

growing confidence

promoting positive mental health and emotional wellbeing

Edinburgh City Council celebrates Raising Children with Confidence Programme

Edinburgh City Council's Growing Confidence project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, interviewed 162 parents and carers as part of a major new emotional health and well-being project spanning work with children, parents and teachers. Parent and carer responses indicated a clear demand for more and better information on how to prepare and support their children to cope with life's many challenges. Growing Confidence responded by developing a pilot programme, 'Raising Children with Confidence', aimed at parents and carers across Edinburgh. Introductory workshops were held in ten primary schools in Edinburgh and 129 parents attended. Of those parents, 94% (117) expressed an interest in doing 6 follow-up workshops, which launched in May.

Raising Children with Confidence forms part of the Growing Confidence project's holistic approach to promoting positive mental health and well-being and is designed to complement ongoing work in the same primary schools with children, staff and the community. The workshops cover the latest research around mental health and well-being and follow on from the success of similar training with over 280 teachers and staff from the Council's Children and Families department (Confident Staff, Confident Children). Topics include child development, emotional resilience and the role of positive relationships including:-

- Why do kids do that?
- What's love got to do with it?
- Cotton Wool Kids?
- Staying Connected?
- What makes us, us?
- Time Well Spent?

In total, 60 parents were able to attend the 6 follow up sessions and evaluation forms received so far show

- 98% found the course quite (14%) or very valuable (84%)
- 92% felt that their understanding and awareness of factors that affect children's mental health & well-being had improved
- 81% felt it had had a positive impact on their relationships with their children
- 100% that they enjoyed it & would recommend it to a friend

City of Edinburgh Council held a celebration event with 40 of these parents and carers to thank them for their involvement in the pilot and obtained further feedback from them to inform future course developments. A further 28 courses are planned this year.

Growing Confidence takes a proactive step towards a long-term reduction in mental ill health which is an area of wider concern in Scotland and worldwide. The UK ranks bottom of 21 industrialised countries in terms of children's subjective well-being (UNICEF), Scottish Government statistics indicate that 1 in 10 of Scotland's under 19 population have 'mental health problems which are so substantial that they have difficulties with their thoughts' and that almost 9% of the Scottish population over 15 take anti-depressants daily.

"Caring relationships are fundamental to positive mental health. The reason why this project is important is that it is taking a long term view to strengthening the relationships and connections between children, families, schools and local communities." Councillor MacLaren, Edinburgh City Council

The Growing Confidence Project and Edinburgh City Council are grateful to Standard Life for their support of the project, alongside sponsorship from the Big Lottery Fund.

Further Information

The Growing Confidence Project and City of Edinburgh Council are committed to sharing the information and research for the different areas project with parties interested in building similar projects. The statistical information gathered as part of the project, which provides invaluable insights into parent/carer, teacher and child attitudes and concerns about emotional health and well-being will be collated and made available on request. The programmes and training are evaluated and modified on an ongoing basis in response to the feedback of everyone taking part.

Primary Schools involved in the Raising Children with Confidence pilot:

Dairy Primary School
Roseburn Primary School
Castleview Primary School
Towerbank Primary School
Ratho Primary School

Juniper Green Primary School
Pirniehall Primary School
Fort Primary School
Preston Street Primary School
Royal Mile Primary School

Selected parent feedback of the 6 week course May - June 2009

"Thanks again for a most enjoyable and thought provoking course."
Parent from Juniper Green Primary School

"I have a much better understanding of my children's personal development and how important it is to appreciate their feelings and that it's important to spend quality time together as a family"
Parent from Pirniehall Primary School

"The presentation of the issues was carried out in a very professional manner and myself and my husband did enjoy it very much! Well done for your hard work and please continue to raise awareness in this very important subject!"
Parent from Preston Street Primary School

Selected parent feedback from the introductory workshops held early May 2009:

"Very good session with lots of information. Makes you realise how important we are to our children"

"The examples used were very insightful and highlighted the importance of emotional well-being"

"I thought it was pitched just right as an intro- it left me interested and wanting to know more"

Selected parent feedback from the initial interviews in autumn 2008:

"Parenting is challenging at all stages and anything that helps can only be welcomed. We're all learning all the time- it's not a done job being a parent."

"There are no rules to follow or books to say how to do things the right way. I feel most parents would appreciate the chance to discuss these issues."

"Mental health issues need to be addressed for parents, carers and children to understand."

Websites for further information:

Growing Confidence Project: www.growingconfidence.org

Unicef: www.unicef.org

Mental Health Foundation: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Parenting Across Scotland: www.parentingacrossscotland.org

ParentLine Scotland **0808 800 2222**