



FAMILY LINKS

The Centre for Emotional Health



LEARNING PARTNERSHIP REPORT
HAMPSHIRE 2019

HAMPSHIRE LEARNING PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

10-WEEK NURTURING PROGRAMME

SEPTEMBER 2018 - JULY 2019

This report outlines the findings from evaluation data returned from 34 Family Links Nurturing Programme groups held across Hampshire between September 2018 and July 2019. The impact of the groups was assessed using a pre/post design, measuring changes in three key outcomes:

1. Parental mental wellbeing
2. Children's behavioural and emotional difficulties
3. Children's prosocial behaviour

All three outcomes showed statistically significant improvements after parents completed the programme.

OVERVIEW OF GROUPS

Thirty-four Nurturing Programme groups were held across 25 different locations in Hampshire between September 2018 and July 2019. Table 1 shows when the groups were held and the number of complete datasets returned for each measure.

Table 1: Group dates and datasets returned

Group	Dates of Group	WEMWBS	SDQ Difficulties	SDQ Prosocial	EOPE ¹
G1	Sep 2018 - Dec 2018	5	5	5	0
G2	Autumn 2018	3	3	3	3
G3	Autumn 2018	4	4	4	0
G4	Autumn 2018	5	5	5	0
G5	Autumn 2018	4	5	5	0
G6	Autumn 2018	3	3	3	3
G7	Autumn 2018	0	5	5	8
G8	Autumn 2018	5	5	5	5
G9	Autumn 2018	0	7	7	6
G10	Autumn 2018	0	3	4	5
G11	Autumn 2018	4	4	4	0
G12	Autumn 2018	0	6	6	6
G13	Jan 2019 - Apr 2019	11	11	11	10
G14	Jan 2019 - Apr 2019	13	14	14	13
G15	Spring 2019	8	8	8	8
G16	Jan 2019 - Apr 2019	4	4	4	4
G17	Jan 2019 - Apr 2019	4	4	4	4
G18	Jan 2019 - Mar 2019	0	2	3	3
G19	Jan 2019 - Apr 2019	6	6	6	7
G20	Jan 2019 - Mar 2019	0	7	7	7
G21	Spring 2019	10	10	10	0

¹ End of Programme Feedback

G22	Spring 2019	5	5	5	0
G23	Jan 2019 - Mar 2019	4	4	4	3
G24	Summer 2019	8	8	8	9
G25	May 2019 - Jul 2019	11	11	11	10
G26	Apr 2019 - Jul 2019	8	8	8	8
G27	Summer 2019	3	3	3	3
G28	Summer 2019	3	3	3	0
G29	Summer 2019	5	5	5	5
G30	Summer 2019	7	6	6	0
G31	Summer 2019	9	0	0	0
G32	Summer 2019	8	8	8	0
G33	Summer 2019	10	9	9	0
G34	May 2019 - Jul 2019	0	9	9	9
TOTALS		170	200	202	139

METHOD

Evaluation Design

The evaluation adopted a pre/post design, with parents completing questionnaires at the start of the group and at the end of the final session, to measure changes in parent and child outcomes between the start and end of the programme.

Measures

Two validated tools were used to assess the identified outcomes, detailed descriptions of each measurement tool can be found below.

Table 2: Parent and child outcomes assessed by pre/post questionnaires

Outcome	Parent / Child Outcome	Questionnaire
Parental mental wellbeing	Parent	WEMWBS (Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale)
Children's behavioural and emotional difficulties	Child	SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)
Children's prosocial behaviour	Child	SDQ (Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire)

Parental mental wellbeing was assessed using the Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS, Tennant et al., 2007). Scores can range from 14 to 70, with higher scores indicating more positive mental wellbeing. Research suggests that the British norm WEMWBS score is 49.9 (Health Survey for England, 2016), although this varies slightly across demographic and social groups. The WEMWBS is designed to assess mental wellbeing and not to identify mental health problems; therefore, there are no clinical cut off points categorising 'poor' mental health. An increase in WEMWBS score between pre and post group measures indicates the parent's mental wellbeing has improved. Guidance about using WEMWBS to measure impact by Putz *et al.* (2012) suggests an increase of between 3 and 8 points demonstrates a meaningful improvement in mental wellbeing.

