



Wigan
SureStart

NSPCC

Crucial to children must stop. **CALL STOP.**

this booklet was given to you by

who can be contacted on

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Wigan's Safe Parenting handbook



Introduction

Welcome to the Wigan Safe 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 where very little training is given to prepare parents for what lies ahead.

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 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 ways that can make it a less stressful and more rewarding experience.

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.

Who will receive the guide and how can parents use it?

This handbook will be issued to Wigan parents over the next 12 months, as well as to new parents via Wigan's health visiting services.

The handbook has been produced by the Wigan Safeguarding Children Board - lots of local agencies working together to promote safe parenting who have had many years of training and experience in supporting parents through difficult times. The Wigan Safeguarding Children Board is a new legal body which has been set up to build a safe and supportive environment for all children to grow up in.





I hope you find this handbook helpful and worth keeping for future reference.



Gerald Meehan
Chairperson
Wigan Safeguarding Children Board



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Bedwetting & sleeping difficulties

- Children do not wet or soil deliberately
- It is estimated that 1 in 4 of three year olds and 1 in 6 of seven year olds repeatedly wet the bed
- Bedwetting may be a sign of a physical problem, but more often your child will learn bladder control at their own pace
- Each child's sleep pattern is different
- Take time to establish 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 hunger

how can I help my child?

“ 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. **”**



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 immediately before going to bed. If you are worried discuss your concerns with your health professional. 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 anxiety or strain. Praise your child when they sleep through the night. Do not scold your child if they do not sleep through the night, or if they bed wet. Try to develop an understanding for how they feel and whether they are worried by the wetting.



PREVENTION

Make sure your child is aware 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, GP or school nurse.



CONTACTS

• Health visitor/GP school nurse
• Euresis Resource & Information Centre (ERIC) 0117 960 3060 www.eric.org.uk
• Wigan Social Services 01942 828777

Potty training

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

Bedwetting

It is not easy to know why some children take longer to be dry at night than others. However, bedwetting is not due to laziness or lack of will power. Some children, in fact up to one in six seven year olds, bed wet. 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 deliberately. If, after the age of seven, your child continually wets his bed, the problem may be caused by a number of factors. Talk to your child about it and reassure them that other older children experience this too. Discuss any concerns about your child with your GP, Health Visitor or School Nurse.

Sleeping difficulties

- There are many different reasons why babies and young children do not sleep through the night.
- Try to establish a sleep routine as early as six weeks if possible.
- Feel confident in yourself to know whether your child is really distressed or just restless.
- If your sleep is frequently disrupted by your child's restlessness, arrange for a trusted relative or friend to care for your baby or child so that you can get some sleep.

Establishing a routine

Many children and babies experience sleeping difficulties at some time. It is important to try to establish a regular night time sleep routine for your child by going to bed at a regular time each night. Prepare a warm, comfortable environment 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 concerned 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.

“ 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. ”

Bullying

- 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

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**
- **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.

If you are not satisfied with the way your child's school is dealing with the matter, you can ask for advice from the Safe Schools project.



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

- Wigan Education Welfare Service 01942 705405
- Samaritans 08457 909090
- Kidscape Helpline 08451 205 204

WEBLINKS • www.kidscape.org.uk
• www.bullying.co.uk

• Check the Wigan Council website for the latest phone numbers on • www.wiganmc.gov.uk

“ The first time he made me do it, it felt horrible, but he's been really nice to me, he says he is my special friend. I'm not supposed to tell anyone, it's a secret - or something bad will happen to me. I think my mum would be upset or angry with me if I told her. ”

Child exploitation

- Often starts out with apparently innocent activity
- Child exploitation has devastating effects on children, both physical and mental
- Exploitative adults are very sophisticated and well practised in how they approach children
- Children are sometimes abused by people they know
- Often children will not talk about incidents of sexual exploitation
- Be sensitive to changes in your child's behaviour. It is up to attentive adults to recognise the signs of sexual exploitation
- It is important that your child feels that you believe what they are telling you. Help and support your child, no matter what

new technology, old problem

Child exploitation takes many forms, including child prostitution, child pornography and pornography on the Internet. The vast majority of children do not get involved voluntarily; they are coerced, enticed or are utterly desperate. Sadly, children are sometimes abused by people they know within their own family or wider network. As a parent you need to be able to recognise the signs that your child might be a victim of child pornography or any other form of sexual exploitation.

like. But you can warn children about the abnormal actions of abusers and make sure that children know that they have the right to say NO.

Children abused through prostitution are victims of sexual abuse. Unfortunately these victims often become offenders themselves, as in order to support themselves or to escape from the life they lead, they get involved in drugs and petty crime.

Child pornography has devastating effects on children, both on those who are exploited in the actual pictures and those who view it. Exploitative adults will encourage children to view child pornography, which leads them to see pornographic acts as acceptable and normal. This acceptance can make them more susceptible to being the subject of future sexual involvement.

Internet-related child exploitation is now also a major cause for concern. Remember that as you or your child moves through the Internet, you leave information about yourself. Become computer literate and get to know the services your child uses. Establish some Internet safety rules with your child.

You should be aware of the indicators of sexual and physical abuse and exploitation, such as those listed under 'Warning Signs' below. Obviously there could be other explanations, but it is important to help your child no matter what the cause of the symptoms or the behaviour. For instance, you might become aware of and concerned about your child's relationship with an older person (whom your child might describe as a friend, whether male or female) and/or frequent absences from home/school.

Child pornography places the children depicted in extremely harmful situations, both sexually and physically. It causes a sense of shame and guilt in the child and a fear that family and friends might find out and blame them. This fear often makes it difficult for a child who has been exploited to testify against a molester in court.

Preventing children from being photographed or portrayed as the subject of pornography is difficult. Because abusers have no distinguishing characteristics, it is difficult to warn children about what an abuser is or looks

Local police and social services have small specialist teams who are specially trained to interview children with the support of their parents.



