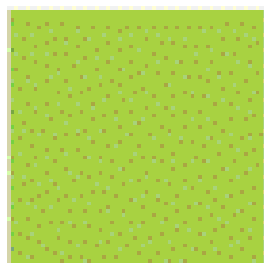
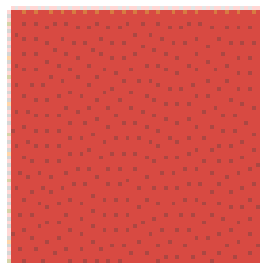
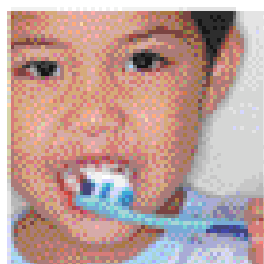
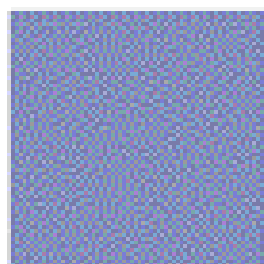
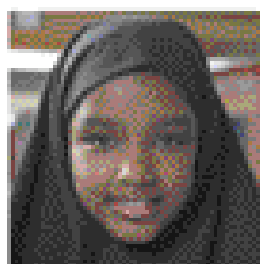
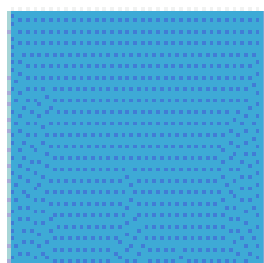
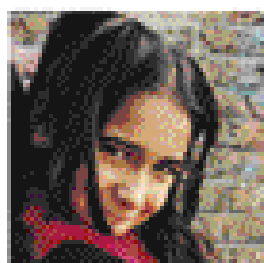
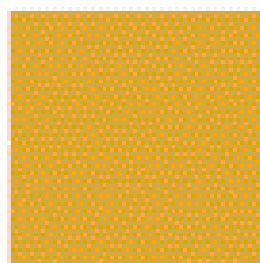
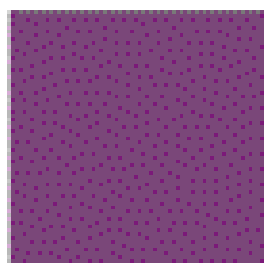


Parenting Handbook

A **GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS**
of birth -11 year olds in Swindon



Introduction

Welcome to the Swindon Safe Parenting Handbook.

Parenting can bring great fulfilment and joy. However, the role of parent is sometimes challenging as well as rewarding. It's a job where very little training is given to prepare parents for what lies ahead.

Each of you will have had different experiences of being a child. Most of you will have had positive experiences of being parented yourselves and this will give you a good grounding for the task of bringing up your own children. Some of you may have had childhoods that ranged from being slightly unsettled to very unhappy. Some of you can use your own parents as models; others will want to do things differently.

Every family experiences difficulty from time to time and this can test the best of parents. At these times it may be hard to think about what help or information you might need.

When things get tough, it does not mean that someone has failed in parenting - everyone struggles at times. It is often the way difficulties are handled that can make a difference to your children, both now and in the future.

There is no such thing as the perfect parent. Nor is there an 'average' family - they come in all shapes and sizes. However, there are ways to make parenting a less stressful and more rewarding experience. The most important gifts you can give your children are to bring them up knowing that you love them, to give them as much stability as possible, to provide gentle but firm guidance and boundaries and simply to do your best.

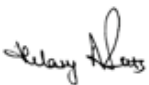
What is the handbook about?

I hope this handbook can offer some ideas and information to help you find your way through what can be a maze of issues and advice. It lists some of the warning signs of particular difficulties and offers helpful tips. Contacts and further information you can follow up when you are making decisions or worrying about your child have also been included.

Who has produced this guide?

The handbook has been produced by Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), which is made up of senior representatives from health, education, social work, police, probation, Connexions and the voluntary sector (including the NSPCC) among others. The LSCB brings together all the main organisations who work with children and families in Swindon, with the aim of ensuring that they work together effectively to keep children safe.

I hope you find this handbook helpful and worth keeping for future reference. You may also wish to visit the Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board Website:
www.swindonlscb.org.uk



Hilary Pitts

Chair of Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board

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“ My son's learning fast. He doesn't need me to tell him that everybody's different. But I do want him to understand that everybody's equal too. **”**

Equality & diversity



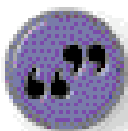
WARNING SIGNS

Children notice difference all the time, in everything, in everyone, everywhere. They need to know diversity is important, that equality is everyone's right, and that difference should not be met with hostility, suspicion, envy or fear.



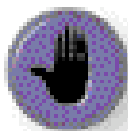
ACTION

You should expect every setting your child is in to have made a visible commitment to equality and diversity. All should listen and act immediately if something happens or you have worries.



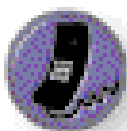
WHAT TO SAY

There are many organisations specially set up to give support and advice to parents, including parents of vulnerable children or children from minority communities. Contact them.



PREVENTION

All parents and carers have a right to expect a safe environment and support for their child whatever their individual needs, experiences or background. Schools are becoming more inclusive with diversity and equality expected in all areas of school life.



CONTACTS

- Swindon Racial Equality Council
01793 528545
- Disabled Children Team
01793 863911 or
01793 863931
- Children's Information Service Swindon
01793 541786
- Swindon Area Disability Information Exchange (SADIE)
01793 716811
- DIAL UK (National Number)
01302 310123
- PinkParents
08701 273 274

WEBLINKS

- www.scodp.co.uk
- www.equalityhumanrights.com
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.dialuk.info
- www.familyandparenting.org
- www.frg.org.uk
- www.pinkparents.org.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Your child is protected by the Human Rights Act, the Disability Discrimination Act, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, the Sex Discrimination Act**
- **Your local council, education and health authorities are there to help**
- **Ask your child's school how they deal with racism and other forms of harassment, and ask them to talk through their policies with you**
- **Support groups, parent groups and other organisations are out there to help you**

Different and equal

Diversity is all about differences. We are all different – physically, socially, culturally and sexually. Diversity means variety, it means a rich and vibrant culture. But not everyone values and respects the differences in society. Discrimination is when you are treated differently just because of who you are. You could experience discrimination from an individual or from a business, a service, an agency or even a school. Although we're all different we all have the right to equal respect, opportunity and justice, so there are laws in the UK to prevent discrimination on all levels. If you feel you or your child has experienced discrimination, your local authority, local organisations and the legal system are there to help you.

Racism

Thanks to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 all public bodies have a clear duty to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, and to promote equal opportunity and good relations between 'racial groups'. This includes schools, so the curriculum and the teaching in our schools should reflect racial diversity and should have clear processes for handling, reporting and monitoring racist incidents.

Homophobia

It is unacceptable that anyone is targeted for abuse or discrimination because of their sexuality or indeed the sexuality of their parents, carers or family members. To that end, sex education in schools places an emphasis on respect for sexual orientation – whether lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 makes it unlawful for any service provider (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat disabled people less favourably than other people because of their disability. It also requires them to make reasonable adjustments to make their services accessible to disabled people.

Sexism

Sexism arises out of common stereotypes that exist regarding male and female roles in society. It can be based on experiences some people have of relationships between adults of both genders. Sexism can be experienced in the home, in social situations or in the workplace, leading to discrimination in a variety of situations, including serious forms of physical or psychological abuse. The Sex Discrimination Act is there to provide a legal framework for promoting equality between genders.

Make contact

On the opposite page you'll find list of contacts that you may find useful. You and your child have the right to be different and equal, so make contact today and get the support you need.



Positive parenting & self-esteem

“Some of my friends moan that their parents are too busy for them. But my mum’s great - she always finds time to talk to us about stuff and makes us feel special - I know I can talk to her about anything.”



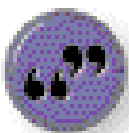
WARNING SIGNS

There may be none. Is your child eating well? Getting enough exercise? Any changes in their behaviour? Is your child trying to tell you something?



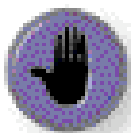
ACTION

Be involved and develop a good relationship with your child before they reach their teens. Adopt a healthy lifestyle. Share activities together.



WHAT TO SAY

With younger children, set boundaries. With teenagers, remember that you are in charge. Even if you only get a grunt, don't give up on communication.



PREVENTION

Be a little crazy! Have fun with your child. Encourage good friendships and outside interests. Listen carefully to your child's point of view. Help them think through choices.



CONTACTS

- Swindon Sure Start Partnership
01793 466491
- Children's Information Service Swindon
01793 541786
- Homestart Swindon
01793 613886
- Beating Eating Disorders
0845 634 1414
- Family Rights Group
0800 731 1696
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS

- www.cissswindon.co.uk
- www.earlyyearschildcare.org
- www.b-eat.co.uk
- www.nspcc.org.uk
- www.parentlineplus.org.uk
- www.parentscentre.gov.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Children need to feel secure, loved and valued - this is the basis of self-esteem and confidence**
- **Noticing and rewarding good behaviour is the best way of influencing your child's behaviour**
- **Be realistic about what you expect from your child**
- **Parents and carers need to work together and be consistent**
- **Listen to and talk to your child - it's good to talk!**
- **Do things together with your child that you both enjoy - have fun!**

Make them feel great!

