Dear readers,

Regular readers of our quarterly might notice a slight change. It’s out with the old and in with a new design which we hope you will enjoy.

Alongside all the usual news, features and contact information are links to useful websites, suggestions for further reading and information on courses.

Teenage pregnancy was chosen by various readers as the topic for this issue and you can now choose one of two topics for the next Sure Start Bulletin.

These are food and nutrition (and also oral health) or ante/post-natal support.

If you would like to vote or if you have any comments on the content or design of the bulletin, please contact me at joseph.leftwich@scotland.gov.uk.

Hope you enjoy this issue.

STAFF

Children and Families Division has responsibility for Sure Start Scotland and is headed by Maureen Verrall. Maureen's staff who work with Sure Start Scotland are:

Elena Groll 0131 244 0253
Margaret Tod 0131 244 7024
Joseph Leftwich 0131 244 7583
Carrie Davies 0131 244 7028

Our postal address is:

Area 2B North Victoria Quay
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ
To email any member of staff:
firstname.surname@scotland.gsi.gov.uk
SURE START SCOTLAND WEBSITE

The Sure Start Scotland website address has now been changed. The previous address was far too complicated to remember so we have changed our address to:

www.scotland.gov.uk/surestartscotland

Simple isn’t it?
But if it’s not simple enough then please click on the image below.

UN YEAR OF THE FAMILY

2004 marks the 10th anniversary of the UN Year of the Family. A small steering group consisting of Scottish Executive staff and voluntary sector representatives has come together to provide an overview of events happening in Scotland to mark the anniversary.

We intend to promote various events in Scotland. A website including a timetable of events will be available at:

www.scotland.gov.uk/unyearofthefamily

If you have any events or any connected activity which you would like to badge as part of the UN Year of the Family 10th Anniversary then let us know and we can post it on the website.

STAFF CHANGES IN THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DIVISION

Sarah Smith, Head of Children and Families Division, recently left to take up a new post in the Office of the Permanent Secretary as Head of the Ministerial Support Group. We wish her all the best for the future.

My predecessor, Dave Boyle, has left the Executive for America where he will work on a camp for the rehabilitation of young offenders. My name is Joseph Leftwich and I’ll be in post until October.
SUCCESSFUL GROUPS FOR YOUNG PARENTS

Jo Farrington, antenatal teacher and trainer for the Nation Childbirth Trust and co-founder of Young Women Expecting Babies (YWEB) discusses how she prepares successful groups for young parents.

How do you keep young parents coming to groups?

This question always crops up at the NHS ConNeCT courses that I, and other trainers from the National Childbirth Trust, run for health professionals interested in running antenatal classes for teenage mothers, their partners and/or supporters; and it is a real dilemma. Judging from the experiences of those attending NHS ConNeCT courses there seems to be a wide range of ways to attract young mothers to groups and to keep them coming. Many of them involve food!

We haven’t resorted to providing meals yet, in the group I run, apart from drinks and packets of chocolate-chip cookies that are eagerly devoured. We meet in the early evening (7 to 9 pm) so that girls who are working as well as those at school or home can attend and we have seen the added benefit of their mothers and partners being able to bring them and/or stay with them. Most eat supper before they come or bring a hamburger. However, lunchtime also seems a popular time for groups to meet and this could be timed to suit school attendees too. Girls who work should be allowed time off for antenatal classes, although this can be difficult to ask for and does not apply to their partners or other supporters. Another strategy that seems to attract young parents-to-be is to provide freebies that the girls can enjoy during their pregnancy or can use with their babies. These can often be acquired from local shops and businesses although asking for them is time consuming. However they are popular and appreciated.

Then there is the venue. It helps if this is seen as cool, as well as being safe, central and easily accessible. There are lots of good places that NHS ConNeCT participants use and it never ceases to amaze me how creative they are when looking for a venue for this type of group.