Warning Signs

Changes in behaviour or mood, inappropriate sexual activity, sleep disturbances, bed-wetting and soiling, unexplained marks, problems at school, going missing, self harm. Indirect clues, like asking about sexual experiences or leaving pornographic material, diaries, or letters where they can be found.

Action

If your child confides in you, support them. Tell your child protection, youth services, child abuse or other appropriate organisations. If you think your child has been physically injured, seek medical help. Talk to your child about what is happening.

What to say

It is important that your child feels that you believe what she or he is telling you. Make it clear that telling what happened was the right thing to do and that you will protect him or her from further harm.

Prevention

Know where your child is, be familiar with their friends and daily activities. Teach your child to trust their own feelings and assure them that they have a right to say NO to what they sense is wrong. Listen carefully to your child's fears and be supportive.

Contacts

• Wigan Children's Services
01942 828777
• NSPCC
0800 800 5000
• Parentline Plus
0800 800 2222
• Police
0161 672 5650

Child protection

- Parents are responsible for their children's safety
- Social Services become involved once concern is shared
- Decisions about abuse need careful assessment
- Children are best cared for by their own families
- Professionals want to work in partnership with families
- Very few children are removed from home following abuse

myths and realities

“ Social work has changed a lot. In the past our approach to child protection wasn't very flexible. Now we work more in partnership with families where there are concerns to make sure they get support before things reach a crisis. ”

Very few adults harm children deliberately and most often, when harm does happen, families need support, not punishment or the removal of their children.

effect on the child. All of these factors will help to decide what should happen next to support and protect the child and family.

Wigan social workers and other professionals get involved when parents may be unable to protect their child from harm and need some help. In some cases Wigan's Family Support Unit will investigate with social workers to help protect children and decide whether an offence has been committed against a child.

Social workers and the Police have a duty (they have no choice about this) under The Children Act 1989 to investigate concerns of child abuse.

There have been lots of negative reports in the media about social workers and what happens when concerns about child abuse are reported.

2. Professionals are not solely responsible for protecting children. Traditionally, social workers have been expected to make sure that children are safe. In order to do this well, they rely on information from parents, family, other professionals and the local community who all play an important part in identifying concerns about those close to them. This helps to ensure that they are offered support before the situation becomes far worse.

Many **myths** exist, so for the record:

1. Child abuse is not easy to recognise, prevent or stop.

It is rarely possible to definitely say that a child has been abused or by whom. A careful assessment is needed in order to find out what has happened and what support and protection will best help the family. As a result it can be difficult to avoid some intrusion into family life. A social worker will ask questions about the family circumstances, consider the frequency and the seriousness of the incident and the

3. Reporting child abuse rarely results in the child being removed from home. This is not the main aim of child protection investigations and rarely happens. Social workers can only remove children from home with a court order, having demonstrated that there is serious and immediate risk. In emergency situations the Police have power to remove a child for up to 72 hours.



Warning Signs

Social workers will get involved when they believe that physical injury, neglect, sexual or emotional abuse has occurred. Make sure you know what child abuse is - contact the helplines in the Contacts column for more information.

Action

A social worker (and sometimes a police officer) will meet with the family when abuse is reported. They will also talk with other professionals in order to make decisions about how to help.

WHAT TO SAY

If you are worried about your own or someone else's treatment of a child, seek advice about what practical and emotional support is available.

PREVENTION

It is important that children know what to do when they feel unsafe. Do they know who to talk to and how to get to a safe place or person?

CONTACTS

- Wigan Children's Services Duty SW 01942 828777
- Police 0161 872 5050 or 999 in an Emergency
- NSPCC 0800 800 5000
- Parentline Plus 0800 800 2222

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.”

- Never leave a young child alone
- Children under 13 years should not be left
- 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 is 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, it is important that they know where you are and who to contact in an emergency.



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

• Wigan Children's Services
01942 828777
• Contact your local Health Centre
• Police
0161 872 5050 or 999 in an Emergency
• NSPCC
0800 800 5000

Children with disabilities

“ 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.”

- 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're not alone

If your child has a disability the future may seem like a daunting struggle, not just for them, but for you too. The word 'disabled' covers a very wide range of different conditions and it is estimated that some 15% of people in the UK experience some form of disability at some time in their lives. Remember you and your child are not alone.

Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance, help with extra housing costs and Carers Blue Badge scheme. And don't forget free dental treatment and prescriptions, help with the cost of glasses, and in some circumstances travel to hospital, school meals, and even road tax exemption.

Education

Depending on their kind of disability, your child may benefit most by attending a special school - an environment specifically designed to match their educational needs. Alternatively your child may receive the extra support they require through the Special Needs provisions available in a mainstream school. Your education authority and health service providers will help you assess your child's special educational needs and recommend the most appropriate way forward for their education.

Extra support

Your council can provide extra support for you and your child. This can include special leisure facilities, holidays, short breaks and many additional services for particular needs. Also there are many local, national and international organisations and charities specially set up to provide further help, advice and support to people just like you.

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.

The government, local council, health and education authorities provide a wide range of benefits, facilities, support and advice for disabled children and their carers.

Legal protection

Your child is especially protected by law. The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for any service provider (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat disabled people less favourably than other people because of their disability. It also requires them to make reasonable adjustments to make their services accessible to disabled people.

Health

From the start, your GP and local health authority are there for you. They'll provide 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.

Benefits

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



WARNING SIGNS

Some children's disabilities are diagnosed fairly 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 disabled children. Contact them and tell your story. There will be others out there just like you.



