspcc.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.childline.org.uk • www.frg.org.uk • www.nctpregnancyandbabycare.com

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

-  Making sure your baby has a healthy diet from the start is a great thing you can do as a parent
-  Until your baby is six months old, breast milk has got everything they need
-  The longer you breastfeed, the greater the benefits for you and your baby
-  Breastfeeding is the best way to feed a baby because it helps to protect them against infections
-  You might be entitled to free milk, fresh fruit and vegetables and vitamins to keep you and your baby healthy

Feeding your baby - A great start!

Giving your baby a healthy diet from the start is one of the most important things you can do for them - not just now but for their future years, too.

Breastfeeding isn't just good for your baby - it can be really rewarding for you, too. It is a chance to bond with your child and feel close to them.

Most mothers breastfeed their babies, some bottle feed with formula milk, and some mothers do a mixture of both. Breastfeeding is good for babies because breast milk contains antibodies that help protect against illness such as stomach, ear and chest infections. Babies who are breastfed are less likely to become obese or get diabetes or dermatitis. There is also evidence that breastfeeding can reduce the risk of cot death. Giving your baby only your breastmilk gives the best protection and babies receive some benefit with every mouthful of breastmilk they take.

There are other advantages for you too - it is free, you don't need to prepare breast milk and

you can do it most places. Breastfeeding can sometimes take a little while for you and your baby to get used to, but once you do, it is easy. If you can't breastfeed your baby for any reason but want them to have breast milk, for example if you are going to be away from your baby for some time while you are working, you can express your breast milk by hand or by pump.

When your baby is six months old, they will still need to breastfeed but now is the time to offer your baby some solids. This period is called 'weaning', which means 'trying' - your baby will be trying lots of different foods to see what they like. Remember that babies can't drink cow's milk until they're a year old.

Find out if you're entitled to free milk, fresh fruit and vegetables and vitamins under the Healthy Start scheme. You may qualify if you're pregnant and/or have one child or more who's under four and your family gets some benefits. See contacts for how to get an application form.

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"I had everything - a home, a loving husband and a darling baby girl. Yet I felt unworthy and helpless."



WARNING SIGNS

It's normal to feel emotional and very tired after having a baby, but symptoms of PND include constant crying, feeling cut off from everyone else, not being able to sleep, feeling worried and tense and not bonding with your baby.



ACTION

If you feel low or depressed, don't try to cope on your own and don't be afraid to ask for help - all new mums need help from family and friends. Don't worry about keeping the house clean or making big meals - rest when your baby sleeps.



WHAT TO SAY

If you feel you are not coping, talk to your health visitor, midwife, or doctor - and don't feel embarrassed or bad that you're not handling motherhood as well as other mums seem to be. Talk to other mums - you'll find they're probably finding things just as difficult as you are.



PREVENTION

Although more people now know about Postnatal Illness, only about half of mothers who need help are getting it. So don't keep your feelings to yourself - the sooner you talk about it, the quicker you can get help and treatment if you need it.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor, midwife, doctor or local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Association for Postnatal Illness 020 7386 0868
- National Childbirth Trust (NCT) 0300 33 00 770

WEBLINKS <http://apni.org> • www.nct.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

Not every mum copes straight away with motherhood

Most women suffer 'baby blues' in the first ten days

The sooner you get help, the sooner you'll feel better

Talk to your doctor about your worries

Make the most of help from family and friends

Postnatal illness - Recognising the signs

Caring for your baby should be a wonderful experience, but for many mums, at some time in the first few days, weeks or months, it is not.

Baby blues

Some new mums get the 'baby blues' when they feel, not surprisingly, very tired, worried and weepy during the first few days after the birth. This usually disappears without the need for treatment about ten days after the birth.

Postnatal depression (PND)

A small number of women will have deeper depression, sometimes weeks or months after the birth of their baby. These mums have more powerful and longer lasting symptoms such as:

- Constant weepiness.
- Worry, tension.
- Difficulty in bonding with the baby.
- Loss of interest in sex.
- Trouble sleeping, restlessness.
- Feeling very tired.
- Feeling completely alone or living in a 'bubble'.
- Feelings of guilt and resentment.

Many women do not see that they have postnatal depression and carry on without getting the help they need. It is often women who expect a lot of themselves and of

motherhood who find caring for a new baby hard to cope with.

If you feel depressed, it is very important to let family and friends know how you feel so that you can get help. Your doctor can talk about treatment options with you, such as counselling and anti-depressants. You can also get to know about local mothers' groups that can be an enormous support to new mums from your doctor, midwife, health visitor or Sure Start Children's Centre.

Puerperal psychosis

A very small percentage of women suffer from puerperal psychosis, which causes severe mental breakdown and may include symptoms such as manic behaviour and hallucinations. Treatment options include going into hospital, drugs or counselling.

Getting support

Being at home with a new baby who seems to always need feeding and changing, who takes all your attention and leaves you feeling really tired, can be a lonely experience. Take up any offers of help and support from friends and family. If you feel you are not coping, always talk to your doctor, health visitor or midwife or contact your local Sure Start Children's Centre.

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“Your baby’s development from breast or formula milk feeding to sharing in family meals is one of the first stages of growing up, enjoy it, encourage it, don’t force it.”



WARNING SIGNS

Babies can choke on foods so be careful with hard foods such as raw carrot sticks and large apple pieces. Also be careful with foods with skin (like sausages) or fish with bones. Cut food into small pieces and remove all skin and bones and lightly cook vegetables before feeding them to your baby.



ACTION

Don’t rush into weaning as a result of pressure from parents or friends. If you are unsure or concerned about when your baby is ready to begin weaning talk to your health visitor. There is no right way to introduce food, but choose a time that is convenient to you and when you are both relaxed. Do not force food on your baby.



WHAT TO SAY

If your baby is a fussy eater there are things you can do. Praise them when they do well and do not get frustrated. Don’t worry if your baby does not like certain foods, leave it and come back to it. Set a good example, let them see you enjoying food. Don’t worry if your baby does not eat much in one day, appetites vary!



PREVENTION

Weaning your baby should not start until they are at least six months old. Until now they will be getting all the nutrients that they need from breast or formula milk. Until this stage, babies are not able to use their tongue properly to move the food to the back of their mouth.



CONTACTS

- Your midwife, health visitor or local Sure Start Children’s Centre

WEBLINKS www.dh.gov.uk • www.babycentre.co.uk • www.kidshealth.org/parent

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The following signs could mean your baby is ready to start weaning:

- Being unsatisfied after a full milk feed
- Demanding increasing and more frequent milk feed
- Weight gain slowing or levelling out without a period of illness to explain why
- After a period of sleeping through the night your baby begins waking because they are hungry

Weaning your baby - Developing a healthy appetite

What is weaning?

Weaning is the introduction of solid foods into the diet of a baby who is drinking breast or formula milk. By the time your child is one year old they will probably be eating chopped and mashed family food. You can try to give your baby solid food when your baby can sit up, wants to chew and is maybe putting things in their mouth and can reach and grab accurately.

Finger foods

You can start to encourage your baby to chew, even if they do not have teeth by giving them finger foods. For example you could introduce slightly cooked sticks of vegetables, cubes of cheese, toast, peeled apples or bananas. Some babies prefer food they can hold to mashed food, so offer your baby finger food from the beginning. Finger foods can provide chewing practice and encourage babies to feed themselves. Avoid sweet biscuits and rusks so that your baby does not get into the habit of expecting sweet snacks.

Cups

If you are bottle feeding, comfort sucking on a bottle can become a habit that is hard to break. Introduce a cup from six months and aim to have your baby off the bottle by their first birthday. Using an open cup, or a free flow cup without a valve will help your baby learn to sip and is better for your baby’s teeth.

