

# EVALUATION REPORT

The Step-by-Step Project

PARENTING SUPPORT IN MODERN FAMILIES

Prepared by Future Communities Ltd

Company number: 05698273



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*Izabella – stress management facilitator*

## **1. Context – Why was the project needed?**

The correct type of parental support is increasingly becoming recognised as a determining factor in children's receptiveness to learn and to behave well. Schools enter into an arrangement with the parents of the children enrolled in their schools to help enable children reach their full potential. As part of this arrangement schools provide parenting support.

In a national context the OFSTED Framework from 2009 highlights the specific standards that schools are measured on relating to parents, which the Step-By-Step project aimed to contribute to:

- The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers
- The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being
- The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion

More parents are encountering transitions in family life, such as a dramatic increase in parental break-up, step families and an increase in work pressure. Each change affects family relationships and ultimately children's development.

This project's aim is to develop more positive relationships between parents and children at an earlier stage to prevent serious issues later. Coaching for parents differs from other traditional parenting interventions in that coaches are not claiming to be parenting experts, telling parents they are doing something wrong.

The coaching approach focuses on the use of powerful questions to enable parents to understand themselves and their children better; a total belief in parents' ability to succeed; asking instead of telling; the idea that parents have the solutions to their problems within them, and that by owning their own solutions they will be more likely to implement them.

Parent coaching has not only proved to be beneficial for child development but also within education and for academic achievements. Even small changes in parents' behaviour or speech patterns can have a significant impact on children's performance and motivation, self-esteem and confidence.

Parent coaching gives parents essential knowledge and understanding of how and why their children react the way they do, and provides them with tools and strategies to support their children as they grow.

### Evidence of project need:

A report published in 2012 by Active Horizons, a minority led charity based in the Belvedere area reported that nearly 70% of the young BME people interviewed said:

- They lacked parental and family role models and mentors.
- Most had loose bonds with their parents because they are not involved in what they do.
- They were worried about the disciplinary measures often taken by parents.

The London Poverty Profile 2013 shows:

- In some parts of the target area child poverty is high, including 26% in Thamesmead East and 22% in Belvedere wards.
- 21% of children have a low level of educational development by the age of 5.
- An increase in teenage pregnancy above the England average 2008-10

The Partnerships' Manager for the Bexley Schools Partnership identified a need for this project. The Partnerships' Manager consulted stakeholders at several local Primary schools and many of them have indicated that there is a strong need for support in this area.

The project trainers have previously worked on other parenting programmes in the area, including one at nearby Alexander McLeod primary school in Abbey Wood. The parents were consulted about the programme and agreed that there was a further need for this and similar programmes in the area.

Future Communities is a community engagement and consultation organisation with a mission to bring people and communities together, develop and support community initiatives, projects and proposals, build more cohesive communities and increase social capital, utilise new technology for the benefit of local communities and link neighbourhood development, diverse local communities and community groups

Future Communities achieves this by helping communities to use new technology to their advantage, building sustainable communities - Supporting the organisations and groups working in and with communities so they can carry on their vital work, working with other partners to engage with the community at borough wide and neighbourhood level, offering training, consultancy, community development, research, partnership and project management services in order to promote community cohesion and engagement and actively engaging the community in the development and delivery of these services.





## **2. Aims and Benefits of the Project**

People deserve to have better chances in life. The aim of the project was to deliver the opportunity for people in the local community to access the parenting programme with elements of stress management & well-being strategies, to help them to develop new skills and improve/refine the existing ones.