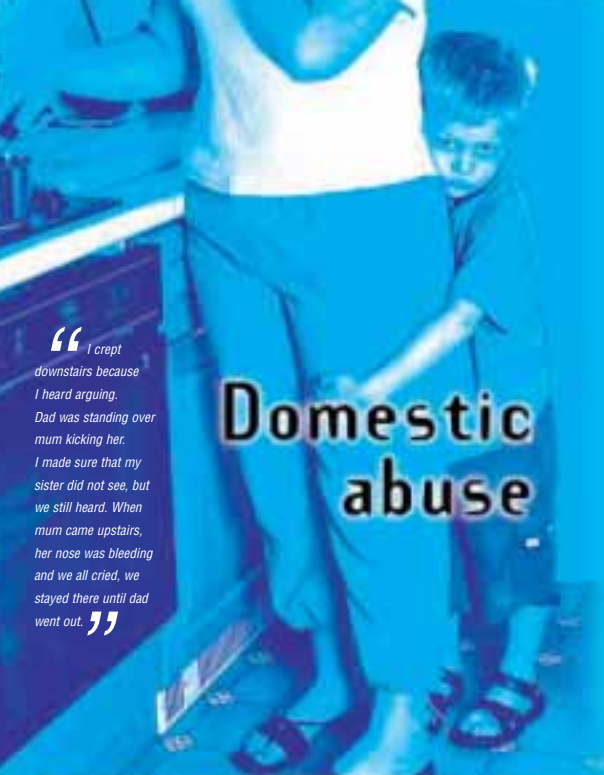
PREVENTION

You can't prevent your child's condition. But you can minimise the disability they experience by ensuring that they get the best support available, and by remembering that they have rights.



CONTACTS

- Wigan Council's Services
01942 828777
- SCOPE
1942 513853
- Carers Helpline
01942 606886
- Contact a Family
0800 608 3556



Domestic abuse

“ 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.”



WARNING SIGNS

Any violence or abuse between adults will negatively affect children. Seek support and help as soon as possible. The longer it lasts, the more damaging living with domestic abuse becomes.



ACTION

Report your concerns about yourself or someone else to the police. 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

A violent partner can take responsibility for violence by seeking help to stop. Make sure that you offer a positive role model for children so that they learn other ways of behaving.



CONTACTS

- DIAS 01942 495230
- Wigan Women's Aid 01942 456094
- Wave 01942 262278
- All urgent calls to the Police must be made to the 999 Emergency Service
- National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247

- Domestic abuse teaches children to use violence or abuse
- 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
- Alcohol misuse is very common when domestic abuse occurs, as a contributing factor and as a survival mechanism
- Pregnant women are more vulnerable to domestic abuse

how does it affect children?

Domestic abuse is a crime and a major social problem affecting many families. In 90% of reported domestic violence incidents, children have either been present in the same or a nearby room. It is overwhelmingly women and children who are affected by domestic abuse and men who are the 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 violence in the family.

Children learn how to behave in part from examples parents set for them. Domestic abuse teaches children negative things about relationships, and how to deal with people.

For instance:

- It can teach them that violence is a way to resolve conflict
- They learn how to keep secrets
- They learn to mistrust those close to them and that children are responsible and to blame for abuse, especially if it erupts after an argument about the children.

Many people find it difficult to understand why people 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 and some may want to stay put, and get their abuser to leave.

Short term effects:

Children are affected in many ways by domestic abuse, even after a short time. These effects

include: feeling frightened, becoming withdrawn, bedwetting, running away, aggressiveness, behavioural difficulties, problems with school, poor concentration and emotional turmoil.

Long term effects:

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

These can include:

- A lack of respect for the non-violent parent
- Loss of self-confidence, which will affect their ability to form relationships in the future
- Being over-protective of parent
- Loss of childhood
- Problems at school
- Running away.

If you are worried about domestic abuse, discuss it with someone else.

If you are violent or abusive, you can seek help to stop what is happening.

If you are affected by domestic abuse you are not alone - you can seek help from a range of specialist services in Wigan. You can also report incidents to the police - this will provide valuable evidence for any charges against your abuser in the future.

Apart from any criminal proceedings, you can apply for an injunction in the civil court to protect yourself. If you would like details of solicitors in your area who deal with family law, contact the local domestic abuse services.

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.”



WARNING SIGNS

In general terms if your child's appearance, behaviour or financial situation changes dramatically you should include drug and alcohol use in your list of "I wonder if..." questions.



ACTION

Observe and talk to your child if you are worried. In an emergency contact an ambulance immediately. If your child is not in immediate danger talk with them about their drug use at another time when they are not using.



WHAT TO SAY

Use every opportunity to discuss drug use, for example, when drugs are mentioned in a television programme. You can give accurate information regarding the risks of drug use at an early age.



PREVENTION

Ensure that you are informed about drug use and the effects of different types of drugs. There are many helpful guides available from the helplines listed below.



CONTACTS

• Wigan Children's Services
01942 828777
• Wigan Young Persons Drug & Alcohol Team
01942 777720
• ADFAM
0207 928 8898
• National Drugs Helpline FRANK
0800 77 66 00

- Many parents worry that their child may use drugs
- Prevention is better than cure
- Drug use is increasing among young people
- Make sure you know about drugs and their possible effects
- Talk to your children about drugs from a young age
- Wigan's schools teach drug prevention in the curriculum

how would I know?

If you find out that your child has or may have taken drugs, it can be frightening because of the potential effects. This can be due to your lack of knowledge about drugs and not feeling confident about talking about them. Most young people who experiment with drugs do not go on to use them on a permanent basis. Therefore addiction, crime and death are not as usual as the stories in the media can lead us to believe.

It is vitally important, however, that children are aware of the risks of using drugs, alcohol and volatile substances (e.g. solvents). More young people experience problems caused by too much drinking than through drug use.

Drug use among young people - how widespread is it?

Drugs are more widespread among children and young people than ever before.

Research shows that about one in twelve 12 year olds and one in three 14 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 increasing amongst girls.

It is important to discuss drugs use early. Some parents/carers worry that doing this encourages their child to use drugs. Avoiding talking about drugs 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 be more responsive to being told about the risks of drug use. Make sure you tell your children about the risks. Accurate information and support will help them decide what to do. It does not guarantee non-use but will increase the chance of an informed choice.