Children's behavioural and emotional difficulties were assessed using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997). The measure consists of five subscales, each containing five items, and four of these subscales combine to form a difficulties score (emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and peer relationship problems). Parents answer the questionnaire in relation to one of their children who is over the age of two, indicating how much they agree with each statement by selecting a response of either 'not true', 'somewhat true' or 'all of the time'. Scores range from 0 to 40, with a higher score indicating a higher level of emotional and behavioural difficulties in the child. A decrease in score between pre and post measures indicates parents are reporting less behavioural and emotional difficulties in their child. The SDQ has established norms

for normal, borderline and clinical scores for 4 – 17 year olds, shown in the table below. This information is not available for 2 – 4 year olds.

Table 3: British norms for SDQ Difficulties categories

Category	4 – 17 year olds	2 – 4 year olds
British Mean	8.4	7.3
Normal Range	0 – 13	N/A
Borderline Range	14 – 16	N/A
Clinical Range	Above 17	N/A

Children’s prosocial behaviour was assessed through the fifth subscale of the SDQ. Scores on this subscale range from 0 to 10, with a higher score indicating a higher level of positive social behaviour. An increase in the prosocial score between pre and post measures indicates parents are reporting more prosocial behaviour being displayed by their child. The prosocial scale has established norms for normal, borderline and clinical scores, for 4 – 17 year olds, shown in the table below. Again, this information is not available for 2 – 4 year olds.

Table 4: British norms for SDQ Prosocial categories

Category	4 – 17 year olds	2 – 4 year olds
British Mean	8.6	8.1
Normal Range	6 – 10	N/A
Borderline Range	5	N/A
Clinical Range	4 or under	N/A

In addition to the pre/post measures outlined above, parents also completed an **End of Programme Feedback** questionnaire. This consisted of 10 key strategies covered during the programme, with parents indicating the helpfulness of each strategy and their confidence in using them by selecting a response on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

Data Analysis

A Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted to test whether the data were normally distributed, the results and corresponding statistical analysis used are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of Shapiro-Wilk test and corresponding statistical analysis

Measure	Complete datasets	Shapiro-Wilk test		Statistical test
		P value ²	Normal distribution?	
WEMWBS	170	$p<.01$	No	Paired Wilcoxon signed-rank test
SDQ Difficulties	200	$p=.42$	Yes	Dependent samples t-test
SDQ Prosocial	202	$p<.01$	No	Paired Wilcoxon signed-rank test

The SDQ Difficulties data were normally distributed and therefore a parametric test (dependent samples t-test) was used to analyse the change in means between pre and post measures. Effect size (Cohen's d) was also calculated and reported as this quantifies the magnitude of changes between the pre and post measures. Values of Cohen's d are to be interpreted as follows: $d=.20$ small, $d=.50$ medium, $d=.80$ large.

Both the WEMWBS and SDQ Prosocial data were not normally distributed and therefore a non-parametric test (paired Wilcoxon signed-rank) was used to analyse the difference in mean ranks between pre and post measures. Effect size (r) was also calculated, with values to be interpreted as follows: $r=.10$ small, $r=.30$ medium, $r=.50$ large.

Independent samples t-tests and the Mann-Whitney U test were used to test differences between the pre measure scores of parents who did and did not complete the programme.

For all analyses, a 95% confidence interval was used to determine statistical significance.

² All figures are rounded to 2 decimal places.

RESULTS

Outcome 1 – Parental mental wellbeing

- There was a large and statistically significant increase in parents' wellbeing scores between the start and the end of the group, ($z=8.67$, $p<.01$, $r=-0.47$), showing that parents were reporting a **significant improvement in their mental wellbeing**.
- **79%** of parents who completed the programme showed an improvement in their mental wellbeing.
- Before the group, **83%** of parents had a mental wellbeing score that was below the **British norm**, whereas after the group, only **52%** had a score below the British norm.

Table 6: WEMWBS pre and post scores

Mean Pre Score ³	Mean Post Score	Mean Score Change	% of parents showing a score increase
41.1	48.1	+7.0	79%

Outcome 2 – Children's behavioural and emotional difficulties

- There was a statistically significant decrease in children's behavioural and emotional difficulties scores between the start and the end of the group, and the magnitude of change was a medium to large effect ($t=8.59$, $p<.01$, $d=0.61$), showing that parents were reporting a **significant improvement in their children's behavioural and emotional difficulties**.
- **71%** of parents who completed the programme reported an improvement in their children's behavioural and emotional difficulties.
- Before the group, **70%** of children scored within the clinical range compared to **49%** after the programme.

