

Borrow toys for
free

Learning together
is fun

More places to
enjoy activities

FREE activities
Please take a copy

children's
centre
chatter



Published by Sunderland City Council
for families in Sunderland
Issue 2: September to December 2010

**Sure Start
Children's Centres**


Sunderland
Children's Centres

Hello...

Welcome to the second edition of Children's Centre Chatter, brought to you by Sunderland Children's Centres.

Inside you'll find out about all the activities and services that are available through centres for you and your family.

You'll also find news, useful family information and activity timetables for each area of the city, so that you can see exactly what's taking place between September and December 2010 at Sunderland Children's Centres.

Nearly all activities are free, so spending time together as a family or signing up to a short course doesn't need to break the bank. Visit your nearest centre and see what you'll discover...

Sunderland Children's Centres

What are Sunderland Children's Centres?

At Sunderland Children's Centres you and your children can have fun and make new friends in safe and relaxed surroundings.

There are 17 Children's Centres located across Sunderland - all are open to children aged 0 to 5 and not only their mams, dads or carers, but also their grandparents and childminders too. Parents-to-be and their birthing partners will also find there's plenty going on in centres for them.

Not sure where your nearest centre is? Take a look at the map within the timetable pages.



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“ A great place for parents-to-be, children 0 to 5 and their mams, dads, carers, grandparents and childminders. ”

Keeping children and young people safe is everybody's business...

Sunderland Children's Centres are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. Staff and volunteers share this commitment and consider the safety of all children to be paramount and central to their work.

If you have concerns about a child's safety or well-being please speak to a member of staff as soon as possible.

This information can be made available in large print, Braille, audio and other languages. Please contact the Communications Team on 0191 561 5627 or email esagmarketing@sunderland.gov.uk for help.

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Sunderland
City Council

Children's Centre Chatter 

Bite size news

What's going on across the city's Children's Centres



Toddlers to success

Easington families can now benefit from a new toddler group thanks to four dedicated local mams.

As members of the Easington Lane Parent Group, Jenna, Sarah, Sharon and Angela discovered the need for a toddler group in the area. After finding premises and successfully applying for a £750 Children's Centre Inspiration Fund grant, the mams have now launched their toddler group, Little Stars, which runs on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 12.45pm to 2.30pm at Easington Lane Community Access Point.

To find out more about Inspiration Fund grants that are available to improve the lives of Sunderland's children visit: www.sunderlandchildrenscentres.co.uk

Children's Centres help grandmother start new career

Linda Robson, 55 of Downhill, enjoyed taking her granddaughter Raegan along to their local Children's Centre so much that she was inspired to become a Children's Centre volunteer. She has completed voluntary work experience and training courses through Sunderland Children's Centres and has now launched her new career in childcare.

Linda recently started working at Rainbow Tots in Hylton Castle as a Nursery Assistant, thanks to funding from Future Jobs Fund.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities visit: www.sunderlandchildrenscentres.co.uk



HENRY encourages healthy lives

Families have been learning about Health, Exercise and Nutrition for the Really Young (HENRY) during a successful pilot in East Sunderland.

16 parents from Hendon and Ryhope signed up to the eight-week HENRY training course to learn more about healthy family lifestyles. The programme looks at healthy eating and lifestyles for the whole family and exercises which can be enjoyed at home.



Feedback from parents has been very positive and following its success extra HENRY courses will be rolled out in other areas of the city from September. Check the timetable pages for further details.



You can't beat family fun

Over 350 families enjoyed the Washington Children's Centres' summer 'Fun in the Park' day.

The free outdoor event, held at Usworth Park in Washington, encouraged families to enjoy spending more time together. Children's favourites such as hook the duck and Messy Play were available during the day, while children's entertainers and magicians performed.

Louise McDonald, 38, took her son Archie to the event and said it was nice to see so many families getting outside and playing together.

Spending quality time with dad

Dads in the West of Sunderland can now take advantage of a new group that's just for them and their children.

