



Northgate
Early Years Project

Annual Report 2006



November 2006

Another year has flown by. It has been both challenging and exciting!

Compiling this report gave me another opportunity to reflect on all the work undertaken by NEYP staff. They have really worked exceptionally hard to both maintain and further develop the whole programme we offer across the Canterbury district. With Big Lottery funding the Parents groups, Family Play sessions and training courses for parents have become established at Thanington Community Centre, Beauherne School and Wincheap School.

A new Drop-In group open to all parents has been established at St Stephen s Infants School. Annette Haigh, Childrens Liaison Officer at the school identified courses and workshops that parents wanted and with funding from a KCC grant, these are being delivered.

Due to lack of funding, we were very disappointed to close the childrens Breakfast Club we had been running for about ten years! However, we are working with Kingsmead School to look at other sources of funding and running a joint scheme next year.

The courses we have provided for parents to promote Positive Parenting have been very well attended and we hope to deliver these in other areas and with partners from different organisations. We are also planning some joint group work with the Adolescent Resource Team to support parents of ten and eleven year olds.

The Speakeasy course has proved to be useful to parents and we will start a new course at Wincheap School in the next few weeks.

We are working with Adult Education to deliver some joint courses and workshops for parents. A key to providing quality services is ensuring all the skills are there to do it! Working in partnership with other organisations and providers has meant we are consistently able to do this.

The emphasis on play and the importance of play is paramount to the work we do and over the year we have provided some themed sessions for families to enjoy different types of play. This has been supplemented by some very creative and dynamic training sessions by Judy Berryman.

The Crèche Bank has been well used and has supported many groups and different organisations across the Canterbury District. It certainly has filled an identified gap in need! This year has seen the development of our website which was created for us by Phil Spain. Have a look! (www.neyp.org)

Funding is an ongoing issue for all voluntary organisations and much of my time in the next few months will be to find some more! With the development of the work we are doing there is even more to fund!

Parents have been key partners in helping identify what is needed and their attendance at groups and involvement with the Project shows they are right! This continues to ensure a "needs led" service.

The Northgate Early Years Project is open to all families with children up to the age of eleven. We welcome your comments, feedback and general interest and look forward to hearing from you!

Nicolette Cole, (Project Manager)



NEYP Staff and Volunteers . . .

Nicolette Cole	Project Manager	Bonnie Tomkin	Group Worker Supervisor
Julie Murphy	Senior Project Worker	Jo Kilshaw	Play Worker
Jill Houliston	Project Administrator	Clare Pryce	Assistant Project Worker
Lin Lindley	Creche Bank Co-ordinator	Tina Knight	Play Worker
Gill Ledger	Project Worker	Veronica Hanagan	Play Worker
Helen Challacombe	Project Worker	Jodean Tappenden	Centre Beautifier
Zoe Hardingham	Toy Librarian & Project Worker	Kirsten Davenport	Play Worker
Ann Lamkin	Project Worker	Sarah Holness	Play Worker
Georgie Dordoy	Project Worker	Mike Trew	Centre Beautifier
Jeanie Brown	Creche Supervisor	Sally Elves	Retired Health Visitor
Jean Harris	Play Worker & Toy Library Assistant	Shirley Andrews	Play Worker
Kate Scorey	Play Worker	Jim Lennox	Handyman
Gail Wardle	Play Worker	Brian & Team	Gardeners
Susie Beedy	Play Worker	Christ Church	
Lynn Bell	Play Worker	University College	Volunteers
Maria Donnelly	Play Worker		

Goodbye to....

- Sonnie Suwari, who for a number of years volunteered as a play worker with NEYP. His loyalty, dedication, hard work and sense of humour will be sadly missed. Thank you!
- Charlotte Burroughs centre beautifier and play worker

Additional Funding was secured from the following sources . . .



Kent County Council

Supported by



The Big Lottery



**Argyll & Sutherland
Regiment**



Canterbury City Council

SureStart Canterbury

commissioned Northgate Early Years Project to provide a range of groups and services in Canterbury



