Luton Children’s Centres

A guide to the services and support Luton Children’s Centres have to offer you and your family

Details correct at time of printing June 2013
What is a Children’s Centre?

Luton’s Children’s Centres provide a one-stop shop for information, advice and support for families with children under 5. Families benefit from a range of flexible services and support when they need it. The centres are dotted all over Luton making them easy to access. They bring together local services which may be all under one roof, or close by in the community. Children’s Centres aim to support you in the everyday challenges of parenthood.

Who are Children’s Centres for?

Children’s Centres provide a variety of good quality services and information to children under five and their families.

Case Study

“We first started using the Centre when Star was a baby, as we wanted her to mix with other children and develop good social skills, and that has certainly worked. Marylyn took her to Baby Massage and Makaton signing sessions and she did a Cookery Course, and they both enjoyed it so much that, when Marylyn went back to work, I decided to keep on taking Star, and then Rudy, to as many Groups as I could.”

Matt is unable to work following a very bad motorcycle accident some years ago so is the children’s full-time carer, and he acknowledges the fact that the Centre has been a useful social outlet for him, too. With limited mobility he finds it difficult to go very far but as the Centre is only a few minutes walk from their home it has proved the ideal place for both him and the children to meet friends and relax.

“Because I can’t travel too far on my own, it’s great to know that there is somewhere so close to meet up with familiar faces and entertain the children at the same time.”

“Obviously, I use the Centre mainly for Star and Rudy but I can’t deny that I enjoy it too. “Because I can’t travel too far on my own it’s great to know that there is somewhere so close to meet up with familiar faces and entertain the children at the same time. We’ve all made friends through the Centre and Rudy and Star absolutely love it.”

The centre were a great help with my first child. I’ve made many friends in these groups and look forward to attending some of these classes again with my second child.”

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Child Development & School Readiness

My daughter really enjoys socialising at this play group. The location is very convenient, and the staff are very friendly and helpful. The activities are brilliant and help my daughter’s development.

Stay & Play

Our stay and play sessions are opportunities for parents/carers to come along and meet other people with young children. A variety of age appropriate activities are available such as messy play, soft play, stories and rhymes and lots more.

Learning Through Play

Our services are structured around the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum which will prepare your child for school. All staff are trained in running services which develop your child’s development through play and social interaction.

Milestones

Our staff are trained in supporting parents/carers in a number of key milestones including toilet training, crawling, weaning, toddling, bedtime routines and those temper tantrums.

Communication & Language Development

You will be fascinated at how your child develops their communication and language skills. We provide advice and support in how you can enhance your child’s communication at home through baby signing, singing songs, nursery rhymes and sharing books.

Signposting to Other Organisations

If you have concerns regarding your child’s development our staff can help in pointing you in the right direction for support and advice from specialist organisations.

Toy Libraries

Toy Libraries have a great range of toys for all age groups. For a small annual membership charge you can access a wide variety of toys and keep your child entertained whatever the weather!

Advice on Childcare

All Children’s Centres in Luton work extremely closely with pre-schools, nursery schools, play groups and child minders. Whether you are returning to work after your maternity/paternity leave or looking for somewhere for your child to access their free 15 hours we can help! Some families may be entitled to a funded child care place for their two year old. We can provide advice on completing forms and offer advice on any childcare related benefit queries.

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Looking After You!

Parenting Courses
A variety of courses and bite size sessions offering support and advice from staff and other parents on a range of parenting topics.

Group Support
Being a parent/carer can be quite lonely at times. We offer regular opportunities for groups to come together and meet new people.

Bump 2 Babe Antenatal Support
These are free antenatal classes run by midwives, health visitors, infant feeding team and children centre staff. The aim of the classes are to prepare expectant parents for pregnancy, birth and early parenthood. Bump 2 Babe for young parents is also available.

Post Natal Support
Our staff and services are for both expectant parents and new parents. Support can be offered to parents/carers with post-natal depression, breastfeeding, pregnancy and birth.

1 to 1 Support
We have staff who can visit you in your home or on a one to one basis at the centre to help with a wide range of topics from benefits advice, parenting support, breastfeeding support or just a friendly chat.

Family Learning
We provide courses to promote parents/carers awareness of children’s early learning through interactive sessions such as outdoor play.

Adult Learning Opportunities
If you are interested in improving your skills in a variety of subjects your local centre can provide access to a wide variety of courses. These courses can be anything from improving your literacy and numeracy skills, to gaining a qualification to support your employability.

