

Family Links Impact Report 2016/17



Family
Links

Family Links Impact Report 2016/17



We know more than ever about the importance of supporting the emotional health of children, parents, families and schools. Emotional health is transformative – it supports good mental health, builds and maintains positive relationships and empowers children to learn and succeed in their education.

As Family Links enters its 20th year, we reaffirm our mission to empower all children, parents, families, workplaces and schools to be emotionally healthy.

There are a large number of people who have played an essential role in supporting our work this year, and many are named at the back of this Impact Report.

On behalf of the Trustees and staff of Family Links, I want to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to all of you.

Nick Haisman-Smith, Chief Executive of Family Links

"Family Links gives the children opportunities, self-belief and confidence. It creates an arena where it's safe to learn."

Head Teacher, Pegasus School, 2015

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nurturing schools network

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our mission
our vision and
what we do

our mission

Family Links is a national charity dedicated to empowering children, parents, families, schools and workplaces to be emotionally healthy.

our vision

Our vision is a world where adults and children live flourishing lives, fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Family Links believes that emotional health is a human right and that it is the foundation for achievement and happiness.

what we do


We deliver innovative, high quality training in the Nurturing Programme to health and social care services, third sector organisations, schools and universities.



The Nurturing Programme

is the approach that underpins all our work and is designed to provide adults and children with the understanding, skills and ability to lead emotionally healthy lives, build resilience, empathy, self-esteem and support positive relationships.

Read more online: familylinks.org.uk/who-we-are



Family Links believes that
emotional health is a human
right and that it is the
foundation for achievement
and happiness.

What we do: Families

Empowering adults and children to lead emotionally healthy lives and build positive relationships

working one-to-one with parents

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Pre-birth: welcome to the world

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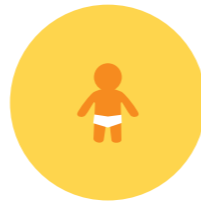
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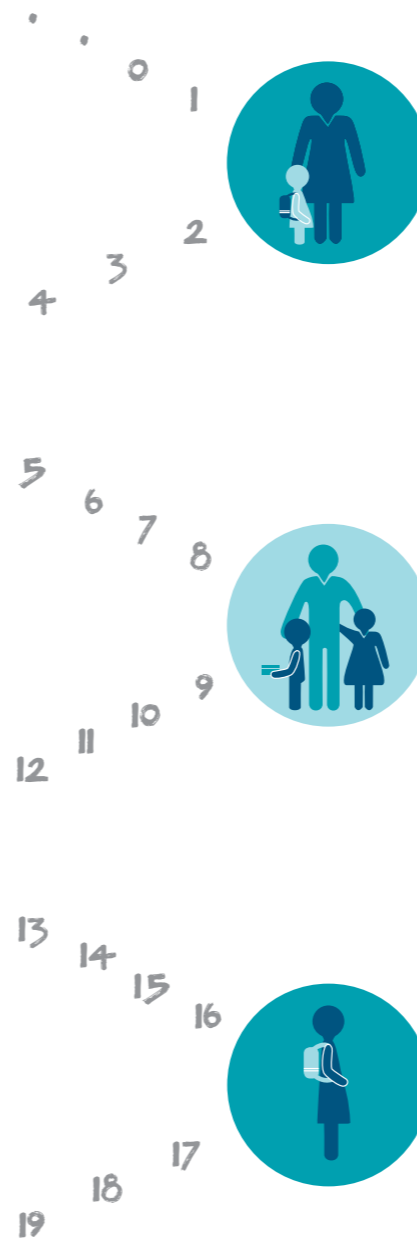
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Encouraging positive relationships, pro-social behaviour, and social and emotional wellbeing for teachers and pupils



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Initial Teacher Education

0-19 years



Early Years

We provide training and resources for Early Years teams, including Circle Time curriculum. Supporting young children to understand and manage their feelings, using games and activities to explore emotional health.

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Primary Schools

We provide whole school training and resources to develop emotional resilience and support learning. Staff learn practical strategies to build an emotionally healthy, warm and respectful school community where everyone can flourish and achieve.

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Secondary Schools

We provide professional development for school staff to improve understanding of teenage development, working in partnership with parents and building emotional wellbeing for pupils and staff.

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Why it matters: What research tells us about emotional health

1/10

One in ten children receives a clinical diagnosis for a mental health, behavioural or emotional problem¹

4X

Children with a diagnosed emotional disorder are four times as likely to have poor physical health compared to those without²

43%

43% of children on community orders have emotional or mental health needs, and over half of children in custody have a diagnosable mental health disorder³



Children who have externalising behaviour difficulties are more likely to leave school without any qualifications, become teenage parents and report troubles with their finances⁴



Poor emotional health is linked with higher rates of smoking, drinking and cannabis use among children aged 11–15⁵

With good emotional health, we have the resources and resilience to manage challenges and to maintain our mental and physical health, be responsible citizens who can fulfil our potential and enjoy positive relationships.

16yrs

Emotional wellbeing at age 16 is a strong predictor of mental health and life chances at age 30⁶



Two key aspects of positive parenting, parental warmth and responsiveness to distress, are shown to predict children's socio-emotional functioning⁷



Social and emotional wellbeing predicts peer acceptance and positive peer relationships during adolescence⁸



Social and emotional wellbeing is related to academic attainment, earning potential and resilience for life⁹



Positive socio-emotional wellbeing is a protective factor for the development of mental health problems and risk-taking behaviour¹⁰

"My whole family have changed because my attitude with myself reflects onto them. I'm proud to look back and see I've started that change."

