



The first 3 years

Off to a good start

*"Together may we give our
children the roots to grow
and the wings to fly"*



Foreword

The early years of a child's life are very important for later health, well-being and development. One of the main reasons is how fast our brain grows, starting before birth and continuing into early childhood. Although the brain grows so fast in the early years, it continues to develop and change into adulthood. The first 3 years can build a foundation for future learning, health and life success.

How well a brain develops depends on many factors in addition to genes, such as:

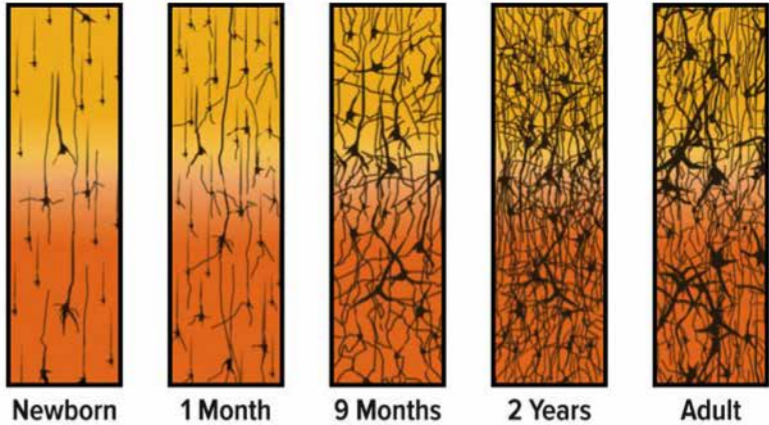
- Proper nutrition starting in pregnancy and beyond.
- Exposure to toxins or infections.
- The child's experiences with other people and the world.
- Nurturing and responsive care.

The right care for children, starting before birth and continuing through childhood, will help their brain grow well and help them reach their full potential. Cherish Sure Start is here to help you as parents and carers to support your child, to have a healthy start.

Children are born ready to learn, and have many skills to learn over many years. Parents and other caregivers can support healthy brain growth by speaking to, playing with, and caring for their child. Children learn best when parents take

turns when talking and playing, and build on their child's skills and interests. Nurturing a child by understanding their needs and responding sensitively helps to protect children's brains from stress. Speaking with children and sharing books, stories and songs, will help develop your child's language and communication, which puts them on a path towards learning and succeeding in school.

Talking, reading, and playing can stimulate brain growth. Ensuring that parents, caregivers, and early childhood care providers have the resources and skills to provide safe, stable, nurturing, and stimulating care, is an important public health goal.



Source: Adapted from Corel, J.L. The postnatal development of the human cerebral cortex. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 1975

What is Sure Start?

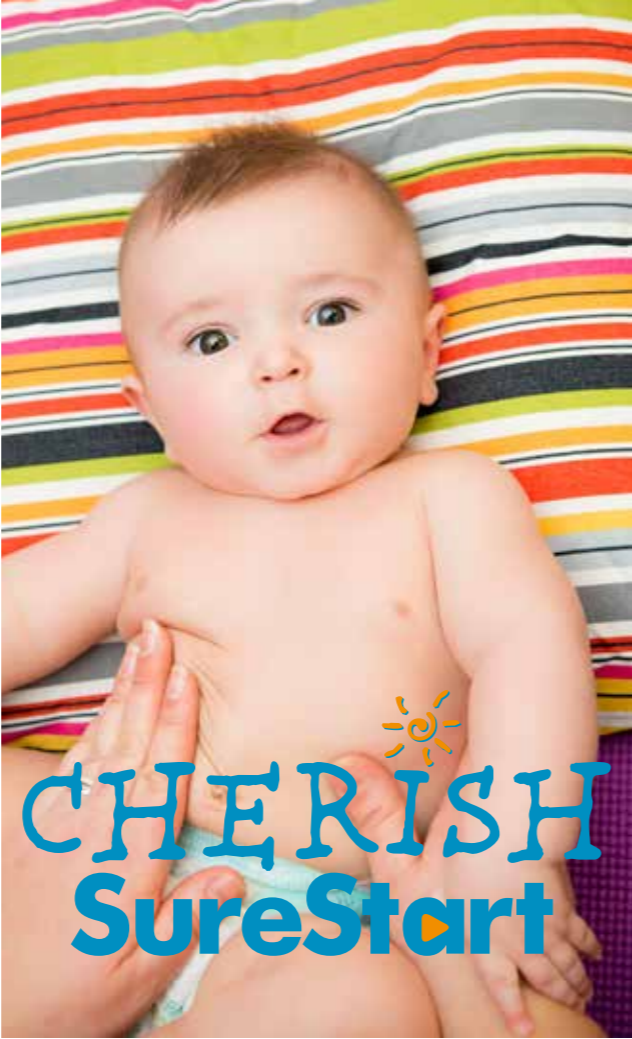
Sure Start is a Government initiative for families with children and babies under 4 years of age. Sure Start aims to give children the best start in life by supporting their health, social and emotional development, their ability to learn, and by strengthening their families and communities.

