



# Ashford Locality Children's Centres Services

A Sure Start Children's Centre



April 2010 - March 2011

Helping every child get the best start in life

All courses/groups are **FREE** unless otherwise stated



Contact us via:

Email: [info@surestart-ashford.co.uk](mailto:info@surestart-ashford.co.uk)

Freephone: 0800 587 7455

Text: 07717 427537



# Volunteering Opportunities

## Parents Forums

WANTED – MUMS, DADS, NANS, GRANS, UNCLES, AUNTS

Would you like to get involved or have input into what goes on at your local Children's Centre? If so how about joining our Parents Forum. Local parents give ideas and thoughts and discuss what services they would like to see. For more details or information please contact your nearest Children's Centre or text: 07717 427537.

## Aims

- To enable local people the opportunity to build new skills/access training
  - To enable local people to get involved/support their local Sure Start Children's Centre's activities/services
  - To work with the Early Years Family Liaison Officer and Community Involvement Worker and feed into the Sure Start Volunteer Group
  - To represent and promote Sure Start Children's Centres
  - To maintain existing skills
  - To be a link between families and the steering group
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## Steering Group

Each Ashford Locality Children's Centre has a Steering Group. These groups consist of parents/carers Children's Centre staff and Partner Agencies. They meet for about 2 hours bi-monthly. If you would like to become involved in leading and developing Ashford Locality Children's Centre services please contact your nearest Children's Centre Manager.

## Aims

- To participate and support the Sure Start Children's Centre agenda so that together we achieve the expected Every Child Matters outcomes for children in this locality
  - To guide the development of appropriate services and partnerships to ensure that all children within our locality can reach their potential and flourish when they start school
  - To ensure that the needs of all Pre-School Children within this community are integral to the development of services aimed at supporting children under the age of 5
  - To ensure that local services are reviewed and evaluated
  - To highlight relevant local needs and provide guidance on how to meet these needs. Where these needs cannot be met with local resources or partnerships the Steering Group should raise these with the Local Children Service Partnership.
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# Volunteering Opportunities

## Volunteer Opportunities

Bored? Want to make new friends? Can you spare a few hours a week? Enjoy the benefits of volunteering including support, training courses, social events and personal development. There is a 7 week course which will provide you with all the information and skills you need in becoming a Sure Start volunteer. To qualify for a space on our Volunteer Preparation Course you need to have completed at least 3 months of helping with Sure Start, completed the relevant forms and applied for a Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure. We hold a Volunteer Working Group every Tuesday during term time 9.30am-11.30pm where we get together to plan for events and to help develop the Children's Centres. If you can help and would like to get together with the other volunteers in a fun, informal way and you would like more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

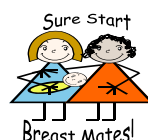
### Aims

- To boost volunteers' self-esteem
- To provide a supportive and challenging environment to work in
- To make new friends/increase social network (reduce isolation)
- To give local people the opportunity to build new skills/access training
- To enable local people to get involved/support their local Sure Start Children's Centre's activities and services
- To produce posters/literature for the programme
- To co-ordinate their own work with the Community Involvement Worker
- To plan activities for drop-ins and other services
- To offer new volunteering opportunities to the group
- To represent and promote Sure Start Children's Centres
- To maintain existing skills

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## Breastmates Peer Support Training

This 6 week course is newly accredited by the university of Greenwich which equips mothers with the skills and knowledge to enable them to provide mother to mother breastfeeding support. Most mums on completion of the course become Breastmate Volunteers. This course is open to any mother who has breastfed for a minimum of 3 months. For further information please contact Fiona or Nina on: 0800 587 7455. If you have any concerns or would like support with breastfeeding you can call our Telephone Support Line 10.00am-10.00pm, 7 days a week on: 07919 690827 or 07979 495776.



### Aims

- To enable breastfeeding peer supporters to work in the local community to support local breastfeeding mothers
  - To raise the profile of breastfeeding
  - To increase the length of time mothers choose to breastfeed for
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# Contents

What are Children's Centres?.....	5
Ashford Children's Centres Contact Details.....	6
Ante-natal Groups and Services.....	8
Speech and Language Groups and Services.....	10
Groups for Children Aged 0-1 Years.....	12
Groups for Children Aged 0-4 Years.....	14
Groups for Children Aged 0-5 Years.....	16
Courses for Parents/Carers.....	20
Groups and Services for Mums.....	23
Groups and Services for Dads.....	24
Other Services.....	25
Adult Learning .....	26
Specialist Groups.....	27
Partner Agencies.....	29
Childcare.....	33
Volunteering Opportunities.....	34

# Childcare

## Creche

All Children's Centre's Crèches offer high quality play opportunity for children aged 0-5 years old. We use the Early Years Foundation Stage to help each child to learn and develop. The overarching aim is to help young children achieve the five Every Child Matters outcomes of staying safe, being healthy, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

We have fully qualified staff ranging from NVQ Level 2 to Level 5 to provide the highest quality of care to your child. All our staff have a full Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check plus two references before they are able to work in the crèche.

We will support your child's learning in a stimulating, friendly and caring environment. We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers to meet the unique needs of individual children for example; following their home routines for sleep, eating and toileting and all crèche's offer children healthy drinks and snacks.

Most activities provided in our crèches are child-led and are planned to encourage their individual development and learning through play.

All crèche spaces need to be booked in advance and operate on a first come, first served basis. We encourage parents/carers to come for a pre-visit before they leave their children in the crèche to help them become familiar with their new environment and also unfamiliar staff and we also believe this will give parents/carers the opportunity to observe and get to know the staff who will be taking care of their children.

All crèche practitioners look forward to working in partnership with parents/carers and spending good quality play time with your children.

## Aims

- To provide a free on site child care service
- To encourage good quality play and learning opportunities which are in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage
- To facilitate a nurturing, stimulating and inclusive environment that meets the holistic approach to the care needs and well being of the individual children and families
- To employ local people to work in crèche
- To signpost families in need whilst safeguarding children
- To increase the number of volunteers that gain childcare qualifications

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## Kiddie Kapers Nursery

We aim to provide a safe, friendly, clean and comfortable environment for all children to play and learn. We are located at The Willow Centre off Brookfield Road. If you would like more information, please contact Kiddie Kapers on: 0800 587 7455 or come along and look around.



