

## Evaluation Report on GroBrain Baby Course

### Kingsleigh Children's Centre, Bournemouth

#### Introduction

There is overwhelming research supporting the significance of attachment and good parent-child interactions in the early years, on positive outcomes for children. Following recent Solihull training, we were interested in accessing material that conveyed these important concepts in an accessible 'parent friendly' way. GroBrain was developed by Camilla Douglas of Insight Parenting Co and is designed to be a low cost resource for parents of babies pre-birth to 1 year. It is based on attachment theory and links basic parenting skills with infant brain development.

Two Nursery Nurses from Health were due to start an under 1's group (Little Stars) in April from Kingsleigh Children's Centre. After viewing the GroBrain material they were keen to be involved and agreed the material could be piloted within these sessions. Following the pilot, future use of the material could be evaluated. The group was open to anybody with a child under 1 and health colleagues had invited all parents within this group.

#### Course content

The GroBrain material is divided into 4 sessions:

- Love and Brain Development
- Managing babies' crying
- Communication and Play
- Stress Management for Adults

The sessions are designed to be informal and interactive. Each section is designed to last approximately an hour. As the course was a pilot, it was agreed I would use the 1<sup>st</sup> session to explain a little about the programme and show a brief extract from the DVD 'Baby It's You' to introduce the ideas of baby's brain development. This made the total number of sessions 5. At week 2 parents were given a Grobrain pack, which included a booklet, magnets, pen and brain diagram with stickers. Unfortunately due to the limited resources it was not possible to give additional packs to parents who joined later.

#### Attendance

The group was an open group, so new parents could join at any stage. There was no requirement to attend all sessions although this was encouraged. There was a core of 11 parents that attended 4 or more sessions. Attendance figures are recorded below. 3 fathers attended the sessions.

Week	1	2	3	4	5
	27/4	4/5	11/5	18/5	25/5

<b>No of attendees</b>	11	13	13	11	15
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## **Evaluation**

Weekly evaluations were completed by parents at the end of each session after weeks 2-5. Not all parents completed evaluations every week as some needed to leave early for older children and some were attending to crying babies!

## **End of Programme Evaluation**

At the final session, to gain further feedback from the group, participants completed 'post its' answers to the following questions and gave the answers below:

### **What was good?**

- It was great, learnt alot re my baby's development
  - The whole course was really interesting-Loved it!
  - Really informative
  - Learning more about my child's brain development
  - I enjoyed the video
  - Having the chance to share thoughts and ideas with other mums
  - Ideal room, handouts to refer to, Diane was good! Interaction & informal, not a lecture.
  - Sharing ideas and experiences with other mothers
  - Informal session yet informative, not bombarded with too much and not forced opinions.
  - Stress busters
  - Gain new knowledge
  - Meeting others, informed information.
  - As a nursery deputy manager I feel this training would be very good for nursery staff, especially those working with under 1's, especially in areas where children need alot of love.
- What I learnt?
- Learning about my baby's brain development.
  - That what I'm doing is right and that by doing what comes naturally I am helping baby's development.
  - To cope with stress more. Take time out.
  - How what I am doing anyway works for my baby's development.
  - Lots of things to do at home-practical; communication, stress tips, learning from other mums

### **What will I do as a result of what I've learnt?**

- Lot's of playing, chatting and cuddling!
- Continue talking and interacting with my baby using words such as 'up', 'milk', 'bye', etc.
- I will refer to my book on Grobrain and handouts regularly
- Use more new words
- Ask for help

### **What would make it better?**

*Nothing would make it better, easy to understand, told in a good way*

*More sessions on more subjects/aspects*

*More handouts with basic info in case couldn't focus on talking because of baby.*

*More stuff on baby's development.*

*Observations/Comments from Health colleagues*

*"This was perfect for the age group of the children, positive reinforcing message with lot's of handy hints"*

*"The feedback from parents has been excellent-they loved it"*

*"Even the ones who didn't make all the sessions have been saying how good it was"*

*"I noticed changes in the parents; I parent who remained on the outside of the group for the first few sessions, was sat at the front by the end and joining in more. Another parent who shared her difficulties with her baby's personality said how everything had changed, she was enjoying him more and he was sleeping better."*

*"Parents had permission to explore the difficult bits without being made to feel bad"*

### **Final Conclusions**

This was a successful pilot, parents gave positive feedback and the feedback from health colleagues supported this. They are keen that GroBrain sessions are repeated within the 'Little Stars' group.

The data from the final session suggests that levels of communication and play were reportedly increased by 60%. 100% of parents had increased their understanding of baby brain development, 90% felt more able to empathise with their baby and comfort them. Levels of affection showed little change, however feedback from parents and observations would suggest this was high already.

The comments made by parents suggests that parents felt reassured that they were 'doing ok' and this is reflected by the fact that 90% felt more confident as a parent by the end.

