



Family Links

Family Links reaching families at risk through the Nurturing Programme

20 March 2007

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REACHING OUT: Progress on Social Exclusion Who are the most socially excluded?

- **Social exclusion** is about more than poverty. It is about having the personal capacity, self confidence and aspiration to make the most of the opportunities, choices and options in life that the majority of people take for granted.
- Family Links' Nurturing Programme is a practical model that tackles these issues.
- Research shows that if certain protective factors are in place (such as supportive parents for children) then outcomes in later life are much more positive.



3 Questions

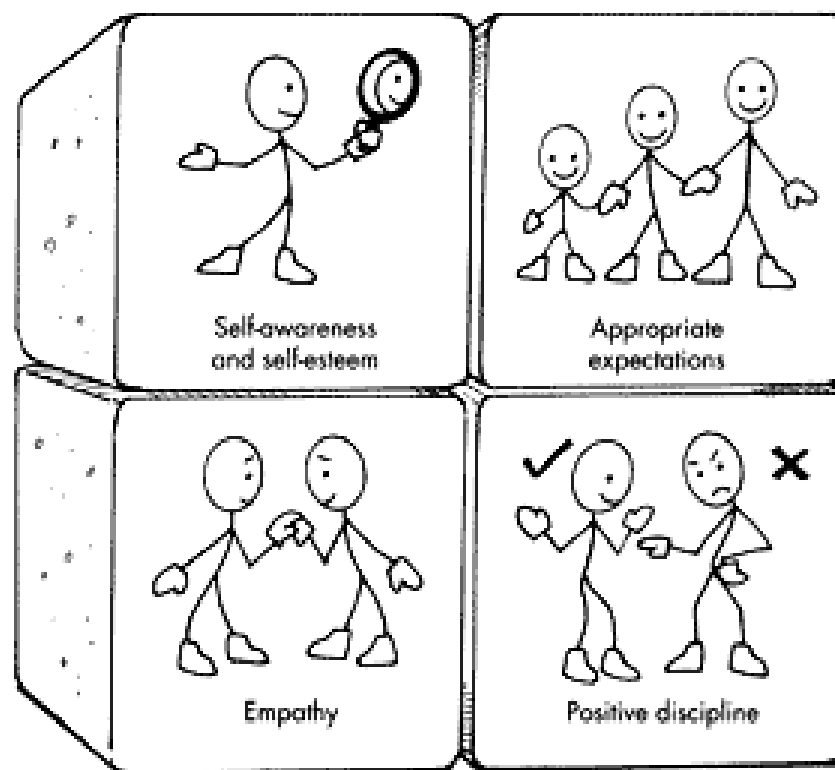
- ◆ How does Family Links' work impact on family outcomes?
- ◆ What are the benefits of a whole family/whole population approach to services for children and adults at risk?
- ◆ How do families at-risk of exclusion access Family Links' services?