## Aims

- To deliver a service of the highest standards that will develop, improve and sustain each child's overall quality of life
  - To ensure that our service is delivered flexibly, attentively and in a non-discriminatory fashion
  - To respect children as individuals taking into account their specific needs
  - To manage our services efficiently and effectively and ensuring 'learning through play'
  - To value partnerships with parents/guardians/carers
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# Partner Agency Services

## Link Lunches

Community Link Lunches are an opportunity for local people and professionals who are working with/have a vested interest in services for families with under 5s. They are held every eight weeks at Children's Centres across Ashford and give you the opportunity to find out what's going on in your local area. Lunch is provided for everyone attending. Come along and have your say. If you have ideas that you would like to share regarding services or for more information about when the next Community Link Lunch is please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

## Aims

- To promote an integrated approach to partnership working across the locality in order to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes for children under five
  - To raise awareness of Children's Centres targets and the services provided within the Locality
  - To enable regular communication between partner agencies
  - To improve the development of appropriate service by highlighting areas of local need
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# What are Children's Centres?

Children's Centres provide multi-agency services that are flexible and meet the needs of young children aged 0-5 years and their families in their local community. The Government intends that the provision of good quality integrated services should have a broad and lasting impact on children, their parents/carers and the wider community. By 2010 there will be a Children's Centre in every community in Kent. The types of services available will include some or all of the following, dependant on local requirements:

- Family support and outreach to parents
- Drop-in sessions for parents/carers and children
- Ante-natal classes and baby clinics
- Information and advice about breastfeeding, parenting and speech and language
- Services for children with special needs and disabilities
- Childcare provision
- Early education integrated with childcare
- Encouragement and support for parents/carers thinking about training or finding a new job
- Links with voluntary agencies
- Links with local schools

## Key Aspects of Multi Agency Working in Children's Centres

Ashford Locality Children's Centres have developed strong partnerships to help our children to get the best start in life. Some examples of partners include:

- Health Visitors and Midwives' attendance at parent/carer and toddler groups.
- Speech and Language training for centre staff and support for individual children within groups.
- Qualified Teacher support at 'drop in' sessions to advise parents/carers on the benefits of learning through play.
- Health promotion campaigns through courses such as 'Healthy Eating' delivered by the Health team.
- Other visiting agencies will also include Children and Families' Information Service and Job Centre Plus.
- Voluntary agencies also play a vital role in service delivery, for example Homestart provide an outreach service to parents/carers who are experiencing problems either with parenting issues or through other family circumstances.

## Why do we need Children's Centres?

The introduction of Children's Centres is part of a national government strategy to deliver better outcomes for all young children by using an integrated approach to service delivery, initially in areas where it is most needed, but ultimately in every community. Where children are living in poverty, it has been identified that it has a profound impact on the child and their family and can mean social exclusion, problems in education, employment, mental and physical health and social interaction.

Children's Centres are ideally placed to address child poverty and it's effects by providing fully inclusive and accessible services to all, therefore significantly improving outcomes for all children focusing on early intervention and preventative work.

For more information about Kent Children's Centres please visit:

[www.kent.gov.uk/childrenscentres](http://www.kent.gov.uk/childrenscentres)

# Ashford Children's Centre's Contact Details

## The Willow Centre



The Willow Centre,  
Halstow Way,  
Off Brookfield Road,  
Ashford.  
TN23 4EY

0800 587 7455

## The Ray Allen Centre



The Ray Allen Centre,  
Stanhope Road,  
Stanhope,  
Ashford.  
TN23 5RN

01233 620495

## Bluebells Children's Centre



Bluebells Children's Centre,  
School Road,  
Hothfield,  
Ashford.  
TN26 1HA

01233 622296

## Sure Steps Children's Centre



Sure Steps Children's Centre,  
Belmont Road,  
Kennington,  
Ashford.  
TN24 9LS

01233 624857

# Partner Agency Services

## Community Wardens

Community Wardens work closely with Children's Centres across Ashford. For example; Maurice Stewart who is based at The Ray Allen Centre. Maurice along with the other Community Wardens are here to help, advise & support you with community issues, such as crime & anti-social behaviour, housing, home security, police related advice/issues, getting to school safely, elderly community safety advice and litter/dog fouling. Maurice has a drop-in at The Ray Allen Centre every other Tuesday 1.00pm-2.30pm. Contact Maurice on: 07813 694389, 01622 696368 or The Ray Allen Centre on: 01233 620495 or contact your nearest centre.

## Aims

- To give advice to local residents on protecting themselves, their homes and property from crime
- To give information on how individuals can play a part in keeping their community safe
- To provide information on joint working with Ashford Borough Council and other agencies on problems such as nuisance neighbours, fly tipping, antisocial behaviour, graffiti, parking or any other issue that may be decreasing the quality of their living
- To provide a friendly approachable point of contact, available to offer help and advice to residents

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## Housing and Police Drop-In

We hold a drop-in fortnightly on Tuesdays 9.30am-11.30am. Please come and let us know about what you think of the services and what you would like to see. Are your interests and needs being addressed? All information given will be confidential. There will also be other agencies present including Police Community Support Officers and Ward Councillors who will be able to help with issues or concerns which you may have about your community. These groups will soon be available at most of the Children's Centres across Ashford. For more information please contact your nearest centre.

## Aims

- To give advice to local residents on protecting themselves, their homes and property from crime
  - To give information on how individuals can play a part in keeping their community safe
  - To provide information on joint working with Ashford Borough Council and other agencies on problems such as nuisance neighbours, fly tipping, antisocial behaviour, graffiti, parking or any other issue that may be decreasing the quality of their living
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# Partner Agency Services

## Stop Smoking Service

All our Ashford Locality Children's Centres provide a Stop Smoking service for example; The Willow Centre every Tuesday at 10.00am with a support group running from 10.30am-11.30am. The NHS Eastern and Coastal Kent Stop Smoking Service provides a free, friendly and confidential service offering advice and support and helps many different people from all walks of life. We understand that the time has to be right for you and we are ready when you are. You are four times more likely to stop completely with the use of nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) together with support. If you would like to receive more information about the service and find out how you can receive up to 12 weeks nicotine replacement therapy for a one off prescription charge (normal exemptions apply), then please do not hesitate to contact us. Please call 0800 849 4444 to book an appointment or to find out about other venues and services in the area.



### Aims

- To make the service more accessible to all those parents/carers and parents-to-be who would like help to quit but do not know where they can go.
- To have an advisor on hand who is always ready and willing to help you achieve that healthier and wealthier lifestyle.