Why do young people use drugs?

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

How would I know?

There are many telltale signs, which include a young person who is panicky, tense or drowsy, complaining of sickness, has impaired concentration, lack of energy, depression, skin problems or aggression.

There may be a change in relationships with family and friends, a change in behaviour, or a change in performance at school.

Other signs can involve changes in a financial situation and personal possessions 'disappearing' and being sold.

Drug and alcohol misuse by parents

Drug and alcohol misuse by the adults in a household can seriously affect the care and wellbeing of children. Advice can be obtained on 01942 826880 or 01942 608618.

WEBLINKS • www.adfam.org.uk
• www.talktofrank.com

• Check the Wigan Council website for the latest phone numbers on • www.wiganmc.gov.uk

“ Andrew is 7, and I was very careful to visit and discuss his needs at the after school club.

The Children's Information Service gave me some useful information about how to choose childcare. It now means that I can work a full day knowing his needs are being met and he is in a safe environment ”



Early education & childcare

- All registered childcare in England must meet national standards set down by the Department for Education and Skills
- Children's Information Service hold lists of registered out-of-schools clubs, playgroups and children's leisure activities
- There are many provisions for young children under the age of five, such as childminders, day nurseries and pre-schools
- Children learn all the time not just at school, you can help

how do I make the right choice?

Play, Learning and Development

Play is an essential part of every child's life and vital to their development. It is the way children explore the world around them and develop and practice skills.

Children need places to play, objects and materials to play with, time to play and most importantly, people who can help them to play and play with them.

As parents you are your child's first and most important educators and you will be responsible for introducing your child to playful activity.

When your child starts nursery or playgroup the staff in the setting will work alongside you to ensure that learning through play continues.

What is Early Education?

Early Education gives children the opportunity to develop and learn through play based activities. In an Early Education setting children's development is supported by trained and qualified staff.

Every child has a free entitlement to attend a number of sessions each week. For more information contact the Early Education Funding Team or the setting where you want your child to attend.

Child Care

You may need childcare in order for you to go to work, attend college or access training. There is a wide range of good quality services available in the Borough.

Childcare may be available in the following settings:

- A Private Day Nursery
- A Nursery School
- Sure Start Children's Centre
- A Nursery Class
- A Playgroup or Pre-school
- A Childminder
- A Nanny
- Out-of-school childcare, which includes before, after and holiday care/schemes
- Crèche

How do I find a place?

Contact the Children's Information Service who will be able to provide you with a list of places that are available to you.

Recruitment into the Early Years and Childcare Sector

If you are interested in working with children and would like to access training and support contact Wigan Sure Start Team on 01942 206205.

Where does Early Education take place?

Early Education takes place in:

- Playgroups
- Private Day Nurseries
- Starter Groups
- Schools with Nursery classes or units
- Childminders who belong to a Childminding Network

When can my child start Early Education and how often can they attend?

Your child can start Early Education from the beginning of the school term after he/she is three years old.



WARNING SIGNS

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

ACTION

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

WHAT TO SAY

Tell your child who will be looking after them, where they are going, how long for, and who to ask when they need something. 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 the early education or 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 an emergency.

CONTACTS

- Speak to your health visitor.
- Children's Information Services
01942 776660
- Ofsted complaint line
0845 601 4772
- Early Education Funding Team
01942 406050
- Wigan Sure Start Team
01942 206205

Good oral health



“ She always had juice in a bottle, then she moved onto one of those ‘anyway-up cups’ because they are a lot less messy. I suppose she did have quite a lot of sugary drinks. I didn’t realise it would damage her teeth so badly. Now she is waiting to have six teeth out and she is only four.”



WARNING SIGNS

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



ACTION

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



WHAT TO SAY

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



PREVENTION

Most drinks for babies and children contain sugar, so look at labels - sucrose, glucose, fructose, dextrose, glucose syrup, maltodextrin and concentrated fruit sugar can all cause tooth decay. Get in the habit - brush your baby’s teeth as soon as they come through, night and morning. It’s never too early to start taking your child to the Dentist. Ask family and friends to recommend one who is good with children.



CONTACTS

• General Dental Services, Bryan House 01942 772737
• Emergency Dental Service out of hours 07876 357967
• Oral Health Promotion, Standish Clinic 01257 501324

- Every child has the right to a healthy mouth and a nice smile
- Frequent intakes of sugary snacks and drinks will rot teeth
- Be firm; try to give healthier sugar-free snacks and drinks in between meals
- Let children enjoy their sugary things at mealtimes and/or just afterwards
- Sugary snacks and drinks at bedtime are especially damaging to teeth
- There is not enough fluoride in Wigan’s Water supply to help strengthen teeth. So use a family fluoride toothpaste right from the start
- Encourage and support your Pre-schools and Schools to promote healthy sugar-free snacking
- Start off the right way, its not always easy but it’s worth it in the long term

tooth care matters

As we get older many of us realise how important our teeth are, not only for eating and speaking, but for confidence and self esteem too. If children are brought up to care for their teeth, it should stand them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

In theory tooth care should be quite simple - don’t allow children to have sugary things too often and make sure their teeth are brushed well twice a day. In practice it’s not that easy, the way sugary products are advertised and promoted can make it difficult to limit them. Most of us lead busy lives and sometimes it’s easier just to give in to pester power.

If we try not to encourage a sweet tooth in the beginning it can help to make things easier.

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

• Ask your doctor/chemist if you can have sugar-free medicines.

• Golden Rule - never give a sugary drink last thing at night.

• As they grow, get into the sugar free habit. Put more fruit, vegetables and bread based snacks on your shopping list.

• If you are confronted with sweet treats at the check-out, offer easy alternatives like an apple, tangerine or breadstick.

• Don’t ban sweets, but keep them for special occasions like a meal or for a special time.

• Make sure that children brush their teeth twice a day with a family fluoride toothpaste, but only use a pea sized blob. They will need your help until they are seven.

