

Press release: Helping parents to parent

Public policy can have an impact on parenting behaviour and achieve positive outcomes for children, but there is currently a lack of evidence on what works – according to [new research](#) by the Social Mobility Commission.

The report says that parenting interventions can be successful – particularly those that focus on parenting styles, the creation of a supportive home learning environment, relationships within the family and parental stress and mental health.

Programmes can give parents a greater understanding of child development, develop parents' confidence in their role and support both parents to become actively involved in a child's upbringing.

The research finds that an authoritative parenting style which combines warmth with firmness in setting boundaries, secure attachment between children and parents and the provision of a supportive home learning environment can improve children's outcomes.

It finds that programmes which offer targeted support for parents, are most effective. But these should be termed 'universal' to reduce stigma for those taking part and increase parental participation. Home visits were found to have moderate to high levels of success. It also concludes that highly trained and skilled practitioners, such as nurses, social workers and teachers, are crucial to the successful delivery of parenting interventions.

However, one of the report's key findings is that there is currently a lack of long-term evidence and studies about what parenting interventions work best. The Social Mobility Commission is calling on the government to commission further research to address gaps in this area.

Figures show that, in the last decade, more than 2.5 million children in England – including over 580,000 children known to be eligible for free school meals, had not reached the government's definition of a good level of development at the age of 5.

By the time students receive their GCSE results, around 32% of the variation in performance can be predicted based on indicators observed at, or before, the age of 5.

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

The early years of a child's life have a lasting impact, but there are stark differences in how ready children are for school. In the last decade, over half a million poorer children were not school ready by the age of 5.

We want the government to set a clear objective that, by 2025, every child is school ready and the child development gap has been closed. This requires every low-income family having access to high-quality childcare.

Parenting programmes also have an important role to play in reducing social inequality. But it is clear that there is currently a lack of evidence in this area. The government should commission further research to address this knowledge gap and develop a robust and consistent tool for the evaluation of parenting interventions.

Dr Barbie Clarke, Managing Director of Family Kids and Youth, which carried out the research, said:

Our research shows that public policy can have a real impact on parenting behaviours and achieve positive outcomes for children. Intervention can develop parental management skills and confidence, build healthy family relationships and enhance children's social, behavioural and cognitive development and wellbeing.

Highly trained and skilled practitioners, such as nurses, social workers and teachers, are crucial to their successful delivery. Programmes also need to be universal, but targeted, to reduce stigma and encourage parents to take part.

The [‘Helping parents to parent’](#) report was commissioned by the Social Mobility Commission to bring together evidence on parenting behaviours and the extent to which public policy can support parents. It examined 28 interventions and programmes in the United Kingdom and internationally.

Successful schemes examined in the report include:

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) runs in several countries and aims to improve the home literacy environment, as well as to enhance the parent-child relationship, to prepare children for school. Aimed at parents of 3- to 5-year-olds, it combines 30 sessions of home visiting and community-centre-based support over 2 years, with daily activities at home. HIPPY has been tested in 9 countries and studies have shown a positive impact on child adaptation and readiness for school.

Parenting Shops in Belgium aim to provide a one-stop ‘shop’ for a range of parenting support mechanisms. Designed to increase community cohesion and reduce parenting stress, the intervention includes parenting classes, home visits, lectures and local community initiatives such as counselling. Professional staff and some skilled volunteers offer a range of support, and the ‘shops’ have been shown to be successful in reducing family tension and

difficulties.

The Incredible Years operates in several countries, targeting parents, children and teachers. The aim is to increase parents' confidence, competence and coping strategies, and build good parent-child relationships, while helping parents build supportive networks. Delivered through videos, role play and peer support to assist problem solving, research has shown that the programme significantly improves parenting interaction and promotes children's social and emotional wellbeing.

Key recommendations include:

1. There is a need for highly trained practitioners to implement and deliver parenting interventions.
2. There is a need for more family centres or single-access platforms that provide an umbrella of universal parenting support and services and are easily accessible for all families.
3. Home visiting programmes, or those with a home visiting element, have the potential to deliver more success in improving children's outcomes.
4. There is a lack of long-term evidence on parenting interventions and programmes. The government should commission further research on this issue and there needs to be a robust and consistent tool for evaluation.

Notes for editors

1. The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory, non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the United Kingdom and to promote social mobility in England. It currently consists of 4 commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.
2. The commission board currently comprises:
 - Alan Milburn (chair)
 - Baroness Gillian Shephard (deputy chair)
 - Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, University of Bath
 - David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation
3. The functions of the commission include:
 - monitoring progress on improving social mobility
 - providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility
 - undertaking social mobility advocacy
4. For further information, please contact Kirsty Walker at the Social

Mobility Commission by:

[Press release: Second interim report: Fatal tram accident, Croydon](#)

From:

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Second interim report following a fatal accident involving a tram near Sandilands Junction, Croydon, 9 November 2016.

