



Integrating Services for Parents and Families

A Framework for Provision

Developed through the Lancashire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership
Revised September 2008



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1. WHY DO WE NEED A FRAMEWORK?

'Families will be at the centre of excellent, integrated services that put their needs first'

(Ed Balls Secretary of State for Children Schools and Families in the Children's Plan 2008)

Every Child Matters is about improving outcomes for children and young people. It is recognised that parents are key contributors to this agenda. Parents and families are doing a vital job in raising the children and young people of Lancashire. If at any stage in this most invaluable role parents and families need support, then they deserve the highest quality, at the right time and at the right level. This is especially important at an early stage to try and resolve problems before issues become more serious and have a negative impact on children's welfare.

Throughout Lancashire, there are many agencies and organisations from all sectors working with and supporting parents and families. There are many examples of innovative and effective activities – parents have told us about some of these. However, sometimes these activities have not been strategically planned and delivered and

are not available across the county to all families.

It is believed that a more joined up approach will help to raise awareness about what support is already available and to identify gaps. We can then begin to look at how best use might be made of all of the resources available to build on those activities or interventions that we already know to be effective. It is vital to take a 'whole family' approach, as outlined in the Governments 'Think Family' initiative.

I had no confidence or self-esteem... life is completely different now. After one to one support and attending a group I have done a NVQ in childcare and am volunteering for SureStart. It really benefited me and can benefit parents and our future adults to have a happier, healthier outlook on life.

A mum after accessing parent support services

2. WHO IS THE FRAMEWORK FOR?

The framework is for all parents and families and for all agencies and organisations across Lancashire who work with those parents and families to improve outcomes for their children.

For the purposes of this framework, the term 'parents' includes:

- **all** parents
- **all** carers (this would include for example, other family members who are caring for children and young people, foster carers, and 'professional' carers such as residential care workers)
- corporate parents who have responsibility for children and young people who are 'looked after' by the local authority.



Make sure your child feels valued, listen to what they say. Encourage them and let them know you are proud of them.

SC, St. Annes

3. WHAT WILL THE FRAMEWORK DO?

Firstly, and importantly, what the framework will **not** do is say exactly what support should be delivered, how and by whom, everywhere in Lancashire. This framework is not about a 'one size fits all' approach. It is very important that local needs, informed by local children and young people, their parents and families, are met in the most appropriate way for their locality.

This document sets out a framework to support those organisations and individuals working with children and young people and their families. Building on existing good practice, the framework aims to:

- develop a multi-agency model of high-quality, evidence-based parent and family support, based on four levels of provision
 - encourage a county-wide consistency of approach to parent and family support
 - ensure that support for parents and families is integral to service planning for children and young people
 - enable parent and family support to be designed and delivered at a locality level, to meet and reflect the needs of Lancashire's diverse population
- ensure that parents and families are involved in the design and delivery of services
 - establish mechanisms to share best practice
 - maximise the potential for pooled and re-configured resources
 - contribute to workforce development, through multi-agency training and staff support, with opportunities for gaining accredited qualifications

4. PRINCIPLES

The framework is underpinned by some key principles:

- the needs of children and young people must always come first
- all parents and families should know how and where to get help if and when they need it
- support should be available through universal services wherever possible and should be delivered flexibly in accessible, non-stigmatising settings
- the views of children, young people, parents and families must be taken into account when services are being designed and delivered

These principles have been adopted by Lancashire's Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and, through Lancashire's Children's Trusts, will be integrated into children's services across the county.

Since attending there have been several changes. I am more patient and play with my four boys more.

It has made a big difference to my family.

A dad after attending a parenting course

5. HOW DOES THE FRAMEWORK FIT WITH OTHER PLANS?

Lancashire's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) sets out ambitions and priorities for services for children and young people. In addition to this overarching plan, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) for Lancashire identifies county-wide priorities whilst allowing for some local priorities to be addressed.

Both the CYPP and the LAA priorities have been informed through consultation with partners and by the views of children and young people and their families.

Support for parents and families has been clearly highlighted as a cross-cutting priority which should underpin all work undertaken with children and young people.

Linking in to the CYPP, there are a number of other plans and strategies relating to children and young people. Many of these plans have a specific target or objective around parent and family support – for example,

Standard Two of the National Service Framework (NSF) for Children, Young People and Maternity Services.

In order to ensure that parent support is embedded throughout all of children's services, all plans must state how they intend to support parents, either directly or indirectly.



