

Home-Start North and Mid-Beds Newsletter April 2007



Hello to all our Families, Volunteers and Supporters

I can hardly believe that I have been working for Home-Start North and Mid-Beds for three months. To say it has passed quickly would be an understatement and I am enjoying every moment of it. I have been particularly touched by some of the struggles our families face in their day to day lives and the commitment of our volunteers.

It is a very exciting time for Home-Start North and Mid-Beds as we are about to double our Volunteer Preparation courses for 2007. We are now able to offer fast track courses in the daytime, evening and weekend and an increase in volunteers will mean that we will be able to reach many more families who are in need of support. If you know of anyone that might want to join us, then please encourage them to pick up the phone.

We are also going to be moving premises as our current rent and services charges have increased significantly. I am hoping that by the time you receive your next newsletter we will be telling you all about our new offices. Talking of newsletters, you will have noticed that we have changed the format; we are now able to offer you an opportunity to receive future editions by email. If you would like to be added to the list please email kateparker@homestartnorthandmidbeds.co.uk

Wendie

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR VOLUNTEERS!

**COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE
FOR ALL HOME-START VOLUNTEERS TO PROVIDE YOU WITH UP TO
DATE INFORMATION ON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN TRAINING

You **MUST** attend **ONE** of the following sessions which will be held at our offices in Phoenix Chambers, 15-17 High Street, Bedford:

Wednesday 2nd May 9.30am – 11.30am

Thursday 3rd May 6.00pm – 8.00pm

Saturday 5th May 10.00am – 12.00noon

Please phone or email to confirm which session you will be attending.

Home-Start North and Mid-Beds

Phoenix Chambers, 15-17 High St, Bedford MK40 1RN
Tel: 01234 270601 wendielovatt@homestartnorthandmidbeds.co.uk

The Lawns Early Excellence Centre, The Baulk, Biggleswade
Tel: 01767 226709 adminhsbg@btconnect.com

LATEST NEWS



Congratulations to our new volunteers who completed our **Bedford** spring volunteer prep course:

Elaina, Kim, Lisa, Brenda, Sukhbir, Sophie, Elizabeth, Liz, Pauline & Tanya

We are delighted to welcome you to our team and look forward to placing you with a Home-Start family soon!

We have 2 more volunteer prep courses coming up. One in Biggleswade which started on Weds 18th April in the evening (ending on 13th June); and a Fast-track course in Bedford which will run from 4th June to 28th June over 2 days a week (Mon & Thurs).

Current volunteers are welcome to come along to any of the sessions and/or join us for lunch - just let your Coordinator know.

Biggleswade Volunteers Update

Good luck to:

Sam who starts her Masters in Social Work this September
Rachel L who begins her Health & Social Care course this Sept
Rachel S who starts her Certificate in Playwork course next month

Congratulations to:

Andrea who had a baby girl, Sarah, at the end of March
Sarah who started a part-time job as a receptionist

Biggleswade News

Asda stall very successful – over 400 leaflets given out! Thanks go to Sarah, Molly, Rosemary and Shirley for ‘wo-maning’ the stand. Molly also did a stand for us at Somerfield in Shefford on 20th April – so thank you again Molly!

Biggleswade Birthday celebration – Are you around during the end May school holidays – Helpers wanted! Please phone Gail or Sarah 01767 226709 for exact date and further details.

All volunteers invited to last night of Biggleswade prep course at The Grove, Biggleswade. 8.00pm on Wednesday 13th June.
Please come and make our new volunteers feel welcome.

Biggleswade Office
BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION
End of May bank holiday week (TBC)

Join in the fun!
HELPERS WANTED
Phone 01767 226709 for more info



Getting Started in Pre-School Practice

18 th April – 27 th June	1.00pm-3.00pm	Bedford
24 th April – July	7.00pm-9.30pm	Biggleswade
3 rd May – 17 th July	9.30am-1.30pm	Bedford

For people interested in working in a pre-school or nursery environment with children aged 2½ to 5 years. This is a practical hands-on 30 hour foundation course.

Contact the Recruitment Helpline 01234 228847

Or email: jobsinfo@bedscc.gov.uk

Come along to the Bunyan Free Church Coffee Morning on Sat 19th May, from 10am-1pm at the Church Gardens of the Bunyan Meeting Rooms, Mill St Bedford

[Craft stalls, cakes, cream teas.](#)
[Toys & secondhand books to buy](#)

LOCAL GROUPS ... WHAT'S GOING ON..... THINGS TO DO ...

www.whatsonforlittlesones.co.uk

is a fantastic website resource to find out what classes, activities and events for children and babies under 5 are taking place in your local area.

You can search for activities by town, county or activity type/name.

Selecting 'Bedfordshire' brings up a long list of different groups and classes with full details so you can get in touch directly with the group or activity organisers. www.whatsonforlittlesones.co.uk



Goldington & Putnoe Children's Centre 30 Meadway, Bedford 01234 353512

Mini Smarteez – group for children 2.5 – 3 yrs. Singing, outside activities, craft & more. Meadway Tues & Thurs 9.15-11.15am

Teens & Tots – Support group for parents under 21 and their children. Meadway 12.30-3pm Tues.

