

# 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

## Press release: Second interim report: Fatal tram accident, Croydon

From:

First published:

20 February 2017

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.

PDF, 2.15MB, 12 pages

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email [enquiries@raib.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@raib.gov.uk). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

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## Concern over closure of university adult learning classes



Following concerns from constituents, I have written to University of Dundee Principal Professor Sir Pete Downes expressing dismay at the closure of the School of Humanities' educational and creative adult education classes as of April 2017.

Residents are concerned that the replacement which is a suite of credit-bearing modules will be more costly and deviates away from the principles of the adult education classes that have been so successful over the years.

These adult learning courses have run for many years and have been really successful. Many, but not all of the students, are at or beyond retirement age and many are already well-qualified, so replacing the courses with award bearing courses sadly will end a long tradition of offering general interest courses to members of the public.

At present there are 13 courses on offer at Dundee University, with over 200 registered enrolments. It seems such a shame to end the courses and I have asked the university for a re-think.

Professor Downes has now advised me :

We are replacing the current 'Courses for Adults' programme with a new suite of modules for students of all ages, which will give an introduction to studying at higher education level and will be credit bearing.

This aligns with our commitment to widening access to higher education. Modules will be available at the start of the next academic year in English, History, Creative Writing and Philosophy. There will be an option for students to opt-out of studying for credit.

These courses are replacing our previous provision, which was no longer sustainable and did not align with the priorities of the School of the Humanities and of the University.

The University's contributions to the local community are very important to me and to many of our staff and students. The breadth of these depends on building sustainable models of delivery wherever possible. I expect adult education will remain an important part of our work with the local community but we need to consider adult education in a broader context and across a wider range of subjects and disciplines. The approach being taken by the School of Humanities to ensure sustainable provision of Continuing Education is as follows:

- The School of Humanities initiative to change its continuing education offering to a suite of four 10 credit bearing modules will widen access to higher education and be in line with the Universities commitment to public engagement and outreach.
- This offering will extend the opportunity to reach people who may wish to engage with HE later in their lives, or who wish to study whilst having other commitments which prohibits them from a full time programme.
- A matriculated student undertaking study for credit may be able to apply for help with course fees from the following:
  - o Individual Learning Account (ILA)
  - o Part-time Fee Grant

There are wider implications for the University as a whole and for our commitments to, and responsibility for, public engagement.

Much work is currently being done to prepare the University's strategic plan for the period from 2017 to 2022 and I have asked our Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching) to review Continuing Education and its part in our widening access and public engagement work as part of the refreshed University strategy, which will be in place from the start of the next academic year.

I hope that the Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching) when reviewing Continuing Education will bear in mind that many constituents and the Dundee University Courses for Adults Association committee do not want the present provision to end.

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## Vice President condoles the passing away of Justice Altamas Kabir

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari has condoled the passing away of former Chief Justice of India, Shri Altamas Kabir.

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## Subway lines to link Beijing with cities in Hebei

Four new subway lines will be built to link Beijing and neighboring Hebei province by 2021, as part of the region's integrated development, Hebei's top economic planner said.



[China Daily]

The subway lines, together with other means of transportation, will cut the transfer time between the capital and cities in Hebei to less than 1 hour, according to a transportation plan released by the Hebei Development and Reform Commission for the 13th Five-Year Plan period (2016-20) period.

According to the plan, one of the four subways—the Pinggu Line—will link Beijing's Pinggu and Tongzhou districts with Sanhe in Langfang, Hebei.

Preparatory work for the Pinggu Line has already started and is expected to be completed by 2021, according to the National Development and Reform Commission.

The other three lines, which are in the planning phase, would link Yizhuang in Beijing with downtown Langfang; Daxing in Beijing with Gu'an in Langfang;

and Fangshan in Beijing with Zhuozhou in Baoding.

Development of the urban rail transportation system in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region must be accelerated as there is significant demand for transportation services for short- and medium-distance journeys in the region, according to the plan.

By 2015, five cities in Hebei—Langfang, Cangzhou, Shijiazhuang, Baoding and Tangshan—had become part of a “one-hour traffic circle” connecting them to the capital.

However, large volumes of commuters traveling to and from Beijing every day require bus, subway or intercity railway services that provide faster and more frequent modes of transport.

To better meet demand, a 58-billion-yuan (\$8.4 billion) investment will see the total length of the urban rail transportation system in Hebei, including lines connecting Beijing, reach 80 kilometers by 2020.

Intercity railway lines that connect Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei, not including subway lines, will be extended to a total of more than 400 km.

Intercity railway stations will be established mainly around Beijing’s new airport in Daxing district and Chongli in Zhangjiakou, a co-host of the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Construction of the stations is expected to guarantee convenient routes for passengers traveling between the new airport and Winter Olympics venues.

The upgrade of the transportation system will aid in moving Beijing’s noncapital functions, and the transfer of industries and people to Hebei, the plan said, adding that it will also create job opportunities and help develop the local economy.

“The system will make life more convenient for residents of the capital’s neighboring cities, which will attract more investment,” said Wang Yuling, an official at the Hebei Development and Reform Commission.