Cherish Sure Start

Cherish Sure Start was established in 2001, when a partnership of community, voluntary and statutory agencies and local parents, was set up to plan and develop the programme. The programme is available to families living in the areas of Ballinamallard, Devenish, Ederney, Erne Ward, Irvinestown, Kesh, Lack, Lisnarick, Lisnaskea, Newtownbutler, Portora, Roslea and Trillick. Cherish Sure Start, operates from four bases providing outreach services in the home and in community premises throughout the areas.

Sure Start Services

Since 2001, a wide range of services have been established adding to services already available in the area. A team of professionals specialising in play, health and well-being, family support, speech and language and early education runs the programmes.





So what does Cherish Sure Start have to offer you?

"Antenatal programme gave me a much deeper knowledge of what being a dad will be about and how I can get to have a relationship with my child even before they are born"

ANTENATAL SERVICES FOR MUMS AND DADS TO BE

Antenatal Home Visit

To enhance the quality of care and emotional health for you as expectant parents, we will offer you some guidance, support and signpost you to other services where relevant. Areas include information on diet, exercise, smoking cessation, PND and breastfeeding.

The Real Birth Programme (4 weeks)

This programme promotes positive birth and is designed to give you a more in-depth understanding of the amazing changes that take place when you give birth to your baby. The programme is a factual and honest approach to labour. It helps to empower pregnant women and their birth partners and can dramatically reduce the fear and anxieties women and their partners feel at giving birth. Feeling more relaxed in labour can also help you to have a comfortable birth.

Welcome to the World (6 weeks)

Antenatal programme, which helps support parents in pregnancy, birth and beyond, with its focus on the importance of relationship issues; preparing for new roles, responsibilities and the emotional changes involved in becoming a parent. It supports mothers and fathers in their relationship as a couple, helps you understand the importance of parent baby relationships, and helps with the transition to parenthood.

Hypnobirthing (4 weeks)

A complete birth education programme that teaches simple but specific self-hypnosis, relaxation and breathing techniques for an easier more comfortable birth. The programme lets you discover and experience the joy and magic of birth, where you will discover that severe pain does not have to be an accompaniment of labour.

Antenatal Fitness Classes (6 weeks)

An antenatal programme to support the new mums, body and mind in preparation for labour through exercise, stretching, power of your breath and meditation.



POSTNATAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Postnatal Home Visit

To register your new baby and to inform you of up and coming Sure Start services. We support parents with practical issues around caring for themselves and their families. Health issues include:

- Postnatal care for baby & mum.
- Bonding, infant mental health & brain development.
- Sleep management.
- Healthy eating & breast feeding support.
- Parenting skills.
- Speech development.
- Home safety.
- Childhood illness.

Breastfeeding Help and Support

Get off to a great start with our friendly, supportive breastfeeding groups in Irvinestown and Newtownbutler.

Come along to learn about breastfeeding before your baby arrives, to make new friends and share the difficulties of life with a new baby.

We offer information and support to all pregnant and breastfeeding mums. Trained staff will be on hand should you require any help with breastfeeding and one to one support can also be provided at home.

Every week we have a topic such as life with a new baby, normal sleep



INCREDIBLE YEARS
"I enjoy the time given to share our ideas & opinions. I enjoy talking to the other ladies sharing our thoughts."



expectations, starting solids, returning to work and much more! Electric breast pumps and books are available for loan.

Birth Trauma 3 x 1:1 Sessions

A gentle and safe way to lift traumatic feelings, that can remain after a difficult birth or postnatal experience. Memories of pregnancy and birth last a lifetime, but negative or traumatic memories can impact on physical, mental and emotional health. You don't have to keep struggling to cope with these difficult emotions. The 3 Step Rewind technique is a way to gently and safely move through your experience, so you can look ahead to the future with confidence. Facilitated by trained professionals.