Family Links Nurturing Programme's National Development in the UK

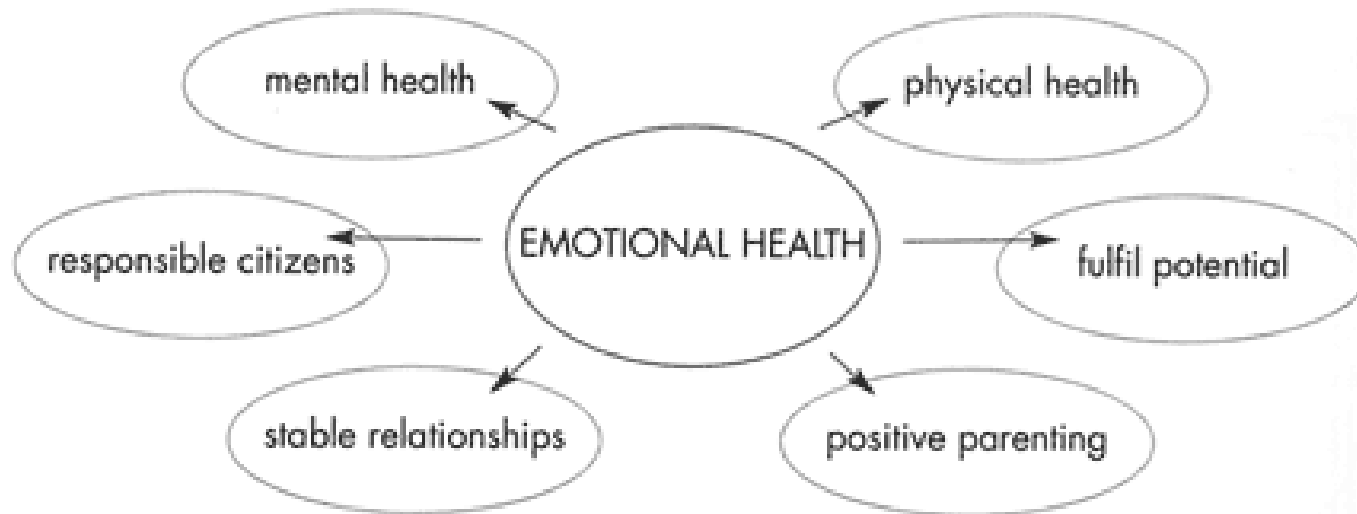
- ◆ 1992: 10 parents and 14 children trialled the Nurturing Programme.
- ◆ 2007: 80,000 children in schools around England – several thousand school staff.
- ◆ England & Wales: several thousand community and health staff have attended Parent Group Leader or workforce skill enhancement training.


The 4 Constructs



The Nurturing Programme promotes total well-being

To lead satisfying lives and to be resilient in the face of life's difficulties, we need to be emotionally healthy.





A universal programme that targets the vulnerable by working through whole population

Children's Nurturing Programme

- For children aged 3-13
- 10 week programme repeated every term.
- Delivered in Circle Time as part of Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education
- Nurturing programme underpins school ethos

Parent's Nurturing Programme

- 10 week programme
- 2 hours once a week
- Matches children's topics



Topics covered by children and parents in 10-week matching programmes

- ◆ Family / Classroom rules
- ◆ Praise and criticism
- ◆ Time out...to calm down
- ◆ Personal power, choices and consequences
- ◆ Feelings and what we do with them
- ◆ Anger and how to deal with it
- ◆ Communicating clearly: 'I' statements
- ◆ Kinds of touch and nurturing ourselves
- ◆ Ages and stages in children's development
- ◆ Issues around sex – helping children stay safe
- ◆ Behaviour to ignore
- ◆ Problem-solving and negotiation



How does Family Links' work impact on family outcomes?

- **Parents:**

- Increase empathy and confidence in their parenting role:
 - “The course has helped us understand why our foster child is the way she is and how to help her become more confident and independent”
 - “Our foster child is now smiling most of the time and gaining a little confidence, she now comes home from school saying it has been great and the bullying has almost stopped”.
- Increase personal confidence to return to work.

- **Children:**

- Improved support from their parents enhances their emotional and cognitive development and their social skills and work motivation in learning environment.
 - “We now have more good times than bad times and she is starting to act more like a teenager than a 7-8 year old.”



Seven Terms Later

Teacher:

“Brighter children with low self-esteem used to get quickly frustrated and throw work away. They now cope in a calmer way with anger and disappointment. They deal with failure better and are prepared to try again.”

“The boys are talking more about their feelings.”

“The children pick up the pieces more quickly when things go wrong.”


“Special Time gives the quiet child a time to have a voice even though they may prefer not to at other times”.



Training Professionals

The Nurturing Programme matches important features in quality parenting programmes highlighted by a Home Office Policy Research Bureau report ‘What Works in Parenting Support?’:

- Manualised programmes
- Programme integrity, i.e. all group leaders deliver in a similar way
- Services delivered by appropriately trained and skilled staff
- **Empathic facilitators**
- A variety of delivery routes, i.e. use quality material in one-to-one as well as in group work.



