

Welcome to the September edition of the Best Start bulletin. In this edition you will find out about the Best Start Parent Champions.

What do the Best Start Parent Champions do?

Marie-Louise Fuentes, the Croydon Parent Champion Co-ordinator recruits, trains and supports a team of Parent Champions across the borough.

As a Parent Champion Volunteer you would:

- Talk to parents about services for families with children under 5
- Tell parents about childcare options
- Help parents find further information and advice
- Support parents to get involved in community activities through peer to peer support groups.



Some of the Best Start Parent Champions left to right; Carol, Juliette, Mary, Marie-Louise (parent champion co-ordinator), Stella

What is a typical day for a Best Start Parent Champion?

Parent Champions deliver their programmes in different ways either by running peer to peer support groups or by being out and about in the community talking to parents in the street, libraries and local community groups.

Mary and Stella run a peer to peer group 'Circle of Friends' delivered at the Home-Start Croydon office where parents can come along for a chat, make friends and have a cup of tea or coffee while their children have lots of toys and books to enjoy!

Shazeen and Rashmi are also Parent Champions while attending sessions at the library or community centres. They provide information on childcare options, activities in the Children's Centre's and signpost parents to other services.

What training / resources will I receive as a Parent Champion?

Parent Champions will access a free training course delivered by the Family and Childcare Trust and the Parent Champions Co-ordinator. Once the course has been completed they will be issued with a Certificate and a folder with information about services in Croydon for families with children under 5.

If you are interested in becoming a Best Start Parent Champion who should you contact?

Home-Start are currently recruiting Parent Champion volunteers and the next course will be starting mid-September. For more information please contact Marie-Louise Fuentes on 07841 033 403 or email louisef@croydon-homestart.co.uk



Best Start Week!

Look out for the Best Start week which will include a number of roadshows across Croydon promoting Best Start services during the week of 16th October – 20th October 2017.

We are taking this opportunity to join up with the family learning festival themed 'Start your adventure'. Please save the dates, further details to follow shortly.



Chatterbox groups

We have chatterbox drop-in groups to promote, support and encourage children's speech, language and communication development. Visit the Best Start social media sites to view the chatterbox leaflet and find out more information.

Being a parent course

Fantastic tips and strategies on parenting and enhancing communication with your child. A free 8 week course raising parental confidence with a crèche provided alongside.



We now have further dates confirmed!

5th October - 30th November

4th October - 29th November

4th October - 29th November

For more information and to book your place please email epec@slam.nhs.uk

Help paying for childcare

The government is introducing new ways to help parents with childcare costs.

You can now find a straightforward explanation of all government childcare support on the new Childcare Choices website:

<https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

Using the websites Childcare Calculator, you can quickly find out which of the offers are available to you and choose what works best for your family

Childcare
Choices

Check out our Facebook and Twitter pages for all up to date information.



Best Start events!

What's on

Children's Centre's Autumn Timetables

The autumn timetables for our 9 children's centre's are now available to view online via our website and social media sites.



Have a look to see what's on offer from September - December.

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/community/childcare/childcentres/what-is-best-start>



Breastfeeding Baby Friendly Assessment

UNICEF Baby Friendly standards aim to support mothers to breastfeed and to help all parents to build close and loving relationships with their babies.

A couple of weeks ago Best Start welcomed the UNICEF BFI assessors to Croydon Health Services for Stage 3 in the Baby Friendly accreditation process.

The assessors visited baby clinics at various children's centres and clinics around Croydon, talking to mothers and observing the way we support parents and babies.

Initial feedback is positive – particularly with regards to the kindness of staff and the good collaboration between Best Start colleagues and the warm welcome provided to parents.

We're waiting for the final report from UNICEF but the good news is that we are a step closer to achieving full Baby Friendly accreditation for the health visiting service and family nurse partnership, and the hard work of the teams has been recognised. With a bit more training we hope to achieve full accreditation in 2018.