Healthier, happier and more active people create a solid foundation for healthier communities and for better relationships within those communities. The aim of the project was to work with parents to strengthen relationships with their children and to provide clear benefits:

### For the schools & community groups:

- Children become less disruptive and more manageable in the classroom
- Children are able to concentrate for longer and learn better
- Children are better able to socialise

### For Parents:

- To grow in confidence as parents
- To know how to parent children to foster self-esteem and confidence
- To know what is best practice in parenting
- To develop communication skills appropriate to managing children in the home

Additional benefits to parents include the following:

- Gaining greater family unity
- Enjoying greater choice in their parenting skills
- Managing children more effectively
- Building self-esteem in others
- Developing self-confidence
- Achieving greater happiness for themselves and their families
- Developing healthier lifestyle habits
- Learning strategies to handle stress
- Gaining a better understanding how our food choices affect our behaviour & well-being

### **3. Objectives and Activities**

#### Objectives:

To offer a parenting programme to parents in the borough of Bexley that reflects the needs of modern-day families by understanding that family forms can be various and the needs of modern parents to manage situations are new to this generation.

This project supported the emotional well-being and communication skills of up to 100 parents within a cluster of schools and local community groups.

#### Activities involved:

There were four types of work undertaken in this project:

- 1) Parenting courses and work-groups
- 2) Stress management & well-being sessions
- 3) Step-parenting and blended family advice
- 4) 1-2-1 coaching/counselling



The project delivered:

- 4 five-week parenting courses
- 6 individual counselling and well-being sessions
- 6 group stress management and wellbeing workshops
- 1 step-parenting session

The step-parenting programme took place during a parenting open day held at the school and organised by the PTA. The event was a mix of entertainment for families and education. Families were invited to talk and learn. There were three members of our team ready to talk and counsel extended and re-integrating families. In total 11 people benefitted from the Be Step Wise stall.

Each parenting and stress management session was of two hours' duration. The time of day for sessions was either morning, after drop-off or afternoon, before pick-up from the schools.

Homework was given between sessions.

Email and telephone support, as appropriate, took place with the parent liaison officer of each school.

The programme was evaluated with a post programme evaluation.





#### **4. Content of the programme**

Content of Parenting sessions:

##### Session One – Communication

1. Listening with a difference – Encouraging children to talk (when it goes wrong, super-silence and active listening)
2. How to communicate with your children in a constructive way & the power of hypnotic messages (different talking styles, how does the child feel)
3. How to get your children to listen to instructions and the 'I Care' quiz
4. Descriptive praise and recognition

##### Session Two - Discipline

1. Encouraging good behaviour: Boundaries and House Rules
2. Dealing with misbehaviour vs behaviour we don't like: Punishment, choices & consequences and keeping control

##### Session Three - Learning

1. How to help with homework – even when we don't know all the answers + homework without tantrums
2. Encouraging story-telling
3. 10 ways to make learning fun



## Session Four – Building self-esteem and confidence

1. When your child needs more closeness and support: Showing them that you love them, how to spot when your child needs support
2. When your child needs more independence: Giving your children responsibility in a safe way, helping your children cope with challenges



## **Content of Stress Management and Well-being workshops:**

### What is STRESS?

1. What are the main reasons for people getting stressed? - identify the group's top 3 reasons.
2. Are we stressed or are we worried?
3. Six mistakes of Men by Cicero

### How to deal with stress in different life situations?

1. What people in the group are already doing?
2. What are the other popular solutions?

### Tips on handling stress

1. Recognise & identify the problem
2. Change your state, using NLP & breathing techniques
3. Focus on solutions, not the problem
4. Shift your attitude and mindset - the power of gratitude and equilibrium in life
5. Hydrate - the importance of water
6. Eat smart - how what and when we eat supports our results

### Top tips for long term health & wellbeing

1. What the body needs?
2. 3 Keys to Optimum Wellness
3. The importance of breakfast
4. Healthy Active Lifestyle



## 5. Outputs and Achievement Data

### Evaluation data from the participants:

Below there are questions that participants of the parental programme were asked at the end of each session.

The responses show that the course made a difference to all participants. There is also a clear trend showing an increased benefit for the participants as the programme progressed.

Below there are the results in actual numbers and percentages for each question asked in the evaluation forms:

Will you and your family have benefitted from the session?