One Stop Baby Shop (fortnightly)

This drop in session gives parents/carers the opportunity to discuss with a health visitor from HSCB and a member of the Sure Start team, the needs of their developing baby in an informal relaxed setting. The session will support, where possible needs of parents of children, up to one year old. The One Stop Baby Shop runs on the second and fourth Monday in the month, in the ARC Healthy Living Centre, Irvinestown. Please contact the Sure Start office or your local health visitor for details and dates.

COS-P Parenting Programme (8 weeks)

The Circle of Security Programme (COS-P) is a parenting programme for caregivers of children between the ages of 4 months and 6 years. The programme can help you nurture your child's attachment, emotional resilience and freedom to explore. You will learn how to protect and nurture your babies through to teens, while fostering their independence, and what emotional needs a child may be expressing with difficult behavior.

INFANT MASSAGE
"I felt really welcome and it was great to meet other mums and babies"



Vivid stories and unique practical tools offer insight into how our own upbringing affects our parenting style (and what to do about it)

Incredible Babies Programme (8 weeks - Babies 0-12mths)

This is a wonderful programme that looks at:

- Learning how to observe and read babies' cues and signals.
- Understanding babies as intelligent learners.
- Learning about ways to provide physical and tactile stimulation for babies and its importance for brain development.
- Understanding the importance of finding time for oneself to renew energy for parenting.
- Understanding about babies' development of object and person permanence and more!

BABY YOGA
"I learned the importance of having a relaxing, calm time with my baby"

Baby Massage (4 weeks)

Baby Massage is a lovely gentle programme, which allows for the communication of touch to be nurtured between the parents/carers and their baby. In either one to one or group

sessions, there is an opportunity to learn the message and movements of massage. Touch is a wonderful way to communicate love, care and nurturing between you and your child, which will continue throughout their childhood into adulthood. For parents with newborn babies up to 1 year.

Baby Yoga (4 weeks)

Baby yoga complements infant massage, offers quality physical stimulation including flowing postures, holding, movement, touch, voice and deep relaxation. It induces a happy, care free and lively parent-infant interaction, which develops as the babies grow. For parents with babies aged 4months to 1 year.

Reflexology for Babies aged 0-8mths (4 weeks)

Baby Reflexology is a gentle bonding experience that parents can pass onto their baby. This course will show you how to safely apply a gentle reflexology treatment on your baby to aid common ailments and promote calm, relaxation as well as improving sleep patterns.

We also offer a wide range or postnatal fitness programmes.

CHILD AND FAMILY HEATH PROGRAMMES

Weaning Workshop (Duration 2 hours)

Information and advice on feeding infants from 6 months to 1 year. Interactive activities are used to discuss the what, when and why of introducing solids to the infant's diet. Information is provided on, suitable foods to include, foods to avoid, practical aspects of weaning, introducing a cup, vegetarian weaning, fussiness and vitamin supplement guidelines. Suitable for parents of infants aged 4 months +. For older infants for example those aged 10 months + it may be more appropriate and relevant for these parents to attend the Feeding under 5s workshop.

Solid Start (3 weeks)

Information and advice on feeding infants from 6 months to 1 year. Interactive activities are used to discuss the what, when and why of introducing solids to the infant's diet. Information is provided on suitable foods to include, foods to avoid practical aspects of weaning, introducing a cup.

Healthy Eating Sessions (1 hour)

Interactive sessions can be delivered on healthy eating; information will be tailored for the needs of the group.

Cook-It (adult programme 6 weeks)

Cook It is an opportunity for parents to learn about the nutritional value of food and healthy eating.



COOK-IT
"Cook It made me aware of what makes up various recipes and the possible choices – Healthy and Unhealthy foods"

enhance your cooking skills and develop ideas about how to provide fast,

affordable and nutritious food for the family. Also covers reading food labels.

Boogie Beats (4 weeks)

Boogie Beats is a music and dance programme for parents and toddlers aged two to four years old. The sessions consist of singing, nursery rhymes, playing percussion instruments, musical games and dancing. There are many benefits of boogie beats including exercise and physical development, improving speech and language through singing and rhymes, self-expression and self-esteem through movement and learning musical concepts such as beat and rhythm, overall contributing to brain development.

