

Positive parenting

working together to
support families
in Liverpool



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Liverpool Family Services Directory

This is an online directory of services and activities for children, young people and their families.

The directory is regularly reviewed for its accuracy to ensure it is up-to-date with the most recent information available to support parents in meeting their child's needs. The directory is also available for professionals working with families (including schools) to make sure that the most appropriate information and support is made available when it is needed.

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Liverpool Family Service

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Welcome

Your job as a parent can be both challenging and rewarding. It is a job where very little training is given to prepare parents for what lies ahead. Every family experiences difficulty from time to time. When extra pressures come along, these can make a hard job even harder. At these times it may be difficult to think about what help or information you may need. When things go wrong, and they almost always will at some point, it does not mean that you have somehow failed as a parent - things go wrong for everyone. It is often the way difficulties are handled that can make a difference to your children, both now and in the future.

What is the handbook about?

This handbook can offer some ideas to help you find your way through what can be a maze of issues and advice. It gives contacts and further information you can follow up when you are deciding how to deal with issues. This handbook also offers helpful tips from professionals and things to look out for.

Who has produced this handbook?

Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board and the Liverpool Children and Young People Partnership, a partnership of agencies whose job is to safeguard and promote children's well-being and help parents in their task of positive parenting.

We hope you find this handbook helpful and a useful resource.

Stuart Smith - Executive Director, Children, Family and Adult Services

Helen Winrow - Assistant Executive Director, Integrated Children's Services

Throughout this booklet the term 'parents' has been used to mean mothers, fathers, carers and other adults with responsibility for caring for a child.



For a copy of the Disabilities Handbook call 08000 85 20 22.

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Common Assessment Framework

Liverpool's vision is for all children and young people to have positive and safe life experiences, leading to a successful transition to adulthood and fulfilling their full potential. Children, young people, and their families will be supported at the earliest possible point to prevent escalation of problems and difficulties.

Some children/families can get the support they need from services available to every one (for example, Schools, Health Visitors, GPs etc). These are often referred to as 'Universal Services'. However, sometimes children/families may need more intense or specialised support during a crisis. This is often referred to as 'Targeted Support' (for example, to deal with a family crisis or short-term health problem), or for a longer term arrangement (for example, when a child is born or diagnosed with a disability or learning difficulty), this is often referred to as 'Specialist Support'.

The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was introduced through the Children Act 2004, and is a valuable process in improving services to children and families, by making sure parents are fully engaged with an assessment of their child's needs and agree to the agencies/services that may be involved in helping their child/family with their needs at that time.

Liverpool City Council has produced information leaflets to explain the role of the Lead Professional, and how the Common Assessment Framework works.

These can be downloaded at:
www.liverpool.gov.uk/Health_and_social_care/Every_child_matters_agenda/Common_assessment_framework/Practitioner_information/index.asp



What is a Local Safeguarding Children Board?

The Children Act 2004 required each Local Authority throughout England and Wales to operate a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

The Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board was launched in April 2006 and focuses on the Stay Safe Outcome of the five Every Child Matters Outcomes.

What does Liverpool Safeguarding Children Board do?

Objective and Functions

The main focus of the LSCB is:

- To co-ordinate local work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- To ensure the effectiveness of the work.
- To participate in the development of the Children and Young People's Plan.
- To offer challenge and scrutiny to the Children's Trust Board (CTB) in respect of professional practice and community engagement, in relation to Safeguarding in Liverpool.
- To develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- To raise awareness with the local community and professionals in the area of Liverpool of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- To ensure a co-ordinated response to unexpected child death, including the collecting and analysis of this information.
- To monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is being done by the Board and partner agencies individually and

collectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

- To undertake Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) and advise on lessons to be learned and ensure the lessons are implemented by agencies.

Who are we?

Liverpool LSCB has an Independent Chair, Ms Bernie Brown and members of the Board are from:

- Aintree Hospital • Alder Hey Hospital • Barnardo's
- Chair of the Child Death Overview Panel
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health
- Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Services (CAFCASS) • Community/Lay Members
- Community Health • Connexions • Faith Groups
- HM Prison Service • Liverpool Children Services
- Liverpool Primary Care Trust
- Liverpool Women's Hospital
- Local Adult Safeguarding Board
- Mersey Care NHS Trust
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service • Merseyside Police
- Merseyside Probation Services • NSPCC
- Schools and Education Services • UK Border Agency
- Youth Offending Team

For further information contact the LSCB Team:
The Job Bank, 4 Tunnel Road, Wavertree, Liverpool L7 6QD.
Tel: 0151 233 6101 or visit the LSCB website
www.safeguardingchildrenboard.liverpool.gov.uk





A positive attitude

Make them feel great!

Positive parenting is about bringing out the best in your child. Listen and try to understand their point of view, encourage their efforts and you will really start to form the basis of a good relationship. They will always be your child but allowing them to develop, grow and establish their independence will give them the confidence they need.

In trying to help, it may appear that you are nagging. Learning from their mistakes, where it is safe to do so, is a good thing. It can be easy to point out where you think things are going wrong and forget to notice the things that go right. Everyone enjoys a bit of praise and encouragement, so when they do well, tell them.

Children gradually learn to make their own decisions, which may not always fit with yours. That is why tension is normal. Choose your battles and let some go! You might find that their friends seem to take priority as they get older. This is normal but you might feel jealous and even feel a bit left out.

Stop

They seem unhappy, have mood changes, are unusually secretive and are avoiding you.

Think

Could you be doing what you think is right without listening to how they feel?

Do

Try to develop an open relationship. Be supportive and let them know you are always there to listen.



Growing & developing

A sense of self-esteem and being aware of dangers is the best protection you can give your child. Let them know you're around to talk about puberty and changes in their body, sexual health and relationships. Let them know that you will always be there as a support through growing up, at exam times and on into adulthood.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Foster Care

Could you make a difference? If you have enjoyed being a parent consider becoming a foster carer and use your skills and enthusiasm to help other children and families. Contact the Foster Care Team on 0151 233 3700.

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All kinds of parents

Your family is unique

There's no such thing as an 'average' family - every family is different. Growing up with one parent can be a good thing, leading to a close relationship. Encourage your child to spend time with their other parent if it's safe and possible. Help them to understand that it's okay to love you both.

Young parents may face extra challenges. Don't be embarrassed to ask for support and advice. Your education may have to be cut short, but don't give up on plans for the future. Make sure that you have good, reliable childcare.

In a new relationship, everyone needs time to get used to things. Change can make us all feel unsafe, so it's important to make sure everyone feels secure. Take things slowly and carefully.

Grandparents can help out and are an important link to family history and a sense of belonging. Their experience can be useful. They have lives of their own so don't ask them to do too much. In family break downs they may lose touch.



Stop

We are separating and my son will be living with me.



Think

Is he feeling insecure? Have you neglected his feelings?



Do

A stable family life is important to children. Remind him that you both still love him.



We are all equal

Diversity is all about differences. We are all different - physically, socially, culturally and sexually. You may have a child with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a disability. But not everyone values and respects the differences in society. Discrimination is when you are treated differently just because of who you are. Although we're all different we all have the right to equal respect, opportunity and justice.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Health Visitor

If your sleep is often disturbed, arrange for a trusted relative or friend to care for your baby or child so that you can get some sleep. Talk to your Health Visitor.

Between the ages of three and four years, your child is likely to be dry during the day, with the occasional accident. This is often a gradual process where more and more nights will be dry nights.

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Bedwetting & sleeping difficulties

Patience, praise and peace!

There are many different reasons why babies and toddlers do not sleep through the night. Feel confident in yourself to know whether your child is really distressed or just restless. Trust your instincts.

Try to establish a regular night time sleep routine for your child early on by putting them to bed at a regular time each night. Prepare a warm, comfortable place for them to relax in. Reading to your child at bedtime helps them to unwind, and gives you some special time together. If your child is scared of the dark, try keeping a night light on.