## Citizens Advice Bureau

Have you got a problem with debt, employment or welfare benefits? Do you qualify for legal aid? If so then come along to The Willow Centre for our drop-in every Tuesday 9.30am-10.30am. The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. There will also be advice available on housing, family and immigration. Further details can be obtained at Ashford Citizens Advice Bureau, 10 Norwood Street, Ashford. Or you can call them on: 01233 626185 weekdays between 9.30am-1.00pm.



### Aims

- To provide the advice people need for the problems they are facing
- To improve the policies and practices that affects people's lives

## Ashford Playlink Plus

Playlink Plus is run by Action for Children and provides a wide range of activities and play opportunities for families with children under 8. This service is for referred families only. The sessions are held on Tuesdays and Thursday 9.00am-12.00pm during term time only and 10.00am-2.00pm during holidays at The Ray Allen Centre. For further information please contact Playlink Plus on: 01233 643103.



### Aims

- To provide a safe space for families to play
- To provide the opportunity for parents/carers and children to learn new skills
- To offer parenting advice and support

# Ashford Children's Centre's Contact Details

## The Children's Centre at Tenterden



The Children's Centre at Tenterden,  
Recreation Ground Road,  
Tenterden,  
Ashford.  
TN23 6RA

01580 761970

## Children's Centres Coming Soon

## The Children's Centre at Furley Park

Furley Park School,  
Reed Crescent,  
Park Farm,  
Ashford.  
TN23 3PA

01233 641156

## The Children's Centre covering East Stour, Newtown and the Town Centre

For more information please contact:

Sam Ansell:  
07833 232675  
Tasha Morgan:  
07850 715520

# Ante-natal Groups and Services

## Ante-natal Birth Preparation Classes

Held at several of our Ashford Locality Children's Centres. Some may have different names such as The Willow Centre's Baby Business. For more information and dates and times of these sessions, please speak to your midwife (who's number will be found at your G.P Surgery).

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## Midwifery Clinic

These are ante-natal clinics provided by East Kent Hospital Trust Midwives. These clinics care for women from Singleton Surgeries and Musgrove Park. Other clinics are carried out in local G.P. surgeries. Access to other Sure Start services are available through your midwife. For more information please contact your midwife (who's number will be found at your G.P surgery).

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## STEPS (Teen Club)

A meeting place which is appropriate for all to reach, with suitable dates and times, where we will ensure a welcome approach in a relaxed informal manner. You will have the opportunity to discuss any concerns that you may have, inform us if you have any suggestions or ideas you'd like to share with the group or you may just wish to chat with other young Mums and their birthing partners. A multi agency care team will endeavour to support and provide information relating to your needs in a non-judgemental and confidential manner. We will endeavour to support you in your pregnancy and beyond with knowledge of healthy lifestyles and of the appropriate Ante-natal and Parent Education.

## Aims

- To prepare expectant parents for the birth of their baby
  - To provide ante-natal care as per the National Institute for Clinical Health and Excellence guidelines to ensure good health and well being of the mother and gain better outcomes for the new born.
  - To provide a service of care promoting knowledge and awareness to the parents through ante-natal preparation, healthy lifestyles and Parent Education/ Ante-natal Classes.
  - To provide a non-judgmental environment where ante-natal care can be delivered ensuring privacy, confidentiality and a trusting and supportive approach to the individual needs of everyone involved.
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# Partner Agency Services

## Family Planning

We hold a FREE Contraceptive Service at The Willow Centre. This friendly and confidential service is held 1.00pm-3.00pm every Wednesday and is a drop in. We offer Chlamydia screening, pregnancy testing, termination referrals, cervical smear testing and free condoms for men and women. If an appointment is needed please contact The Willow Centre on: 0800 587 7455.

## Aims

- To provide an accessible and friendly service
  - To improve the uptake for contraception
  - To provide an alternative location for cervical smear testing
  - To provide professional and non-judgemental advice
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## Salvation Army Drop-In

An informal group who meet at the Light Bites Café at The Ray Allen Centre on a Thursday morning 9.30am-11.30am, offering a friendly ear and help with filling in forms. Anyone is welcome to come along for a hot drink and a chat. For more information please contact The Salvation Army on: 01233 643480 or email them on: ashfordcorps@salvationarmy.org.



## Aims

- To offer support for local families in a safe and friendly environment
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## Other Services

### Transport

Children's Centres understand that it can sometimes be difficult for parents/carers to have access to transport especially in some of the rural areas of Ashford therefore we are sometimes able to provide transport for you so you can access Sure Start services. For more information or to find out if this is available please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To enable parents/carers to access Ashford Children's Centre's services
- To enable access to groups and services to reduce isolation

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### Light Bites Community Café



Light Bites is our community café both at The Ray Allen Centre and The Willow Centre. It is a welcoming, comfortable, place where you can sit, have a chat and enjoy a cup of coffee and a piece of cake or sample one of our delicious specials of the day served by our friendly staff. This café is open to members of the public. Hours of opening: Monday-Friday 8.00am-3.30pm. Buffets and parties both within the centre and outside catered for. For further information contact Sheila on: 0800 587 7455.

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### Kiosks

The Kiosks provide access under four main headings and allow easy access to:

- Information/services
- The Job Centre which allows access to Direct Gov, Job Centre Plus, Kent County Council, etc.
- Benefits which provides information on entitlements, families can check they are claiming the correct entitlement of benefits, etc.
- Housing which offers advice and an interactive referral form.

Touch screen kiosks are available for use at three of Ashford Locality Children's Centres which are The Willow Centre, The Ray Allen Centre and Bluebells Children's Centre.

Families can ask staff to help them access relevant forms, make initial appointments and find advice,. Families will be directed easily to the correct sites for information. Staff and partner agencies can access information in these areas easily to support families.

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## Ante-natal Groups and Services

### Monday Mums

This is a parent/carer and baby group for parents/carers with babies under 18 months. An informal group run by volunteers which is a great place to socialise your baby and make new friends. Breastfeeding support is available. Older siblings are welcome but must be supervised. This group is open to mothers/fathers and carers. For more information please contact The Willow Centre on: 0800 587 7455 or text: 07717 427537.