Having got the girls through the door, how do you get them to participate? Often they are shy and are not used to mixing with strangers. If you are welcoming and the environment is comfortable it should be possible to encourage them to discover what they have in common, working in pairs and small groups. One needs to start at where they are and build on that, allowing them to talk about being pregnant, their hopes and fears for the birth and their plans for the new baby before getting them to think about labour, birth and parenting. Supporters need to be encouraged and shown how to help.
Every session is different and unpredictable, making planning difficult. However, it is possible to adapt to whatever size group you have and even one person on her own can get a great deal out of the session. It is hard not to despair when girls don’t come back, but this is inevitable. It is important to keep finding ways to make the group more enticing and relevant. Enthusiasm for the group and an interest in each person is much appreciated.

So if you want some fresh ideas about how to attract young parents to an antenatal group or if you feel in need of inspiration or encouragement to start such a group for young mothers or parents, why not consider coming to an NHS ConNeCT course. We are hoping to run some in Scotland soon.

Jo Farrington

For course details
tel: 0208 752 2338
Email: connect@national-childbirth-trust.co.uk

The National Childbirth Trust has recently been appointed Barbara Purdie as Community Development Worker in Scotland. Her contact details are as follows:

Barbara Purdie
12 Crosshill Drive
Bo’ness
West Lothian
EH51 9JB
Tel: 01506 823 406
Email: barbara_purdie@blueyonder.co.uk

**SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL-AGED AND TEENAGE PARENTS IN EAST LOTHIAN**

Monica Hoenigmann, Integration Manager at East Lothian Council, writes on developing systems of support for young parents.

East Lothian Council have acknowledged the need to develop clear policies and support for school aged and teenage mothers to encourage them to improve their educational opportunities and access health services.

It is estimated that there are between 10 and 12 babies born to teenage mothers in East Lothian each year with about 8 of these requiring significant levels of support. Research by Chambers and Walkey in 2001 showed that:

- pregnant teenagers fare less well in relationship to their antenatal health and care;
- postnatally, many live in poverty with 90% living on benefits;
• there are many barriers to young mothers resuming their education or finding affordable childcare.

In response, East Lothian Integrated Community Schools (previously New Community Schools) have been working closely with health services and the Scottish Childminding Association to develop systems of support for young parents.

After a successful joint bid with the Scottish Childminding Association the School Aged Parents group is funded through the New Opportunities Fund.

The project aims to provide free childcare to school aged parents in East Lothian to support them in continuing their school education.

Guidance teachers, integration officers and the school nursing service will work with the young person to ensure that they receive appropriate support. This may include reduced timetables, extra study support, access to lap tops for course work at home, information on benefits and access to health provision. The young person will be involved in all decisions regarding themselves and their baby.

The provision of suitable childcare will be provided in the young person’s local community by an experienced childminder who has had additional training to carry out this role. They will be able to support the young parents through a range of parenting issues.

There is a budget for transport as East Lothian is a rural area and travel may be involved to access services.

This service benefits both parents and their children by:

• providing parents with relevant support and guidance;
• adjusting school timetables to meet individual needs;
• involving Grandparents/carers in the process;
• providing enhanced school supports if required;
• providing children with varied and stimulating experiences;
• increasing the chances of finishing their school education and continuing into further education;
• increasing access for young mums to antenatal, postnatal and other health services;
• encouraging integration of support of family and other services;
• improving communication between the agencies and young person;
• reviewing support and care on a regular basis;
• decreasing the likelihood of other services becoming involved in the longer term through early intervention.

Support for Teenage Mums is a young mums group which meets one morning a week in an agreed location in East Lothian. It was initiated by the School Nursing Manager who became aware that teenage mums were unlikely to access mainstream antenatal, postnatal care and playgroups.

