

the
Parenting
handbook



Introduction



Welcome to the Ayrshire and Arran Parenting Handbook.

Your job as a parent is one of the most difficult there is - it can be both challenging and rewarding. It is a job for which very little training is given to prepare parents for what lies ahead.

Bringing up a family is an experience which brings both enjoyment and stress.

Every family experiences difficulty from time to time and this can test the best of parents. When additional pressures come along, these can make a hard job nearly impossible. At these times it may be hard to think about what help or information you might need.

When things go wrong it does not mean that someone has failed, in parenting things can go wrong for everyone. It is often the way difficulties are handled that can make a difference to your children, both now and in the future.

There is no such thing as the perfect parent. However, there are some ideas to make it a less stressful and more rewarding experience. The purpose of this handbook is to highlight some of these.

What is the handbook about?

It is hoped this handbook can offer some ideas and information to help you find your way through what can be a maze of issues and advice. It gives contacts and further information you can follow up when you are deciding how to deal with your worries and difficulties. This handbook also lists some of the warning signs of particular difficulties and offers helpful tips.

Ayrshire & Arran's Web based Directory of Children's Services

Ayrshire & Arran now have a web based directory of services which are available to children and families through CARIS (Child and Recreational Information Services). Many of the organisations and services mentioned within this handbook and many more in addition can be found on:

www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk

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“ Louise is my daughter. She’s eleven. Steve and I split up when she was two. Then I met Mike. He has two sons. His ex-wife has another son with her new husband. And Steve has another daughter with his new partner. It’s confusing enough for me, so I don’t know how Louise copes with it all. ”

All kinds of parents



WARNING SIGNS

Changes in the way your child acts may signal that they are not feeling secure about the changes going on around them. Watch out for feelings of blame or guilt if your relationship with your partner is not working. Changes in how you act can also have a direct affect on your child.



ACTION

Talk through any changes in family life early - children are quick to pick up “vibes” and so may know if you’re keeping something from them. Keep talking to your child about the new things that are happening to you and your family. Take things slowly and be patient.



WHAT TO SAY

Talk about how you feel about each other as much as you can. A stable family life is important to children, however unusual the make-up of your family. Remind them that they are loved, whatever is happening.



PREVENTION

Consider counselling, mediation and support agencies as they can often help to spot possible problems before they arise. Know your rights with regard to your role as a partner and a parent. Talk to your child’s school.



CONTACTS

- CRUSE Bereavement Care 01355 244288
- Gingerbread Glasgow 0141 576 5085
- Family Mediation Ayrshire 01563 572429 (covers all Ayrshire)

- Your family is unique.* Who is in your family? How does it work?
- Single parents can be mum or dad
- Different people handle change in different ways, children need stability;* change can make them feel especially vulnerable
- Family change takes time to get used to - for Grandparents, Uncles and aunts too!
- Whatever kind of family you have, you’re not alone. If you need help, make contact!

What is a family?

There’s no such thing as an ‘average’ family - they come in all shapes and sizes. Each different type of family has its own special challenges, so it’s important to understand how your family make-up can affect your child, particularly when things change.

Going it alone

Growing up with one parent can be a good thing, leading to a close relationship between parent and child. If your child does spend time with their other parent, it’s important to help them understand how both of you will be part of their lives and that it’s okay to love both their parents and not feel guilty.

Coping with a death in the family

When we are coping with our own grief at the loss of a partner it is sometimes hard to see how children might react when a parent dies. Every child will act differently, some will feel guilty about still living while one of their parents is dead, others will think about death and loss and who else could ‘leave’ them. Patience and the support of family and friends is key at this time. Support agencies such as CRUSE have a helpline to help parents cope and useful advice on their website (see contacts opposite).

Teenage parents

As a young parent, you’ll face many extra challenges. However, all new parents struggle at times, so don’t be embarrassed to ask for support and advice. Your education may have to be cut short, but don’t give up on all your plans for the future as there’s still plenty of time. Remember to think about your own needs and try to enjoy some of the things that other

teenagers do like meeting up with friends or going to a club. Make sure that you have good childcare if you leave your child at home.

New families

If you enter into a new relationship, everyone will need time to get used to the new family. This could be more difficult if your new partner has children of his or her own or you are adopting or fostering a child. Change can make us all feel unsafe, so it’s important to make sure every one feels comfortable with new arrangements. Take things slowly and carefully and try to see things through each other’s eyes, imagining everyone’s feelings in this time of change.

Grandparents as parents/new grandparents

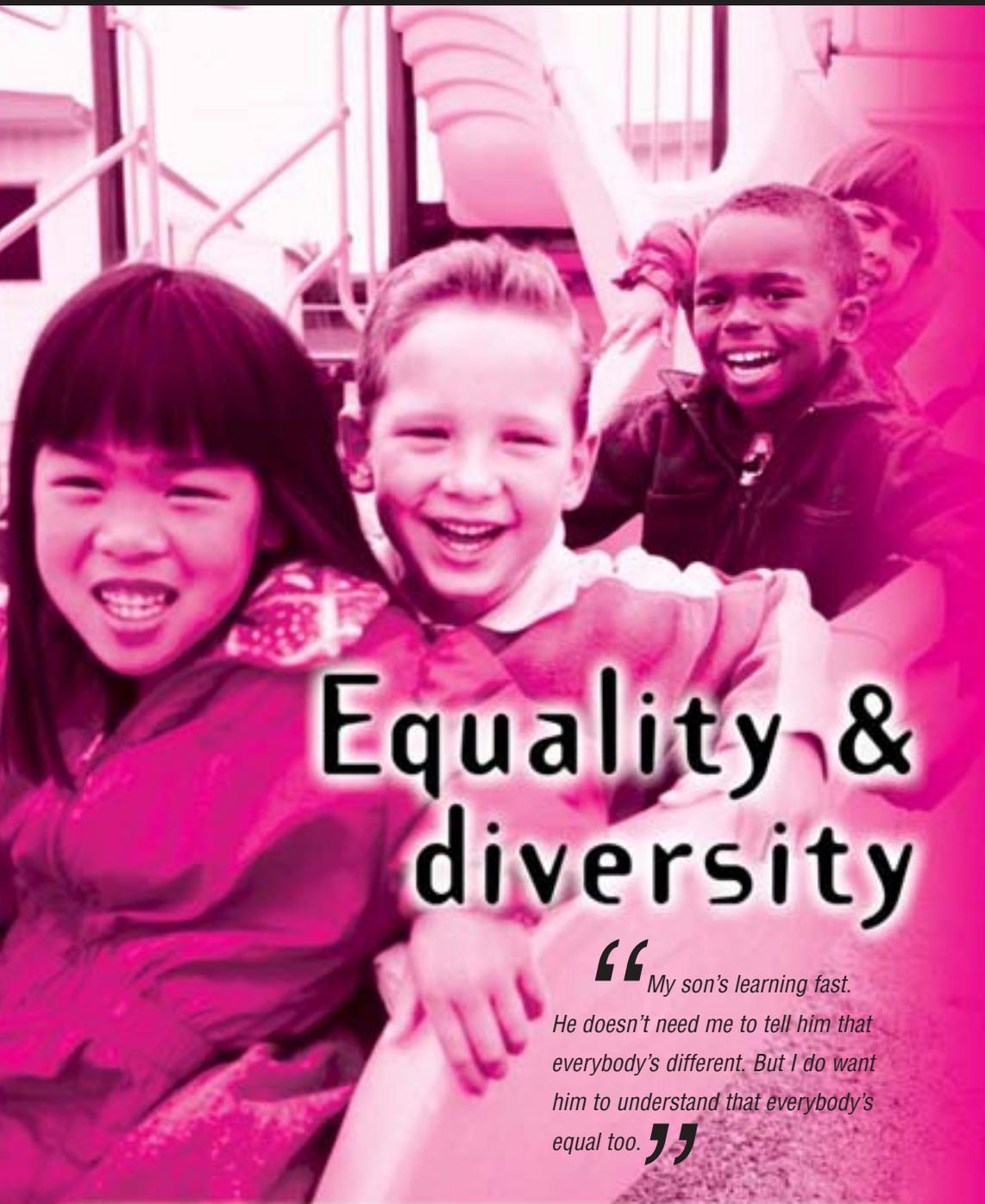
Grandparents can give a welcome extra pair of helping hands and are an important link to family histories and a sense of belonging. But they may need help to come to terms with changes in your family too. They may lose access to much-loved grandchildren when relationships break-up, or have to adjust to new family members when new relationships start. Be aware that grandparents may sometimes have health issues of their own; don’t ask them to do too much as they still have their own busy lives.

Make contact

Whatever kind of family you are, there are many organisations especially set up to help you cope. Don’t feel you have to struggle on alone. Make contact and get the help that you and your kind of family need.

Look up a word

- *Unique Different to everything else.
- *Stability A situation which feels safe because it doesn’t change too much.



Equality & diversity

“My son’s learning fast. He doesn’t need me to tell him that everybody’s different. But I do want him to understand that everybody’s equal too.”



WARNING SIGNS
Children notice difference all the time in things, people and places. They need to know that we are all different but that we are all equal, and that difference should not be met with suspicion, envy or fear, but should be positive, advantageous and valued.



ACTION
You should expect every place your child is in to have made a visible commitment to equality and diversity. All should listen and act at once if discrimination happens or you have worries. It is important that we are proactive in our actions and consider their effects too.



WHAT TO SAY
There are many organisations specially set up to give support and advice to parents, including parents of vulnerable children or children from overseas. If there are language or communication issues these can be supported with the help of Glasgow interpreting services. Contact them.



PREVENTION
All parents have a right to expect a safe place and support for their child whatever their individual needs, experiences or background. Schools are becoming even more inclusive with diversity and equality expected in all areas of school life and encouraging citizenship issues throughout the curriculum.



CONTACTS

- The Disabled Trust for Scotland 0141 332 3446
- Family and Friends of Lesbian and Gays (FFLAG) 01454 852418
- Commission for Racial Equality Scotland 0131 524 2000

WEBLINKS www.onescotland.com

- **Your child is protected by the Human Rights Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act and the Sex Discrimination Act**
- **Your local Council, Education and Health Authorities are there to help**
- **Ask your child’s school how they deal with racism and other forms of discrimination* or abuse, and ask them to talk through their policies with you**
- **Support groups, parent groups and other organisations (Voluntary and Statutory) are out there to help you**

Different and equal

Diversity* is all about differences. We are all different - visibly, physically, socially, culturally and sexually. Diversity means variety, it means a rich and vibrant culture. But not everyone values and respects the differences in society. Discrimination is when you are or have perceived that you have been treated unfairly just because of who you are. You could experience discrimination from an individual or from a business, a service, an agency or even a school. Although we’re all different we all have the right to equal respect, access, opportunity and justice, so there are laws in the UK to prevent discrimination on all levels. If you feel you or your child has experienced discrimination, your local authority, local organisations and the legislation are there to help you.

targeted for abuse or discrimination because of their sexuality or the sexuality of their parents, carers or family members. Sex Education in schools helps young children understand and respect sexual orientation - whether lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 says it is against the law for any service provider (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat disabled people less well than other people because of their disability. It also means they should make reasonable adjustments to make their services suitable for disabled people to use.

Sexism*

Sexism arises out of common stereotypes that exist regarding male and female roles in society. It can be based on experiences some people have of relationships between adults of both genders. Sexism can be experienced in the home, in social situations or in the workplace, leading to discrimination in a variety of situations, including serious forms of physical or psychological abuse. The Sex Discrimination Act is there to provide a legal framework for promoting equality between the sexes.

Make contact

At the back of this handbook you’ll find a list of contacts that you may find useful. You and your child have the right to be different and equal, so make contact today and get the support you need.

Racism

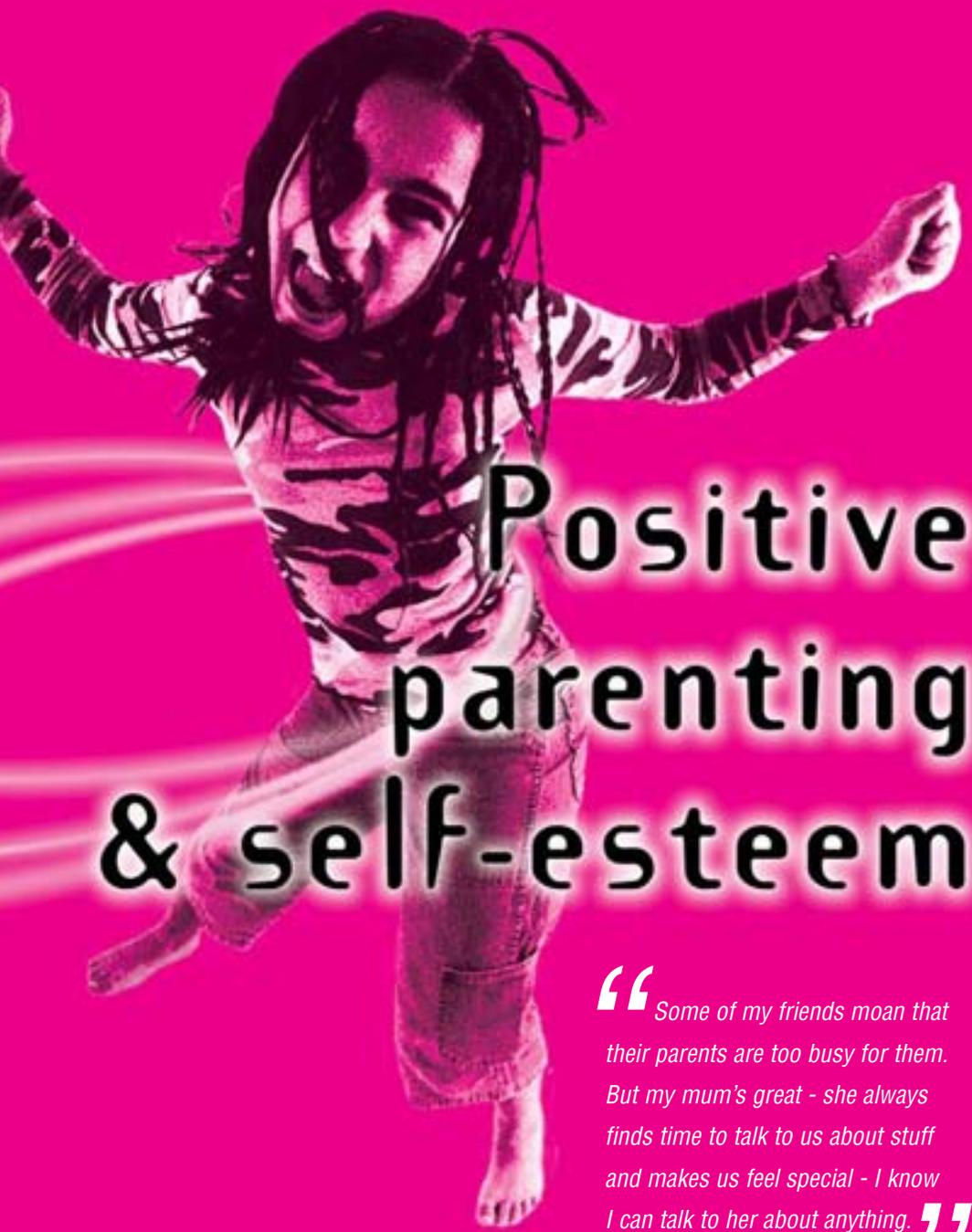
Thanks to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 all public bodies have a clear duty to stop unlawful racial discrimination and to promote equal opportunity and good relations between ‘racial groups’. This includes schools, so the curriculum and the teaching in our schools should reflect racial diversity and should have clear processes for handling, reporting and watching out for racist incidents. This act looks closely at the effect of action and not the intent.