Bedwetting may be stressful for both of you and will often wake your child. It is not easy to know why some children take longer to be dry at night than others. Try not to lose your patience or punish them, your child is not doing this on purpose. Children learn at their own pace and praise and support will help.



Stop

Your child of seven often wets the bed.



Think

Could they be unwell, or could there be something worrying them?



Do

Try to understand how they feel and if they are upset by the wetting. Talk to your Doctor or School Nurse.



Night time checklist

- Is your child too hot or cold?
- Are they comfortable?
- Could they be hungry?
- Check their bed is not wet.
- Are they scared of the dark?
- Did they have a calm relaxed time before bed?
- Is the house too noisy?

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



If your child is a bully

It can be a shock for parents to learn that their child is a bully. Bullies who continually harm other children need support and help as well. They may be going through difficulties of their own, maybe at home, which may have led to their actions. Talk to your child about what they are doing and try to find out why they are acting like this. It is wrong and they need your help.

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Tell-tale signs

- Your child seems secretive.
- They may have injuries they cannot explain.
- Their belongings may be damaged or go missing.
- They may run away or miss school.

Bullying

Children have the right not to be hurt

Bullying is a frightening experience. It can isolate and damage self-confidence. Bullying can have negative long-term effects on children, leading to depression and even suicidal thoughts and actions.

What other children think is very important to your child and fitting in is a must. Those thought of as different for any reason may be picked on and bullied. Be aware of the possibility of bullying and make sure you know the tell-tale signs.

You may think that your child is unlikely to be bullied but the reality is that bullying can happen at any time and to any child. If your child tells you about a 'friend' who is being bullied listen carefully and take them seriously. They may be trying to tell you it's happening to them.

All schools in Liverpool have an Anti-Bullying Policy. School action alone cannot guarantee it stops, so it is important that you work together with your child's school.



Stop

You notice injuries with no explanation. Behaviour seems different, they may seem secretive.



Think

They may be being bullied. You need to do something about it and find out what is happening.



Do

See the Headteacher. Outside school consider contacting the Police. Reassure your child.



The facts

- Bullying is unacceptable.
- Bullying can happen anywhere to any child.
- It can take many forms, from cyberbullying or verbal abuse to physical attack.
- Bullying is the repeated abuse of a child by one or several people.
- Most bullying is done by children who are the same age as the victim.
- Bullies may be children who are experiencing bullying themselves, maybe at home.
- Children with a disability or SEN are more likely to be bullied.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



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If your child is between three and four years old, they are entitled to a free part-time nursery place. Free part-time places are available at primary schools with nursery classes, nursery schools, playgroups, nurseries and some childminders. School based sessions and play groups are often available during term time only, but nurseries and childminders may be able to be flexible and provide sessions throughout the year. Childminders are only able to provide free sessions where they are registered to do so, and belong to the local accredited Childminder Network.

Childcare

How do I make the right choice?

You are responsible for the safety and well-being of your children. It is important that you think carefully about the person you are going to leave them with, whether this is a babysitter, childminder, at a nursery or with a relative or friend. Local Children's Centres can offer fantastic support and advice.

When you leave your child in the care of someone else you want them to be as well cared for and safe as they are with you. Therefore, when choosing childcare take your time and visit a number of different settings. Do not be afraid of asking to see qualifications and registration certificates. Talk to other parents.

Babysitters do not need qualifications or certificates and it is recommended they are over 16. A good babysitter will have a good reputation locally. Even with family and trusted friends you should establish rules and let them know your childcare routines, like bedtimes and food they like. Also let them know about any allergies and leave a number to contact you in an emergency.



Stop

You would like your child to be cared for by a childminder in their home.



Think

Has anyone been recommended? Talk to Liverpool Family Service.



Do

Check qualifications and visit more than once at different times of day. Make sure you feel happy.



Types of childcare

- **Day nurseries** for under fives during the working day.
- **Playgroups** for children between three and five. Usually four hour sessions.
- **Out-of-school clubs or kids clubs** provide sessional play and care for over threes usually before and after school and during school holidays.
- **Childminders** registered and inspected by Ofsted to care for children in their homes.
- **Nannies, au pairs and home child carers** are employed to provide care in the child's own home. Check they are registered on the Ofsted Childcare Register.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



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Children from abroad

Liverpool is ready to care for them

Many children arrive in this country from overseas every day. Many are asylum seekers or refugees, escaping from danger in their home countries. They may be with their parents, with a relative or they may be alone.

Our teams of Social Workers, Health Workers, Teachers and Carers are all ready to offer support but we can only help if we know about the child. If you are caring for a child from abroad, your first duty is to get in touch with Liverpool Children's Services.


We will be interested in their story and any special needs. Doctors welcome you to our NHS and can arrange a health check. Specialist staff in education will find the best school for them and work with you, Teachers and other care staff to help them make friends and begin an enjoyable learning experience.

We aim to understand cultural differences and overcome language barriers, to make you and your child feel confident and settled as soon as possible.

Stop

 You are caring for a child from abroad who we may not know about.

Think

 As their carer, you have a responsibility to do everything you can to get the help they need.

Do

 Tell Liverpool Children's Services about the child. Ask for help if you don't understand.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Helping children to heal

Many children who arrive in the UK are unhappy. Leaving your home and your family on a difficult journey can be very upsetting. Some children may be escaping from war or extreme violence and may have experienced terrible things. Our caring professionals in Liverpool will do all they can to help the child you care for deal with their unhappiness. Together we can find a way to heal their pain.



What is neglect?

Neglect happens when a parent or carer fails to meet a child's basic needs of food, shelter, security, attention or protection.

Children left alone

It can be a lonely and frightening experience

If a child is left alone it can be a sad, lonely, frightening and dangerous experience. There are possible risks, both physical and emotional.

The level of responsibility which is given to the child to look after themselves and to somehow manage whatever may happen is impossible for a younger child. They may say that they do not mind being left and may find it exciting at first, but they cannot fully know the possible risks and how to handle them.

Everyday things that happen in life such as hunger, a storm, the phone ringing or someone coming to the front door can cause problems. An accident, feeling ill or a power cut may occur and these may not be issues that a child could cope with.

If they are told, the Police and/or Children's Services may take action if they think that a child has been neglected by being left alone.



Stop

You notice a child who appears to be left alone for long periods of time.



Think

Is there immediate risk of harm to the child?



Do

If you are worried contact Children's Services. If they are in danger now, call the Police or Careline.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Guidelines

The NSPCC have guidelines advising that children under 13 should not be left alone. This does not have the force of Law but it is suggested as good practice.

As a child grows up and becomes more responsible, leaving them alone after school, or during the day is okay as long as they are prepared. If your child is 13 or over and you feel they can deal with this, it is important that they know where you are and who to contact in an emergency.



For a copy of the Disabilities Handbook call 08000 85 20 22.

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Education

Depending upon the disability or Special Educational Need that your child has, they may need additional support in their mainstream school. In some circumstances your child may need to attend a special school - a specialist environment designed to match their educational needs. Every school has a Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) who can discuss any issues with you. You can also contact Parent Partnership on 0151 233 2848 for impartial information.

Children with a disability/SEN

Make sure that they get the best support available

If your child has a disability the future can feel like a real challenge, but you are not alone. You can't stop your child's condition, but you can help with the disability they experience by making sure that they get the best support available. Liverpool Children's Services provide a range of support.

Your Doctor and Health Authority provide the help you need to understand your child's disability and help you plan treatment, therapy, equipment and ongoing care. The Neighbourhood Early Years Service (NEYS) helps parents of disabled children under five to be at the heart of decision making and planning. This includes access to keyworker services and other resources. There is extra support which can include special leisure facilities and short breaks.

Your child is especially protected by Law. The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for any service provider like schools to treat disabled people differently because of their disability. We support equal rights.



Stop

You think your child may have some form of disability.



Think

Some children do not appear to have a disability at birth, it can develop over time. Do not panic.