RAIB has today released its second interim report into a fatal accident involving a tram near Sandilands Junction, Croydon on 9 November 2016.

This report contains material which appeared in our [first interim report](#), published on 16 November 2016, as well as some new information which we are now able to release.

New information in paragraph 9 updates the number of people we believe were on the tram. Paragraph 28 sets out the investigation activities that have taken place so far. Paragraphs 30 to 34 describe the infrastructure in the area, including the speed restriction sign on the approach to the tight curve where the derailment occurred. Paragraphs 36 and 37 describe how the tram was driven immediately before the accident. Paragraphs 38 and 39 describe the initial findings of the RAIB's examination of the tram, including the damage to the vehicle and the locations of the fatal casualties.

The response by the industry to the RAIB's urgent safety advice (issued on 14 November 2016) is described in paragraphs 42 and 43.

The ongoing and future areas for the RAIB's investigation are listed in paragraphs 40, 45 and 46.

We will publish a final report, including any safety recommendations, at the conclusion of our investigation.

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the tramway industry, the [British Transport Police](#) or by the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our reports.

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News story: New legal powers could send UK scientists into space to research vaccines and medicines

British scientists will be able to fly to the edge of space to conduct vital medical experiments under new powers unveiled this week.

Laws paving the way for spaceports in the UK will allow experiments to be conducted in zero gravity which could help develop medicines.

The powers will allow the launch of satellites from the UK for the first time, horizontal flights to the edge of space for scientific experiments and the establishment and operation of spaceports in regions across the UK.

Next steps involve government encouraging business and industry to come forward with specific proposals for space launches and the introduction of a Bill later this year, after which specific rules and regulations will be developed for operators – such as safety and insurance measures. In addition, the government is inviting commercial space businesses to bid for funding to help create a space launch market in the UK.

The sector is vital to the future of the UK economy, it creates high-value jobs and generates wealth across the country. Our regions will benefit from direct access to space as the building of local spaceports will lead to more demand in hospitality and tourism services, creating jobs and opportunities. The UK construction, engineering and service sector will benefit too from supply-chains and supporting services.

Together the new powers and funding will potentially allow a commercial spaceflight from a UK spaceport by 2020.

Space satellites are vital for our daily lives – once launched they can help provide broadband to rural communities, monitor weather systems as they move around the earth, and even help rural health workers who use satellite communications to diagnose and assist patients situated far from specialist health services.

The move has the potential to take UK scientists up to space so they can research and develop vaccines and antibiotics, which grow differently where there is no gravity. The flights could also carry out hundreds of vital scientific experiments on medical issues such as aging and the human body.

Aviation Minister Lord Ahmad said:

The UK's space sector is the future of the British economy. It already employs thousands of people and supports industries worth more than £250 million to the economy, and we want to grow it further. Forty years ago, meteorologists couldn't have imagined the importance of satellites for predicting the weather. Today over 90% of data used in every forecast comes from a satellite, with hundreds of other applications used in GPS, telecommunications and broadband.

We have never launched a spaceflight before from this country. Our ambition is to allow for safe and competitive access to space from the UK, so we remain at the forefront of a new commercial space age, for the next 40 years.

Although the UK is a world-leader when it comes to satellite technology and services, businesses currently have to rely on launch services located in other countries such as the US, Japan, or India, and often have to share launch vehicles, which can lead to delays and restrictions on where satellites can go.

The Bill builds on [£10 million of grant funding](#) announced by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy earlier this month which will deliver an early boost to the UK's commercial spaceflight market, helping us harness our research and innovation while creating high skilled jobs. It will work alongside the government's modern [Industrial strategy](#), which will support sectors like the space industry by creating an environment where companies big and small can thrive.

Universities and Science Minister Jo Johnson said:

From the launch of Rosetta, the first spacecraft to orbit a comet, to Tim Peake's 6 months on the International Space Station, the UK's space sector has achieved phenomenal things in orbit and beyond.

With this week's Spaceflight Bill launch, we will cement the UK's position as a world-leader in this emerging market, giving us an opportunity to build on existing strengths in research and innovation. Through our 'Industrial strategy' we will harness this potential, creating an environment where companies across this sector will thrive.

New launch technology for small satellites will provide low cost, reliable access to space.

Forecasts suggest the global market for this will be worth £25 billion over the next 20 years. Our new laws will put British businesses at the forefront of these services.