**Be soft enough so
that they will approach you,
be firm enough so that
they will respect you.**

DS, Garstang

6. A LOCAL MODEL OF DESIGN AND DELIVERY

One of the key principles underpinning 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' is that services should, wherever possible, be designed and delivered at a local level. This will help to ensure that children and young people, parents and families can be involved in discussions about what services are developed and delivered in their area that will best meet their needs.

The Integrating Services for Parents and Families Framework strongly follows this approach and will be integral to the Children's Trusts in Lancashire. This model, which comprises a County Trust Partnership Board, along with twelve Local Trust Partnerships (LTP), one in each district, should ensure that county-wide plans and priorities are influenced by local information. Local Trust Partnerships are then able to plan for service delivery in a way which makes sense for local parents and families.

Each LTP is a sub-group of their district Local Strategic Partnerships, and this will help to ensure that service planning for children and families is linked to other local agenda such as economic development and community safety.

Working alongside the Local Trust Partnerships are Local Parenting Forums.

These forums bring together practitioners and increasingly, parents, to look in detail at local provision, needs and gaps and consider ways of working together to best meet the needs identified.

This network of various trusts and forums might seem complicated but really should help to make sure that parent support remains a key part of all work with children and young people, that key partners are all involved and that there is clear communication between what happens at a county level and locally.



**Praise them
often to build their
confidence up.**

LS, St. Annes



7. INVOLVING PARENTS AND FAMILIES

The involvement of parents and families in the planning, design and delivery of services is key to the ensuring the right support is in place at the right time.

There are lots of examples of how parents have been, or are currently involved in children's services.

These range from parents as members of steering groups and forums through to specific focus groups as part of consultation exercises, and through involvement in review processes for their own individual children.

There has been a real effort to engage parents at a local level to help to inform the priority areas identified for 2008/09.

Local Parenting Forums are working more closely with parents than has previously been the case and events and activities to involve parents are taking place regularly across the County.

Parents have also been involved by sharing their own advice and expertise through the Top Tips for Parents competition. Feedback from parents collected as part of other consultations – for example, the childcare sufficiency work – has also been used.

It is recognised though that there is still a lot to be done to improve opportunities for involvement and this is a priority area of work for 2008/09.

A key starting point for this work will be to ask parents how they would wish to be involved and what support they feel would help them in this.

It is also vital that children and young people tell us what they feel about parent and family support and what they think would make the most difference.

A Children and Young People's Champion has just been appointed for Lancashire and will be helping to make sure that opportunities for involvement are available for all children so that their views contribute to future plans.

Be realistic- nobody gets EVERYTHING right ALL of the time. If you only get SOME things right, SOME of the time your doing well.