Do

Contact your Health Visitor, Doctor, local Children's Centre, NEYS or school to access Team Around the Child support.



Benefits

Benefits that you could receive to help you include Disability Living Allowance, Carer's Allowance, help with extra housing costs, Carers Blue Badge Scheme, free dental treatment and prescriptions and help with the cost of glasses. In some cases travel to hospital, school meals and road tax exemption. There are organisations and charities who provide further help, advice and support.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Around dogs

- Never attempt to stroke/touch any dog without the owner's permission.
- Never run past a strange dog as this could make it chase you.
- Never stare at a dog as they may see this as a challenge or an attack.
- Dogs and small children should never be left together unsupervised. No matter how good-natured the dog is, a dangerous situation could develop if the dog is hurt, frightened or feels threatened.
- Children must be taught to handle animals gently and carefully.

Dangerous dogs

There are many benefits of having a dog in the family

Having a dog in the family can be fun, a source of exercise and help children learn about responsibility and respect for animals. You should always have some guidelines when it comes to dogs and children. If you are thinking of getting a dog, research to find out which breeds behave best with children. Buy from a reputable breeder and make sure that the dog has no history of aggression and that it is a legal breed.

If you already have a dog introducing a new baby into the family can take some preparation and planning to keep them safe. Your dog may feel left out or jealous. Try changing their routine ahead of baby's arrival, so you may need to slowly change where they sleep or eat for example.

Never allow your dog to play rough games with adults because they may not understand they cannot do the same with children. Never allow your child to be alone with your own or any other dog. Take care in parks and open spaces where a dog could approach you or your child.



Stop

Make sure children always ask before approaching a strange dog or trying to pat it.



Think

Dogs are animals and will always respond instinctively.



Do

The key to any child-dog interaction is SUPERVISION, SUPERVISION, SUPERVISION!



The Law & dogs

There is a penalty of prison, a fine, or both for allowing a dog you own or are in charge of to be dangerously out of control or for owning a banned breed. These are sometimes known as 'trophy dogs'. Whether your dog is a banned type depends on what it looks like, rather than the breed or name by which it is called (whether a crossbreed or not). The Law refers to four kinds of dog which are banned:

- Pit Bull Terrier.
- Japanese Tosa.
- Dogo Argentino.
- Fila Brasileiro.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



How domestic abuse affects children

Children are affected in many ways. They may feel frightened, become withdrawn, aggressive or difficult, bedwet, run away, have problems at school, lack concentration and suffer emotional upset.

Long-term effects: The longer children are exposed to violence, the more severe the effects on them are. These can include a lack of respect for the non-violent parent, loss of self-confidence (which will affect their ability to form relationships in the future), being over-protective of a parent, loss of childhood, problems at school and running away. Children need time to discuss the feelings they have about violence or abuse. Children need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way relationships should be.

Domestic abuse

You are not alone

Domestic abuse is a crime. It affects many families across Liverpool. Women (often pregnant) and children are those mostly affected by domestic abuse, usually when drugs or alcohol are involved.

Children do hear, they do see and they are aware of violence at home, even if you think they don't. Children react in different ways to violence and research suggests that they are more likely to become abusers or victims later in life. Offer them a positive role model so that they learn other ways of behaving.

Many people find it difficult to understand why people stay in abusive situations. Fear, love, the risk of homelessness and money worries can make it difficult for women with children to leave and some may want to stay put and get their abuser to leave. It is your responsibility to protect your child and remove them from harm. You can seek help from a range of specialist services in Liverpool. You can also report incidents to the Police.



Stop

Any violence or abuse between adults at home will negatively affect children.



Think

Take responsibility by seeking help to stop or make it stop.



Do

In an emergency, call 999. Get support and help now. The longer it lasts, the more damaging it becomes.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



What is domestic abuse?

Abuse can be physical, sexual or verbal. It can also include things such as the constant breaking of trust, psychological games, harassment and financial control.

What do I do now?

If you want to leave an abusive relationship and are worried about safety, you do not have to suffer alone. There is support out there.

- There are three important steps you must take:
- Recognise that it is happening.
 - Accept you are not to blame.
 - Get help and support.



Ways to cope

Some of the ways to cope include:

- Count to ten before doing anything, allow yourself to calm down.
- Hug and cuddle your child.
- Check they are not hungry, too hot or cold or need changing.
- Go for a walk or a drive to help them sleep.
- Make use of a helpline in times of crisis.
- Walk out of the room for a short time, but stay nearby.
- Ask someone else you trust to take over for a while.

Don't shake the baby

Different ways to cope

It is normal to get frustrated sometimes when a baby will not stop crying. It is the way all babies make sure that their basic needs are met. It is neither your fault nor the fault of your baby. A baby with additional difficulties may cry more which can be very stressful.

Shaking can cause death or serious and long-lasting brain damage. Shaken Baby Syndrome is an injury caused as a result of a baby being shaken so that their head wobbles rapidly back and forth. The force of this can tear the blood vessels that connect the brain and skull. A baby's neck muscles are not strong enough to hold their head firmly. Never ever shake a baby for any reason. It is never safe to shake a child, not even in play. It is important for other children at home, your babysitter or any other carer to understand the dangers.

Contact your Health Visitor, Doctor, local Children's Services or Children's Centres. Do not allow a situation to go on where you feel unable to cope.



Stop

Your baby will not stop crying and you cannot sleep. You feel tired and frustrated.



Think

It is not your baby's fault, they may be feeling upset or uncomfortable in some way.



Do

Try to understand your baby's needs when they are having difficulties. Take a break if you can.



The facts

- Shaking is often a response to extreme frustration.
- Shaking can cause damage that you cannot see.
- Shaking can cause damage that is long lasting.
- Never shake a child for any reason.
- There are different ways to cope with a crying baby.
- Do not suffer alone, seek support from others.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Tell-tale signs

Signs to look out for are:

- Appearing panicky or tense.
- Being drowsy and lacking concentration.
- Complaining of sickness.
- Strange eating patterns.
- Has no energy.
- Seem depressed.
- Has skin problems or spots.
- Is aggressive.
- Unable to sleep.
- Seem secretive.

Not all of the signs above mean your child is taking drugs. Look out for changes in their behaviour and relationships.

Drug & alcohol misuse

Look out for the signs

There are many reasons why young people may start to drink or use drugs. They want to show they are growing up and see it as a sign of maturity. They may also feel under pressure from friends to experiment. It is also seen as a means of escape and having fun.

There are many tell-tale signs that your child may be using drugs or alcohol, take a look at the box on the left. There may be a change in relationships with family and friends, how they act or a change in performance at school.

Other signs can involve changes in a financial situation and personal possessions 'disappearing' and being sold.

It is important to discuss drugs and alcohol early with your child. Some parents worry that doing this may encourage their child to use drugs but avoiding talking about drugs will not protect them.



Stop

Your child's behaviour seems to have changed completely.



Think

Could they be using drugs or drinking alcohol?



Do

Don't jump to conclusions, find out the facts. If your child needs help get it now.



The facts

- If you or someone at home uses drugs or alcohol you are seriously affecting the care and well-being of your children.
- Children of users are more likely to become addicts.
- Most children will be aware of drugs and alcohol before they leave primary school.
- Children will be more responsive to being told about the risks.
- Provide good information about the dangers. It does not guarantee non-use but will increase the chance of an informed choice.



Encouraging good behaviour

Communication through the years pays off

Every day, your child learns new things. It's what makes childhood so exciting. You have an important job in teaching them about values and beliefs and by being a good role model. Start early and see your hard work pay-off.

Using positive feedback is a great idea. Build up self-esteem by talking about their strengths, not their weaknesses. Being too critical can damage confidence. When they do something good, praise them and explain why. Rather than saying "Good girl!" try saying, "You're a good girl for helping me".