• When they are older still check they are doing it properly.

• Gums may bleed when brushed, cure bleeding gums by brushing them better. If bleeding continues go to see your dentist.

• Register your child with a dentist as soon as you can and take them to see him/her. Let them get used to going. Don’t wait until they have problems or are in pain.

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

“ 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 automatically know what is dangerous
- Babies need guidance to keep safe at home
- Remove all potential dangers in your home
- Watch your child and remove him or her from danger
- Explain about safety to your child from an early age

making your home safe

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

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

Some dangers around the home:

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

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



WARNING SIGNS

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

ACTION

Make a list of these potential 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 facial expressions alongside explanations are extremely important. Children will begin to sense the warning tone in your voice over time.

PREVENTION

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

CONTACTS

- Child Accident Prevention Trust 020 7608 3828
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) 0121 248 2000
- Talk to your health visitor or midwife

Missing

“ 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 skipping school, talk to the school or an Education Welfare Officer. 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 their behaviour 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

Be alert to any unexplained changes in your child's behaviour. Spend time with them and be interested in their lives and worries. Do you know who your child's friends are? Be very careful about their access to the Internet and 'chat rooms'.



CONTACTS

- Missing Persons Helpline (24 hours) 0500 700 700
- Message Home (for young people to get a message to their parents) 0800 700 740
- Wigan Education Welfare Service 01942 705405
- Wigan Children's Services 01942 828777

- 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 - 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 available - please don't be too embarrassed or afraid to ask

From home and school

The law says that parents must ensure that their children receive a proper, full time education and they can be prosecuted if their child does not attend school regularly and on time. 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 skipping school or lessons, they are more likely to come across addicts or other young people who might want to cause them harm.

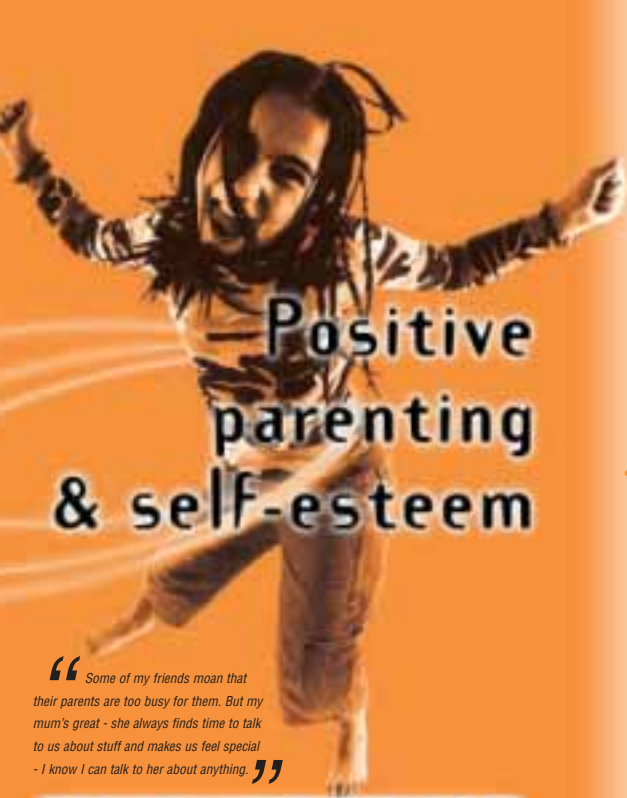
When children miss school without their parents' knowing, this is called truancy. Children who truant regularly often do this because they are worried about something. There might be something happening on the way to or from school that is causing them concern. They might be being bullied. They might be finding some lessons or subjects too hard (or too easy) or they might be having problems in completing their homework. Sometimes, children will be reluctant to leave

home because they are worried that their parent might come to some harm whilst they are at school.

Children from all sorts of backgrounds run away from home for a variety of reasons. Many of us will remember planning to run away when we were younger because we felt unable to cope with our problems, that nobody cared about us or because 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. 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.

However, if a child goes missing from home repeatedly, receives unexplained gifts, and possibly has an older 'friend', there is a possibility they could be sexually exploited.



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.* ”

- Children need to feel secure, loved and valued - this is the basis of self-esteem and confidence
- Noticing and rewarding good behaviour is the best way of influencing your child's behaviour
- Be realistic about what you expect from your child
- Parents and carers need to work together and be consistent
- 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.

This starts from the earliest days of your relationship with your child.

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 unwittingly giving your child lots of attention for negative unwanted behaviour, rather than for the good behaviour you would prefer them to do. It can also undermine your relationship with your child. Parental attention and praise is one of the biggest motivators for children so you need to use it in the right direction! Not only will this influence 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.

A sense of self-esteem is your child's best protection from peer pressure. You can help to foster this in many ways, for example by being a positive role model, giving positive accurate feedback, identifying and redirecting your child's inaccurate beliefs and by being spontaneous and affectionate. Make them feel great!

Encouraging your child to eat healthily does not mean denying them food they enjoy.

Healthy eating is about having a varied, balanced diet and enjoying lots of different foods. Younger children often refuse to eat certain foods and teenagers may go through food fads. These differences are normal. But some eating problems are more serious and if you are recognising signs of difficulties, contact a health professional for advice and support.

Promoting the health of your child is a task that most parents do without thinking. Whether it involves encouraging your child to brush their teeth, keep fit by sport and regular physical exercise, and reminding them to pay attention to personal hygiene, you are an important source of information and advice and an influential role model for your child.

Teenagers have to learn to make their own decisions and establish their independence from their parents. Unfortunately their decisions might not always agree 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 talk. The main concern for adolescents is whether what they are going through is normal. Remember to give them the practical information they need about the physical changes and reassure them that their physical development is perfectly normal.



WARNING SIGNS

There may be none. Is your child eating well? Getting enough exercise? Any changes in their behaviour? Is your child trying to tell you something?



ACTION

Be involved and develop a good relationship with your child before they reach their teens. Adopt a healthy lifestyle. Share activities together.