Toddler Yoga (4 weeks)

This programme is for Children aged 1 year – 4 years. It benefits both the emotional and physical health of your toddler. This includes:

- Emotional
 - Bonding between mother and toddler.
 - Communication and interaction.
 - Confidence in handling your toddler.
 - Building trust and understanding.
 - Tension release, relaxing and calming.
 - Pleasure and fun.
- Physical
 - Improves blood flow.
 - Stimulates cell growth.
 - Strengthens the muscles, keeps the

spine straight and supple.

- Maintains flexibility in the spine and joints.

Tumbling Tots Programme (4 weeks)

This programme has been designed to aid development of co-ordination and motor skill development for pre-school children from 18 months to 3 years. It provides parents, with a simple resource to introduce children to physical activity at an early age. The programme looks at physical activities to help children to develop mobility, awareness of space, physical control, manipulative skills.

Wriggle & Rhyme (4 weeks)

Talking with and listening to pre-school children is vital in supporting and developing their language and self-esteem. It is also very important for pre-school children to have the opportunity to listen to and join in rhymes, as this is a significant element of their communication and development. This programme has been developed to suit the language and communication needs of the preschool child. The programme aims to monitor attention & listening skills, vocabulary, social skills / eye contact and sense of rhyme.

Tickle Tummy Time (4 weeks)

Tickle Tummy Time is a programme designed by a Speech & Language Therapist. The programme is for babies aged four months up to one year with a parent/carer. It aims is to encourage speech and language development through songs and nursery rhymes. Significant foundations in communication skills are established in the first 12 months of a child's life. Tickle Tummy Time encourages attention and listening, eye contact, turn taking and non-verbal communication.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

We also run a variety of living well sessions and work in partnership with external organisations including MindWise and AWARE to deliver programmes to support your mental health. These include:

Living Life to the Full (6 weeks)

This programme can make a big difference to your life. It can help you manage your feelings when you are stressed, worried or depressed and teach you some simple practical skills to help you cope with life's challenges. Experienced facilitators from AWARE deliver the programme, who will ensure that you get the most from the course and

start Living Life to the Full.

Mood Matters for Parent and Baby (2hr workshop)

This is a mental health awareness workshop for expectant parents and parents of young babies. Delivered by AWARE - the national depression charity for Northern Ireland. The programme teaches you skills and techniques to look after your mental health, manage your feelings when you are stressed, anxious or depressed and help you cope with challenges during and after pregnancy.

WRAP (8 weeks)

WRAP is an international programme of wellness, recovery and action plan. A Sure Start Family Support Worker and Facilitators from the Mums Wellness Programme will guide you gently through a series of strategies and support to enhance your wellness and coping strategies. Becoming a parent is a wonderful experience but it can also bring with it challenges, which are unexpected and difficult. The WRAP programme is aimed at allowing parents the opportunity in a supportive and caring environment to face, discuss and master coping strategies to support their parenting journey of wellness.

INCREDIBLE BABIES
"The programme has made me realise that I am doing my best"

FAMILY SUPPORT AND PARENTING PROGRAMMES

The Family Support Team

The team work in partnership with parents to support them in their role as their children's first educators. The Family Support Workers provide on-going support for families through a series of planned groups and home visits. This home based support, which is tailored to meet the individual needs of families, is available from the antenatal period and right up until the child reaches their fourth birthday. The nature of these visits can range from our antenatal home based programme, breastfeeding support, home baby massage, parenting support and age appropriate play. Any of the programmes we run can be delivered in the home if required by our family support team.

The Sure Start Crèche

Crèche allows parents the opportunity to access Sure Start programmes and courses and leave their child in a safe and structured environment with qualified staff. Respite Crèche places are also available for parents who may need additional support for whatever reason at a particular time.

Nurturing programme (11 weeks)

The Nurturing Programme is one of the most popular and positive parenting programmes and a firm favourite with Sure Start parents. It provides the

opportunity to explore, reflect and realise that the role of being a parent does require a tool kit of strategies and support.

Parenting Puzzle (4 weeks)

Children are rewarding, stimulating and fun, but looking after them can be stressful and challenging! The Parenting Puzzle helps deal with those challenges, so that you can have a more fulfilled, calmer and nurturing family life. The course covers many different topics, including:

- Understanding why children behave as they do.
- Recognising the feelings behind behaviour (ours and theirs).
- Exploring different approaches to discipline.