Parent, Northern Ireland

Highlights from our work with Families



15,788 parents and **31,576** children reached by our work this year



That's **164,170** parents and **321,454** children since Family Links was founded 20 years ago



1,828 new parents attended the *Welcome to the World* antenatal groups this year



2,698 parents since *Welcome to the World* was introduced in 2015



New book published *Talking Teens: A Guide to Understanding Teenagers*



1,348 practitioners trained to deliver *Talking Teens* parent groups



We've been developing our evidence base in partnership with The Colebrooke Centre



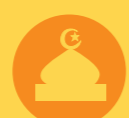
Developed programme: *Families, Children and Change with Family Action*



697 practitioners trained this year to deliver the *10-week Nurturing Programme*



10,331 practitioners trained to deliver the *10-week Nurturing Programme* since 1997



1,000+ parents attended *Islamic Values* parent groups in mosques and community settings



Resources developed in **9 languages**



New module: *Parents, Kids and Money* piloted in Wales, in partnership with the Money Advice Service



58 group leaders around the UK are equipped to run parent groups in prisons



20,000 parents followed the online course offered in partnership with Netmums



Since 2011, **181** Parent Group Leaders trained as OCN tutors, helping parents attain OCN qualifications

Highlights from our work in Education



This year The Nurturing Schools Network welcomed **2,399** new members



Worked with over **9,000** school staff and **2,427** trainee teachers to date



In 2016 we trained **1,575** more Teach First teachers including **1,033** secondary teachers



Celebrating **8 yrs** of our partnership with Teach First reaching **3,150** teachers



chaired a national working group for developing character, wellbeing and mental health



We're a **key partner** in the Fair Education Alliance: working to close achievement gap



500 children benefitted from the transition curriculum in Oxfordshire



Working with teaching staff in a **Madrassah** (Islamic school)



We've worked with **694** teachers in **18** schools this year



Proud to continue **sponsorship** of Multi Academy Trust



member of the steering group of a national partnership for wellbeing & mental health in schools



We've **launched** a Postgraduate Certificate in Social & Emotional Learning, with Canterbury Christ Church University



Launched new professional development course for **Secondary schools**



Consistently **positive feedback** on our training: *"Interactive, interesting and thought-provoking."*



4,408 copies of *The Teaching Puzzle* being used by staff in schools around the UK



We provide training and resources to school staff working from early years to secondary

Supporting new parents: Welcome to the world

Getting the best start in life begins before we are born. Our experience of working with families tells us that it is vital to help parents connect with their unborn baby, look after their own emotional and physical health and maintain supportive relationships. This secure, loving start to life supports infant brain development, increases parental confidence and builds the foundations of positive family relationships.

Welcome to the World is an 8-week programme aimed at helping parents and families prepare for the arrival of their baby. We train practitioners to deliver this programme to families from the second trimester of pregnancy. The aim is to encourage the development of positive relationships, secure attachment and increase the emotional wellbeing of the parents.

We are working on a process evaluation with the University of Hull.



Research findings ¹

- Average parent-to-be mental wellbeing increased significantly during the course
- Mothers and fathers showed a significant increase in attachment scores by the end of the programme
- Parents gained information and learning about breastfeeding, and brain, emotional and intellectual development and bonding



In 2015/16:
1,828
parents attended a *Welcome to the World* parent group ²

Read more online: familylinks.org.uk/what-we-do#welcome-to-the-world

Support during the early years: Parenting Puzzle Workshops

These four workshops for parents of children under 5 are designed to improve family relationships and children's social, emotional and cognitive development.

They aim to develop parents' understanding of empathy, explore the power of praise and positive interaction, focus on the importance of listening and communication and increase parents' understanding of the power of play.



Research findings ¹

Parents were asked about eight dimensions of parenting to measure their view of their parenting self-efficacy. These dimensions are:

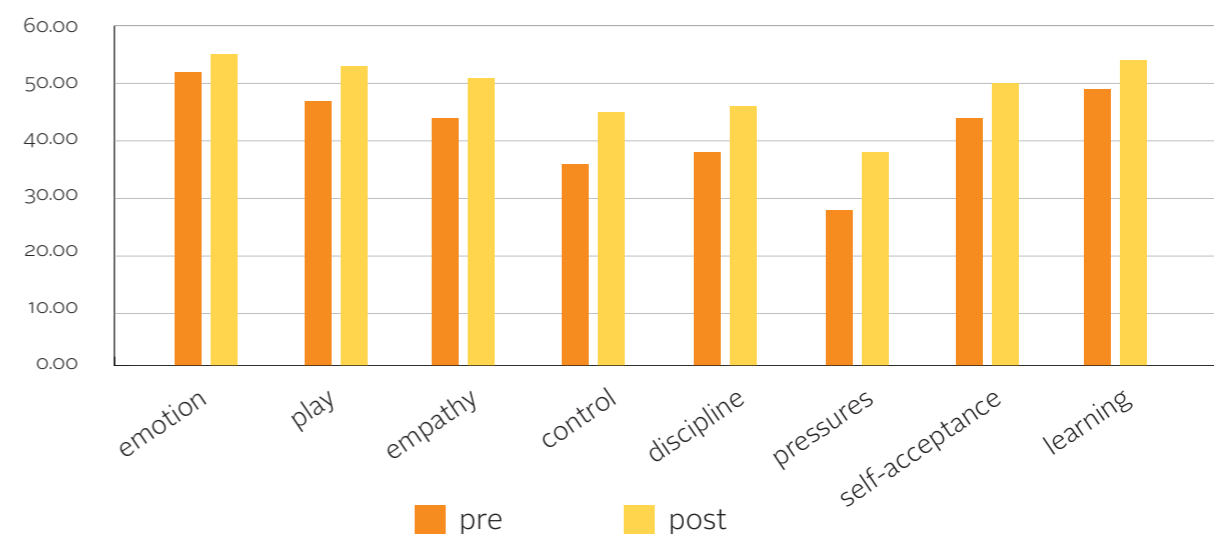
emotion and affection
play and enjoyment
empathy and understanding
control