Foods you should not give to your baby

There are foods that you are advised not to give to your baby for the first 6-8 months as they have been known to upset a baby or to cause an allergic reaction. These include:

- Nuts and seeds.
- Shellfish.
- Exotic or citrus fruits.
- Eggs and egg products such as custard.
- Cow’s milk.
- Foods that contain gluten.
- Soft and unpasteurised cheeses.

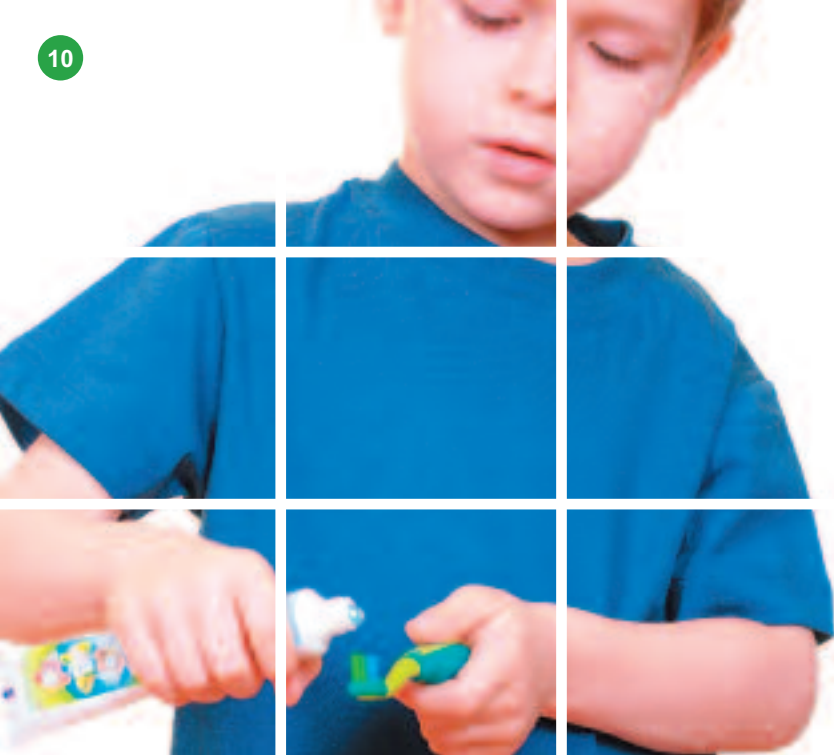
Eating as a family

Eating as a family can encourage your baby to get into good habits from a young age. Get your baby used to eating a variety of the foods the rest of the family eats, although it may need to be cut up smaller. Sitting them in a highchair at the table and smiling and talking to your baby can help, as well as encouraging them to feed themselves through the use of finger food. Don’t worry if it gets messy, it is all part of the learning process!

Things to remember

Meal times should be a relaxing and pleasant experience. If there are any problems with weaning, these can normally be resolved by patience, understanding and a lot of positive encouragement. Your health visitor will normally be able to offer you new ideas and techniques to support the process.

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"My son is really good at brushing his teeth. He knows how important it is to look after them."



WARNING SIGNS

Be observant, keep an eye on your children's teeth. Sugary drinks can cause rapid damage, especially to baby teeth and young children can't always explain when they have toothache.



ACTION

Tooth decay is almost totally preventable. Stop it right from the start. Know what causes teeth to go bad. Talk to your health visitor and register your baby with a dentist as soon as you can, they can both give good advice on how to prevent tooth decay.



WHAT TO SAY

Good tooth care will come from you, mums and dads, brothers and sisters. Take opportunities to let them watch you brushing your teeth. Explain what you are doing and why you are doing it. Try to make it fun.



PREVENTION

Most drinks for babies and children contain sugar, so look at labels. Even concentrated fruit sugar can cause tooth decay. Get in the habit - brush your baby's teeth night and morning as soon as they come through. It's never too early to start taking your child to the dentist. Find one who is good with children.



CONTACTS

- Your dentist, health visitor or local Sure Start Children's Centre
- NHS Sheffield 0114 305 1000

WEBLINKS www.sheffieldpct.nhs.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Be firm; try to give healthier sugar-free snacks and drinks in between meals
- Use a family fluoride toothpaste right from the start
- Encourage and support your pre-schools and schools to promote healthy sugar-free snacking
- Start off the right way, it's not always easy but it's worth it in the long term

Good oral health - Tooth care matters

As we get older many of us realise how important our teeth are, not only for eating and speaking, but also for confidence and self-esteem too. If children are brought up to care for their teeth, it should stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives. In theory tooth care should be quite simple - don't allow children to have sugary things too often and make sure their teeth are brushed well twice a day. In practice it's not that easy, the way sugary products are advertised and promoted can make it difficult to limit them. Most of us lead busy lives and sometimes it's easier just to give in to pester power. If we try not to encourage a sweet tooth in the beginning it can help to make things easier.

- The best drink in the first year is breast or formula milk. Soya milk can damage teeth so only use it if your doctor or health visitor advises it.
- Water is a good thirst quencher between meals, under the age of six months offer cooled boiled water.
- Encourage your baby to drink from a cup as soon as they can hold one, usually around six months. After using a lidded cup your baby can progress to an open cup. Valve cups are not recommended.
- Try well diluted fresh orange juice in a cup at meal times.

- Ask your doctor/chemist if you can have sugar-free medicines.
- Golden Rule - never give a sugary drink last thing at night.
- As they grow, get into the sugar free habit. Put more fruit, vegetables and bread based snacks on your shopping list.
- If you are confronted with sweet treats at the check-out, offer easy alternatives like an apple, tangerine or breadstick.
- Don't ban sweets, but keep them for straight after a meal or for a special time.
- Make sure that children brush their teeth twice a day with a family fluoride toothpaste, but only use a pea sized blob. They will need your help until they are seven.
- When they are older still check they are brushing properly.
- Gums may bleed when brushed. If this happens, brush them gently but really well. If bleeding persists ask your dentist for advice.
- Register your child with a dentist as soon as you can and take them to see the dentist. Let them get used to going. Don't wait until they have problems or are in pain.

Just think, a healthier diet means better resistance to infections, less time off school, enough energy to last the day and less tooth decay.

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"When I found out that Josie was disabled I didn't know how I was going to cope. I didn't think I'd be able to do it alone. I soon realised I didn't have to."



WARNING SIGNS

Some children's disabilities are spotted early. Others take time to appear or happen suddenly. If you think your child may have some form of disability, contact your health visitor or doctor for advice.



ACTION

Don't think you have to go it alone. Get as much information as you can about your child's condition. Find out what services, support, benefits and advice are available and make contact.



WHAT TO SAY

There are many organisations specially set up to give support and advice to parents of children with a disability. Contact them and tell your story. There will be others out there just like you.



PREVENTION

You can't stop your child's condition. But you can help with the disability they experience by making sure that they get the best support available, and by remembering that they have rights.



CONTACTS

- Your Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)
0114 205 3158
- SIGN
0114 266 9476
- Parent Partnership Service
0114 264 0033
- Specialist Support Services for Children
0114 239 8336
- Contact a Family
0808 808 3555
- NHS Direct
0845 4647

WEBLINKS www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk • www.carersuk.org • www.ndcs.org.uk • www.cafamily.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Your child is protected by the Disability Discrimination Act
- The Government, your local council, education and health authorities are there to help
- You may be able to receive financial help to assist with caring for your child
- There are many forms of extra services and support available to you and your child

Children with disabilities - You're not alone

If your child has a disability the future may seem like a daunting struggle, not just for them, but for you. Don't think you have to go it alone. Get as much information as you can about your child's condition and about the services and support available to you.

You are helping your child by making sure that they get the best support available and by remembering that they have rights. The word 'disabled' covers a very wide range of different conditions. Sometimes getting a diagnosis for a child can take a long time.

Support can and should be put in place around a child's individual needs, without having to wait for them to receive a name for their condition. The Government, local council, health and education authorities provide a wide range of benefits, facilities, support and advice for disabled children and their parents and carers.