What has the Northgate Early Years Project provided this year? 2005-2006

- 8 Parent, Baby & Toddler Groups a week in 6 Canterbury venues, 3 with Health Visitor Clinic
- Toy Library sessions at Poets Corner
- Heuristic Play sessions
- Messy Play sessions
- Parents Book Borrowing Scheme
- Crèche Bank
- Weekly YAPS Group with crèche
- 6 Parents Drop-In Groups a week in 6 Canterbury venues
- Parents weekly Breakfast Group
- Baby Milk Service
- Closed Parents Group (meets for 38 weeks)
- Home Visiting
- Post Natal Group with crèche
- Out of School/ Holiday activities for children & families
- Card Making Workshops for families
- Freedom Programme in partnership with Domestic Violence Project
- Community Coffee Mornings
- Accommodation for childrens groups to meet and play
- Accommodation for Sturry Road Community Garden Committee
- Volunteering opportunities
- Venue for community groups to hold meetings
- Counselling Service
- Accommodation for training
- Breastfeeding training/ advice
- Art sessions for children and parents
- Play support for families attending weekly clinic at Canterbury Health Centre
- Support / advice to other voluntary and community organisations
- Training courses for parents
- Training courses for Staff and volunteers
- Umbrella organisation for processing Criminal Records Bureau checks
- Work experience placements for school and college students
- Treasure Basket sessions
- Individual Family Play sessions
- Individual Cook & Eat sessions
- Macmillan 'Biggest Coffee Morning in the World' participation event
- Childrens Breakfast Club in partnership with Kingsmead Primary School
- Accommodation for Parkside Primary School reception class to play
- Accommodation for Rainbow Nursery to have a play session

What do Parents say? . . .

"I first heard about NEYP through a drop-in morning held at St Stephens school. I decided to go along to find out what was on offer for pre-school children. I met Nicky and some of the team and found them to be friendly and informative. Nicky invited me along to Poets to see what the project was about.

I went along to Poets and had a chat with Nicky, I knew then and there that I wanted to be involved with NEYP. Everyone that I had met and spoken with were so friendly and passionate about what they did and before I knew it Nicky had me signed up for the Management Committee!

I am now a regular to 3 different groups a week I have got to know the staff and the warm welcome you receive is fantastic and theres the added bonus of a cup of tea and coffee on tap! My son loves the sessions and gets so much enjoyment out of them; however my daughter is not very happy with just having to go through the school holidays!

The project is something that I truly believe in and feel that all the hard work that goes into running the different groups is amazing and well worth it., because lets face it if your children are happy then so are you. And what more could anyone ask for."

Heidi Floyd (Parent)

"I have been a member of the NEYP management committee for a few years now. Looking back to 2001, I was impressed then with the range of services provided: not only parent baby and toddler groups, but also parent groups, and a variety of training courses. In the light of what is provided now, these look rather minimal. Every few months the list of services provided seems to be longer! Not only are there more parent, baby and toddler groups, but they are designed to meet more specific requirements. There is also a whole range of facilities and resources, all of which are there to support parents and children.

What continues to impress me is how NEYP not only recognizes that parents and their needs are many and varied, but takes appropriate action. NEYP is always on the lookout for gaps in its provision, and, coupled with a "can do" attitude, responds with a top quality service, thanks to the efforts and commitment of the team of highly professional staff.

The number of people attending sessions and using the services is a testimony to how essential these services are. If much of what is provided now was unimaginable a few years ago, we can look forward eagerly to the question "What next?"

Ruth Fryer (Parent)





Looked After Children . . . Welcome Packs

The Canterbury Launch of the multi agency LAC Welcome Packs was held at Poets Corner on May 24th 2006. Packs are now being distributed throughout East Kent to all foster carers of children under 5 years.

'A final BIG thank you to everyone for all the hard work and enthusiasm on the LAC bag project. As I have said before it has been a pleasure to work with everyone and to 'bond' with such a great bunch of people. I think the 'Welcome Pack' has been well received and successful . . . it was good to see those Teddies getting hugged!

Sue Walton (Early Education Access - Inclusion and Equalities Team)

Congratulations to Jack Scamp and Kirsty Cook (pupils at Kingsmead Primary School) who were presented with thank you gifts for their winning pictures which had been printed on all the bags. They had designed their logo whilst attending Breakfast Club at the hut.



Parents Breakfast Group

Over the past year we have had over 140 different families book in for Breakfast! On average, due to high demand, we now find ourselves only able to offer places at 4 week intervals.

Positive outcome has been the groups that have booked in en bloc. e.g. First Steps and St Stephens. What was really satisfying and rewarding was to have a parent, from a previous First Steps group, contact us in September to ask if she could book in for a number of parents from the group, which had finished in July. What a marvellous way to continue their friendships and support network, as well as accessing new information.



Visitors have joined us from:

Multi Agency Cascade Service • SureStart • Community Safety • Canterbury City Council
Health Family Support • Parkside Primary School • St Stephens Infants School

Comments from parents and partners attending the session . . .

"Nice to have breakfast in peace again!"

"I had a lovely time, everyone was really friendly, the crèche staff were lovely and the whole place itself is warm and welcoming."