JW. Chorley

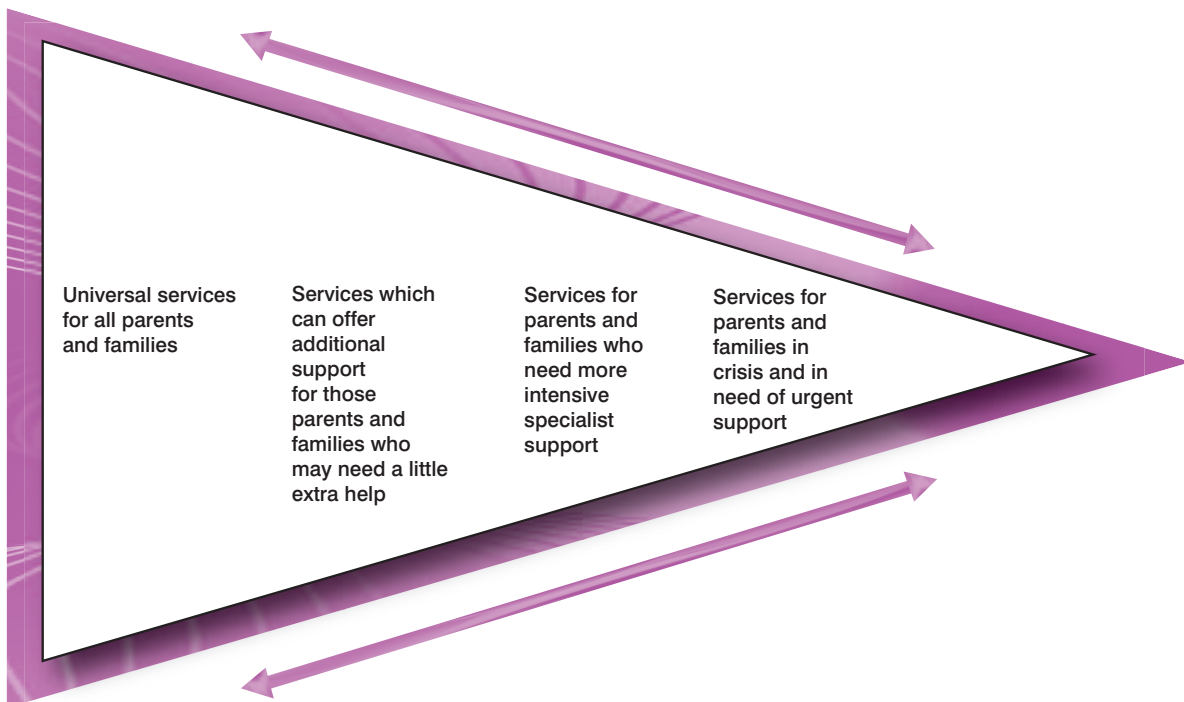
8. A RANGE OF SUPPORT

The Lancashire model of parent and family support identifies a range of support, from universal support available to all families, through to intensive support for parents and families who may have reached a crisis point.

The model is not about identifying 'service thresholds' or 'hoops' through which parents and families have to jump before they can access support. It just seeks to show a continuum, or flow, of need and support which we all from time to time have reason to access. It is recognised that sometimes people may need to access support at an intensive or even crisis level without having followed

a journey through the whole continuum. A list of the **types** of services which might be needed can be found at Appendix One.

The shape of the model, as shown in the diagram below, suggests that the greatest resource should be at the universal service level, which can be accessed by all. If appropriate support is available at that level, then hopefully fewer families will need access to the more complex and specialised services. This model aligns with Lancashire's Common Assessment Framework 'continuum of need' approach.



9. HOW WILL PARENTS AND FAMILIES KNOW WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE AND HOW TO ACCESS IT?

There will undoubtedly, and quite rightly, be a range of ways in which parents and families find out about services.

However, if we are to work in a more integrated way and make the best use of the resources we have, then all those working with children, young people and families must be aware of, or know how to find out about what support might be available.

Even at a very local level, it can be quite a challenge to know what is out there.

Some of the key things we will be trying to do to make this a bit easier for everyone include:

- a web-based service directory - covering the whole county, with links to local directories and sources of information
- a Lancashire 'Parents' website – which will provide a range of information, advice and top tips, and links to national as well as local contacts

- clear and comprehensive information available in local settings and places where parents go – for example, schools, children's centres, health centres, libraries, GP surgeries

Most importantly, parents themselves will be asked how they would prefer to receive information and find out about things in their area.

10. HIGH QUALITY WORKFORCE

We cannot work in the best way with parents and deliver the most effective services if practitioners are not appropriately trained and skilled.

In Lancashire, there are many practitioners with a wealth of experience and expertise and a range of skills.

It is important to build on this and make sure that not only are front-line practitioners trained and have the right skills, but also that managers are able to fully support their staff.

Lancashire's Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy recognises work with parents as an important area for development.

This needs to impact upon recruitment and selection, training plans and professional development, and take account of the National Occupational Standards for working with parents.

Thank you for your help and advice, bedtime is no longer like World War Two.

A parent after receiving support and advice

11. IDENTIFYING AND SHARING GOOD PRACTICE

How will we know what really works? Which services and interventions are effective and making a difference?

Often when organisations try to measure how they are doing in terms of parent support, we measure things such as the number of parents who attend a particular parenting course.

Whilst it's helpful to know this, this does not necessarily tell us anything about how successful that course was for a particular parent, what difference it had made to them and how it might have led to improved outcomes for their children.


We will need to develop some robust ways of measuring and evaluating that actually tell us about the impact of activities. This must include asking parents, and children and young people, for their views.

There are already some tried and tested tools and good examples, both in Lancashire and nationally, and we will build on these. This piece of work will be a priority for 2008/09.

Once we do identify good practice, then we will make sure that this is

shared across the county, using networks such as Local Trust Partnerships and local parenting forums, so that service planning and design can build on what we know works.

It will also be equally important to share information about those activities which are not so successful in order that lessons learnt can inform future developments.