Sheffield City Council supports children and families with disabilities through area based inclusion teams. Hearing, visually impaired and autism support services are centrally based, offering support city-wide.

Early signs

Some children's disabilities are spotted early on around the time of their birth. Others only appear gradually and it can be difficult for a parent to know whether there is a problem, or

whether their child is simply a little slow in developing.

Getting assistance early on is important, as early interventions can sometimes prevent problems from getting worse. If you are concerned about how your child is developing contact your health visitor or doctor for advice. Your local Sure Start Children's Centre will also be able to help you.

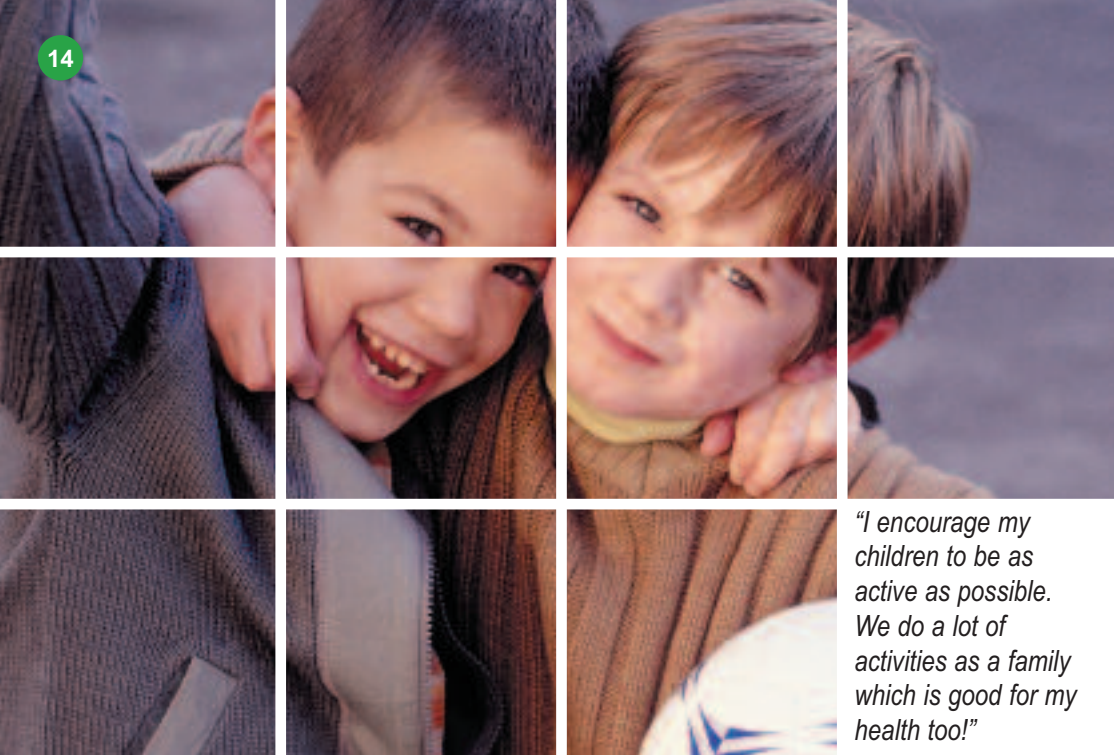
Behaviour

Certain conditions affect the way a child behaves. Children with learning disabilities face more challenges in learning what is acceptable behaviour. Children who find it difficult to communicate, or be independent of others can easily get frustrated, which can impact on their behaviour. The organisation Contact a Family has useful leaflets, which can help parents, including ones on understanding challenging behaviour, encouraging good sleep habits, feeding/eating and potty training. There are some specialist courses where parents can learn how to manage difficult behaviour for children with disabilities, your local services can tell you more. There are many local, national and international organisations and charities specially set up to give further help, advice and support to people just like you.

Make contact

You're not alone, so make contact today and get the support you need.

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"I encourage my children to be as active as possible. We do a lot of activities as a family which is good for my health too!"



WARNING SIGNS

An unhealthy diet can lead to health problems. Your child may not sleep well, be able to concentrate, feel less active and not have sufficient energy to live life to the full.



ACTION

Get active. Eat a healthy balanced diet. You can ask your doctor for diet and exercise advice for a healthy lifestyle for you and your family. If you are a smoker get help to give up. Take your child to the dentist regularly.



WHAT TO SAY

Explain to your children the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Suggest activities you can do as a family like cycling or swimming so you can get fit and have fun together.



PREVENTION

Balance is the key! Too much saturated fat, salt and sugar are bad for the body. Help your child lead a healthy balanced lifestyle.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor, school nurse or Sure Start Children's Centre
- School Health Service
0114 226 2001
- Activity Sheffield
0114 273 4266
- NHS Stop Smoking Service
0800 022 4 332
- Beating Eating Disorders
0845 634 1414

WEBLINKS <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> • www.b-eat.co.uk • www.nhs.uk/Change4Life

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- Balance is the key to a healthy lifestyle**
- If you eat more calories than your body burns, you will put on weight**
- Act now and protect your children from second hand smoke**
- Life is too short to waste time being unhealthy**

Healthy lifestyles - Looking after their health

What they eat

It can be confusing to know how to plan healthy meals for you and your family. Obesity and heart disease are major problems in the UK today, because we eat too much saturated fat, salt and sugar in fast food and snacks, and not enough fresh fruit and vegetables. Balance is the key. It's important to make sure your child eats a good variety of foods in sensible amounts.

Ensure your children eat regular meals and make time to sit down to eat and to enjoy food together as a family. To get the best possible start to the day it is important that children have a good healthy breakfast. Encourage your children to drink water and milk rather than fizzy drinks and juice.

Exercise

Encourage your children to be as active as possible. The whole family can get involved with swimming, long walks, bike rides and kicking a ball around the park. Even walking to school or to the shops counts as exercise. There are often after-school clubs where your child can take part in activities such as football or dance classes.

Smoking

The health problems associated with cigarettes such as cancer and heart disease are well known, which is why you and your family should stay smoke free.

However, if you smoke you should protect your child from second hand smoke and reduce the risk of them becoming ill. Your doctor can help you kick this damaging habit for good.

Sleep

As a parent you know that lack of sleep can affect your mood and ability to function at work or as a parent. The same is true of children. Recent studies have concluded that not having enough sleep can impact on a child's behaviour and achievement at school. Establish a good bedtime routine and agree a set time for bed. Children are growing and use lots of energy so can need up to 12 hours sleep a night so make sure your children get a good night's sleep.

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"I tried to not get cross when I had to change the sheets again, and made sure I praised her for going all night without wetting the bed. It's made a huge difference, she's dry most nights now."



WARNING SIGNS

There may be none, but does your child seem to be unhappy? Has something happened in the family or in your child's life that is worrying him or her?



ACTION

Stay calm if your child is wetting or soiling the bed. Check whether there is a particular time when your child wets or soils. Make sure they go to the toilet just before going to bed. If you are worried discuss your concerns with your health visitor or doctor. You should also seek support for yourself.



WHAT TO SAY

Give your child the chance to discuss their feelings with you. Try to keep calm and relaxed without showing signs of strain. Praise your child when they sleep through the night but do not tell them off if they don't or if they bed wet. Try to understand how they feel if they are worried or stressed by the wetting.



PREVENTION

Make sure your child knows that they can share any worries with you. If you want advice about things you can do to try to prevent wetting, discuss your concerns with your health visitor, doctor or school nurse.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor, doctor or local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Education & Resources for Improving Childhood Continence (ERIC) 0845 370 8008

- Bedwetting may be a sign of a health problem but more often than not your child will learn to control their bladder at their own pace
- Each child's sleep pattern is different
- Take time to sort out a bedtime routine, including a time for your child to relax and unwind before going to bed
- If your child often wakes in the night, try to find out why he or she has woken, for example because of a bad dream or being hungry

Sleeping difficulties - How can I help my child?