- Finding ways to develop co-operation and self-discipline in children.
- Learning the importance of looking after ourselves.

It's easier to make changes when we are able to share ideas and have the support of others, which is why our parent groups are so successful.

Potty Training (2 weeks)

Potty training can feel overwhelming - for everyone involved. We have pulled together a wealth of knowledge to guide you through it. From how to train to when to start.

We will also address other problems you might face including poo phobia and life milestones.

This can be delivered on a one to one basis as well.

Sleep Services for Parents/ Carers

Over 40% of children experience sleep issues.

We can offer informal advice and support through:

- One to one sleep sessions in the Centre or in your home to support your child to get a better night's sleep.
- Sleep workshops where you can meet other parents and learn more about helpful strategies.

Your child must be over 12 months of age.



DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMME FOR 2-3 YEAR OLDS (2YOP)

We are all aware of the impact of a first experience and how that first impression stays with us and defines how we think or feel about something or someone. For many children the Developmental Programme for 2-3 Years Olds will be their first experience of a learning environment with other children and with an educator other than their parent. The impression your child forms at this stage will influence your child's ability to enjoy learning and achieving now and in the future. The Programme focuses on the importance of learning through a play based approach to development and understanding. The programme will focus on play in group settings to enhance children's social and emotional development, build on their communication and language skills, promote physical development and encourage intellectual growth. The programme is constructed not just with a view to preparation for the next stage for children but rather as part of the child's natural process.

- Parents are required to agree to the following:
- To attend Information session for Parents. These may include language development workshops, healthy eating workshops, potty training workshops etc.
 - To attend regular stay and play sessions with your child where parents

- will have the opportunity to experience first-hand the many activities and challenges their child is participating in.
- To facilitate regular home visits from a trained staff member involved in the delivery of the programme. This will enable you to extend the learning experiences your child enjoys in the programme in the comfort of the home environment.
 - To ensure your child attends a minimum of 80% of the sessions.

2YOP operates throughout the School year. Where possible the programme runs for 7.5 hours per week. There are currently 60 places available - 24 in Newtownbutler, 24 in Irvinestown and 12 in Enniskillen. Criteria can be obtained from the DENI website.

Stay & Play (2YOP)

Each month staff on the P2OP provides an innovative stay & plays session so that parents can come along and spend quality time with their child and enjoy the play activities together whilst learning about the value of play.

Speech and Language Support in the 2YOP programme

The Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) visits each group during the year and provides advice and workshops for staff and families about language promoting activities to support all children in the

group. The SLT does not provide any individual speech and Language therapy. To help with planning activities for all children: The DP2-3 yr staff in the programme will invite each child to participate in a short language screening activity using pictures and objects. This is called the WellComm tool-kit. It will be completed at the start and end of the year. This short screening activity will help to highlight language promoting activities for all of the children in the group. It will also help to measure progress during the year. Parental consent will be required for any screening and advice from the SLT. Information gained from everyday observations in the setting and talking with parents are very important parts of language planning. Parents can also arrange to meet the SLT during the year if they have any individual queries about their child's communication. These meetings are called Talk Links.

Transition Programme (2YOP)

The programme works in partnership with parents and the local preschool/ nursery settings to ensure that the transition from the programme to the preschool or nursery setting is an enjoyable, exciting and valuable experience. Parents are supported with their application form and a transition report is shared with the settings.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMMES

How Sure Start can support the home learning environment

Peep Learning together programme is an evidence-based intervention that the Sure Start staff have been trained to deliver. It provides comprehensive child development activities and information that trained practitioners can share with families – in groups, drop-ins or 1:1 work. Peep sessions involve songs, stories, activities and discussion linked to the programme's five strands of learning:

- Personal, social and emotional development.
- Communication and learning.
- Early literacy development.
- Early numeracy development.
- Healthy and physical development.

If you would like to register on our home learning programme please let us know. Visits will take place on a monthly basis at times to suit you and your family.

Tiny Me (6 weeks)

A programme for under 1 year olds to support parents/ carers so that they can encourage the development of their babies. The programme also supports parents/ carers in their relationship with their children to help build strong bonds that last through positive interactions.

Tiny Tots (6 weeks)

A programme for 1-2 year olds to promote parent/carers awareness of children's early learning and development through making the most of every day activities and interactions. The programme supports parents in the development of children's literacy and numeracy using songs and rhymes, stories, art activities and general fun for all.