Homophobia*

We live in a diverse country with a lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community; diversity should be welcomed and reflected across all services. It is not acceptable that anyone is

Look up a word

- ***Discrimination** To judge someone unfairly.
- ***Diversity** Differences between people or things.
- ***Homophobia** Fear or hatred of gay people.
- ***Sexism** To judge someone based on whether they are male or female.



Positive parenting & self-esteem

“Some of my friends moan that their parents are too busy for them. But my mum’s great - she always finds time to talk to us about stuff and makes us feel special - I know I can talk to her about anything.”



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 before they reach their teens. Keep a healthy lifestyle. Do things together.



WHAT TO SAY

With younger children, set rules. With teenagers, remember that you are in charge. Even if you only get a grunt, don't give up on talking.



PREVENTION

Be a little crazy! Have fun with your child. Try to get them to make friends and have outside interests. Listen carefully to your child's point of view. Help them think through choices.



CONTACTS

• Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222
• Childline Scotland
0870 336 2910

- Children need to feel secure, loved and valued - this is the basis of self-esteem and confidence
- Noticing and praising good behaviour is the best way of having a good effect on how your child acts
- Be realistic about what you expect from your child
- Parents and carers need to work together and keep the same rules
- Listen to and talk to your child - it's good to talk!
- Do things together with your child that you both enjoy - have fun!

Make them feel great!

Positive parenting is about bringing out the best in your child, by listening and understanding, praising and encouraging their efforts, noticing and rewarding good behaviour and doing things together that you both enjoy. In trying to be helpful, it is often easy to point out where a child is going wrong and forget to notice the things that go right. By doing this you are giving your child lots of attention for the unacceptable things which they are doing, rather than for the good things you would prefer them to do. It can also undermine your relationship with your child. Parental attention and praise affects children so you need to use it in the right direction! 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.

Teenagers have to learn to make their own decisions and 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 have been through it and that you are always willing to listen. The main concern for teens is whether what they are going through is normal. Remember to give them the practical information they need about the physical and emotional changes and reassure them that their development is perfectly normal. Keeping your child fit and healthy is something that most parents do without even thinking about it. Whether it involves getting your child to brush their teeth or reminding them to pay attention to personal hygiene, you are an important source of information and advice and a role model for your child.

A sense of self-esteem is your child's best protection from other difficulties. You can help to make them feel good about themselves in many ways. By being a good role model, giving good feedback, understanding and helping your child and being natural and affectionate.

“ There came a time when I knew my lifestyle was damaging my health and I was worried that my kids were suffering too. So I made the decision, made a few simple changes and now I can't believe the difference. ”



Healthy lifestyles

- **Balance is the key to a healthy lifestyle: too much of anything tends to do damage**
- **If you eat more calories than your body burns, you will put on weight**
- **Smoking has more than 50 ways of making life a misery through illness and more than 20 ways of killing you**
- **Life is too short to waste time being unhealthy**
- **Healthy teeth give you something to smile about**

Looking after your body

These days 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 unsaturated 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 you eat a good variety of foods in sensible amounts. Variety is particularly important for children as they are learning to enjoy different tastes. Keep trying with those healthier foods they don't seem to like as much, eventually they will learn to enjoy them. But what you put into your body is only half the story.

Smoking

Unfortunately some of us are still deliberately choosing to damage our bodies by smoking. Moreover, smoking also puts the health of those around us at risk. The health problems associated with cigarettes are well known, which is why more and more smokers are giving up each day. If you smoke, your doctor will be happy to offer you a range of services and products that could help you kick this damaging habit for good.

Teeth

If you keep a healthy lifestyle, most parts of your body will take care of themselves. But special care is needed for teeth. No one likes going to the dentist, but it's much less unpleasant if you go regularly and look after your teeth in-between times. Children are especially at risk from tooth decay because of the sugary things they eat. Wherever possible, avoid sugary snacks, or find non-sugar alternatives and always make sure they brush regularly (twice a day) with a family fluoride toothpaste. Use a family toothpaste with at least 1000ppm fluoride content.

Exercise

Food is burned in our bodies to create energy. If we don't use it, we get fat. But that doesn't mean we all have to join expensive gyms. You can get plenty of exercise just walking to the shops or to school. Playing sport is another great way to keep fit and have fun at the same time. Perhaps you'd enjoy swimming, cycling or dancing and you could even learn a new activity at your local leisure centre. If you don't keep your body active, it will soon start to go wrong. But there is one thing some people do that can be even more damaging to our health.

Overall care

A healthy balanced lifestyle should help you enjoy your life to the full, whatever your age. If you have any questions or concerns about your family's health, use the contacts supplied on the opposite page to get the information you need.



WARNING SIGNS

A healthy person should eat a balanced diet, be active, sleep well, have sufficient energy and generally feel that they enjoy life. If this isn't you and your family, perhaps some basic improvements could make a big difference.



ACTION

Ask your doctor for diet, exercise and general advice on a healthy lifestyle. Avoid faddy diets wherever possible. Give up smoking. Go to the dentist regularly.



WHAT TO SAY

Remind yourself that you can change your general state of health. Ask your friends and family for support in your decisions to change.



PREVENTION

Too much unsaturated fat, salt, sugar, alcohol are bad for the body. Prevent ill health by balancing your lifestyle. Stop smoking.



CONTACTS

- Your GP
- Health visitor
- Midwife
- School nurse
- Fresh Air-shire Service
0800 783 9132 (stopping smoking)
- Fit Ayrshire Babies
01294 605885

WEBLINKS www.healthinfoshop.scot.nhs.uk

“ Before Joe was born I never thought about where I left things. Nowadays, everything in the house seems dangerous. I feel I have to follow him everywhere. Yesterday he found my painkillers in the bedroom and nearly swallowed some. It happened so quickly.”

Health & safety

- Babies and children learn by exploring their surroundings
- Babies do not know what is dangerous and what is not
- Babies need to be kept safe at home
- Take away any dangers in your home that you can
- Watch your child and keep them away from danger
- Explain about safety to your child from an early age

Making your home safe

Babies and young children learn about their world through what they see and touch. This means that, as soon as they are able to, they will crawl, touch and grab at whatever they can see. They want to find out about things and need careful and gentle help 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. It might just make them scared of the oven or the door.

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

Some dangers around the home:

- Make sure that all prescribed and non-prescribed drugs are locked away well out of reach and your use of them is private to stop your child copying you.
- Certain rooms are full of danger (such as the kitchen) and should stay out of bounds or be made safe by the use of safety devices.
- Are your children safely kept within the house? Is the safety chain high enough on the front door even for a very active toddler?

- Crawling and looking around are an essential part of their development - keep an eye on your young children, especially near wires and sockets.
- Beware of pets around young children. Even trained and good-natured animals can turn on them.
- Make sure that irons, saucepans and hot drinks are kept out of the reach of children. Scalding and burns are common and can be avoided.
- The home you live in is full of dust and this can set off or make worse any allergy your child has such as asthma. Keep your home as dust free as you can.
- Breathing in 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 labels. Make sure 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 or swallow. Unsafe toys can be very dangerous.



WARNING SIGNS

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



ACTION

Make a list of these dangers and remove them to safety or protect your child from them by using safety devices. Talk to the contacts listed if you are unsure about this.



WHAT TO SAY

With very young children the tone of your voice and how your face looks as you are saying something are very important. Children will begin to sense the warning tone in your voice and face over time.



PREVENTION

Remove dangerous objects like drugs, needles, medicines and household chemicals out of the reach of children and lock them away safely. Do this before your child can be exposed to them.



CONTACTS

- Contact your health visitor for more information on obtaining a Home Safety Pack
- Child Accident Prevention Trust 020 7608 3828
- Fresh Air-shire Service 0800 783 9132



Play & Learning

“ They say you experience second childhood when you get old. I experience it every time I play with my child. I'd forgotten what fun it can be! ”

- Children of all ages learn through play
- Play is an important part of your child's development
- Early childhood experiences affect children's views on learning
- Children need a safe and supportive place where they can play, learn and develop
- There are all sorts of groups and programmes in your area to help your child to play and learn
- As a parent you have an on-going role in your child's play and learning
- Young children do not see a difference between work and play

Parents have a Key role in play and learning

Playing is a natural way for your child to learn about the world around them. Children learn through play at home, at nurseries and playgroups, with their friends, at school and beyond. Play is a big part of your child's development and you have an important role to play.

readily with reading and maths when they go to primary school. Every child is entitled to a free nursery place in the term after their 3rd birthday. Information on how to access a nursery place is available from CARIS (contact details shown opposite).

Early learning through things which happen everyday

Children who are helped or praised when they express themselves freely through play tend to be more able to adapt, learn skills and do better at school. As a parent it's important to spend time playing with your child, providing interest and interaction. Involving children in daily activities such as shopping, laying the table or cooking will provide 'real life' ways for children to learn. From birth your child begins to learn through play about using their senses, meeting people, talking and moving.

School years

Primary schools recognise and value play and use it as a learning tool throughout the school day. At home your child will begin to play more on their own or with friends, but it is still important to be part of your child's play, as well as any hobbies, artistic or sporting interests that they may develop as they grow. Giving your child time and helping them is of even greater value than new toys or games, and playing with them means that you are part of their personal, social and emotional development.

Of course safety is most important, so please see the chapter in this booklet about Health & safety. Also see the chapters about Babysitting and Choosing high quality childcare, as these carers have a role to play too.

As they grow older you will need to set ground rules about playing out and visiting friends. Try to find a way of getting your child to get out and meet with others, whilst making sure that you know where they are and that they are fully aware of dangers and threats to their safety.

Nursery provision

Pre-school education can give your child a really good start in learning and in getting on with other children. Children who have attended a nursery are able to progress more

As children, we all enjoyed playing - perhaps we still do! Learning to play again with your child can be great fun. It will bring you closer to your child and play a vital role in preparing them for a full and active life.



WARNING SIGNS

If your child isn't getting enough attention from you or from other carers, they may not be learning. It could seriously affect their development and how they learn in later life.



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 playgroups and other play activities available in your area.



WHAT TO SAY

Just go with the flow. Show them 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 interested. Try to think up new things for your child to do especially ones for rainy days.



CONTACTS

• CARIS
0845 351 3000
• Ayrshire Council Educational Services:
- East Ayrshire 01563 576000
- North Ayrshire 01294 324400
- South Ayrshire 01292 612000

WEBLINKS www.childcarelink.gov.uk/ayrshire



Choosing high quality childcare

“ Andrew is 7, 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 environment. He has made lots of new friends not just other kids but members of staff too. I can relax and get on with what I need to do... life is so much easier. ”



WARNING SIGNS

Sometimes, children are not always able to tell you if something is wrong so note changes in their moods, behaviour and physical appearances.



ACTION

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



WHAT TO SAY

Tell your child who will be looking after them, where they are going, how long for and whom 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

Take up references from others who have used a particular childcare service. Look for trained and experienced staff. Visit the facilities and look for busy and relaxed children. Check how you will be informed about your child's progress and in case of emergency.



CONTACTS

• CARIS
0845 351 3000

All childcare and early or pre-school education services should have:

- General information
- What to look for
- Top ten quality pointers
- Top tips
- Where can I get information on childcare in my local area?

How do I make the right choice?

All childcare and early or pre-school education services should have:

- Trained or experienced staff - ready to respond to your child.
- Safe and clean premises with plenty of space to play and explore.
- Fun activities planned each day with a range of toys and equipment.
- A big welcome for you and your child.

General information

In Scotland there are many different types of childcare, early education and pre-school education services. You should find out about them before you decide which is best for your child.

What to look for

Choosing childcare and early education is a big step for you and your child. Ask about opening hours, price, age of children and if there is a space for your child.

There are lots of differences between different types of childcare, early education or pre-school services and also between individual childminders, nurseries, nursery classes or out of school clubs. Try and give yourself enough time to visit several possible options in your area to get a good idea of what could suit your child. Don't forget you are the expert on your child and trust your feelings.

It can be a good idea to take your child with you to see how staff talk to him or her. Try to go when children are there so you can see if they are calm, happy and busy.

Top ten quality pointers

When you visit possible childcare options, look for these Quality Pointers. You could add your own as well:

1. Are the children relaxed, safe and happy?
2. Do children play and talk together?

3. Are the staff listening to children and answering them carefully?
4. Are the staff welcoming?
5. Are the staff joining in with what the children are doing?
6. Are there lots of fun activities planned to help children learn and play? Can children plan some of these themselves?
7. Are there plenty of clean toys and equipment for children to use?
8. Are the premises clean, well kept and safe for children with a fun outside play area?
9. Do parents have plenty of chances to say what they want for their children?
10. Are you invited to read the most recent inspection report?

If there are other things you want to know, do not be afraid to ask. Good childcare staff expect you to ask questions and will be happy to answer them. You should also know how to raise any concerns or complaints with the staff and managers.

Top tips

- Always take up references. You could ask for names of other parents to talk to about your chosen service.
- Listen to your child and find out more if he or she seems unhappy.
- Always trust your own feelings about your childcare - you know your child best.