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### Baby Bouncers

A parent to parent support group for parents/carers and babies under 1 year. Come along and meet other mums/dads/carers and make new friends. Get some advice on specific problems or just come along and share tips and ideas. Breastmates will be available for mums needing support with breastfeeding. Please come along and join us every Thursday from 10.30am-12.00pm. For more information, please contact Sure Steps Children's Centre on: 01233 624857 or text: 07717 427537.

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### Bluebell's First Time Parents

Calling all new parents/carers. Come along to our weekly drop in for all new parents/carers. This session runs Wednesday mornings 10.30am-12.00pm. Support and information is available and this is a great chance to make new friends with a coffee and a chat in a relaxed environment. Breastfeeding support is also available. This group is only open to Bluebells Children's Centre registered families with at least one child under 9 months. For more information please contact Bluebells Children's Centre on: 01233 622296 or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To improve social support networks for parents/carers and their children
  - To increase breastfeeding duration
  - To increase parental knowledge on a wide range of issues related to young babies
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### Watch This Space

More Children's Centres are being developed across the Ashford Locality which will be running courses similar to the above. Please feel free to contact your nearest centre for more information.

# Speech and Language Groups and Services

## Speech and Language Therapy

Speech and Language Therapists and Assistants attend Sure Start groups on a regular basis and are available Monday-Friday 8.00am-4.00pm to give advice, answer questions or just to have a chat about your child's communication skills and development. They work together with local nurseries and visit them each term to give advice and support. They also provide training opportunities for nursery staff and local childminders to give more information and to enhance their skills in speech, language and communication development. As part of Sure Start they are able to come out and visit you, to provide you with advice and support around your child's communication in your own home. For more information please contact The Willow Centre on: 0800 587 7455 or text: 07717 427537.

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## Sign and Rhyme

Come along to Sign and Rhyme. It's a fun, informal group which incorporates singing and Makaton signing to encourage and support children's language development. Each session lasts for 30 minutes and is for children aged 6 months-2.5 years. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

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## Makaton for Babies

This informal 6 week course is a fun and easy way to learn signs with your baby. Signing while speaking has been shown to encourage the development of communication and language skills. It can help reduce frustrations and helps you to understand your baby's needs and wants. Makaton Signing for Babies is provided as a series of sessions for you and your baby. Together you will learn up to 100 signs and symbols and have fun practising them in songs, games and activities. Why not come along to a 6 week course and have a go and enjoy the benefits of signing with your baby. Priority will be given to families with children who have been referred in by health professionals. A free crèche is provided for children under 5 but has to be booked in advance. For more information please contact The Willow Centre on: 0800 587 7455 or text: 07717 427537.

## Aims

- To give parents/carers an understanding of Makaton symbols and explain how and why Makaton can be used as part of communication with babies
- To teach parents/carers Makaton signs and introduce symbols
- To encourage parents/carers to engage and interact positively with their babies
- To encourage parents/carers to sign with their child and help parents/carers to gain confidence using Makaton signs in everyday situations
- To improve communication, language and literacy
- To improve parental understanding of child development and why activities are important
- To increase enjoyment of spending time with their children
- To help parents/carers to understand their baby's needs, thoughts and ideas
- To help reduce frustration
- To enhance early vocabulary and understanding
- To encourage the development of speech
- <sup>10</sup>To enrich your baby's relationships
- To build confidence and self-esteem
- To stimulate baby's intellectual and emotional development

# Specialist Groups

## Childminder Drop-In

Childminder Drop-Ins are run at most Children's Centres across the locality. Childminders can socialise with their colleagues to discuss issues and share ideas for good practice. Minded children are able to play with the toys and join in with the activities available. For more information about when and where this session is being held please contact Sally-Ann Nash on: 01233 622597.

## Aims

- To improve childminder's links with others and gain advice and support
- To enable play and social opportunity for the children
- To enable new childminders to be integrated and meet with their designated Development Worker and Support Childminder
- To facilitate a 'feeder' opportunity for childminders to link with Children's Centre's services

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## Young Parents Group

These groups are for young parents/carers. The groups are free to any young parent/carer under 20 years of age and you are welcome to just drop in. They provide support to young parents/carers in a welcoming, non-judgemental environment. They also provide an opportunity for you to meet with other young parents/carers, as well as offering access to play equipment, short courses and trips out.

Ashford YAPs Groups are held at:

The Ray Allen Centre, Stanhope Road, Ashford. 01233 620495 or text: 07717 427537  
Monday 12.30pm-2.30pm

Sure Steps Children's Centre, Belmont Road, Ashford. 01233 624857 or text: 07717 427537  
Thursday 12.30pm-2.30pm

The Children's Centre at Tenterden, Recreation Ground Road, Tenterden. 07711 643281 or text: 07717 427537  
Friday 12.30pm-2.30pm

## Aims

- To enable positive parenting
- To support young parents/carers when making life choice decisions - this could be in relation to education, training, employment, diet, health, ante/post-natally for parents/carers and children
- To encourage parents/carers to use the 'baby book accreditation' which will work towards credits for a GCSE. This is available at some of our YAPs groups
- To increase young parents/carers engagement with Sure Start Children's Centres
- To improve support networks for young parents/carers
- To form positive relationships with their peers
- To enable young parents/carers to engage with different agencies
- To improve the health and well being of young parents/carers and their children
- To delay second pregnancy

# Adult Learning

## Adult Education Classes

We work closely with Adult Education and other providers to provide a range of courses for parents/carers for example; a back to work course, literacy and numeracy courses, story sacks and much more.

These courses will be delivered throughout the year. A free crèche is provided for children under the age of 5 but needs to be booked in advance. We may also be able to assist with transport at some venues. There are various courses held across the locality of Ashford so please contact your nearest centre to see what is available or text: 07717 427537.

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## Adult Learning at Skills Plus

Do you need qualifications for work or to join a course? Do you want to be able to help your child/ren or grandchild/ren with their homework? Do you want to brush up your own skills? If so come to the Skills Plus Centre! All Skills Plus courses are FREE. They are aimed at adults working at any level of the adult literacy and numeracy core curriculum who want to brush up or develop their existing skills in the use of: Reading Writing Speaking Listening Maths

An individual learning plan is developed between you and your tutor to enable you to work at your own pace with tutor support and guidance. Qualifications can be gained. For more information or to arrange an appointment please drop in to The Ray Allen Skills Plus Centre on a Tuesday or contact them on: 01233 208619.