WHAT TO SAY

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



PREVENTION

Be a little crazy! Have fun with your child. Encourage good friendship and outside interests. Listen carefully to your child's point of view. Help them think through choices.



CONTACTS

- Eating Disorders Association 0845 634 7650 (Youthline under 18)
- Parentline Plus 0800 800 5000
- Young Minds 020 7336 8445
- Talk to your health visitor
- Parenting Co-ordinator 01942 487130

Smacking

- Smacking does not teach children self-discipline
- Smacking gives attention to a child's bad behaviour
- Children learn best by attention to things they do well
- There are many positive alternatives to smacking
- Smacking teaches children to hurt others
- When self-discipline is taught, smacking becomes unnecessary

the great debate

“ 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. ”

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

of aggression, can have a negative effect on a child's mental health and can damage the relationship between the parent and the child.

Teaching children from a young age by setting limits and explaining reasons for these limits helps to instill discipline. Discipline is more about rewarding good behaviour than punishing bad behaviour.

It is much more helpful and safer to notice and reward your child's positive behaviours, to encourage the behaviours you want. In fact, many people say that smacking is actually a lesson in bad behaviour.

Have you ever smacked your child? The answer from many parents reading this will be yes. It's not so surprising as smacking may look to have the desired effect - it may stop the behaviour in its tracks, maybe your child cries or seems apologetic, it may even release tension or frustration for parents. But it can have a down side, and some undesirable long term consequences.

There is lots of advice available about tried and tested methods that help children to behave well, without having to resort to smacking them.

There is a lot of research now which shows that smacking children can increase a child's level

of physical 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.



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. Leaving bruising and other marks on a child.

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

- Wigan Sure Start 01942 206205
- Wigan Children's Services 01942 828777
- Talk to your midwife, health visitor or school nurse
- NSPCC 0800 900 5000
- Barnardos 020 8550 8822

Smoking cessation

“ I know that smoking is bad for me, but I didn't know, that second-hand smoke was endangering the health of my family. Now I never smoke in the house or around my children and I am seeking help to give up.”

- Side stream smoke accounts for 85% of the smoke in a smoky environment and contains high concentrations of toxic chemicals
- Children are at a greater risk because their lungs are still developing. They breathe more rapidly and so absorb more toxic chemicals
- 42% of British children are exposed to second-hand smoke within the home
- 17,000 under fives are admitted to hospital every year, as a result of exposure to second-hand smoke
- Act now and protect your children from second-hand smoke

second hand smoke

What's in Tobacco Smoke?

- 4,000 toxic chemicals.
- Carbon Monoxide.
- At least 40 known cancer-causing agents.

Second-hand Smoke is made up of two types of smoke:

Mainstream - breathed in and out by smokers.
Side stream - smoke from the burning tip of a cigarette.

How to protect your child

The best thing you can do is to keep them away from all cigarettes and smoky places (a smoky place is not just where you can see smoke hanging in the air, it is any room where even one person is smoking).

- Keep children's playing, sleeping and eating areas smoke free.
- Make your car a smoke free zone because smoke is more concentrated in such a small space.
- Ask other people not to smoke around your child.
- Choose smoke free places when out and about with your family.
- Avoid smoking anywhere around your children
- If you choose to smoke - go outside.

Don't forget - smoking in the kitchen, even with

the door or a window open is still not ventilated enough to stop smoke drifting into other rooms and lingering for a long time.

Seriously consider the many benefits of giving up smoking for your own and your family's health. For advice and support ring the numbers on opposite page.

Adults do not deliberately set out to endanger their child's health or encourage them to smoke. Yet every time someone smokes around a child, that child or baby is smoking too! Children copy and learn from their parent's actions - if you smoke they are more likely to smoke when older.

Most parents know that smoking is bad for them, but they may not know that second-hand smoke is endangering their health. Parents can suffer the same warning signs (as listed on the opposite page) as their children, but sometimes much worse as they also may go into many smoky places.

As parents you may experience difficult times and you may feel that smoking helps you to cope. However research shows that smoking actually increases stress.

You have to decide whether to smoke or to stop. If you choose to smoke, you should try to protect your children from second-hand smoke and reduce the risk of them becoming ill or smokers themselves.



WARNING SIGNS

A range of signs may indicate if a child is suffering from the effects of second hand smoke including: wheezing, coughing, asthma, chest infections, glue ear (child has difficulty hearing and often speech/language difficulties). Regularly suffer poor health.

ACTION

If you are worried about your child/baby's health, take him/her to your doctor or the A&E department. Consider the prevention and advice given on the opposite page to create a clean air environment for your child/baby.

WHAT TO SAY

Ensure that all people who come into your home are aware of your own 'No Smoking in the Home' rules that you have decided to put in place. You can now give them the reasons why you have these rules by referring to the facts and figures on the opposite page.

PREVENTION

Follow the prevention steps outlined on the opposite page.

CONTACTS

- National Quit Line 0800 00 2200
- Local Stop Smoking Service 0900 073 0638
- For help and advice speak to the local Smoking Cessation Midwife 07901 843 823
- Contact your GP, community midwife or health visitor.

Sure Start

“ I was new to the area and had a small child, my health visitor told me about the new Sure Start Centre in Hindley - there is lots of activities for my child and me. Since going I have made loads of friends and now I work as a volunteer in the centre.”



Warning Signs

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



Action

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



What to say

Tell your child who will be looking after them, where they are going, how long for, and who to ask when they need something. 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 the early education or 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 an emergency.



Contacts

- Speak to your health visitor.
- Children's Information Services
01942 776660
- Play Section (Wigan & Culture Trust)
01942 486491
- Ofsted
complaint line
0845 601472
- Early Education Funding Team
01942 486050
- Playful and Resourceful
07713 075717
- Sure Start Hindley
01942 776106
- Sure Start Tyldesley
01942 883279

- Sure Start is all about achieving better outcomes for young children and their families
- You can get support with health, education, child care and other family needs, all designed for your local area
- Sure Start programmes can help your child get the best start in life
- Sure Start programmes can also help you achieve your best, both as a parent and in your working life

helping you give your child
the best start

Services for Children Under Five

The first five years of a child's life is very important. The Borough is committed to ensuring the best start in life for every child and young person and is working hard to improve the services available for very young children and their families.