Positive parenting is about bringing out the best in your child, by listening and understanding, praising and encouraging their efforts, noticing and rewarding good behaviour and doing things together that you both enjoy.

In trying to be helpful, it is often easy to point out where a child is going wrong and forget to notice the things that go right. By doing this, you are giving your child attention for the bad things they are doing, rather than for the good things you would prefer them to do. It can also undermine your relationship with your child. Parental attention and praise is one of the biggest motivators for children so you need to use it in the right way. Not only will this influence your child's behaviour in a positive way, it will also make your child feel happy, loved, wanted and secure and this is the basis of life-long confidence and self-esteem.

A sense of self-esteem is your child's best protection from other children. You can help to make them feel good about themselves in many ways. Be a good role model, give good feedback, understand and help your child if they believe things that are not true and be natural and affectionate. Make them feel great!

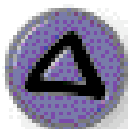
Children have to learn to make their own decisions and establish their independence from their parents. Their decisions might not always be the same as yours. That is why tension is normal. Choose your battles and let some go! Be friendly and supportive and let them know you have been through it and that you are always willing to talk.

Keeping your child fit & healthy is something that most parents do without thinking. Whether it involves encouraging your child to brush their teeth or reminding them to pay attention to personal hygiene, you are an important source of information and advice and an influential role model for your child.

Eating is an important part of everyone's life. Encouraging your child to eat healthily does not mean denying them food they enjoy. Healthy eating is about having a varied, balanced diet and enjoying lots of different foods. Younger children often refuse to eat certain foods and may go through food fads. These differences are normal. But some eating problems are more serious and if you see signs of difficulties, contact a health professional for advice and support.

Temper tantrums

“Not only has he learnt to walk and talk, but now he’s learnt to stamp his foot, argue, scream until he’s bright red and embarrass me in public on a regular basis. What’s happened to my baby?”



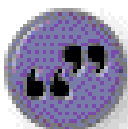
WARNING SIGNS

It could happen anywhere, but watch out for a tired or hungry child at a time when he or she wants something that you have said “No” to, like when out shopping or during a day out.



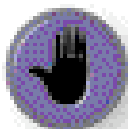
ACTION

Keep calm, think about whether your child needs food or rest. Give your child attention and try to find a quiet place or some way of getting his or her attention. Don’t give in, but try to understand your child’s feelings.



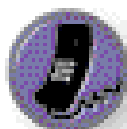
WHAT TO SAY

Try to give your child a choice or a way out. Be calm and understanding. Keep it simple and clear. Praise your child for calming down.



PREVENTION

Avoid long shopping trips or tiring days out. It often helps to give your child extra cuddles or talk to them more. Try to see causes for tantrums in the day ahead and think of ways to avoid them.



CONTACTS

- Your Health Visitor
- Children’s Information Service Swindon 01793 541786
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS • www.cissswindon.co.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- One-in-five two-year-olds has a tantrum at least twice a day
- The 'Terrible Twos' are a normal part of growing up
- Getting angry is natural but it just makes things worse
- Try to find a good way to deal with problems
- Plan to avoid the causes of tantrums
- Remember, they won't last forever!

When every day is a difficult day

Why temper tantrums happen

Tantrums may start around 18 months, are common at two years old and are much less common at four. Very young children are often not able to tell you things as much as they want to and their frustration may come out as a tantrum.

Tantrums are more likely to happen if a child is tired, hungry or uncomfortable. Tantrums also often happen in busy, public places, which can be embarrassing and add to your stress. If you are worried about the way your child is acting talk to your health visitor or doctor.

Dealing with temper tantrums

- Keep calm. Getting angry and shouting at your child will only make things worse.
- Your child might be tired or hungry so rest or food might help. Or they might just need a cuddle.
- Try to find something else interesting to do or look at. If you're in a busy or noisy place try to go somewhere quieter.
- If none of these work, try to see things from your child's point of view and understand what they actually want. Try giving them a choice, as this gives your child a sense of control and can be better than simply saying "no". Always try to offer a positive way out.
- If you do say 'no' don't give in later to calm them down. If you give in, your child will learn that tantrums work!

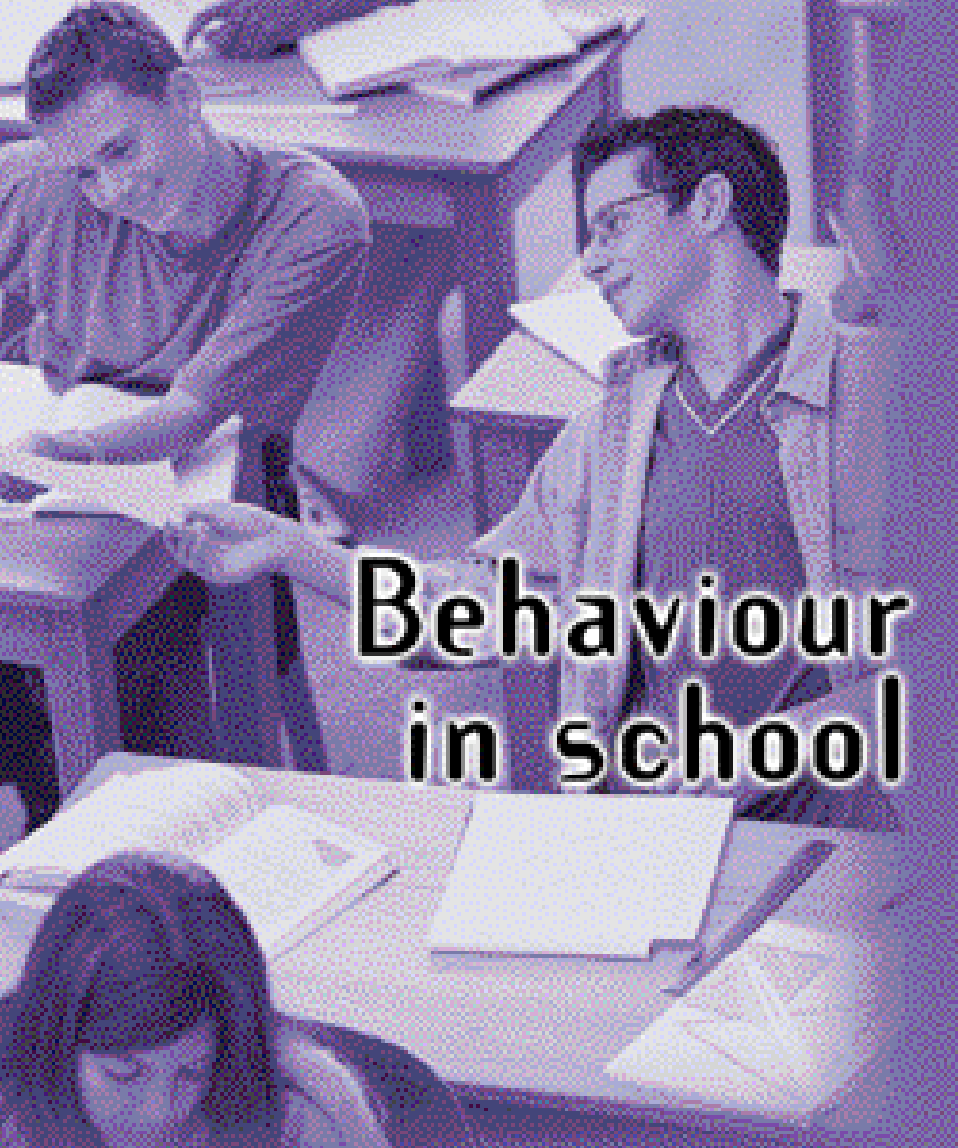
- If you're at home you can try ignoring the tantrum, or maybe walking away into another room if it's safe to do so. Get your child to cool down on their own and talk more calmly about what they want.
- After the tantrum, praise your child for settling down. Even though they may no longer be angry they may still be upset, so give them a cuddle and make it clear that you still love them no matter what.

Avoiding temper tantrums

Tantrums are less likely if you plan ahead.

- Try to stop your child getting hungry or overtired.
- Make sure your child has enough attention and affection.
- Make sure your time together is quality time together especially if you work long hours.
- Keep shopping trips and outings as short as possible.
- Try to plan a method that you'll use to deal with tantrums when they happen and to share the approach with other adults in your child's life.

Remember, temper tantrums are normal and do not usually lead to serious problems. As your child gets older they will learn to deal more calmly with the stresses of everyday life.



Behaviour in school

“ I thought there was nothing I could do about his disruptive behaviour. But now the school and I are working together to improve his attitude at home and in the classroom.”



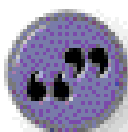
WARNING SIGNS

Parents and carers are often surprised it is their child being disruptive at school, but if a teacher feels the need to point it out to you, listen and take action.



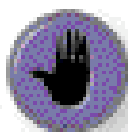
ACTION

Ask to have a meeting with you, your child and the school to discuss the problems and to try and work out solutions.



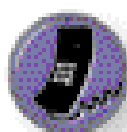
WHAT TO SAY

It can be difficult to accept that your child is being difficult, but it is important to remember that it is your child who will benefit from guidelines and support.



