

---

## The Family Links Nurturing Programme: a report of a qualitative evaluation of training and implementation

Dr Virginia MacNeill, 2005

### Extracts from Key Findings:

“Perceptions of the immediate impact of the course on teaching staff:

- enhanced team-working skills
- improved confidence and communication skills
- greater empathy with children
- increased knowledge and understanding of tools and techniques for promoting children’s social, emotional and behavioural development

The immediate impact on participating parents and their families:

- a better understanding of family relationships and parenting
- improved confidence and communication with their children
- more positive attitudes towards their children
- positive behaviour reinforcing techniques like Choices and Consequences were most successful

The Nurturing Programme’s longer term impact in the classroom:

- widespread use of class reward systems
- perception that it has made a positive difference to the social, emotional and behavioural development of some children

Perceptions of the helpfulness and relevance of the Programme in schools:

- children understand and positively respond to it
- empowers children by giving them a common language
- techniques enable a consistent approach throughout the school”



Family Links

---

## Research and Evaluation on the Nurturing Programme

### Understanding parenting programmes: parents’ views

Dr Jane Barlow and Dr Sarah Stewart-Brown,  
Health Services Research Unit, University of Oxford  
*Primary Health Care Research and Development 2001, 2*

### Conclusion

“Overall, the qualitative data obtained in this study suggest that the parents who participated in and completed the Family Links Nurturing Programme were both satisfied with it and felt that they had made beneficial changes in their lives as a result of it. This suggests that brief interventions such as parenting programmes can have a long-term beneficial effect for parents...”

Perhaps most important of all, many parents referred to an increased sense of empathy with their children, and a better understanding of the factors which motivate children to behave in particular ways. Many parents appeared to feel that they were in a position, having completed the programme, to address the emotional and behavioural issues presented by their children.

It seems likely that these outcomes were the result of a combination of affective strategies which helped the participating parents to focus on feelings, relationships and the parents’ own experiences of being parented, in addition to the provision of behavioural strategies aimed at providing the parents with new methods of managing their children’s emotional and behavioural development.

Programmes which combine both affective and behavioural strategies may well be providing parents with important benefits which are not provided by behavioural strategies alone.”

Please visit our website for more on research and evaluation, including copies of the reports mentioned in this leaflet:  
[www.familylinks.org.uk/nurturing/research.htm](http://www.familylinks.org.uk/nurturing/research.htm)

As our approach is evidence-based, the research and evaluation is ongoing.

---

### **An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the School and Family Links Programme**

Mary Layton, MA Dissertation 1996, Oxford Brookes University

#### *Extract from the Summary*

“This evaluation has demonstrated the effectiveness of the School and Family Links Programme in improving the child’s knowledge of prosocial and assertiveness skills and when to use them appropriately. Of particular significance is the children’s ability to apply their skills effectively outside school.”

---

### **The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievements and Adjustment:**

#### **A Literature Review**

Professor Charles Desforges with Alberto Abouchaar  
DfES Research Report RR433, 2003

#### *Paragraph 8.36.1*

“The programme receives strong endorsement from head teachers who have used it (Hudson 2003; Carnan, 2003). These heads feel that the programme has, as part of a general strategy of school improvement, played a significant part in improving the schools’ ethos and it has enhanced the emotional stability of all concerned. Further endorsement is manifest in the heads’ willingness to invest time, money and energy in buying and sustaining the programme and to further invest in capitalising on its perceived benefits through the recruitment of home-school links workers. Heads proselytise for the Programme. Furthermore, they are increasingly confident that they are involving previously hard to reach parents. Strikingly, heads report observing participant parents recruiting other parents to the ways of thinking and action promoted in the Programme.”

---

### **Evaluation of a Course on Emotional Education in Initial Teacher Training**

Dr Katherine Weare and Dr Robert Stratford,  
University of Southampton, 2004

#### *Extract from Discussion of the Findings*

“The course appears to have been very successful in terms of its impact on confidence, degree to which it met its own aims, and degree to which the students enjoyed it. Given that it was only two days long and students did not elect to attend, this impact is remarkable.”

---

---

### **Nurturing Group Work in a Children’s Home**

Maggie Bell, Helen Fay, Debbie Ramsden, Shirley Morgan  
*Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care*, Vol.2, No.2,  
August/September 2003

The paper describes a joint Education, Social Services and Health initiative introducing the Nurturing Programme in a Sunderland Children’s Home. Both the staff and the young people undertook the 10-week course.

#### *Extract from the Conclusion*

“Our young people speak very positively about the effects of the programme... Several of the young people have commented that the home is calmer to live in now.

Comments from the staff also reflect what the young people have said; however, what most members of staff have talked about is the nurturing aspect of the course and how it made them think about looking after themselves...”

---

### **The Nurturing Programme: a prison based pilot – An evaluative commentary**

Jonathan Nicholls, Mental Health Foundation, 2005

The report describes a pilot in Styal women’s prison in Cheshire, focusing on the lessons learned from taking the Nurturing Programme into a prison setting. It is therefore not intended to be a formal evaluation of the impact of the pilot, but it does nonetheless contain some observational points about the course.

#### *Extracts from Stakeholder experiences from the Styal Pilot*

“Hence, while it’s not possible with this study to determine the long term impact of the programme, there are indications that the course was raising the women’s awareness of their role as parents in a useful way.

Another indicator of the prisoners’ engagement with the course was their attendance levels. It is compulsory that prisoners attend training or other forms of work in the prison – but for uninspiring courses, it was suggested that prisoners will often claim to be sick, resulting in low attendance levels. For the Styal pilot, however, voluntary attendance levels were consistently high. This indicates that the prisoners found the course of value.”

---