Table 10: SDQ Difficulties pre and post scores

Mean Pre Score ⁴	Mean Post Score	Mean Score Change	Mean Score Change (%)	% of children showing a score decrease ⁵
19.4	16.5	-2.9	-15%	71%

³ British norm = 49.9

⁴ British norm = 8.4, Clinical range ≥ 17

⁵ In the SDQ Difficulties a decrease in score represents an improvement in reported child behaviour.

Table 11: Proportion of children in each SDQ Difficulties category

	Pre Group (n)	%	Post Group (n)	%
Clinical	139	70%	97	49%
Borderline	22	11%	40	20%
Normal	42	21%	66	32%

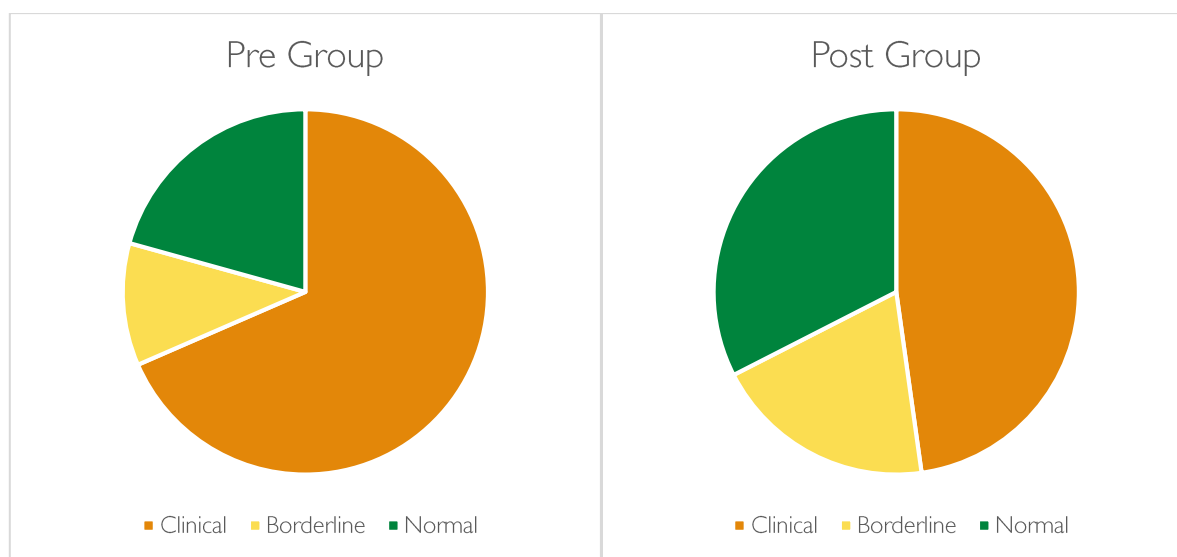


Figure 2: Proportion of SDQ Difficulties categories before and after the group

Outcome 3 – Children's prosocial behaviour

- There was a medium sized statistically significant increase in children's prosocial behaviour scores between the start and end of the group, ($z=5.80$, $p<.01$, $r=-0.29$), showing that parents were reporting a **significant improvement in their children's prosocial behaviour**.
- 50% of parents who completed the programme reported an improvement in their children's prosocial behaviour.
- Before the group, 24% of children scored within the clinical range compared to 14% after the programme.

Table 12: SDQ Prosocial pre and post scores

Mean Pre Score ⁶	Mean Post Score	Mean Score Change	Mean Score Change (%)	% of children showing a score increase ⁷
6.0	6.8	+0.8	+13%	50%

Table 13: Proportion of children in each SDQ Prosocial category

	Pre Group (n)	%	Post Group (n)	%
Clinical	49	24%	29	14%
Borderline	31	15%	25	12%
Normal	124	61%	150	74%

