Family Links Impact Report 2015
Welcome to the Family Links Impact Report 2015

This year, Family Links has reached more families and children than ever, through an ever growing range of programmes, projects and resources. We have many individuals and organisations to thank for helping us achieve this. From our inspiring network of Parent Group Leaders, to our committed funders and from the teachers we have trained to our incredible team of staff – your hard work and support continues to change the lives of thousands of children and families every year.

As Family Links works towards our goal of having a fully resourced and evidenced range of programmes to improve the emotional health of children from minus nine months to nineteen years old, we want to pause each year to celebrate the successes we have made and look to the journey ahead.

We hope you enjoy reading about our developments and triumphs from the last year and that you feel inspired and enthused by this important and life-changing work.

Nick Haisman-Smith, Chief Executive of Family Links

"Strong evidence that the Family Links programme is delivering positive outcomes for parents, and a strong local commitment."

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Thank you and get involved
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Our Impact

**Key Achievements**

**In Parenting**
- **14,500+** parents reached so far and more added to this number each week ¹
- **286,000+** children reached since Family Links began ¹
- **30,878** children in the UK experienced the power of the Nurturing Programme this year ¹
- Resources now available in **10** languages
- **8 out of 10** foster carers tell us they now have a much better carer-child relationship ⁴
- **14,534**. Parenting Puzzle books are being used by parents around the UK ¹
- Family Links practitioners work in **9 out of 10** of the most deprived areas in the UK ²
- **96%** of Parent Group Leaders tell us parents report an improvement in children’s behaviour ⁴

**Research shows that:**
- Effective parenting support delivers significant positive outcomes for children, including...
  - **Increase in children’s self-esteem**
  - **Reduction in anti-social behaviour**
  - **Increased educational achievement**

- **Significant reduction in contact with health and social services**
- **Reduction in teenagers’ psychological distress**
- **Decrease in long-term chance of substance abuse**

**Many of our partners using the Nurturing Programme have seen these positive outcomes and others:**

**Awards and recognition**

**Hertfordshire County Council**
Hertfordshire County Council found that referrals to social care had been significantly reduced following the use of the Family Links Nurturing Programme as an early intervention tool.

**Bradford Metropolitan District Council**
Bradford MDC reported that the Nurturing Programme kept parents engaged and that more parents completed the course when compared to other early intervention programmes.

**Cardiff Flying Start**
Cardiff Flying Start measured over 300 parents’ levels of self-belief in their ability to parent before and after attending a 10-week Nurturing Programme Parent Group. Parents’ self-efficacy greatly increased after attending a parent group and there were positive and significant changes in every one of the dimensions of parenting measured.

**In Education**

**The Institute of Education at the University of Worcester**
The Institute of Education at the University of Worcester found strong evidence that the Family Links Nurturing Programme is delivering positive outcomes as an early intervention tool for parents as well as evidence that the gains for parents are sustainable in the longer term.

- **286,000+** children reached since Family Links began ¹
- **171,260** pupils have been reached since Family Links began ¹
- **96%** of school staff found the training course useful or extremely useful
- **3,052** teachers use The Teaching Puzzle book ¹
- **8,000+** teachers trained ¹

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**Sponsors of The Blackbird Academy Trust group of primary schools**

**Review** of academy trust schools found a decrease in behavioural and emotional difficulties ³

**Partnership** with Teach First:
- **1,195** Teach First primary school teachers trained
- **30,878** children in the UK experienced the power of the Nurturing Programme this year ¹

**Read more of our case studies:** familylinks.org.uk

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¹ This year: Sep 14 → Aug 15
² Numbers can be looked up in references - page 21
Implementation Support

Family Links is committed to helping our partners achieve the best possible outcomes from their service provision, and support best practice in the implementation of parenting support for all Family Links Programmes.