Tiny Learners (6 weeks)

A programme for 2 year old and over to support parents/ carers with helping their children to move smoothly from home to preschool. The programme covers topics around personal social & emotional development, communication & language, early literacy & maths and health & physical development. Children can come

along and have fun, learning through a variety of activities. Fun for all the family.

Mini Picasso (4 weeks)

One of our absolute favourites for younger children, Mini Picasso classes start moulding our children into great artists from 15 months. The classes are fun and imaginative and sometimes include a singsong! Get involved with clay, pastels, and painting on canvas. Great for: 15 months onwards.

Messy Play (4 weeks)

Make a mess gives children the opportunity to explore objects and raw materials such as sand, water, chalk, paint, play-dough and paste in a free and unrestricted way. The children can use the basic materials without being constrained by the one right way to use them. The sensory experience enables them to understand how things feel, smell and taste and it supports their physical development. All of this messy play means that your children are likely to come home with dirty clothes. Please bring extra clothing for the children so they are able to enjoy and experience our messy play.

Baby Sneak a Peek (4 weeks)

The programme focuses on how to make the most of learning opportunities in everyday life at home. Specifically

designed from birth to aid your child's development, the classes are packed with an incredible variety of sounds, smells, sights, texture, music, dance and singing.

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Sensory Basket (2 weeks)

An activity where families will learn different ways to help their child learn through play. Each week will have a different focus from natural/home objects like pots and pans and wooden spoons to music and sound and messy/creative play. Suitable for children aged 0-2 ½ years.

Room to Play Drop-in

This group aims to support families with their children's early learning in an enjoyable way. Groups are for parents/ carers and their children. Sessions generally include the following core activities:

- songs and rhymes,
- a story time,
- activities with the children,

- a talking time for adults (to share experiences and ideas),
- book-sharing,
- ideas and scrap materials for families to take home to make things.



"My little ones get very excited when we pull up to Cherish Sure Start, always a very warm welcome and the kids love the leaders: thank you and look forward to more"

"It was great learning about the different things they can play with that is already in the home"

SPEECH & LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES

Speech & Language support and advice from our qualified Speech and Language Therapist (WHSCT).

If your child is finding communication tricky, we can help.

Your child might find it difficult to:

- Sit still and listen.
- Understand instructions.
- Use many different words.
- Speak clearly in sentences.
- Make themselves understood to friends and family.

HOW CAN SURE START HELP?

TalkLink

A 1:1 information session for parents/ carers, which offers practical advice and strategies to use with your child. I can meet with you and your child to chat about what to expect at different ages. I might look at:

- Attention and listening
- Interaction skills
- Play
- Understanding
- Talking & Speech sounds

Our Sure Start Speech & Language Therapist does not provide individual Speech & Language Therapy sessions for children but offer a range of programmes which your child may be invited to following a TalkLink, in addition

to providing talking tips for you to try at home. She can support you to refer your child to a Speech and Language Therapist within your local health centre for further assessment and individualized support if required.

PROGRAMMES OFFERED

Tiny Talkers (4 weeks)

An early language group focusing on attention & listening, understanding and use of language through songs and games.

Play & Discover

A stay & play type session supporting parents of children with more complex communication needs.

Ready Steady Sing and Play (baby & toddler groups 4 weeks)

Parent and child programme which aims to promote early interaction through the use of play and rhyme. The topic for each session will change on a weekly basis and activities will be suited to this e.g. food, transport etc. Parents will be provided with a key take home message each week.

Changing Time is Chatting Time

An information session on early brain

development and the benefits of talking and singing to your baby during every day activities like changing time.

BookStart Corner (4 weeks)

A home-based programme promoting the love of books and nursery rhymes.



"I enjoyed interacting with other children and learning through songs & actions"



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT



Paediatric First Aid (3 x 2hr sessions)
This course has been specially designed for those who have a duty of care towards children and babies aged 0-8 years, including Childminders and Parents. Receive basic but vital First Aid information on how to deal with accidents and emergencies affecting babies and children.

Accredited training for childminders/ day care staff includes Speech & Language Support (WellComm), First Aid and Food Hygiene training.

Volunteering Opportunities
Community development provides parents with the opportunity to get involved in The ARC Healthy Living Centre. This can be through attending parent forums or volunteering to help at sessions.



TICKLE TUMMY TIME
"Lovely relaxed atmosphere and baby was content"



CHERISH SureStart

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