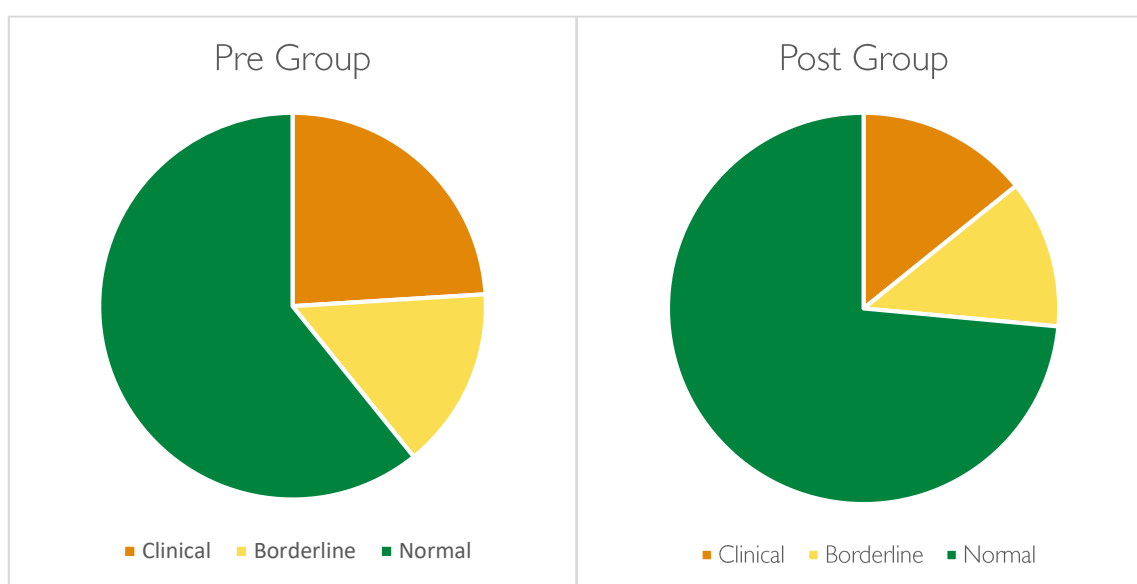


Figure 3: Proportion of SDQ Prosocial categories before and after the group

Pre measure scores were collected from a number of parents who did not go on to complete the programme (Table 14). Comparisons of pre measure scores for parents who did and did not complete the programme show that there were no significant differences between the groups for each of the three measures. This suggests that parents who completed the programme are likely to be representative of all parents who started groups.

⁶ British norm = 8.6

⁷ In the SDQ Prosocial an increase in score represents an improvement in reported child prosocial behaviour.

Table 14: Pre score comparisons for parents who did and did not complete the programme

Measure	Course completed			Not completed			Independent Samples t-test result
	Datasets	Mean	SD	Datasets	Mean	SD	
WEMWBS	172	41.1	9.59	63	40.4	10.0	$t_{233}=0.53$ $p>.05$
SDQ Difficulties	203	19.4	6.6	72	20.8	4.6	$t_{273}=-1.55$ $p>.05$

Measure	Course completed		Not completed		Mann-Whitney U test result
	Datasets	Median	Datasets	Median	
SDQ Prosocial	204	6.0	73	6.0	$U=6697.5$ $p>.05$

End of Programme Feedback

Parents found *praise* and *honouring children's feelings* the most helpful strategies, with 97% and 93% of parents rating these as 'helpful' (either 4 or 5 out of 5) respectively.

Parents felt most confident at using *listening and talking* with 86% of parents reporting that they were using this confidently (rated as either 4 or 5 out of 5). Parents reported the least confidence in *ignoring undesirable behaviour* and *nurturing ourselves*, with only 55% and 51% of parents reporting that they would be able to confidently use these strategies. Results are shown in Figure 3.