Our implementation Support package includes:

- Telephone and email support for all trained practitioners
- Access to an online area with additional resources, handouts and leaflets
- Free processing of data from parent groups, and personalised reports for facilitators
- Regular newsletters with up-to-date research and best practice examples
- City & Guilds Level 3 & 4 qualifications for practitioners
- Professional development opportunities via refresher courses
- Access to a wide range of resources via our online shop
- Regular regional meetings
- Follow-on training and resources for specialist work
- Open College Network qualifications for parents
- CPD

If you'd like to find out more, please email: parenting@familylinks.org.uk or education@familylinks.org.uk

10-week Nurturing Programme

The 10-week Nurturing Programme is used by practitioners in health, social care and education settings to enable parents to become more resilient, caring and confident.

Our Evidence

Family Links is committed to research into the effectiveness of the Nurturing Programme. We invest in a research and evaluation department and work with many partners to ensure rigorous evaluation and continuous measurement of our impact.

Parent and Child Mental Health outcomes Report 2015

Analysis of data on child outcomes suggests significant shifts and improvements. The reduction in child total difficulties was very significant with a reduction in conduct problems and hyperactivity identified as the biggest change. The proportion of children with clinical levels of difficulties also reduced significantly from 43% to 28% after the 10-week Family Links Nurturing Programme.

Parents’ mental health also improved. Typically starting from a much lower score than the general population, parents attending the Programme moved up to a score that was only marginally (and not significantly) lower than the national norm. This change in parental mental health was large and highly statistically significant.

Combined, these findings suggest that the Programme is highly effective in improving mental health outcomes for both children and their parents.

Parenting Self-Efficacy Report 2015

Using the reliable ‘Tool to Measure Parenting Self-Efficacy’, parents looked at 8 different dimensions to understand the level of self-efficacy (self-belief) in their parenting. The 8 dimensions include: emotion and affection, play and enjoyment, empathy and understanding, control, discipline and boundary setting, pressures of parenting, self-acceptance, and learning and knowledge.

Findings showed that the levels of self-efficacy in parenting greatly increased after attending the Programme, with significant and positive changes across all 8 dimensions. The biggest changes identified were in the discipline and boundaries dimension.

Other studies showed:

- Statistically significant positive shift in parental sense of competence
- Stronger evidence of improvements in parental wellbeing and outcomes for children

Out of 74% of families that completed the Programme in one local authority:

- 20% had Child Protection Plans
- 19% had parental mental health issues
- 14% had suffered domestic abuse

Family Links is committed to conducting and commissioning rigorous and innovative evaluations of our work with children, families and teachers. If you would like to find out more, visit us at familylinks.org.uk or get in touch at research@familylinks.org.uk.
Mike Tivey is a Fathers’ Worker in The Rainbow Children’s Centre in Portobello, Wolverhampton. He took part in the Parent Programme in 2006 and then trained to lead Parent Groups. He is a single dad with a teenage son, Martin.

What do you think the particular issues which face single dads are?

“I started off as a weekend Dad, there’s not really a lot that you can do and you miss out. I think most single Dads find that you’re expected to discipline your child for something that happens when you’re not there, and that’s quite difficult.”

What was your relationship with Martin like before you did the Nurturing Programme?

“He came to live with me about 3 or 4 years ago, He was about thirteen or fourteen. It was quite rocky when he first moved in because he’d been set hardly any boundaries and then he suddenly had to stick to times and homework. There was a lot of conflict and he was quite argumentative at times.”

Why did you decide to take part in the Nurturing Programme parent group?

“I thought before I trained as a Parent Group Leader it’d be nice to do the course and find out what it’s all about. I did think it would be interesting as well, not just because of Martin. I counsel 11 - 25 year olds, a lot of issues are to do with anger, parents and how they were brought up so I thought it might tie in with that as well.”

What feedback have you received about the Nurturing Programme?

“Very positive. My relationship with Martin has really changed since we’ve been using it there and he admits it as well. He doesn’t say a lot but he does say ‘yeah, it’s better now’. Even the parents from the last group they see the change over the ten weeks and you’d get a lot of positive feedback.”

The difference the programme has made:

“Life’s a lot happier at home, let’s be honest, we get on a lot better and he seems more grown up as well, probably because I’m treating him more grown up with certain things like the Family Rules. I used to label Martin and you don’t think it has any effect, but then I remembered that that’s what bought it back to me because Mum and Dad used to label me at times and you don’t realise the effect until you think back. The course really does make you think...”