**Venue:** Kingsleigh Children's Centre, Bournemouth

**Facilitator:** Diane Laird

**Timings:** 1.30-3.00 Wednesdays. Weekly for 5 weeks

**Date** 27<sup>th</sup> April-25<sup>th</sup> May 2011

## Evaluation of a new antenatal and postnatal course for parents in Bridgend based on GroBrain materials

### **Families First 0-2 programme in Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board.**

An abundance of research shows that the foundations of health and wellbeing are laid in pregnancy and the first two years of life, when the brain is developing most rapidly. Loving, secure, consistent and reliable relationships in the early years are needed to ensure a child grows into a confident, resilient, motivated and empathic individual, equipped with the skills to socialise, engage and thrive in education and employment (Sunderland 2009, Gerhart 2008, WAVE Trust 2013, Welsh Assembly Government 2009, Welsh Assembly Government 2011).

Families First was developed in Wales in response to the Child Poverty Strategy (Welsh Assembly Government 2011), aiming to alleviate inequality and social determinants of ill health and raise parental awareness of the vital part they play in shaping their child's pivotal years. The Health Board Health Visiting service successfully achieved funding via the Welsh Government Families First programme in 2012 to run a public health programme for families across the Bridgend locality in South Wales. The programme aimed to deliver key public health messages on breastfeeding, responsive parenting and infant neurological development, communication and play, weaning and family healthy eating, family dental health and parental stress management.

The overall aim of the programme was that parents would not only be educated but empowered to consider the impact of the familial lifestyle choices made, and use the practical solutions and suggestions within the programme to help the family alter their behaviour to impact positively on the growing infant.

#### **Delivering the programme**

Clare Shears RGN, RHV, IBCLC was seconded to deliver the programme over an 18 month period, with the support of health visiting services, midwifery services and the Joint Assessment Family Framework. She was able to overcome difficulties finding free venues by giving a short presentation on the aims and objectives of the programme, showing how it could help build more resilient communities as well as increasing infants' capacity to engage with learning. Four of the six sessions were delivered in a primary school setting.

The overall aim of the programme, was that parents would not only be educated but empowered to consider the impact of the familial lifestyle choices made, and use the practical solutions and suggestions within the programme to help the family alter their behaviour to impact positively on the growing infant.

The challenge was to develop both an antenatal and post natal programme, easily accessible to parents at mutually convenient times, incorporating the essential messages outlined above, but in a manner that was practical, fun and friendly without being judgmental and delivered in a professional but informal way. The resulting programmes developed were a two, two hour, antenatal class and a 6 week (two hours a week) postnatal class.

The GroBrain package of education was pivotal to programme. From the ever growing body of evidence of how important the early years of an infant's life are in shaping their future physical and emotional wellbeing, I wrote the programme around the key components of GroBrain.

The four fundamental aspects of GroBrain (Love and brain development, managing crying and distress, communication and play and stress management) were woven into both antenatal and postnatal programmes and linked in all the key public health messages outlines above.

In total 6 two hour sessions per week have been delivered in 6 venues across the locality on a rolling programme over the last 12 months. Over 200 families have attended either the antenatal or postnatal programme. All evaluations have been positive about the course.

#### **Some of the parents comments include**

*'I loved the fact it wasn't just baby massage but we discussed so many other things which helped me feel like a confident parent.'*

*'I liked spending time with my baby, socialising with new mums and learning something new. Lovely instructor and great topics covered.'*

*'I liked everything about the course. Thank you Clare!'*

*'I enjoyed everything, learning how to communicate better with my daughter and her needs.'*

*'This is a brilliant course. Would recommend to any parents. Make it longer than 6 weeks!!'*

*'I wish the course had been longer, I'm sad not to be coming anymore. An excellent course I would highly recommend to everyone.'*

*'Thoroughly enjoyable. I gained a better understanding and increased my confidence. I've also made a new circle of friends.'*

*'Brilliant course, really enjoyed and learnt loads. I would recommend to all my friends. I learnt massage techniques and how to grow my baby's brain.'*

*'I've got much better insight into babies. Clare was very helpful and friendly and I really enjoyed.'*

*'I met other mums. It helped me bond with my baby and help with baby's colic and constipation. It's brilliant and I would recommend it. The only problem was that it is only 6 weeks long'*

Clare Shears RGN, RHV, IBCLC

December 2013

## Evaluation of GroBrain Baby Course in Camden Borough

### Background

In 2015 Camden Borough were looking for a postnatal baby course for parents with a wide cultural diversity many of whom would not have English as their first language. When they saw the visual richness of GroBrain materials, we were commissioned to train their team of 25 health professionals, family support workers and children's centre staff to deliver the GroBrain Baby Course.

### Training

Training took place over two consecutive days. The first day covered the underpinning knowledge on infant brain development, the stress response, attachment and attunement, and how to explain these concepts to parents in simple but memorable ways one-to-one using GroBrain resources. The second day covered an overview of facilitation skills and familiarisation with the GroBrain course materials. Trainees also had to explain brain development in small groups, for peer and tutor feedback, which they found particularly useful. Attendees rated the usefulness of the training and resources in the workplace at 9/10.

### Evaluation of the GroBrain Baby Course

Over 300 parents have attended this course between 2015-16.