Family drop-in with breakfast, help & support – Meadway 9.15-11.30am Mon, Weds.

'Bumps and babies lunch time club' for pregnant women and babies under 6mths. Please book. Weds 12-1.15pm Meadway

Toddler Playtime – selection of toys, music and healthy snacks for under 5's. Putnoe Heights Church Hall, 1.30-3pm Tues and Thurs

Creative Project – What it means to be a young dad – whether you have recently become a father or your partner is going through pregnancy. To find out more contact Jean-Francois 341977.

Next Steps for Parents and Children 6-15 months – child development. Starts Tues 1st May 1.15-2.45pm. Term time only at Goldington Family Centre. 50p per session, booking essential.

Relate Family Counselling – help with conflict, arguments, behavioural problems, loss and change, divorce, step families For families with at least 1 child between 5-13yrs. Tues 3.30-7.30pm. Further info call 356350.

What's on at Project 229 in Kempston?

There are loads of things going on at Project 229 including:

Antenatal classes—Wednesdays 1-3pm, call Laura for info 01234 840880

Bellybabes—postnatal exercise class—contact Sue 07941 400984

Customer Advisory service from Bedford Borough Council: need help with rent/council tax, bills—Don't lose out, claim the benefits you are entitled to! Monthly (next session 9 May) on a Wednesday 10.30am-12.30pm. Call Maria 01234 221670. **Debt advice**, struggling with money worries? - For a free appointment 01234 851508.

The Net—Supporting women referred by health professionals, and their children—playtimes for the children and activities for the mums. Wednesday's term time only, call 01234 851508.

GROW – 8 week courses for women – including Assertiveness, Coping with change, Stress Management, Decision Making, Time management – for more info call Stella 07810 377043

Basic computer, email and internet courses (free email course starts 4 June)—call Nicola 01234 840880.

Asian Singing Group for Children – various dates and times. For more info call Bipin 01234 840880.

Creative Dance for young children (lower-middle school) 4-5pm every other Weds (16&30 May). Contact Angharad 01234 328712

21st July GO WILD Environmental Festival of all things natural! Arts, crafts, produce, music, family activities and much more! Addison Park, Kempston

Group for Young Parents & Parents 2 B! Every Wednesday 3.30pm to 5.30pm at Cherry Trees, Hawkins Rd, Bedford. Come along for free food, FUN and freebies! Info call Jane 01234 269512 or text 07746 9162257.



GROUPS AT SURE START *Cauldwell & Kingsbrook*

Cherry Trees, Hawkins Rd (01234 316433) include:

Tiny Times (baby activities), Mondays 1-3pm

Movers & Makers (action songs and play for under 4's), Tuesdays 9am-12pm

Tot Stars (baby and toddler songs and rhymes), Thursdays 10am-12pm

Antenatal/postnatal checks, Mondays 1-3pm

Peter Pan, Edward Rd (01234 269512) include:

Baby Massage, Tuesdays 1.30-2.30pm (phone to book)

In-Betweens (action packed play for babies & toddlers), Wednesdays 10am-12pm.

Kingsbrook, Stephenson Lower School Canvin Way (01234 316433) include:

Tot Stars, Mondays 10-11.30am & 1-2.30pm **Tiny Times**, Tuesdays 1-3pm

Stay and Play, Wednesdays 9am-12pm **Baby Massage** (play activities & time 4 chat), Thur 1.30-2.30pm

There are lots of other activities taking place so please contact your local centre for up to date details.

Groups in Biggleswade & surrounding area

At the Lawns Early Excellence Centre, Biggleswade

Toy Library-The Grove Annexe, Mondays 9.00-11.00am

Teenage Parent Drop-In- Mondays 1.00pm-3.00pm

Make and Play-Wednesdays 9.30am-11.00am

Rhyme Time-fortnightly on Mondays at 10.30am and **Story Time**, fortnightly on Wednesdays at 2.30pm at Biggleswade Library.

Manor Farm Family Centre, London Rd, Sandy

Drop in- Tues, Weds, Thursdays 9.30-11.30am 01767 683015

Dads Group Fri 10.00am-12.00noon 01767 224100

There are also regular groups in Great Gransden, Everton, Gamlingay, Wrestlingworth and Potton. Contact the Biggleswade office on 01767 226709 for further details about local groups.

Queen's Park Neighbourhood Centre provides a range of health, social, financial, educational and children's services. Pop in any time for a chat. Weekly activities include:

Baby Bollywood (music, movement and rhyme for under 5's);

Family Groups (free crèche);

Tiny Times (play session for babies); Midwife drop-ins and Baby MOTs; exercise classes,

Early Explorers (learning through play group for parents and their under 5's);

GROW course for women to develop self-confidence and self-esteem) and a Community Café.

Phone 01234 276744; Marlborough Road, Queens Park.