A Dads view:

"Really nice to have time off work and enjoy social activity within the neighbourhood. Nice people here and well organised. Gave me an insight into the future with parenting. Very nice childrens play area and friendly staff. Nice to know my child is SAFE! Thanks. Oh and nice breakfast!"



Partnership Working and Sharing Practice . . .

“ . . . the Northgate Early Years Project has always demonstrated a commitment to partnership working, working both with the statutory and other voluntary sector organisations in the area thus providing appropriate signposting, support and avoiding duplication of services. In my former role as Contracting Officer for Kent Social Services, I have reviewed the Project for a number of years and my reports have reflected most valued services, which are managed in an extremely professional way. I am now working in a commissioning role in Health and although NEYP is not now in my geographical area, I have signposted my colleagues in Health and Education to the Project to observe innovative ideas which could be replicated in my own area as good practice. The lead health visitor in my area has also visited the Project and now wants to make links with projects in the Swale area to share the practice demonstrated at Northgate Early Years Project.”

Caroline Friday (Commissioning Manager) Swale Primary care Trust

(Entry on Christ Church University Website)

‘Northgate Early Years Project’

This is an inspiring local community project which has many facets but all with the view of supporting local families with young children. They run parents groups with crèche facilities, family play sessions, breakfast clubs, a toy library, book loan scheme and many themed sessions. Whenever there is guidance on a wide range of issues given to parents, there are always facilities available for the children to be looked after so volunteers are always welcomed.

Judy Challis (Volunteering Co-ordinator, Christ Church University)

Working in Partnership . . .

“I joined Wincheap School as headteacher in September 2004. One of the things that was very important with me was to build up relationships with other agencies that could help and support our parents and families.

It was suggested that a starting point might be the Northgate Early Years Project and so I made contact.

A Parent group with crèche facilities now runs in school on a weekly basis and has done so for more than a year. It is well attended and the parents really appreciate the time to discuss matters of interest, hear about things that they may find useful, learn a bit about school and enjoy a chat with others in a similar situation. Representatives from the group have been to me to bring ideas and suggestions that have been raised in their sessions. The babies and toddlers enjoy their time and are extremely well cared for.

Another really important issue for school is the way in which the group runs without us even noticing. The rooms are prepared and cleared very efficiently and probably left tidier than they were found!

Thank you to all those involved in running these sessions and I hope we will be able to continue them for a long time to come.”

Val Clough, Headteacher, Wincheap Primary School

John Simmonds, K.C.C. Cabinet Member for Education and School Improvement says . . .

“I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to you and the chance to meet you and several of your team. I had not realised the true extent of your activities and the progress you have made. I know that the head of our pre-school service, Alex Gamby has been in touch with regard to meeting with some of her senior colleagues. As we take increasing responsibility for quality standards in pre-school education, the level of help provided in deprived wards such as yours is of tremendous value and you may help us in providing a model for other areas . . .”



Parents Comments from Parent Baby & Toddler Group at Poets Corner . . .

"I have been coming to Poets Corner for about a year and its great. My daughter really enjoys herself her and they have different things for the children to do from painting, sticking, play dough and in the summer water and sand outside. We also come to the breakfast club on a Friday morning and staff take very good care of your children. Its great value for money. Thanks for it all."

"My daughter really enjoys coming to the group here . Theres always a large variety of toys to play with and activities for the children to do. Also the staff are really nice which makes me feel comfortable coming here."

"Lovely place for our children, really enjoy it. Staff extremely friendly and kind. Lots of different stuff to do each week. Lots of activities for the little ones and older ones. We love it."

Thursday Drop-In at Poets Corner

This session is always very well attended. Parents have demonstrated real practical and emotional support to other group members who have had difficult and sometimes tragic experiences during the past year.

The Group has been involved in:

- 4-week course on 'Effective Communication'
- A group visit to the newly built Riverside Childrens Centre where they were able to look round the nursery prior to its opening and find out about all the other services and activities that would become available.

Our partnership working has enabled:

- Marco Keir joined the session to share the new plans that had been drawn up for the Beaney Institute in the centre of Canterbury. He was keen to listen to parents comments and valued their input. Many felt confident enough to ask questions and share their ideas.
- Veronique Milot came along during 'Families Love Libraries week to promote and encourage the use of library services in Canterbury.

Querns Drop-In

Following discussions with staff and parents, it was decided to change the format of the Querns group to a Drop-In instead of a closed group.