**Allow children to
take small risks, under
supervision and to get dirty.
They will wash**

GT, Preston

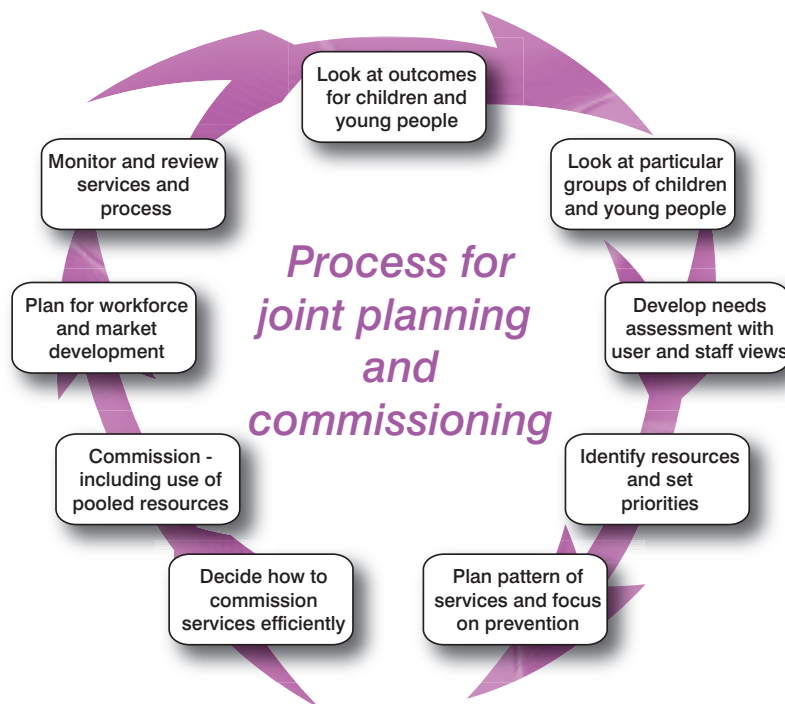
12. COMMISSIONING SERVICES

Commissioning is not just about buying or procuring services. Commissioning is a continuous process which should include:

- assessment of needs
- planning and agreeing priorities
- identifying actions or services required
- drawing up specifications of services required
- getting the right providers to deliver those services
- evaluating the effectiveness of the services and their impact on improving outcomes for children and young people

The whole process should be informed by the views of children and young people, their parents and carers, and build on evidence based best practice.

A framework for joint commissioning was provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in a guidance document - 'Joint Planning and Commissioning Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services, 2006' - and is shown in the diagram below.



In Lancashire work is ongoing to develop a robust joint commissioning model for children's services and any arrangements put in place for the commissioning of parent support will be aligned to that model. Part of the framework around needs assessment

and gaps analysis, agreeing priorities and planning is already shaping up through the children's trusts but further work is to be done around increasing opportunities for joint funding and delivery of services, and around the procurement processes.

13. MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE FRAMEWORK

A county, multi-agency task group will work to ensure the implementation of the framework. The group will report to the County Childrens Trust Partnership Board and other relevant groups as appropriate.

Local Trust Partnerships, as part of their role around joint planning and delivery of services, should have an overview of parent support in their districts and ensure plans are in place to address local needs.

The framework is a mechanism for bringing together a wide range of activities which contribute towards supporting parents across Lancashire. Therefore accountability for specific delivery of some aspects will rest with the relevant organisations.

For example, Primary Care Trusts are responsible for the effective delivery of services specified in the National Service Framework. Lancashire County Council is responsible for the implementation of Extended Services through Schools and Children's Centres, which includes parent support as part of the core offer.

To ensure that a single approach to commissioning parent support is implemented, as specified by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, a small team will be established to provide support and co-ordination both centrally and locally.



**Take time to listen to
your children! House work can
wait till they've gone!**

JL, Lytham St. Annes

14. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE FRAMEWORK

Monitoring the effectiveness of the framework and its implementation is essential if this is to actually make a difference to children and young people.

At a county level, the County Childrens Trust Partnership Board will have responsibility for monitoring the progress being made and making sure that the framework is regularly reviewed and revised to reflect needs.

At a district level, the Local Trust Partnerships and Local Parenting Forums will maintain an overview of parent support in their areas and will be able to inform county-wide developments.

Any monitoring and evaluation processes must include feedback from parents and families.

Without this group I would have given up hope.

A parent talking about a parenting group

15. PUTTING THE FRAMEWORK INTO PRACTICE

Having set out this framework and principles, what are we actually going to do in practice that will make a difference to parents and families, children and young people?

There is obviously a great deal of work to be done and this is not something which can be completed within a few months. It will take time to develop and build on effective practice, which meets the needs of parents and families, and which is sustainable.