Where can I get information on childcare in my local area?

The Childcare and Recreation Information Service (CARIS) can provide guidance and information about the wide variety of childcare provision including Childminders, Day Nurseries, Playgroups, Out Of School Care as well as Parent & Toddler Groups and Leisure Activities. CARIS can be contacted on 0845 351 300 (or by visiting the website at www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk).



Post-natal depression

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

- Not every mum copes straight away with motherhood
- Around 15% of women suffer post-natal depression
- Most women suffer 'baby blues' in the first ten days
- The sooner you get help, the sooner you'll feel better
- Talk to your midwife or health visitor about your worries
- Make the most of help from family and friends

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.

Many women do not see that they have post-natal 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.

Baby blues

Around 50-80% of 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.

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 which can be an enormous support to new mums from your doctor, midwife, or health visitor.

Post-natal depression (PND)

Around 10-15% of women will have worse depression,* sometimes weeks or months after the birth of their baby. About half of cases happen in the first three months, and 75% of cases by six months. 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.

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.

Post-natal Depression website

www.pni.org.uk



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 PND, only about half of mothers who need help are getting it. So don't keep your feelings to yourself - the sooner you'll talk about it, the sooner you get help and treatment if you need it.



CONTACTS

- Your GP, midwife or health visitor
- Mental Health Foundation Scotland 0141 572 0125

WEBLINKS www.pni.org.uk

Look up a word

- *PND Post-natal Depression.
- *Bonding The special love between you and your baby.
- *Depression Feelings of sadness and loss of hope that won't go away which stop you enjoying things and make you feel tired all the time.

“ I thought I couldn't manage. She cried all the time, I was exhausted and nothing worked. I felt such a failure. I got so angry with her I felt like shaking her to stop her noise. I had no idea how much that could hurt her. ”

Never shake the baby



WARNING SIGNS

A range of signs can indicate if a child may have been shaken, including altered level of consciousness, feeding difficulties, floppy or very stiff, bulging fontanelle sudden change of colour, lethargy, vomiting, irritability, and seizures.



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 (see right).



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 GP, midwife or local health visitor
- NHS 24
08454 24 24 24
- CRY-SIS
08451 228 669
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222

- 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

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. Normally a baby will cry for a total of two hours every day but not continuously. If a baby has additional difficulties, they will cry more and this can be very stressful. One in ten babies cry much more than this on average and many parents experience a great deal of difficulty managing and coping with this.

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 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.

Many parents may not realise the extent of the damage that a shake can do to babies and young children under the age of five.

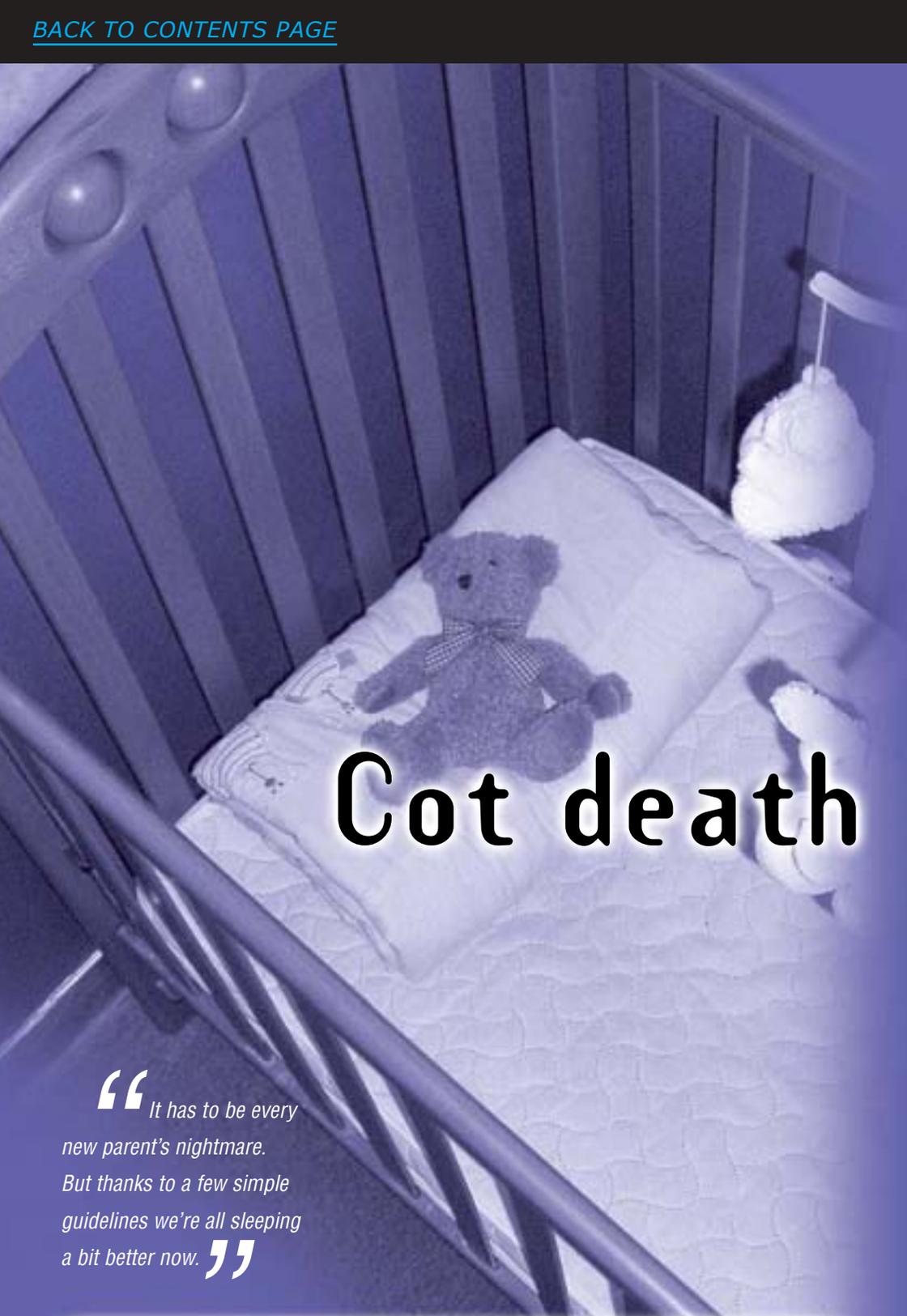
Parents/carers who have a low tolerance level may become frustrated and more likely to shake the child or resort to shaking the child to stop him or her from crying. However there are many alternatives to try and people to talk to.

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 (not exceeding ten minutes). Always go back and check.
- Make sure your baby is not crying because he or she is unwell.
- Ask someone else you trust to take over for a while.

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 it's tough coating. This happens because a young



Cot death

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

- Since the introduction of new prevention guidelines in 1991 the number of babies dying as cot deaths in the UK has fallen by nearly 70%
- 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
- Make sure your baby's cot is a safe and secure place to sleep
- Keep smoke away from your baby

Reducing the risk of cot death

'Back to Sleep'

Unless told otherwise by health professionals your baby should always be put to sleep on their 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.

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.

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 and 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.

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 try to give up now for your child's sake. Tobacco smoke is known to be in the breath of a smoker for a considerable time after they have been smoking.

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 more than you are wearing.

Make contact

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



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 stopping 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. By following these simple steps the UK has seen a major reduction in cot deaths in the last ten years.



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.



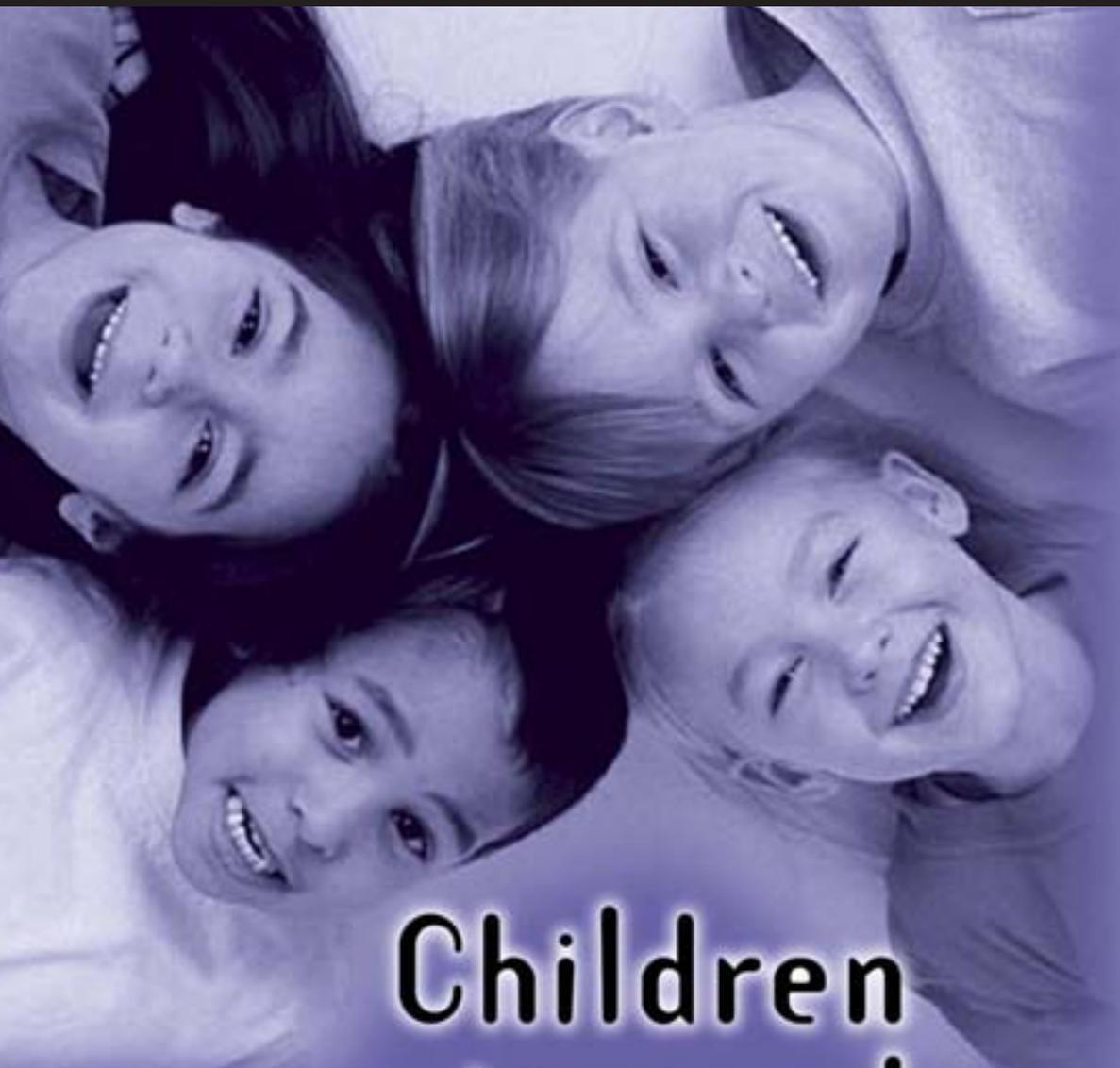
PREVENTION

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 GP, midwife, or health visitor
- NHS 24 08454 24 24 24
- CRUSE Bereavement Care 01355 244 288
- Scottish Cot Death Trust 0141 357 3946
- SANDS 020 7436 5881



Children in need

“ I always wanted to be a good mother, but it was hard to keep on top of everything. Finally I got some help and you wouldn't believe the difference it's made. I'm so proud of how far we've come. We're a family again. ”



WARNING SIGNS

Missed health appointments, basic needs not being met, behavioural problems, not going to school or poor school progress, not being clean, not looking after themselves and hurting themselves on purpose.



POSSIBLE CAUSES

Family breakdown, disability faced by child or other family member, domestic violence, parents using drugs or alcohol and see page 50 Drugs & alcohol misuse and page 54 Domestic abuse.



WHAT TO SAY

Try to help your child as best you can but if there are problems you cannot help with get help at once from Social Services, your doctor or other care professionals. Try to tell them about what's happening as openly and honestly as you can. Be involved in all meetings and interviews.



PREVENTION

The earlier you seek help, the less damage will be done and the easier it will be to sort out the difficulties that your child and your family face.



CONTACTS

- Discuss your concerns with any agency involved with your family
- Speak to your health visitor, nursery and school staff
- Childline Scotland 0870 336 2910
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

- Children do well when their parents or carers give them a good standard of care and sometimes parents and carers need help to do this
- Children can be 'in need' for a wide variety of reasons
- By involving the child, the parents or carers and all the relevant service providers together, the aim is to find and sort out issues early and successfully
- Permission is usually requested from parents and carers to share information amongst groups of professionals, unless there are concerns about your child's welfare and well-being
- Children have a right to have their basic needs met and to be protected from abuse and neglect

Working together for our children

Who are 'Children In Need?'

All sorts of children and families face a variety of difficulties, where help is needed to make sure that they are safe and supported. The difficulty may arise from disability or family breakdown or from difficulties that many parents face in responding to their child's changing needs. The help that children and families need can come from several different departments and agencies, and aim to bring together all the agencies that can offer help. The goal is to meet the needs of children and families in our community before a problem becomes a crisis.

another agency to help. If a number of agencies need to make a plan with you to meet your children's needs they may call a meeting, to which you will be invited, and at which you will be given support to share your views. At this meeting, you, your child and representatives from various agencies, work together to find a successful way forward to overcome your individual difficulties. Plans made at a children in need meeting will be written down and reviewed* within an agreed period of time.

Family focused

You and your child are fully consulted and are encouraged to attend any meetings held about your situation. By law, all information about your family is treated in the strictest confidence and your permission is required for information to be shared, unless there are serious concerns about your child's safety. At any time, you and your child have the right to express your views and have anything you wish explained to you.

How it all works

When professionals with whom you have contact become aware that you need help to meet the needs of your child they will talk to you about how they can help. If it is not possible for their agency to provide the right service or advice they will request your permission to ask

Look up a word

*Reviewed Checked to make sure that everybody is doing what they said they'd do.