Potty training

Your child is more likely to learn control if you are relaxed and calm about it. Remember your child will learn at their own pace and that praise, rather than telling them off, will help. Between the ages of three and four years your child is likely to be dry during the day, with the odd accident. Remember, this is often not an instant change but a gradual process where more and more nights will be dry nights.

Bedwetting

It is not easy to know why some children take longer to be dry at night than others. However, bedwetting is not due to laziness or lack of will power. Although this may be stressful for both you and your child try not to lose your patience. It is rare for a child to wet or soil on purpose. If, after the age of seven, your child often wets his or her bed, the problem may be caused by a number of things. Talk to your child and reassure them that other older children experience this too. Discuss any concerns about your child with your doctor, health visitor or school nurse.

Sleeping difficulties

- There are many different reasons why babies and young children do not sleep through the night.
- Try to have a sleep routine as early as six weeks if you can.
- Feel confident in yourself to know whether your child is really upset or just restless.
- If you are often woken up during the night, arrange for a relative or friend whom you trust to care for your baby or child sometimes so that you can get some sleep.

Establishing a routine

It is important to get a regular night time sleep routine for your child, one where they go to bed at a regular time each night. Make sure their room is warm and comfortable for them to relax in. Reading to your child at bedtime helps your child to unwind and relax. If your child is scared of the dark, try using a night-light. A few favourite toys in the bed will be a comfort if your child wakes up during the night. If you are worried that your child has serious difficulty getting to sleep, or does not regularly sleep through the night, discuss your concerns with your doctor, health visitor or school nurse.



"My daughter loves books and enjoys reading to me every day."



WARNING SIGNS

If you feel your child is struggling with language and communication, discuss your concerns with your doctor or health visitor. Your child will then be assessed and possibly referred to a professional who specialises in speech and language development.



ACTION

Choose a quiet place so there are no distractions, like the TV or radio. Sit the child on your knee and cuddle up with a book. Follow the words with your finger. This will help your child begin to understand that the black squiggly things are important because they are telling the story.



WHAT TO SAY

Talk to your child from birth as they listen to words spoken and learn how to talk. Children, aged three to four years old have growing vocabularies, and they learn how to rhyme.



PREVENTION

Introduce your child to books as early as possible and find out what is available in your local library. Enjoy yourself. Sharing books is great fun and it's the perfect time to share a cuddle at the same time.



CONTACTS

- Your local library, Sure Start Children's Centre or your child's school
- Early Years Librarian 0114 250 6843
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- **Bookstart is a national programme that encourages parents and carers to share and enjoy books with their babies and toddlers. It is administered by the Library Service**
- **Bookstart for Babies packs (0-18 months) and Bookstart Plus packs (2-2½ years) are usually distributed to families via local libraries and health visitors**
- **The Bookstart Treasure Box (3 years +) is distributed to nurseries, childminders and other early years settings from libraries**
- **The scheme also provides on request Booktouch Packs for blind and partially sighted children and Bookshine Packs for hearing impaired children**

Books & learning - Making learning fun

Your local library

Did you know that babies and toddlers are welcome to join the library and can have their own library card? Libraries have wonderful books for babies and toddlers and they don't mind how excited or noisy their young visitors get. All families are welcome and every library provides Baby Time sessions on a regular basis.

Talk to me

Book sharing is especially good for helping your child learn to talk, particularly when the stories have rhyme, lots of repetition or encourage joining in. You will be amazed at how much books influence your child's vocabulary and how many new words and phrases they pick up from the books and stories you share.

Read to me

Parents are a child's first and most important teacher and children have so much to learn about the world and how they fit in. Sharing books with your child is a wonderful way to build a loving relationship, increase their language skills and help them to understand the world.

Books for parents

You'll also find in your library, books that can help you deal with some of the common things

that all parents face such as potty training, weaning, temper tantrums and sleeping difficulties.

More than just books

As your child grows and develops, one of the best things you can do is to establish a routine of visiting the library together. This way your child will feel confident about using the library, finding books and information for school projects or to pursue an interest.

Lifelong love of books

Children are born to be lifelong learners, with an eagerness to learn new things everyday. Babies and toddlers who are introduced to books grow into confident readers with a curiosity about life and a lifelong love of books.

Baby Book Awards

The Baby Book Awards is an annual event celebrating the best of new books for babies. You can become involved in this and have your say in voting for the winning book.

Book ahead

This is a scheme funded by central government to provide packs of books and advice on sharing books with young children to privately run Early Years settings.

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“Andrew is seven, and I was very careful to visit and discuss his needs at the after-school club. It now means I can work a full day knowing his needs are being met and he is in a safe place.”



WARNING SIGNS

Sometimes, children are not always able to tell you if something is wrong so look out for changes in their moods, what they do and their physical appearance.



ACTION

Speak promptly to the person in charge about your concerns. If you have serious concerns about your child's safety, remove your child at once and contact your local child protection team at your local social services department. Call Ofsted.



WHAT TO SAY

Tell your child who will be looking after them, where they are going, how long for and who they need to ask for their daily needs. Find out about what a typical day or session consists of. Be prepared and ask plenty of questions.



PREVENTION

Talk to others who have used a particular childcare service. Look for trained and experienced staff. Visit the place where your child will be cared for and look for busy and relaxed children. Check how you will be informed about how your child is getting on and in case of emergency.



CONTACTS

- Sheffield Information Link 0114 275 6699
- Ofsted 08456 404045
- Department for Children, Schools and Families 0870 000 2288
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) 0121 248 2000
- NSPCC 0800 800 5000

WEBLINKS

www.ofsted.gov.uk • dcsf.gov.uk
www.rosopa.co.uk • www.nspcc.org.uk • www.surestart.gov.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699
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- All registered childcare in England must meet national standards set out by the Government
- All three and four year olds in Sheffield can have 15 hours per week of free early learning
- Make a list of questions and take it with you when you visit each childcare centre
- Make sure the carer knows how to contact you in an emergency and who you will allow to collect your child
- Avoid leaving your child with someone under 16

Childcare & early learning - The right choice for you

As a parent you are often the best judge of whether a childcare service will suit your child.

When you leave your child in the care of others check that their needs are being met, their cultural background is recognised and understood, they will be happy there, the same group of children often attend so your child can make friends, mealtimes are relaxed and fun, there is lots to do and it is carefully planned.

Make sure that your child is left in a safe place with well trained and experienced staff. You may also want to get involved and know about what your child is doing day to day.

Listed below are some of the main types of childcare:

After school/out of school and breakfast clubs provide term time care for school pupils before or after school and some also open in school holidays. They may be Ofsted registered depending on how long they are open.

Day nurseries provide full and part-time integrated childcare and education for children aged from birth to five years. Some offer after school care for children over five too.

Home based childcarers (childminders) are Ofsted registered and self-employed childcarers who look after children of any age in the childcarer's own home. They can provide integrated childcare and education to small groups of children. Nannies are also home based childcarers, but they are not required to register.

Maintained nursery schools and classes are funded by the Local Authority and run by schools and Sure Start Children's Centres. They provide integrated care and education for three and four year olds.

Pre-school and playgroups both provide childcare, some are required to register depending on how long they operate for.

For more information on how to choose suitable childcare contact Sheffield Information Link.

Free early learning

In Sheffield, every three and four year old is entitled to 15 hours of free early learning during term time. The 15 hours are flexible but must be taken over a minimum of three days and are available up to a maximum of 38 weeks of the year. Contact Sheffield Information Link to find your nearest provider.



"My local Sure Start Children's Centre has been a huge support. My son and I enjoy the activities we do and I've made some new friends too."



WARNING SIGNS

Are you anxious about your child getting the best start in life? Every family needs advice or support at some point and Sure Start Children's Centres are there to help.