discipline and boundaries
pressures
self-acceptance
learning and knowledge

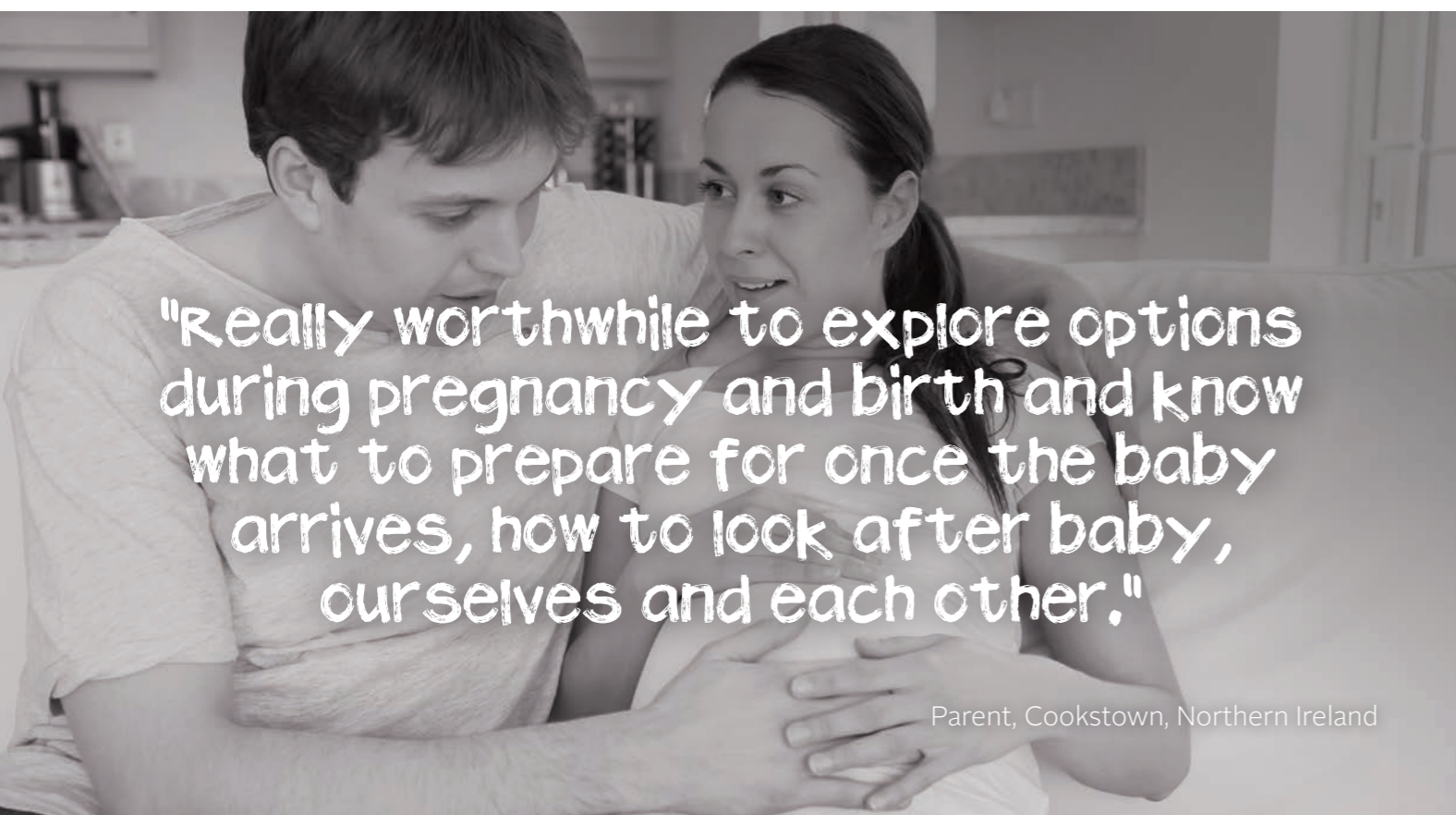
Results of pre and post scores from 70 parents showed a significantly positive increase for each of the eight dimensions, with the overall difference being highly significant.

TOPSE scale pre and post programme score:

TOPSE: Tool to Measure Parenting Self-Efficacy



Read more online: familylinks.org.uk/what-we-do#workshops



"Really worthwhile to explore options during pregnancy and birth and know what to prepare for once the baby arrives, how to look after baby, ourselves and each other."

Parent, Cookstown, Northern Ireland

Caring and confident parents: The 10-week Nurturing Programme

The 10-week Nurturing Programme promotes emotional health, relationship skills and positive behaviour management strategies. It encourages an approach to relationships that gives children and parents an emotionally healthy springboard for their lives and their learning. The programme promotes emotional literacy; enhances self-esteem; develops communication and provides effective strategies to encourage self-awareness and empathy.

