

Parenting policy - the last 10 years

[2008](#)

[2007 - 2005](#)

[2004 - 2001](#)

[2000 and previously](#)

2008

December 2008: A progress paper is published: [The Children's Plan one year on](#).

December 2008: The [2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy](#) sets out plans for the development of the workforce. A new Expert Group on Children's Workforce Policy is announced

December 2008: A White Paper on [welfare reform](#), 'Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future', confirms plans for a single out-of-work benefit, with plans including obligations for lone parents of children under seven to prepare for work.

December 2008: Legislation is announced in the [Queen's speech](#) to commit to ending child poverty by 2020.

December 2008: The first national [Play Strategy](#) sets out plans to improve and develop play facilities for children throughout the country.

December 2008: Government action plan following the Bercow review of services for children and young people with [speech, language and communication needs](#).

November 2008: The [Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services Review](#) sets out recommendations to government for improving these services.

November 2008: The [Education and Skills Act](#) raises the age for leaving education or training to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015.

October 2008: Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) will become a compulsory part of the curriculum from ages 5 to 16 in response to a review of [sex and relationships education](#).

September 2008: [Early Years Foundation Stage](#) comes into force in all childcare settings.

July 2008: [Youth Crime Action Plan](#) sets out a strategy for youth justice and family interventions.

July 2008: Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services ([C4EO](#)) is launched.

June 2008: The [Youth Alcohol Action Plan](#) includes measures aimed at parents of young people who drink.

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June 2008: An action plan is published following the [Byron review](#) on risks to children from exposure to potentially harmful or inappropriate material on the internet and in video games.

June 2008: The [Young Runaways Action Plan](#) aims to improve services for young runaways and their families.

June 2008: A new national strategy for [carers](#) is published.

June 2008: A third round for the [Parenting Fund](#) is announced.

May 2008: A consultation is launched on the future of [social care](#) leading up to a Green Paper in 2009.

May 2008: Measures to improve services to [disabled children](#) announced, focusing on provision of short breaks.

April 2008: Plans for investment in the [children's workforce](#) are published alongside details of the implementation of the Children's Plan.

April 2008: A review is launched to assess the impact of the [commercial world](#) on children's wellbeing.

March 2008: The [Youth Taskforce Action Plan](#) focuses on anti-social behaviour, including preventative measures such as family support and investment in youth activities.

March 2008: The revised [Child Health Promotion Programme](#) is launched alongside an expansion of the [Family Nurse Partnership](#) pilots.

March 2008: Launch of the [Parent Know-How](#) programme, providing government funding for various helplines and advice websites.

February 2008: [Staying Safe Action Plan](#) on safeguarding children from harm and appropriate responses to risk.

January 2008: The Social Exclusion Task Force's report, Think Family: Improving the life chances of families at risk, calls for a '[Think Family](#)' approach. [Family Pathfinders](#) to pilot this are announced.

January 2008: The [Healthy weight, healthy lives](#) strategy aims to tackle obesity in England.

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2007

December 2007: The 10 year [Children's Plan](#) sets out the Government's ambitions for improving children and young people's lives over the next decade.

December 2007: 'Ready for work: full employment in our generation' confirms plans to move [lone parents](#) of children over seven onto Jobseeker's Allowance from October 2010.

November 2007: The [National Academy for Parenting Practitioners](#) is launched.

November 2007: The Government sets up a [review](#) to determine how the right to request flexible working can be extended to parents of older children.

October 2007: DCSF creates new [Youth Taskforce](#) to replace the Respect Taskforce.

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July 2007: Green Paper on welfare reform, [In work, better off](#), proposes measures to get more parents into work including reducing the period for which lone parents are entitled to income support.

June 2007: In Gordon Brown's first ministerial reshuffle, the [Department for Children, Schools and Families](#) (DCSF) is created from the DfES, sharing responsibility for youth justice with the Ministry of Justice.

June 2007: Department of Health publishes a review of the role of [Health Visitors](#), proposing that they should be leading multi-skilled teams.

