



Mellow Futures

Mellow Futures

A parenting programme for parents with learning disabilities and/or difficulties



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Mellow Futures

- Supports parents with a learning disability and learning difficulty
- Written under a project called Parent Pioneers, funded by the Department of Health
- The project is being delivered over 3 years, from 2012-2015
- The project is being delivered in 2 Local Authority pilot sites:
 - London Borough of Islington
 - County of Northumberland



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Parent Pioneers

Delivered by four specialist organisations:



Mencap; intellectual disability expertise and project management



Mellow Parenting; adapting parenting courses



Elfrida Society; running parents reference group



Norah Fry Research Centre; evaluating the project



Key aims

- To level the playing field for families where a mum to be or parent in the early months of parenting has a learning difficulty or a learning disability.
- Providing **early** and **accessible** services - support needs to be **early, planned, and pro-active**
- To increase the support to families in their community
- Improve the knowledge and skills of early years services



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Mellow Bumps

- helping mums to bond with their babies
- helping mums to de-stress
- 6 weeks

Mellow Babies

- supporting mums to be a parent.
- discussing what is like being a parent and talking about topics such as healthy eating and safety
- 14 weeks





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- Volunteer family mentors
 - to help practice what was learnt on the course
 - supporting families access local support and services
- Adaptation of the existing programme
 - easy information, highly visual, repetitive, easy print, pictorial with use of video and craft/art.
- Support with issues in other areas of their life
- A Parents Reference Group





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Parents leading practice

- We are from The Reference Group. We are a group of parents with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Many of us have not felt welcomed at parenting groups or support services
- We don't get information in the right way
- We get left out
- We sometimes feel judged
- It is important that we are involved in Mellow Futures so we can help professionals develop groups that work for us



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Parents leading practice

- We help train workers about the needs of parents with learning difficulties.
- We look at all the course materials
- We test out new and adapted sessions.
- We think about the best way to find out if it works with the Norah Fry Research Centre.
- We help write job descriptions for volunteers mentors
- We have made films about our experiences to help people make better services for us



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Sally's film





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Kevin's film





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Islington Mellow Futures

Mellow Futures is part of family of programmes developed to support parents and their children in making good relationships.

- Intensive
- A group approach
- Focus on nurture and relationships
- Reducing external environmental risk

4 components of the group:

- Personal group
- Lunch with the children - Opportunity to nurture the families and chance to Observe
- Shared activities - Giving parents and babies an opportunity to have fun together
- Parenting workshop

Some adaptations made:

- Reducing barriers to parents attending
- Highly visual approach where literacy is not required
- Repetitive 'bite sized' pieces of information
- Using crèche workers with the right skills
- Use of volunteer parent mentors
- Facilitators and mentors trained

Some outcomes for the mums:

- Child taken into care the shortly after the group finished
- Three mothers showed increased ability to work with further support servicers.
- One mother was able to successfully argue for additional independent assessment in court
- Supervision order made instead of adoption
- 4 mothers developed a social network



Evaluation of the Programme

- Interim Evaluation available now
- Final evaluation available in July 2015.
- Cost Benefit Analysis





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Any questions?