You can use positive feedback when they are misbehaving too. Tell them you're upset about their behaviour, not them. That way they won't see themselves as a bad person and know they have the power to change the way they act. It's up to you to set boundaries and rules in their life, which will change as they grow. Be consistent with your rules.

Life is busy but it's important to make time to spend together.



Stop

Do they say things like "I'll never be able to do this right?"



Think

Is your child's self-esteem low?



Do

Praise them where you can. Tell them you're unhappy with their problem behaviour, not them personally.



Positive feedback

- Use positive feedback to build up self-esteem.
- Praise your child when they do well and explain why you're pleased with them.
- Children are happier if they have rules to follow.
- Use play to teach your child good behaviour.
- As they grow, change the way you encourage them.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.

Internet hazards

- **It's easy and fast** - making a decision at the click of a button can cause long-term problems.
- **I am in the privacy of my own home** - because they may be at home, and cannot be seen, children may be more reckless and bold in their actions. The emotional and physical distance of being online gives a false feeling of security.
- **Mob mentality** - social networking groups may have 'pages' specifically designed to target and bully individuals. It's easy to be anonymous and feel less responsible for their actions.

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Set ground rules

- Limit time spent on the internet.
- Talk about age appropriate websites.
- Tell them to never give out contact details or post photos of themselves on the internet.
- They should always let you know if someone is asking questions or wanting details they don't feel happy about.
- Ensure social networking profiles are set to 'private' so only friends can view.

Make sure your child understands why there needs to be rules. Because they can't see or hear the people they chat to, they may not be who they seem.

E-safety

New technology, old problem

The internet is part of life nowadays. It opens up many educational and social opportunities, giving access to a world of information and experiences. Whether on a computer at school or at home, a games console or mobile phone, children are accessing the internet whenever they can and wherever they are.

Children have a different language that we as parents need to learn and understand. If you and your child understand the risks you can get the most from the internet and stay safe. Chatrooms can be used by paedophiles to meet children and often the child thinks they are the same age. They can also 'groom' children to become victims, either psychologically on the internet itself, or by arranging to actually meet with them, gain their trust and abuse them*. Merseyside Police and Children's Services have specialist teams trained to counter these forms of exploitation and offer support to children and parents.

Make sure your child does not give away any personal details.



Stop

Your child is using the internet in secret.



Think

Could they be visiting unsuitable sites, or chatting with someone who may harm them?



Do

Learn about the internet yourself. Keep the computer in a family room.



The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre is dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse of children. They are part of UK policing and are very much about tracking and bringing offenders to account either directly or in partnership with local and international forces. If you are in immediate danger contact the Police.

* See Exploitation pages 34-35.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



What is exploitation?

Child exploitation is a broad term, which includes forced or dangerous labour, child trafficking, child prostitution and sexual abuse. The scary truth is that the UK has a serious problem with child exploitation - through the child sex trade, forced prostitution and forced labour in homes, restaurants, factories and farms. These children are denied the rights to attend school and may be separated from their families and friends. Exploitation is wrong.

Exploitation

Reduce the risks

It is up to us to protect our children. Children are vulnerable to exploitation. Exploitation takes many forms. A close and positive relationship with your child can reduce their vulnerability. Making sure they have high self-esteem and feel good about themselves can stop them falling into abusive relationships.

All children have a right to be safe from harm, wherever they are. If you both understand the risks of the internet you can make sensible and informed choices online. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre delivers a multi-agency service dedicated to tackling the exploitation of children.

Children involved in sexual exploitation can become victims of serious physical and sexual attacks, which can sometimes lead to death. They can easily become addicted to drugs and alcohol and face a high risk of catching Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). The emotional and psychological damage can be huge and can lead to self-harm, severe depression and even suicide.



Stop

My teenager seems to have extra money and new clothes I didn't buy.



Think

Could they be being exploited in some way?



Do

If so, get help to make it stop. Talk about what's happening. Offer a supportive home life.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Sexual exploitation

Adults who benefit from child sexual exploitation use many different methods to target children. It can begin with an 'exciting' new friendship with an older boyfriend or girlfriend. The child may receive expensive gifts and be given alcohol or drugs. Before long they create a loyal and dependent relationship with the victim. It is against the Law and a form of sexual abuse, which puts the child at risk from physical, emotional and psychological damage.



Boys

Boy's bodies can start to change from around the age of ten with sexual development soon after. Your son will be developing into a young man. He will need your support and trust but he will also need some privacy, respect and encouragement.

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Growing up

Changing times

Growing up can be a challenging time for all and a bit of love and understanding can go a long way. Let them know you are there to support them. Sometimes it can come as a bit of a shock when your child starts to develop and change into a young adult and it can be difficult to 'let go'. Of course, you are still their parent and they still need you. Be there to support them.

Discussing matters such as friendships, relationships and love are important. Be open-minded and do not judge them, so they feel they can trust you and turn to you when they need help and support.

Friendships are very important to young people. Having a close friend or group of friends and belonging to a group helps them feel good about themselves, learn to deal with people and develop their own identity.

You can show them how to trust their own feelings and values, building up an emotional strength that will help them as they get older.



Stop

He keeps asking me awkward questions about sex, I am not sure what to say.



Think

The more they understand about growing up, the less daunting it will seem.



Do

Find out, maybe you could go online. Don't be embarrassed, let them know they can ask you anything.



Girls

Puberty in girls can begin from around the age of nine. Your daughter will probably have gone through puberty and has developed into a young woman. She will need your support and trust but she will also need some privacy, respect and encouragement.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Health Visitor says

Smoking at home can lead to health problems. This is called passive smoking and it means you are forcing your child to breathe in your smoke. Even if you smoke outside it can still damage their health. Now you are responsible for your child why not give up smoking? Visit <http://smokefree.nhs.uk> for more information.

Healthy lifestyles

Start healthy habits early in life

With healthy habits from birth, you can give your baby a good start for a healthy and happy future. Breast milk is ideal for your baby's growing needs and giving them breast milk can make a big difference. If you are not as healthy as you could be, now could be a great time to establish good healthy habits for all the family.

Babies like the foods they get used to. If you give them lots of different, healthy foods to try when they are babies and toddlers, they are more likely to eat a variety of healthy foods as they grow up.

As they grow, you can help them by playing with them and helping them make new movements and explore their surroundings. As they develop, encourage them to take up a new sport or activity. The whole family can enjoy a healthy lifestyle together, even simple things like hiking or cycling help our health and allow us time together to relax and get fit.



Stop

Do you drink too much alcohol, take drugs or smoke?



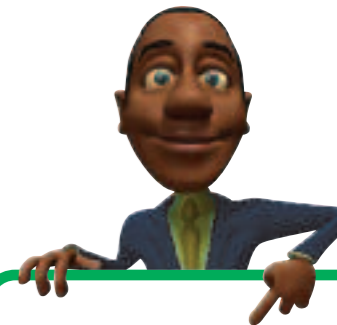
Think

You may be passing these habits onto your child. Now is the time to get healthy together.



Do

Get help if you need it from NHS websites and speak to your Practice Nurse.



Doctor says

Here are some basic rules to help you lead a more healthy lifestyle:

- Your good health habits will become your child's good health habits.
- Exercise together.
- Eat well.
- Drink alcohol with caution. Know the limits.
- Do not smoke or take drugs. If you do, get help to give up.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.

Protecting children in the pub

Signs that your child might come to harm in a licensed premises include you're drinking a lot, you don't know where your child is, they keep running off, there's adult entertainment available. Adults can buy young people aged 16 or 17 beer, wine or cider (not spirits) to drink with a meal as long as they're with them. It's against the Law for children under 18 to buy alcohol, or for an adult to buy it for them.

It's important to know about any risks there are for children in pubs, as well as other licensed premises, which means anywhere that supplies alcohol or entertainment. For example, restaurants where you're eating a meal and places like nightclubs where you might take your children for an event like a wedding reception or family party. Children have a right to be protected from harm - not just physical but emotional and moral. It's up to everyone to do what they can to protect them.

