

'Grow with Me' parenting strategy to help children blossom

THE LAUNCH of the Tameside Parenting Strategy will help children in the borough achieve the best start in life.

Known as "Grow with Me", its vision is to nurture the personal, social and emotional development of our children by supporting parents and families with skills, information and practical guidance.

The strategy isn't about telling families how to raise their children, but about making them aware of the difference they can make, encouraging them to feel confident in their own abilities and providing help and guidance where necessary.

Created in partnership with many local partners, the strategy was due to have an official launch this month that's had to be postponed because of the coronavirus restrictions. While the launch will take place later in the year, the strategy is being released now to ensure that families can benefit from it.

The strategy is informed by the latest expertise and other services, including Early Attachment, Family Intervention, Early Years, Youth Services, Community Development and Health, as well as a survey of parents and carers and listening to children. The science of early development shows that the first 1,001 days of a child's life are important in determining the adult they will become. Anybody with responsibility for raising or teaching children, not just parents, are the single biggest factor in getting those vital early years right.

Aims include increasing parenting confidence, improving mental health for parents and children, increasing school readiness, improving child development, preventing anti-social behaviour, reducing parental conflict and reducing relational and developmental trauma.

The strategy's key principles include:

- Early intervention and prevention to ensure that families can be helped to build resilience and nip potential issues in the bud.
- A renewed commitment to workforce development that will allow the right professionals to be in the right place with the right skills to deliver the support which children and parents need.
- A variety of different routes to accessing the service, including an online offer that will make sure that no parent or child is left behind.

The parenting offer outlines five key programmes to support parents and carers in Tameside, including:

- The Solihull Approach: Parenting groups for those with children aged 0-19, covering behaviour, developmental needs and developing strategies and skills.
- Incredible Years: A 14-week programme for parents of children aged 2-8, covering play, praise and rewards, routines and limit setting, handling behaviour and problem solving.
- Early Start: A 6-week postnatal group for parents with children up to 12 months.

- Mellow: A 14-week course for parents of children under 3, covering parent and child focus, self-esteem and talking and listening.
- The Freedom Programme: An 8-week programme around domestic abuse for parents of children of any age.

Councillor Bill Fairfoull, Tameside Council's Deputy Executive Leader with responsibility for Children and Families, said: "Making sure that every child has the best start in life, no matter what their circumstances, is both an important and challenging responsibility for all local authorities.

"I'm delighted that, despite all the challenges and restrictions that the coronavirus has brought, we've been able to launch the 'Grow with Me' Parenting Strategy, which, now more than ever, will help and support families to achieve this.

"As an adopted child myself, I know from first-hand experience how important a loving and stable family was in helping me get a fantastic start in life. I look forward to working with parents, children, services and partners to make this strategy a success and achieve the best possible outcomes for our families."

The strategy follows the launch of a new website to help parents, carers, young people and professionals easily access support and advice. It can be found on the website at www.tameside.gov.uk/earlyhelp/neighbourhoods.