There are some underpinning actions which definitely need to happen sooner rather than later so that other work can move forward. There are four specific things which have been identified as priorities for this coming year 2008/09.

These are:

- **Making sure that there is accessible and appropriate information available for all parents.**

This means looking at a whole range of ways of providing this information, as no one model would work for everyone. Research tells us that a large proportion of parents do not have access to the internet, for example, so just having a website will not be the answer.

- **Developing a range of opportunities for parents to be involved in service design and delivery.**

This means looking at levels of involvement, as not all parents will wish to be involved to the same degree but should have the opportunity. It means asking parents how they would wish to be involved and what are the barriers to this. Sometimes this might be around confidence issues, as well as practical concerns such as transport or crèche facilities.

- **Development of quality standards framework and performance monitoring model.**

This means developing and adopting a toolkit or kite mark model to assess and monitor effectiveness and quality of parenting services on offer in Lancashire.

- **Research into evidence based parenting programmes to inform an appropriate menu of programmes for Lancashire.**

This means looking at parenting programmes on offer across Lancashire and in other parts of the country to identify those evidenced as being accessible and effective. Informed by this it should be possible to then recommend a selection of universal and targeted programmes for use, if appropriate, to meet the needs of Lancashire's parents.

In addition to these underpinning priorities, there are six service areas

which have been identified through a range of consultation and feedback from both parents and families, and from practitioners. Some of these areas may well have a degree of overlap.

The six areas are:

- **Support for vulnerable families**
- **Universal support for parents of teenagers**
- **Early support for parents of children with emotional and mental health issues**
- **Support for parents of children with disabilities and those with life-limiting conditions**
- **Support for parents around children and young people's behavioural issues**
- **Support for corporate parents of children who are 'looked after' by the local authority.**

There is now work to be done to identify specific actions which need to take place within these priority areas. Some of these actions will be county wide and might relate to activities already agreed in other plans and initiatives.

For example, Lancashire's 'Children Looked After' Strategy has already identified some things which need to happen to support foster carers. The action plans around Children's

Centres and Extended Services through Schools have identified actions to be taken to support parents.

There will also be locally planned activities which will contribute and many of the local parenting forums are already working on their local action plans.

With regard to the support for vulnerable families, one of the actions will be to develop a more 'whole family' approach to include all services, including adult services such as housing, adult mental health services and domestic violence services as appropriate.

This approach is supported by the government's recent 'Think Families' guidance. Work will take place to develop this area of practice and will include looking at the Common Assessment Framework as a tool for supporting a more joined up approach.

All of the work planned for 2008/09 will help to inform a more detailed strategy for 2009/10 and beyond.

Never let a child leave the house without letting them know they are always welcome back (no matter how difficult it gets!). Let them know that you'll never give up on them.

ME, Preston

APPENDIX ONE: POTENTIAL SERVICES

The following table outlines some of the **potential** services, delivered by a wide range of providers, which might be required across a range or continuum. Many services and service providers often cut across more than one particular

'level' of support indicated in the diagram below. The list of services is intended to act as an example of the **types** of services which might support parents and families and **is by no means exhaustive**. It is anticipated that actual services in place will be identified at locality level, as part of an audit of provision and needs analysis. Services developed in the future are likely to be commissioned from a variety of providers, identified as the most appropriate to meet the needs.

	Potential services
<p>Universal services for all parents and their families These services should all provide clear access to information about services and signposting, with a focus on prevention and early intervention.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • health • education • early years • employment advice • leisure • youth provision • housing • benefits, financial and debt advice
<p>Services which can offer more additional support for those parents and families who may need a little extra help</p>	<p>All of the above services, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outreach support • domestic violence services • substance misuse services • youth justice services • additional educational support • advocacy
<p>Services for parents and families who need more intensive, specialist support</p>	<p>All of the above services, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • social care assessments, care plans and child protection services • intensive parenting programmes • respite care • specialist child health diagnosis and assessment with care packages • emotional and mental health services • special educational needs statutory assessment
<p>Services for parents and families in crisis and in need of urgent intervention</p>	<p>All of the above services, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foster care and residential homes • specialist education provision • in-patient or residential health provision • community-based intensive support • youth offending services including secure provision and remands



USEFUL PUBLICATIONS AND LINKS

The following are just a few of the key publications which may be of interest, some of which are mentioned within this strategy. Also given are website details of some organisations that have expertise in this area of work. A website search will produce many other links.