If you're taking your child somewhere where there's alcohol, remember that the more you drink the harder it will be to look after them. They can wander off or receive unwanted attention from strangers.

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Play is important

It is very important that children are allowed to get muddy sometimes, shout and scream and feel free. It is easy to be over protective. Balance is the key. Give them a bit of independence as they grow, as long as they are safe.

Keeping safe

In and out of the home

Most accidents happen in the home which is why it is important to ensure that your home is a safe place for all your family, especially for young children. One of the highest reported incidents of accidents at home is children being scalded by hot tea. Make your home as child friendly as you can.

Make sure that all medicines, drugs and cleaning chemicals are locked away out of reach. Certain places are full of danger, such as kitchens, sheds and even garden ponds. Supervise toddlers at all times, an accident only takes seconds. Use safety devices such as door locks, stair gates and bed guards when your child is too young to understand the dangers. Some toys are made up of very small pieces which a baby or toddler could choke on. Be aware!

Make your child aware of the dangers of roads and railways. Always use an appropriate car safety seat for their age and height. Outside the home they should never be alone. Teach them to run, yell and tell if approached by a stranger.



Stop

My child can now crawl around.



Think

Have you child proofed your home? Think about the dangers of everyday life.



Do

Child proof your home using safety devices.

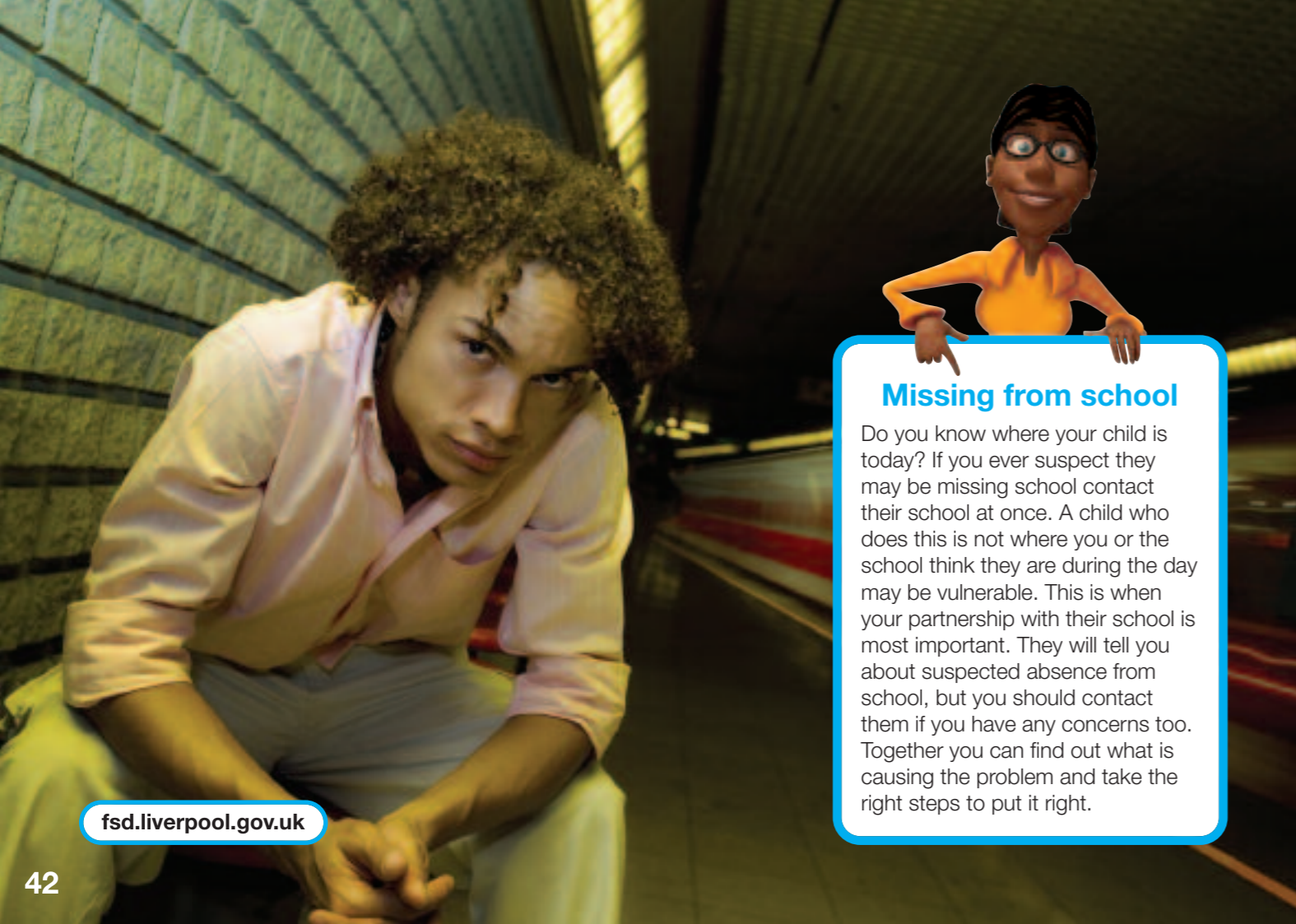


Tips

Exploring is an essential part of a toddler's development.

- Supervise young children, especially near wires and sockets.
- Small children should never be left alone with pets. Even trained and good-natured animals can be tested.
- Make sure that irons, saucepans and hot drinks are kept out of reach.
- Play with age appropriate toys suitable for their age, especially if the pieces are small enough to choke on.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Missing from school

Do you know where your child is today? If you ever suspect they may be missing school contact their school at once. A child who does this is not where you or the school think they are during the day may be vulnerable. This is when your partnership with their school is most important. They will tell you about suspected absence from school, but you should contact them if you have any concerns too. Together you can find out what is causing the problem and take the right steps to put it right.

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Missing school & running away

Be aware

Missing school is also a serious matter. By Law parents must ensure their children receive an effective full-time education. Missing school means missing out on valuable learning time, on life skills, fun and friendships. They are more vulnerable to crime by being away from their peers, possibly alone and risk getting into bad company or being exploited.

Children from all sorts of backgrounds run away from home for a variety of reasons. If your child runs away they need your help. They may be trying to find out how much you care for them.

Children who run away often have problems that they feel they are unable to talk to their parents about. Many also run away because of drug abuse or because they are pregnant. Look for signs that your child might not be happy at home and remember help is available - please don't be too embarrassed or afraid to ask. Your child will be at risk from harm if they are sleeping rough.



Stop

You suspect your child is missing school.



Think

Where could they be going and what could they be doing?



Do

Talk to them. Find out why, are they being bullied? Talk to the school (see Bullying pages 12-13).



Missing from home

Make sure that your child knows how important they are to you. If you have to tell your child off, tell them that it's their behaviour that's the problem - not them. If something has gone wrong in the family, don't let your child think that it's their fault. Be aware that if a child goes missing from home repeatedly, receives unexplained gifts and possibly has an older 'friend', it is possible they could be being sexually exploited (see pages 34-35).

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Missing someone

Coping with loss

Loss of a loved one can be through their death, moving away, divorce or separation, or a parent in prison.

Death of a loved one causes a range of feelings as they try to cope with what's happened. They may feel anger at the person who died, at you, at others or themselves. They may feel guilty, possibly blaming themselves in some way. Talk about what has happened as much as they want to.

Separation and divorce is hard. The more your child knows what is going on, the easier they will find it to cope. Children can think that their parents' breaking up is somehow their fault and they've done something wrong. Let them know that what's happened is not their fault. Tell them you are both there for them.

Whoever your child misses is important to your child. Support them and let them know you are there.



Stop

You and your partner have separated.



Think

How will this affect my child?



Do

Let them know you will both still be there for them.



Parents in prison

Encourage your child to keep in touch, perhaps by writing letters or drawing pictures. Let them know that their parent in prison still loves them and talk to them about a possible prison visit. Talk about what you will tell others and how your child feels about that. They may not wish friends at school to know. You may wish to tell your child's school in confidence so they can offer them support.