May 2007: [Treasury review](#) of services for children and young people announces a £340 settlement for disabled children and their families, mainly for provision of short breaks.

April 2007: Paid [maternity leave](#) is extended to nine months.

April 2007: Strategy on [maternity services](#) aims to give women more choice.

March 2007: DWP publishes [Working for Children](#), a strategy to tackle child poverty by getting more parents into work.

March 2007: [Every Parent Matters](#) is published, setting out the Government's policies relating to parents and parenting.

March 2007: All local authorities must have a parenting commissioner and parenting support strategy in place.

February 2007: [Unicef report](#) finds the UK last out of 21 industrialised nations on overall child wellbeing.

February 2007: Beverley Hughes announces £7.5 million of funding for local authorities to develop and implement a [parenting support strategy](#) as outlined in the parenting support guidance (October 2006).

February 2007: Information Sharing Index renamed [ContactPoint](#)

January 2007: The Respect Unit announces 40 [Respect Areas](#) which will have extra money for police, parenting classes and intensive support for parents, a budget of £125,000 per area. [Family Intervention Projects](#) will be a key plank of the respect zones.

January 2007: [Targeted youth support programme](#) begins national roll-out (to be completed by 2008). All local authorities are now required to secure access for young people to 'positive activities' under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

January 2007: Treasury publishes a discussion paper from the [Children and Young People review](#) ahead of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.

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2006

December 2006: [Starting School Project](#) (previously Transition Information Sessions) rolled out nationwide, coordinated by the Family and Parenting Institute and 4Children.

November 2006: The remit for the [National Academy for Parenting Practitioners](#) is published.

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November 2006: The Home Office's [Respect Unit](#) announces a £4 million project to establish parenting experts, dubbed Supernannies by the press, in 77 areas in Britain, to help parents who are worried about their children's behaviour. The Department for Education and Skills also announces that it will fund training for up to 1,000 frontline workers in 50 areas with a [Family Intervention Project](#) set up by January 2007.

November 2006: [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) extends parenting contracts and parenting orders so that they can be used before the pupil has been excluded. Schools are enabled to make their own applications for parenting orders. The Act also provides for penalty notices or prosecution for parents where excluded pupils are found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of their exclusion. These provisions come into force in September 2007.

November 2006: The [Police and Justice Act 2006](#) enables a local authority or a registered social landlord to enter into a parenting contract with a parent, and enables a local authority or a registered social landlord to apply for a parenting order.

November 2006: £7 million announced jointly by the Department of Health and the DFES to fund [pilots of intensive home visiting](#) to families by health visitors and midwives during pregnancy and the first two years of children's lives, as announced in the Action Plan on Social Exclusion. Due to start April 2007

November 2006: [Early Learning Partnership Projects](#) established to support 1 to 3 year olds who are at risk of learning delay – administered by the Family and Parenting Institute.

October 2006: Publication of [Parenting Support guidance](#) to local authorities in England asking local authorities to develop parenting support services through a parenting support strategy that informs the Children and Young People's Plans and take account of parents' views.

October 2006: [Care Matters](#) Green Paper published which produces proposals to address the problems of children in care including prevention policies for families with children on the edge of care, better "corporate parenting"; better fostering models and better educational support.

September 2006: There are 1,000 Children's Centres of which about 500 were Sure Start Local Programmes, 430 Neighbourhood Nurseries and 70 Early Excellence Centres ([National Audit Office](#) figures).

September 2006: [Parent Support Advisers](#) (PSAs) introduced in 20 local authorities and 600 schools as part of £40 million Government pilot project to support children and families where there are early signs that they could benefit from additional help. Help will include parenting programmes, mentoring for parents or children and one to one tuition.

September 2006: [Choice advisers](#) start to be introduced in schools to help parents with the admissions process.

September 2006: [Reaching Out: An Action Plan on Social Exclusion](#) is published by the Cabinet Office highlighting the importance of parenting as a factor in improving outcomes for children, and announcing ten health-led parenting support demonstration projects for vulnerable first-time mothers from pregnancy to age two, based on [David Olds'](#) programme in the US.

