



# NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 14

SPRING 2010

## COMMITTEE

The Trustees are supported by a strong committee of seven which helps to ensure that the Forum is run well and moves forward into the new decade positively. We look forward to welcoming two new Trustees who will be joining us in February. If you need to contact the Chairman Rosie Novis please ring our Hotline.

## Hotline

Ring the Forum Hotline: **01277 633910** if you want any information about anything mentioned in this newsletter and look at our website [www.billericayparents.com](http://www.billericayparents.com)



## PARENTS AND CARERS SURVEY

Organised by a group of statutory and voluntary agencies including the Forum, in the Basildon District, questionnaires are going out through all local schools and the Children's Centres to all parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-19 years in the area. Your views are very important and will help in the provision of services that suit your needs. Do please take some time to complete the survey. It really is important! Please ask our Hotline if you have not had one yet.

# This Term's Courses

**Booking Essential - bookings now being taken for the following courses:**

0-6 years	Wednesday evenings	Starts Jan 27th	7.45-9.45pm	Dizzy Ducks Nursery Perry Street
0-6 years	Thursday mornings with crèche	Starts Jan 28th	9.30-11.30am	Queens Park Community Church
0-6 years	Thursday evenings	Starts Jan 28th	7.45-9.45pm	Queens Park Community Church
7-11 years	Thursday mornings	Starts Feb 25th	9.30-11.30am	Sunnymede Infant School
0-6 years	Wednesday mornings with crèche	Starts Feb 24th	9.30-11.30am	Hilltop Infant School Wickford

10-14 years Monday evenings Starts March 1st 6.00-8.30pm Mayflower High School  
*This is a Strengthening Families course run jointly by BPF and the local TASC team. Both parents and young people attend this course and it aims to improve family relationships. See article in this newsletter*

All courses are free and usually last 5 weeks, but the 10 - 14 yrs course will last for 7 weeks

Open to all parents, carers and others

Interested? Booking essential - Ring our Hotline on 01277 633910 for more information

## SPRING OPEN MEETING

# CYBER-BULLYING

## A workshop for parents

Tues. March 23rd • 7.30pm • Queen's Park Community Church



**A session for parents only, to raise your awareness about how cyber-bullying differs from other forms of bullying and to increase your confidence in supporting your child if they are affected by it.**

*Note: this session is not suitable for children or young people*

*The Charity "Beat Bullying" has just published its report "Virtual Violence- Protecting Children from Cyberbullying" and it shows that a third of children will suffer from cyberbullying and 1 in 13 will suffer prolonged cyberbullying.*

**To book a place ring our hotline: 01277 633910**

# Young Girls Under Pressure to Diet

**L**ast summer, on what had to be the hottest day of the year, my 8 year old daughter insisted upon remaining clad in her jeans and T-shirts whilst she had her friends over to play.

Her friends all splashed about in the paddling pool, whilst she remained in the shade, sweltering. I first put it down to a squabble, but further delving revealed that one of the girls had commented that her tummy stuck out. My heart sank! She is a tiny little girl, with no tummy to mention, let alone one that stuck out, but the seed had been sown!

## **SHE REFUSED DESSERTS AND ICE CREAMS**

For a week she refused desserts and ice creams and needed constant reassurance about her body - this was not the behaviour that I had envisaged from an 8 year old, especially from one with a mother who clearly didn't watch her weight religiously!

Thankfully the episode was short lived and she was soon back to normal, but it has made me very aware of how vulnerable our children are and the consequences of throw away comments.

A lot is written about the dangers of the 'Hannah Montana' figures, with their perfect lives, bodies and faces, but the jury's out on whether they are really any more of a threat than cartoon figures.

## **MOTHERS ARE NOT ACCEPTING OF THEIR OWN BODIES**

A recent newspaper article claimed that mums who constantly dieted are twice as likely to have a daughter with an eating disorder. This is put down to the fact that mothers who are not accepting of their own bodies and constantly strive for perfection are copied by their daughters.

Harsh criticism indeed and a no win situation for parents, who are also being bombarded with facts about the need for a healthy lifestyle for families.

## **I EMPHASISED THAT SHE WAS HEALTHY**

With my daughter I emphasized that she was healthy and that her body was a natural shape. We looked at a book showing the internal organs and talked about what a lot there was to squash into a small space and it was no wonder that a tummy was a bit rounded sometimes.

I have no idea on whether an expert would have handled it the same way, but it seemed to do the trick for her. The upside for me is that a diet can obviously never again be on my list of New Year's Resolutions and anyone who says that it never has been anyway is just being mean!

*Research at Bristol University has shown that dieting by teenage girls could cause damage to their bones. Teenage girls dieting to reach "size zero" may be putting their bones at risk because fat mass plays an important role in building bone. A study has warned that the pressure to be thin could cause long-term harm to their skeletons.*

## **Why Let Drink Decide?**

A campaign to encourage parents to talk to their children earlier about alcohol is being set up by the Department for Schools, Children and Families. Research has shown that parents don't see alcohol as one of their 'priority' concerns and are, therefore, far less likely to talk about it with children compared to other issues.

Alcohol does, however, increase the risk and severity of other things happening that we know parents (and young people) do worry about such as violence, unwanted pregnancy, road traffic accidents. To highlight the risks and dangers of alcohol to parents and young people, a new awareness campaign, 'Why Let Drink Decide?' is being launched and will appear in print, TV, radio and online

A researcher, employed by the DSCF is looking for case studies, which she hopes will illustrate the consequences of alcohol by finding parents/families who think it's important to talk to their kids about it.

These families may have found themselves in a bad situation as a result of alcohol, but they are also looking to speak to families who haven't suffered a negative impact from alcohol, but feel that educating their children is important anyway. They are not necessarily after hard hitting stories.