	1 <sup>st</sup> Wk.	1 <sup>st</sup> Wk. %	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wk.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wk. %	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wk.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wk. %	4 <sup>th</sup> Wk.	4 <sup>th</sup> Wk. %	5 <sup>th</sup> Wk.	5 <sup>th</sup> Wk. %
Agree	30	81	24	89	26	100	24	96	23	100
Neither agree or disagree	6	16	0				1	4		
Disagree			0							
Unanswered	1	3	3	11						

Will your friends and neighbourhood have benefitted from the session?

	1 <sup>st</sup> Wk.	1 <sup>st</sup> Wk. %	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wk.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wk. %	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wk.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wk. %	4 <sup>th</sup> Wk.	4 <sup>th</sup> Wk. %	5 <sup>th</sup> Wk.	5 <sup>th</sup> Wk. %
Agree	17	65	15	58	19	73	17	68	16	70
Neither agree or disagree			8	31	4	15	4	16	4	17
Disagree					1	4	3	12	3	13
Unanswered	9	34	3	11	2	8	1	4		

Will the school and your community have benefitted from the session?

	1 <sup>st</sup> Wk.	1 <sup>st</sup> Wk. %	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wk.	2 <sup>nd</sup> Wk. %	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wk.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Wk. %	4 <sup>th</sup> Wk.	4 <sup>th</sup> Wk. %	5 <sup>th</sup> Wk.	5 <sup>th</sup> Wk. %
Agree	23	63	12	46	22	84	20	80	16	70
Neither agree or disagree	6	16	9	34	3	11	4	16	3	13
Disagree										
Unanswered	7	19	5	19	1	4	1	4	4	17

Parents commented that:

“This has been a very exciting time learning about parenting because the whole community will benefit from it. Happy parents make happy children and happy families mean happy country”.

“This session really impacted me and my parenting. It also brought us together as parents. I believe the programme will have an impact beyond the room where it took place but also in the school and the community. Excellent!

“Very interesting, nice to hear other parents’ perspectives on the same issues”.

“An encouraging session that must benefit all”.

Below there is further data demonstrating the difference made to participants in the parenting courses and work-groups and 1-2-1 coaching/counselling:

The participants were asked - Would the parenting work make a difference to something they did?

67% in week 1, 92% in week 2, 92% in week 3, 91% in week 4 and 96% in week 5 said it ‘yes’ it would.

Parents said: “I feel more empowered each week”; “Lovely practical ideas that build a strong family”; “It’s a very successful session which



inspired us to educate our children and change the family atmosphere"; "It's a very good platform for parents to improve their parenthood. Very good organisation. Thanks a lot".

They were asked – Had they found the session useful?

91% in week 1, 100% in week 2, 100% in week 3, 100% in week 4 and 100% in week 5 said 'yes'.

Parents said "This session really helped me to reflect and identified some of the triggers in regards to my behaviours and reactions"; "Was very useful for me at least to know my child better"; "Very good sharing strategies, facts and ideas! Very helpful"; "How to build friendship with my children and improve communication"; "Useful gaining techniques on communication".

"Thank you to you both, Alison and Agnes for your time, knowledge and help"; "Have learned a lot today especially the praise and communication"; "Great facilitators, knowledgeable and friendly. It's been great".

They were asked – Had they felt their emotional well-being had improved?

63% in week 1, 96% in week 2, 85% in week 3, 92% in week 4 and 83% in week 5 said 'yes'

Parent's said: "This programme has been helpful personally to me in relating at home..... My life is much more better"; "I feel so empowered and more in control of myself, my children and my home"; "This programme really helped me reflect on myself as a parent, but also to understand why we behave the way we behave".

Here some comments from parents after Stress Management & Well-being sessions:

"Excellent presentation with lots of useful insights"; "Whole session very informative"; "Very thought provoking"; "Thank you, very informative. I will try harder"; "Thoroughly enjoyed it but would possibly like the session longer..."