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## Careers Advice on Learning and Working

Drop-in to see Careers Advisor Jenny Pullen from Next Step, who will be at The Ray Allen Centre on the first Thursday of each month 9.30am-12.30pm. Jenny will be in the cafe, on hand to give advice on CV writing, interview techniques, looking for jobs, adult learning, confidence building and more! Find Jenny in the café or ask for her at reception. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To equip parents/carers with the skills they need to succeed within the workplace
  - To enable parents/carers to achieve economic wellbeing
  - To give parents/carers the confidence to get back into work
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# Speech and Language Groups and Services

## Makaton Signing for Beginners

This is a certified course to learn about the Makaton system of signs and symbols. It promotes communication development in children with or without communication difficulties. Signs and symbols are taught from stages 1-4. We also offer Makaton follow up workshops teaching signs from stages 5-8. There is a charge of £25 per person for the 2 manuals that you will be given. Families are also welcome for one fee of £25. A free crèche is offered for some courses but not all of them so please contact The Willow Centre to find out if this is available on: 0800 587 7455 or text: 07717 427537. This course is also available to anyone working in an Early Years setting.

### Aims

- To increase parents/carers/Nursery Staff/Early Years Educators' understanding of the history and of using Makaton Signing System with children/adults in their environment
  - To enable participants to learn signs and symbols from stages 1-4 plus additional vocabulary
  - To enable participants to feel confident to use Makaton Signing and Symbols in their environment
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## 18-26 Months Communication Checks

Informal one to one appointments for parents/carers of children aged 18-26 months to discuss speech and language development. Parents/carers will need to make appointments to bring their child into their nearest centre where speech and language staff will observe the child and chat with the parent/carer regarding ways to promote and develop communication development and play skills. For more information please contact The Willow Centre on: 0800 587 7455 or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To check if children are reaching their expected speech and language developmental milestones
  - To identify children who may require early intervention to support speech and language development but also to recognise those who are achieving their milestones
  - To recognise the important role parents/carers have in their child's speech and language development and play
  - To discuss ways to encourage positive interaction with their child thus developing communication and play skills
-

# Groups For Children Aged 0-1 Years

## Baby Massage

Baby massage is run in most of our Children's Centres. This can be relaxing for both parent/carer and baby. Taking time out together for a massage teaches baby how to relax and you will relax too. Massage has a lot of physical benefits and for babies can play a vital role in circulation, digestion and growth. Using simple techniques you might ease the symptoms of colds, colic and teething. Bonding with your baby can take some time and doesn't always happen easily. The bonding experience can be encouraged through touch, spending quality time together and eye-to-eye contact with your baby. Baby Massage is for babies aged 8 weeks to 6/7 months. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To improve communication between parent/carer and baby
- To help calm babies emotions and relieve stress
- To soothe babies and help them to sleep better
- To help babies to develop awareness of their body
- To enhance parents/carers ability to understand their babies' needs
- To aid digestion and help to relieve colic, wind and constipation
- To help develop muscle tone, co-ordination and suppleness
- To strengthen the immune system
- To regulate breathing and relieve nasal congestion
- To improve skin texture

## Crawlers

Crawlers is a drop-in group that meets weekly on Thursdays 9.30am-11.00am term time only at the new Children's Centre based at Furley Park School, for all families who have a child/ren up to the age of one. Come along to meet other parents/carers in a relaxed play environment and share experiences as your baby develops. No need to book, just turn up and play. Light refreshments will be provided. For more information please contact The Willow Centre on: 0800 587 7455 or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To meet new friends/increase social network
- To interact with baby in a play environment
- To access support as and when needed
- To enable families to find out about local activities
- To enable families to be involved in the development of the new Children's Centre



# Other Services

## Multi-Sensory Room

Our Starlight Studio is furnished with cushioned spaces, light tubes, light box flooring, different fabrics to feel and music to stimulate the senses through touch, sight and sound. You can book this room as a family or as a group and it is FREE. You will need to attend initial training (approx 2hrs) on how to use the room, prior to booking. To book or for further information please call The Ray Allen Centre on: 01233 620495 or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To offer a stimulating and failure free experience for children of all ages and abilities.
- To help develop children's self esteem and self confidence and to help play an important part in the development of their emotional well-being.

## Toy Libraries

Some of our Children's Centres have toy libraries which offer a diverse collection of toys selected to cater for all ages and abilities. Some of our toys are specifically purchased to meet the need of children with additional needs. The main purpose of the toy library is for parents/carers and children to take home different toys for up to four weeks. There is an annual membership of £2.50 which is required to join the library and thereafter toys can be borrowed for a fee of 50 pence per small toy and £1.00 per large one. All toys are for children aged 0-5 years old. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

## Lending Library

This is where you can come along and choose a book for your child/ren for you both to enjoy together. Just choose the book and sign it out. Once you have finished with the book come along and pick another one. Settling down with your child to read a book can be a relaxing and rewarding experience for both parent/carer and child in an often hectic day. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To provide of a wide range of toys and books for lending to families
- To provide information and advice about play and sharing books
- To give access to a rich variety of high quality toys and books
- To provide toys and books to suit the abilities of all children
- To enable all children to develop vital skills
- To give parents/carers the opportunity to discover the appropriate toys, books and play activities for their children
- To give parents/carers the knowledge to understand the role of play and imagination in child development
- To allow parents/carers to develop their parenting skills

# Groups & Services for Dads

## Chill with Dads

This group meets on the first Tuesday of every month 7.00pm-9.00pm (without children) at Bluebells Children's Centre then on the fourth Saturday of every month at various Children's Centres across the locality. This is a great chance to meet other dads and male carers to share information and enhance your knowledge on a variety of topics. On the Saturdays you will be able to take part in play and craft activities, singing and rhymes and local trips which are free. For more information please contact Home Start on: 01233 647209, Kent Children and Families' Information Services on: 08000 323230 or you can look at the website [www.kent.gov.uk/childrenscentres](http://www.kent.gov.uk/childrenscentres).

## Aims

- To help dads/male carers spend more time with their children
- To provide support to dads/male carers
- To provide more fun time with children
- To meet and chat with other dads/male carers
- To provide an informal information session about parenting and to allow dads to have their say
- To provide social activities with other dads/male carers
- To provide information about what is going on locally for families and children



# Groups For Children Aged 0-1 Years

## Healthy Eating for Babies

Babies are normally ready to start taking solid food at 6 months old. At this age babies can sit up and are ready to begin chewing. We run some workshops for parents/carers with babies under 6 months to provide information on baby led weaning, suitable healthy foods and ideas about moving onto a mixed diet. We run regular workshops across the locality. Please contact your nearest centre to find out when the next one is or text: 07717 427537.

