

PACEsetter

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Parent And Community Education from CANDL

How are we doing?

Over the summer, many of you will have received a questionnaire about the SFSC Programmes in which you have participated over the past two years. Many thanks to those of you who completed and returned it; not a huge number of you, admittedly, but enough for us to draw together some evidence about the Programme's effectiveness.

As well as sending out the questionnaire, we have analysed a random group of Pre and Post questionnaires (the ones participants fill in at the beginning and end of each Programme) from different years and different venues, and spoken to some of you on the phone about what the Programme meant to you. Although the full evaluation will not be

ready until the new year, we can already draw some conclusions. Firstly, even after several months, many of you are still using the strategies and ideas from the Programme every day. Secondly, although being part of a group is important to most of you, the ideas still work without that group support. Thirdly, many of you would like to do the Programme again, or refresh yourself about some parts of it.

Here at PACE we will be looking carefully at the results of this evaluation, and using it as we think about the way forward. And by the way, it's not too late to send in that questionnaire if you can still find it!

Barbara becomes our latest accredited facilitator!!!!

Since our last edition, Barbara Dormer has become a fully accredited facilitator for the SFSC Programme. Barbara has attended a 5-day training course with the REU, the sponsors of the Programme, and facilitated a programme at The King's Centre with Lynda Green. She then completed all the paperwork for her particular Programme – no mean feat, believe me!

In describing the experience of facilitating, Barbara said: "The parents' enthusiasm to share personal experiences and opinions has been enlightening, and then for the parents to take on board the Programme's strategies...has been a tremendous and exciting experience for me."

Many congratulations, Barbara – it was a lot of work, but we hope you feel it was worth it!

For details of current and forthcoming parenting programmes, just get in touch—contact details are on the back page.



Aargh..... and Hooray...the things that bother us, and the things that cheer us up!

Aargh

So – Christmas is coming, and once again families will be bombarded with adverts for the latest ‘must-haves’. Every year there are calls for the regulation of advertising to children, and every year it seems to get worse. In fact, it’s a multi-million pound industry, intent on turning children of all ages into materialistic consumers. Did you know, for example, that two-thirds of 3 year olds can recognise the McDonalds arches, and the average child is familiar with up to 400 brand names by the time they are 10?

Our children know what they want, and they are encouraged endlessly to ask for it by what they see on television, and advertising hoard-

ings. Nor is the answer it seems, simply to ban advertising during children’s television programmes. Do you know which programme is watched by more children than any other? It’s “Coronation Street”. The advertisers know that, and act accordingly.

Last year the National Consumers Council conducted a study amongst children aged between 9 and 18, asking them to keep diaries and scrapbooks of their shopping habits. The study produced some very interesting results. Many said they felt uncomfortable, pressurised and stressed by intrusive advertising, and for lots of them, it was the fact that they knew their families

were unable to afford the popular brand names that caused so much stress. And it wasn’t just Nike trainers that were the problem; younger children reported being laughed at in school because their lunchboxes contained Tesco own brand crisps, and not Walkers!

This is a problem that is not going to go away. How do you feel about advertising to children? Do you think it is something that children have to learn to live with, or should it be stopped? Is there anything that ordinary parents can do? Let us know what you think.



And Hooray.....

At a recent conference, I picked up a very good new resource for all of us who are interested in childhood, parenting and the family, called ‘Understanding Childhood’. A series of leaflets* written by experienced child psychotherapists (but don’t let that put you off—they are very readable!) it aims to give an insight into a child’s feelings and view of the world. It also aims to help

parents and those who work with children to make sense of a child’s behaviour. There are thirteen leaflets, covering everything from your new baby, your family and you, to the child’s experience of primary school and supporting teenagers. Fathers, grandparents and the extended family are also included, and there are discussions covering separation and change in the early years, divorce, temper tantrums, post-natal depression and bereavement.

If you would like a copy of any of these leaflets, just

contact us; alternatively they can be downloaded from www.understandingchildhood.net.

- *1. Your new baby, your family and you
2. Crying and sleeping
3. Postnatal depression
4. Sibling rivalry
5. Tempers and tears
6. Separations and changes
7. Understanding your overactive child
8. The child’s experience of primary school
9. Supporting teenagers
10. Fathers
11. Grandparents and the extended family
12. Divorce and separation
13. Bereavement



Young Mentors get going!

One of the things of which many of us are conscious is the need for good adult role models. An initiative in Lewisham, South London, The Association of Tamil Parishioners, or ATP for short, is addressing this, and CANDL has played a part in its development. So, what has ATP done? I went to see Mathew Manoharan, the inspiration behind the organisation to find out.

"A group of young Tamils, both Christian and Hindu, have been undertaking individual mentoring training with the Oasis Trust, and financed by a grant awarded to the ATP by the Faith Communities capacity building fund.

18 young people between the ages of 18 and 25 have completed 2 days training, and we are now looking to pair them with younger Tamils in the community."

"Why is this important?"

"There are two reasons. Firstly, there is no tradition of volunteering within the Tamil culture, and it is important for young adults to realise they can play a significant part in their

community, as well as working to earn a living. Secondly, we are all aware of the necessity for good role models in our communities, and the Tamils are no exception. This initiative means that young Tamils can build up relationships with people who understand their culture, and are also very aware of the pressures that living in Britain brings."

"Are you planning any other initiatives in the future?"

"Yes. We are hoping to undertake some research to find out how many Tamils there are in Lewisham – we are not a separate category in the Census figures, being classed simply as Asian, so it's almost impossible to know the size of the

community. We also plan to open a drop-in centre for young Tamils and their families. We have already held a conference, bringing together Tamils from the greater London area, and representatives from the voluntary sector in Lewisham, which was a great success."

I first met Mathew in 2004, when the ATP was just an idea in his mind. Now, thanks to his inspiration, it is beginning to affect the lives of a significant group of people in south London. I look forward to seeing what happens in the future!

Young mentors celebrate at their award ceremony in Lewisham



Christmas is coming!!!!

Yes, we know, and we have already mentioned it on page 2, but at this time of the year it is hard to avoid! But it doesn't have to be too stressful; here are some tips that might help.

- Try as far as possible to keep to normal meal and bedtimes over the Christmas period. Younger children in particular find lots of change in routine difficult.
- Involve the children in writing cards, wrapping up parcels etc. Remember – everything doesn't have to be perfect!!!!
- Make hand-made wrapping paper, using brown paper or butchers' paper. You can use paints, crayons, potato prints, stamps, etc. You can try your local fish and chip shop for butchers' paper; removal companies also use it for wrapping.
- One family I know spreads their presents over the 12 days of Christmas. They say that this stops that feeling of anti-climax on Christmas afternoon,

because you know there are still 11 days of present-opening to go!

- Let the children make their own decorations. Paper chains are relatively easy – buy ready-to-make ones, or make your own using old wrapping paper, or the Christmas pages from magazines
- Give children a 24-print disposable camera on December 1st, and ask them to take one picture that represents the time before Christmas every day. You can then make a scrapbook of the pictures in that 'boring' period between Christmas and the new year!
- Plan an outing; walk down your local high street to see the lights, or look at the shop windows. Count the number of Christmas trees, angels or cribs that you see. If you are brave, go on the bus or train to central London, to see the Christmas decorations. (There is usually a wonderful tree in Covent Garden.)

Above all, remember to communicate with each other! Don't keep your stresses to yourself – let others, including your children, know how you feel. It's OK to feel stressed occasionally!

We here at CANDL wish you a happy, peaceful and stress-free Christmas



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