[News story: Welsh company wins £82M contract on global stage](#)

The deal with Qioptiq in St Asaph, North Wales, will see battle-winning handheld equipment – including night-vision goggles and day and night weapon sights – maintained over the next six years, to ensure they are available to our personnel around the globe.

This good news for Wales, as the UK prepares to celebrate St David's Day, follows the recent announcement that North Wales will be a global repair hub providing maintenance services for F-35 components, in a move worth millions for the region.

Speaking at the IDEX trade show, Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

It's a pleasure to announce this £82 million contract here at IDEX. This deal will provide our troops with the equipment they need to stay safe, while also delivering £47 million of savings.

This contract is made possible by our £178 billion equipment plan, supported by a Defence budget that will rise every year until the end of the decade.

Work under the new Surveillance Target and Acquisition Support (STAS) contract will create eight new positions at the company, which employs around 560 at its St Asaph and Bodelwyddan sites. By merging 20 individual support contracts into one deal, the MOD will save £47 million for the tax payer over the next six years.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This massive contract for Qioptiq underlines Wales' reputation as a world leader in the defence technology sector, coming hot on the heels of the choice of DECA Sealand as the global repair hub for the F35 aircraft.

This enormous vote on confidence in the Welsh economy demonstrates that we offer the highly skilled workforce and facilities that investors need. It is also clearly great news for employment in the region.

The contract covers equipment used right across the Armed Forces, from frontline infantry and Royal Marine soldiers, to military specialists such as bomb disposal experts, including infantry periscopes, laser aimers and target locating equipment.

Chief Executive Officer of the MOD's Defence Equipment and Support organisation, Tony Douglas said:

This new deal with Qioptiq has reduced costs by a third, demonstrating how we are constantly striving to build innovation and value into Defence procurement and support. Crucially, the STAS contract, will deliver improved support to Her Majesty's Armed Forces.

IDEX is a biannual international defence exhibition and conference dedicated to unmanned systems held in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. The United Kingdom has supported IDEX since its inception and this year a Royal Navy Mine Counter Measure Vessel, HMS Penzance, will be attending.

Mrs Baldwin and the UK team will be working to develop closer links with a range of Governments and industrial partners in the Gulf. British companies are promoting a range of innovative world leading technologies, many suitable for armed forces in the region.

They are keen to share technology, offer value for money solutions supported by training and logistical support, and build joint venture partnerships on land and maritime border security; maritime mine detection and countermeasures; and chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear and biological and chemical defence.

[Press release: Search engines and creative industries sign anti-piracy agreement](#)

The UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has helped broker a landmark agreement which will see search engines and the creative industries work

together to stop consumers being led to copyright infringing websites.

Representatives from the creative industries, leading UK search engines, and the IPO developed a Voluntary Code of Practice dedicated to the removal of links to infringing content from the first page of search results.

The Code agreed on 9 February 2017 will come into force immediately, and sets targets for reducing the visibility of infringing content in search results by 1 June 2017.

Minister of State Jo Johnson MP will oversee the implementation of this Code of Practice, and the IPO will work with all parties to evaluate progress.

Jo Johnson, Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, said:

Search engines play a vital role in helping consumers discover content online. Their relationship with our world leading creative industries needs to be collaborative. Consumers are increasingly heading online for music, films, e-books, and a wide variety of other content. It is essential that they are presented with links to legitimate websites and services, not provided with links to pirate sites.

I am very pleased that the search engines and representatives of the creative industries have agreed this Code. I look forward to this valuable collaboration benefiting both the UK's digital and creative sectors.

Minister of State for Digital and Culture, Matt Hancock, added:

We are one of the world's leading digital nations, and we have a responsibility to make sure that consumers have easy access to legal content online. Pirate sites deprive artists and rights holders of hard-earned income and I'm delighted to see industry led solutions like this landmark agreement which will be instrumental in driving change.

As we build a more global Britain we want the UK to be the most innovative country to do business, and initiatives like this will ensure our creative and digital economies continue to thrive.

Notes to editors

1. The UK Intellectual Property Office is responsible for Intellectual Property (IP) rights in the United Kingdom, including patents, designs, trade marks and copyright

2. Signatories of the Voluntary Code of Practice are:

- Google
- Bing
- BPI
- Motion Picture Association

Under the Alliance for IP umbrella, the following members have indicated agreement:

- ACG
- Association of Authors Agents
- BASE
- British Brands Group,
- BSA
- FDA
- PPA
- Premier League
- Publishers Association
- PLS
- UKIE
- Entertainment Retailers Association
- Educational Recording Agency