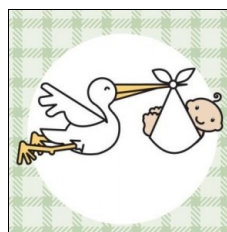


Welcome to the 11th Newsletter!

Since our last newsletter we have had some staffing changes within the Psychological Service. Firstly, Joyce Fullarton, who was Principal Psychologist in the team for over 10 years, retired from her post in September 2014.

and she is now on maternity leave. Finally, Chris Atherton and his wife are expecting in May this year.



In October 2014 we were delighted to announce that Nick Smiley, who was previously a Depute Principal Educational Psychologist in the team, was appointed as the new Principal! Nick has been a member of the team since 2005.

As a result of these recent changes there have been some unavoidable amendments to the Psychologists' school allocation. Details of these are available on our service website, however, if you have any concerns please do not hesitate to contact the service directly. The details are at the end of this newsletter.



Inside this issue:

Baby News...

Since our last newsletter Ainsley McGoldrick gave birth to a beautiful baby boy in September 2014. Christine McGovern is expecting in early February.

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Pre-five Resource Group

The Pre-five Resource Group (PRG) has been meeting since August 2014. The multi agency group meets on a monthly basis, chaired by Janice Collins, Quality Improvement Officer, to consider the additional educational support needs of children aged 0 to 5 years and their families.

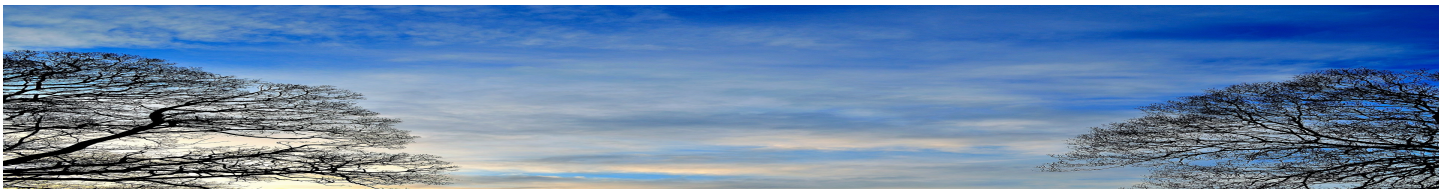
The PRG replaces a number of early years groups and aims to streamline processes, reduce duplication and deliver improved and more equitable practices to effectively meet the needs of young children and their families, in line with GIRFEC.



Dyscalculia Guidelines

Jennifer Hunter, Educational Psychologist, has been involved in a working group to develop guidelines for dyscalculia. The need for dyscalculia guidelines arose from the success of the dyslexia guidelines. The working group included representatives from primary and secondary and Quality Improvement Officer, Clare Creighton. The guidelines are now in draft form and are being taken to the next ASN Coordinators meeting for consultation and feedback.

It's hoped that the guidelines will be launched later this year along with a parallel training programme. We will keep you posted via our service website and the next newsletter.



Symbolising the Environment

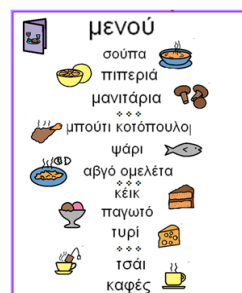
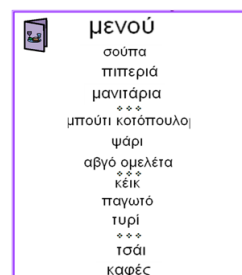
Chris Atherton, Christine McGovern and Siobhan Wilson are evaluating a 'Symbolisation' pilot which is taking place in the Williamwood Cluster primary schools and Carlibar Communication Centre. The pilot involved symbolising the school environment, by providing children with visual cues to support their understanding of verbal and written information.

Symbolising the environment has been shown to be beneficial for children in a range of ways, for example, promoting early communication and literacy skills, being able to follow instructions and supporting transition and organisation skills. Symbolisation of the environment is also thought to further promote inclusion as children who benefit from symbols in a specialist provision will have more access to general and universal symbols in mainstream instead of relying on individualised support. Sandra Miller from the Fife Augmentative and Alternative Communication Team (FAACT) at Fife

Council has been rolling out symbolisation across many schools in Fife which had a positive impact.

The evaluation has consisted of pre and post skills based scores for each child as well as focus groups with the staff and children involved. Baseline data has been collected from the P1/P2 classes that are taking part and post data will be collected at the end to enable us to evaluate the impact of this intervention. Further information will be provided in the next newsletter.

Here are two Greek menus. One uses symbols and the other does not. It highlights how important symbols can be to understanding text.



Group work with Mothers in East Renfrewshire

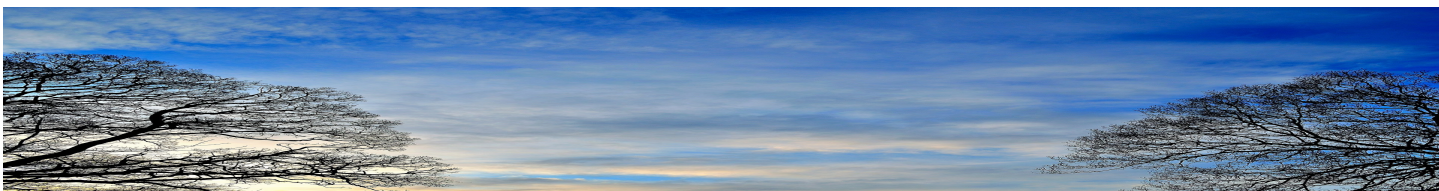
Y o u n g M u m s G r o u p
Eilidh Lanzani and Ainsley McGoldrick worked collaboratively with Pamela McCulley from Young Persons Services to deliver weekly sessions to parents aged 18-24 from April to September 2014. 4-10 parents attended each week and inputs covered a range of relevant topics including resilience to stress, building positive relationships, diet and nutrition and social and emotional skills. Feedback from parents highlighted the informal support group gave them a more positive impression of Educational Psychologists. Furthermore the sessions improved parenting capacity and provided support to the young mothers.