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

Children with disabilities

- Children with disabilities* are included in the category of having additional support needs
- Disability affects some 15% of people in the UK at some time in their lives
- 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
- Support groups, parent groups and other organisations are out there to help you cope

You are not alone

If your child has a disability the future may seem like a real struggle, not just for them, but for you too. The word 'disabled' covers a very wide range of different conditions and it is thought that 15% of people in the UK have some form of disability at some time in their lives. Remember you and your child are not alone. The Government, local Council, Health and Education Authorities give a wide range of benefits, facilities, support and advice for children with disabilities and their carers.

disabled child. These include Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance, help with extra housing costs and Carers Blue Badge scheme.

Don't forget free dental treatment and prescriptions, help with the cost of glasses and sometimes help with travel to hospital, school meals and free road tax.

Legal protection

Your child is protected by law. The Disability Discrimination Act says it is against the law for any service provider (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat disabled people less fairly than other people because of their disability. It also asks them to make reasonable adjustments to make their services easy to use - like ramps or disabled toilets so that disabled people can use them too.

Education

Depending on their kind of disability, your child may get better results by going to a special school which is a place specifically designed to match their educational needs or your child may get the extra support they need through the special needs provisions in a mainstream school. Your Education Authority and Health Service providers will help you assess your child's special educational needs and help you find the best way forward for their education.

Extra support

Your Council can give extra support for you and your child. This can include special leisure facilities, short breaks and many additional services for particular needs. 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.

Health

From the start, your doctor and local Health Service are there for you. They'll give the help and advice you need to discover and assess your child's disability. They'll help you plan the treatment, therapy, equipment and ongoing medical care that your child may need.

Make contact

On the left you'll find a list of contacts that you may find useful. You're not alone, so make contact today and get the support you need.

Benefits

There are several benefits that you could receive to help you with the costs of caring for a



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 GP 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 is 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

- Carers Scotland 0141 221 9141
- Princess Royal Trust for carers:
 - South Ayrshire 01292 619047
 - East Ayrshire 01563 571533
 - North Ayrshire 01294 311333

Look up a word

*Disabilities Conditions which mean that a person may need extra help with daily life.

“ She didn't say anything, but I could tell that having to look after me was having an affect on Jessie. But how could I care for my daughter, when she was caring for me and her baby brother? I made a few phone calls and found out that even with my illness, I can still be a good parent. ”



Young carers

- 3% of carers are young carers
- One in five young carers miss school because of their caring role
- Young carers are protected by the Children Act 1989; Carers (Recognition and Services Act) 1995 and Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000
- The Government, your Local Council, and Education and Health Authorities are there to help and will act once concern is raised
- There are many types of support to help you and your child cope with their caring
- You care about your young carer! So make contact with the support groups and organisations that are there to help

Who cares?

Many people need special care in their homes. They may be ill, disabled or elderly, or they may have drug or alcohol problems. Care from a member of the family can be a help. When the carer is a child or a young adult it is very important to make sure that they are getting everything they need too. If your child has any caring role, for yourself or another member of their family, it is most important that they do not suffer because of their caring. Most importantly, tell your local Social Services, and your Local Education and Health Authorities about this. You don't have to cope alone; they can help you and your child get the support and advice you both need.

Health

Sometimes young carers can be so busy looking after others, that they forget to look after themselves, and can become ill, stressed or depressed. The best way to avoid this is to get help from your doctor and school nurse. Let them know all about what is happening so that they can give the help and advice that both you and your child need.

Extra support

Your Council can give extra support to carers. This can include special breaks for carers and extra support services for particular needs. There are also many local and national organisations set up to help young carers and their parents.

Education

You will want your child to do well at school. Many young carers achieve good results but research has shown that caring can have a bad effect on a child's education. To help stop this, it is normally helpful if your Local Education Authority or your child's school are told about their caring role. This way they can give your child extra help if needed and will understand and support them.



WARNING SIGNS

Late homework, missing school, feeling tired all the time and acting unusually may be signs that your child is struggling with their caring role. It is very important that you talk and listen to your child so you can take action to help them cope.



ACTION

Don't think that you and your child have to deal with things alone. Get as much information as you can and find out what services, support, benefits and advice are available. You're not alone - make contact!



WHAT TO SAY

Make sure your local Social Services, your Local Education and Health Authorities, and your doctor know about what is happening and keep them up to date if things change.



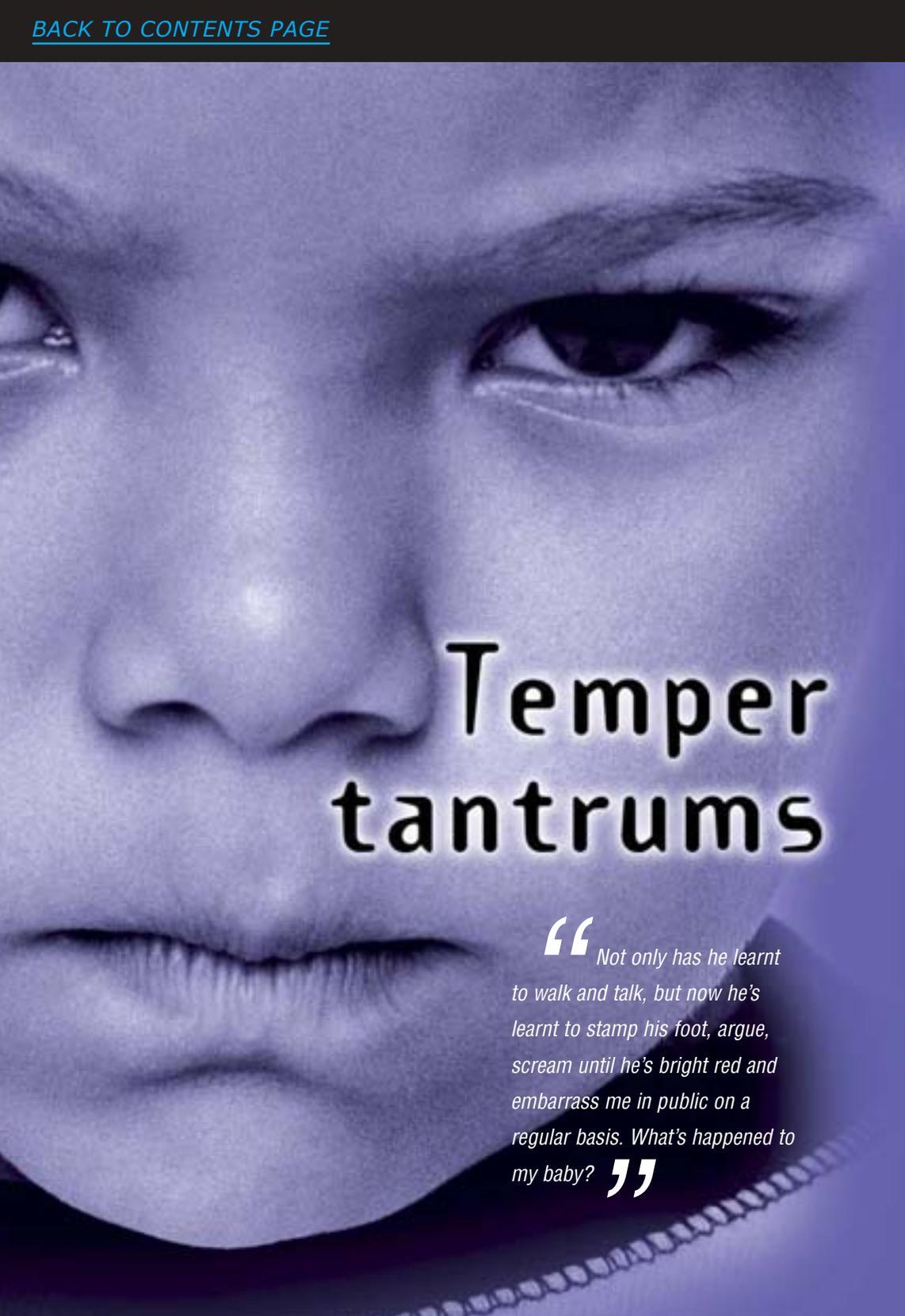
PREVENTION

Being a young carer could have a bad effect on your child's health, education and well-being. You can help stop this by making sure that they get the best support and advice available.



CONTACTS

- Carers Scotland 0141 221 9141
- Princess Royal Trust for carers:
 - South Ayrshire 01292 619047
 - East Ayrshire 01563 571533
 - North Ayrshire 01294 311333



Temper tantrums

“ Not only has he learnt to walk and talk, but now he’s learnt to stamp his foot, argue, scream until he’s bright red and embarrass me in public on a regular basis. What’s happened to my baby? ”

- One in five two-year-olds has a tantrum at least twice a day
- The ‘Terrible Twos’ are a normal part of growing up
- Getting angry is natural but it just makes things worse
- Try to find a good way to deal with problems
- Plan to avoid the causes of tantrums
- Remember, they won’t last forever!

When every day is a difficult day

Why temper tantrums happen

Tantrums* may start around 18 months, are common at two years old and are much less common at four. Very young children are often not able to tell you things as much as they want to and their frustration may come out as a tantrum.

Tantrums are more likely to happen if a child is tired, hungry or uncomfortable. Tantrums also often happen in busy, public places, which can be embarrassing and add to the parents’ stress.

If you are worried about the way your child is acting talk to your health visitor or doctor.

- If you’re at home you can try ignoring the tantrum, or maybe walking away into another room if it’s safe to do so. Get 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.

Avoiding temper tantrums

Tantrums are less likely if you plan ahead.

- Try to stop your child getting hungry or overtired.
- Make sure your child has enough attention and affection.
- Make sure your time together is quality time together especially if you work long hours.
- Keep shopping trips and outings as short as possible.
- Try to plan a method that you’ll use to deal with tantrums when they happen and to share the approach with other adults in your child’s life.

Remember, temper tantrums are normal and do not usually lead to serious problems. As your child gets older they will learn to deal more calmly with the stresses of everyday life.

Dealing with temper tantrums

- Keep calm. Getting angry and shouting at your child will only make things worse.
- Your child might be tired or hungry so rest or food might help. Or they might just need a cuddle.
- Try to find something else interesting to do or look at. If you’re in a busy or noisy place try to go somewhere quieter.
- If none of these work, try to see things from your child’s point of view and understand what they actually want. Try giving them a choice, as this gives your child a sense of control and can be better than simply saying ‘no’. Always try to offer a positive way out.
- If you do say ‘no’ don’t give in later to calm them down. If you give in your child will learn that tantrums work!



WARNING SIGNS

It could happen anywhere, but watch out for a tired or hungry child at a time when he or she wants something that you have said ‘No’ to, like when out shopping or during a day out.



ACTION

Keep calm, think about whether your child needs food or rest. Give your child attention and try to find a quiet place or some way of getting his or her attention. Don’t give in, but try to understand your child’s feelings.



WHAT TO SAY

Try to give your child a choice or a way out. Be calm and understanding. Keep it simple and clear. Praise your child for calming down.



PREVENTION

Avoid long shopping trips or tiring days out. It often helps to give your child extra cuddles or talk to them more. Try to see causes for tantrums in the day ahead and think of ways to avoid them.



CONTACTS

- Health visitor
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
- Childline Scotland 0870 336 2910

Look up a word

*Tantrums When a child shouts and screams to get what they want.



Smacking

“Smacking is the only thing that works... I get so angry with him sometimes. Besides, I was smacked when I was a child and it never did me any harm.”



WARNING SIGNS

A child who flinches when they fear they will be hit. Smacking a child in frustration with a force, which in hindsight was unnecessary. Bruising and other marks on a child. Behavioural changes - slap or fingertip marks - fearful and withdrawn.



ACTION

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



WHAT TO SAY

Tell your child they have crossed boundaries or broken family rules. Use your tone of voice and facial expressions to help them understand. 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 consistent, ignore trivial bad behaviour and reward good (perhaps use a star chart).



CONTACTS

- Health visitor
- Childline Scotland 0870 336 2910
- Social Work Services (see back pages for local contact numbers)
- Local Police Office

- Children are delicate. A light slap to you can be potentially very harmful to a small child
- Hitting children sets the wrong example. It teaches children to hit out when things aren't done the way they want
- Smacking has negative effects. This goes further than physical pain
- Smacking does not teach children discipline. There are better ways of managing behaviour

The great debate

It is important that children learn how to behave and control their own behaviour as they get older. Parents have a very important job to set standards and be a role model 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 to instill self-discipline. Smacking, which controls your child from the outside, has no long lasting positive effect. In fact smacking usually has to increase in severity in order to have the same impact on your growing child.

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 various times. 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 frustration, rather than a helpful way of influencing the child's behaviour.

However, simply because lots of people may have smacked their children does not mean it is the best way to punish your child or ensure good behaviour. Those who say smacking is

acceptable have argued that it is not harmful in the long term and is the most immediate form of discipline. It is much more helpful and safer to notice and reward your child's positive behaviours, to encourage the behaviours you want.

The numbers of parents who smack their children is decreasing and lots of those who continue often do so because they are not sure that other methods will work. In this society parents are not allowed to physically harm their children regardless of any individual, cultural or religious justification. As a result, child protection professionals will assess incidents of physical ill treatment of children, in order that they can understand, prevent and explain the consequences of further incidents.

There are a number of alternative ways of handling your child's behaviour. Further information and support can be obtained from your health visitor, nurse or school staff.

For further information see the Scottish Executive website for guidance. www.scottishexecutive.gov.uk

Bedwetting & sleeping difficulties

“ I felt myself getting panicky every time I put him to bed. Maybe it was a lack of proper routine, but at the time I felt so tired and had so little patience. I never praised him for going all night without wetting his bed. I just got cross when I had to change the sheets again, which didn't really help at all. ”

- It is thought that one in four three-year-olds and one in six five-year-olds repeatedly wet the bed
- Bedwetting may be a sign of a health problem but more often 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 a bad dream or being hungry

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.

- Feel confident in yourself to know whether your child is really upset or just restless.
- If you are woken during the night, try to arrange for a friend or relative to help out with some of the chores in the house to let you rest.

Establishing a routine

Babies need different amounts of sleep, and if your baby is breastfed, he/she will tend to waken for feeds during the night. Many children and babies have difficulty getting to sleep at some time. It is important to get a regular night time sleep routine for your child by them going 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 keeping a night light on. 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 GP, health visitor or school nurse.

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. Some children, in fact up to one in six seven-year-olds, bedwet. 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.