The group was re-launched with a coffee morning in May 2006 and regular attendees were asked to bring along someone new. This proved a great success and the Querns group is fast becoming a popular and well-established Drop-In. The group continued to meet throughout the building of the new extension. Despite the inevitable noise and disruption, parents continued to meet and not a session was missed! The new extension is a great addition to the Centre.





Extended school provision at **BEAUHERNE PRIMARY SCHOOL**, part of the newly formed Canterbury Campus, a Federation between The Canterbury High School and Beauherne Primary School, which incorporates the City View nursery and Pre-school, and Canterbury Adult Education . . .

“Another important strand in the growing success at Beauherne has been our involvement with a large number of outside agencies and local organizations as we develop our extended school provision, helping to ensure that every child really does matter. The support given by the Northgate Early Years Project has been key in moving forward our after-school club, where Project staff are running the club on our behalf. Setting up the club and running it in a way that derives maximum benefit for children and parents alike has been a challenge, but the willingness of their staff to make the provision work has ensured that the club is a viable option.



Northgate Early Years Project also provides a 'Parent Baby & Toddler session on Monday mornings at the school. The sessions are well attended and have the added benefit of access to a Health Visitor Clinic every fortnight. The number of families coming along to the group

steadily increases with the Northgate Early Years Project once again providing a much needed service for the local community”

*Clive Close
(Head of School, Beauherne Primary School)*

Our website . . .

Northgate Early Years Project
Providing services throughout the Canterbury District

HOME | CROCHES | BABY & TODDLER | PARENTS | HEALTH CLINIC | BREAKFAST CLUBS | TDYI | NEARLY NEW SHOP | TEMPLATES | OUT OF SCHOOL | LINES

BOOKMARK this site or make this your **HOME PAGE**

WELCOME ...

Through community groups and home visiting, the Northgate Early Years Project seeks to enhance the development and education of children by providing a range of services and resources which support both children and parents.

Through their initiative "Every Child Matters", the Government's aim is for every child, whatever their background or circumstances, to have the support they need to...

- * Be healthy
- * Stay safe
- * Enjoy and achieve
- * Make a positive contribution
- * Achieve economic wellbeing

Northgate Early Years Project plans it's services to help children achieve these outcomes.

Staff have awareness and knowledge of the Birth to Three Matters framework, a guidance document of good practice to support practitioners working with children from birth to three. It takes as its focus the child and steers away from subjects, specific areas of experience and distinct curriculum headings. It identifies four Aspects, which celebrate the skill and competence of babies and young children and highlights the interrelationship between growth, learning, development and the environment in which they are cared for and educated.

These four Aspects are:
A Strong Child
A Skilful Communicator
A Competent Learner
A Healthy Child

2005 AGM REPORT CONTACT US SITE MAP

Supported by



Big Lottery funding has enabled new groups and services to be established in Wincheap, Thanington and on the London Road estate. Ann Lamkin is the Project Worker taking the lead on the development in these areas.

Parent, Baby & Toddler Group at Beauherne Primary School -

This group has taken a while to establish but with a real concerted effort by health visitors, Ann's home visits to families and increased publicity and promotion, the session is attended by a large enthusiastic group of parents who really support each other. With the group based on the Canterbury campus, it was good to welcome a Canterbury High School student to the group for work experience with a view to attending a child care course at the local college.

Activities we have provided have included vegetable printing, ice exploration and a bug watch! Our new outside toys have been a great boost to play and the addition of sand and water trays have meant "messy play" for all every week! The group enjoyed a music workshop "Crash Bang Wallop" facilitated by the Yamaha School of Music. Parents, children and workers accompanied the action songs with percussion playing. This popular session culminated in the musician playing his violin watched by a totally mesmerised group of toddlers!



Parent Baby & Toddler Group at Thanington Community Resource Centre -

This group is now an established group with over twenty families attending the weekly session. Over the year a great variety of activities and play experiences have been enjoyed. Playing with vast amounts of shredded paper was certainly one of the most popular sessions! At the end of the summer term all families enjoyed a teddy bears picnic, "sports day" and a cake decorating session. We are delighted to be able to use this venue which also has some good outdoor play space. The "Borrow a Book" scheme has been well used by children and parents. Many parents have contributed ideas for themes and projects and have also promoted the group in the wider community. They have often brought along a friend or neighbour who they thought would benefit from the activities, support and friendship the group provides.

Parents Drop-In Group & Crèche at Wincheap Foundation Primary School -

This group is co-facilitated by Ann and Tess Hickson, health visitor. This works so well with the mix of skills and experience to really support parents. The group is for any parent



with a child up to the age of eleven, Val Clough; headteacher of Wincheap Foundation Primary School has been welcoming, supportive and keen to work in partnership with NEYP. She has made a room available for the crèche which we have equipped together.