Completed evaluation forms from 82 parents have been assessed.

There was an average of 88% attendance at each session (meaning participants completed an average of 3.5 sessions out of 4, showing a low drop out rate.)

Levels of knowledge were self-assessed on 8 key topics.

1. Bonding
2. Baby brain development
3. Communication with babies
4. Confidence in comforting your baby
5. Understanding the reasons why babies cry
6. Tuning in to babies' signals and signs
7. Confidence as a parent
8. Postnatal depression

Self-assessed scores on these topics rose from an average of 65% pre-course to 83% post course.

### **What did you get out of the course?**

*Plenty of helpful info and advice  
Confidence in knowing what to expect and that what im doing is norma  
How to listen and talk to my baby, sharing experiences with other mums  
Info on communication, bonding, stress  
Enhancement of my knowledge  
Info on baby development, socializing with new people  
Self-confidence, confidence  
Learnt more about communicating with babies, met other mums  
Very helpful, learn how to take care of my baby  
Meeting other mums  
Reminders about building foundations  
Information, reassurance, contact with other babies and mums  
Learning new things  
How important everyday things are  
A lot of support and reassurance  
Lots of useful advice and tips  
Friends and a wealth of information*

### **Anything particularly helpful on the course?**

*All great  
Being able to ask specific questions  
Would recommend 100%. The best course.  
Aimed at those with little experience of good parenting?  
The 3 questions on baby's emotional needs, really helped m  
All very helpful, eg on emotional needs  
Play time with baby  
Brain wiring  
Info on brain development  
Bonding, listening to different cries, using a happy calm relaxed voice  
Now I understand why my baby cries  
The treasure basket and de-stress activities*

### **Anything particularly unhelpful on the course?**

*Would've liked handouts if miss a session [Recap on previous sessions?]  
Need more info, strategies on sleep and feeding?  
The first 2 weeks [out of 4] could be 1 hour sessions not 2 hours?  
Aimed at inexperienced younger parents? Needs tailoring for those who have read more?*

### **Would you recommend this course to a friend?**

*77% would definitely recommend  
The remaining 23% would recommend*

## **Antenatal Course for Vulnerable Parents**

### **Following the success of the Baby Course, Camden commissioned us for a second time to develop a**

Camden's First 1001 Days Programme is a priority within Camden's Resilient Families programme and has been adopted as one of 5 priorities agreed by the Health and Wellbeing Board (Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2018).

One of the elements of the First 1001 days is the Preparation for Parenthood Service. This new service aims to promote effective support for parents around sensitive parenting and attachment and to help parents-to-be to manage the transition. The Preparation for Parenthood Service will be delivered by children's centre staff, health visitors; midwives and partner organisations with the overall aim to reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for young children and their families in Camden.

CAMDEN

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## FEEDBACK FROM PARENTS AFTER 4 SESSIONS (MAX)

*Noel Park Children's Centre and Clapton Salvation Army*

“At Noel Park Children's Centre we have worked with Camilla and introduced GroBrain in our new babies and parents' group. The parents attending, some with English as a second language, found the material and concept easy to grasp and very useful. They felt the programme gave them a really good insight into the world of their baby and tips for helping them understand their children's needs.

As a centre that focuses on working on attachment and helping parents to develop nurturing relationships with their children early on, we felt that GroBrain was just the right tool to get simple, clear and well evidenced messages across to the local, diverse community. The visual richness of the programme allows parents/carers with little English to still take part and learn.

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- Being more conscious of my role – behaviour, listening
- Learning that my baby has as much to tell me as I do to her
- You should spend more time talking to each other
- I make a conscious effort to strengthen the love wiring and stay calm around her
- I have been to just one session and found it very useful
- It assured me, gave me confidence in doing what I have been doing (it's interesting to know why and what effect it has on him)
- Made me feel more confident as a parent
- More conscious of my behaviour
- Giving love/attention. It's great to know it is building my baby's brain. It's another excuse to love her even more.
- Very educational
- Great packs

- Very interesting, useful information but a bit fast paced.
- Great tips re how to help my baby with stress in later years. If only I'd had the same as a child!

**What have you got out of the GroBrain sessions so far? What difference has it made to you and your baby?**

- Being more conscious of my role – behaviour, listening
- Learning that my baby has as much to tell me as I do to her
- You should spend more time talking to each other
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- I have been to just one session and find it very useful
- It assured me, gave me confidence in doing what I have been doing (it's interesting to know why and what effect it has on him)
- Made me feel more confident as a parent
- More conscious of my behaviour
- Giving love/attention. It's great to know it is building my baby's brain. It's another excuse to love her even more. 10/10
- Very educational 8/10
- Excellent 9/10
- Great packs 9.10
- Very interesting, useful information but a bit fast paced. Looking forward to next session 8.10
- Looking forward to hearing about it much more 10/10
- Great tips re how to help my baby with stress in later years. If only I'd had the same as a child!
- Would like to hear more about methods to calm baby's down 8/10
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- In times when finances are limited, GroBrain seems to offer an excellent solution for delivering an important universal message at low cost."