ACTION

Make time to have fun playing with your child. Make sure other carers have a positive attitude to play and learning. Find out about Sure Start Children's Centre services available in your area and get involved.



WHAT TO SAY

Just go with the flow. Introduce your child to as many different experiences as you can. Try to discover what sort of play interests your child and play along with them.



PREVENTION

Avoid letting your child get bored. Spend time with young children - keep them stimulated. Try to think up new activities for your child, especially ones for rainy days.



CONTACTS

- Your local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Sheffield Information Link 0114 275 6699
- Department for Children, Schools and Families 0870 000 2288

WEBLINKS www.sheffield.gov.uk/findachildrenscentre • www.asksid.net • www.surestart.gov.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- A network of Sure Start Children's Centres services offering support and advice to families with young children
- A range of services are available across the city depending on local need and parental choice. Not all services will be the same
- Lots of services are available for parents as well as young children
- Children of all ages learn through play - play is a vital part of your child's development
- Early childhood experiences affect children's attitude to learning
- As a parent you have a continuing vital role in your child's play and learning
- Young children do not distinguish between work and play

Sure Start Children's Centres - A place for all the family

Young families have a range of needs. From early pregnancy through until starting school the demands on you as parents never really stop. Sure Start Children's Centres are about making sure that it is as easy as possible for you to get the help and advice you need from services, close to home, and when you need it.

The types of activities you may find include:

- Baby and toddler activities.
- Speech and language sessions.
- Baby massage sessions.
- Drop-ins to see the midwife or health visitor.
- Breastfeeding support.
- Positive parenting courses.
- Child development courses.

You can get help and advice during and after your pregnancy right through to when your child is preparing to start school, as well as meeting and talking to other mums and dads. Sure Start Children's Centres may offer access to childcare, early education services, advice on

what is available in your area, child and family health services or family support and outreach to parents.

If you are looking to return to training or work there will be links with Jobcentre Plus and the local college. There may be activities and training available for parents who want to learn new skills and meet other parents.

Sure Start Children's Centres services can help both you and your child prepare for school and education. They will be able to support you in accessing early learning places and the Centre may offer you a variety of play and learning opportunities, as well as telling you what else is available in the local area. Children learn through play and having fun, as well as being praised for their efforts.

Everyone can use Sure Start Children's Centre services, they are open to all families with children under five including those expecting a baby.

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"The first year or so of my daughter's life were the most special for bonding with her. Even before she could talk, I knew that her smiles and gurgles were her trying to communicate with me."



WARNING SIGNS

Children develop at different rates but if you're worried about your child's speech and language, ask your health visitor or staff at nursery for advice. They may need to have a hearing test or to see a speech and language therapist.



ACTION

Talk and smile to your baby even if they can't talk back, and give them lots of praise. Looking at a picture book from your library will improve your baby's words, language and listening skills too. Singing nursery rhymes or making up songs is another fun way to learn - don't be embarrassed!



WHAT TO SAY

Remember that babies absorb lots of things, so try to use a calm, gentle voice whenever you're around them. Use actions and gestures with words, for example waving 'bye bye'. It's a good idea to copy what they say - even if it's just burbling and repeat words they use.



PREVENTION

Before they can speak, your child will communicate with you through eye contact, smiling and gurgling. So talk and interact with your baby - it will be easier for them to learn to talk later on. If you are worried speak to your health visitor.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor, doctor or local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Firth Park Clinic 0114 271 6297

- Communicating with your child can begin from birth
- Before they can speak, they communicate with you through eye contact, smiling and gurgling
- Communication isn't just about words, but your tone of voice and your facial expressions too

Developing speech & language - Chatter matters

Communicating with your child helps you form a strong bond. Even before your child can talk, they interact with you through eye contact, smiling, gurgling and even crying. Their brain develops the most between birth and two years so their early days are really important.

Your baby learns by hearing and doing. So if you say words and make sounds from the start they will copy them later on. They might smile without meaning to at first, but if you smile back they will learn to do it again.

If you talk and interact with your baby it'll be easier for them to learn to talk later on, even if you don't think they understand now. It'll also increase their self-confidence, help them make friends and help them learn to read and write when they're older.

But it's not just about words. Your child will also notice your tone of voice, how you stand and how you use your hands - even your facial expressions.

Remember that children develop at different rates, so don't worry if other children their age seem to be talking more.

How your child's speech and language develops

In the first six months, most children learn to make eye contact, smile when an adult sees them and use different cries for different

needs. Give your baby lots of eye contact.

From six months to a year, your baby will try out sounds for themselves, like 'ma-ma' and 'da-da'. Give them big smiles, copy them and encourage them to repeat. Describe everything you do when you're with your child - even if it's just opening or closing the door.

From 12-18 months, your child will probably try out their first words, or point and make a noise to say what they want. Repeat words as you say them - for example, if you offer them a biscuit, say 'biscuit'. If you recognise a word they say, repeat it to them, give them a smile and some praise.

From 18 months to two years, they'll be able to refer to themselves by name and understand the names of familiar toys and food etc. Try not to correct words that they get wrong - just repeat them back to them correctly.

From two to three years, your child will probably be asking 'why' a lot. Try to be patient and give simple answers to their questions. They'll also be able to join in with nursery rhymes and action songs and listen to simple stories.

From three to four years, your child should be talking more freely and clearly. Try to take it in turns to listen and speak so they'll learn two-way conversation.



"With a few simple changes and a new set of rules I have really turned around my child's behaviour. Life is a lot happier for us both now."



WARNING SIGNS

There may be none. Is your child eating well? Getting enough exercise? Any changes in how they act? Is your child trying to tell you something? Are they constantly unhappy, with mood changes and temper tantrums?



ACTION

Be involved and develop a good relationship with your child. Lead a healthy lifestyle. Do things together.



WHAT TO SAY

Set rules and stick to them and remember that you are in charge! Don't give up on talking.



PREVENTION

Be a little crazy and have fun with your child! Listen carefully to your child's point of view. Help them think through choices.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor, midwife or local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Your Multi Support Agency Team (MAST) 0114 205 3158
- C'mon Everybody 0114 231 2731
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS www.cmoneverybody.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk

- Children need to feel secure, loved and valued - this is the basis of self-esteem and confidence
- Be realistic about what you expect from your child
- Listen to and talk to your child - it's good to talk!
- Do things together with your child that you both enjoy - have fun!

Positive parenting - Make them feel great!

Positive parenting is about doing things you enjoy together and bringing out the best in your child, by listening and understanding, praising and encouraging their efforts, noticing and rewarding good behaviour.

It is often easy to point out where your child is going wrong and forget to notice the things they do right. Parental attention and praise affects children so you need to use it in the right way! Not only will this have an effect on your child's behaviour in a positive way, it will also make your child feel happy, loved, wanted and secure and this is the basis of life-long confidence and self-esteem.

Children have to learn to make their own decisions and to establish their independence from their parents. Unfortunately their decisions might not always fit with yours. That is why tension is normal. Choose your battles and let some go! Be friendly and supportive and let them know you understand and that you are always willing to listen.

Temper tantrums

Young children are often not able to express themselves as much as they want to and their frustration may come out as a tantrum.

Tantrums are especially likely to happen if a child is tired, hungry or uncomfortable.

Tips for dealing with temper tantrums:

- Keep calm. Getting angry and shouting at your child will not help.
- Your child might be tired or hungry so rest or food might help.
- Try to find a distraction.
- If you do say 'no' don't be tempted to give in later to calm them down.
- If you're at home you can try ignoring the tantrum.
- Encourage your child to cool down on their own and talk more calmly about what they want.
- After the tantrum, praise your child for settling down. Even though they may no longer be angry they may still be upset, so give them a cuddle and make it clear that you still love them no matter what.

If you feel you need support or advice in managing your child's behaviour contact your local Sure Start Children's Centre or MAST. You may choose to attend a local parenting course.