The Local Authority has specific duties in relation to private fostering arrangements, these include:

- Check the suitability of private foster carers.
- Ensure that private foster carers, parents and children are clear about who to contact for advice and support.
- Monitor the standards of care.
- They must notify the Local Authority, it is an offence not to do so.
- They must inform Children's Services at least six weeks before a planned arrangement begins.
- If it is an emergency placement or the child is already living in private foster care, then Children's Services must be informed immediately.

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Private fostering

Making a difference

If you're thinking about asking someone else to look after your child, be aware of what might happen. Your Local Authority has access to Police records so may know things about them that you don't. So, it's important to tell your Local Authority so they can protect your child. Sometimes, parents ask another family to look after their children. This is called private fostering. Parents might want their children to be privately fostered because they work or study long hours, live abroad or may have separated or divorced.

If you want to be a foster carer, find out about the child you are thinking of fostering from their birth parents - things like if they have any medical problems or require a special diet. Register the child with your own Doctor when they come to live with you.

Keep in contact with the birth parents. It's not always easy being a private foster carer, things can still go wrong. It's important you all need to be clear about what you expect from each other.



Stop

My cousin's son has just moved in with us, and his parents are overseas.



Think

Will they be staying with you for more than 28 days?



Do

If so, you must notify the Local Authority. They can offer you the best help and advice.



What is it?

Private fostering occurs when a child under 16 is cared for, for more than 28 days by an adult who is not a close relative, by private arrangement between the parent and the carer.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



What can I do?

If someone you know is having difficulties, you could offer the following:

- A listening ear.
- Ideas to cope with problems.
- Encouragement to get help.
- Practical support (e.g. babysitting).

If the family is unable to cope and they do nothing to get help you need to report it.

Protecting our children



Receiving support

Very few adults harm children deliberately and most often, when harm does happen, families need support, not punishment or the removal of their children. Liverpool Social Workers and other professionals get involved when parents may be unable to protect their child from harm and need some help. In some cases Merseyside Police Family Crime Investigation Unit will work with Social Workers to help protect children and decide whether an offence has been committed.

Speak out and consider how you would feel if it was your child. Discuss your concerns in confidence with either Careline Children's Services or the Police. Liverpool City Council also offer support and information.

When we suspect, witness or are told of a child that is being harmed, action should be taken to stop things getting worse. Even if you think an incident is just a one-off, your information could be very important. Long-term abuse can have a negative affect on a child for the rest of their lives.



Stop

There are many signs of abuse, from physical injury to changes in behaviour.



Think

Make sure your child knows who they can share worries with if and when they need to.



Do

Seek advice about what practical and emotional support is available from schools and Children's Centres.

Abuse at home

When we suspect abuse of a child in our own home, we can react in many different ways. We may feel guilt, anger, disbelief or denial. Some of these reactions can prevent help getting to a child who needs it. You may not tell others because you fear that the children will be at further risk of harm. You may love the person who is causing the harm and not want to believe what is happening. You need to put your child's safety first.



Relationships

Valuing others

Relationships are very important to children and young people. We all experience different types of relationships throughout our lives from those with our parents, family and friends to sexual relationships. It helps them feel good about themselves, learn to deal with people and develop their own identity, as well as helping them learn about the values and ideas of others.

It is important to teach your child the importance of family and to appreciate them. Let them know you will always be there for them and remember that children need to feel secure, loved and valued - this is the basis of self-esteem and confidence. Your relationship will change over the years.

Belonging to a group and fitting in is very important, they may be part of a group because their friends are. Problems or friendship break-ups are a big deal to them. Let them know that you are there for them and show them how to trust their own feelings and values, this will help them in later life.

Stop

My daughter is 12, she has had an argument with her best friend.

Think

Her best friend is really important to her and offers her support and companionship.

Do

Take her feelings seriously and be there for her. Suggest ways she can make up with her friend.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Young people

You may feel worried about the effect certain friends are having on your teenager. Peer pressure may mean they are doing things they don't really want to just because everyone else is. What others think of them is really important right now. Let them know they can talk to you and that you will listen. Encourage them to trust their own feelings and values, building up an emotional strength that will help them as they get older.



Safe sleeping

Reducing the risks of cot death

A cot in your room is the safest place for your baby to sleep in their first six months. Keep the cot tidy and do not use plastic sheets. Babies can overheat, so try to keep the room between 16-20°C. Do not use duvets, quilts or pillows until your baby is one year old and never use hot water bottles or electric blankets.

Always position your baby in the 'Feet to Foot' position, with their feet at the foot of the cot so that they can't move down inside their blanket.

Unless a health professional has told you to do something different, always put your baby to sleep on it's back. Never let your baby fall asleep propped up on a cushion, on a sofa or chair, and don't let anyone fall asleep while nursing your baby.



Stop

Always put your baby to sleep in the 'Back to Sleep' and 'Feet to Foot' position.



Think

Babies aren't good at keeping their own temperature constant, so make sure they don't get too hot or too cold.



Do

It is best to keep your baby's cot in your room for the first six months.



Health Visitor says

If you take a baby who cannot sleep into your bed, do not take any medicine, drugs or alcohol that may make you sleep more heavily than usual. Remember that when sleeping next to you, your baby will be warmer anyway, so if they fall asleep under your duvet they may get too hot. Be aware that they face a bigger health risk if you or your partner smoke.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



How can I help?

It is normal to feel upset, angry and powerless to find a child is self-harming but remember they need your understanding and support. Listen without judging them and stay calm. This is their way of handling problems. Find ways to help them learn to deal with stress and understand the things that cause them to self-harm in the first place. If they can't talk to you, encourage them to talk to another family member, friend, Teacher, Youth Worker, Social Worker or your Doctor.

Self-harm

Understanding and support

Self-harming or hurting yourself can take many forms. This may include cutting, burning or scalding, hitting, picking skin, head banging against a wall or other object or taking an overdose. Eating disorders are also a form of self-harm.

While the aim is to hurt, it is not usually to kill themselves and it may carry on for years.

People who self-harm often use it as a way of dealing with problems, such as depression, bullying, abuse or feeling unloved. Those who self-harm usually think badly of themselves and need even more attention and support.

Self-harming is not just about getting attention, as it is most often carried out in private and kept secret. Children and young people go to great lengths to cover up their self-harming. What they are doing is a sign that they need help.



Stop

I suspect she is hurting herself. She always wears long sleeves and seems secretive.



Think

Find out the facts. Try to understand why it is happening. Has something happened at home?



Do

Give them time to talk. Do not be cross. Call 999 if it looks serious or they have taken an overdose.



Facts

- Self-harming is a sign of deeper problems such as bullying, abuse or feeling unloved.
- Young people who self-harm say it is a way of being in control and use it to help them cope, as the physical pain takes their mind off their problems.
- Young people who self-harm often do not get help for themselves because they may be worried about what you will think of them and their self-harming.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Is it legal?

It is unlawful for a parent or carer to smack their child, except where this amounts to 'reasonable punishment' regardless of any individual, cultural or religious justification. There is a grey area in the Law as to whether a 'smack' amounts to reasonable punishment. However, physical punishment will be considered 'unreasonable' if it leaves a mark on the child or if the child is hit with an implement such as a cane or a belt*. As a result, child protection professionals will assess incidents of physical ill-treatment of children, in order that they can understand, prevent and explain the consequences of further incidents to parents.

*Source www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Smacking

The great debate

It is important that children learn how to behave. Parents have a very important job as role models for their children in helping them to learn how to do this.

Setting limits early on and explaining reasons for these limits helps to instill self-discipline. Smacking has no long-lasting positive effect and in fact smacking usually has to increase in severity in order to have the same impact on your growing child. This is where the fine line between smacking and hitting can be crossed. Smacking does not teach self-discipline and may teach your child to hurt others.