Birth to Three Matters

The Government has introduced guidelines to help ensure that everyone who cares for children 0 to 3 years understands and meets the needs of all children, including those with Special Educational Needs and/or disability.

All services that deliver to this age range should be aware of, and work to, the guidance, more about Birth to Three Matters can be found on the DfES website www.surestart.gov.uk

Other services available in the Borough include:

Parent and Toddler Groups

A session organised for parents and their children to play and socialise.

Playgroups

A play session organised for children aged two and half to four years (children can often be left for the full length of the session). Some Playgroups are also registered with the Education Department to deliver early education for three and four years olds.

Toy Libraries

A loan service for toys and equipment.

Pram Club

These are often run by health visitors at clinics to support parents with children 0 to 1 year old.

Health Visitors / Clinics

Health visitors provide a home visiting service for all parents with young children, they will often be linked to a clinic.

Sure Start Children's Centres

Wigan is planning to create a number of Sure Start Children's Centres by 2008 and more by 2010. These will be in different parts of the Borough and will provide, amongst other things, a range of activities and services for children under five years old.

Libraries and Book Start

Early access to books and stories is proven to give children a head start at school. Wigan Libraries invite you to bring your baby along to join and receive a free gift bag, which includes useful information for you, on how to share books and stories with your child).

Outdoor Play Areas and Play Gardens

Encouraging your child to play outside in different kinds of weather most days will help them to be more active and have fun! There are a wide variety of outdoor play areas across the Borough to go to. For more information contact the Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust Play Section.

Playful and Resourceful

Playful and Resourceful is a mobile resource trailer that is stocked with reasonably priced play consumables and safe scrap for children's play. To find out more about the project or arrange for the trailer to visit call the number in the contacts column.

“ 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

- The UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe
- Be proactive in your approach by taking the initiative in raising the issues about sex and relationships
- Explain that sex is not compulsory and that saying no is an option
- Try not to give the message that sex is necessarily a problem. Be prepared to talk about sexuality, even if it seems difficult
- Remind early teens that the legal age of consent to sexual activity is 16
- Try not to be judgmental, but don't be afraid to say if you think an activity 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

preventative parenting

Children will learn about sex whether you want them to or not. Children are constantly exposed to information about relationships and sex: in magazines and newspapers, in films, adverts and soap operas. Children and young people also learn about sexual behaviour from each other - and what gets passed on in the playground may not be accurate or what parents want them to hear!

You might feel concerned that by discussing sex and relationships, particularly at an early age, you will encourage your children to start having sex when they're very young. But research has proved that the opposite is true. In fact, teenagers from families where parents talk frankly about sex wait until they are older than others before they start having sex. And when they do have sex for the first time, they are more likely to use contraceptives.

All these confusing messages may lead young people into situations they don't know how to deal with. As a parent you have an important role in making sure your child has the right information and skills to cope with these pressures. It is your job to help them appreciate the importance of loving relationships, and to understand that the most people regard a sexual relationship as the most intimate relationship they will ever have with another human being.

Most teenagers are sexually active before they graduate from college. It is shocking to know that some young people are sexually active as young as 11 or 12, although the average age for first sex is 17. The fact is that you can't always stop your teenagers from having sex and many of them will do it anyway. What you can do is to educate them about sex, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, HIV/Aids and contraception.

You have the advantage of having had your child's lifetime to impress upon them what the important messages and values really are. You know your child's attitudes and personality, you understand their history and know their goals for the future. Each family has their own views on relationships and sex - you need to give children clear messages about your expectations, give as much useful information as you can, and try to keep communications as open as possible.

If you feel uncomfortable or unsure about talking about sex with your children, don't worry - this is a common reaction. But don't let it put you off. Sex education shouldn't be a one-off talk but a gradual process of communication. If your children grow up knowing it's ok to discuss sex and the feelings they have with you, then they're much more likely to come to you for support when they need it.



WARNING SIGNS

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



ACTION

If you think that your child is sexually active, ensure 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, ensure she sees her GP.



WHAT TO SAY

Talk to your daughters about their birth control. Make your sons aware 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 avoiding unplanned pregnancy but also to avoid sexually transmitted infections.



CONTACTS

• Brook Advisory Centre
01942 760000
• Contact your school nurse or GP
• Family Planning Association
0845 310 1334
• GUM Sexual Health Clinic
01942 822277
• Connexions
01942 765800/
768055

Temper tantrums

“ *Not only has he learned to walk and talk, but now he’s learned 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?* ”



WARNING SIGNS

It could happen anywhere, but watch out for a tired or hungry child in any situation when he or she wants something that you have said “No” to, especially when out shopping, or during a social event or a day out.



ACTION

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



WHAT TO SAY

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



PREVENTION

Avoid long shopping trips or tiring days out. It often helps to give your child extra attention and affection. Try to foresee possible causes for tantrums in the day ahead and find ways to avoid them.



CONTACTS

- Talk to your health visitor or GP
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
- Wigan Children’s Information Service 01942 776660
- Wigan Social Services 01942 828777
- Parenting Co-ordinator 01942 487130

- 1 in 5 two-year-olds has a tantrum at least twice a day
- The ‘Terrible Twos’ are a normal part of your child’s development
- Getting angry is a natural reaction but it just makes the situation worse
- Be firm but find a positive way to deal with the problem
- 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 around two years old and become much less common at four. Very young children are often not able to express themselves as much as they want to and their frustration may come out as a tantrum.

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

If you are worried about your child’s behaviour discuss your concerns with your Health Visitor or GP.