“When Mia started school it was an exciting time for her - and us, too! She wasn't the only one who had to get used to a whole new routine - there were big changes for the whole family.”



WARNING SIGNS

Your child may feel nervous and insecure about the big changes. They may say they feel too ill to go to school, they might be angry towards you or cry, too. These feelings are all quite normal.



ACTION

Start thinking about which school you want your child to go to well in advance. Contact your preferred school and arrange a visit.



WHAT TO SAY

If your child feels nervous, talk about how you felt when you started/ changed schools. Explain that it's natural to feel like this but that everyone's in the same situation.



PREVENTION

If you're feeling anxious about your child starting school, try not to let them see this. Be positive about the exciting change. Talk to your child and reassure them about what's going to happen. This will help them feel prepared about the next stage in their life.



CONTACTS

- Your child's school
- Choice adviser 0114 273 5233
- Primary School Admissions 0114 273 5766
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.direct.gov.uk • www.parentscentre.gov.uk • www.edubase.gov.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Starting school can be a huge change for your child
- Start thinking about your child's early learning place well in advance
- Find out as much as you can about their new school
- It can sometimes be a difficult time for parents too

Starting out - Helping children and parents cope

Home to nursery

For some children, being in a large group of children can be a scary experience. You can help them by going to a Parent and Toddler group, by attending other activities where other small children are around, by inviting children from nursery to play, by helping in playgroup or nursery so that you get to know their friends and your child gets used to being with other children.

needs to happen in the autumn term a year before your child would start there. Do this by the closing date, or you might not get the school you want. You'll find out if your child has been accepted by 31 March. If they haven't been given a place, you can appeal against the school's decision.

A choice adviser can offer you independent support and guidance to help you decide on the right school for your child.

Nursery to primary school

Prepare your child for what will happen in school, encourage their independence. Ask if you can help in their class. Talk to their teacher, share information about your child that may help. If your child has a problem, talk to school, they will be able to help.

Give your child lots of support so it's easier for them. Make sure they know what to expect. You might worry how your child is going to cope with being in a new environment. While you probably feel excited for them, maybe you also feel a little sad that your child is growing up and doesn't need you so much any more. It's natural to feel like this sometimes.

Find out as much as you can about the schools near you. Go to open days if you can. When you've decided which schools you're interested in, fill out the Common Application Form. You can do it online or on paper. This

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"Taking part in family learning has meant that I feel more able to support my child with his learning. His teacher says he is doing so much better at school since I went on the course."



WARNING SIGNS

If you are concerned about how your child is coping with learning or you do not feel able to help your child you are not alone. Talk to their teacher or to the Family Learning Team for advice.



ACTION

Talk to your child about their learning and life in school. It's never too late to return to learning even if you did not enjoy it the first time around. Adult and Community Learning and especially Family Learning Programmes are free or low cost to encourage parents back to learning. Learning as an adult is fun!



WHAT TO SAY

Be positive about your child's efforts with learning new skills. Enrolling on a family learning course will help you to keep up with the children and see how things are taught so that you can help them at home.



PREVENTION

You can brush up your own literacy and numeracy skills so that you are better able to help your child, by contacting the Family Learning Team or your local College.



CONTACTS

- Your local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Lifelong Learning and Skills 0114 266 7503
- Family Learning Team 020 7766 0001
- Your local library

WEBLINKS www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Learning together within the family is a great opportunity to show your child that you value learning
- The best start you can give your child in terms of their education is talking to them
- Taking part in learning as an adult can lead to increased confidence, skills and even qualifications

Family learning - Enjoy learning together

Family learning activities get parents involved in their child's learning and increase a parent's confidence in supporting their child. In Sheffield there is a team of qualified tutors who deliver family learning programmes.

Family learning is a planned activity which involves parents, carers and wider family members in their children's learning.

You can get involved in workshops/short sessions and longer courses that will help you support your child at all stages of their learning. These can take place during the school day or in the evenings in schools, Sure Start Children's Centres, extended schools, libraries or in the local community.

Family learning funding is available to every local authority in the country to engage parents into learning through their children's learning.

Wider family learning covers all aspects of the national curriculum including health issues, citizenship, eco programmes and the arts. Some courses can lead to parents gaining a qualification.

Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy Programmes aim to support the whole family with their literacy and numeracy skills in a variety of ways. This includes activities, making games and resources to use at home, discussions and parents working alongside their children.

As well as programmes where parents work with their children, the service also offers adult only sessions with a tutor where parents learn about the curriculum and make resources to support children's learning at home. All Family Learning Programmes effectively support families in school and at home with learning.

Through family learning, parents can help support their child, build their own confidence and skills, gain qualifications and make new friends.

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"It has to be every new parent's nightmare. But thanks to a few simple guidelines we're all sleeping a bit better now."



WARNING SIGNS

Cot death or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is becoming more and more rare. Most deaths occur in babies under six months old. There are no clear warning signs so preventing this is crucial.



ACTION

Look at the prevention advice given on the opposite page and take any steps needed to create a safe place for your baby.



WHAT TO SAY

Make sure that all people who take a role in caring for your baby know of the risks from cot death, especially if they smoke. If you are unsure about what to do get medical advice at once.



PREVENTION

Follow the prevention steps outlined on the page opposite. Keep your baby's cot in your room for the first six months, this way it will be easier to keep an eye on their sleeping position and surroundings.



CONTACTS

- Your doctor or health visitor
- Cruse Bereavement Care Sheffield 0114 249 3328
- Cruse Bereavement Care (National) 0844 477 9400
- NHS Direct 0845 4647

WEBLINKS www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk • www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Always put your baby to sleep in the 'Back to Sleep' and 'Feet to Foot' position
- Babies aren't good at keeping their temperature constant, so make sure they don't get too hot or too cold
- Keep your baby away from smoke

Safe sleeping - Reducing the risk of cot death

'Back to sleep'

Unless told otherwise by health professionals your baby should always be put to sleep on its back. This has been shown to be highly significant in ensuring babies' safety during sleep. Never let your baby fall asleep propped up on a cushion, on a sofa or chair and don't let anyone fall asleep whilst nursing your baby.

The safest place

A well-designed and stable cot in your own room is by far the safest place for your baby to sleep in their first six months. Keep it simple and tidy, do not use plastic sheets, bumpers, baby nests, wedges, bedding rolls or any ribbons or mobiles that your baby could get caught up in. The mattress should be firm, flat, clean and have a secure waterproof covering. Cover the mattress with a clean sheet and make sure there are no gaps between the mattress and the sides of the cot as your baby could slip or become caught.

Temperature

Babies can overheat, which is known to play a part in cot death. Try to keep the room between 16 and 20 degrees centigrade. Do not use duvets, quilts or pillows until your baby is one year old, instead give your baby one light layer

of clothing or bedding. Never use hot water bottles or electric blankets and always position your baby in the 'Feet to Foot' position, with their feet at the foot of the cot so that they can't move down inside their blanket. Avoid covering your baby's face or head indoors.

Sleeping with your baby

If you take a baby who cannot sleep into your bed, do not take any medicine, drugs or alcohol that may make you sleep more heavily than usual. Remember that when sleeping next to you your baby will be warmer anyway, so if they fall asleep under your duvet they may get too hot. Be aware that they face a bigger health risk if you or your partner is a smoker.