The school have been helpful in providing suitable size furniture and allowed us to put posters and pictures on the walls to make the room even more inviting for families.

The parents meet together with group workers in the conference room where many issues around parenting and children are explored. Over the last few months, subjects discussed have included internet safety, bullying, immunisations, “super nanny” methods, sleeping and contraception. The group is lively and enthusiastic, sharing many different views and has both interesting and sometimes hilarious sessions!

Many of the parents have never left their babies and children before but have all commented on the high standard of the crèche and how much they look forward to this little slot of time for themselves each week. They use the time well and have been able to support each other with different ways of managing situations, events etc.

Speak Easy Course - Two Project workers are delivering this ten week course for parents at Wincheap Foundation Primary school. The course helps parents become more confident talking to their children about sex and relationships in the language that is right for them. It is a fun and relaxed way for parents/carers to learn together in a small group. The two Project Workers have undertaken the appropriate training

to deliver this course which is accredited with the Open College Network. Parents can choose the time to gain a recognised qualification that can lead on to further study and employment. NEYP has delivered other Speak easy training which was very well attended and where several parents did gain the qualification. It is really good to be able to go out to different venues to provide this course and NEYP is delighted to deliver one at this school which has been so keen to work

in partnership. Val Clough, head teacher, will be facilitating one of the sessions. A crèche is provided for babies and children of parents/carers attending the course.





Freedom Programme

Project staff have completed the training necessary to deliver the Freedom Programme for women. Gill is currently co-facilitating the course with Anne Lyttle, Project Manager of the Womens Refuge. This is working really well and with their different skills and expertise, together they are delivering an excellent course for the women attending.



Time Out for Parents

Gill and Georgie are currently delivering this ten week Positive Parenting course, "Time out for Parents", which is both well received and enjoyed by all those attending.

Real recognition of the way parents behaviour can impact so strongly on the behaviour of their children is becoming very evident. The parents attending the course work hard and we are hoping this will be a rolling programme. We have a waiting list!

Parents comments on this course include . . .

"I have found the group a big help. I like it that I see the same people every week and make new friends. It has helped me with problems I have had with my children and also with personal problems I have had in my life. Gill and Georgie are wonderful as group leaders, very positive and really understanding. I would like to join a similar group which offers similar support as I need routine things in my life"

"I have found this group has made me more positive in general. Gill and Georgie are very nice. They listen to us all the time and give us lots of useful information. I really enjoy attending the group and look forward to every session"

Training for parents

During the past year I have worked with the Northgate Early Years Project to provide "Effective Communication" training for parents. . I have found it to be one of the most worthwhile projects I have ever undertaken. The aims of the training were to support participants to further develop and practise communication skills, to help parents identify the resources they had within them to make choices in the way they communicate and how the choices made could have a very positive effect on their lives. I also delivered a "Telephone Skills" workshop for staff and volunteers which provided an opportunity to share and develop best practice. The people I've met through working with the Project have been dedicated, warm and open to sharing their skills to provide really effective and appropriate services for all families with young children."

Karen Hodgson (Independent Trainer)

Young Able Parents Support (YAPS)

The YAPS Group supports young parents and expectant parents up to the age of 21.

The group meets weekly and is facilitated by Julie Murphy, (NEYP Senior project Worker) Sally Elves, (NEYP volunteer and retired health visitor) and Jane Brady (Midwife). Health Visitors have also delivered sessions on specific topics throughout



the year. External trainers have also been involved, working with the parents on “Effective Communication Skills”, self-esteem, healthy eating and lots more! The sessions have been full, lively and participative.

In July several parents moved on from the group. A goodbye picnic and play session involving the young parents, their partners, children and staff took place at Poets corner.

Some parents went on to attend other community groups. Some attend the closed group co-facilitated by Mary Bullivant (health visitor) and Georgie Dordoy (NEYP Project Worker and some come along to the parent s breakfast group.

Playworkers have been busy collating a record of each child's development and experiences during the time they have been in the crèche. The records include photographs, drawings and diary comments and are given to parents when they leave the YAPS Group.

Because the YAPS Group has been so large, it has been necessary to move it down to The Hut, our other NEYP base at Kingsmead Primary School. A new group is being established and the staff have been occupied with home visiting new young parents and expectant parents. Five pregnant parents are regularly attending and crèche workers are standing by for the new arrivals!