“...Professionally as well, the way I interact with the children in the centre actually listening to them and getting more involved – I think that makes a big difference. And even with the Dads’ groups because you can get 12 to 13 dads and their children turn up and sometimes the Dads would rather sit back than get involved with the children. By talking to the dads about the Nurturing Programme they get more involved.”
David

David is a foster parent to Katy, 14 and has two sons Joe, 21 and Darren, 19. At first David was reluctant to attend the Family Links 10-week Nurturing Programme, but settled in very quickly, finding it both enjoyable and useful.

"I had a go at spending more time with Katy, cooking and board games. We played the Nurturing Game and it began to break down barriers. I had a go at giving choices around chores. She realised how to take responsibility. Katy is still reluctant to attend the Family Links 10-week Programme but is getting on well at the end of each day.

"I am making a point of using the 'I' statements and then taking a few minutes off just for me, and to my surprise it is starting to work.""For Katy, I nurture through positivity; body language and tone of voice. Although Katy is still rejecting praise and is up and down depending on contact with birth family, she does feel more confident and included and loved. She is more confident and cooperative. I am trying to be consistent and have empathy."

Maeve

Maeve is an assistant head at a school for children with special needs. The school took part in Family Links training three years ago and Maeve now leads Nurturing Programme Parent Groups in the school.

"It provided lots more ideas and strategies to support me in developing relationships with pupils and help them to understand their feelings and actions. I'm more skilled at talking about feelings and so are they. I think the parenting programme really brought me closer to some parents. Feedback from the first group was really good. One of the parents at the end of the programme said, "We finally accepted my child as he is and actually I'm much happier now than I was before.""

You can see clearly where the progression comes from and when you're delivering it you can see that it's such a well-written programme.""Islamic Values

The programme considers the links between parenting and Islamic values and includes the use of the document Islamic Values and The Parenting Puzzle, bringing together Islamic religious teaching with the Nurturing Programme. The programme specifically considers how positive parenting strategies relate to Islamic values.

Working with Muslim Families:
This course is designed to increase understanding and knowledge of Islam and the implications for working with Muslim families. There is an opportunity to discuss the differences between parenting styles based on cultural norms and practices, and the nurturing approach supported both by Islam and the Nurturing Programme. Guidance will be offered on the most effective way to engage families and effect positive outcomes for adults and children.

Case-study
Adoptive Setting
"Going on a parenting course isn't because you're not a good parent; for us it was because we needed confidence to parent to our best ability. I think doing the course with just adoptive families is really important because they do need more.

"As a family the course has helped us to grow, to talk to professionals confidently and to enable our child to develop fully. Now we get cuddles and kisses - it's just delightful!""

Foster Carers

10 foster carers looking after 14 children reported changes before and after attending a 10-week Programme.

- 8 of the 10 foster carers reported a better carer-child relationship
- Foster carers said they found it easy to replicate the skills learnt
- The programme helped carers feel more emotionally resilient
- The programme was so well received, the service plan to make it available to all foster carers

Caroline's Involvement

Westminster Drug Project partnered with Family Links in 2013. 26 drug and alcohol practitioners have been trained to lead groups for parents overcoming addiction. Caroline Roberts is a Drug and Alcohol Recovery practitioner and Parent Group Leader at HMP Woodhill in Milton Keynes.

"The programme didn't just give them nurturing skills, they felt nurtured as well.""

Caroline felt that the unique structure of the supportive parent group allowed its members to let their guard down, share experiences and support each other.

"They really gelled as a group, they started trusting each other and caring for each other. It was really nice to see them think about other people rather than themselves... drug users can be really quite selfish."

Before attending the parent groups, one father was at risk of losing contact with his family and Caroline was pleased to have received a letter from him reporting that he'd recently enjoyed visits from his family.