"Very enthusiastic & knowledgeable presenter. Really enjoyed the session"; "A well presented presentation full of important information".

## **6. Is the project making a difference and meeting local need?**

The project has clearly made a difference to those parents who took the time to participate in it, based on evaluation forms.

As a result, this project made a substantial difference to the quality of life for the children, young people and families who received the service and gave them a better chance in life by addressing personal health & well-being issues before they became more serious and by supporting them to become healthier more active people, growing up in a healthier more sustainable community.

Future Communities have received further demand from parents and teachers who wish to take part in any future courses.

## **7. What has worked well?**

Co-operation worked well between all the stakeholders. Future Communities, the schools and the facilitators developed a co-operative working relationship that meant the entire project ran smoothly.

The co-operation between the collaborators meant that the project ran to time with no problems. The first parenting programme ran after half-term in the Autumn, which meant that we were able to deliver the programme in a timely fashion throughout the academic year.

We engaged well with Head Teachers, Teachers, Parental coordinators and community groups – they were all supporting and promoting our courses.

The Head teachers were welcoming and inclusive. They made personal efforts to contact certain parents and welcome us in by introducing us personally at the coffee mornings and talking to people at the school gates with the facilitators or on the facilitator's behalf. Community groups helped to publicise and promote the project.

There were opportunities to debrief after sessions between the facilitators, and between the facilitators and the schools and community groups.

Regular meetings were held with Future Communities and the facilitators. In this way there was proper planning and anticipation for next steps.

We also engaged well with the parents who attended the sessions and courses, and the output and achievement data demonstrate that the interventions made a significant difference to the parents.

Parents told us themselves that the content of the sessions had made, sometimes, transformational differences to their lives in the family. All matters were dealt with in a courteous, timely and appreciative fashion which meant there was a feeling of good intention that permeated the project.

## **8. What the project could have done better**

Ways to improve could include:

- Improved communication and marketing to parents
- Communicating the benefits clearly and confidently.
- Drawing from larger audiences, perhaps working with two schools at once
- Producing some multi-media presentation so parents can understand exactly what they are engaging in.
- Running programmes for people in full time work, would mean accommodating different times, e.g. evenings
- Introduce parents to the programme during parents meetings
- Create incentives/recognition for parents who attend sessions, something that will benefit the schools and community groups too at the same time.
- Make sure conflicting events and workshops are not being run at the same time in school.

Should we receive more funding we could run courses that are relevant to the government's agenda, including:

- Tackling obesity in young people
- Supporting parents with radicalisation issues
- E-safety and child exploitation
- Identity issues for children of immigrants
- Families in transition; single, blended and single-sex parenting

## **9. Conclusion**

The parenting support project in modern families has been successful. The success means the project was delivered within budget and it has met its objectives on all counts, namely:

- 1) The Project was delivered on time, the team started as soon as the commencement day was set and delivery was contained to comfortably within the School academic year as planned. Review dates and progress checks were set and kept to. Report writing took place over the final

two months of July / August.

2) The Project addressed each of the topics in full. Parenting courses of five weeks duration were run, emotional well-being sessions were held, stress management workshops took place, individual counselling sessions were taken up.

3) The project met its criteria for the number of people who would benefit. Over 100 people benefitted from the programme.

4) The parents benefitted from the programme shown by their gratefulness for what they had been able to change for the better in their lives and families, as described on the feedback evaluation forms.

5) The schools have benefitted by having been able to offer support to parents in their parenting, and saw it as a gift from the start.

6) The communities have benefitted as the parents who attended will have made a direct positive difference to their communities applying/ implementing the skills and knowledge learned with their families and friends, so making incremental, but important differences to the fabric of our society.

7) It would be our recommendation that further projects of this nature were supported and encouraged.



*Agnes and Alison – parenting facilitators*