Ongoing research

This year we have completed a multi-year project with the Colebrooke Centre to articulate an evidenced theory of change for the Family Links 10-week Nurturing Programme.



This report will be the first phase of our next major evaluation of this programme. More information about this project can be found on our website.



Research findings

Testing of four overarching impact measures suggests improvements in:

- Family relationship quality ¹
- Positive use of parenting strategies ¹
- Perceptions of coping and self-efficacy ^{1,2}



In 2015/16 we reached
12,369
more parents ³

A parent/school partnership ⁴

Margaret McMillan Primary School in Bradford has been running 10-week Nurturing Programme Parent Groups for four years.

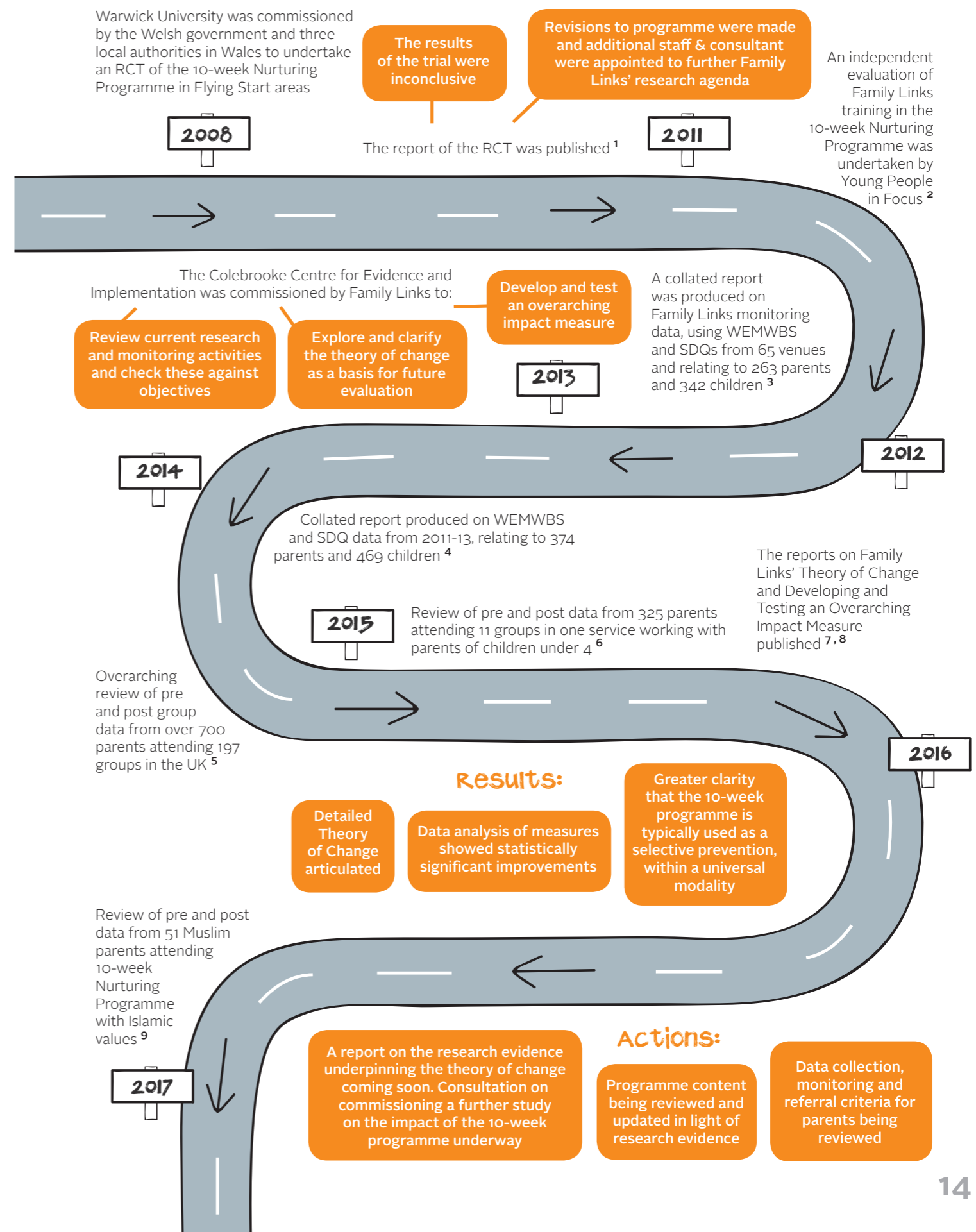
"Engaging parents in children's learning is a key outcome for the school's strategy," explains Maxine Lister, Team Around the Child Manager, "We know it works and it's a wise investment".

The school has a waiting list for parents to join the groups and has found the programme particularly successful in engaging hard to reach parents.

"It's helped with behaviour, you try the ideas and they really work" explains one mum. "I'm learning a lot," said another, "You come and you find out you're not the only one going through these things"

Read more online: familylinks.org.uk/what-we-do/#parent-group-training

The 10-week Nurturing Programme: Evaluation Journey



Supporting Muslim Families: Family Links work incorporating Islamic values

8.1 percent of all school age children in Britain are Muslim, but the majority of programmes aimed at supporting families do not meet the needs of the community.¹ Our work is designed to increase understanding and knowledge of the difference between cultural practices and the nurturing approach supported both by Islam and the Nurturing Programme, and how this can help parents.