PREVENTION

Research shows that stepping in early is the best way to prevent your child's behaviour from getting worse- and to give them the chance of a good education.



CONTACTS

- School Nurse
- Children's Information Service Swindon 01793 541786
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS • www.cisswindon.co.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.parentscentre.gov.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Identify the problems your child is facing**
- **Recognise the effects of disruptive behaviour at school**
- **Work with the school to encourage positive changes**
- **Understand the value of school for your child**
- **Get support to learn effective ways of helping your child**

Recognising problems

Children can be disruptive in the classroom in many ways: playing up when they should be working, refusing to carry out requested tasks, talking back to the teacher and distracting other children from their work by their behaviour. Often parents or carers do not recognise this disruptive behaviour in their child at home, but a recent survey* found that 80% of primary school teachers blamed poor discipline at school on a lack of parental control at home. While this may be true, research also shows that children benefit most when their parents and school step in early to deal with difficult behaviour.

The effects of disruptive behaviour

A child's disruptive behaviour at school not only affects their own schoolwork, it affects the concentration and behaviour of other children in the class. It also means the teacher has to spend time controlling poor behaviour rather than teaching.

While bad behaviour may seem amusing to other children, in reality a disruptive child tends not to have close friends, or doesn't keep friends for long and they may find other children avoiding them at break-times. Teachers, too, may find it difficult to keep a balanced view of the child.

Future consequences

If a child is not taught how to become a considerate and an active member of the class, then they are more likely to become disaffected with school and as a result may fall behind or start to play truant.

Getting support for your child

All schools should have strategies in place to help control behaviour. The school may suggest a written action plan, agreed by you, your child and them on how to deal with disruptive behaviour. They may impose sanctions, such as the withdrawal of break or giving a lunchtime detention. Your child may be mentored by an older pupil or supportive adults. If a child can see themselves as others see them and understand how their behaviour affects others, it can help them to behave in a more responsible way.

Your child may be referred to an educational psychologist, employed by your local authority, to assess the best way of helping them.

There are also parenting support programmes available which can help you to build on your parenting skills and open the lines of communication between you and your child – knowing that they have solid support at home will help your child to deal with problems at school.

*Survey by ICM for Teachers' TV on website www.behaviouruk.com

“When I found out that Josie was disabled I didn't know how I was going to cope. I just didn't think I'd be able to do it alone. Pretty soon I realised I didn't have to.”

Disabled children



WARNING SIGNS

Some children's disabilities are diagnosed fairly early. Others take time to appear or happen suddenly. If you think your child may have some form of disability, contact your health visitor or GP for advice.



ACTION

Don't think you have to go it alone. Get as much information as you can about your child's condition. Find out what services, support, benefits and advice is available and make contact.



WHAT TO SAY

There are many organisations specially set up to give support and advice to parents of disabled children. Contact them and tell your story. There will be others out there just like you.



PREVENTION

You can't prevent your child's condition. But you can minimise the disability they experience by ensuring that they get the best support available, and by remembering that they have rights.



CONTACTS

- Disabled Children Team 01793 863911 or 01793 863931
- Children's Information Service Swindon 01793 541786
- Swindon Area Disability Information Exchange (SADIE) 01793 716811
- Swindon Carers' Centre 01793 531133
- Contact a Family 0800 808 3555
- Downs Syndrome Association 0845 230 0372 (Helpline)
- Mencap 0800 808 1111 (Learning Disability Helpline)
- NAS 0845 070 4004 (Autism Helpline)
- SCOPE 0800 800 3333 (Cerebral Palsy Helpline)

WEBLINKS

- www.cisswindon.co.uk • www.cafamily.org.uk • www.downs-syndrome.org.uk
- www.familyfundtrust.org.uk • www.mencap.org.uk • www.nas.org.uk • www.ncb.org.uk
- www.nspcc.org.uk • www.scope.org.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Disability affects some 15% of people in the UK at some time in their lives**
- **Your child is protected by the Disability Discrimination Act**
- **The Government, your local council, education and health authorities are there to help**
- **You may be able to receive financial help to assist with caring for your child**
- **There are many forms of extra services and support available to you and your child**
- **Support groups, parent groups and other organisations are out there to help you cope**

You're not alone

If your child has a disability the future may seem like a daunting struggle, not just for them, but for you too. The word 'disabled' covers a very wide range of different conditions and it is estimated that some 15% of people in the UK experience some form of disability at some time in their lives. Remember you and your child are not alone.

The Government, local council, health and education authorities provide a wide range of benefits, facilities, support and advice for disabled children and their carers.

Legal protection

Your child is especially protected by law. The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for any service provider (including schools, businesses and organisations) to treat disabled people less favourably than other people because of their disability. It also requires them to make reasonable adjustments to make their services accessible to disabled people.

Health

From the start, your GP and local health service are there for you. They'll provide the help and advice you need to discover and assess your child's disability. They'll help you plan the treatment, therapy, equipment and ongoing medical care that your child may need.

Benefits

There are several specific benefits that you could receive to help you with the costs of caring for a disabled child. These include

Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance, help with extra housing costs and Carers Blue Badge scheme. And don't forget free dental treatment and prescriptions, help with the cost of glasses, and in some circumstances travel to hospital, school meals, and even road tax exemption.

Education

Depending on their kind of disability, your child may benefit most by attending a special school - an environment specifically designed to match their educational needs. Alternatively your child may receive the extra support they require through the special needs provisions available in a mainstream school. Your education authority and health service providers will help you assess your child's special educational needs and recommend the most appropriate way forward for their education.

Extra support

Your council can provide extra support for you and your child. This can include special leisure facilities and short breaks, aids and adaptations and many additional services for particular needs. Also there are many local, national and international organisations and charities specially set up to provide further help, advice and support to people just like you.

Make contact

You're not alone, so make contact today and get the support you need.

Puberty & adolescence

“ I was dreading the teen years and, yes, I have to shout at all the usual things, like doing homework, but what I didn't expect was my son to turn out so interesting. ”



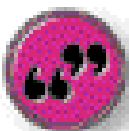
WARNING SIGNS

Mood swings, arguments, talking back, an over-the top interest in hygiene or a complete lack of it, are quite normal. Difficulty in saying what they feel calmly and untidiness are all warning signs that your child is becoming a teen! As well as coping with emotional changes brought on by hormones, your child will also have to deal with physical changes.



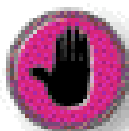
ACTION

Listening and talking to your child will help you understand what they are going through emotionally and physically. One of the best things you can do for your child is to let them know that you are there for them. You may also want to discuss the risks of alcohol and drug use and begin talk to them about sexual health.



WHAT TO SAY

Teenagers can be witty, interesting and thoughtful as well as opinionated, sarcastic and sulky. Bring out the best in them by talking things through rather than arguing. You will probably have to answer lots of questions about puberty. Don't be embarrassed and be well prepared with simple facts - there are many leaflets, books and websites available to help you.



PREVENTION

Remember you are the adult! All too often you may find yourself having temper tantrums! Being flexible and bargaining works better than making rules and demands. The more information your child has the better he or she will be able to cope with the changes that come with puberty. Talk together to stop any worries or problems getting out of control.



CONTACTS

- Children's Information Service Swindon 01793 541786
- U turn (young people's drugs and alcohol service) 01793 465040
- Parentline Plus 0800 800 2222
- Al-anon 020 7403 0888 (Helpline)
- National Drugs Helpline 0800 77 66 00
- NHS Direct 0845 4647

WEBLINKS • www.al-anonuk.org.uk • www.lifebytes.gov.uk • www.likeitis.org • www.nspcc.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.parentscentre.gov.uk • www.talktofrank.com • www.teenagehealthfreak.com

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Teenagers can be fun and rewarding**
- **Mood swings are a normal part of behaviour**
- **Listening is the key to a good relationship**
- **Your teenager craves independence - but still needs you!**

Changing times

Puberty and the teenage years are often seen as a period of tension and broken family relationships as children turn into unrecognisable and unpredictable creatures who either barely leave their room or are never home.

It's also normal to discover that you have a remarkable young person living with you who is bright, interesting and funny.

The most obvious cause for the mood swings of adolescence is raging hormones. At the onset of puberty, hormones are triggering physical changes and emotional feelings that are not only hard to deal with, but hard to talk about.

At the same time, your child is forming deeper, more complex relationships; any worries or arguments can deeply affect their sense of well-being and confidence. They may have difficulty handling their new sexual feelings and concerns about their appearance may lead to a lack of self-esteem.

This is also a time when your child may be tempted to experiment with alcohol or drugs. It is important to discuss alcohol and drug use early and tell your children about the risks - most children will be aware of drugs in some way before they leave primary school.

They will also be trying to work out an identity for themselves. Your child is learning about views, opinions and beliefs that may be different to those they have grown up with. On top of all this, they also have to cope with school or college work, which can make them anxious and stressed.

And teenagers will take it out on those closest to them - you!

Supporting your teen

How you handle your teen can make the difference between a close, rewarding relationship and a difficult one.

Untidiness, doing homework, letting you know where they are and helping around the house are common conflict points. Offering choices or a compromise work better than making demands: 'If you tidy your room, I'll put this wash on for you'.