Every parent gets frustrated at times and it is at these times that a parent may smack in the heat of the moment. However this is an outlet for the parent's frustration, rather than a helpful way of influencing the child's behaviour. Try to use different ways to teach acceptable behaviour. Praise them when they are good and try to distract them from misbehaving.



Stop

My child is being so naughty I feel like smacking them.



Think

This has happened in the past and does not seem to be working.



Do

Think about different ways of showing your child how to behave. Explain why you are angry.



How to avoid smacking

- Try not to let a situation get so bad that you feel you need to smack your child.
- Set limits early on.
- Explain why you may be unhappy with their unacceptable behaviour and praise their good behaviour.
- If you feel so angry you are out of control take time out and walk away.
- Try to take a break, all parents get frustrated sometimes.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Starting nursery & school

Change and transition

For children, any kind of change or transition can be scary. Start thinking about your child's early learning place well in advance and research their new nursery or school. It can be a difficult time for parents too.

Nursery school. Being in a large group of children, sometimes for the first time can be a frightening experience. Try going to a Parent and Toddler Group, or attend other activities where other small children are around so they get used to mixing. Be patient if they become clingy and take it slowly.

Starting school. This is a big change in your child's life. Try to prepare them for what will happen and encourage their independence. Visit the school before they start. Talk to their Teacher and share information about your child that may help.

Secondary school. Your child was used to being one of the oldest and now they may be one of the youngest. This can be a difficult time. Make sure your child knows they can tell you about any problems, especially bullying. Exam times can be stressful so be patient and supportive (see pages 60-61).

If your child has a disability or SEN there are more things to think about. Contact Liverpool Parent Partnership Service on 0151 233 2848.



Stop

You are feeling anxious about your child starting school.



Think

Do not let your child know how you feel, be strong for them.



Do

Be positive about the exciting change. Talk to your child and reassure them about what's happening.



Tips

- Give your child lots of support and make sure they know what to expect.
- They may feel nervous and say they feel too ill to go to school. They may also be angry towards you or cry - this is all quite normal.
- You might worry how your child is going to cope with being in a new environment, have confidence in them and be strong for them.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Signs of stress

It is important that you know and recognise the signs of stress. This way you can support your child and get extra help if you need to.

Signs can include:

- Mood swings.
- Being unable to sleep.
- Trouble concentrating on schoolwork.
- Sudden stomach aches or headaches and wanting to stay away from school.
- Overreacting and being emotional.

Stress & anxiety

Helping them cope

Children of all ages can get stressed and anxious. They can feel stressed for many reasons but the most common reasons are parental divorce, exam pressure and being bullied or abused. Be careful what you say, even when you don't think your child is listening to you. Children overhear parents talking about money worries or problems they are having at work and they start to feel anxious about these things themselves and take on worries beyond their years.

Many children and young people feel under pressure to do things they are not happy about because of peer pressure. This might mean wearing certain clothes or shopping in the right places. On a more serious level, this might mean being absent from school, trying alcohol or drugs, shoplifting or going further with a boyfriend or girlfriend than they feel ready to. Let them know you are there for them and that they can talk to you if they are worried. Mental health issues can affect children. If you have concerns speak out.



Stop

Your child seems stressed out.



Think

Are they under lots of pressure with school work and exams?



Do

Try to break down their workload into small easy to manage amounts. Talk to their Teacher.



Relieving stress

There are lots of ways you can help your child overcome or cope with stress and anxiety:

- Talk to your child about what is causing their stress.
- Tell them it is normal to feel stressed now and again.
- Help them learn to relax and cope better when they're upset.
- Do not put extra pressure on your child by expecting too much from them.
- If their anxiety goes on for longer than a month, let them know you will support them in getting help.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Mood swings

It's true that teenagers are especially prone to mood swings. This is often put down to the surge of hormones produced at the start of and during puberty, but there might be other reasons too. Their appearance is changing so they may feel more self-conscious than usual, be feeling under pressure at school or worrying about friendships. Therefore it can be perfectly normal to feel happy one minute, and depressed, angry or frustrated the next. Mood swings usually stabilise as they head towards their late teenage years, but if you are worried contact your Doctor.

Tantrums & mood swings

Managing behaviour

Tantrums may start around 18 months and become less common at four. However, tantrums may later be replaced by mood swings once your child reaches puberty. It's not all bad news, it's just part of growing up and will pass.

Toddler tantrums often happen when a child is not able to express themselves as much as they want to and their frustration may come out as a tantrum. Tantrums are especially likely to happen if a child is tired, hungry or uncomfortable. They often happen in busy, public places, which can be highly embarrassing and add to the parents' stress.

Mood swings during puberty normally pass with growing age and confidence, but can often be difficult to live with at the time. Hormones and changes in physical appearance are often to blame and they may go from being happy one minute to angry and depressed the next.



Toddler tantrums

Keep calm and consider whether your child needs food or rest. Give your child attention and if possible, find a quiet place or some way of distracting their attention. Don't give in, but do try to understand your child's feelings. Praise your child for calming down afterwards.



Stop

My ten year old has become moody, rude and seems depressed.



Think

They are probably going through the onset of puberty.



Do

Talk to them about how they feel. Help them understand the changes their body is going through.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Contraception

Make sure your teenager has access to information and support around condoms and contraception. They have an equal responsibility whether they are a boy or a girl. You may not agree with your teenager having sex at all but it is better they have all the knowledge they need and have protected sex.

Teenage pregnancy & STIs

Preventative parenting

We cannot protect children from the society we live in. Sex is everywhere around us and children and young people will learn about sex whether you want them to or not. They will also learn about sex from each other and information that gets passed-on in the playground is not always accurate. The result can be confusing messages that leave them exposed to risky situations, STIs (Sexually Transmitted Infections) and pregnancy.

You have an important role to play in making sure your child has the right information to cope with these pressures, to make positive choices about their relationships and to stay safe. Try to introduce information gradually to your child which you can build on as they mature rather than a one-off talk. You might feel concerned that by discussing sex and relationships, particularly at an early age, you will encourage them to have sex early. However, research has proved that the opposite is true.



Stop

Your teenager may be having unprotected sex.



Think

Make sure they understand what they are doing and are mature enough to cope.



Do

Advise and make sure they use protection. Support them in their choices.



If she's pregnant

If you think your daughter may be pregnant, or if she has told you that she is, make sure she visits her Doctor or a local Sexual Health Service to get the pregnancy confirmed and to access the support available. Talk to her about the choices she has and how these choices will affect the rest of her life (and probably yours).

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Young carers

Who cares? You care. They care.

Many people need special care in their homes. They may be ill, disabled or elderly, or they may have drug or alcohol problems. Caring for a member of the family can be a big help. When the carer is a child or a young adult it is very important to make sure that they are getting everything they need too.

If your child has any caring role, for yourself or another member of their family, it is most important that they do not suffer because of their caring role. It can be difficult for a child to take on the responsibilities of an adult and find themselves supporting a parent as well as younger brothers or sisters.

They can be so busy looking after others that they forget to look after themselves and their health, schoolwork and friendships may suffer. You don't have to cope alone, there are organisations that can help you and your child get the support and advice you both need.



Stop

Your child is missing school, feeling tired all the time and acting unusually.



Think

They may be finding their caring role difficult to cope with. Are they doing too much?