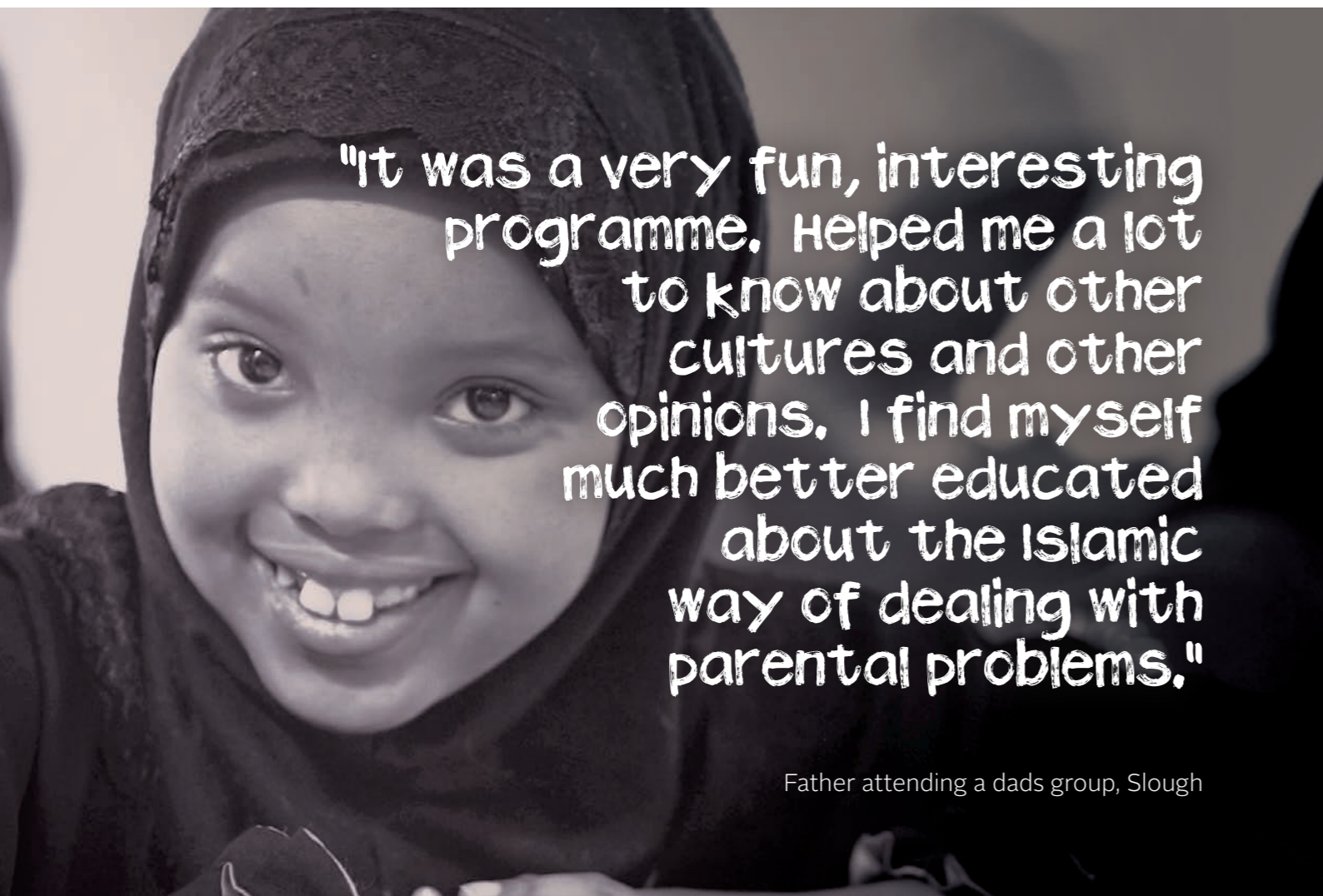
The programme is based on the 10-week Nurturing Programme, and includes teachings from the Qu'ran and the Hadith.

Most groups are delivered in mosques, where parents say they feel comfortable seeking support. We train practitioners from the local community to facilitate parent groups in their mother tongue, helping to remove the language barrier.

Research findings ²

A process evaluation of a group for Muslim fathers held in a Mosque found that the programme was highly acceptable to fathers, who were generally very positive about the experience and reported positive changes.

Read more online: familylinks.org.uk/what-we-do#Specialist-programmes



"It was a very fun, interesting programme. Helped me a lot to know about other cultures and other opinions. I find myself much better educated about the Islamic way of dealing with parental problems."

Father attending a dads group, Slough

Developing protective factors in the Muslim community: The Islamic Values Project

Family Links was awarded a Department for Education National Prospectus Grant to develop a culturally-sensitive intervention designed with and for the Muslim community.

The project supports the safeguarding of children through a programme attended by **148 parents**.



UK ISLAMIC MISSION
Serving Humanity Since 1962



The project includes:

10-week Nurturing Programme Parent Groups

that consider how positive parenting strategies relate to Islamic Values.

Cultural Awareness

training for practitioners to widen their knowledge and understanding of Islam and work more effectively with the Muslim community.

Training for Staff in Madrassah

(Islamic Schools) to support an emotionally healthy environment and positive classroom climate.