"What he got from the Parenting Puzzle and thinking about his family gave him the motivation to go to rehab.""Specialist Settings

The 10-week Nurturing Programme is effective in universal settings and is also used by practitioners to deliver targeted support as part of specialist interventions such as adoption and fostering, working with parents in prison, working with Muslim families and parents whose children have special needs.
Welcome to the world

Welcome to the World is an 8-week programme aimed at helping parents and families prepare for the arrival of their baby. The aim of ‘Welcome to the World’ is to prevent some of the difficulties many new parents experience, such as poor mental & emotional health, depression & relationship problems, abuse or neglect.

Parents attend the group from the second trimester of pregnancy. As with the Nurturing Programme, the emphasis is on supportive, non-judgemental discussion.

Parents reflect on their own values and their hopes and fears for the future. Practical information is also included within the 8-week programme.

Outcomes in N. Ireland

- Parents were more likely to reach out for support
- Friendships made during the programme were maintained
- Decrease in social isolation
- Increase in breastfeeding rates
- Greater parenting confidence

"I am grateful to the group because I have learnt so much, and my partner has successfully quit smoking when the baby is born."

Mary Duggan is a Sure Start Health Visitor, supporting families from deprived areas of Northern Ireland for 27 years. In the past year she initiated the delivery of the Welcome to the World programme, recording a 100% attendance.

“We now know that if we can reduce stress and anxiety in parents during pregnancy, we’re going to get much better health and wellbeing outcomes for both baby and family life."

“it’s a journey of empowerment for the parents. The sensitive facilitation creates a safe space for them to reflect."

How we measured Impact

- 111 parents in 28 settings around the UK
- 8 weekly sessions lasting 2 hours
- Parents were given the tool to measure Parenting Antenatal Self-Efficacy (TOPSE), Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) & Maternal Antenatal Attachment Scale (MAAS)

"So worthwhile to gain knowledge, explore options during pregnancy and birth and what to prepare for once the baby arrives - how to look after baby, ourselves and each other."

A 2015 Evaluation found:

- There were statistically significant improvements in maternal and paternal attachment, with a particularly positive shift for fathers
- Mothers’ and fathers’ wellbeing measured significantly higher than the UK average after the programme. WEMWBS mean scores increased by 2.42 points
- All parents who responded to the feedback questionnaire believed that they have benefited from the programme

Family Links Antenatal Programme
Initial Pilot Evaluation

Watch this video

A 5-minute film - Welcome to the World: Parents and parent group leaders share their experiences of the 8-week course.
youtube.com/FamilyLinks

Next Steps
Evaluation project with University of Hull
Adolescence is the most significant period of change in the brain apart from the first year of life; it is not until the early 20s that the brain begins to look like that of an adult. Family Links offers a range of training courses that provide an opportunity to understand adolescent brain development and its effect on behaviour.

The courses include ideas and strategies for parents and professionals to maintain boundaries, motivation and support for young people in an emotionally healthy context.

The work brings together the latest understanding from neuroscience and developmental psychology and the principles of the Nurturing Programme, one of the leading social and emotional education interventions in the UK.

 Emotional health for all – how feelings drive behaviour
 The emerging science of teenage brain development
 A trainee adult – the adolescent developmental process
 Autonomy promotion - what do young people need from adults?
 Self-esteem, power and expectations
 Managing risk and promoting resilience

Courses for those working with parents and teenagers:

Understanding Teenagers
A professional development course for those working with teenagers or their parents. Professionals better understand teenage brain development, building resilience in young people and the significance of parents for teenagers.

Talking Teens Parent Groups
4-week groups for the parents of teens and pre-teens. Increase parents’ understanding of teenagers’ development, feelings and behaviour. Give parents strategies to build and maintain relationships.

Courses for those working in schools:

Understanding the Adolescent Brain for resilience and motivation
A professional development course for professionals working with young people in schools and educational settings.

At the end of the pilot groups, parents reported getting on better with their teenager and feeling less stressed in their parenting role. They also reported feeling more confident about talking about difficult issues and understanding their teenager’s feelings. The next stage of evaluation is focussed on learning more about the implementation of the programme in three local authority areas, including the level of need of the parents attending and the impact of the programme.