## Aims

- To encourage parents/carers to introduce healthy foods correctly in order to promote and meet the physical, developmental, nutritional and emotional needs of all babies
- To prevent any physical, developmental and nutritional problems that can arise from incorrect feeding of babies
- To prevent problems associated with eating and food



## Busy Bees

Busy Bees is a parent/carer and toddler group/coffee morning that's held at Willesborough Infant school on the 2nd and 4th Friday of each month, from 9.00am-11.00am. Parents/carers can come along and have a cup of tea/coffee and meet other parents/carers while their children enjoy taking part in creative activities, playing with toys and joining in for a song time at the end of the session.

## Aims

- To provide families with information on services within the local area.
- To provide good quality play opportunities, including a craft session and a song time.
- To provide families with opportunities to make new friends/increase social network (reduce isolation)
- To give local people the opportunity to build new skills/access training
- To enable local people to get involved/support their local Sure Start Children Centre activities/services.
- To engage with families that may be categorised as hard to reach.
- To create good links with the school and community.
- To build good relationships with families before they attend the school
- To support families with the transition of starting school
- To recruit and offer new volunteering opportunities to the group
- To represent and promote Sure Start Children's Centres
- To encourage families to get involved in community events i.e. Carnival, Teddy Bear's Picnic etc
- To provide families with a healthy snack.

# Groups For Children Aged 0-4 Years

## Movers and Shakers

This is a music and movement group for children aged 18 months-4 years. Children and parents/carers get the opportunity to learn new songs and dances, play instruments and learn Makaton signs to nursery rhymes. At the end of each term children take part in a concert. For more information please contact The Willow Centre on: 0800 587 7455 or text: 07717 427537 .

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## Melody Makers

This is a music and movement group run by a local mum and allows access to regular focused music sessions for 6 weeks of music filled fun. This group is aimed at children aged 18 months-4 years. Younger siblings/children welcomed to be part of general musical stimulus. For more information please contact Sure Steps on: 01233 624857 or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- For children aged 18 months-4 years to have access to regular, focused music sessions
- To improve children's listening and attention skills
- To increase children's vocabulary and communication skills
- To encourage parents/carers to spend quality time interacting and singing with their children
- For parents/carers to go home and sing with their children and widen their repertoire of songs and music
- To improve the development of balance, gross and fine motor skills
- To enable parents/carers and children to use Makaton signing during the group and also at home



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## Healthy Steps

Run by the local health visiting team this fun group is designed to both share information and support parents/carers with issues such as weaning, sleep patterns, behaviour management and minor illnesses and to provide educational and exploratory play and activities for the under 5's. Come and join in and pick up some top tips! For details of dates or for more information please contact Sure Steps Children's Centre on: 01233 624857 or The Children's Centre covering East Stour, New Town and the Town Centre on: 07833 232675 or 07850 715520 or text: 07717 427537. Please note this course does not run weekly.

### Aims

- To provide specific information to meet families' needs and offer suggestions about how to transfer suggestions to the care of children
  - To provide a safe, non-judgemental environment for parents/carers to ask questions of health professionals and other parents/carers
  - To provide an opportunity for babies to be weighed
- 

# Groups & Services for Mums

## Freedom Programme

Domestic abuse can be behaviour that is physically, sexually and psychologically abusive and is directed by one partner (or ex-partner) against another. It can include domination or control of a partner. Abusers use physical and sexual violence, threats, money, emotional and psychological abuse to keep power over their partners. The abuse can go on over a long period of time.

The Freedom Programme runs for 12 sessions (term time only). It is a free course for women who have or who are experiencing domestic abuse and is very confidential and supportive. Free childcare is provided on a first come, first served basis and needs to be booked in advance.

For more information or to find out where the next course is being held please contact Wendy Bartlett on: 07745 644975.

### Aims

- To increase women's ability to take control of their lives
  - To increase women's perception of the importance of, and ability to, make positive use of social provisions to increase employability and/or to achieve economic independence
  - To recognise the beliefs held by abusive men
  - To recognise the impact of their life experiences on their own attitudes and beliefs
  - To increase women's ability to recognise what steps they need to take to protect their children
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## Craft Attack

Craft Attack is for women with babies and young children who have developed low moods after childbirth. The group will be for 6-8 women and will run for 12 weeks during term time only. This group is referral only and the referrers are Health Visitors, Midwives, GPs, Social Workers, Children's Centre staff and Homestart Co-ordinators. A free crèche is provided which will need to be booked in advance. There is also transport available if needed. For more information please contact Bluebells Children's Centre on: 01233 622296 or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To use arts and crafts to help members explore how they are feeling
  - To identify hidden strengths and talents
  - To provide the opportunity to make new friends
  - To provide the opportunity to gain confidence and self-esteem
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# Courses for Parents/Carers

## Speakeasy

Speakeasy is a course which offers a flexible and relaxed way to gain greater confidence in an area that can cause embarrassment and awkwardness for parents/carers.

The main aim of the course is to encourage parents/carers to provide positive sex and relationship education within the home. This can really be beneficial to parents/carers as they learn about the physical and emotional change taking place at puberty, gain an awareness of what sex and relationship education means in the context of family life and develop confidence and skills in identifying and responding to the needs of their own children.

They also explore societal and cultural attitudes towards sex and sexuality as it relates to children and gain knowledge of the different kinds of contraception that are available and what is being taught in schools.