Research findings ¹



When asked to rate the helpfulness of the group, parents rated their experience 6.8 out of 7



of parents said they would recommend to other Muslim families



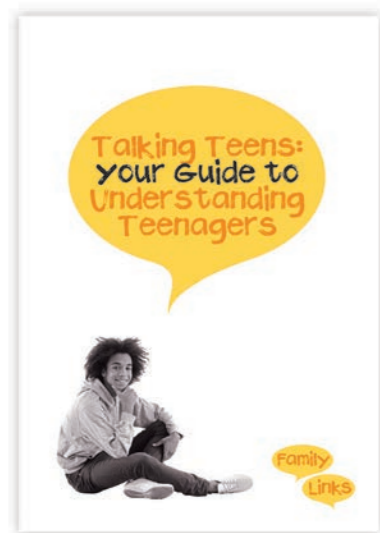
reported a positive improvement in protective factors for safeguarding children

Read more online: familylinks.org.uk/what-we-do#Specialist-programmes

Building positive relationships with teenagers: Talking Teens

The teenage years are a time of change, and many families find it challenging to adapt and maintain positive relationships. Our **Talking Teens** programme is a 4-week programme that provides an opportunity for parents to learn more about adolescent brain development, develop strategies to help set appropriate boundaries and promote self-esteem and resilience.

New book for parents launched in 2016:



Research findings ¹

Parents reported:



21% increase in confidence in setting boundaries with their teenager



30% increase in feeling their teenager is able to cope with the ups and downs of life



22% increase in confidence in their ability to help their teenager to develop positive life skills



71% increase in understanding of what teenagers need from parents to help them develop well

New skills and strategies for professionals: Understanding Teenagers

Teenage behaviour can be difficult, and can best be understood when seen as part of the developmental process. Adolescence is the most significant period of change in the brain apart from the first year of life; it is not until the early 20s that the brain begins to look like that of an adult.

We deliver professional development training courses for staff working with teenagers and their parents in schools and in the community.

The courses bring together the latest understanding from neuroscience and developmental psychology and the principles of emotional health to help promote resilience in young people.

Understanding teenagers

For professionals working with teenagers and their parents to help support and motivate young people in an emotionally healthy context.

"Feel more confident and will use this to help parents understand their teenager."

Understanding teenagers in school

For those working with young people in schools and educational settings enabling them to better understand the adolescent developmental process and use strategies to motivate and support young people.

"Understanding the changes in the brain helps me to understand some of their behaviour and why they are driven to take risks."

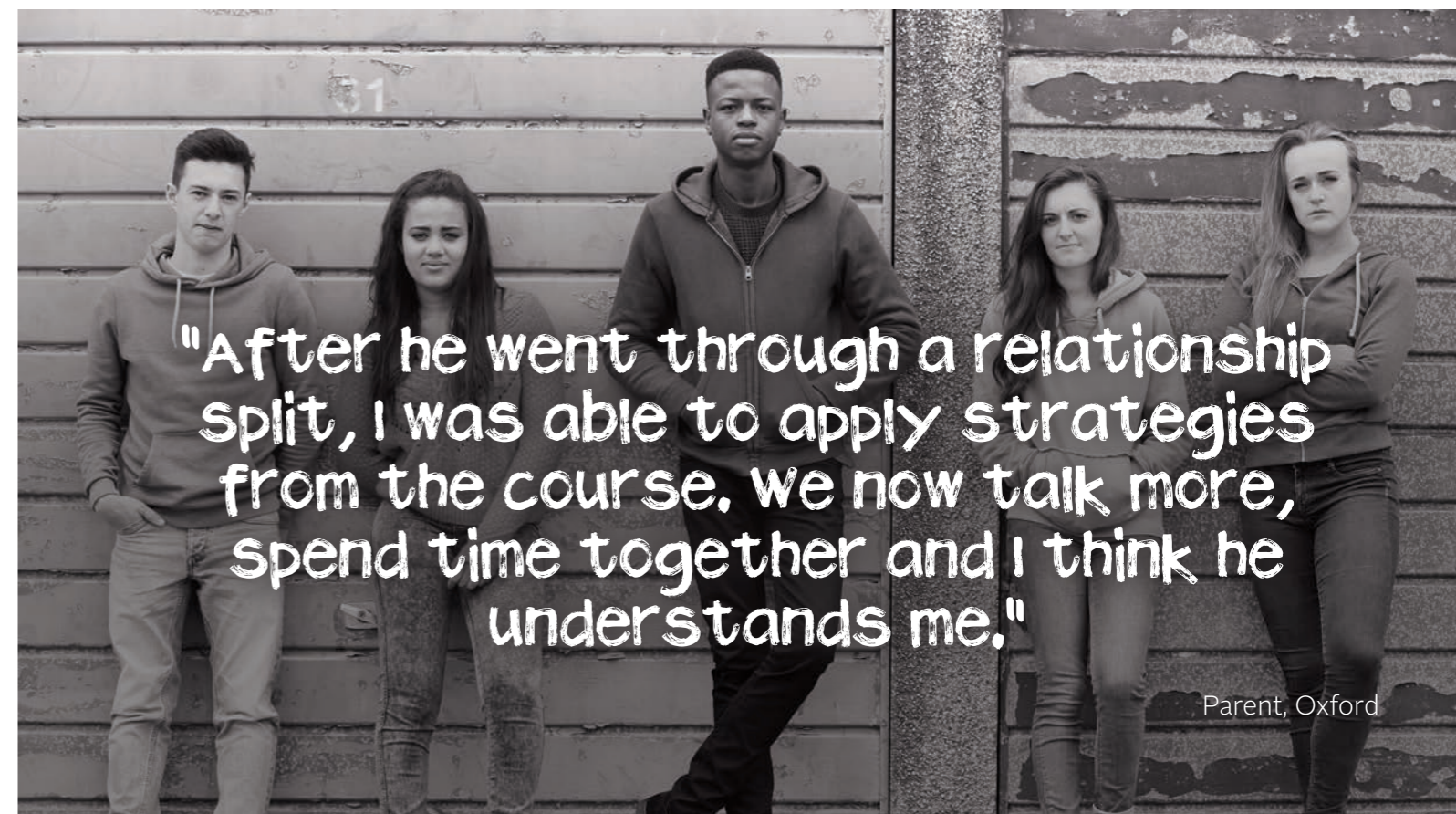
A parent's story ²

A parent of two attended a Talking Teens group at her daughter's secondary school in September 2015.