Do

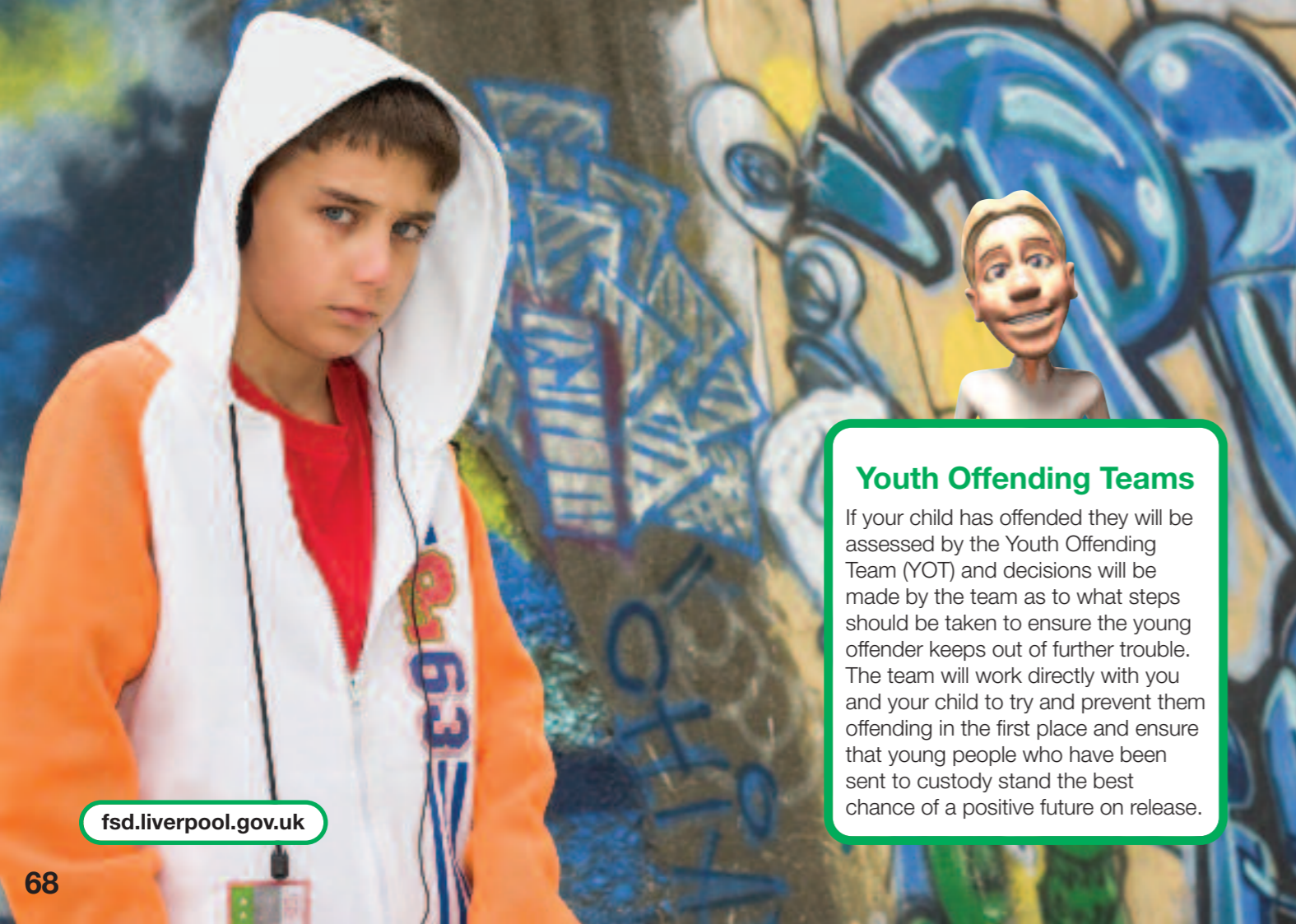
Find out about support available. Tell the relevant authorities. Talk about relieving their pressure.



Extra support

Sometimes caring for others can have a bad effect on a child carer's education and health. We can give extra support to young carers. This may include special breaks and extra support services for particular needs. Your child may just need to be able to step away from their responsibilities from time to time and meet with other young carers like them. Let them know they are not alone.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.



Youth Offending Teams

If your child has offended they will be assessed by the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and decisions will be made by the team as to what steps should be taken to ensure the young offender keeps out of further trouble. The team will work directly with you and your child to try and prevent them offending in the first place and ensure that young people who have been sent to custody stand the best chance of a positive future on release.

Young people in trouble

Preventative parenting

Children of all ages can get into trouble and the main reasons young people give for offending are boredom and pressure from their friends.

Be aware and look out for signs that your child may be up to no good - they may be under the influence of a negative group of friends. Not coming home, wearing new clothes or having money which cannot be explained may be signs. There may be a perfectly sensible explanation so make sure you talk to them to find out what is happening. You should also look out for the possibility that they are using drugs and alcohol.

Research into the lifestyles and experiences of young offenders tells us that young people from a stable and supportive family home are less likely to offend. Therefore, it is important that you take an active interest in your children. Know who their friends are and how they are doing at school. If you suspect something is wrong do something sooner rather than later.



Stop

I have found something which may be drugs in my son's drawer.



Think

Could there be an explanation for this? Is your child out of their depth and do they need help?



Do

Talk to them. Find out what is going on and offer support. Talk to support groups about what to do.



What should I do?

Talk to them and don't ignore the problem. Stay calm - all children break the rules from time to time, some more than others. Be consistent in what you say and do and if you do impose a rule, stick to it. The biggest reason stopping young people from offending is the fear of being caught and their parents' reaction.

If you are worried, get help. See contact details at the back of this handbook.

National contacts

- **Alateen Al-Anon (for young people)**
020 7403 0888
www.al-anonuk.org.uk
- **Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)**
0808 800 5793
www.ace-ed.org.uk
- **British Association for Adoption & Fostering**
020 7421 2600
www.baaf.org.uk
- **Bully Busters**
0800 169 6928
- **Child Exploitation & Online Protection (CEOP) Centre**
0870 000 3344
www.ceop.police.uk
- **Cruse Bereavement Care Helpline**
0844 477 9400
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk
- **Cry-sis Helpline**
08451 228 669
www.cry-sis.org.uk
- **Defra (For more information about the laws on dangerous dogs)**
08459 33 55 77
www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/domestic/dogs.htm
- **Education & Resources for Improving Childhood Continence (ERIC)**
0845 370 8008
www.eric.org.uk
- **FRANK (24hrs)**
0800 77 66 00
www.talktofrank.com
- **Kidscape**
08451 205 204
www.kidscape.org.uk
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline**
0808 2000 247
www.womensaid.org.uk
<http://refuge.org.uk>
- **NSPCC**
0808 800 5000
www.nspcc.org.uk
- **Parentline Plus**
0808 800 2222
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- **The Samaritans**
08457 90 90 90
www.samaritans.org
- **www.itsnotyourfault.org**
- **www.justice.gov.uk**

Local contacts

- **Adoption & Fostering**
0151 233 3700
- **Careline Children's Services**
0151 233 3700
- **Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)**
Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.
(Professional referral required through Centralised Assessment & Brief Intervention)
0151 293 3662
- **Connexions Liverpool**
0151 709 5400
www.connexionslive.com
- **Education for Asylum Seekers**
0151 233 3901
- **Family Crime Investigation Unit North & South**
0151 709 6010
www.merseyside.police.uk
- **Liverpool Childcare & Family Information Service**
08000 85 20 22
- **MENCAP**
0151 280 9636
- **Merseyside Police**
0151 709 6010
www.merseyside.police.uk
- **National Youth Advocacy Service**
0151 649 8700
- **Neighbourhood Early Years Service (NEYS)**
0151 233 1112
- **NSPCC**
0844 892 0264
www.nspcc.org.uk
- **Parentline Plus**
0151 201 7876
www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- **Parent Partnership**
0151 233 2848
- **Red Cross Tracing Family**
0151 709 7799
www.redcross.org.uk
- **Refugee Action Group**
0151 702 6300
- **Sensory Team**
0151 225 6280
- **Sleeping problems with children**
0151 651 1392
- **Victim Support North Liverpool South Liverpool**
0151 261 1969
0151 281 1000
- **The Samaritans**
0151 708 8888
www.samaritans.org

Every effort has been made to keep the information in this handbook up-to-date and accurate. However, we cannot guarantee that inaccuracies will not occur. We will not be held responsible for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused as a result of reliance on such information.