The group provides an opportunity for pregnant teenagers, young mums and their babies to meet to discuss common issues and concerns. The teenagers feel unable to attend mainstream provision in their local communities as they feel self-conscious, alienated and don’t have much in common with older mothers. The group is supported by the East Lothian School Nursing Manager.
and Child and Family Support Workers from the Integration Team. Transport is provided for the mums-to-be, mums and their children who attend from all over East Lothian. The group are currently looking for additional funding to enhance their provision and provide a crèche, childcare and transport.

The benefits of the group are;

- to provide support;
- to identify additional supports;
- chance for them to support and discuss issues with each other;
- to offer antenatal support which meets their needs;
- access to antenatal support;
- links and input from health visitors and midwives;

- talks and presentations on issues;
- discussion on future opportunities and training;
- links to education support e.g. communications course;
- tuition on driving test theory.

It is hoped that this two-pronged approach will offer a range of support and opportunities for teenage parents to assist them in their educational development either in school or in the community. It is hoped that there will be longer-term benefits both for parents and their children.

Monica Hoenigmann

SURE START TORRY,
TEENAGE MOTHERS GROUP AND
THE TORRY YOUTH PROJECT

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Pam Simpson, Children and Families Officer at Aberdeen City Council, discusses achievements through various projects.

This group started in November 1999 one afternoon a week. Initially 4 young women attended with one child each. It very quickly became apparent that both mothers and children enjoyed and benefited from the contact with the group. A second session began in January 2000 funded through Sure Start.

Over the last four years about 14 girls have attended the group. Mothers attend both sessions regularly and for the children it is the only group contact they have.

This group is for young mothers aged 15-19 years of age, and their children. A crèche is run for the children in a room next door to the mothers. At the beginning of the project it was difficult for both the children and mothers to adapt to attending a group but now the children play constructively, supervised by 3 crèche workers.

The worker works alongside the young mothers offering an informal educational programme especially designed for them. The aim of the programme is to build the skills of the
young women and by doing this, increase their confidence. Topics covered in their programme have included basic computing, assertiveness, healthy/budget cookery, health and beauty, crafts, dressmaking, discussion on personal relationships, benefits, contraception, child development, employment and they had a two day visit to Edinburgh. The group is currently engaged in a project with Health Promotions and ASH considering the effects of smoking on their health and appearance. They are also working with Torry Learning House to develop their computing skills through the use of computers installed in their homes.

As well as activities we have also gone on some educational trips away. These include, Dundee to visit a drop-in centre for teenagers but the highlight of our time at the teenage mum’s group was when a group of teenage mums from Belarus came to visit us. Some of the group returned to visit them in Belarus, which was a very educational and beneficial experience, and was also the first time that most of the girls had been out of Scotland. We also had a visit from Princess Anne at the Torry Youth Project, where the girls did a presentation of what they have been doing over the last year.

Since leaving the group two of the mums have gone on to college as they said the group had given them the confidence to do so. One of the other mums is now a fully qualified hairdresser and is going on to do a beauty course.

The fact that numbers have risen steadily speaks volumes for the need for such provision. The young women have developed considerably and there is a marked difference in their confidence levels and self esteem.

An evaluation showed that the Mothers had benefited from the programme, that they had made choices about the content and had an input into future programmes. The mothers also said that the children’s social interaction skills had improved.

Pam Simpson

SEXUAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING LEARNING NETWORK

SHIRLEY FRASER, Co-ordinator for the Sexual Health & Wellbeing Learning Network, asks what are the issues and what are the responses?

The overall birth rate in Scotland is falling and all the indications are that this trend will continue throughout the next decade. In terms of conceptions among females aged between 13 and 16 years, the rate has also been slowly declining with 2001 showing the lowest number since 1996 where there were around 9 conceptions for every 1000
girls in this age group compared to 68 for every 1000 young women aged 16 to 19. This decline masks small increases in some areas: Ayrshire and Arran and Tayside have the highest rates of conceptions in both age groups. Evidence from countries which have successfully lowered teenage births stress that success is a matter of motivation and means. Key to this is empowering young people by giving them a stake in the future, a sense of hope and an expectation of inclusion in an economically advanced society. They must also have access to contraception and good education so that they can make informed and mutually respectful choices.