"It was mainly our relationship I was concerned about. When she behaved badly me and my husband would be very angry. But as a result of the course I could understand that her behaviour was normal, so I don't get so angry anymore. The biggest thing was understanding why she was behaving this way, which helped me rationalise it.

I definitely think our relationship has improved because I'm less tense. I feel stronger and more confident.

Even this summer I've managed to feel strong enough to deal with some problems that have come up and I feel really proud of that. Tension in the whole family has dropped. Every parent in the school needs this help."



Read more online: familylinks.org.uk/what-we-do#talking-teens

Our online parenting programme: Partnership with Netmums

20,000 parents have taken the online parenting course jointly run by Netmums and Family Links. Parents sign up to receive regular emails that include strategies to try and ideas to consider. Support and feedback is offered via a moderated chat room.



90% of respondents felt that the course had made a positive difference to their family ¹

92% of respondents felt that the course had made a positive impact on how they felt as a parent ¹



Supporting families to make good financial decisions: Parents, Kids and Money

This innovative pilot programme is being delivered in Wales as part of the Money Advice Service/Big Lottery Wales initiative. It equips parents with the skills and confidence they need to teach their children about money.

Parents attending a 10-week Nurturing Programme parent group take part in one additional 2-hour session called **Talk, Learn, Do: Parents, Kids and Money.**



The session includes:

- Understanding the importance of learning about money at a young age
- Exploring ways to teach children about money through everyday experiences
- Thinking about budgeting, saving and how parents can resist 'pester power'

Example from the session:

Parents imagine that an alien has come to earth and is following them around for a few days.

What would the alien notice about money?
What would they learn?
What might confuse them?

Now imagine these aliens are our children - this is how things might look to them.

How can we help them?

"It encourages you to try out different ideas and see which work best. I feel our family is more harmonious and we work together to achieve a happier home."

Parent's feedback having completed the online course



Aspire, Flourish, Achieve: The Nurturing Schools Network



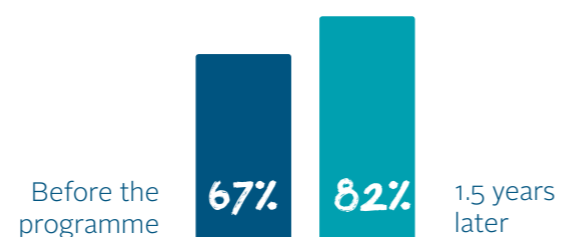
We work in partnership with a large network of schools and teachers who are committed to promoting emotional health and wellbeing. We deliver training and resources to encourage empathy, support positive relationships and provide skills and strategies to promote emotional health, resilience and wellbeing.

Our support includes: a range of professional development courses for school staff; *The Teaching Puzzle* guide to social and emotional learning; and practical, clear curriculum resources for Circle Time and class discussion.

Research findings ¹

We have been evaluating the impact of the Nurturing Programme in two primary schools in an area of high social deprivation.

Children with normal or borderline prosocial behaviour increased:



Children with clinical levels of behavioural and emotional difficulties decreased:



Working with new teachers: The Nurturing Schools Network

Building positive relationships at schools makes a direct contribution to children's achievement and provides them with the social and emotional skills to get the most out of life. We work with teachers at the beginning of their careers so that they can be confident, positive role models in the classroom and the school community.

They learn to build a positive learning environment; learn how to motivate and guide children and young people and develop a range of emotionally healthy behaviour management strategies.



Canterbury Christ Church University Partnership

In 2015, The Nurturing Schools Network announced a new partnership with CCCU to offer the UK's first **Postgraduate Certificate in Social and Emotional Learning**. Three new masters-level modules focus on the social and emotional dimensions of learning and how to put them into practice in a school. The course involves developing a creative, nurturing and reflective approach to professional practice.



In 2015/16 we worked with:



694 school staff ¹



1,687 trainee teachers ¹

Research findings ²

Trainee teachers' self-confidence significantly improved following Nurturing Schools Network workshops.

Four dimensions were measured:

- creating a positive learning environment
- using praise and reward
- behaviour management
- personal power.

82% felt they better understood the connections between emotional health and learning

100% agreed or somewhat agreed they could better manage challenging behaviour

96% of trainee teachers felt they could work more effectively with other adults, including parents

"I've learned how to make my classroom a more emotionally balanced place for my students."