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. Try to check whether there is a particular time when your child wets or soils. Make sure your child goes to the toilet just before going to bed. If you are worried discuss your concerns with your health visitor or doctor. 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. Do not tell your child off if they do not sleep through the night, or if they bed wet. Try to develop an understanding for how they feel and 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

- Speak to your health visitor, doctor, nursery or school staff
- Education and Resources for Improving Childhood Continence (ERIC) 0845 370 8008 www.eric.org.uk



Babysitting

- Children rely on their parents for their safety
- Your child has the right to care which is free from harm
- Make sure your child gets the best quality care
- Select your babysitter carefully
- Avoid leaving your child with someone under 16
- Ensure your babysitter can be contacted in an emergency

Who can I leave my child with?

As parents you have responsibility for the safety and well-being of your children. As a result it is important that you think very carefully about the person you are going to leave them with, whether this is a stranger, close relative or a friend. When you leave your child in the care of someone else you are taking a risk with his or her safety and welfare. When considering a temporary carer for your child it is important that you choose someone with the abilities and high standards that you would expect of yourself. This includes someone who will make sure they are fed, changed, kept safe, given room to play, feel secure and can deal with difficulties which may occur.

16 years of age. This is based on the idea that at 16 and above, an individual is much more aware of potential dangers and risks and could seek help quickly if necessary.

This age limit is also linked with the possible action which could be taken by the police if anything were to go wrong and an injury resulted. It is most likely that you as a parent would be held responsible if anything goes wrong if your babysitter is under 16 years of age. Often a good babysitter will have a good reputation locally and can be recommended by a friend or neighbour. However it is essential that you meet personally with the prospective babysitter before you decide to leave your child in their care.

Generally a babysitter will come to your home to take care of your child. Make sure you talk to your babysitter before you leave. Let them know when to expect you back and make sure they have contact details in case of emergencies.

Babysitters do not need qualifications or a certificate to look after children. As a result anyone can advertise his or her services as a babysitter. The Law Society of Scotland - Children's Law and the NSPCC recommend that the minimum age of a babysitter should be



“Leaving Natalie with anyone is difficult, but I really need to have a break sometimes. I would worry all the time if I could not rely on and trust the person looking after my child. I'm really glad I spent the time I did finding the right babysitter.”



WARNING SIGNS

Children will not always be able to tell you if something is wrong, so note changes in their mood, behaviour and physical appearance. Agree with the babysitter to discuss, from the beginning, all accidents and incidents.



ACTION

Use people you trust to care for your child or ask them to recommend someone. Speak to other families who have used the babysitter you are considering.



WHAT TO SAY

Tell the babysitter all about your child's routine and their likes and dislikes. Tell the babysitter about your rules, like no smacking. Always leave a contact number in case of emergencies.



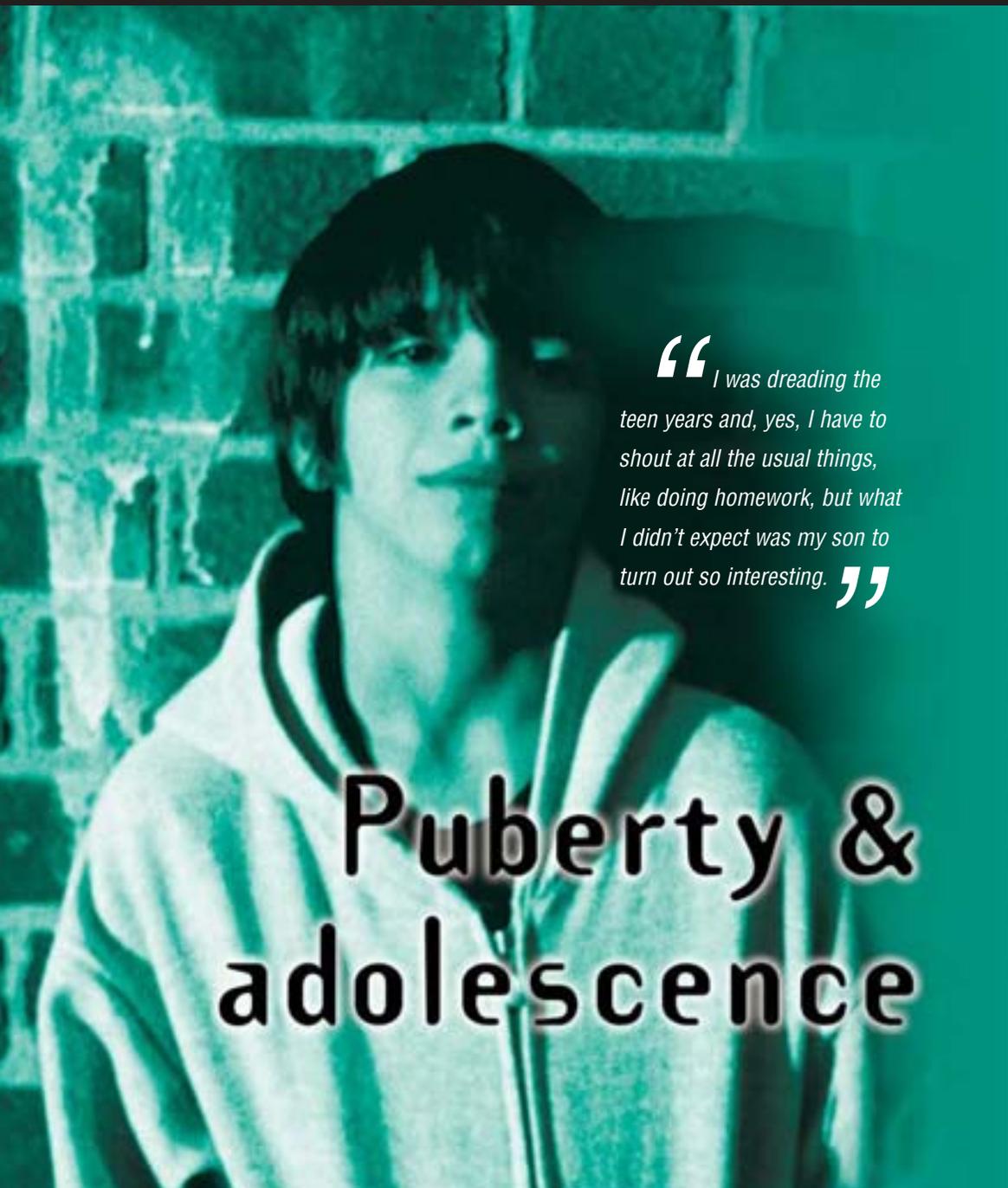
PREVENTION

Make sure you feel completely comfortable about your babysitter before you leave your child in their care.



CONTACTS

- Scottish Child Law Centre
0800 328 8970 (Free)
- ChildLine Scotland
0870 336 2910
- Care Commission
0141 843 4230
- CARIS
0845 351 3000



“ I was dreading the teen years and, yes, I have to shout at all the usual things, like doing homework, but what I didn't expect was my son to turn out so interesting. ”

Puberty & adolescence



WARNING SIGNS

Mood swings; arguments; talking back; an 'over-the-top' interest in hygiene, or a complete lack of it are quite normal. Difficulty in saying what they feel calmly and untidiness are all warning signs that your child has become a teen! As well as coping with emotional changes brought on by hormones, your child will also have to deal with physical changes.



ACTION

Listening and talking to your teen will help you understand what they are going through emotionally and physically. One of the best things you can do for your child is to let them know that you are there for them.



WHAT TO SAY

Teenagers can be clever, interesting and thoughtful as well as having set ideas, being sarcastic and sulky. Bring out the best in them by talking things through rather than arguing. You will probably have to answer lots of questions about puberty*. Don't be embarrassed and be well prepared with simple facts.



PREVENTION

Remember you are the adult! All too often you may find yourself having temper tantrums! Being flexible and bargaining works better than making rules and demands. The more information your teenager has the better he or she will be able to cope with the changes that come with puberty. Talk together to stop any worries or problems getting out of control.



CONTACTS

- Childline Scotland 0870 336 2910
- NHS 24 08454 24 24 24
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

- Listening is the key to a good relationship
- Your teenager wants independence - but still needs you!
- Growing up can be frightening for teenagers
- Hormones set off physical changes, mood swings, and changes in feelings
- Give your teenager the information they need

Your teenager is just growing up

The teenage years are often seen as a time of arguments and bad family relationships as children either hardly leave their room or are never home. They won't answer the most simple questions about school or how their evening went and are totally unpredictable.

Yes, that is normal adolescent behaviour, but it is not all bad news. It is also normal to find out that you have a young person living with you who is clever, interesting and funny. The most likely cause for the mood swings of your teenager is hormones. At the start of puberty, hormones are triggering physical changes and emotional feelings that are not only hard to deal with, but hard to talk about.

Your teenager is also forming deeper and more complex relationships; any worries or arguments, for example pressure from mates to do things they may not feel comfortable with, can affect their sense of well-being and confidence. They will also be experiencing new sexual feelings which they may find difficult to handle and concerns about their looks.

They will also be trying to work out who they are. Your child is learning about views, opinions and beliefs that may be different to those they have grown up with. On top of all this, they also have to cope with school or college work, which can make them worried and stressed.

And teenagers will take it out on those closest to them - you!

Supporting your teen

How you deal with your teenager can make the difference between a close relationship and a difficult one. Untidiness, doing homework, letting you know where they are and helping around the house can cause arguments. Reasoning with your teenager works better than making demands: "If you tidy your room, I'll put this wash on for you."

Talking to your teenager will help you understand each other and develop your relationship. It will also help build up their confidence. Listen to their ideas and try to understand their thoughts and feelings. Respect your teenagers' privacy - remember you were a teenager once! Be open-minded and do not judge your teenager so they trust you and feel they can turn to you when they need help.

The teenage years can be tough and your child needs to know they have your support. It's common for them to argue or even ignore you at times, because they know that, on the whole, you will take the bad moods with the good. If they upset you, don't forget a lot of it is just for show and that when things go wrong, the person they'll often turn to for comfort is you.

Look up a word

*Puberty The time when the body develops and a child grows into an adult.

“ Greg is ten - same age as me. I haven't met him, but we chat on the Internet all the time. He's really funny. He wants to meet up tomorrow to play football... I can't wait to see what he looks like. ”

Internet safety

- The Internet can be fun and is useful
- It is important that parents monitor their child's Internet use
- Stranger danger exists online as well as in the real world
- Children can be bullied online

New technology, old problem

The Internet, chatrooms, MSN, webcams and ipods are wonderful for young people to find information, study and keep in contact with friends or meet new ones.

Unfortunately there are risks attached to using the Internet from sites that contain violent or sexual content and child abusers who use chat rooms to become friendly with young people. It's also possible for children and young people to be bullied online through email, instant messaging and websites.

Get involved

If you have a computer at home, keep an eye on what's going on by keeping it in a family room, not hidden away in a bedroom. Take an interest in the websites your teenager visits and encourage them to talk about how they spend their time online. If you're not confident about using the Internet yourself, why not ask your teenager to show you how?

Limit the amount of time they spend online and encourage them to have other interests and hobbies.

Online dangers:

● Contact from strangers

Remind your teenager that strangers on the Internet can be just as dangerous as strangers on the street. They should be alert to the fact that people online might not be who they say they are.

They should never give out their full name, address, e-mail or personal information (name of school, where they hang out with friends, mobile number) to people they meet in chatrooms online as this could allow someone to locate them in the real world.

They should be very wary about agreeing to a face-to-face meeting with someone they have met online. If they really want to meet up with an online friend you should insist on going

with them and make sure you meet in a busy public place.

Warn your teenager not to open e-mail attachments from senders that they don't know as they could contain a virus.

● Bullying

Increasing numbers of young people are victims of 'cyber bullying'. This can mean getting threatening or hurtful emails or text messages or having abusive things written about them on websites or chatrooms.

If this happens to your teenager they should first try ignoring these messages as the bully may get bored and stop.

If the bullying does not stop, it may be possible to block messages from the person sending them (see www.stoptextbully.com).

If the messages are coming from someone at school, report it. The school will have an anti-bullying policy which they can put into place.

If threats seem serious, contact the police.

● Inappropriate content

Your teenager may come across websites with disturbing sexual or violent content. You should encourage them to tell you if they are distressed or concerned about anything they have seen online. Don't overreact if they have been looking at something unsuitable - remember that it's possible they came across it accidentally.

Software filters can help block inappropriate material but are not 100% effective and are not a substitute for good adult supervision.

If your teenager keeps it a secret when using the computer, if you notice changes in how they act, problems sleeping, or changes in routine or they are suddenly asking about sexual matters you could look into whether their Internet use has anything to do with it.



WARNING SIGNS

Being secretive when using the Internet, changes in how they act, unusual sexual questions, leaving clues (such as emails) that they are having chats with others which seem sexual or you are not comfortable with, or problems at school and not telling you where they are going or who they are meeting.



ACTION

Encourage your child to discuss how they spend their time online. Learn how to use the Internet yourself so you can understand what your child is viewing and whether it is suitable.



WHAT TO SAY

Discuss with your child the dangers of chat rooms and looking at unsuitable websites. Make sure they know that any personal information, including their real name, should not be passed on to anyone else. Be open-minded about the teen websites they are viewing, but let them know that if they are worried about anything they see or read on the Internet they can ask you about it.