Encouraging your teenager to talk about what's going on in their lives will help you to understand them, give them the help they need and, in turn, build up their confidence. Your child will appreciate it if they are listened to, their opinions asked, their thoughts and feelings acknowledged, their privacy respected and they are met with flexibility rather than orders. Be open-minded and non-judgemental and your teenager will feel they can turn to you when they need to.

The adolescent years can be tough and your teenager needs to know they have your support. It's common for them to argue or even reject you at times, because they know that, on the whole, you will take the bad moods with the good. But however they may upset you, don't forget a lot of it is just bravado and that, when things go wrong, the person they'll eventually turn to for comfort is you.

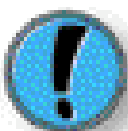
Cot death

“ It has to be every new parent's nightmare. But thanks to a few simple guidelines we're all sleeping a bit better now. ”



WARNING SIGNS

Cot death or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is becoming more and more rare. Most deaths occur in babies under six months old. There are no clear warning signs.



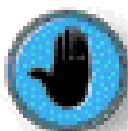
ACTION

Look at the prevention advice given on the opposite page and take any steps needed to create a safe place for your baby. By following these simple steps the UK has seen a major reduction in cot deaths in the last ten years.



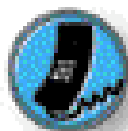
WHAT TO SAY

Make sure that all people who take a role in caring for your baby know of the risks from cot death, especially if they smoke. If you are unsure about what to do get medical advice at once.



PREVENTION

Follow the prevention steps outlined on the page opposite. Keep your baby's cot in your room for the first six months, this way it will be easier to keep an eye on their sleeping position and surroundings.



CONTACTS

- Your GP, Midwife or Health Visitor
- Cruse Bereavement Care 0844 477 9400
- Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths 020 7233 2090 (Helpline)
- NHS Direct 0845 4647

- Since the introduction of new prevention guidelines in 1991 the number of babies dying as cot deaths in the UK has fallen by nearly 70%
- Always put your baby to sleep on their back with feet at the bottom of the cot
- Babies aren't good at keeping their temperature constant, so make sure they don't get too hot or too cold
- Make sure your baby's cot is a safe and secure place to sleep
- Keep smoke away from your baby
- Do not sleep with your baby on a sofa, particularly if you have been smoking, drinking or taking drugs

Reducing the risk of cot death

'Back to sleep'

Unless told otherwise by health professionals your baby should always be put to sleep on their back. This has been shown to be important for their safety while they are asleep. Never let your baby fall asleep propped up on a cushion on a sofa or chair, and don't let anyone fall asleep whilst nursing your baby.

The safest place

A well-designed and stable cot in your own room is by far the safest place for your baby to sleep in their first six months. Keep it simple and tidy, do not use plastic sheets, bumpers, baby nests, wedges, bedding rolls or any ribbons or mobiles that your baby could get caught up in. The mattress should be firm, flat and clean and have a secure waterproof covering. Cover the mattress with a clean sheet and make sure there are no gaps between the mattress and the sides of the cot as your baby could slip or become caught.

Temperature

Babies can overheat, which is known to play a part in cot death. Try to keep the room between 16 and 20 degrees centigrade. Do not use duvets, quilts or pillows until your baby is one year old, instead give your baby one light layer of clothing or bedding more than you are

wearing. Never use hot water bottles or electric blankets and 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. Avoid covering your baby's face or head indoors.

Sleeping with your baby

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 they are sleeping next to you your baby will be warmer, 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.

Clean air

Never let anyone smoke near your baby and, if you or your partner smoke, you should try to give up now for your child's sake. Tobacco smoke is known to be in the breath of a smoker for a considerable time after they have been smoking.

Make contact

If your baby seems unwell or if you have any worries about safe sleeping or cot death, get medical advice at once.

“ When Angela was young I thought I couldn't manage. She cried all the time, I was exhausted and nothing worked. I felt such a failure. I got so angry with her I felt like shaking her to stop her noise. I had no idea how much that could hurt her. **”**

Don't shake the baby



WARNING SIGNS

A range of signs can indicate that a child may have been shaken, including feeding difficulties, lethargy, eye injuries, vomiting, irritability, speech and learning difficulties, developmental delay, seizures and paralysis.



ACTION

If you are worried about your child, take him or her to see your Doctor, health visitor or to the casualty department. Seek support, including the helplines listed under Contacts (see right).



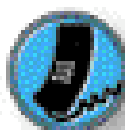
WHAT TO SAY

Develop communication with your child using eye contact, smiling, cuddling and talking. This will increase your understanding and responsiveness to your baby's needs when he/she is having difficulties.



PREVENTION

It is never safe to shake a child, not even in play. It is important for siblings playing together or for the babysitter or any other carer to be made aware of the dangers.



CONTACTS

- Your GP or Health Visitor
- Cry-sis 08451 228 669
- NSPCC 0800 800 5000
- NHS Direct 0845 4647
- Parentline Plus 0800 800 2222

WEBLINKS • www.cry-sis.org.uk • www.nspcc.org.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **There are different ways to cope with a crying baby**
- **Never shake a child for any reason**
- **Shaking is often caused by the adult feeling out of control**
- **Shaking can cause damage that you cannot see**
- **Shaking can cause damage that is long lasting, even permanent**
- **Do not suffer alone, seek support from others**

Different ways to cope

Why do people shake babies?

Often, although not always, babies and young children are shaken when a parent or carer becomes very frustrated when they will not stop crying due to colic, illness or feeding difficulties. On average a baby will cry for at least two hours every day. If a baby has additional difficulties, they will cry more and this can be very stressful. One in ten babies cry much more than this average and many parents find this too difficult to manage.

Many parents may not know how much damage shaking can do to a young child. Parents and carers who do not have much patience may become angry and are more likely to give in and shake the child.

Some very rough play with a young child can also cause similar injuries to shaking them. Never shake a young child or swing them by their arms or legs.

What damage can shaking cause?

Shaking a baby can cause death or serious and long-lasting brain damage. Shaken Baby Syndrome is an injury that happens when a baby is shaken so that his or her head wobbles rapidly back and forth. The force of this can tear the blood vessels that connect the brain and

skull. This happens because a young child's neck muscles are not strong enough to hold their head firmly. The action of shaking can cause serious damage, even though the parent does not realise it. Never ever shake a baby for any reason.

Ways to cope with a crying baby

Crying is the way all babies make sure that their basic needs are met - they may be hungry, thirsty, need a change of nappy or even some company. Crying is neither your fault nor the fault of your baby.

Here are some ways of coping:

- Count to ten before doing anything and allow yourself to calm down.
- Hug and cuddle your child - perhaps with the use of a baby-carrier so that they are close to your body to help soothe them.
- Go for a walk or a drive to help them sleep.
- Use a helpline in times of crisis.
- Go out of the room for a short time, (but make sure that you are nearby).
- Ask someone else to take over for a while.

“ Andrew is 7, and I was very careful to visit and discuss his needs at the after-school club. It now means I can work a full day knowing his needs are being met and he is in a safe environment. He has made lots of new friends not just other kids but members of staff too. I can relax and get on with what I need to do... life is so much easier. ”

Childminding & daycare



WARNING SIGNS

Children are not always able to tell you if something is wrong so note changes in their moods, behaviour and physical appearances.



ACTION

Speak promptly to the person in charge about concerns. If you have serious concerns about your child's safety, remove your child immediately and contact your local child protection team at your local social services department. Call the Ofsted complaint line.



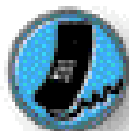
WHAT TO SAY

Tell your child who will be looking after them, where they are going, how long for and who they need to ask for their daily needs. Find out what a typical day or session consists of. Be prepared and ask plenty of questions.



PREVENTION

Take up references from others who have used a particular childcare service. Look for trained and experienced staff. Visit the facilities and look for busy and relaxed children. Check how you will be informed about your child's progress and in case of emergency.



CONTACTS

- Children's Information Service Swindon 01793 541786
- Swindon SureStart Partnership 01793 466491
- Swindon Children Services Referral Team 01793 466903
- Parentline Plus 0800 800 2222
- Ofsted 08456 404045
- 0845 6014772

WEBLINKS • www.cisswindon.co.uk • www.parentlineplus.org.uk
• www.parentscentre.gov.uk • www.ofsted.gov.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- All registered childcare in England must meet national standards set down by the Government
- Childrens' information services hold lists of registered out-of-schools clubs, playgroups and children's leisure activities
- Talk to other parents. Personal recommendations are helpful, but you should take up at least two references
- Make a list of questions and take it with you when you visit each childcare centre
- Make sure the childcare provider knows how to contact you in an emergency and who you will allow to collect your child
- If you are considering a private foster carer, you must contact your local social services office

How do I make the right choice?

Childminders

Childminders look after children in the childminder's own home. They are registered with Ofsted and inspected every year. Childminders can often be flexible about the hours that they work. They will provide a fun and learning environment. Every childminder is different, so look for someone who will suit your family. Some childminders are part of a network. These childminders have agreed to meet certain quality standards and some may be accredited to offer early years education. Contact the Children's Information Service for more information.

Day nurseries

Day nurseries are for children under the age of five and are for the length of the working day. Social care services, voluntary organisations, private companies, individuals, businesses or community groups might run them. They are registered and inspected by Ofsted.