Teach First participant 2016

Read more online: nurturingschoolsnetwork.org.uk

Measuring our impact: our ongoing commitment to evaluation

Family Links is committed to researching the effectiveness of all our programmes, including the 10-Week Nurturing Programme. We have a dedicated research and evaluation team, and work with many university-based and independent research partners to ensure rigorous evaluation and measurement of our impact.

our evaluation and research achievements this year include:

- **A multi-year research project** with The Colebrooke Centre for Evidence and Implementation, detailing and articulating the evidence base for the Family Links 10-week Nurturing Programme. Report available soon on our website
- **A process evaluation** in partnership with the University of Hull researching the Family Links *Welcome to the World* programme, with a focus on mental wellbeing and attachment. Report available soon on our website
- **An impact report** on the expansion of our work with the UK Islamic Mission showing parent groups helped parents feel calmer, seek help and listen to their children ¹
- **A multi-year research project** with two primary schools exploring the impact of the Nurturing Schools Network training and resources on teacher efficacy and child social and emotional development ²

Research partners we work with

We'd like to thank our many partners and advisors who work with us to advance our understanding of the impact of our work:

Dr Deborah Ghatge
and The Colebrooke Centre
for Evidence and Implementation

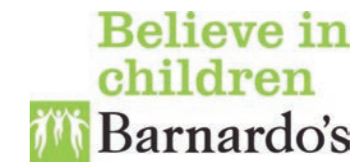
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Irene Murray
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David Utting
Dr Aase Villadsen
Joan Webb
Yongjiao Yang

Bayards Hill Primary School
Cardiff Flying Start
Cheney School
Department for Education
East Riding Council
Hampshire Council
Orchard Meadow Primary School
Our Lady's Catholic Primary School
Pegasus Primary School
St Andrew's C of E Primary School
St John Fisher Catholic Primary School
St Gregory the Great Catholic School
UKIM Women's Branch
Wheatley Park School
Windale Primary School

We work with:



Read more online: familylinks.org.uk/why-it-works



Get involved:

A big thank you to:

Doris Field Charitable Trust
 Garfield Weston Foundation
 The Headley Trust
 The Henry Smith Charity
 Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation
 Inchcape Foundation
 John Ackroyd Charitable Trust
 John Ellerman Foundation
 John Swire 1989 Charitable Trust
 The Kiawah Charitable Trust
 Mr and Mrs JA Pye's Charitable Settlement
 The Pease Charitable Trust
 Paul Hamlyn Foundation
 The Robert and Margaret Moss Charitable Trust
 The Sandford Trust

St Michael's and All Saints' Charities
 The Stationers' Foundation
 The Schroder Foundation
 Corefiling
 Dragon School Sale
 Fossil Foundation
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 Swan Hellenic
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 James and Vanessa Emmett
 James Hanbury
 Jared Smith
 Rosalind Portman
 Nigel Wilson
 Rob Haisman-Smith
 Rosie Clarke
 Gilda Haskins

and to our Patrons:

Alexander & Hannah Armstrong
 Dr Stephen J Bavolek
 The Countess of Inchcape
 Annette Mountford
 Lord Northbourne
 Professor Richard Pring
 Philip Pullman



"Helps me bond with the baby. It's given me confidence."



Support us

Support our work by donating. Go to our website for details: familylinks.org.uk/how-to-donate



Ambassadors

Become an ambassador, to find out more, email sally.alden@familylinks.org.uk

What we do: Families

Empowering adults and children to lead emotionally healthy lives and build positive relationships

working one-to-one with parents

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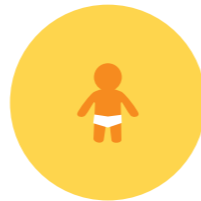
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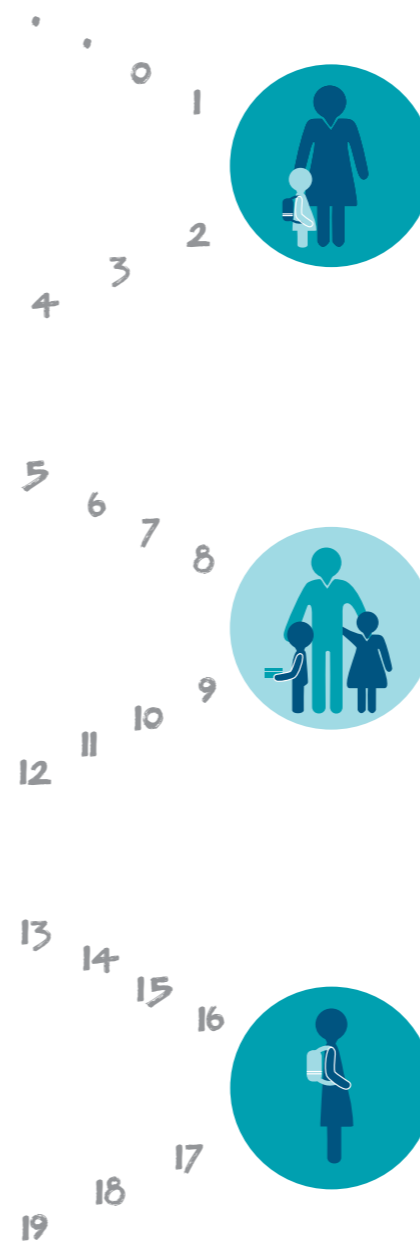
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We provide professional development for school staff to improve understanding of teenage development, working in partnership with parents and building emotional wellbeing for pupils and staff.

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"I'm listening more,
I'm more empathic to my
children's needs and I give
a lot more praise."



References:

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"To our minds, Family Links does some of the most important work in the charity sector.

It rolls up its sleeves and gets stuck in at the most fundamental level: the family itself.

By showing families in difficulty not just how to cope with family life, but how to enjoy it and how to share its challenges with others, it kick starts so many other benefits that ripple out to the wider community.

Most charities are there to help mop up after disaster, Family Links doesn't even allow disaster to get its toe in the door. It has changed the outcomes of so many life stories and with your help can continue to do so."

Alexander and
Hannah Armstrong
Family Links Patrons



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