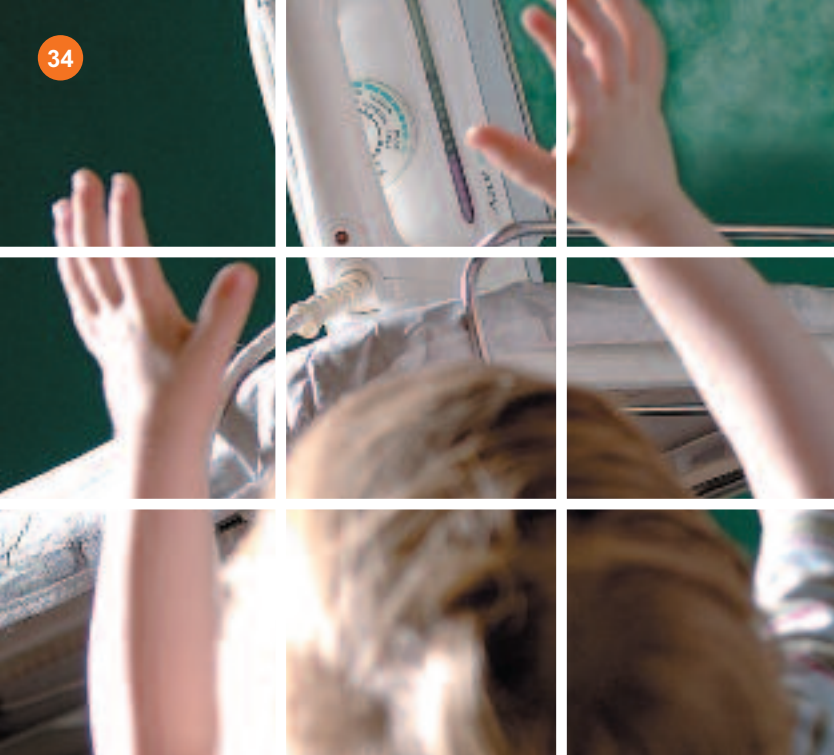
Clean air

Never let anyone smoke near your baby and if you or your partner is a smoker you should give up now. Tobacco smoke is known to be in the breath of a smoker for a considerable time after they have been smoking.

Make contact

If your baby seems unwell or if you have any worries about safe sleeping or cot death, get medical advice at once.

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"Before Joe was born I never thought about where I left things. Nowadays, everything in the house seems dangerous so I never leave him unsupervised."



WARNING SIGNS

Spend some time exploring your house as if you were a young child. This will show you the many potential dangers that, if not removed, could harm your child.



ACTION

Make a list of these potential dangers and move them to safety or protect your child from them by using safety devices. For more information contact helplines listed under contacts.



WHAT TO SAY

With very young children the tone of your voice and your facial expressions alongside explanations are extremely important. Children will begin to sense the warning tone in your voice over time.



PREVENTION

Remove dangerous objects like drugs, syringes, medicines and household chemicals out of the reach of children and lock them away safely. Do this before your child is exposed to any hazard.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor or midwife
- The Royal Society for the prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) 0121 248 2000
- Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) 020 7608 3828

- Babies and children learn by exploring their surroundings
- Babies do not automatically know what is dangerous
- Babies need guidance to keep safe at home
- Remove all potential dangers in your home
- Watch your child and remove him or her from danger
- Explain about safety to your child from an early age

Health & safety - Making your home safe

Babies and young children learn about their world by exploring it. This means that, as soon as they are able to, they will crawl, touch and grab at whatever is in their line of vision. They are curious by nature and need careful and gentle guidance from a young age about what danger is and what to stay away from. Shouting at or smacking children will not teach them about safety.

Most accidents happen in the home and this is why it is important to ensure that your home is safe for all your family especially for young children. There are many situations each year in which children have overdosed on their parents' drugs and medicines.

Some dangers around the home:

- Make sure that all medicines and drugs are locked away well out of reach and your use of them is private to avoid your child copying you.
- Certain rooms are necessarily full of danger, such as the kitchen and should remain out of bounds or be made safe by the use of safety devices.

- Are your children contained within the house? Is the safety chain high enough on the front door even for a very active toddler?
- Crawling and exploring are an essential part of their development - keep an eye on your young children, especially near wires and sockets.
- Small children should never be left alone with pets. Even trained and good natured animals can be tested when children are around.
- Make sure that irons, saucepans and hot drinks are kept out of the reach of children. Scalding and burns are common and avoidable accidents.
- Inhaling cigarette smoke is bad for children's health. Children will be affected by passive smoking and your smoking may encourage them to smoke when they are older.
- Check toys for safety marks. Ensure that your child does not play with toys that are not suitable for his or her age, especially if the pieces are small enough to choke on. Unsafe toys can be very dangerous.



"She cries all the time and I get so frustrated with her sometimes I feel like shaking her to stop her noise. I had no idea how much that could hurt her."



WARNING SIGNS

A range of signs can indicate if a child may have been shaken, including feeding difficulties, lethargy, eye injuries, vomiting, irritability, speech and learning difficulties, developmental delay, seizures and paralysis.



ACTION

If you are worried about your child, take him or her to see your doctor, health visitor or to the Casualty department. Seek support, including the helplines listed under Contacts.



WHAT TO SAY

Develop communication with your child using eye contact, smiling, cuddling and talking. This will develop your understanding and responsiveness to your baby's needs when he/she is having difficulties.



PREVENTION

It is never safe to shake a child, not even in play. It is important for siblings playing together or for the babysitter or any other carer to be made aware of the dangers.



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor or doctor
- Cry-sis
08451 228 669
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS www.cry-sis.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Shaking is often a response to extreme frustration
- Shaking can cause damage that you cannot see
- Shaking can cause damage that is long lasting
- Never shake a child for any reason
- There are different ways to cope with a crying baby
- Do not suffer alone, seek support from others

Shaking the baby - Find different ways to cope

Why do people shake babies?

Often, although not always, babies and young children are shaken when a parent or carer becomes very frustrated when they will not stop crying due to colic, illness or feeding difficulties. On average a baby will cry for at least two hours every day. If a baby has additional difficulties, they will cry more and this can be very stressful and difficult to manage.

Many parents may not realise the extent of the damage that a shake can do to a young child. Parents/carers who have a low tolerance level may become angry and more likely to give in and shake the child. However there are many alternatives to try and people to talk to.

Some very rough play with a young child can also cause some similar injuries so never shake a young child.

What damage can shaking cause?

Shaking a baby can cause death or serious and long-lasting brain damage. Shaken Baby Syndrome is an injury that results when a baby is shaken so that his or her head wobbles rapidly back and forth. The force of this can tear the blood vessels that connect the brain

and skull. This happens because a young child's neck muscles are not strong enough to hold their head firmly. The action of shaking can cause serious damage, even though the parent/carer does not perceive it as fierce. Never ever shake a baby for any reason.

Ways to cope with a crying baby

Crying is the way all babies make sure that their basic needs are met - they may be hungry, thirsty, need a change of nappy or even some company. Crying is neither your fault nor the fault of your baby.

Some of the ways to cope include:

- Count to ten before doing anything and allow yourself to calm down.
- Hug and cuddle your child - perhaps with the use of a baby-carrier so that they are close to your body in order to help soothe them.
- Go for a walk or a drive to help them sleep.
- Make use of a helpline in times of crisis.
- If necessary walk out of the room for a short time, ensuring that you are nearby.
- Ask someone else you trust to take over for a while.

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"I have made sure that I taught Kyle about road safety from a young age. He is eight now and I still don't let him cross the road on his own!"



WARNING SIGNS

Young children have difficulty dealing with traffic, so it is recommended that they are not let out alone or allowed to cross the road by themselves. It is important that you show them what to do right from the start.



ACTION

Teach your child the Green Cross Code. Visit websites below for more information.



WHAT TO SAY

It is vital that you teach your child about road safety from an early age. Remember that children copy their parents/carers, so be a good role model by always crossing the road sensibly and always wearing a seatbelt.



PREVENTION

The law says that all children up to 135cm in height or 12th birthday (which ever they reach first) must use an appropriate child restraint. You can be fined if your child is not wearing a seat belt or in the correct restraint.