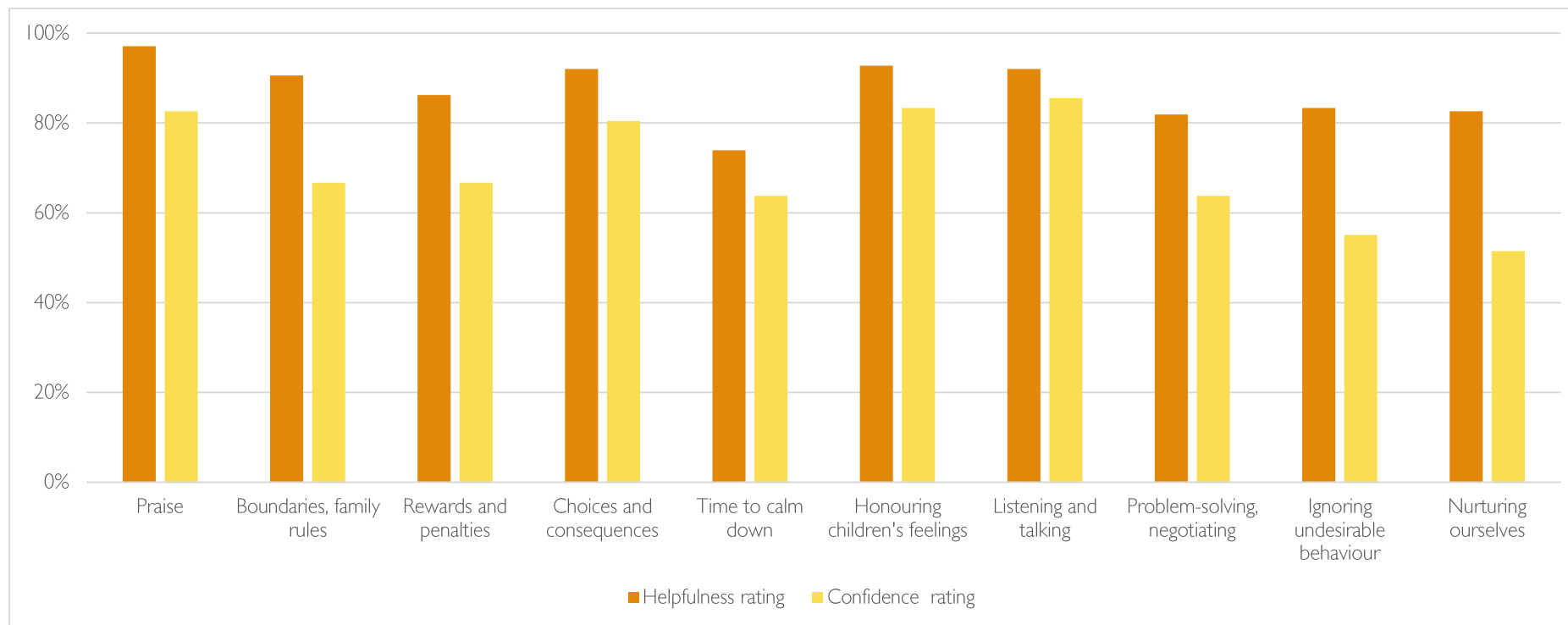


Figure 3: Proportion of parents rating each strategy as either a 4 or 5 out of 5

Two groups submitted qualitative comments from the End of Programme Feedback questionnaires, below are a selection of quotes:

- *"The group was lovely & friendly, hope to keep in touch with some of the members."*
- *"I felt relaxed & respected. It has really helped with new skills to help deal with situations in the household."*
- *"[The course] helped me understand more and been great to share life experiences and problems."*
- *"100% recommend, a lot of helpful ideas, tools, support."*
- *"Thank you all so very much for my time at the support group. I have learned a lot about myself, children, techniques and take away many positives. Thanks for all your advice."*
- *"My daughter is turning into a well-rounded child who is enjoying life"*
- *"Useful time to reflect on parenting styles and choices."*
- *"The group was very good and those that stayed through the 10 weeks were interactive and supportive. Good atmosphere."*
- *"It is extremely valuable in linking the components together to install values, creating rules and boundaries and keeping a fair balance."*
- *"Group started with a few dominant people but was lovely and relaxed and we settled in. Always felt respected. No pressure to share."*
- *"Good to share experiences, get advice and support."*

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of the statistical analysis show there was a statistically significant improvement in all three outcomes after the group, showing improvements in: parental mental wellbeing, children's behavioural and emotional difficulties and children's prosocial behaviour. Data collected from parents who did not go on to complete the programme shows there were no significant differences between the two groups with respect to their scores across each of the three measures. This suggests that the parents who completed the programme were representative of all parents who started groups. Feedback from parents at the end of the programme suggests that they found the strategies taught during the programme helpful and qualitative feedback suggests parents thoroughly enjoyed the course, particularly the ideas given and having the opportunity to share experiences with others.