All dads and male carers with children five and under are welcome to attend the city's new 'Dads and Kids' group. It's completely free and offers lots of fun activities, from Messy Play and games to story time and outdoor play.

Sessions are held at Thorney Close Children's Centre every Saturday from 10am. Another Dads and Kids group will also be starting at Silksworth soon.



Enjoying learn

Interest is growing in a course designed to bring families together to work on their basic skills, as Sunderland parents spread the word about Family Learning.

Mum, Lorrae Sawyer first heard about the course when parents at her local Children's Centre mentioned how useful it had been and how their children enjoyed it.

Lorrae said: "The sessions were really informal, relaxed and friendly. John, the course leader, asked us what English and maths skills we would most like to brush up on."

She was so impressed that as soon as she finished the first course she signed up to the longer 10-week course. She said: "I then recommended it to some of my friends as it's such a great way to get together with other parents."

Her friend Alison Warren added:

"Lorrae said the sessions were good fun and interesting. She was right – they were a really easy way to top up my learning.

"I would definitely recommend the course to others as it's an enjoyable way to learn together as a family and now I don't feel so worried about my little boy asking me to help him with his homework when he gets older."

Family Learning courses run in Children's Centres across the city. Check the timetable for details or contact your nearest Children's Centre.



ing together



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Sunderland children's ce

It's now even easier for families to enjoy Children's Centre services throughout Sunderland, as communities benefit from new and improved facilities.

Families can now take part in Children's Centre activities and find useful support services in more community buildings across the city, including Seaburn Dene Primary School. This is in addition to the 17 Children's Centres which are already open.



...it's a great way for parents and children to meet in their local community and what's more, the sessions are free.



Centres reach out further

As the number of venues grows, Children's Centre staff will be working in the community even more. They will be delivering popular sessions such as Messy Play and Busy Bodies from locations including schools and community centres.

Miss Purdy, Headteacher at Seaburn Dene Primary School, said: "It's great to be working with Sunderland Children's Centres so that families in the area can enjoy all the brilliant services they offer. I'm delighted that we are now able to offer free Children's Centre activities from our school.

"Classrooms that were not always in use are now hosting various activities, such as Stay and Play and Toy Library – it's a great way for parents and children to meet in their local community and what's more, the sessions are free."

To find out what activities are taking place in your community see the timetable pages or visit www.sunderlandchildrenscentres.co.uk



Why buy when you can borrow

Families can now borrow their favourite toys from Toy Libraries across the city completely free of charge, as all fees have been removed from the service.

Toy Libraries provide a valuable service for parents and children, offering a huge variety of toys and games for children of all ages to borrow and take home.

Many of the toys have educational benefits or are designed to encourage development in children with special needs. As these items can be expensive some families may not normally be able to access them in any other way.

There is something for every family in Toy Libraries, so all children can now enjoy borrowing a new toy each time they visit.



W... for free?

Families, childminders and groups can make use of the service. Just ask inside your nearest Children's Centre about their Toy Library.

Great news...

The Toy Library reward scheme is here to stay! Borrow from the Toy Library five times and you'll receive a free gift.

Don't forget to pick up a reward card next time you visit.



Spotlight on...

Name:

Maureen Robins

Age: 40**Family:**

Two children

Lives:

Tunstall, Sunderland

Work: Child and

Family Support

Worker

Hobbies: Running, reading, cake making and socialising



What do you enjoy most about your job?

"As a Child and Family Support Worker every day can be met with a different challenge and I get the fantastic opportunity to meet lots of great families.

"My favourite part is delivering the Family Nurturing programme, a 10-week programme which offers parents and carers a chance to regularly meet up and talk about issues such as managing their child's behaviour. Parents find it very reassuring to know that there are other parents out there with similar problems.

"When I first did the training myself I put many of the suggestions to use at home, so I've really seen the benefits that the programme can bring."

To find out more about Family Nurturing or other parenting programmes and support contact the Family and Parenting Team on 0191 443 2908 or visit: www.familiesinfoservice.com



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