Some of the key messages parents took away from the programme included:

"That you are really needed as a parent even if your child behaves otherwise."

"That I am doing a better job than I thought I was!"

"Keep on telling him that I like him as well as love him."

"Communication - the importance of listening. Remember that children hear what you say through their filters."

Next Steps
Create a resource booklet for parents
Every member of the Nurturing Schools Network uses the Nurturing Programme to develop positive behaviour and improve social and emotional wellbeing for teachers and pupils.

We train schools in the Nurturing Programme so they can implement a whole-school approach using The Teaching Puzzle and curriculum resources.

Our aim is to build an active community of schools and teachers who are committed to promoting emotional health and wellbeing: where everyone can aspire, flourish and achieve.

### Family Links’ Impact

In an innovative evaluation project we are tracking the progress of 285 children in two schools using the Nurturing Programme as a whole-school approach to building emotional health and supporting teacher wellbeing. The schools are located in an area of high social deprivation.

**Following the teachers’ first training course with Family Links:**

- Teachers reported a significant decrease in children’s behavioural and emotional difficulties
- There was a statistically significant increase in prosocial behaviour. This is measured by actions such as being helpful, kind to others and considerate of others’ feelings

| 96% | reported that they were confident and motivated to apply the techniques
| 70% |
| 171,260 pupils reached since Family Links began
| 21,040 pupils have been reached this year alone

"I read it all with fascination. I wish something like this had been available when I was a young, uncertain, short-tempered, impatient and inattentive teacher!"

- Philip Pullman

### Aspire

We believe that being emotionally healthy, having robust levels of self-esteem and a sense of empowerment, choice and responsibility will support the aspirations of children and adults to reach their potential and make the most out of school life.

### Flourish

We support school communities so that individuals feel valued, understood, and respected. Our courses encourage empathy, positive relationships, improved communication, and provide skills and strategies to promote emotional health, resilience and wellbeing.

### Achieve

We provide tools to create a learning environment which is focused, disciplined and purposeful, where there is respectful communication, guidance without criticism, and a positive climate in which everyone can achieve their goals.

### Training topics include:

- Positive behaviour management strategies
- Improved relationships based on respect and effective communication
- Looking after the wellbeing of the whole school community
- Expertise in feedback to promote learning

"The training was fantastic and the term has started so positively. Even though budgets are tight, it was money well spent. Thank you for doing such an amazing job and I hope other schools value your expertise as much as we do."

- Headteacher, 2015

**THE BLACKBIRD ACADEMY TRUST**

Family Links is a proud sponsor of the Blackbird Academy Trust, a large multi-academy trust serving a thousand children in East Oxford.

**nurturing schools network.org.uk**

**Next Steps**

Continue evaluation project to better understand longitudinal impact of Nurturing Programme in schools
Initial Teacher Education and our University Partnerships

Skills for new teachers

We work closely with Initial Teacher Education providers around the country, including Teach First, Canterbury Christ Church University, Oxford Brookes University, Birmingham City University and Ark as well as directly with schools. Our approach gives new teachers the skills, strategies and knowledge to create positive classroom environments and build respect, good communication and positive relationships with the whole school community.

We equip trainee teachers with skills and strategies that help them achieve the highest levels of performance as outlined by teacher standards and the Ofsted Framework.

Family Links' impact

Trainee teachers felt twice as confident in dealing with challenging behaviour

Increase in the number of trainee teachers who felt confident giving constructive feedback

Trainee teachers' measured performance improved for behaviour management; setting high expectations and creating a good and safe classroom environment

Significant improvements in teacher wellbeing; particularly for newly qualified teachers (NQTs)

Results for teachers, their class and the school

- Relationships between adults and children in the school improve, resulting in increased motivation and achievement
- Trainee teachers feel more confident in their abilities to teach effectively
- Teachers have a better understanding of the connections between emotional health, self-esteem and pupil behaviour; children and adults thrive academically; socially and emotionally

TeachFirst

Family Links has been working in partnership with Teach First since 2008. We have worked with every new Teach First primary teacher and provided workshops, seminars and resources focused on improved emotional health and wellbeing for the whole school community. Teach First has transformed the impact of many schools in challenging areas; we are proud to be supporting their success.