September 2006: [Childcare Act 2006](#). This is the first Act to deal solely with early years and childcare. It gives local authorities new duties to provide information and advice, and sufficient childcare for all working parents, especially those with disabled children and those on lower incomes

August 2006: Publication of the Price Waterhouse Coopers report, [The Market for Parental and Family Support Services](#).

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July 2006: Children's minister Beverley Hughes announces 2 year £10 million funding for a [pilot scheme of parenting courses](#) in 15 local authorities for children aged 8-13.

July 2006: Local Authorities are asked to identify a single commissioner of parenting support services, in a letter sent by the Minister for Children, Young People and Families.

July 2006: Treasury [policy review](#) of children and young people launched to inform Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

June 2006: Pilots for [budget-holding lead professionals](#) set up across 16 local authorities as proposed in [Support for parents: the best start for children](#).

April 2006: Funding for Children's Centres now provided through local authorities, rather than centrally.

March 2006: Publication of the [Joint Planning and Commissioning Framework](#) for Children, Young People and Maternity Services.

January 2006: [Respect Action Plan](#) publishes proposals for:

National Academy for Parenting Practitioners)

- a network of intensive "family support schemes"
- measures relating to schools which were subsequently brought in under the provisions of the Education and Inspections Act
- ways in which local authorities could improve commissioning of parenting services

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2005

December 2005: Following recommendations from Lord Laming's [report](#), Beverley Hughes announces the Government plans to implement a national child [index](#) to enable practitioners to share information about children, operational by the end of 2008. Implementation costs are budgeted at £224 million over three years. and operating costs at £41 million per year, both to be funded by central Government.

December 2005: Treasury report, [Support for parents: the best start for children](#), published.

November 2005: Reports from the [National Evaluation of Sure Start](#) analysing the early stages of the programme are published. They do not demonstrate significant difference between populations with and without access to Sure Start programmes, but highlight the diversity between programmes.

October 2005: Government publishes its White Paper, [Higher Standards, Better Schools for All](#), which includes a measure which will allow schools to apply for parenting orders, and proposed introducing choice advisers to help parents choose schools.

October 2005: [Children, Young People and Families Grant programme](#) launched bringing together existing funding schemes such the Strengthening Families Grant.

October 2005: The [Commission on Families and the Wellbeing of Children](#), set up by the National Family and Parenting Institute, reports on the relationship between the state and the family.

September 2005: [Targeted Youth Support Programme](#) piloted in 14 local authority areas

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September 2005: [Respect Task Force](#) (to change into Respect Unit) set up in the Home Office and led by Louise Casey.

July 2005: The [Youth Matters](#) Green Paper includes proposals for: a duty on local authorities to secure positive activities for all young people; an 'opportunity fund' in each Local Authority to be spent on local projects that young people want; and piloting youth opportunity cards.

June 2005: [Extended school prospectus](#) published: extended schools to be rolled out nationally by 2010, including parenting and family support.

April 2005: Family Support Grant and the Marriage and Relationship grant formed a single programme – the [Strengthening Families Grant](#) which focuses on support for couples, parents and families.

April 2005: Local authorities start implementing the [Common Assessment Framework](#), a form used by any practitioner assessing a child's needs, to simplify the assessment process for parents and professionals and encourage joint working.

March 2005: Professor Al Aynsley-Green is appointed England's first [Children's Commissioner](#).

January 2005: [Child Trust Fund](#) launched.

January 2005: There are 188 designated children's centres up and running. Original local Sure Start projects start being wound up and Sure Start Children's Centres folded back into local Government control. Norman Glass, the architect of Sure Start, publishes an [article](#) criticising the change of direction for the scheme.

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2004

December 2004: [Choice for parents, the best start for children: a ten year strategy for childcare](#) is published, including a target of 3,500 Children's Centres in place by 2010.

November 2004: The [Children Act 2004](#) provides the legal underpinning for Every Child Matters. It gives education, health and social services for young people, and the youth justice system a duty to co-operate together and to share information about children in their care with other professionals, in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children. It also enables local authorities to set up Children's Trusts to promote integrated working: all areas are expected to have a Children's Trust by 2008.