“For just over a year, I have been Childrens liaison Officer at St Stephens Infants School in Canterbury. When I became aware of the Northgate Early Years Project, I arranged to meet with Nicky at poets Corner and have never looked back! We share the belief that by providing groups and services that parents want to increase and share skills, build confidence and self esteem....they in turn do the same for their children. Together with NEYP, we have established a weekly Drop-In group that is open to all parents. These friendly sessions provide an opportunity for parents to meet together, chat with me as well as with workers from the community. They can find out about what is going on in school and the local area. We welcome new faces most weeks! Every half term the Deputy Headteacher, Rosemary Welch, around fifteen parents and myself go along to Poets corner to meet over breakfast with NEYP staff. It is a very popular session!

NEYP obtained some funding from KCC to provide some training that parents had asked for. We have been able to offer some great courses on “Effective Communication” and “Paediatric First Aid”. I know this is just the beginning of many successful joint ventures to come! Nicky and her team at the Northgate Early Years Project are a joy to work with and I cannot praise them or thank them enough!”

Annette Haigh

“Over the past 4 years I have spent many happy hours at the Northgate Early Years Project. I have always felt very welcome and genuinely cared for especially at difficult times. Both of my children feel very at home here and my 4 year old is very pleased that she will still be able to visit with her new school. The Project has given me confidence in my parenting abilities and provided me with something to look forward to on many and long tiring days. It has often been the difference between coping and not coping.

Thank you very much.”

Barbara Penfold



Crèche Bank . . .

What do the commissioning organisations think of the Crèche Bank service?

"The staff supplied by NEYP Crèche Bank were friendly and fitted in well with the nursery staff. They not only helped with the child they were assigned to, but were happy to join in with anything else"

Dawn Pierce, Canterbury Day Nursery

"The Crèche bank enabled us to provide crèche facilities for our formal groups. We could not manage without you"

Jane Niece, Family Welfare Association, Whitstable

"The Crèche Bank has provided us with an excellent service which has enabled the Freedom Programme to run, giving support to women and no worries about child care. Using Crèche Bank staff in our nursery to cover holidays and illness has proved invaluable. We would not be able to operate without the help of these staff "

Anne Lyttle, Canterbury Womens Refuge

"The Crèche Bank provides a friendly reliable and crucial service which contributes greatly to the success of SureStart Canterbury. It enables parents the freedom to participate fully in the wide range of activities that SureStart and its voluntary partner organisations have to offer"

Mark Walton, Riverside Childrens Centre

"Youve been fantastic! Always managed to help out at short notice as well as with pre-planned placements. Thank you!"

Jane Hicks, New House Nursery

Card making . . .

Parents and children enjoyed making Christmas cards during the November half term break





Counselling Service for families . . .

"I appreciate having the opportunity to undertake my counselling placement at Northgate Early Years Project. I first came into contact with the project when researching possible placement opportunities for my counselling diploma.

I read about the range of groups and services the Project offers to families in the area. On my first visit to Poets Corner, I was impressed at the welcome I received, how cared for the building and environment were considering the large number of children and families utilising it! Although I am only at Poets Corner once a week, I have really been made to feel very welcome and comfortable. I feel the staff go out of their way to ensure I have all I need.

The counselling I offer is free. I see all parents on a one to one basis allowing them to talk freely and confidentially.

I feel privileged to be part of a project that is so worthwhile and that has a positive effect on the lives of so many children and families in the area."

Zoe Anderson (Counsellor)

La Leche – Breast Feeding

In February 2006, Georgie Dordoy, NEYP Project Worker, attended a training course to become an administrator for the La Leche League. Eleven, breastfeeding mothers were recruited to become Peer Counsellors; working closely with the support of the administrators, they assisted mothers to breastfeed through mother-to-mother support. They helped encourage and share information to promote a greater understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of mother and baby. After successful completion of their training the Peer Counsellors were awarded their certificate at a graduation ceremony in July. Another course is scheduled for January 2007.

Play support alongside the Health Visitor Clinic at Canterbury Health Centre

Georgie goes along to this weekly health visitor clinic armed with play equipment and toys. By engaging the children with play activities, parents have a better opportunity to talk with the health visitor about any developmental issues about their babies and toddlers.

Parent, Baby & Toddler Group at Diocesan Payne Smith School

A weekly session is jointly co-run by Georgie and Fiona Keytes in the hall at Diocesan Payne Smith School. The number of families enjoying this session is increasing. The session is open to all families with a babies and pre-school children. Funding from the SureStart local programme enabled the group to buy storage and play equipment. The group meets in the afternoon and finishes in time for parents to collect their school-aged children.