It's hard getting parents through the door – it takes skill to keep them coming back each week

Quotations from “Understanding parenting programmes: parents’ views” by Dr J Barlow*:

- *“They were so supportive, so willing to be flexible in their attitude; they didn’t criticise; supported me instead of saying ‘no this is how you’ve got to be a parent’, she really listened.”*
- *“She just made me feel welcome and accepted.”*
(Parents’ views on the group facilitators)

* Dr. J Barlow, DPhil, Health Services Research Unit, University of Oxford



Consistency

“We shall succeed together and fail separately.”

Sir Winston Churchill

The Nurturing Programme is for all children, parents, teachers and community practitioners.



Building Teams and Building Trust

- Locality Team Training around Children's Centres by Family Links
- Health Visitor one-to-one self-esteem boosting work
- School provided Parent Group with Teaching Assistant and Home School Link workers
- Group run in Children's Centre attached to school
- Children receiving Nurturing Programme in school

Woman depressed after a termination, dropped into café having been through the above support process, and Headteacher called GP.



What are the benefits of the Whole Family/Whole Population Model?

- Family Links Nurturing Programme – a Universal model:
 - Non-stigmatising – therefore open-door
 - Ideal for use across social and cultural spectrum
 - Non-judgmental
 - Emphasis on group support in parent groups and through circle time for children
 - Inclusive
 - Children reached through their parents attending parent groups or their school delivering NP as part of PSHCE syllabus
 - Peer group acceptance of vulnerable children



Quotes from Barton Primary School:

“There is now a group sense and concern for each other. Peer group pressure from the children who behave well enough is being exerted on those who gain attention through deviant behaviour. They encourage them to behave. More and more disruptive children are responding to this encouragement.”

“Have ‘gelled’ as a class.”



Jayne Osgood's research on the Nurturing Programme reveals benefits of social cultural mix:

“Mothers with English as an additional language were concerned that they would be conspicuous by their difference, but the eclectic mix of parents within each group meant that every member was ‘different’ in some way.”

“The opportunities to become exposed to, and learn from other parents (with different backgrounds, life experiences, family circumstances and cultural identities) was presented as a very powerful and valuable factor.”

Osgood J, and James K (2006), Parent Support in Sure Start North West Kensington and Golborne: an evaluation of the Family Links Nurturing Programme. Institute for Policy Studies in Education, p.43-44.




How do families at-risk of exclusion access Family Links' services?

Parent's issues – The Toxic Legacy

- They don't see they have a need for help:
 - *"I wouldn't have gone if it (the parent group) had been on the outside, but now I'd like to do nurturing plus when I get out"*

woman prisoner, Styal Prison
- **They don't want help: Week 1**
 - *"I didn't want to attend the group – I was forced by the (fostering) agency."*
 - *"I felt angry – knowing they knew how challenging it would be for me with my dyslexia. I felt frightened and panicked. "*
 - *"Actually once I settled down and was made at ease I enjoyed it and it was useful"*
- **Week 10**
 - *"The confidence I got has helped me join a dyslexia group"*



Feelings Drive Behaviour.

When I feel comfortable with the power I have*, I also feel...

*(eg. interesting job; enough money; getting on well with partner, colleagues, children.)

Strong *Competent*

Healthy *Confident* *Safe*

Secure *Valued* *Positive*

Helpful *Capable* *Responsible*

Relaxed *Decisive* *Energetic*

Able to take appropriate risks



When I feel powerless* I also feel...

*(blocked motorways; late trains; stressful job)

Defeated *Tearful*
Overwhelmed
Scared *Angry*
Frightened
Anxious
Helpless *Depressed*
In denial
Irresponsible
Self-loathing
Desperate *Lethargic*
Like giving up

At Risk Parents Accessing Family Links' Services Professional's Issues

Issues	Solutions	Barriers
Training workforce	Excellent trainings: Skill enhancement 1:1 work Parent group leaders Team building - Children Centres - Locality team Whole school teams	Insufficient training re. raising self-esteem on public health courses; PGCE etc.
Case load size	Parent Groups provide social and peer support – reduce work load 1:1 work with the way	Although professionals train often no time allowed by line managers or money (venue crèche)
Involving Dads	Family Links ante-natal programmes: Dad's attended Creative ways of 'hooking Dads' eg. football. Male workers succeed	Very little funding available to develop programmes. Family work not attractive to men.
Prevention	Huge investment of input ante-natally by midwives to health visitors and family support workers to build relationships for long term improvement.	Shortage of midwives and health visitors.