This course runs for 6 weeks and can lead to an Open College Network Accreditation. A free crèche is provided for children under 5 which will need to be booked in advance. Please contact your nearest centre for more details or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To promote an understanding of the physical and emotional changes taking place at puberty
- To raise awareness of what sex and relationship education means in the context of family life
- To build confidence and skills in identifying and responding to the needs of their own children
- To explore societal and cultural attitudes towards sex and sexuality as it relates to children
- To gain knowledge of the different kinds of contraception that are available
- To gain information on sex and relationship education in schools
- To gain information and knowledge on child protection strategies

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## Cook and Taste

Cook and Taste is a four week course. Participants will learn several easy, quick and cheap dishes that you can try at home and adapt to suit you and your family. It is based around creating a healthy balanced diet, including five a day and cooking from a store cupboard. There is also a healthy snack and lunchbox week and the opportunity to try all the food prepared at the end. There will be a member of our crèche team will be on hand to look after your children however there is no formal childcare provision. For more information please contact The Willow Centre on: 0800 587 7455 or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To increase the amount of parents/carers incorporating five a day, the fruit and vegetable rainbow and healthy balance in their diets
- To enable participants to cook healthy meals from scratch
- To increase the amount of new ingredients participants choose to try

# Groups For Children Aged 0-4 Years

## Family Clubs

Most Children's Centres across the locality run Family Clubs in partnership with our Health Visitor colleagues. For example; The Willow Centre's Family Club runs every Wednesday 1.30pm-3.00pm at South Ashford Baptist Church, Brookfield Road. This group is informal and provides parents/carers who are new to the area with the chance to meet new friends and find out about what is happening in their area. Often at these sessions there is breastfeeding support, play activities and discussions on health issues. Local Health Visitors are often available to give support and for baby weighing. Healthy snacks are provided. This group is for children aged 0-4 years old and is open to all. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To provide specific information to meet families' needs and offer childcare advice
- To provide a safe, non-judgemental environment for parents/carers to ask questions of health professionals and other parents/carers
- To provide an opportunity for babies to be weighed
- To provide an opportunity for new parents/carers to meet and socialise so reducing isolation
- To provide play opportunities for the children consisting of messy play, imaginative play and song time using Makaton signing

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## Toddler Energy

Toddler Energy is a six week course for 2-4 year olds. Come and enjoy helping your toddler let off some energy, using music and exciting equipment. For more information please contact Sure Steps Children's Centre on 01233 624857 or The Children's Centre covering East Stour, New Town and the Town Centre on: 07833 232675 or 07850 715520 or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To provide an opportunity for parents/carers to meet other parents/carers and make new friends
- To provide an opportunity for children to take part in physical activity benefitting them both physically and emotionally
- To work towards developing and improving physical, social and emotional development and language and communication
- To develop confidence within parents/carers encouraging them to join in and work with their children making sessions fun, motivating and above all to aid essential bonding
- To provide an opportunity to use fun equipment such as hoops, beanbags, parachute, balls and hoppers as well as music and movement



# Groups For Children Aged 0-5 Years

## Art Workshops

Parents/carers and children come along and join in the messy fun with Art Workshops. In these workshops children can explore their creative side. There is a theme to each session for example; weather. The children can get stuck in using paints, clay and sponges. These groups are run during the holidays and are open to families with at least one child under 5. Older siblings are welcome too. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To develop children's fine motor skills and aid children with writing and drawing skills
- To develop children's learning, social and emotional skills which gives them the self-confidence and self-esteem they need to continue positive relationships throughout their lives
- To expose parents/carers to resources that they may not have at home and give them ideas for play opportunities
- To provide parents/carers and children the opportunity to make new friends
- To enable parent/carers to be able to encourage creativity that is of low cost and that they can replicate at home
- To introduce and encourage the concept of sensory development

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## Story Box

Come along and see what's inside the box. The sessions will be based on specific themes and will involve the children in the story as it emerges. This group is aimed at children aged 2-5 years old. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To encourage language development
- To encourage positive parent/carer-child interaction
- To help develop attention and listening skills
- To encourage social communication skills
- To develop creative skills and imaginative play skills



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## Ashford Twins Club based at Bluebells

Come along every Friday from 10.00am-12.00pm for friendship and support. We have a range of toys for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers and activities such as colouring, play dough and sticking. During this group we hold a music session. There is lots on offer for all multiples under 5 - so come along! The cost per family is £1.00 per session. Please contact Karen Carr on 01233 610720 or visit their website at [www.ashfordtwinsclub.co.uk](http://www.ashfordtwinsclub.co.uk).

### Aims

- To offer friendship and support with regular meetings with other parents who have been in the same situation
- To share a wide range of experience

# Courses for Parents/Carers

## You Make the Difference

You Make the Difference is a 9 week programme for parents/carers of babies and young children. It provides an opportunity for parents/carers to develop new ways of interacting with their children to promote language development and social skills. Parents/carers will learn how to use everyday activities and play time as opportunities to promote their child's learning. Each week parents/carers will have a group session and then time to practise what they are learning with their child. This will be video taped to see the difference parents/carers are making and the parents/carers can take this away with them at the end of the 9 weeks. A free crèche is provided for children under 5 which will need to be booked in advance. Please contact your nearest centre for more details or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To recognise the important role parents/carers play in their child's early learning and development
- To show specific ways of positively connecting and communicating with their child so parents/carers can use everyday routines and activities to foster and enrich their child's early language, social and literacy development.
- To build confidence in their ability to help their child learn
- To build individual skills and confidence in reaching out and connecting with their community
- To increase parents/carers awareness of any developmental needs their child may have so that they can be linked with other services to promote early identification as required

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## Baby and Toddler Resuscitation

If your baby or toddler is suddenly unable to breathe, cry, cough or speak they may be choking, which happens if your baby's airways get partially or completely blocked and makes breathing or coughing difficult. Knowing how to quickly and effectively clear a blocked airway and if necessary start resuscitation can be really useful. We hold regular informal workshops for parents/carers to learn and practise these skills. A free crèche is provided for children under 5 which will need to be booked in advance. Please contact your nearest centre for more details or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To enable parents/carers to manage an incident
- To raise awareness of hazards in day to day life
- To enable parents/carers to look after themselves and a casualty
- To equip parents/carers with skills to provide child/infant resuscitation
- To ensure parents/carers can treat choking in children and infants

# Courses for Parents/Carers

## Incredible Years

This is a 12 week course for parents/carers with children aged 3-6 years of age. Parents/carers get the opportunity to learn and practice techniques to help them to become more confident in their parenting role.

Parents/carers benefit from having a positive relationship with their child and an increased knowledge of children's emotional development. Children show more positive behaviour which decreases the need for discipline.

The course will be delivered across all of the Ashford Locality Children's Centres throughout the year. A free crèche is provided for children under the age of five which will need to be booked in advance. We may be able to assist with transport at some venues.

For more information and details about where the course is being held please contact Joy Nelhams at Bluebells Children's Centre on: 01233 622296 or text: 07717 427537.