CONTACTS

- Sheffield City Council Road Safety 0114 273 6161
- Getting to School 0114 273 6153
- Information on routes and ways of getting to school (see weblinks)

WEBLINKS

www.sheffield.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/road-safety • www.get2school.sheffield.gov.uk/map.aspx • www.dft.gov.uk/think/ • www.childcarseats.org.uk/ • www.rospa.com/roadsafety • www.travelwise.org.uk • www.trafficclub.co.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- It is vital that you teach your child about road safety from an early age
- The road is not a playground. It is a very dangerous place!
- All children up to 135cm in height need to be using a correct child restraint on every car journey

Road safety - Teach them to be safe

Crossing the road

Many children cannot judge how fast cars are moving or indeed the distance at which it is safe to cross the road. Therefore it is important that they are taught at a young age how to cross the road safely.

Children under the age of eight have difficulty dealing with traffic, so never let them out alone or let them cross the road by themselves. The main aims with under fives are to make sure they are safe and to teach them about traffic. Parents are the best people to teach their children about road safety.

- Explain to your child what traffic is. Tell them that the road is for traffic and the pavement is for people, talk to them about what you are doing when you are out and about.
- Always choose the safest crossing place, even if it means walking a little bit further.
- Keep a firm hold of your child. Always hold hands or use reins.
- Children should always walk on the pavement away from the road.
- Explain about stopping at the kerb and why we look and listen before crossing the road.
- Teach your child that pavements and roads are not playgrounds.
- Make sure your child can be seen. Look for reflective strips on coats or buy small items to improve visibility.

In the car

If you're driving children in the car they need

to be in a properly fitted, age appropriate car seat. Make sure it's right for your child's weight and height. Here is a short guide:

- Children who weigh 13g or less (usually 1 year and under) should be in a rear-facing baby seat. Never place in the front seat if there is an airbag.
- Children who weigh between 9kg and 18kg (about age 4 and under) should be in a child seat.
- Children who weigh more than 15kg (about age 4 to 6) should be in a booster seat.
- Children who weigh 22kg or more should have a booster cushion.
- Visit www.childcarseats.org.uk for more detailed information on child car seats.

Cycling

Your child must always wear a helmet when riding a bike. If they have an accident, helmets can prevent them having a serious head injury.

Children should be clearly seen, get them to wear reflective and fluorescent sashes or bands. Get them into the habit of giving their bike a safety check - show them how to check the brakes and tyres, that the reflectors are clean and the lights work. If cycling with your child start to teach them some basic road safety, for example always checking for cars and basic manoeuvres. It is recommended that young children do not cycle on the road unaccompanied.

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"I get so frustrated with him sometimes, that I occasionally feel like smacking him - I don't of course as I know that will not solve anything."



WARNING SIGNS

A child who flinches or moves away when they fear they might be hit. Smacking a child hard with a force, which (when you look back at it) you feel you shouldn't have done and feel bad about. Leaving bruising and other marks on a child.



ACTION

If you are worried about your own or someone else's smacking get support from the organisations listed under Contacts. If it is someone you know, offer practical help and suggestions.



WHAT TO SAY

Tell your child they have gone too far or broken family rules. Use your tone of voice and the expression on your face to help them understand that they have reached the limit. Explain your reasons why.



PREVENTION

Make it a general rule not to smack your child. Use other ways to discipline; set clear limits and explain them, be firm and stick to rules, ignore minor bad behaviour and reward good (perhaps use a star chart).



CONTACTS

- Your health visitor or local Sure Start Children's Centre
- Your Multi Agency Support Team (MAST) 0114 205 3158
- Barnardo's 020 8550 8822
- NSPCC 0808 800 5000

WEBLINKS www.barnardos.org.uk • www.nspcc.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Smacking does not teach children self-discipline
- Smacking gives attention to a child's bad behaviour
- Children learn best by attention to things they do well
- There are many better things to do than to smack
- Smacking teaches children to hurt others

Smacking - The great debate

It is important that children learn how to behave and control how they act as they get older. Parents have a very important job as role models for their children in helping them to learn how to do this.

Teaching children from a young age by setting limits and explaining reasons for these limits helps them develop self-discipline. Smacking, which controls your child from the outside, has no long-lasting good effects. In fact smacking usually becomes harder in order to have the same impact on your growing child. This is where the thin line between smacking and hitting can be crossed.

Have you ever smacked your child?

The answer from many parents reading this will be 'yes'. Every parent experiences frustration with his or her child at some time. It is at these times that a parent may smack in the heat of the moment, but this is an outlet for the parent's feelings, rather than a helpful way of training a child. However, simply because lots of people may have smacked their children does not mean it is the best way to punish your child or make sure they are good. Those who say smacking is okay have argued

that it is not harmful in the long-term and is the most immediate form of discipline. However, it is much more helpful and safer to notice and reward your child's good behaviour, in order to encourage the behaviour you want.

Fewer parents are smacking their children now. Lots of those who keep doing so do it because they are not sure what else will work.

In UK society parents are not allowed to hurt their children whatever their individual, cultural or religious reasons. As a result, child protection professionals will look at cases of abuse of children, so that they can understand, stop it and explain the implications of it happening again. In England and Wales the Children's Act says smacking is against the law if it causes bruises, reddening of the skin or mental harm.

There are a number of other ways to deal with your child's behaviour. Talk to one of the agencies listed under Contacts to find one that works for you.

If you feel you need support or advice in managing your child's behaviour contact your local Sure Start Children's Centre.

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“Everyday I hear the child next door crying. Her parents are always shouting at her. This is probably none of my business but I am worried and not sure what to do.”



WARNING SIGNS

There are many possible signs of abuse, ranging from injury to changes in the way a child is acting. You could see something happen or a child may tell you that he or she is being hurt.



ACTION

If you think that a child has been hurt, contact the Interviewing Officer or the police. If you are unsure, you can speak to a helpline such as the NSPCC and your call will be kept private.



WHAT TO SAY

Explain exactly what you have seen or been told. If you can, keep a note of dates, injuries and the exact words used. These will help you.



PREVENTION

Make sure your child knows who they can share worries with if and when they need to. Listen carefully to children and notice any changes in them.



CONTACTS

- Sheffield City Council
0114 272 6444
- NSPCC
0808 800 5000
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
- ChildLine
0800 1111
- Family Rights Group
0808 801 0366

WEBLINKS www.nspcc.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.childline.org.uk • www.frg.org.uk

Sheffield Information Link (SIL) for information on children and family services (0-19) 0114 275 6699

- Protecting children is everybody's business
- Adults have a responsibility to report abuse
- Consider offering some support if you are worried
- If in doubt share your concerns about children
- Reporting concerns rarely leads to a child being removed
- Act now - long-term abuse is damaging for children

Worried about a child? - Should you mind your own business?

When we suspect, witness or are told that a child or young person has been harmed we can react in many different ways. We may feel guilt, anger, disbelief or denial. Some of these reactions can prevent help getting to a family who need it.

All parents experience difficulties at times. But they can be helped by other family members or close friends. If someone you know is having difficulties, you could offer:

- A listening ear.
- Ideas to cope with problems.
- Encouragement to get some help.
- Practical support for example with childcare or shopping.

Many people do not report their concerns because they may:

- Fear that the child or young person will be at further risk of harm.
- Believe that nothing will be done.
- Believe that the child or young person will be taken away from their family.
- Worry that the family may find out who reported them.
- Ruin family relationships.

However there may be times when a child or young person may be at risk of significant harm and professional support is needed. It is best that action is taken early to stop things getting worse. Long-term abuse is much more likely to cause problems for a child or young person as they get older. Even if you think an incident is just a one off, other professional agencies may already have concerns. So your information could be very important.

You can discuss your concerns in confidence by ringing 0114 273 4855, 24 hours a day and ask to speak to a social worker for the area where the child lives. The information will then be passed to the duty social work team in Children's Specialist Services for an initial assessment, if this is necessary, or passed to the agency outside of Children's Specialist Services which can offer the most appropriate support to the child and its family.

If you wish, you will be given feedback in due course about what action has been taken in response to your concerns.

Don't think: 'What if I'm wrong?' - think 'What if I'm right?'

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