Pre-schools

Pre-schools are for children aged between three and five. Sessions usually last no longer than four hours. Most of them are run by groups of parents with one or two paid staff.

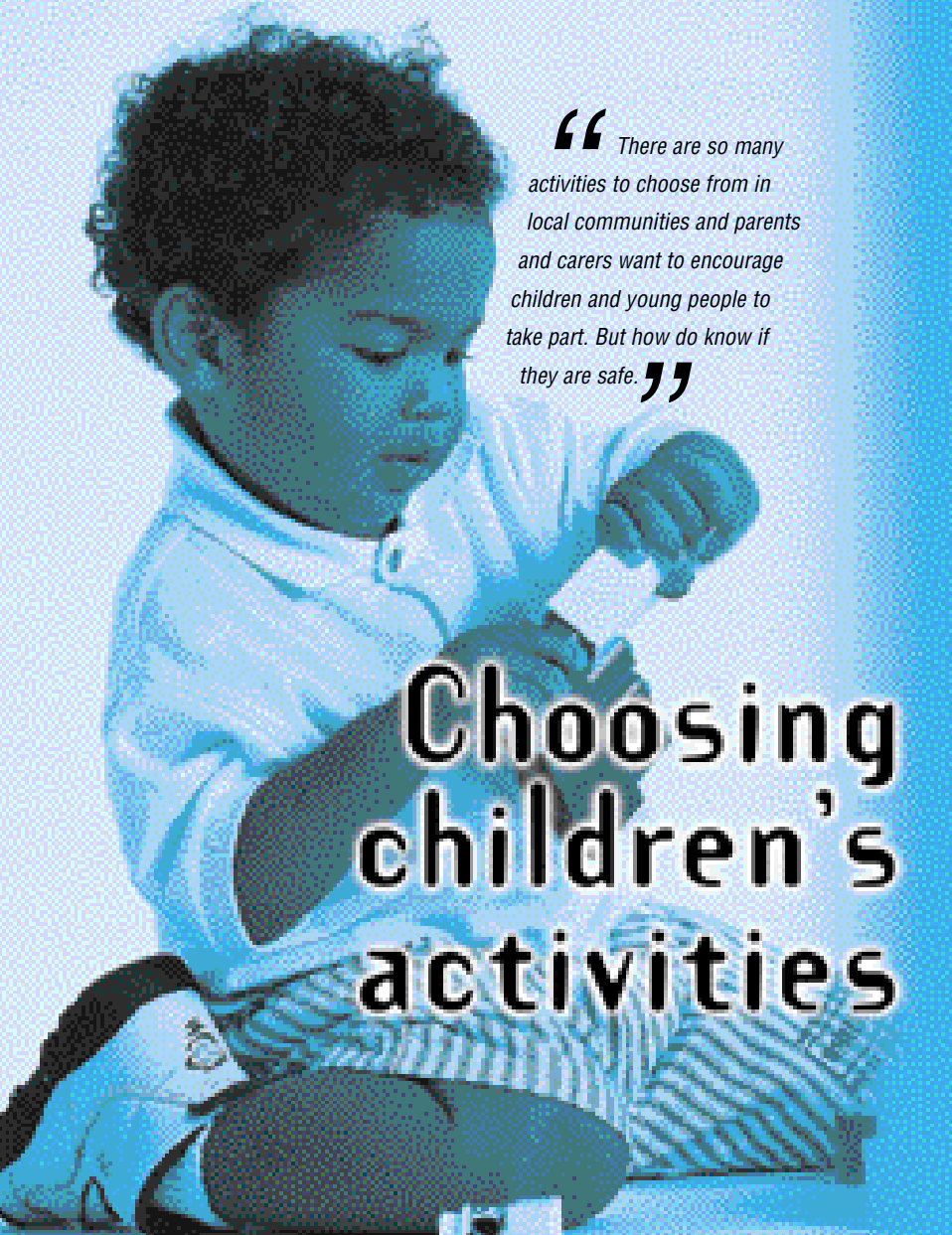
After-school clubs

After-school clubs provide play and care in sessions for children from four to 13 years old. There are breakfast-clubs, after-school clubs and holiday play schemes. They are inspected by Ofsted once a year. If your child is between three and four, they may be able to get a free

part-time nursery place. Early education and nursery classes are usually open during term time. Children can go all day or just part-time. Contact Swindon Sure Start Partnership for more information.

Private fostering

Private fostering is very different from the care given by local councils through approved foster carers. This happens when a child under 16 is looked after for more than 28 days by an adult who is not a parent or close relative by private arrangement between the parent and the carer. If you are thinking about placing your child with a private foster carer or becoming a private foster carer yourself, the first thing you must do is contact Swindon Children Services Referral Team. By law, Swindon have to approve these arrangements. The private foster carer will need as much information as possible about your child (including medical history) and Children Services can give you a form to help with this. As the birth parents, you keep full parental responsibility. You must remain in touch with the private foster carer and take part in all-important choices about your child's life.



“ There are so many activities to choose from in local communities and parents and carers want to encourage children and young people to take part. But how do you know if they are safe. ”

Choosing children's activities



WARNING SIGNS

Activities where parents are discouraged from staying to watch or becoming involved. Children who drop out or stop going to activity for no apparent reason. Behavioural changes.



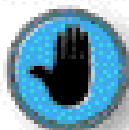
ACTION

Find out as much information as you can about the organisation - ask other parents. Don't be afraid to ask questions.



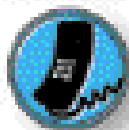
WHAT TO SAY

Are the staff/ volunteers suitable? What are their policies on child protection? Do staff have CRB checks?



PREVENTION

Find out as much as you can before letting your child join an organisation or activity.



CONTACTS

- Children's Information Service Swindon 01793 541786
- Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS • www.4children.org.uk • www.cissswindon.co.uk • www.parentscentre.gov.uk
• www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Children have a right to have fun and be safe**
- **Organisations should be open and welcoming and should share information about themselves and their activities**
- **You have the right to the same standards of care from all organisations, whether their workers are paid or are volunteers**
- **Listen to your child and ask questions about the activities they take part in**

Have fun and be safe

Check it out

A good organisation will welcome questions about their activities and the safety of their surroundings. All organisations should have a child protection policy, including a statement on, and guidelines about, keeping children safe. In addition these are questions you may want to ask:

- **Are the staff and volunteers suitable to work with children?**

All staff and volunteers should go through a proper recruitment process, which includes interviews, references and police checks.

- **Is there a written code of behaviour?**

All organisations should have a written code of behaviour, which outlines good practice when working with children. An environment that allows behaviour such as bullying, shouting, racism and sexism is not acceptable.

- **How does the organisation manage staff and volunteers?**

There should be someone in charge who supervises staff and volunteers.

- **How does the organisation provide for personal care needs?**

In the case of very young children, or those with a disability, you should ask about routines for toileting, feeding and administering medication.

- **Does the organisation have a health and safety policy?**

Find out if there is a leader qualified in first aid, that there is a first aid box and that the premises have passed fire regulations.

- **What are the arrangements when children go on outings?**

You should be told about all the necessary arrangements (including transport to and from) for every outing (no matter how long or short) and you should be asked for your agreement.

Be wary of

- Behaviour that encourages rough play, sexual innuendo or embarrassing punishments.
- Staff who take charge and operate independently of organisational guidelines.
- Staff who show favouritism or personally

reward specific children.

- Encouragement of inappropriate physical contact.
- Poor communication and lack of parental or carer involvement, leaving you feeling uneasy.
- Invitations for children to spend time alone with staff or volunteers (even to visit their home).

Remember, listen to your children and ask questions about the activities they take part in.

Safe at all times

Parents and carers have a right and a responsibility to ensure that children are safe at all times. Organisations have a responsibility to be open and welcoming and to share information about themselves and their activities. Daycare activities, such as pre-school playgroups and crèches, are required to register with the local Health and Social Services Trust.

Not all organisations providing supervised activities – such as uniformed organisations, sports clubs and youth clubs – have to register; but they still have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for your child.

Many organisations are supported by volunteers who generously give their time to provide regular activities for your child. However, whether or not workers are paid, you have the right to expect the same standards from all organisations.

Voicing concerns

Organisations should tell you where to go and what to do if you or your child has any worries. You may feel reluctant to voice your concerns in case you are wrong or worried about the impact on your child, but if you are concerned you must take action:

- Speak to other parents.
- Speak to the leader in charge.
- If you are not confident that they are the right person, talk to someone more senior.
- If you are unhappy about the response you receive, remove your child and contact any of the organisations listed in the Contacts section.

Babysitting

“Leaving Natalie with anyone is difficult, but I really need to have a break sometimes. I would worry all the time if I could not rely on and trust the person looking after my child. I’m really glad I spent the time I did finding the right babysitter.”



WARNING SIGNS

Children will not always be able to tell you if something is wrong, so note changes in their mood, behaviour and appearance. Agree with the babysitter to discuss, from the beginning, all accidents and anything unusual which happens while in their care.



ACTION

Use people you trust to care for your child or ask them to recommend someone. Speak to other families who have used the babysitter you are thinking about using.



WHAT TO SAY

Tell the babysitter all about your child's routine, the things they like and don't like. Tell the babysitter about your rules, like no smacking. Always leave a contact number in case of emergencies.