"I liked sharing situations and feelings with others and finding out I'm not the only one"

**ENJOY
YOUR
BABY**

Enjoy Your Baby
Gillian Thorburn worked in partnership with Health Visitors to run 'Enjoy Your Baby' groups. The programme was developed

by Dr Chris Williams, a Consultant Psychiatrist leading CBT. The aim is to improve parental capacity and attachment by improving maternal mental health. The five sessions support the mothers to make small manageable positive changes in their lives, to enjoy parenthood and to prevent onset of post natal depression. Referrals to the group are made through the Health Visitors so mothers are identified at the earliest opportunity.



Bounce Back Evaluation

The Psychological Service has been involved in evaluating the impact of the 'Bounce Back' programme in the Woodfarm cluster. The cluster have been implementing 'Bounce Back' as a whole school approach over the past 18 months.

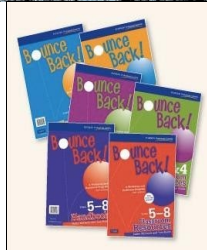
Bounce Back is an evidence-based programme aimed at developing resilience. Pre and post self report questionnaires were carried out

across one year group as they moved from P6-P7. The questionnaires included 'Students Perceived Classroom Connectedness' and 'Protective Resilient Attitudes and Skills Evaluation.'

The data highlighted that children's perceived classroom connectedness significantly improved by the end of the programme.

A focus group carried out with

staff indicated that they felt the children were using more resilient language such as "bad times don't last..." and focus groups with children felt the programme gave them strategies to cope with situations. For more information on the Bounce Back programme visit the website: www.bounceback.com.au/



Barrhead High Nurture Group

Eilidh Lanzani has been working with staff at Barrhead

High to support the development of East Renfrewshire's first secondary nurture group. Nurture groups are widely used in primary schools in the authority and there was a specific need identified for this approach in Barrhead High.

Eilidh worked closely with behaviour and pastoral support staff to identify pupils for a group. The suc-

cess of this approach led to full staff CPD on attachment theory and nurturing approaches. The management team fully embraced the idea which has had a positive impact on behaviour referrals as well as exclusion rates.

The nurture room is set up like a home environment and young people work on social and emotional development. The Boxall Profile is used to assess and track progress of pupils.

Barrhead High now have four groups running from S1-S4. Staff are keen to strengthen the links with parents through the nurture group through inviting them along to mince pies and coffee before the Christmas break and linking with the Parent Council.

Barrhead High are now working towards a nurturing school approach starting with one department using the 'How Nurturing is Our School' resource.

Resilience to Stress CPD

The annual Resilience to Stress training for staff in the authority will be on the 11th September 9.30-4pm with a follow up session on the 13th October 1.30-4pm.

The sessions will explore strategies for reducing and managing stress. They aim to promote resilience both around work place and personal issues. This training is always well evaluated by attendees. If you are interested in attending or for more information please check the CPD website on MyInsider.

Parent Workshops

The Psychological Service run annual parent workshops. This course aims to promote positive parenting and to help parents understand children's (sometimes challenging) behaviour and develop more effective ways of handling a range of situations. It's an opportunity for parents to learn from each other in a friendly, supportive environment.

This year the parent workshops will include preschool, primary,

secondary, Autism, and father-groups. The workshops will take place on Wednesday evenings: 13, 20, 27 May and 3 June from 7-9pm at Carlibar Primary school.

For more information please contact the service directly. The details are on the last page.



"I think it is an excellent course and I commend ERC for providing this as a service to parents."

Mindfulness

Mindfulness can be defined as 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally,' and the practice of 'bringing one's complete attention to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis' (Kabat-Zinn 1994).



It is suggested that many of us carry out our daily activities on 'automatic pilot' and research has been carried out suggesting there are benefits in taking time to pay attention and recognise our bodily functions, such as mindful breathing, to our well being.

Mindfulness practice is increasingly used for both general wellbeing purposes as well as to manage mental and physical conditions, such as anxiety. A number of schools across the UK, including our own Our Lady of the Missions and St Cadoc's Primary schools, are using mindfulness practice with their pupils. Research is showing this can have a positive impact on

children's wellbeing as well as focus and concentration.

Mindfulness involves paying attention using all your senses. This mindful breathing exercise was taken from a mindfulness website: www.freemindfulness.org.

Sit or lie in a comfortable but alert position.

Begin by gently moving your attention onto the process of breathing.

Simply observe each breath as it happens, whether you focus on the rise and fall of your chest or abdomen, without feeling the need to

alter your breath, just observing it as it happens.

As you engage in this exercise you may find that your mind wanders, caught by thoughts or by noises in the room or bodily sensations.

When you notice this happen, know that this is okay, and simply notice the distraction but gently bring your attention back to the breath.

Gently expand your awareness of your breath to the room around you as you bring the exercise to a close. Take a few minutes to think about what your experience was in this exercise and how you feel in the present moment.

For more information on mindfulness or to try out some mindful exercises see the links below.

www.bemindful.co.uk

www.getselfhelp.co.uk/mindfulness

www.youthmindfulness.co.uk

www.freemindfulness.org

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