At the heart of tackling teenage pregnancy lies the greatest challenge – changing the climate in which our young people grow up. We are not comfortable about talking openly and responsibly about sexual health and we focus sometimes exclusively on the negative aspects rather than on sexual wellbeing. Countries such as the Netherlands and Finland where young people’s interest in sex is viewed as a natural part of growing up are much more open to talking about sexual health and supporting pragmatic solutions. Their approach to sex and relationships education, prevention activities, support for young parents, media campaigning is less judgemental and does not seem to attract the same sensationalisation or polarised views as often seen in Scotland. The success of these approaches is demonstrated through evidence that young people are delaying sexual activity later than young people in Scotland. So what are we doing in Scotland to respond to this?

At national level, the draft sexual health and relationships strategy identifies the need to tackle the social and cultural aspects influencing the lives of individuals and calls for sexual wellbeing to be part of the social inclusion agenda alongside more integrated and accessible services. Using the media to promote positive sexual health messages is core to NHS Health Scotland’s activities as is the development of a national sex and relationships programme, SHARE, and multi agency training of teachers and others involved in providing SRE in schools. Recent activities have included commissioning Scottish Youth Theatre to produce and go on tour with a theatre in education programme around sex and relationships issues.

Healthy Respect, the Lothian based health demonstration project, is developing partnership initiatives targeted at improving the sexual health of young people. Promoting sex and relationships education through multi disciplinary training and materials appropriate for and responsive to young people, developing confidential drop in services to support young people and encouraging a culture which enables open discussion about sexual health and wellbeing are key threads. Involving parents and carers in interventions so that they are able to take an active role in providing information and advice to their children underpins this work. Pulling together all the evidence from this work and research to influence policy and ongoing practice in tackling sexual health inequalities is the role of the Sexual Health & Wellbeing Learning Network. Promoting sexual wellbeing positively and adopting a more integrated service response which takes account of user needs is the way forward to our responses to teenage pregnancy in Scotland.

Shirley Fraser
STATISTICS ON TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN SCOTLAND

Shirley Fraser talks about statistics on pregnancies in Scotland.

NHSScotland compile Scottish health statistics and the following link will take you to their webpage presenting teenage pregnancy figures for the period 1991 to 2002.

DISCOUNTED BOOKS FOR SURE START SCOTLAND

Two companies contacted us at the Scottish Executive with offers of discounted books for Sure Start Scotland funded projects.

Firstly, Julie Bell of Usborne Books provides an article on the importance of reading to children and includes details of their discount offer.

ENCOURAGE A SPECIAL BOND BETWEEN PARENT & CHILD THROUGH READING

As adults, we all need to be able to read to understand and complete application forms, follow instructions, learn new things and, best of all, for entertainment purposes.

And it is from early childhood that we begin to develop reading skills – even before we begin school.

Reading to a child encourages early literacy skills, fosters an interest in language, and generally helps the child later on in every day adult life. What’s more, sitting down and enjoying a book together with your child is a lovely way of bonding and simply spending quality time with your little one.

Even reading to little babies is a wonderful experience. The bright colours of the books excite babies. They enjoy lifting the cloth flaps and feeling the variety of touchy feely materials. In general babies are very interested in learning more about the world around them and touchy feely books are a fantastic opportunity for them to learn different textures. They enjoy hearing your voice too and simple text fosters an awareness of language from early on.

Surprising though it is, babies and young children who are read to on a regular basis are already learning early literacy skills. They learn to turn the page to continue the story. They also learn that you read a book from left to
right as they see you pointing to the pictures and pages as you read and they follow the story.

Usborne do an insightful touchy feely cloth book called “Kitten”. Your small child uses his/her finger to follow a piece of string across the page from left to right, which in the end turns out to be a ball of wool which the kitten has been unravelling.