If you would be interested in being involved in this project please ring soon: Lucy Hatherall - Case Study Researcher at Red Consultancy on 07739486651

## *Parentchannel.tv*

Parentchannel.tv is an exciting new online service that has been launched by Parenting UK and partners, as part of the Parent Know How Innovation Fund.

The Forum is pleased that it has been selected as one of six groups from across the country who will form a virtual community in accessing this new site. A group of fifteen parents will share views on the videos, ease of use of the site and act as a sounding board for prioritising topics. Five members of our group attended the launch of the project in London on January 13th.

The new website offers parents short and engaging videos about problems they may face as parents. It provides a new way of supporting parents and carers. The videos are designed for parents with children from the ages of 5-19 and range across three main categories of learning, behaviour and well-being. Through the website and videos, parents will be offered practical advice delivered by parents and experts combined with signposting to other resources and organisations.

We recommend that you take a look at this exciting new site [www.parentchannel.tv](http://www.parentchannel.tv) and would be delighted to hear your views.

Sue Berelowitz, Deputy Children's Commissioner for England speaking at the launch of Parentchannel.tv said that the outcomes of three major recent research programmes showed that the quality of parenting that a child receives is vital in determining its academic success and future development, regardless of social or economic background.



# Kids in Museums

Children's Secretary Ed Balls has offered new charity Kids in Museums £25,000 to fund research into making museums more family friendly.

In an effort to make museums more interactive and accessible to a wider range of families, the charity has published a 20-point manifesto which questions the idea of the traditional 'family ticket' aimed at two adults and two children. They have also raised the questions of pushchair storage and the price and quality of gift shop goods and cafeteria menus.

Kids in Museums will ask families about their experiences of museum trips, publishing the results of their survey in March. Their proposal to museums will include suggestions for a more flexible family ticket that could include families of different shapes and sizes, taking single parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and other carers into account. [www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk](http://www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk)

## STRENGTHENING FAMILIES COURSES

The Forum is working in partnership with the local Team around the School, Child and Community to deliver these new courses which are running across Essex.

The Strengthening Families course is for all families with young people aged between 10 and 14 years of age to help prepare them for their teenage years. The seven week course is aimed at strengthening the parent/carer child relationship and helping reduce behavioural problems in adolescence. Through discussions, fun games and activities, families solve problems together, learn about rules and consequences and explore ways to show love, support and strengthening of family communication. The programme is unique in the way it works in bringing parents and children together. Look at the website: <http://www.mystrongfamily.org> and if you are interested in joining a course phone our Hotline.

### Book Review

## Sensational Baby Sleep Plan

by Alison Scott-Wright

Pub: Bantam Press (8 Jan 2010) ~ £6.59 from Amazon  
ISBN-10: 0593062817 or ISBN-13: 978-0593062814

Sleep is something that new parents want, both for themselves and their newborn babies. This book takes the stress and tension out of those early weeks, and offers a plan that ensures your baby sleeps soundly during the day, and for a full 12 hours during the night from around 8-10 weeks, without the need for night feeds. It gives parents realistic, easy to follow advice and guidance and is packed with tips, hints and reminders, case studies, at-a-glance charts and a daily journal to help you keep track of your baby's progress. "The Sensational Baby Sleep Plan" is a step-by-step, must-have manual for stress-free parenting.

From the Daily Telegraph article 'How the Magic Sleep Fairy cured my baby's insomnia - and saved my sanity' search on <http://www.telegraph.co.uk> for 'magic sleep fairy'

### Course Bookings Secretary:

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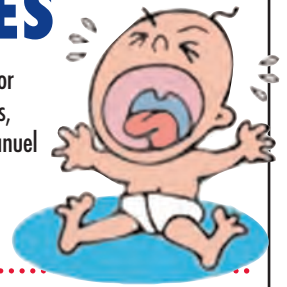
# NOTICE BOARD

## TiME

TiME is a free, friendly drop-in session for mums and babies aged about 6 weeks to 6 months that is run by Billericay Parents Forum in partnership with Billericay Health Visitors and Billericay Children's Centre and is held at Emmanuel Church Rooms, Laindon Road, Billericay on every 2nd & 4th Wednesday in each month from 1.00 - 2.30pm. Do come and join us!

## GASTROBABES

The venue for Gastrobabes, the support group for parents of babies with gastro-intestinal problems, has been changed. They will now meet at Emmanuel Church, Laindon Road on the 3rd Thursday in each month from 2.30 - 4pm For more information ring Natasha on 07748 145224



## TEA ON TUESDAYS

Queens Park Community Church

Next Session: Tuesday Feb. 2nd, 1pm - 2.30pm

Drop-in to talk with others about parenting issues that affect you about your family:

First Tuesday in each month

February 2nd - Toddler Tantrums

March 2nd - for parents who have been on a course this term and want to meet up and chat. For more details ring our Hotline.



## CHILDREN'S CENTRE

The Children's Centre is looking for parents representation on their Advisory Board, Partnership Group and also to form a 'Friends of Billericay CC' group. The groups are all very friendly and would really welcome you joining. Anyone interested please ring our Hotline.



## MATERNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Basildon & Thurrock Maternity Services Liaison Committee has invited parents from Billericay to join their committee. The group meets bi-monthly and the venue alternates between the hospital and Children's Centres in the District. The MSLC is a multi-disciplinary forum, bringing together the different professions involved in maternity care and user representatives. Anyone interested please ring our Hotline.



<http://www.nct.org.uk/home>

For details of NCT events locally, please go to:  
<http://www.nct.org.uk/in-your-area/basildon/events>