Mellow Futures

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

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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
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
Mellow Futures

**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
Mellow Futures

• 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
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.
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
Sally’s film
Kevin’s film
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
Any questions?