November 2004: The [Choosing Health](#) White Paper echoes the importance of parents in improving their children's health

October 2004: DfES consults on [information sharing databases](#) in children's services.

September 2004:

National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services guidance published by the Department of Health setting out a child-centred approach to health with a particular emphasis on supporting parents (Standard 2).

[More](#)

July 2004: In the [2004 Spending Review](#), further funding for Sure Start is announced, with a more ambitious target of 2,500 Children's Centres by 2008. The pilot for free early education for two-year olds is extended to 12,000 places.

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April 2004: All three year olds are now entitled to a free part-time (12½ hours) [early education](#) place during term-time.

March 2004: In the [2004 Budget](#) Chancellor Gordon Brown announces £669 million additional funding for Sure Start ("childcare and services for disadvantaged children") by 2007-08, to fund a Children's Centre in each of the 20 per cent most disadvantaged wards in England by 2008 (1,700 in total). Pilots of free part-time early education for 6,000 two-year olds in disadvantaged areas are also announced.

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2003

November 2003: [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#) introduced which outlines "Parental Responsibilities": extends the use of parenting orders, introduces parenting contracts in the case of exclusion from school, criminal conduct and anti-social behaviour and brings in fixed penalty notice for parents in case of truancy. (Came into effect February 2004).

September 2003: [Every Child Matters Green Paper](#) is published which forms the bedrock of Government policy towards children and parents after the Victoria Climbié report. Proposals include Children's Trusts, improved information sharing, a common assessment framework, Sure Start Children's Centres, extended schools, a Young People's Fund and a Children's Commissioner.

July 2003: Children's Minister Margaret Hodge [announces](#) the creation of 35 [Children's Trust](#) pathfinders, bringing together local health, education and social services.

July 2003: [Constitutional Affairs Committee](#) publishes critical report into the work of the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)

June 2003: Margaret Hodge is appointed as the first [Minister for Children](#) with responsibility among other things for family support. A range of services are brought under DfES, including children's social services from the Department of Health.

June 2003: The first 32 [Children's Centres](#) are established, in existing nurseries and similar settings, to provide a single place for 5 key services – early education, childcare, health, family support and help into employment.

April 2003: [Child Tax Credit](#) and [Working Tax Credit](#) are introduced, replacing Working Families' Tax Credit (WFTC) and Children's Tax Credit. Child Tax Credit is paid to families with children up to a certain income, whether or not their parents work. It is paid directly to the carer. Working Tax Credit differs from the WFTC in also being paid to non-parents on low incomes.

March 2003: [Child Trust Funds](#) announced in the Budget, to provide every child when they are born with a savings account of £250, (or £500 for children in the poorest third of families).

January 2003: [Lord Laming](#) publishes the report of his inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbié.

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2002

December 2002: The Sure Start Unit is set up as a cross departmental unit responsible to DfES and DWP.

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November 2002: Trailblazer local authorities identified to pilot new systems for [information sharing](#) using an IT system.

October 2002: [Extended schools](#) set up in 25 pathfinder local authorities.

July 2002: The 2002 [Spending Review](#) allocates £25 million to the [Parenting Fund](#), funding helplines and parenting support projects during 2004 to 2006. It also announces that a National Framework, mapping parenting support, will be developed.

July 2002: [Education Act 2002](#) gives extra powers to local authorities to prepare the way for [extended schools](#) providing childcare from 8am to 6pm, parenting support and other services.

July 2002: [Employment Act 2002](#) increases statutory [maternity leave](#) to six months paid leave and a further six months unpaid leave and introduces two weeks paid [paternity leave](#). It also introduces the right to request to work flexibly for parents of children under six (or under 18 for a disabled child). These provisions come into effect in April 2003.

April 2002: Lord Chancellor publishes the results of his first report from the Advisory Group on Marriage and Relationship Support called [Moving Forward Together](#).

April 2002: Sure Start maternity grant increased to £500.

March 2002: Launch of the [parenting plan](#) for divorcing and separating parents.