At Risk Parents Accessing Family Links' Services Professional's Issues continued

Issues	Solutions	Barriers
Ethnic minorities	Nurturing Programme works well with interpreters. Cartoons in <i>The Parenting Puzzle</i> book useful.	Short term funding → Sure Start cut backs and loss of years of trust building.
Low literacy	Nurturing Programme works well with interpreters. Cartoons in <i>The Parenting Puzzle</i> book useful.	
Government commitment	Excellent recognition and support of work on social, emotional needs of children and families.	The need to recommend validated programmes may jeopardise other quality work. Initiative overload.
Local Authorities	Strategic long term thinking.	Turn over of managers → frequent change of developments. Quick fix/sticking plaster approach.

At Risk Parents Accessing Family Links' Services Professional's Issues continued

Issues	Solutions	Barriers
Local Authorities	Statutory Sector commitment to partnership work with Voluntary Sector (VS) and transparent commissioning processes.	Often feels that VS does all the networking, communicating. Commissioning process not transparent – favours statutory sector.
Evaluation	Important to have Programmes validated	Very few can obtain funding for expense of Randomised Control Trials.
Flexibility of Nurturing Programme	Skilled FL trained professionals use it in many settings: prisons, hostels, foster families, children's homes.	Need consistency in all workforce and skills to work as facilitators rather than didactic teachers.





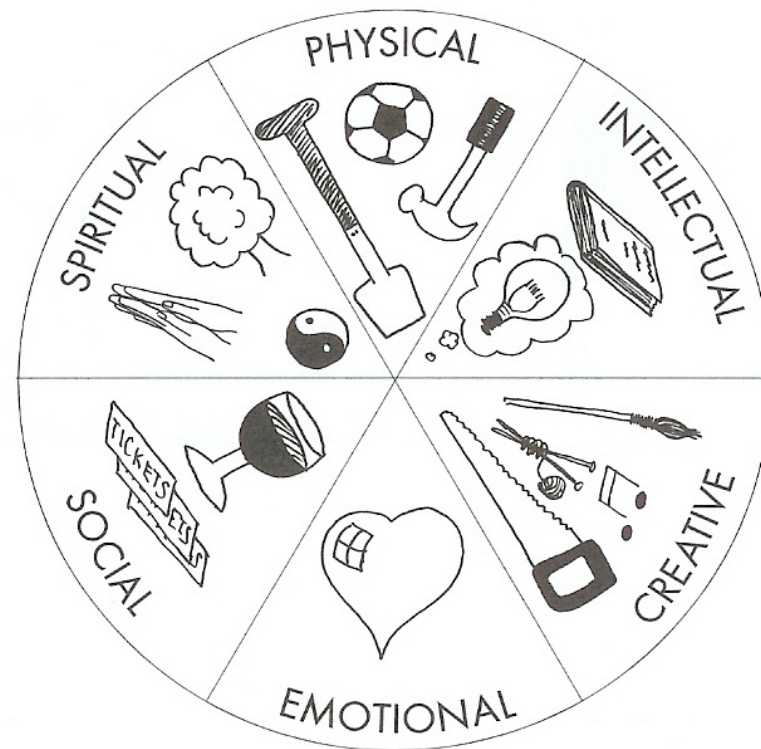
The key to success:

- Training a large enough workforce to be empathic facilitators so that parents trust them.

The most important and often hardest thing for parents to do is to care about themselves.

The Nurturing Programme's experiential, caring approach develops this so that their lives can move onto a better place.

Nurturing Ourselves





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