

## Yogabugs

Good fun for the children who are led through creative stories and exciting adventures that stimulate their imagination and help to maintain their natural flexibility whilst enjoying a variety of safe postures. Each course is for 2-5 year olds with their parents/carers.

## Play and Stay

This is a great opportunity for parents and carers to spend quality time with their children and enjoy playing together in a fun and safe environment. Children's Centre workers set up a range of different activities, both indoor and out, providing opportunities for learning and development through play. Activities are aimed at children between 0-5 years therefore parents are needed to supervise their children at all times. During these sessions there is an opportunity for children to take part in messy play activities (aprons are provided for children but we do advise on not wearing 'best' clothes). A healthy snack is provided for the children and the sessions end with story/singing activities.



## Under 1s

Parents and carers of children aged under one year are thoroughly enjoying our drop in session. Children's Centre staff organise and lead and occasionally guest visitors also attend. The session also includes messy play activities. "Despite appearances, messy play can make an enormous contribution to babies' and young children's cognitive and creative development"-Early years foundation stage.

## Polish Group

A support group for the local Polish community will be run at The BECC from the beginning of the summer term. The session will take place on the 1st Thursday of every month from 10-11.30am

## Young mums group

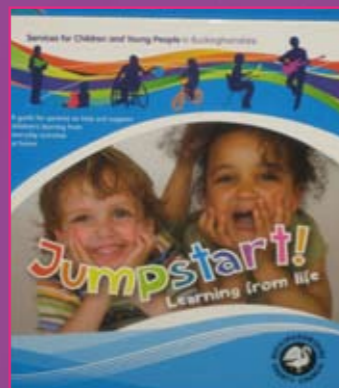
Calling all young mums!!

The BECC is hosting a group for young mums. The group will offer a place to meet up with friends and also the opportunity to get support and advice from the Children Centre staff. There is also the added bonus of a free lunch in our café for all the mummies that attend

## Jumpstart

This is a really exciting new programme to guide parents to help and support children's learning from everyday activities at home. This will be held over 4 sessions and every parent will get a folder to keep. Some of the topics covered:-

Rise and Shine  
Ready Steady Cook / Time to Eat  
Helping Hands / It's Playtime  
Storytime / Time for TV?  
Time to Play  
Lets Explore! / How does your Garden Grow?  
Night Night Sleep Tight!



[www.hertsmere-children.co.uk](http://www.hertsmere-children.co.uk)



To contact Hertsmere Leisure's Children's Centres head office  
please ring: 020 8386 4038

Hertsmere Leisure is a registered charity. Charity no: 1093653



# Newsletter Spring / Summer 2009

## Great news Hertsmere Leisure will be opening seven new Sure Start Children's Centres in the following areas:-

**South Mimms & Potters Bar West - Potters Bar Furzefield Ward**

**Shenley - Shenley Ward**

**Aldenham & Radlett - Aldenham West Ward / Aldenham East Ward**

**Bushey - Bushey St James Ward / Bushey North Ward**

**Bushey Heath - Bushey Heath Ward / Bushey Park Ward**

**Abbots Langley - Abbots Langley Ward**

**Park Street & St Stephens (covering Bricket Wood & Chiswell Green) - Park Street Ward / St Steven Ward**

The actual locations of the new Centres is not confirmed but as soon as they are confirmed we will be letting everyone know.

## What is a Children's Centre

Sure Start Children's Centres are a 'one-stop shop' for children under five and their families, where skilled staff are on hand to give help and advice.

### You can go there for:

- Health advice
- Parenting and family support
- Play sessions and advice on childcare
- Help to get a job or training
- A place to meet other parents

Thousands of mums, dads, carers and children across the country are already enjoying the benefits. **Come and join us!**

## What will my local Children's Centre look like?

Every Centre will be different but you can expect to see a small office with a small meeting area for training and small groups. All activities for larger groups will be held in Community Venues spread around each Children's Centre area to ensure that the majority of people will have easy access to our services.



Children taking part in our Consultation

## Consultation

Hertsmere Leisure in partnership with Opportunity Links have been in the process of carrying out a consultation for the first five Centres on the list which is well under way. Questionnaires have been circulated and received and a number of Focus groups of parents, carers and Community Groups have taken place. We have asked Lydia, our Qualified Teacher to feed back on her involvement in the part of the consultation which involved working with the researcher from Opportunity Links:-

## Consultation with Children

This work was carried out with children in nursery settings in the Hertsmere area. The process is known as the "Mosaic" approach and describes the process of piecing together information gathered in a variety of different ways from children.

By working with children it is possible to learn from their experiences and to use this information, as well as information gathered from their families, to develop the services which will be offered in our new Children's Centres coming to Hertsmere.

Three nursery settings agreed to take part in the consultation in Radlett, Shenley and Bushey.



## The process involved:-

Finding out about the children's views and their feelings about nursery and their home and the wider environment.

Observations on the children whilst they were accessing activities, encouraging the children to express their likes and dislikes creatively through their drawings, taking home a diary sheet to record activities outside the home, friends, and the things they like at home. Two groups were given disposable cameras to use with their family to take photographs



of favourite things. Once the photographs and diaries were complete the research team returned to the nurseries to talk to the children about their observations.