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2001

December 2001: The Government's strategy paper, [Tackling Child Poverty](#), is published.

September 2001: Lord Chancellor announces the setting up of the [Marriage and Relationship Support Grant](#).

June 2001: Family services across England and Wales are [mapped](#) for the first time by the National Family and Parenting Institute.

April 2001: [Children's Tax Credit](#) is launched, worth up to £10 a week, (with a further £10 baby bonus in 2002-03), but payable for one child only. The credit is based on the salary of the higher earner in the household and is payable to that person.

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2000

November 2000: The [Children's Fund](#) is set up to fund services to children and young people at risk of social exclusion through local partnerships between the statutory and voluntary sector (currently funded until 2008).

July 2000: The [Comprehensive Spending Review](#) announces that Sure Start funding is to expand to £500 million for at least 500 local programmes by 2003/04, aiming to reach one third of poor children.

April 2000: [Married couple's allowance](#) ended except for couples where at least one person was born before April 1935.

March 2000: The Government announces [Sure Start Plus](#), a £6 million programme to provide teenage parents with information and advice.

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March 2000: Work Life Balance Campaign launched by the Prime Minister Tony Blair.

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1999

December 1999: [On Track](#) project launched aimed at stopping young people committing crime Interventions include parent training, home school partnerships, structured pre-school education, home visiting and family therapy.

December 1999: Right to [parental leave](#) introduced: mothers and fathers are given the right to take up to 3 months off work with job protection but without pay.

October 1999: [Working Families Tax Credit](#) replaces Family Credit (in place since 1988). The Government estimates twice as many families will receive the new benefit, which is more generous and includes a childcare credit.

October 1999: 66 trailblazer [Sure Start](#) projects are announced. Parents and local community to be at the heart of developing the programme locally.

September 1999: [Opportunity for all](#) published: the first of the Government's annual reports on poverty.

June 1999: The Social Exclusion Unit's report on [teenage pregnancy](#) sets out the Government's strategy with two national targets: to halve the under 18 conception rate in England by 2010, and to increase the participation of teenage mothers in education, training or work to 60% by 2010.

April 1999: [National Family and Parenting Institute](#) established

April 1999: [First 21 Sure Start projects](#) to get funding are announced, set up by parents and local professionals in partnership. Between 1999 and 2003, 524 Sure Start local programmes are set up.

March 1999: Chancellor Gordon Brown announces [Sure Start Maternity Grant](#) to replace the Maternity Payment with the payments doubled to £200, but conditional on having contacted a healthcare professional for advice.

March 1999: Tony Blair declares the Government's historic aim to end child poverty with a generation in the [Beveridge Lecture](#) at Toynbee Hall.

January 1999: Family Support Grant set up for projects supporting families and parents, worth £7 million over three years.

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1998

November 1998: Supporting Families Green Paper published by the Home Office. Its proposals included setting up the National Family and Parenting Institute, and funding for a national parents' helpline (Parentline Plus)

October 1998: Full national [New Deal for Lone Parents](#) implemented.

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September 1998: [Quality Protects](#) programme launched by Department of Health, aiming to provide effective protection and better care for looked after and other vulnerable children. It also requires local authorities to consider adoption as an option for looked after children. Initially a three-year programme, it was extended to a five-year programme, running to 2004.

September 1998: All four-year olds are now entitled to a free part-time [early education](#) place during term-time.

July 1998: The 1998 [Comprehensive Spending Review](#) announces [Sure Start](#), a comprehensive community based programme of early intervention and family support with a UK budget of £540 million allocated over three years.

July 1998: Section 8 of the [Crime and Disorder Act 1998](#) introduces [parenting orders](#) where parents may be required to attend parenting classes or fulfil other requirements. These are rolled out nationally in 2000.

May 1998: The Labour Government sets out the first national childcare strategy in the Green Paper, [Meeting the Childcare Challenge](#).

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1997

September 1997: Ministerial Group on the Family set up.

July 1997: [New Deal for Lone Parents](#) pilots in eight areas.