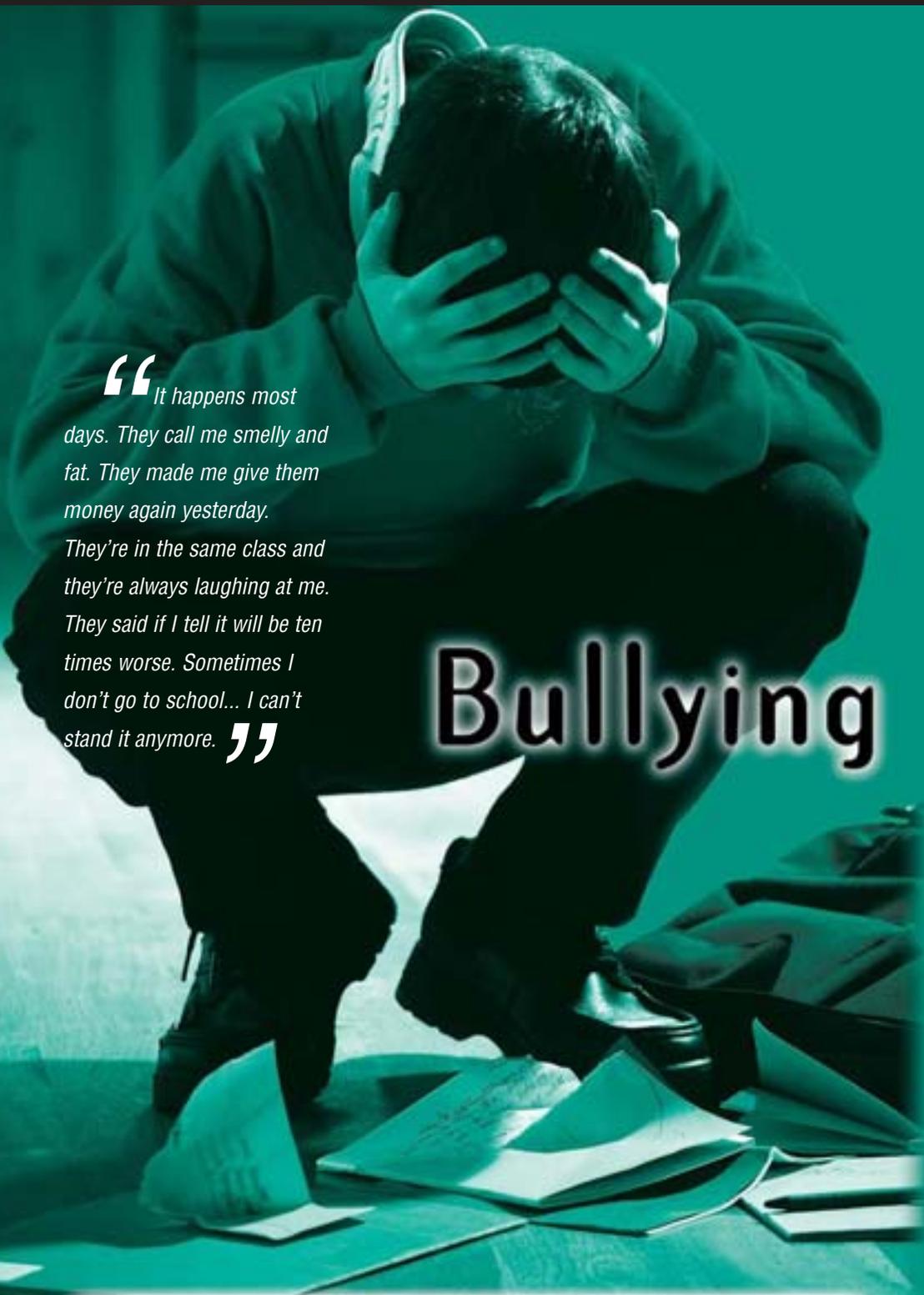
PREVENTION

Keep the computer in a family room, with the monitor facing outwards, so you can always see what's on screen. Discuss which websites your child is looking at and take a look for yourself. Make sure your child is aware of the dangers.



CONTACTS

- Childline Scotland 0870 336 2910
- www.stoptextbully.com
- www.kidsmart.org.uk
- www.websafecrackerz.com
- www.chatdanger.com
- www.parentscentre.gov.uk



Bullying

“ It happens most days. They call me smelly and fat. They made me give them money again yesterday. They're in the same class and they're always laughing at me. They said if I tell it will be ten times worse. Sometimes I don't go to school... I can't stand it anymore. ”

- Children have the right not to be hurt
- Bullying behaviour is unacceptable
- Bullying can happen to any child at any age
- Act immediately if you think your child is being bullied
- Children need ways to protect themselves and seek help
- Advise your child to run, yell and tell the real story

The real story

Bullying is a frightening experience. It can isolate and damage a young person's self-confidence. Some ongoing bullying can have negative long-term effects on children, leading to depression* and even suicidal thoughts and actions.

School days are a time when the influence of other children is very important and fitting in is seen as essential. If children are thought of as different for any reason, they can be picked on and bullied. Sadly, we still live in a society in which to be different in any way can mean ridicule and bullying (often copied from parents) and this ensures that prejudice* will continue into the next generation. It is crucial to be alert to the possibility of bullying and make sure you know the tell-tale signs.

You may think that your child is unlikely to be bullied but the reality is that bullying can happen at any time and to any child.

Bullies who continually harm other children need support and help as well. They may have experienced difficulties of their own at home, which may have led to their actions. Reporting concerns may help them to get help as well.

- Bullying can happen anywhere but most commonly it happens in school.
- Bullying can take many forms, from verbal abuse to physical attack.
- Bullies can also use mobile phones or the Internet.
- Bullying is the repeated abuse of a child by one or several people.
- Bullies are not always older than the child they harm.
- Most bullying is done by children who are the same age as the victim.

If your child tells you about a friend or any other child who is being bullied - listen carefully and take this seriously. That child may not be able to say for themselves what is happening.

Today all schools are required to have an anti-bullying policy. However, school action alone cannot guarantee success and so it is important that parents and schools work together.



WARNING SIGNS
Running away, non-attendance at school, other learning and behavioural difficulties for no obvious reason. Your child has injuries with no feasible explanation for them.



ACTION
See the headteacher at the school for their support and action. If bullying is happening outside school, consider contacting the family of the child who is bullying and try to find a way to work together to sort it out.



WHAT TO SAY
Refuse to put up with bullying. Walk away, tell an adult or friend and avoid fighting. Parents - listen to your child, reassure and be there for them.



PREVENTION
Talk to your child about their school day. Teach your child to respect others from a young age. Teach your child that prejudice and bullying is unacceptable.

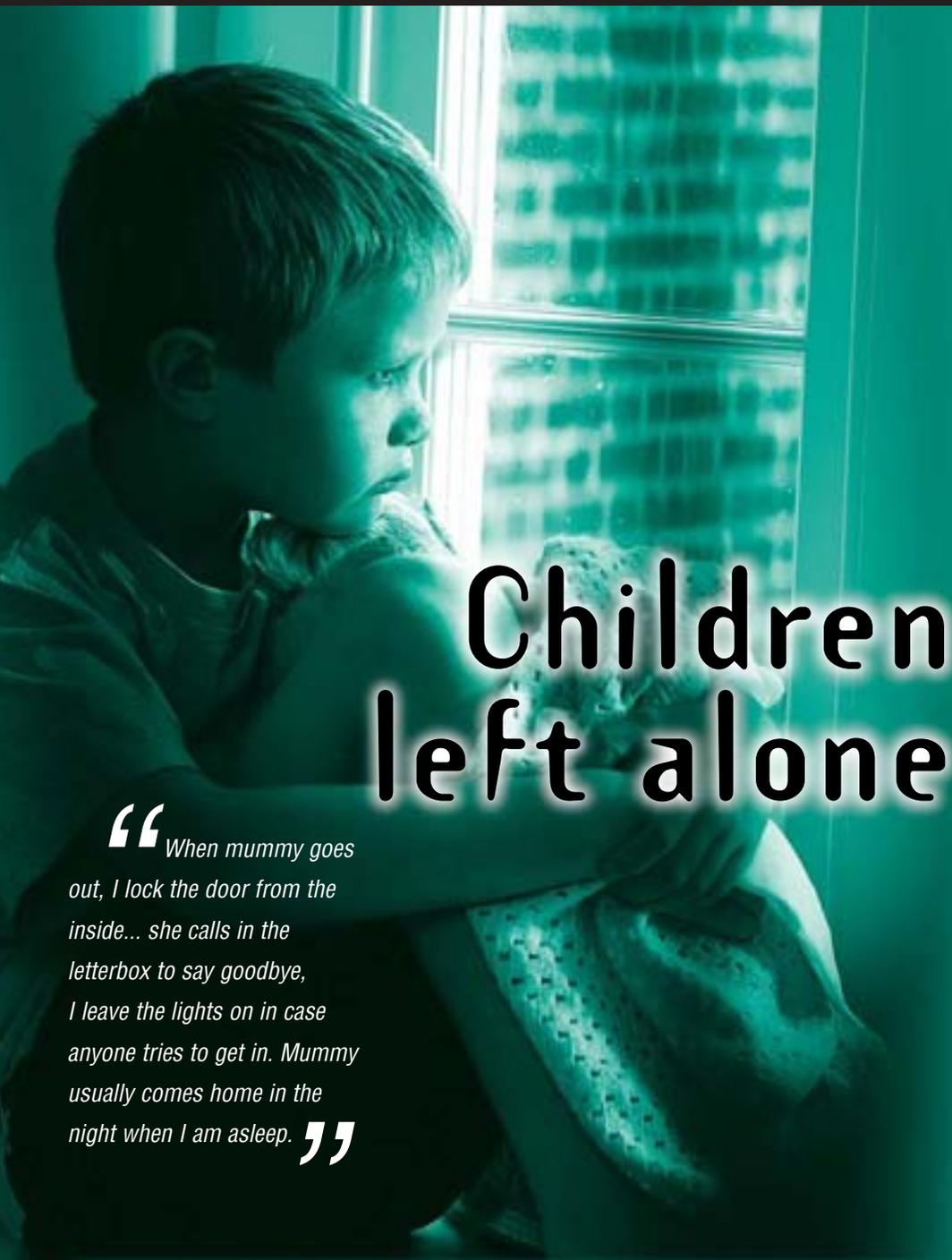


CONTACTS
• Kidscape 08451 205 204
• ChildLine Bullying Line 0800 441144

WEBLINKS www.textbullying.com • www.bullying.co.uk • www.antibullying.net

Look up a word

- ***Depression** Feeling of total hopelessness.
- ***Prejudice** Judgement or opinion made without adequate knowledge.



Children left alone

“When mummy goes out, I lock the door from the inside... she calls in the letterbox to say goodbye, I leave the lights on in case anyone tries to get in. Mummy usually comes home in the night when I am asleep.”



WARNING SIGNS

Parents who have limited support. A child who is frequently observed outside and alone for extended periods of time. Childcare arrangements that keep going wrong.



ACTION

If there is immediate risk of harm to a child, call the police.



WHAT TO SAY

If you are worried about a child being left alone, talk to the parent, a health visitor, teacher or a social worker.



PREVENTION

Think about shared babysitting and discuss this with neighbours, friends or other parents you have contact with. Find out about After School Clubs and Holiday Play Schemes.



CONTACTS

- Childline Scotland 0870 336 2910
- Law Society of Scotland (Children's Law) 0131 225 2934
- Scottish Out of School Care Network 0141 564 1284 www.soscn.org
- CARIS 0845 351 3000 www.scottishchildcare.gov.uk

- Never leave a young child alone
- Children are not ready for this amount of responsibility
- Leaving a child alone places them at risk of harm
- It can be a lonely and frightening experience
- Plan who you could contact for emergency care

Common sense and the law

If a child is not ready to be left alone it can be a sad, lonely, frightening and dangerous experience. There are many possible risks, both physical and emotional, which could affect your child in a negative way.

In addition, the level of responsibility which is given to the child to look after themselves, to somehow manage whatever may happen is impossible for a younger child. They may say that they do not mind being left and may find it exciting initially, but they cannot fully know the possible risks and how to handle them.

Even the relatively ordinary things that happen in life, such as hunger, a storm, the phone ringing or someone coming to the front door can cause problems. An accident, feeling ill or a power cut may occur and these are not issues that a child could deal with.

Whatever kind of neighbourhood you live in, it is rarely, if ever, possible to leave your children and assume that someone will look out for them if necessary, as may be the case in some communities and cultures.

If they are alerted, the Police and/or Social Services may take action if they think that a child has been neglected by being left alone. Neglect happens when a parent or carer fails to meet children's basic needs of food, shelter, security, attention or protection from exposure to danger.

The NSPCC have issued guidelines advising that children under the age of 13 should not be left alone. While this recommendation does not have the force of law, it is suggested as good practice. Children under this age do not have the maturity to manage the responsibility of being left alone and this may be particularly so if they are physically or learning disabled.

As a young person reaches adolescence, leaving them alone after school, for an evening or during the day is less concerning as long as they are prepared and aware of what to do if they are worried or need anything. So preparation for this is necessary.

If your child is 13 or over and you feel he or she has the maturity and ability to deal with this here are some simple suggestions:

- Always let your child know where you are and how to contact you.
- Always have a plan for your child - who to contact if they are worried.
- What to do if there is a fire, how would they get out of the house.
- What should they do if the phone rings or someone comes to the door.
- Contact your child on a regular basis.
- NEVER leave your child alone late at night or overnight.

Where is your child?

“ I was shocked when she ran away although, looking back, she was more of a loner than her brother. I now know that she had been missing school quite a bit. We stopped talking when my partner moved in but had been really close before that. ”



WARNING SIGNS

There may be none but does your child seem to be unhappy? Are you sure that they are not truanting from school? Has anything happened in the family that you haven't talked to your child about?



ACTION

If you think your child might be missing from school, talk to the school. Contact the police if your child goes missing and you don't know where they have gone.



WHAT TO SAY

Make sure that your child knows how important they are to you. When you have to tell your child off, tell them that it's the way they are acting that's the problem - not them. If something has gone wrong in the family, don't let your child think that it's their fault.



PREVENTION

Keep an eye out for changes in the way they act. Spend time with them and be interested in them. Do you know who your child's friends are? Be very careful about their access to the Internet and 'chat rooms'.



CONTACTS

- Your Child's School
- Missing Persons Helpline (24hrs) 0500 700 700
- Parents Network 020 7735 1214
- Message Home (for young people to get a message to their parents) 0800 700 740
- Your local Police Office

- Make time for your child to talk to you about their worries - even when you have to tell them off
- You know how important a good education is - let your child know this
- Only keep them off school if they are too ill to attend and not for days out or shopping trips
- Be honest about things that might be happening in the family
- Look for early signs that your child might not be happy and talk to their school about these
- Help is out there, please don't be too embarrassed or afraid to ask

Missing from home and school

Missing from school

The law says that parents must make sure that their children get a proper, full time education. Children who miss school are much more likely to have problems with their learning and getting the job or college place that they would like. They will often find it harder to make and keep friends and they are at much greater risk of getting into trouble in and out of school.

If they are missing out on school or lessons they are more likely to come across adults or other young people who might want to cause them harm, and to find themselves in situations of risk.

When children miss school without their parents knowing, this is called truancy. Children who 'truant' regularly often do this because they are worried about something.