## Aims

- To reduce conduct problems in children such as negative behaviours, non-compliance with parents/carers, peer aggression and disruptive behaviours in the classroom.
- To promote social, emotional and academic competence in children such as increased social skills, understanding of feelings, conflict management skills, self-esteem and self-confidence, academic engagement, school readiness, co-operation with teachers and reduces violence, drug abuse and delinquency in later years.
- To promote parent/carer competences and strengthen families by increasing positive and nurturing parenting, reducing critical and violent discipline approaches, improving parents/carers problem solving skills, anger management and communication skills, increasing family support networks and school involvement and increasing parents/carers involvement in children's academic-related activities at home.

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## Time Out for Parents

This course is designed for parents/carers to have 'time out' to discuss techniques they could use to build a happier relationship with their child. Parents/carers will discover ways to boost their child's self esteem, talk about why boundaries are important and encourage positive behaviour. A free crèche is provided for children under 5 which will need to be booked in advance. Please contact your nearest centre for more details or text: 07717 427537.

## Aims

- To develop the relationship between parent/carer and child
- To teach skills for boosting emotional security and self-esteem
- To develop strategies for positive discipline
- To help parents/carers learn how to handle common behaviour problems
- To discuss a variety of safety issues affecting children
- To encourage mutual support and give opportunities to make new friends

# Groups For Children Aged 0-5 Years

## Play Opportunities

We provide lots of play opportunities at Children's Centres across Ashford and they may have their own names such as Bluebell's First Time Parents or Wittersham's Under Fives Group. Some groups may be aimed at children of a certain age for instance under 1s or 18 months to 3 years. All our groups have a lot happening and cater for children with additional needs. Children are lifting, dropping, looking, pouring, bouncing, hiding, building, knocking down and lots more. Come and join in with one of these workshops and take home ideas to try out with your child. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537.

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## Play Workshops

Come and join us for one or all of these workshops. You will learn how to promote your child's development through simple play activities i.e. books, treasure baskets and creativity and then you can try them out with your child before you go home. Please contact your local centre to find out when these workshops will be running. These workshops are open to all. A free crèche is provided but will need to be booked in advance. For more information please contact your nearest centre or text: 07717 427537 .

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## Drop-In and Play at Bluebells

Come along on a Wednesday and Friday afternoon from 3.15pm-4.30pm term time only. Use our crèche facilities and/or garden to have fun with your children. There will be age appropriate play opportunities available. Although this is a drop-in there will be a maximum of 30 children currently allowed at any one time. For more information please contact Bluebells Children's Centre on: 01233 622296 or text: 07717 427537.

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## Messy Play

Every Monday 10.30am-11.45am straight after Baby Sign and Rhyme at Bluebells Children's Centre we invite you to come along for some messy fun! Get messy with gloop, foam, sand and water. Sensory play is also available. This session is for the under 2s only. For more information please contact Bluebells Children's Centre on: 01233 622296 or text: 07717 427537.

## Aims

- To help children to learn key scientific concepts such as what sinks and what floats and mathematical concepts such as how to balance blocks to build a tower
- To help children to learn literacy skills such as trying out new vocabulary or storytelling skills as they 'act out' different roles as well as learning social and emotional skills which give them the self-confidence and self-esteem they need to continue positive relationships throughout their lives
- To expose parents/carers to resources that they may not have at home and give them ideas for play opportunities and to introduce and encourage the concept of sensory development
- To give parents/carers and children the opportunity to make new friends
- To enable parent/carers to be able to encourage creativity that is of low cost and that they can replicate at home

# Groups For Children Aged 0-5 Years

## Special Buds Additional Needs Group

Are you a parent/carer of a child/ren under 5 with an additional need? If so this group may be for you - especially if you have a child/ren who has an identified condition, disability or impairment or where there are concerns about their health and development. Come along and drop in for a coffee and get parent to parent support whilst your children play.

Some of these groups run each week in our centres and others run in the school holidays and other siblings up to the age of 5 can attend. Please contact your local Children's Centre for more information or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To assist the coordination of services for families with children with additional needs
  - To assess children with additional needs
  - To provide information, guidance and support for parents/carers
  - To provide activities for children in a relaxed play environment
  - To refer children to other specialist services, if required
- 

## Just Us

A group run and designed by a local parent which is hosted by the Phoenix Primary School. A non-judgmental and safe environment for single parents/carers, with any aged children, to relate to each other, share ideas and tips, share common or general concerns, discuss support you may want from outside agencies and to spend fun quality time with your child/ren. For more information please contact the Phoenix Primary School on: 01233 622510.

### Aims

- To create somewhere where single parents/carers can feel safe/unjudged and relate to each other, share tips/ideas and common or general concerns
  - To develop a buddying system by which single parents/carers can support one another and allow possible 'own' time
  - To encourage parents/carers and provide the opportunity to spend quality time interacting with their own/other children and adults
  - To increase parent's/carer's and children's confidence in personal, social and emotional development
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# Groups For Children Aged 0-5 Years

## Health Walks

Several of our Ashford Locality Children's Centres hold walks around the local area which last around 60 minutes and are pram and family friendly. Come and have fun, talk to friends and meet new people. Bring along the children, parents/carers, friends, grandparents and anyone else who would like to join in. For further information please contact your nearest Children's Centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To enable participants to enjoy an informal free walk in their local neighbourhood
  - To enable individuals to participate in physical exercise with other members of the community
  - To improve the social networks of adults in the community
  - To improve the physical and social/emotional health of individuals
  - To increase staff and volunteer opportunities to engage with the wider local community
  - To encourage participants who are not Sure Start parents/carers to volunteer their services and maybe become walk leaders themselves
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## Parent and Toddler Group

Ashford Locality Children's Centres run a variety of Parent and Toddler Drop-in Groups. Come along and join in the fun with play opportunities and have fun with your child whilst enjoying arts and crafts, singing and story time and lots more. We also run some outreach groups in rural areas in village halls and community centres. For more information please contact your nearest Children's Centre or text: 07717 427537.

### Aims

- To improve communication, language and literacy
  - To improve and enable parental understanding of child development and why activities are important
  - To enable parents/carers to bring children to activities where they can take part in messy play
  - To enable parents/carers to be exposed to resources that parents/carers may not want to use at home or have available at home
  - To increase the number of families at the centre so appropriate services can be signposted
  - To increase the interaction children have with others through play, books and song time
  - To offer good play opportunities by providing a wide range of activities which cover fine/gross motor skills, language and literacy, early mathematics, problem solving, and knowledge and understanding of the world around them
  - To encourage 'tummy time' with babies to help strengthen the upper body and limbs which in turn develops muscle and control for later written work
-