PREVENTION

Make sure you feel completely comfortable about your babysitter before you leave your child in their care.



CONTACTS

- Children's Information Service Swindon 01793 541786
- NSPCC 0800 800 5000
- Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) 0121 248 2000

WEBLINKS • www.cisswindon.co.uk • www.nspcc.org.uk • www.rospace.co.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Children rely on their parents for their safety**
- **Your child has the right to care which is free from harm**
- **Make sure your child gets the best quality care**
- **Select your babysitter carefully**
- **Avoid leaving your child with someone under 16**
- **Ensure your babysitter can contact you in an emergency**

Who can I leave my child with?

As parents, the safety and well-being of your child is up to you. It is important that you think very carefully about the person you are going to leave them with, whether this is a stranger, close relative or friend.

Choose someone with the abilities and high standards that you would expect of yourself. This includes someone who will make sure your child is fed, changed, kept safe, given room to play, and feels secure. This person must also be able to deal with difficulties which may happen.

Generally a babysitter will come to your home to take care of your child. Make sure you talk to your babysitter before you leave. Let them know when to expect you back and make sure they have contact details in case of emergencies.

Babysitters do not need qualifications or a certificate to look after children. As a result anyone can be a babysitter. The Children's Legal Centre and the NSPCC advise that the minimum age of a babysitter should be 16 years of age. This is based on the idea that at 16 and above, a young person understands possible dangers and risks and could get help quickly if needed.

This age limit is also linked with the possible action which could be taken by the Police if anything were to go wrong and an injury

resulted. It is most likely that you as a parent would be held responsible if anything goes wrong if your babysitter is under 16 years of age. Often a good babysitter will be well thought of locally and can be recommended by a friend or neighbour.

However, it is very important that you and your child meet them first before you decide to leave your child in their care.

Do not leave your child in the care of anyone you feel uncomfortable about, even if that means missing an evening out, or work.

Try to plan in advance so you have plenty of time to meet the babysitter beforehand.



Children left alone

“ When mummy goes out, I lock the door from the inside... she calls in the letterbox to say goodbye, I leave the lights on in case anyone tries to get in. Mummy usually comes home in the night when I am asleep. ”



WARNING SIGNS

Parents or carers who have limited support.
A child who is frequently observed outside and alone for extended periods of time.
Childcare arrangements that keep going wrong.



ACTION

If there is immediate risk of harm to a child, call the police.



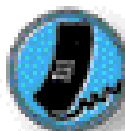
WHAT TO SAY

If you are worried about a child being left alone, talk to the parent or carer, a health visitor, teacher or a social worker.



PREVENTION

Think about shared babysitting and discuss this with neighbours, friends or other parents you have contact with. Find out about After School Clubs and Holiday Play Schemes.



CONTACTS

- Children's Information Service Swindon 01793 541786
- Swindon Police Child Protection Unit 01793 507910
- Swindon Children's Services Referral Team 01793 466903
- Swindon Children's Services EDS (out-of-hours) 01793 436699
- NSPCC 0800 800 5000

WEBLINKS • www.cisswindon.co.uk • www.nspcc.org.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Children under 13 should not be left at home alone**
- **Children are not ready for this amount of responsibility**
- **Leaving a child alone places them at risk of harm**
- **It can be a lonely and frightening experience for them**
- **Plan who you could contact for emergency care**

Common sense and the law

If a child is not ready to be left alone at home it can be a sad, lonely, frightening and dangerous experience. There are many possible risks, both physical and emotional.

Also, you can't rely on a child to let you know how much care they need. They may say that they do not mind being left and may find it fun at first, but they cannot fully know the possible risks and how to handle them.

Even the relatively ordinary 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 happen and these are not things that a child could deal with.

It is never possible to leave your children and assume that someone will look out for them if necessary unless you have spoken to a trusted friend or neighbour and asked them to keep an eye out.

If they are told, the police and/or Children's Social Services may take action if they think that a child has been neglected by being left alone. Neglect happens when a parent or carer fails to meet children's basic needs of food, shelter, security, attention or protection from danger.

The NSPCC have issued guidelines advising that children under the age of 13 should not be left alone. While this is not the law, it is suggested as good practice. Children under this age do not have the maturity to manage the responsibility of being left alone and this may be particularly so if they are physically or learning disabled.

Bullying

“ It happens most days. They call me smelly and fat. They made me give them money again yesterday. They’re in the same class and they’re always laughing at me. They said if I tell it will be ten times worse. Sometimes I don’t go to school... I can’t stand it anymore. ”



WARNING SIGNS

Running away, non-attendance at school, other learning and behavioural difficulties for no obvious reason. Your child has injuries with no feasible explanation for them.



ACTION

See someone at the school for their support and action. If bullying is happening outside school, consider contacting the family of the child who is bullying and try to find a way to work together to sort it out.



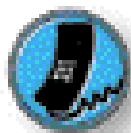
WHAT TO SAY

Refuse to put up with bullying. Walk away, tell an adult or friend and avoid fighting. Listen to your child, reassure and be there for them.



PREVENTION

Talk to your child about their school day. Teach your child to respect others from a young age. Teach your child that prejudice and bullying is unacceptable.



CONTACTS

- ChildLine
0800 1111
- Parentline Plus
0808 800 2222

WEBLINKS • www.parentlineplus.org.uk • www.nspcc.org.uk • www.kidscape.org.uk
• www.childline.org.uk • www.bullying.co.uk • www.stopcyberbullying.org
• www.parentscentre.gov.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Children have the right not to be hurt**
- **Bullying behaviour is wrong**
- **Bullying can happen to any child at any age**
- **Act straight away if you think your child is being bullied**
- **Children need ways of protecting themselves and getting help**
- **Ask your child to run, yell and tell**

The real story

Bullying is frightening. It can make a child feel very alone and unhappy and make them think that they are not as important as their friends who are not bullied. If bullying carries on it can have bad long-term effects on children, leading them to feel depressed and even to suicidal thoughts and actions.

School days are a time when what other children think seems very important to your child. If children are thought of as different for any reason, they can be picked on and bullied. Sadly, we still live in a society in which to be different in any way can mean ridicule and bullying (often copied from parents). It is very important to make sure you know the tell-tale signs of bullying.

You may think that your child is not likely to be bullied but bullying can happen at any time and to any child.

Bullies who keep hurting other children need support and help as well. They may have problems of their own at home, which may have led to their actions. Reporting concerns may help them to get help as well.

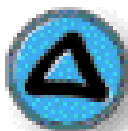
- Bullying can happen anywhere but mostly happens in school
- Bullying can take many forms, from verbal abuse to physical attack
- Bullying is the repeated abuse of a child by one or several people
- Bullies are not always older than the child they harm
- Most bullying is done by children who are the same age as the victim.

If your child tells you about a friend or any other child who is being bullied, listen carefully and take them seriously. That child may not be able to say for themselves what is happening.

Today all schools are required to have an Anti-Bullying Policy. But school action alone cannot get rid of bullying, so it is important that parents and schools work together.

Child exploitation

“ I used to blame myself. How could I be so stupid to get into this! Now I know better. I was thirteen; he was twenty. He said he loved me, but all along he knew exactly what he was doing. ”



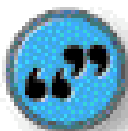
WARNING SIGNS

Absence from home or truancy from school; unexplained money, clothes, jewellery or other gifts; new relationships with older men; evidence of drug or alcohol abuse; changes in mood or behaviour; loss of contact with former friends and new relationships with an older age group; lack of self-esteem.



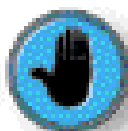
ACTION

Try to encourage your child to confide in you about their situation; avoid alienating your child or making them feel that they are to blame; get in touch with information and support agencies that can help you and your child.



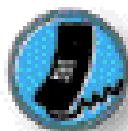
WHAT TO SAY

Make sure that your child knows that you are there to help them, no matter what they have experienced. Assure them that they shouldn't feel ashamed, that they are victims of abuse and that you understand how difficult it must be for them.



PREVENTION

Offer a positive and supportive home environment. Watch out for low self-esteem and other warning signs. Get information and support from local agencies if you feel your child may be at risk.



CONTACTS

- Swindon Children's Services Referral Team
01793 466903
- Swindon Children's Services EDS (out-of-hours)
01793 436699
- Swindon Police Child Protection Unit
01793 507910
- NSPCC
0800 800 5000
- Stop It Now (stop sexual abuse)
0800 1000 900 (Helpline)
- In emergency
'phone 999

WEBLINKS

- www.childline.org.uk • www.faceup2it.org • www.nspcc.org.uk
- www.stopitnow.org.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Often starts out with apparently innocent activity**
- **Exploitative adults are very sophisticated and well practised in how they approach children**
- **Children are sometimes abused by people they know**
- **Child exploitation has devastating physical, emotional and psychological effects on children**
- **It is important that your child feels that you believe what they are telling you. Help and support your child, no matter what**
- **It is never too early or too late to get help**

Drawn into pornography or prostitution

Child exploitation takes many forms, including child prostitution, child pornography and pornography on the Internet. The vast majority of children do not get involved voluntarily; they are coerced, enticed or are utterly desperate. Sadly, children are sometimes abused by people they know within their own family or wider network. As a parent you need to be able to recognise the signs that your child might be a victim of child pornography or any other form of sexual exploitation.