Post Natal Group

Mary Bullivant and Georgie Dordoy jointly facilitate a ten-week programme for mothers who are feeling "down" after the birth of a baby. The aim of the programme is to support mothers to develop new coping strategies and self help skills in a non-judgemental, safe and confidential forum. A crèche is provided for any babies and toddlers of parents attending. Evaluations have really shown the great benefit this programme has for parents.

Parent, Baby & Toddler Group with Health Visitor clinic at Poets Corner

This group continues to be very well attended and the attached health visitor clinic has proved to be useful and supportive to parents. Over twenty five families and thirty babies and children attended a recent session! Its busy, lively and fun for families with four members of Project staff on hand to help provide activities and talk with parents.



The Toy Library

The Toy Library is really popular and well used with membership increasing. The Toy Library sessions are friendly, relaxed and FUN! Parents and children sit together and both look through the catalogues and play with the toys and equipment before making their choice. The sessions also enable staff to give help and advice about different items. Parents find this useful.

Regular users of this great resource include families, pre-schools groups, nurseries, child minders, family support staff and schools.

The library accommodates a large range of good quality toys and play equipment suitable for different ages and stages of development. Some of the large equipment has proved popular for birthday parties. The library also has a selection of story sacks and books. During the year the Toy Library staff organise themed sessions including “messy play”, heuristic play, block play and sensory play. Another session might simply involve families coming along to a group play session using Toy Library stock! Feed back has been very positive. The Northgate Early Years Project is currently establishing a satellite library at the Riverside Childrens Centre. Our aim for the coming year is to establish a mobile service taking the resource into groups and venues where families might find it easier to access.



Dear Zoe

I am writing to show you my great support and appreciation for the toy library service.

Since Oliver was a few weeks old we have regularly visited the library and borrowed items. The toy library is an excellent resource for us. It had meant that Oliver had played with a much wider range of toys and books than we could possibly provide him with financially. It also feels good to know that waste is reduced because you can borrow toys, try them out and then decide if you might buy something similar or not. This way you don't end up with toys that are rarely used at home.

I have to say that my visit to the toy library is one of the highlights of my week. The staff are always so welcoming and the room, although small, is a lovely environment for both parents and children alike

*Many thanks for all your hard work,
Jo Rickards and Oliver (21 months)*

“I have been the Canterbury Childrens services District Manager for just under two years and I have visited the Northgate Early Years Project at Poets Corner, South Street, Canterbury on two occasions. I have been immensely impressed by the friendliness of the welcome, the quality of the environment provided, the dedication of the staff and the strategic understanding that Nicky and her team have obviously developed over the years. Making sense of central and local government drivers in a way that translates into effective services for the children and families we most need to benefit is no easy task. At the Northgate Early Years Programme the best aspirations of policy makers can be seen to be made live in the heart of our communities. I wish the Northgate Early Years Programme continued success. I have been most impressed with the engagement with local people, some of whom have grown from being service-users to members of the staff team and volunteers. The ability of Nicky and her staff to network with other agencies, in particular, HomeStart, has been another source of the innovative and collaborative approach evident at the Project.”

*Jane Simmons, District Manager
Children, Families, and Education, Canterbury Children Social Services*



Summer Family Play Sessions . . .



With a Voluntary Sector Grant, the NEYP was able to provide holiday family play sessions in a variety of Canterbury venues. In addition NEYPs own venues, schools, community centres and parks were used to accommodate play for families with babies and children up to the age of eleven. Once again, these were well attended and gave families another option for somewhere to meet up and play, supported by Project staff, volunteers, youth workers from the Prince of Wales Youth Club and staff from the Northgate Community Centre.



'I have been coming to these sessions for a long time and compares to it. It is simply fantastic for us and the children. A gazebo however would solve the too much sun exposure outside! Looking forward to come back, thanks to all the staff who are wonderful.

'Thank you for another lovely day. By the way I must say snack time its getting healthier and more interesting with plenty of choice for the children. Well done!

'I've been coming to Poets Corner for 3 years with my 3 year old twins Katie and Scott – always a lovely welcome – plenty to do, great snack food. Its been a real life saver for me. I would have gone loopy without this valuable support in their pre-school years. The Toy Library is excellent too. Zoe is very good at suggesting which toys are suitable, we love everything at PC

'... Range of craft/ art activities with excellent materials . . . friendly helpful staff/ helpers...thank you – it was a very pleasant morning . . .

'... mixed with other mums and children and somewhere for my 3yr old to have fun...Lauren 6months likes playing with the baby toys.... Megan 3ys liked painting, making things and dressing up.

'... the activities were excellent...my grandchildren enjoyed it and so did I . . .



Canterbury Volunteer Centre

Canterbury Volunteer centre has provided us with Brian and Rosemary who come along with other volunteers to maintain the garden ensuring it is kept nice for us and the residents who live on the Poets estate.