Links with Job Centre Plus
Many centres will have drop in sessions where you can go and talk to a Job Centre Plus Advisor. They also offer regular Job Shops to help with searching and applying for work.

Breastfeeding Support
Professionally trained staff are always on hand to help with any breastfeeding queries you may have. Some centres also offer the opportunity to hire breast pumps or attend breastfeeding cafes to meet other mums.

Making Sense of the Benefits System
The benefits system can be a confusing process but centre staff are on hand to help complete forms, put you in contact with the right departments and ensure you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

Making the Most of your Money
Children’s Centre staff are trained in supporting parents/carers on how to make the most of their money. We have close contacts with local organisations who can offer debt support and advice on a whole range of financial queries and benefit calculations.

Relationship & Whole Family Support
We can signpost parents/carers to counselling services and for legal advice for any relationship problems they may have. Our centres can be used as venues for contact time or counselling sessions and our team are on hand should you need any advice or support.

Domestic Abuse Support
We have group and one to one support available for victims and survivors of domestic abuse. Don’t suffer in silence.

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Family Health & Wellbeing

It helps to come here as you can mix with other parents and get advice on any queries you might have. The courses that have been run are very useful. It’s a lovely environment and very child friendly.

Child Health Clinics
A drop-in clinic run by the Health Visiting Team. They offer advice and support on your child’s development, feeding, weaning etc. They monitor the growth, health and wellbeing needs of children under five.

Home Safety Checks
We can come out to your home and provide a free home safety check offering advice on how you can minimise the risk of injury to your child. We may also be able to supply equipment such as stair gates, window and cupboard locks and fire guards.

Weaning Advice
Your local Children’s Centre can offer tips and advice on weaning your child. Weaning topics are discussed regularly at group sessions and centre staff can also put you in contact with dieticians for more specialist support.

Baby Massage
Parents/carers will learn the routine, which has numerous health benefits and receive handouts each week so that they can perform the routine at home. The fully interactive sessions give babies a chance to socialise and parents/carers to meet and make friends.

Healthy Eating Advice & Cooking on a Budget
Children’s Centres are offering classes to parents/carers and their children to help develop cookery skills and increase knowledge of a healthy diet. The course aims to teach basic cookery skills and the importance of a balanced diet in a fun and informal environment, as well as giving knowledge and information on cooking on a budget and alternatives to takeaways.

Healthy Start Vitamins & Vouchers
If you are pregnant or have a child under 5 you may be eligible for a healthy start voucher. This entitles you to free milk, fruit, vegetables and vitamins for you and your child.

Oral Health Advice & Support
The oral health of your child is an important part of your child’s development. Most centres sell doidy cups which help your child with speech development and prevent tooth decay. We have regular visits from the mobile dentist and we can support you in locating your local NHS dentist.

New B’s Cafés
New B’s Café is a place where you can meet other mums, have a coffee and most importantly feed your baby in a comfortable and safe environment. Trained professionals will be on hand to give you information and advice on breastfeeding if required.

Adult & Child Fitness Classes
Working in partnership with Active Luton we deliver sessions within the centre to promote physical exercise for you and your child. Soft play equipment is also used in a variety of activities to promote your child’s physical development.

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Health Professionals
All Children’s Centres have a named health visitor who we can refer families to for support. We also work with dieticians, community midwives, GPs and local dentists.

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It is educational to share knowledge with other parents-to-be. The midwives are very engaging and provide a great experience.
If you are worried about a child’s safety, please talk to a member of staff or call the Referral and Assessment Team on 01582 547 653.
# Children’s Centre
## Initial Registration Form

To take part in our range of activities, please fill out this form and return it to your local Children’s Centre.

### Parent/Carer Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSON WITH PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
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### Address Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House No</th>
<th>Street</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town &amp; County</td>
<td>Postcode</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile number</td>
<td>Home Number</td>
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### Email address

How did you hear about us?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Would you like to be kept updated on Children’s Centre activities Y / N</th>
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### Children

**UNDER 5 YEARS OF AGE, LIVING AT SAME ADDRESS**

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<th>First name (M/F)</th>
<th>Surname</th>
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<td>Date of birth</td>
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### Data Protection Agreement

Luton Borough Council Children’s Centres are committed to protecting your privacy. We will process the information you provide in a manner which is compliant with the Data Protection Act. Information provided will not be shared with any third parties without prior consent.

I do / do not consent to my information being shared between Luton Borough Council and the Health Services. Information will not be shared with agencies outside Luton Borough Council Children’s Centres without your consent unless it is necessary for the safeguarding/ protection of a child or vulnerable adult.

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Print name

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