Child pornography has devastating effects on children, both on those who are exploited in the actual pictures and those who view it. Exploitative adults will encourage children to view child pornography, which leads them to see pornographic acts as acceptable and normal. This acceptance can make them more likely to be the subject of future sexual involvement.

Child pornography places the children shown in extremely harmful situations, both sexually and physically. It causes a sense of shame and guilt in the child and a fear that family and friends might find out and blame them. This fear often makes it difficult for a child who has been exploited to testify against a molester in court.

Preventing children from being photographed or portrayed as the subject of pornography is difficult. Because abusers have no distinguishing characteristics, it is difficult to warn children about what an abuser is or looks

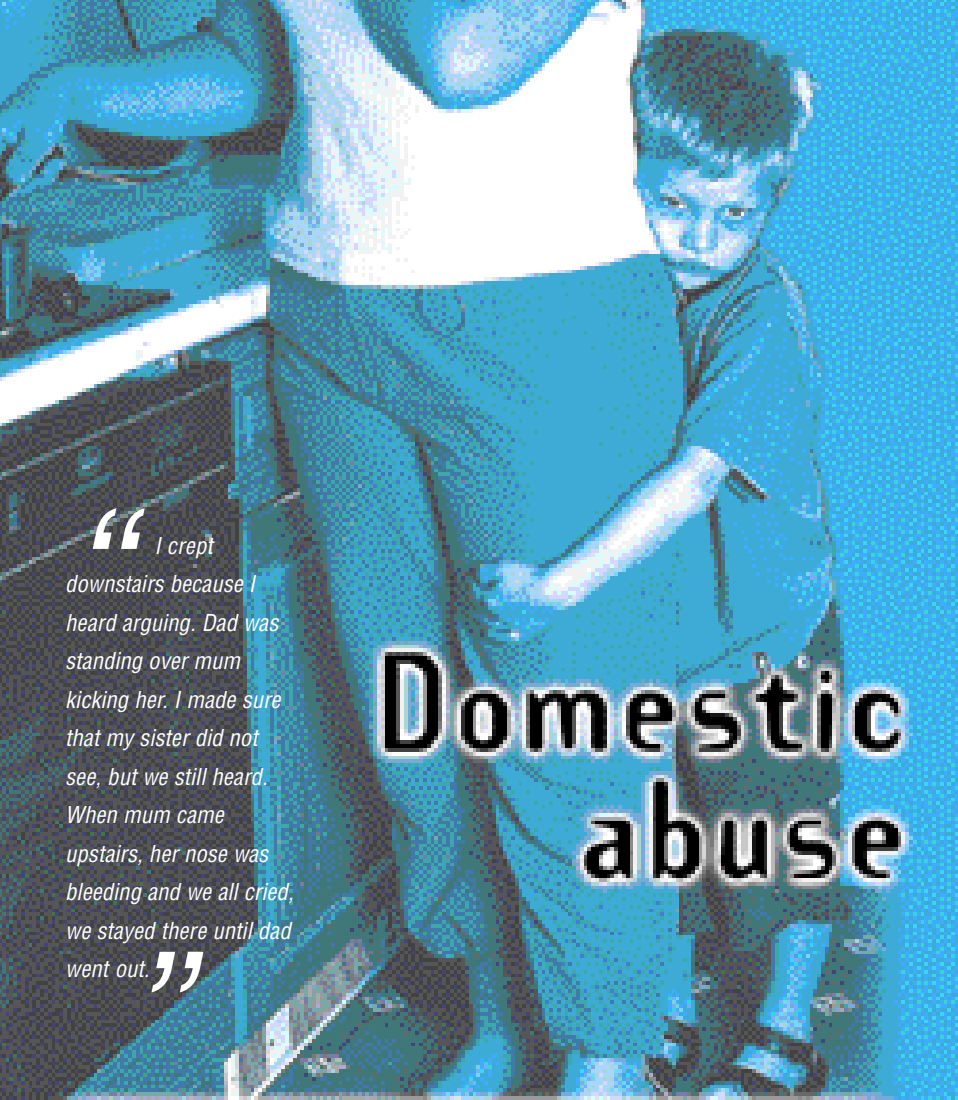
like. But you can warn children about the abnormal actions of abusers and make sure that children know that they have the right to say NO.

Child prostitutes are victims of sexual abuse. Unfortunately these victims often become offenders themselves; to support themselves or to escape from the life they lead, they may often get involved in drugs and petty crime.

Internet-related child exploitation is now also a major cause for concern. Remember that as you or your child moves through the Internet, you leave information about yourself. Become computer literate and get to know the services your child uses. Establish some Internet safety rules with your child.

You should be aware of the indicators of sexual and physical abuse and exploitation, such as those listed under 'Warning Signs' opposite. Obviously there could be other explanations, but it is important to help your child no matter what the cause of the symptoms or the behaviour. For instance, you might become aware of and concerned about your child's relationship with an older person (whom your child might describe as a friend, whether male or female) and/or frequent absences from home/school.

Local police and social services have small specialist teams who are specially trained to interview children with the support of their parents.



“ I crept downstairs because I heard arguing. Dad was standing over mum kicking her. I made sure that my sister did not see, but we still heard. When mum came upstairs, her nose was bleeding and we all cried, we stayed there until dad went out. **”**

Domestic abuse



WARNING SIGNS

Any violence between adults will negatively affect children. Seek support and help as soon as possible. The longer it lasts the more damaging violence is.



ACTION

Report your concerns about yourself or someone else to the police. If you are worried that your child might be affected, talk to them about what is happening. Spend time together talking through worries they have.



WHAT TO SAY

Children need time to discuss the feelings they have about violence. Children need to know that it is not their fault and that this is not the way relationships should be.



PREVENTION

The violent partner should take responsibility for their violence and abuse by seeking help to stop. Offer a positive role model for children so that they learn other ways of behaving. A Safety Plan helps protect you and your children.



CONTACTS

- Swindon Children's Services Referral Team 01793 466903
- Swindon Children's Services EDS (out-of-hours) 01793 436699
- Swindon Police Child Protection Unit 01793 507910
- Swindon Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer 01793 507801
- Swindon Women's Refuge 01793 536447
- Mankind Initiative 0870 794 4124 (Helpline)
- National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 2000 247
- NSPCC 0808 800 5000
- Rape Support Helpline 0808 800 1144
- Victim Support 01380 729476
- In emergency phone 999

WEBLINKS • www.nspcc.org.uk • www.childline.org.uk • www.womensaid.org.uk
• www.mankind.org.uk • www.refuge.org.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- Domestic abuse can affect children in serious and long-lasting ways
- Where there is domestic abuse there is often child abuse
- Children can sometimes blame themselves for problems in their family
- Nearly a third of domestic abuse begins in pregnancy

How does it affect children?

Domestic abuse is a crime that happens in close or family relationships. Everyone's situation is different but all forms of domestic abuse stem from the abuser's need to feel power and control over family members. Anyone who is abusive towards his or her partner runs the risk of damaging their whole family.

Domestic abuse is common, affecting one in four women in their lifetimes. It also happens in same sex relationships. Men too can be victims.

Children know about violence at home even when parents say they don't argue in front of them. Seeing domestic abuse can be emotionally damaging and children may be injured by the violence. Sometimes children are used by the abuser to put pressure on the victim, for example to keep them in the abusive relationship.

Most parents want to protect their children but domestic abuse stops them from doing their best because they are always tired and unhappy. Victims sometimes use alcohol and drugs as a way to cope with abuse, more so if they feel alone.

Domestic abuse can make children afraid and withdrawn. It can disturb sleep; upset their school life and cause problems in making friends. It can lead to low self-confidence,

depression and difficulties in forming relationships. Children might also think that hitting or shouting is a good way to end an argument.

Support from outside the family helps children. So does a good relationship with the non-abusive parent and positive experiences outside home - especially at school. It is good to talk to school or nursery about your child's experiences at home. This will be treated in confidence and will help your child.

Getting free from abuse is not easy. Many victims leave and return several times before making the break. But there are services that can help. These include Refuges, which are safe houses where women and children can live away from abuse. Refuges and some outreach services also provide help for children through the adjustment of leaving.

If you've separated from your partner, and want to feel safe at home, you can ask the local council for details of how to stay safe in your home.

The helplines can help you plan to leave in an emergency and to find a place of safety. If you leave by yourself, make sure it's safe and you cannot be traced easily. Make a crisis safety plan to help keep you and your children safe. Know how to contact emergency help at any time.

“ Greg is ten - same age as me. I haven't met him, but we chat on the internet all the time. He's really funny. He wants to meet up tomorrow to play football... I can't wait to see what he looks like. **”**

Internet safety



WARNING SIGNS

Prolonged, secretive periods on the Internet, changes in behaviour or mood, inappropriate sexual behaviour, asking questions about sexual experiences or terminology, leaving pornographic material, diaries or letters where they can be found.



ACTION

If you think your child has been exposed to any form of exploitation encourage them to confide in you, assuring them that they've done nothing wrong and that you will support them. Contact child protection, youth services, child abuse or other appropriate organisations for further advice and support.