. . . and our partners say

"The year has continued to see the joint working of our project and the Northgate Early Years Project flourish! We provided awareness training on domestic violence which increased the understanding of what it is, how it impacts on the family and where women can go for help.

The Freedom Programme, a nationally recognised 12 week support group for women affected by domestic violence is run in Canterbury. This programme is overseen by the Canterbury District Domestic Violence Forum of which NEYP is a member. Workers from our project and from NEYP have been jointly facilitating this programme. We have been able to combine our skills, knowledge and experience to provide effective support and advice to the women attending the group. NEYP provide a crèche for babies and pre-school children whilst their parents are in the sessions.

We are thankful for a Project like this, which helps women and children who have to move to the Canterbury refuge, often from far away, leaving family and friends.....to integrate into the community. It also provides that valuable support women need with parenting which is often affected by the domestic violence the women and children have experienced.

Well done on another successful year!

Anne Lyttle (Project Manager, Canterbury Womens Refuge)

"I have worked with the Northgate Early Years Project for over 5 years. The organisation is efficiently managed, professional in its approach and displays many examples of good practice - acting as a positive role model to other voluntary groups.

The staff are dedicated and enthusiastic and passionately believe in the aims of the organisation. The service is based on need and staff quickly adapt and change to meet the demands of the parents and families that use it. Activities are always delivered with a smile in a warm friendly and welcoming way, actively encouraging new people to join in.

Nicky Cole is an excellent ambassador for the voluntary sector, and works effectively and positively in partnership with myself and many of my colleagues. With the help and support of NEYP, council officers have been able to effectively engage and reach out to local people in the community. Nicky is always ready to give support, advice or share resources with other groups. Examples of partnership working include those delivered in Thanington and at Beauherne Community School and Wincheap. Both the Prince of Wales Youth Club and the Northgate Community Centre have worked with NEYP to provide activities and play sessions for families.

Canterbury City Council has provided some grant funding to NEYP. This has been well managed, monitoring is always of the highest standard and we are kept well informed of NEYP's achievements. One of the greatest things about NEYP is the way that parents are engaged and actively involved in the planning, delivery and management of the organisation... NEYP is truly a community project, for the community and most importantly led by the community.

I wish you all continued success"

Marie Royle (Neighbourhood Development Manager - Canterbury City Council)



Thank you to...

- NEYP staff for their enthusiasm and hard work in maintaining a quality service
- The Management Committee for their continuing involvement and support
- Parents, and carers for partnership working
- Lin Lindley and the Crèche Bank staff for an efficient and quality service
- Pip Hazelton for her ongoing support & encouragement
- Stephen Askew for his role as Treasurer and commitment to NEYP since it all began
- The staff at Waring & Partners who are always friendly & helpful
- Sally Elves, volunteer & retired Health Visitor for her huge commitment to YAPS
- Gill Mansfield, Headteacher, Annette Haigh, and staff at St Stephens Infant School
- Judy Challis (Christ Church University) for signposting volunteers to NEYP
- Bonnie Tomkins for her continued excellent Groupwork supervision
- Jane Brady, midwife, for her support in the YAPS group
- Jim Lennox, volunteer, who comes along every week to “repair & maintain”
- Mary Bullivant for her involvement and support in partnership working
- SureStart staff who have worked together with us.
- Sari, Rachael, Sam and the rest of the team at Canterbury & Coastal Homestart
- Irene Nierzwicka, Head Teacher Parkside Primary School for collaborative working
- Shirley Andrews, a volunteer who helps every week in a crèche
- Brian & Rosemary, Canterbury Volunteer Centre for keeping the garden nice
- Community Development Team – Canterbury City Council
- Phil Spain for his IT skills, advice and good humour!
- Val Clough , Head Teacher Wincheap School for her support & partnership working
- Clive Close and staff at Beauherne Primary School
- Fiona Keytes for co-working with NEYP to provide family play session
- Graham Gibbens , KCC councillor for his enthusiasm & support for NEYP
- Judy Berryman for her energy and inspiration with Creative Play training
- Karen Hodgson for her enlightening Effective Communication training
- Joey Wicks and P.O.W committee and staff for joint working
- Tess Hickson for her enthusiasm, support & great partnership working
- Mickleprint for a very professional job and excellent customer service.
- All persons , partner organisations & groups who work with us to provide services for families!



‘Through community groups and home visiting, the Northgate Early Years Project seeks to enhance the development and education of children by providing a range of services and resources which support both children and parents.’



Northgate Early Years Project

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