The children thoroughly enjoyed participating in the activities provided by the research team and some of the children's responses to questions asked include

"I need to write my name, I am going to big school and I need to learn everything!" and

"I just want a swimming pool at my nursery".

Most children wanted the researchers to leave the shiny, glitter pens at nursery for them to keep. One little girl said:

"I coloured these yellow and this green, then I cut this one out and stuck it on here and I'm taking it home today!"

## How will you hear about the findings of the Consultation?

Look on our website after the middle of May to see the full report from the Consultation for the 5 new areas.



## Can I be involved in the Consultation for the areas of Abbots Langley and Park Street / St Stevens?

You certainly can – we will be having Focus Groups with Parents (including working Parents), Carers, Professionals and Special interest Groups. Also there will be an opportunity for children to take part with their parents.

Questionnaires will be available to be completed by hand and an online questionnaire will be available via our website from 27th April for 3 weeks.

If you would like to participate in a group please contact:

Anne Frisch, Partnership Coordinator  
The BECC, Borehamwood  
on 020 8386 4038



## What will it cost me to attend Children's Centre Activities?

Hertsmere Leisure Children's Centres offer **FREE** or very low cost services to all parents.

## What are we doing now?

At the moment parents are accessing our Centres, The BECC covering the two Children's Centre areas of Borehamwood South and Borehamwood North & Elstree and PB1 for Potters Bar East



## Toy Library

More and more parents are joining every week and we now have 129 members covering The BECC and PB1 Children's Centres.



'The Toy Library is a new concept for me in particular but it is wonderful. It's a process of saving money on new expensive toys and at the same time have the affordability of renting new toys from here.'

- Nilu Dutta

The quality of toys is another thing people noticed and they are mentioning this every time they hire a toy. Now that the catalogue is on line families are saying that makes choosing easier. People using the toy library vary from parents to carers to childminders and foster carers. I love using the toy library. There are so many nice toys for my baby and my 4 year old to choose from and it works out more cost effective for me because like all children they get bored of the toys quickly, so I just change them for new ones!

There is a great selection of educational toys available and many people are taking advantage of our Home Delivery service.

"I don't know how I managed before the toy library" - Sheryl, mum of Naomi (10 months) and Cameron (4 years)

"Noah (2) loves coming to the toy library. It makes his week!" - Julie (Nanny)

## What do Children's Centre workers do?

Ours days are mad, busy and fun-filled and no two days are the same.

Between us all this is what we do:-

Travelling to Community Venues - Moving things - Setting up - Pulling down - Planning sessions - Working with families in the Community -Training - Working with Health Visitors and Community Nursery Nurses - Cleaning toys & equipment - Promotion at Community events - Evaluating sessions - Support of local Child Minders - Team Meetings - Involvement in Autism Support group - Distribution of newsletters and programmes -

Displays - Meeting new parents and children in our Cafés & Paperwork!

Between us we cover:-

- Play & Stay
- Baby Massage
- Cooking with Parents and Children
- Facilitating Parenting classes
- Crèche
- Under 1's group
- Baby Clinic welcome
- Toy Library
- Top Tots
- Jumpstart
- Rhythm & Rhyme
- Messy & Creative Play
- Games in the Park & Garden
- Celebrations
- Fathers events

"It's crazy!"

## 123 Cook with Me

"I thought this course was a very good introduction to food. Lewis really enjoyed being able to cut up food himself and washing up the utensils after!

Thank you Christina (Lewis's Mum)

123 Cook with me made me realise how much my 2½ year old could actually do in the kitchen. Peelers beware! It is a great way to introduce young children to social cooking and eating Rachel (Mum of William & Ben)



## Volunteering opportunities

Home-Start

Providing independent practical emotional support for your families under stress.



If you have parenting experience, good listening skills and understand confidentiality then you may be interested in becoming a Home-Start volunteer. Volunteers of all ages, backgrounds and gender are welcome.

If you would like to work in Bushey or Abbots Langley please contact Home-Start Watford & Three Rivers on **01923 248 010**

If you are interested to work for Home-Start Borehamwood & District please phone:

**020 8953 5082**

## Breastfeeding Training



The Breastfeeding Network (BfN) are offering a FREE course to train mothers to become BfN Helpers.

The training is over a 12-week period and is expensive. It is an accredited Open College Network qualification and is in line with standards set by UNICEF Baby Friendly Initiative.

Hertsmere Leisure Children's Centres will pay for some mums to undertake this training in order to become volunteers with the BfN to give Peer Support to nursing mothers. We are looking into offering breastfeeding support at all of our Centres in the future.

If you are interested in undertaking this training please contact:-

Anne Frisch, Partnership Coordinator  
The BECC, Borehamwood  
on 020 8386 4038



## Worknet courses

For parents and carers of children aged 0-5 living in Hertsmere and wishing to improve their IT skills with a view to returning to work we have FREE courses available at The BECC and PB1 Children's Centres.

To find out more please ring Worknet on  
**020 8236 7600**