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 some attention or comfort.
- Try to find a distraction. Finding something else interesting to do or look at can help. If you’re in a busy or noisy place try to go somewhere quieter.
- If none of the above works, try to see things from your child’s point of view and understand what they actually want. Try offering them a choice, as this gives your child a sense of control and can be more effective than simply saying “no”. Always try to offer a positive way out.

- If you do say ‘no’ don’t be tempted to give in later to calm them down. If you give in your child will learn that tantrums work!
- If you’re at home you can try ignoring the tantrum, perhaps walking away into another room if it’s safe to do so. Encourage your child to cool down on their own and talk more calmly about what they want.
- After the tantrum, praise your child for settling down. Even though they may no longer be angry they may still be upset, so give them a cuddle and make it clear that you still love them no matter what.

Avoiding temper tantrums

You can reduce the likelihood of a tantrum by planning ahead.

- Try to avoid your child becoming hungry or overtired.
- Make sure your child is getting enough personal attention and affection.
- Make sure your time together is quality time together especially if you work for most of the day.
- Keep shopping trips and outings as short as possible.
- Try to plan a regular method that you’ll use to deal with tantrums when they do happen.

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.

“ 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 you mind your own business?

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

Many people do not tell because they fear the following:

If someone you know is having difficulties, you could offer 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.

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

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.

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?

You can discuss your concerns in confidence by telephoning your local social services office or the police. Whilst we will make a record of your call, if you explain that you do not want to be identified, we will promise to respect your request.

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 Duty Social Worker or the Police. If you are not sure, you can speak to a confidential helpline, at the NSPCC.

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

- Wigan Children's Services
01942 828777
- Police
0161 872 5050 or 999 in an emergency
- Parentline Plus
0808 8002 222
- NSPCC
0808 8005 000

Helpful National Organisations

- Anti-Bullying Campaign**
020 7378 1446
www.bullying.co.uk
- Barnardo's**
020 8550 8822
www.barnardos.org.uk
- Brook Advisory Centres**
0800 018 5023
www.brook.org.uk
- Care to Learn (childcare for young learners)**
0845 600 2809
www.dfes.gov.uk/caretolearn
- Child Accident Prevention Trust**
020 7608 3828
www.capt.org.uk
- Children's Legal Centre & Information Service**
01206 873820
www.childrenslegalcentre.com
- CRY-SIS Helpline**
08451 228 669
www.cry-sis.com
- Drinkline**
0800 917 8282 (7am-11pm)
- Day Care Trust**
020 7840 3350
www.daycaretrust.org.uk
- Eating Disorders Association**
(Youthline under 18)
0845 634 7650
www.edaak.com
- Family Friends of Lesbian and Gays (FFLAG)**
01454 852 418
www.fflag.org.uk
- Family Planning Association (FPA)**
0845 310 1334
www.fpa.org.uk
- Family Rights Group**
0800 731 1696
www.frg.org.uk
- FRANK (National Drugs Helpline)**
0800 77 66 00
www.talktofrank.com
- Gingerbread**
0800 018 4318
www.gingerbread.co.uk
- Kidscape**
08451 205 204
www.kidscape.org.uk
- Message Home**
0800 700 740 for young people to get a message to their parents

- Missing Persons Helpline**
0500 700 700 - (24 hours)
www.missingpersons.org
- National Childminding Association**
0800 169 4486
www.ncma.org.uk
- National Council for One Parent Families**
020 7428 5400
Lone Parent Helpline 0800 018 5026
www.oneparentfamilies.org.uk
- National Day Nurseries Association**
0870 774 4244
www.ndna.org.uk
- National Domestic Violence Helpline (Women's Aid)**
0808 2000 247
www.womensaid.org.uk
- NHS Direct**
0845 4647
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- NSPCC National Helpline**
free national helpline for anyone concerned about a child at risk of ill treatment or abuse
0808 800 5000 - (24 hours)
www.nspcc.org.uk
- NSPCC Asian Child Protection Helpline**
0800 096 7719 (Mon to Fri 11am - 7pm).
Offers services in Bengali, English, Hindi, Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu. Calls taken by Child Protection Officers qualified, experienced and knowledgeable in Asian Culture
- NSPCC Hear 2 Help (for children)**
0800 085 5478 or
01733 207620
- OfSTED Complaints Line**
0845 601 4772
www.ofsted.gov.uk
- OfSTED Early Years Helpline**
0845 601 4771
www.ofsted.gov.uk
- Parentline Plus**
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA)**
0121 248 2000
www.rosipa.co.uk
- Sexwise Helpline**
0800 282930 (12-18 year olds)
7am - 12midnight
www.ruthinking.co.uk
- Young Minds**
020 7336 8445
www.youngminds.org.uk
Parents Information Service 0800 018 2138

Helpful Local Organisations

- Brook Advisory Service**
01942 760000
- Children's Information Service**
01492 776660
- Connexions**
01942 705800 (Leigh)
01942 768055 (Wigan)
- DIAS**
01942 495230
- Early Education Funding Team**
01942 486050
- Emergency Dental Service (out of hours)**
07876 357967
- Family Planning**
01942 778585
- General Dental Services**
01942 772737
- General Practitioner Services**
01942 772765
- GUM (Sexual Health Clinic)**
01942 822277
- Health Visitors (Senior H.V.)**
01257 501333
- Home Start**
01942 700973
- Midwifery Service**
01942 778570
- Oral Health Promotion**
01257 501324
- Play Section (Culture Trust)**
01942 488491
- Police**
0161 8725050
- School Nurses (Senior S.N.)**
01942 775708
- Smoking Cessation (Fresh Focus)**
0800 0730638
- Substance Misuse Service**
01942 608618 (Leigh)
01942 826880 (Wigan)
- Wave**
01942 262270
- Wigan Children's Services**
01942 828777
- Wigan Education Welfare Service**
01942 705405
- Wigan Sure Start Team**
01942 206205
- Wigan Women's Aid**
01942 496094