FAMILY GROUPS

Welcome to Westbourne Group

Meeting on Wednesdays in term time
12.45-2.45pm at Queens Park Community Centre, Marlborough Rd, Queens Park, Bedford
Group leader: Ila Gohil

Contact:
Aleatha Cumberbatch,
01234 316801
admin@familygroups.co.uk

Lock it away for Christmas with Bedford Credit Union

Sorry to be mentioning Xmas as early as April but Bedford Credit Union are offering a savings scheme specifically for this wallet-straining time of year.

You can:

Save as much as you choose to – weekly, monthly or fortnightly.

Save by standing order, cheque or cash.

Your money is then issued in November (or 60 days notice for withdrawal at other times of year)

You can also have a normal share account to withdraw and deposit savings during the year.

Easy to join. Only £3 admin fee for “Lock it Away”

For more info or to join contact: Bedford Credit Union, 6 St Paul’s Square, Bedford, MK40 1SQ
Telephone: 01234 346352 www.bedfordcreditunion.co.uk



Bedford Leisure Card scheme offers a range of different card options to suit everyone. The Bedford Leisure Card is an annual ‘Discount Card’ which is available to everyone, with savings to be made at all DSD Leisure facilities, selected events at the Bedford Corn Exchange, local shops, restaurants, services and entertainment venues.

For those with a keen interest in a particular activity we offer a range of membership cards including gym, swim, golf, squash and sauna & steam cards.

Discounts are available to: Robinson Pool, Oasis Beach Pool, Kempston Pool, Bedford International Athletic Stadium, Mowsbury Golf & Squash Complex, Bunyan Sports Centre.

Free entry to Bedford Museum & Cecil Higgins Art Gallery.

Cards are free if you are in receipt of certain benefits. For more info contact:

Bedford Leisure Card Office
PO Box 348, Bedford MK41 9ZX
Telephone: 01234 350300
Email: leisurecard2@bedford.gov.uk

Application forms can be collected from the various pools, athletic stadium, Bunyan Sports Centre, Tourist Information or Town Hall.

What is the discretionary Social Fund?

The Social Fund scheme provides grants and interest free loans to help people on low income with costs that are difficult to meet from regular income.

- People on Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance or State Pensions credit can be considered for a community care grant.
- People who have been on Income Support or income-based Jobseekers Allowance for 26 weeks can apply for a budgeting loan.
- People who are without sufficient resources to meet their immediate short term needs can apply for a crisis loan.

Info leaflet and application form for a Social Fund loan can be found at your local Job centre or can be printed from www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Also, if you have been refused a Social Fund loan, you can have your application reassessed. Contact IRS (Independent Review Service for the Social Fund): www.irs-review.org.uk
Telephone: 0800 096 1926
Textphone: 0800 096 1929

Would you like your bank to repay all those nasty bank charges? A silly question, I know

A lot of people have already managed to claim back hundreds and even thousands of pounds in bank charges – these two websites offer a wealth of information including sample letters to send to your bank, to get you started.
Good luck!



www.moneysavingexpert.com

www.penaltycharges.co.uk

Important notice to all families waiting for a volunteer



We have a volunteer preparation course running at the moment in Biggleswade, followed by one in Bedford which will be held over two days a week during June. There will then be another course running in Bedford in the Autumn. So we do hope to find a volunteer for you soon!

Your Coordinator will be in touch with more details.

HEALTHY START

Give your kids the best start in life – families on certain benefits can get free milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins www.healthystart.nhs.uk

What is Healthy Start? With Healthy Start, you can get free vouchers every week which you swap for milk, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and infant formula milk. You can also get free vitamins. Healthy Start replaces the Welfare Food Scheme.

Do I qualify for Healthy Start? You qualify for Healthy Start if you're pregnant or have a child under four years old AND: you or your family get Income Support, or you or your family get income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, or you or your family get Child Tax Credit (*but not Working Tax Credit*) and have an annual family income of below £14,495 or less OR: you're pregnant and under 18 years of age

How do I apply for Healthy Start? If you already get milk tokens through the Welfare Food Scheme, you should automatically get Healthy Start vouchers instead. If not, you can apply online www.healthystart.nhs.uk, or pick up a form from your local Sure Start centre. You need to get your form signed by your midwife or health visitor before sending it in to Healthy Start. **You can also get a form by calling 08701 555 455** and asking for the leaflet and application form, "A healthy start for pregnant women and young children" code HS01.

What's a Doidy Cup?

Info taken from www.bickiepegs.co.uk

The Doidy Cup, designed and made in the UK, to teach your child to drink from a rim.

- The unique slant of the Cup enables the child to see the contents as they drink – helping to prevent it being tipped over them!
- The Cup is very easy to clean/sterilize and can be put on the top shelf of a dishwasher (if you have one). It's freezer-proof too.
- Breast-fed babies from 4 months can be given water or expressed milk from the cup and bottle-fed babies can be encouraged to use the cup from 6 months old.
- It encourages babies to use their natural drinking action of sipping and swallowing rather than only sucking.
- Bottles are less likely to be used after the baby reaches a year old, reducing the risk of tooth decay.
- Babies will learn how to put the Cup down correctly.

Cups cost £3.50 from the website, but may be available at a discounted price (as low as 50p) from your local Sure Start centre. Please check for prices.



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