As of September 2015:

- 1195 primary school teachers have attended a Family Links workshop
- 96% agreed the workshop helped them respond to children, colleagues and parents with empathy
- 60 secondary school teachers have benefited from training and resources
- 99% agreed that they had learned useful ideas for positive behaviour management
- Trained every new primary and early years school teacher: 452 in total in 2015
- 97% agreed that they had effective strategies for using praise
- 92% of early years participants agreed the Family Links workshop would help them manage their own stress levels in the classroom
- 96% of trainee primary school teachers agreed they had strategies to manage behaviour in a positive way after their Family Links session

Quotes From the teachers:

"Family Links has enabled me to start my teaching journey feeling valued, positive and most importantly equipped to deal with the complex issues faced everyday as a teacher."

"Family Links has been the most successful, interesting, informative and practical CPD I have had all year."

PGCE and BA workshops

Over the last five years, the Family Links partnership has seen the delivery of highly successful workshops for PGCE and BA students.

We are now pioneering a series of focused workshops designed to support PGCE students improve their performance against specific Teaching Standards.

"I would recommend this session to any trainee who is seeking to make a long-term positive, personal impact in the classroom."
our plans for next year include:

- Create a book to support work with Teenagers
- Launch the Masters Module in social and emotional learning with Canterbury Christchurch University
- Undertake a major research project with the University of Hull
- Commission major evaluation of our 10-week Nurturing Programme
- Launch Parental Engagement Module for Schools
- Launch 4-day version of welcome to the world training
- Deliver our Islamic Values project to groups in London and Birmingham
- Launch Understanding Adolescent's continuing professional development day for schools
- Train Islamic Fathers to provide the Parenting groups themselves
- Launch Understanding Teenagers continuing professional development day

Get Involved:

- Support us: Support our work by donating. Go to our website for details: familylinks.org.uk/how-to-donate
- Keep in touch: What’s happening where you work? Send us the vital data you collect: research@familylinks.org.uk
- Ambassadors: Become an ambassador, to find out more, email sally.alden@familylinks.org.uk
- Work with us: Work with us! To find out more, email parenting@familylinks.org.uk or education@familylinks.org.uk

Thank you:

- Clive Bannister
- Corefiling
- Doris Field Charitable Trust
- Dragon School
- Duncan Norman Trust
- Gilda Haskins
- Headley Trust
- Henry Smith Charity
- Impetus PEF
- Inchcape Foundation
- Irwin Mitchell Solicitors
- James Hanbury
- John Ackroyd Charitable Trust
- John Walliker
- Mr & Mrs JA Pyes Charitable Settlement
- Department for Education
- Nigel Hamway
- Nigel Wilson
- Paul Hamlyn Foundation
- Robert & Margaret Moss Charitable Trust
- Rosalind Portman
- Sir John Swire
- St Mary the Virgin Church, Oxford
- St Michael and All Saints Church Charities
- Stationers’ Foundation
- Swan Hellenic Cruises
- Tedworth Trust
- William Fennemore

we've been featured in:

- Journal of Health Visiting Article, Feb 2015
- All Party Parliamentary Group for Conception to Age 2 Report, July, 2014
- BBC Radio 4 ‘Born in Bradford’ May, 2014
- The Fair Education Alliance June, Dec, 2014
- The Guardian May, 2013
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3. Review of Local Authority Payment by Results Universal Parent Programme Offer
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Our mission, our vision and what we do

Family Links is a national charity dedicated to empowering children, parents, families and schools to be emotionally healthy.

Our vision is a world where adults and children live flourishing lives, fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Family Links believes that emotional health is a human right and that it is the foundation for achievement and happiness.

We deliver innovative, high quality training in the Nurturing Programme to health and social care services, the voluntary sector, schools and universities.

The Nurturing Programme is designed to provide adults and children with the understanding, skills and ability to lead emotionally healthy lives, build resilience, empathy, self-esteem and support positive relationships.