WHAT TO SAY

Assure your child that you believe what they are telling you; create a positive sense of confidence between you. Explain in your own way why these things happen and avoid making them feel ashamed or foolish about what they have experienced. Let them know that you will protect them from further harm.



PREVENTION

Know where your child is; be familiar with their friends and daily activities. Teach your child to trust their own feelings and assure them that they have a right to say NO to what they sense is wrong. Listen carefully to your child's fears and be supportive.



CONTACTS

- Your child's school
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre 0870 000 3344
- NSPCC 0800 800 5000

WEBLINKS

- www.swgfl.org.uk/safety
- www.blogsafety.com
- www.ceop.gov.uk
- www.childnet-int.org
- www.getnetwise.org
- www.iwf.org.uk
- www.nch.org.uk/itok
- www.nspcc.org.uk
- www.parentscentre.gov.uk
- www.ceop.gov.uk

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Child exploitation has devastating effects on children, both physical and mental**
- **Exploitative adults have been quick to use the Internet as a tool; they are very sophisticated and well practiced in how they approach children**
- **Children are fascinated by the 'adult' world, but there are measures you can take to protect your child from online risks and help them make the most of the Internet safely**
- **Be sensitive to changes in your child's behaviour. It is up to attentive adults to recognise the signs of sexual exploitation**
- **Recent research from the NSPCC revealed that one in five 9 to 16 year-olds use Internet chat rooms**

New technology, old problem

Risks from the Internet

The Internet can be a useful tool for people wishing to exploit children. Recent high profile cases in the news have revealed that Internet chat rooms can be used by paedophiles to establish deceptive relationships with children. They then 'groom' children to become victims, either psychologically on the Internet itself, or by arranging to actually meet with them. Often victims believe that they are chatting to other children online.

Internet pornography can cause psychological damage to children who are exposed to it. But worse still, the Internet is a major method by which pornographic images of children are obtained and exchanged by exploitative adults. Sadly such images are in high demand, so pornographers will go to extreme lengths to entice and coerce children into getting involved against their will.

Making it safe to surf

There are ways in which you can help to protect your child online and ensure that the Internet is a safe way to learn and have fun.

Ask your Internet Service Provider or local computer specialist about installing parental controls, which can prevent your child accessing websites with sexual content. These methods cannot provide a total safeguard but do offer some degree of protection.

Learn all you can about the Internet. In the same way that you would teach your child about the dangers from strangers, warn your child about dangers on the Internet and lay down some ground rules regarding the time they spend online. If possible avoid your child going online in private, or at least ensure you have access to their computer. Make sure that they know they should never arrange to meet a new friend made on the Internet without a trusted adult present.

Watch out for possible signs of exploitation or abuse. Some of these signs are often completely innocent, but look out for changes in your child's mood or behaviour, sleep disturbances or bed wetting, unexplained marks, problems at school, going missing or self-harm, asking about sexual experiences and terminology or evidence of pornographic material. Be especially aware of any new friendships between your child and older people, whether male or female.

If your child does experience some form of exploitation, whether mild or severe, it is crucial to be 100% supportive, make it clear that it is not their fault and that you are there to help and protect them no matter what.

Make contact

Local police and social services have specialist teams who are specially trained to counter these forms of exploitation and offer support to children and parents.

“ Everyday I hear the young child next door crying, her parents constantly shout at her. Yesterday, in the street, I saw her mother hit her hard across the side of the head. This is probably none of my business but I am worried and not sure what to do. ”

Worried about a child?



WARNING SIGNS

There are many possible signs of abuse, ranging from physical injury to changes in behaviour. Alternatively you may witness an incident or a child may tell you that he/she is being harmed.



ACTION

If you think that a child has been harmed, contact the Duty Social Worker or the Police. If you are not sure, you can speak to a confidential helpline, namely the NSPCC.



WHAT TO SAY

Explain exactly what you have seen or been told. If you can, keep a note of dates, injuries and the exact words used. These will help you.



PREVENTION

Make sure your child knows who they can share worries with if and when they need to. Listen carefully to children and be alert to changes in them.



CONTACTS

- Swindon Children's Services Referral Team
01793 466903
- Swindon Children's Services EDS (out-of-hours)
01793 436699
- Swindon Police Child Protection Unit
01793 507910
- In emergency phone 999

WEBLINKS

- www.nspcc.org.uk
- Detailed information is available in the 'Families' section of Swindon LSCB's website
www.swindonlscb.org.uk.

Check the Swindon LSCB website for latest and additional contact details - www.swindonlscb.org.uk

- **Protecting children is everybody's business**
- **Adults have a responsibility to report abuse**
- **Consider offering some support if you are worried**
- **If in doubt share your concerns about children**
- **Reporting concerns rarely leads to a child being removed**
- **Act now - long-term abuse is damaging for children**

Should you mind your own business?

All parents experience difficulties at various times but can be helped by other family members or close friends.

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

- A listening ear
- Ideas to cope with problems
- Encouragement to get some help
- Practical support (childcare/shopping)

However there may be times when a child may be at risk of harm and you need to get outside help.

How would you want other people to act if your child was being harmed?

- Would you want them to mind their own business?
- To report their worry to a professional who could help?

When we suspect, see or are told of a child that is being hurt we can react in many different ways. We may feel guilt, anger, disbelief or denial. Some of these reactions can stop help getting to a family who need it.

Many people do not tell because they fear that:

- Children will be at further risk of harm
- Nothing will be done
- The child will be taken away
- The family may find out who reported them
- Telling may ruin family relationships

In reality, it is best that action is taken early to stop things getting worse. Long-term abuse is much more likely to cause problems for a child as they get older. Even if you think an incident is just a one off, other professional agencies may already have concerns about the child. So your information could be very important.

If you report your concern to Social Services, you will be asked for your details about yourself and the worries you have. You might want to make a few notes before you make contact.

Information about your name and address will be treated as confidential.

Helpful national organisations



4 Children

www.4children.org.uk



Al-anon

020 7403 0888 (Helpline)
www.al-anonuk.org.uk



BlogSafety.com

www.blogsafety.com



Bullying UK

www.bullying.co.uk



Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre

0870 000 3344
www.ceop.gov.uk



Childnet International

www.childnet-int.org



Contact a Family

0808 808 3555
www.cafamily.org.uk



DIAL UK (National Number)

01302 310123
www.dialuk.info



Downs Syndrome Association

0845 230 0372 (Helpline)
www.downs-syndrome.org.uk



Equality and Human Rights Commission

www.equalityhumanrights.com



FACE (Fighting Against Child Exploitation)

www.faceup2it.org



Family & Parenting Institute

www.familyandparenting.org



Family Fund

0845 130 45 42
www.familyfundtrust.org.uk



Family Rights Group

0800 731 1696
www.frg.org.uk



Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths

020 7233 2090 (Helpline)
www.fsid.org.uk



GetNetWise

www.getnetwise.org



Internet Watch Foundation

www.iwf.org.uk



Kidscape

www.kidscape.org.uk



LifeBytes

www.lifebytes.gov.uk



Like It Is Sex Education

www.likeitis.org



Mankind Initiative

0870 794 4124 (Helpline)
www.mankind.org.uk



Mencap

0808 808 1111 (Learning Disability Helpline) www.mencap.org.uk



NAS

0845 070 4004 (Autism Helpline)
www.nas.org.uk



National Drugs Helpline

0800 77 66 00
www.talktofrank.com



National Children's Bureau

www.ncb.org.uk



Parents Centre

www.parentscentre.gov.uk



PinkParents

08701 273 274 (Helpline)
www.pinkparents.org.uk



Rape Support

0808 800 1144 (Helpline)



SCOPE

0808 800 3333 (Cerebral Palsy Helpline)
www.scope.org.uk



Stop Cyberbullying

www.stopcyberbullying.org



Stop It Now (stop sexual abuse)

0808 1000 900 (Helpline)
www.stopitnow.org.uk

Helpful local organisations



Swindon Racial Equality Council

01793 528545



Child Health Team

01793 863911 or 863931



Children's Information Service Swindon

01793 541786
www.cisswindon.co.uk



Cruse Bereavement Care

01793 619 933
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk



Homestart Swindon

01793 613886
www.home-start.org.uk



Police Child Protection Unit

01793 507910



Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officer (Swindon)

01793 507801



Swindon Area Disability Information Exchange (SADIE)

01793 716 811



Swindon Carers' Centre

01793 531133
www.carers.org



Swindon Children's Services Emergency Duty Service (out-of-hours)

01793 436699



Swindon Children's Services Referral Team

01793 466903



Swindon Coalition of Disabled People

01793 430045
www.scodp.co.uk



Swindon Sure Start Partnership

01793 466491
www.earlyyearschildcare.org



Swindon Women's Refuge

01793 536447



SWGFL Safe

www.swgfl.org.uk/safety



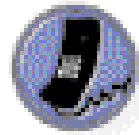
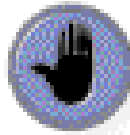
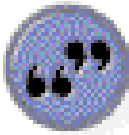
U turn (young people's drugs and alcohol service)

01793 465040



Victim Support

01380 729476
www.victimsupport.org.uk



Swindon LSCB
Swindon Borough Council
Civil Offices
Euclid Street
Swindon SN1 2JH
01793 463803