Later on, he/she may enjoy learning animal noises by looking at picture books with animal pictures and imitating the noise you make. Or it may be learning every day words such as items of clothing, words for toys etc.

Reading to your child can be and should be fun and there is a vast range of books available to assist you. Some have rattles in them and the child looks continually on each page to place the rattling noise, which gets progressively louder as the end of the book is neared.

There are books where you have to find the animal on each page. Usborne’s Farmyard Tales series are famous for ‘finding the little yellow duck’, which is hiding on each page. Lift-the-flap books are also good to stimulate the curiosity of your child.

As the child progresses to preschool and early school, you can get books with easy words to read. “Fox on a Box” is a good one as is the much loved “Fat Cat Sat on a Mat”.

You can also give a child some assistance in confidently overcoming first experiences, such as “Going to a Party”, coping with “The New Baby”, “Going to School”, and “Going to the Hospital”.

And learning social skills is always good if you don’t have to learn them the hard way. Cautionary tales such as “Give that back, Jack!”, “Don’t be a Bully, Billy” and “Don’t Tell Lies Lucy” are designed to give young children the idea of right and wrong in an amusing way with simple rhythmic stories.

Of course, the parent or carer can learn vital caring skills by reading themselves. “Entertaining & Educating Babies & Toddlers” and “Entertaining & Educating Young Children” are vital reads for new parents.

Different authorities spend their funds in different ways. There are some authorities, which are making up Story Sacks of first experiences to give away to preschool children.

Some authorities are trying to encourage men to read with boys and giving out story sacks with a male emphasis.

There are other local authorities, which are making up story boxes to give out on loan to toddler groups, where participants can read and borrow the books.

Usborne Books at Home are offering an amazing deal at the moment to larger order. They are giving away up to 60% in free books on orders for books. This equates to paying for £500 worth of books and receiving an additional £300 worth of books absolutely free. It is a fantastic deal, which would really help your budget stretch that bit further.

If you would like to discuss Usborne books or the Usborne deal further or would like to arrange a book event such as for new mums, breastfeeding mums, dads and male carers, or a preschool or school organisation please contact:

Julie Bell at Usborne Books at Home
Tel: 01324-710013
Email: julie@iloveusbornebooks.co.uk
DISCOUNTED BOOKS FOR SURE START SCOTLAND CONTINUED

Waterstone’s Booksellers also now offer discounted books to all Sure Start Scotland funded projects.

Neil McGaulley provides details.

A number of Sure Start projects in England and Wales have recently opened accounts with Waterstone’s Booksellers to supply books.

This offer is now available to all Sure Start Scotland funded projects.

Waterstone’s can offer up to 15% discount, subject to terms and conditions.

Please contact me at our Glasgow store or Alison at our Edinburgh store for further information. Their details are as follows:

Glasgow
Tel:  0141 333 1920
Fax:  0141 331 0482
Email: enquiries@sauchiehallst.waterstones.co.uk

Edinburgh
Tel:  0131 556 6934
Fax:  0131 557 8572
Email: enquiries@eastend.waterstones.co.uk
USEFUL LINKS
AND FURTHER READING

READING

On Your Own With a Baby
General OPFS fact sheet
Free to lone parents
Call 0131 556 3899

The Really Useful Directory of Services for Pregnant Teenagers and Young Parents
Trust for Study of Adolescence
Call 01273 679907

USEFUL WEB LINKS

www.likeitis.org.uk/
This is a great site aimed at teenagers with loads of useful and practical information on various issues relating to sex education and teenage life. One of its most innovative features is a “hide this page” button which, when clicked, simulates a view of the computer desktop, providing privacy for the browser.

www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk/index.asp
This site offers a broad range of information for parents, carers and others responsible for school age children. The website also provides a comprehensive list of links to useful organisations and recent publications.

www.opfs.org.uk/
One Parent Families Scotland has been working on behalf of lone parents and their families since 1944.

www ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears
Learning & Teaching Scotland’s (LTS), Early Years Online website. This is a great site that supports early years care and education, provides information about the ICT Strategy, has details about events and workshops, and has links to resources and publications.

www.tinyplanets.com
This is the web site for the educational television series. Here you can find loads of free games, fun and educational activities, streaming videos of episodes, media downloads, e-books, and much more.

www.children1st.org.uk/parentline
ParentLine Scotland is the free, confidential, telephone helpline for parents and anyone caring for a child in Scotland.