Publications:

'Every Parent Matters' (March 2007 – DfES)

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

'Parenting Support - Guidance for Local Authorities in England' (October 2006 DfES)

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk

'Respect Action Plan' (January 2006 – Respect Task Force)

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/respect-action-plan

'Extended schools: Access to opportunities and services for all – a prospectus' (June 2005 DfES)

www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/extendedschools

'Sure Start Children's Centre: Practice Guidance' (December 2006 DfES)

www.surestart.gov.uk/improvingquality/guidance/practiceguidance

'Every Child Matters' (DfES 2005)

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/publications

'National Service Framework for children, young people and maternity services' (September 2004 DoH)

www.dh.gov.uk

'National Occupational Standards for work with parents' (March 2005 - Parenting UK)

www.parentinguk.org.uk

'The Market for Parent and Family Support' (2006 – Price Waterhouse Coopers)

www.dfes.gov.uk/research

'Think Family : Improving the life chances of families at risk' (January 2008 - Social Exclusion Task Force)

www.cabinet-office.gov.uk

USEFUL WEBSITES

www.parentinguk.org

Parenting UK is the national umbrella body for people working with parents and families. They were responsible for developing the National Occupational Standards for Work with Parents (see above). The Parenting UK website includes access to a commissioner's toolkit, where you can download information about a wide range of parenting programmes.

www.reaching-out.org.uk

The Reaching Out network is for any organisation, service or individual that works with parents or with families expecting a baby. The website provides an information sharing forum, as well as a regular regional (North West) newsletter.

www.parentingacademy.org

Good parenting is at the heart of children's wellbeing and development. The Academy works to transform the quality and size of the parenting workforce across England, so that parents can access the help they need to raise their children well.

www.familyandparenting.org

The Family and Parenting Institute is a charity aiming to improve the wellbeing of children and families in the UK. A catalyst for change, working to make the voices of families heard.

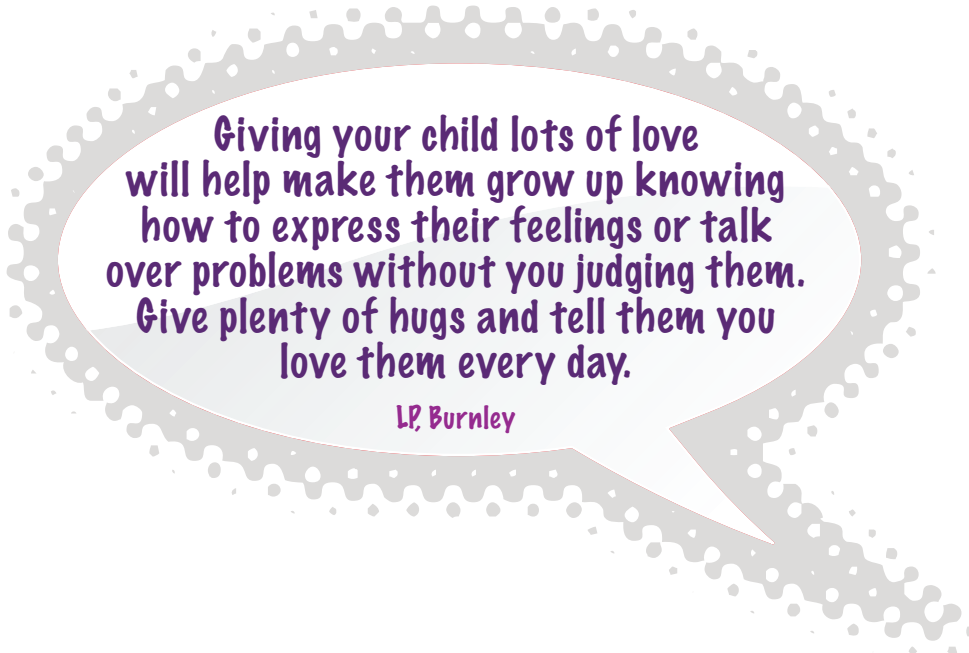

Free 24-hour helpline for parents: ParentlinePlus 0800 083 7921

CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like further information, or have any questions about this framework and the work being developed, or if you would like to find out how to become involved in your local parenting forum, then please email:

policydevelopment@ed.lancscc.gov.uk

Someone will get back to you as soon as possible.



**Giving your child lots of love
will help make them grow up knowing
how to express their feelings or talk
over problems without you judging them.
Give plenty of hugs and tell them you
love them every day.**

LP, Burnley