There might be something happening on the way to or from school that is worrying them. They might be being bullied. They might be finding some lessons or subjects too hard (or too easy) or they might be having problems in finishing their homework. Sometimes, children will not want to leave home because they are worried that their parent might come to some harm whilst they are away.

Missing from home

Children from all sorts of backgrounds run away from home for lots of reasons. Many of us will remember planning to run away when we were younger because we felt unable to cope with our problems, or thought that nobody cared about us or because we thought we had been treated unfairly. Usually, if a child does go missing from home, it will be for a very short period - usually until the child thinks that the parents have noticed they are not there. Often, they will turn up at the home of a friend or relative.

When children run away, they are not being naughty - they are trying to tell us that they are unhappy or trying to find out just how much we do care about them.

If your child goes missing and you are worried about their safety, contact the police.

“ I know my boyfriend loves me really - it's just that he's at school too, so it's a bit difficult at the moment. I never knew you could get pregnant the first time you have sex, mum never told me - I thought it would be alright but it's not, I just don't know what to do. ”

Teenage pregnancy & sexual health

Pregnancy test



WARNING SIGNS

Young people will not always tell you if there is something that is worrying them. You need to understand their needs and let them know that you are there and be ready to listen.



ACTION

If you think that your child is having sex make sure that they know where to get the right information. If you think your daughter may be pregnant or if she has told you that she is, make sure she sees her doctor.



WHAT TO SAY

Talk to your teenagers about birth control. Make your sons know that pregnancy is not just a girl's problem.



PREVENTION

Make sure that your teenagers know about, and practice, safe sex. Remember it's not just about not getting pregnant but also to prevent them getting sexually transmitted infections.



CONTACTS

- GP or school nurse
- NHS 24 0845 24 24 24
- Family Planning Association Scotland Helpline 0141 576 5088
- British Pregnancy Advisory Service BPAS 08457 30 40 30

WEBLINKS www.shayr.com • www.thehormonefactory.com

- **Raise the issues about sex and relationships**
- **Explain that you do not have to have sex and that saying no is an option**
- **Don't give the message that sex is a problem. Talk about sex even if it seems difficult**
- **Try not to judge, but don't be afraid to say if you think something may be unhealthy or could put your son or daughter at risk**
- **Your child will learn by example - they will learn your family's way of doing things based on your values, culture, faith and belief**
- **It is illegal for anyone under the age of 16 to have sex**

How to stop it happening

Talking openly with your children about relationships and sexual health is important. Good parent-child communication about relationships and sexual health can help delay the onset of sexual activity and reduce negative sexual health outcomes such as unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections. Young people who talk to their parents openly about relationships and sex are more likely to practice safer sex when they do become sexually active.

What your child should know

It's important that your child knows that it is okay to say 'no' to having sex. Young people receive messages about sex on a daily basis from television, magazines and friends and it is important that they do not feel that they have to have sex just because all their friends say that they are, or because their boyfriend or girlfriend wants them to. It is important to let them know that relationships are about love and friendship and not just about having sex.

However young people also need to know about sexually transmitted infections e.g. chlamydia, how to protect themselves if they are sexually active and where to go for advice, support and testing and treatment.

Teenagers often don't understand the types of contraception available, how to use them (such as how to put a condom on) and how to access them. Males and females both have a responsibility for contraception and should be taught that using condoms in addition to other forms of contraception is best, as contraception such as the pill only protects against unwanted pregnancy and not against sexually transmitted infections.

Young people should be made aware that it is not legal for anyone under the age of 16 to have sex. However many young people, under this age are

sexually active. Under 16s can access advice, contraception and can consent to medical treatment including termination of pregnancy without their parents knowledge, as long as the doctor they see decides that they have understood what is involved and the possible effects of the treatment. Doctors and other health professionals will try to encourage young people to talk to their parents/carers but they must respect the young person's right to confidentiality. Emergency contraception is a form of contraception that can be used up to five days after unprotected sex to prevent a pregnancy. There are two types: the emergency contraceptive pill and the emergency IUD (intra uterine device).

The emergency contraceptive pill can be taken up to three days after unprotected sex but is most effective if taken within the first 24 hours. It is free of charge from family planning clinics and some chemists. You can also get it from your local GP. The emergency IUD (intra-uterine device) can be fitted into the womb by a doctor up to five days after unprotected sex.

If your teenager has taken emergency contraception and has not had a period within three weeks they should take a pregnancy test and see their doctor.

Pregnant

If you think your daughter is pregnant the sooner you talk to her about it the better. The longer she does nothing about it the less choices she will have. Try to get her to go to her doctor, a local clinic or local pregnancy counselling centre and offer to go with her if she wants you there. Information on all options can also be researched from the Internet and a number of web addresses are listed.

While it may be a shock to learn that your daughter or your son's partner is pregnant, they need your help and understanding.

Drug & alcohol misuse

“At first I thought it was just a teenage thing. Paul started to come home late. A row always started and he'd storm off to his room. He was losing weight, looked terrible and I felt he was lying to us. He just wanted to be out all the time.”

- Many parents worry that their children may be smoking, drinking or using drugs
- Stopping something from happening in the first place is better than trying to sort it out once it has already happened
- Don't let your children see you smoke, drink to excess or take drugs - your example is crucial

How would I know?

If you find out that your child has or may have taken drugs, it can be frightening because of the possible effects. This can be due to you not knowing about drugs and not feeling confident about talking about them. Most young people who try drugs do not go on to use them all the time. Addiction, crime and death are not as usual as the stories in the newspapers or on TV can lead us to believe.

It is very important that children know about the risks of using drugs, alcohol and volatile substances (for example solvents). More young people have problems through drinking too much than through drug use.

Drug use among young people - how widespread is it?

Drugs are more common among children and young people than ever before. Research shows that about one in twelve twelve-year-olds and one in three fourteen-year-olds have tried drugs. By the time they reach 16 years of age, two in every five young people will have tried one type of drug or a mixture of drugs. These figures apply across all ethnic groups, whilst drug use is going up amongst girls.

It is important to discuss drugs use early

Some parents/carers worry that doing this makes their child want to try drugs. By not talking about drugs you will not protect them.

Children will be aware of drugs in some way before they leave primary school. It is likely that at this early stage, children will take more in when being told about the risks of drug use.

Make sure you tell your children about the risks. Clear information and support will help them decide what to do. You cannot be sure they will not try drugs but it will increase their chance of making an informed choice.

Why do young people use drugs, abuse substances or drink alcohol?

They want to find out about them; they want to break the rules; to relax; to escape reality; to cope with difficult situations or feelings; because they enjoy them or because their friends do it.

How would I know?

There are many signs, which include: a young person who is panicky, tense or sleepy; complaining of sickness; cannot concentrate; lacks energy; is depressed; has skin problems or is aggressive.

There may be a change in relationships with family and friends, a change in the way they act, or a change in how they do at school.

Other signs can be a change in how much money they have and personal things 'disappearing' or being sold.

Drug, alcohol and substance misuse by parents

It is estimated that 40,000-60,000 children in Scotland are affected by their parents' drug use and 80,000-100,000 are affected by parental alcohol misuse. Not all parents who use alcohol or drugs mistreat their children, however when the use of drugs or alcohol is having a harmful effect on your life this may have significant and damaging consequences for your children. Substance misuse may be associated with alcohol and a large variety of drugs from all major groups including illegal, prescribed and legal drugs.

Problem drug and alcohol use may affect both your physical and mental health. It may also become a major priority in your life and therefore affect how well you are able to look after your children. Research has shown that parental problem alcohol or drug use can and does cause serious harm to children of every age. There is also strong evidence to show that effective treatment of a drug or alcohol problem can have major benefits for your child.



WARNING SIGNS

In general terms if your child changes in appearance, or how they act or if they have extra money that you did not know about you should include drug and alcohol misuse in your list of "I wonder if..." questions.



ACTION

Keep an eye on and talk to your child if you are worried. In an emergency contact an ambulance at once. Try to talk with them about their drug use.



WHAT TO SAY

Discuss drug use as much as you can, for example, when drugs are mentioned on TV. You can give information regarding the risks of drug use at an early age.



PREVENTION

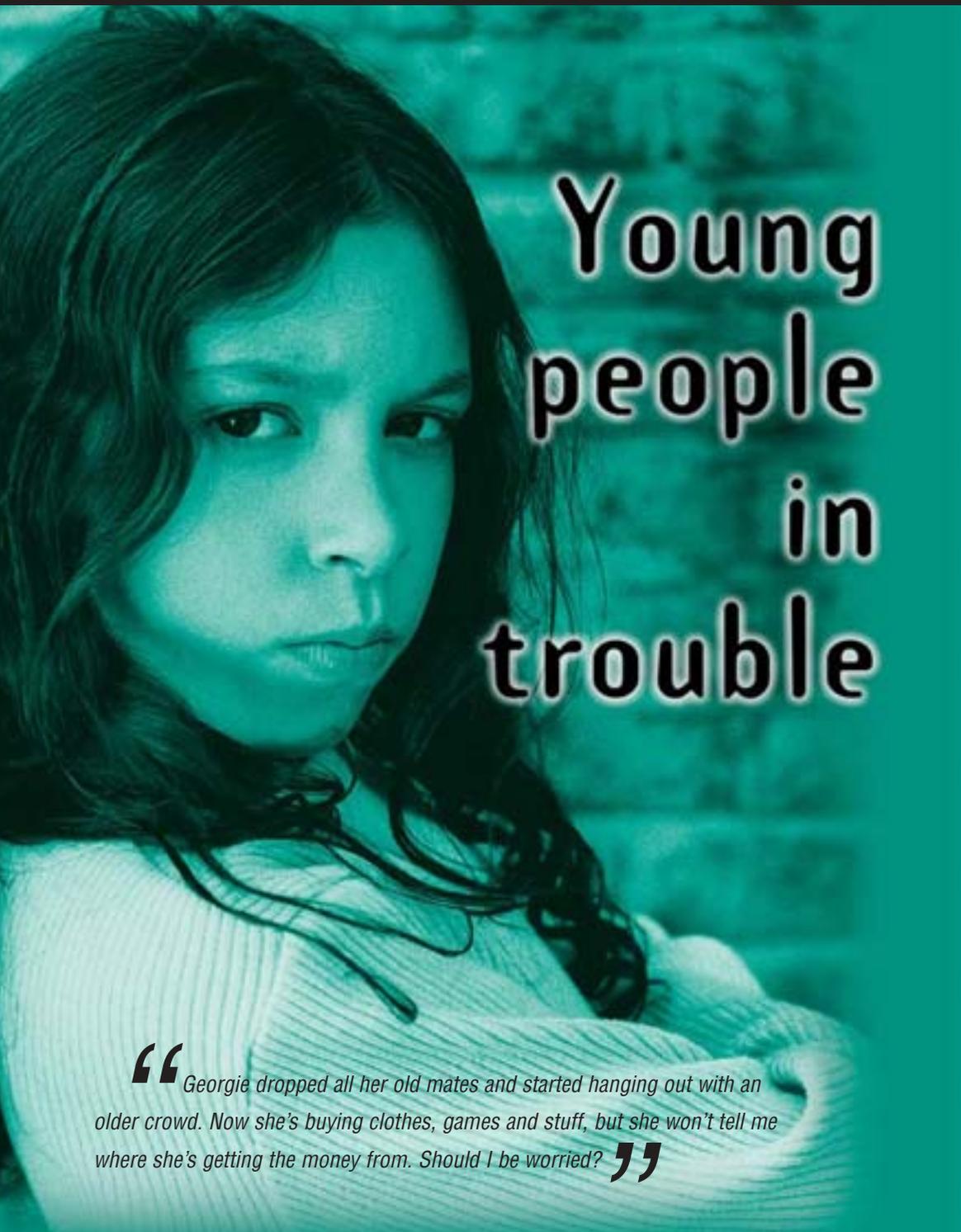
Make sure that you are informed about drug use and what can happen. There are many helpful guides available from the helplines listed under Contacts.



CONTACTS

- FRANK (advice for anyone affected by drugs) 0800 77 66 00
- Scottish Drugs Forum 0141 221 1175

WEBLINKS www.thesite.org.uk • www.recovery.org.uk • www.knowthescore.info



Young people in trouble

“*Georgie dropped all her old mates and started hanging out with an older crowd. Now she’s buying clothes, games and stuff, but she won’t tell me where she’s getting the money from. Should I be worried?*”



WARNING SIGNS

There are many signs which might show something is wrong. Your child may be influenced by others, stay out late, have new clothes or other items which cannot be explained, or use drugs and alcohol.



ACTION

Talk to your child about your worries. You can get help and advice from the local Social Work Department. Don't ignore the problem. Spending more time with your child doing other things can help.



WHAT TO SAY

Try to stay calm, all children break the rules from time to time, some more than others. If you do make rules, stick to them.



PREVENTION

It is important that you take an interest in your children. Know who their friends are and how they are doing at school. If you think that something is wrong do something sooner rather than later.



CONTACTS

- Childline 0800 1111
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
- Reporter to the Children's Panel (see back pages for local numbers)

- **Motoring offences, theft and handling stolen goods are the most common crimes carried out by young people**
- **Less than 2% of all offences committed by young people are robbery**
- **The main reasons young people give for carrying out crime are boredom and pressure from friends**
- **Young people from a supportive family home are less likely to offend**
- **If you think something is wrong, talk to your child sooner rather than later**

How widespread is it?

Young people under the age of 21 in Scotland are estimated to be responsible for 43% of crime. These relate mostly to: Fire-raising (86%), vandalism (75%), theft of motor vehicles (75%), theft by breaking lockfast areas (65%), handling offensive weapons (59%) and housebreaking (55%).

It is more appropriate to consider anti-social behaviour in terms of the number of people it affects and its impact on people rather than by attempting to measure its actual incidence levels.

Young people are often victims of crime. One in five young people experienced a violent incident last year as compared with one in thirty-three adults.

Stopping young people offending

The main reasons young people give for offending are boredom and pressure from friends. Young people also say that the two main things which stop them from carrying out crime are:

- Fear of being caught.
- Their parents' reaction.

Research into the lifestyles and experiences of young offenders tells us that the following factors matter most in keeping young people out of trouble:

- A stable and supportive family home.
- Good support from parents.
- Going to and making good progress at school, in training or at work.