The Scottish Executive is not liable for the contents of any external internet sites listed, nor does it endorse any commercial product or service mentioned or advised on any of the sites.
LOCAL AUTHORITY CONTACTS

Aberdeen City
Pam Simpson
psimpson@education.aberdeen.net.uk
(01224) 523 364

Aberdeenshire
Karen McGraw
karen.mcgraw@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
(01224) 664 271

Angus
Peter Pope
swd_strathmore@angus.sol.co.uk
(01307) 461 767

Argyll and Bute
Margaret Lauder
margaret.lauder@argyll-bute.gov.uk
(01369) 708 544

City of Edinburgh
John Haywood
john@childcarepartnership.org
(0131) 270 6065

Clackmannanshire
Sharon Easton
seaston@clacks.gov.uk
(01259) 452 470

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
Bernard Chisholm
b.chisholm@cne-siar.gov.uk
(01851) 709 436

Dumfries and Galloway
Anne Macfarlane
annemac@dumgal.gov.uk
(01387) 260 405

Dundee City
Christine Riach
christine.riach@dundeecity.gov.uk
(01382) 433 950

East Ayrshire
Janie Allen
janie.allen@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
(01563) 576 185

East Dunbartonshire
Debbie Smith
debbie.smith@eastdunbarton.gov.uk
(0141) 578 8705

East Lothian
Alan Ross
aross@eastlothian.gov.uk
(01620) 827 881

East Renfrewshire
Ian Fraser
fraseri@eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk
(0141) 577 3252

Falkirk
Jim Duncan
jim.duncan@falkirk.gov.uk
(01324) 506 631

Fife
John Pease
john.pease@fife.gov.uk
(01592) 413 070

Glasgow
Marian Hodgson
marian.hodgson@education.glasgow.gov.uk
(0141) 287 8306

Highland
Sam Brogan
sam.brogan@highland.gov.uk
(01463) 711 176

Inverclyde
Sandra Wilson
sandra.wilson@inverclyde.gov.uk
(01475) 712 812
LOCAL AUTHORITY
CONTACTS CONTINUED

Midlothian
Norman Glennie
norman.glennie@midlothian.gov.uk
(0131) 271 3640

Moray
John Carney
john.carney@moray.gov.uk
(01343) 563 552

North Ayrshire
Johanna Brady
jbrady@north-ayrshire.gov.uk
(01294) 32 4447

North Lanarkshire
Jane Liddell
liddellj@northlan.gov.uk
(01236) 812 609

Orkney Isles
Peter Diamond
peter.diamond@orkney.gov.uk
(01856) 873 535

Perth and Kinross
Helen Smout
hjsmout@pkc.gov.uk
(01738) 477 847

Renfrewshire
Kathleen McDonagh
kathleen.mcdonagh@renfrewshire.gov.uk
(0141) 842 5613

South Ayrshire
Carol Taylor
carol.taylor@south-ayrshire.gov.uk
(01292) 612 232

South Lanarkshire
Jackie Kerr
jackie.kerr@ics.s-lanark.org.uk
(01555) 892 251

Stirling
Linda Kinney
kinneyl@stirling.gov.uk
(01786) 442 667

West Dunbartonshire
Lillian Goldie
lillian.goldie@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
(01389) 738 728

West Lothian
Rosemary Howe
rosemary.howe@westlothian.gov.uk
(01506) 775 836