The Youth Justice System

In Scotland the Children's Hearings System deals with most young people aged under 16 who are in trouble, either because there are concerns about the young person's welfare (for example concerns about abuse or neglect), or because of their behaviour (for example, offending).

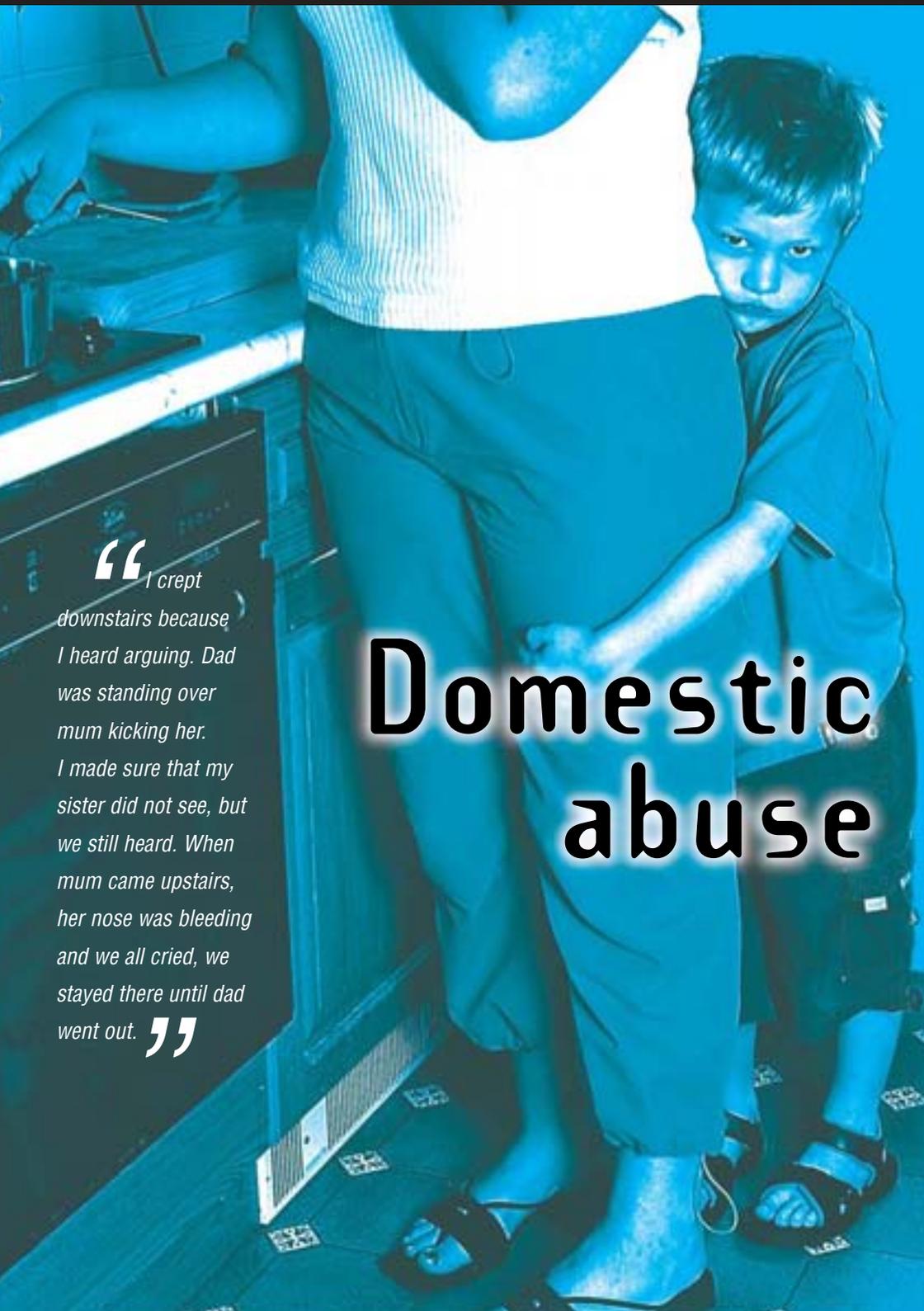
Young people are referred to the Children's Reporter* who will decide what to do. For some young people in trouble the Reporter will decide that intervention is needed. If this happens to your child this could involve you seeking help voluntarily (for example from the Social Work Department or from a parenting class). In some cases the Reporter will call a Children's Hearing to decide if a supervision requirement (a legal order) needs to be made, which would mean that you and/or your child would have to accept the help that is offered.

Lots of help is available for young people who offend, either from the Social Work Department, Education, other Council Departments, Voluntary Agencies and Health Services. This could include assessments to decide what help you and your child need, direct work to help stop them offending, direct work with you and your family to help sort out any problems you have, parenting classes, education, training and leisure opportunities for your child to help them gain skills and to use up some of their free time.

Look up a word

*Children's Reporter

Makes a decision for a family to attend a Children's Hearing following information gathered from Social Work, Police Health Service and school.



“ I crept downstairs because I heard arguing. Dad was standing over mum kicking her. I made sure that my sister did not see, but we still heard. When mum came upstairs, her nose was bleeding and we all cried, we stayed there until dad went out. ”

Domestic abuse

- The effects of domestic* abuse may have an influence on children's behaviour
- Domestic abuse can affect children in serious and long-lasting ways
- Where there is domestic abuse there is often child abuse
- Children will often blame themselves for domestic abuse
- Pregnant women are more vulnerable to domestic abuse

How does it affect children?

One in five women experience domestic abuse at some time in their lives (Scottish Executive). 90% of children are in the same or adjacent room during attacks on their mothers. It is overwhelmingly women and children who are affected by domestic abuse and men who are perpetrators.

Children who witness, intervene or hear incidents are affected in many ways. What can be guaranteed is that children do hear, they do see and they are aware of abuse in the family.

Children learn from example - domestic abuse teaches children negative things about relationships and how to deal with people.

For instance:

- It can teach children that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflict.
- They learn how to keep inappropriate secrets.
- They can learn to mistrust those close to them.
- Children may blame themselves for the abuse, especially if violence erupts after an argument about the children.

It is not only the abuse of a parent children may have to live with, often they too are abused emotionally, physically or sexually.

Why do women stay?

Many people find it difficult to understand why women remain in or return to abusive situations. A combination of fear, love, the risk of homelessness and financial* issues can make it very difficult for women with children to leave. Some women will want to remain in the family home and have the perpetrator* leave.

Short term effects

Children are affected in many ways by domestic abuse - every child is an individual and responses will vary, but some children will feel frightened, become withdrawn, run away, be aggressive, have behavioural difficulties, problems with school, non attendance at school, poor concentration and emotional turmoil.

Long term effects:

The longer children are exposed to violence and abuse, the more severe the effects on them are.

These can include:

- A lack of respect for the non-violent parent.
- Loss of self-confidence, impacting in every area of life.
- Being overly-protective of their parent.
- Loss of childhood.
- Problems at school.
- Non attendance at school.
- Running away.

If you are worried about domestic abuse - TALK to someone who understands. You are not alone, you are not to blame. Seek information and help from the specialist agencies in Ayrshire such as Women's Aid.

The police treat domestic abuse as a serious crime. They have specialist officers in a joint police/social work team who can discuss safety planning, legal protection and other practicalities.

You may want to seek legal advice from a solicitor* to help consider your actions.



WARNING SIGNS

Any violence or abuse between adults will negatively affect children. Seek help as soon as possible - domestic abuse tends to increase in frequency and severity over time. The longer it lasts, the more damaging it is.



ACTION

Abuse thrives on secrecy, ask for information and support from the agencies listed. If you are worried that your child might be affected, talk to them about what is happening.



WHAT TO SAY

Children need time to discuss the feelings they have about violence or abuse. Children need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way relationships should be.



PREVENTION

There is no excuse for domestic abuse. It is the responsibility of the abuser to stop. Offer a positive role model for children so that they learn other ways of behaving.



CONTACTS

- Women's Aid See Pages 58/59 for local contact
- National Domestic Violence helpline 0808 2000 247
- Family Protection Unit (Police) 01292 664014
- In an emergency call 999

Look up a word

- *Domestic: Something that happens in someone's home.
- *Financial: Things to do with money.
- *Perpetrator: Person who commits harmful or illegal action.
- *Solicitor: Legal advisor.

“ Everyday I hear the young child next door crying, her parents constantly shout at her. Yesterday, in the street, I saw her mother hit her hard across the side of the head. This is probably none of my business but I am worried and not sure what to do.”

Worried about a child?

- 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

Should I mind my own business?

All parents experience difficulties at various times and can be helped by other family members or close friends.

If someone you know is having difficulties, you could offer the following:

- A listening ear.
- Ideas to cope with problems.
- Encouragement to get some help.
- Practical support (childcare/shopping).

However there may be times when a child may be at risk of significant harm and professional support needs to be provided.

How would you want other people to act if your child was being harmed?

- Would you want them to mind their own business?
- To report their worry to a professional who could help?

Many people do not tell because they fear the following:

- Children will be at further risk of harm.
- They believe that nothing will be done.
- They believe that the child would be taken away.
- They worry that the family may find out who reported them.
- Telling may ruin family relationships.

In reality, 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 as they get older. Even if you think an incident is just a one off, other professional agencies may already have concerns about the child. So your information could be very important.

You can discuss your concerns in confidence with a Children and Families Team Social Worker (see page 58 for local contacts) who will do an initial assessment.

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

When we suspect, witness or are told of a child that is being hurt 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.



WARNING SIGNS

There are many possible signs of abuse, ranging from physical injury to changes in behaviour. Alternatively you may witness an incident or a child may tell you that he/she is being harmed.



ACTION

If you think that a child has been harmed, contact the police or the local social work offices (see back pages for contact details). If you are not sure, you can speak to a confidential helpline. See Page 58 for details.



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 be alert to changes in them.



CONTACTS

- Social work services (see back pages for local numbers)
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
- Childline Scotland 0870 336 2910

Helpful National Organisations

- Alcoholics Anonymous**
0845 769 7555
- ChildLine**
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
- Drugs Hotline**
0800 137 121
- Enable**
0141 226 4541
- Kidscape**
08451 205 204
(parents bullying helpline)
www.kidscape.org.uk
- Message Home**
0800 700 740
- Missing Persons Helpline**
0500 700 700
24 hours
- NHS 24**
08454 24 24 24
- Parentline Plus**
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- Penumbra**
0131 475 2380
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)**
0121 248 2000
www.rospace.co.uk
- Samaritans**
0845 790 9090
- Scottish Child Law Centre**
0800 328 8970
- Scottish Domestic Abuse Helpline**
0800 027 1234

Helpful Local Organisations - Ayrshire wide

- HEALTH**
 - Fit Ayrshire Babies**
01294 605885
 - Fresh Air-shire Service**
0800 783 9132 (stopping smoking)
- POLICE**
 - Any police station or Family Protection Unit (Police)**
01292 664014
- SUPPORT/ADVICE**
 - CARIS**
0845 351 3000
www.childcarelink.gov.uk/ayrshire
 - Family Mediation Ayrshire**
01563 572429
www.familymediationscotland.org.uk
 - The Addiction Service**
01294 461731

Helpful Local Organisations - South Ayrshire

- ALCOHOL & DRUGS HELP**
 - Alcohol**
01292 281238
 - Substance Misuse**
01292 610479
- EDUCATION**
 - South Ayrshire Council Educational Services**
01292 612000
- SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER'S ADMINISTRATION**
01292 286386
- SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**
 - South Ayrshire Council Social Work Services**
- AYR 01292 267675
- GIRVAN 01465 716103
- SUPPORT/ADVICE**
 - Befriending Services**
01292 264000
 - Princess Royal Trust Young Carers**
01292 263000
 - Women's Aid**
01292 266482
 - Your GP, Midwife, or Health Visitor**

Helpful Local Organisations - North Ayrshire

- EDUCATION**
 - North Ayrshire Council Educational Services**
01294 324400
- SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER'S ADMINISTRATION**
01294 278151
- SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**
 - North Ayrshire Council Social Work Services**
- ARRAN 01770 600742
- IRVINE 01294 324800
- KILBIRNIE 01505 684551
- SALTCOATS 01294 605261
- SUPPORT/ADVICE**
 - Befriending and Respite Project (BARS)**
01294 605505
 - North Ayrshire Young Carers Centre**
01294 311333
 - The Addiction Service**
01294 461731
 - Women's Aid**
01294 602424
 - Your GP, Midwife, or Health Visitor**

Helpful Local Organisations - East Ayrshire

- ALCOHOL & DRUGS HELP**
 - Ayrshire Council on Alcohol**
01563 541155
 - Seastar, Turning Point Scotland**
- Kilmarnock 01563 574257
- Cumnock 01290 429427
- EDUCATION**
 - East Ayrshire Council Educational and Social Services**
01563 576000
- SCOTTISH CHILDREN'S REPORTER'S ADMINISTRATION**
01563 534176
- SOCIAL WORK SERVICES**
 - East Ayrshire Council Social Work Services**
- Kilmarnock 01563 528011
- Galston 01563 820876
- Lugar 01290 554455
- SUPPORT/ADVICE**
 - Befriending Services/Youth Services**
01563 578487
 - Princess Royal Trust Young Carers**
- Kilmarnock 01563 571533
- Cumnock 01290 426404
 - Women's Aid**
- Kilmarnock 01563 536001
- Cumnock 01290 423434
 - Your GP, Midwife, or Health Visitor**

Notes



If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address shown in the bottom box.

Arabic
إذا اردت معلومات إضافية بلغة الأم، يرجى الاتصال بنا
في العنوان الموضح في الأسفل.

Bengali
কমি আপনাকে বিস্তারিত জানার জন্যে আরও একজন ডায়ালগ করা করে
আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন, উনার বকু হলে আমাদের ডিকোনা করিয়ে দে।

Chinese
如果你需用中文印成的資料，
請按低端方格內提供的地址與我們聯絡。

Punjabi
ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਖੰਸਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਲਿਖਾ ਕਰਕੇ
ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਖਾਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

Urdu
اگر آپ کو ہندی میں مزید معلومات کی ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم
اس آدھ پڑاؤ کے آدھ میں دیئے گئے پتے پر ہمیں لکھ کر

This booklet is a joint venture by the Child Protection Committees of South, North and East Ayrshire.
www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/childprotection
www.childprotectionnorthayrshire.info
www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk

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who can be contacted on

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