



Opportunities

The Newsletter from the Forest of Dean
Children's Opportunity Centre

Volume 1

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Welcome to the last issue of Opportunities of 2010, in this new look edition you will find useful tips, a new recipe feature, featured books you can borrow from the Book Library and craft ideas. We hope that you will find this new look makes Opportunities a publication you will enjoy reading. As always if you have anything you would like to see featured please contact me using the details on page 4.

Maxine



Stay and Play Sessions at The Centre



Hi, I am Kerry Smith and I run the new Stay & Play Sessions at the Centre. This is a play session for parents/carers and babies and toddlers, where they can enjoy a relaxed atmosphere in which to play, have fun and meet other families. Various activities will be available such as messy play including water and sand, painting, playdough, gluing and sticking. Some weeks I may surprise you with a tray! E.g. jelly/custard/rice pudding/baked beans for a wonderful sensory experience without the mess in your own home! Other activities available are an amazing multi-sensory room, well equipped covered outdoor play area, and many, many more indoor and outdoor fun activities. We always finish each session with songtime.

The sessions run every Wednesday afternoon between 1pm and 2.45pm, and cost £2.50 which includes a snack mid session. I look forward to seeing you soon. **Kerry**



Hayley's Special Stuffing recipe



This is Hayley's very own special stuffing recipe passed down from her Grandmother, it's very simple, and far superior to any shop bought sage and onion mix!

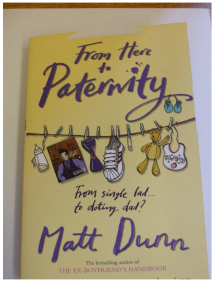
Ingredients

4 large onions
Sage leaves – approx 8-10
Lemon rind
125g breadcrumbs
40g butter
Salt & pepper
1 egg yolk

- ✂ Peel the onions and simmer for 5 mins to soften them
- ✂ Chop the slightly cooled onions and sage very finely or use a food processor and add the breadcrumbs
- ✂ Melt the butter over a gentle heat in a pan or in a microwave
- ✂ Add the butter and egg yolk to the breadcrumb mixture and mix well
- ✂ Use the stuffing to stuff your Christmas bird or bake in a tray for approx 20 mins at 180 degrees c
- ✂ Enjoy!

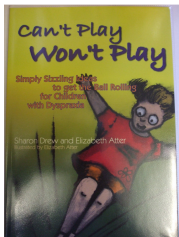
Book Review

Opportunities will be featuring books from the Book Library. All books are owned by the Centre and are available to borrow for **free**. Please contact Lisa for more information or drop in and take a look at the wide range of books available.



From Here To Paternity **By Matt Dunn**

Will Jackson is a desperate man-desperate to be a dad that is. Tired of the Laddish lifestyle, he's redecorated the spare room, traded in his sports car for a 4x4, and even drawn up a list of his favourite baby names. In fact, there's only one thing left to do: find a female to start a family with. But where can he find a woman who meets his exacting standards? Fortunately, you can get everything on the Internet these days, so why not start there? Will's journey to paternity is a hilarious romp through the pitfalls of procreation. 'Funny, moving & a guaranteed page-turner. Brilliant!' *Mike Gayle*



Can't Play Won't Play **Sharon Drew & Elizabeth Atter**

'Simply sizzling ideas to get the ball rolling for children with Dyspraxia 'Learning to roller skate or ride a bike should be an enjoyable experience, but for a child with Dyspraxia, these activities can lead to feelings of frustration and failure. This book is packed with practical information, tips and hints to enable children to enjoy activities that other children take for granted. Written by an Occupational Therapist and a Physiotherapist both of whom have 25 years experience of working with children, this book may give some help.

Events

3 Children's Charities Sponsored Bike Ride & Walk We now have the final total raised from this event, a fantastic **£6,244.96**, a huge thank you to all those who took part, the funds raised will ensure that all 3 charities can maintain the essential services they provide to children in Gloucester and The Forest of Dean.

Miss Felicia's Disco Divas Saturday 4th September saw another fantastic evening's entertainment by Miss Felicia, Coleford's very own star female impersonator at Milkwall Social Club. Miss Felicia treated the audience to routines starring Dolly Parton, Madonna, Bonnie Tyler, and featured the debut of Lady Penelope Parsnip who, together with Miss Felicia performed a duet from The Rocky Horror Picture Show, backed by The Missed Opportunities. She was joined by Boogie Nights Dance Academy, and Baba, an Abba tribute act. We would like to thank Ashley Putland for helping to organise and perform such a fantastic show, raising in excess of £1,500 for the Centre. We all look forward to seeing Miss Felicia again very soon.

Learning Disability Today exhibition Free to people with learning disabilities, unwaged, family carers, and natural supports, £35 to others. Subjects include: health, housing, employment, education assistive technology. 8th December 2010, at the Business Design Centre, London. Telephone: 0844 880 5061, visit <http://tinyurl.com/3aabrpk>.

Scope Early Years training days Between 29th September and 14th December at London and Lancaster: Cerebral Palsy in depth, Celebrate Every Step (using a web tool to track the progress of children with physical learning and sensory needs), Behaviour and the brain, Introduction to epilepsy, Equality and diversity, Children's rights/disability awareness, Parents as Partners all in London, Thursday 9th December and Play for all and communication for all in Lancaster, Monday 6th December. Tel: 02920 662405, visit <http://www.scope.org.uk/services>.

Autism Awareness Centre Conference November 22nd and 23rd Carrington House Hotel, Bournemouth, . Contact Jill Harvey, Linwood School, Bournemouth on 01202 525107, visit <http://tinyurl.com/33bley> (possible charges).

Spoil Yourself Tip

For a bath time treat: Put dried herbs, such as lavender, marjoram, lemon balm and sage, into a muslin bag (you can use fresh but dried are more concentrated), tie it to the hot tap so that the water flows over and through the bag. When the bath is ready, put the bag in the water and leave it to float around while you soak, bliss!

User Questionnaire

At the Centre we are continually striving to ensure we are delivering all the support services families need. As part of this effort we have produced a questionnaire, and it will be given to all families in the Forest of Dean who have access the services we provide. The questionnaire will only take a few moments to complete and I would like to thank you very much for your co-operation. Once all the questionnaires have been received we will be publishing the findings in the next issue of Opportunities, out in March 2011. If you access the Centre and have not received a questionnaire, please contact us via the details on page 4 to receive one.

Christmas Craft you can make at home

Christmas can be a very expensive time of year for families. Crafts with your children can be great fun, and at Christmas can give you some very special and unique decorations for your tree. We would like to share just 2 ideas with you, which we can honestly say have proved easy, fun and very effective, why not give them a try this year.

Christmas Tree Fir Cone

You will need:

Fir cones (easily found in the forest!)
PVA glue
Glitter
Ribbon or any fabric

Once your fir cones are completely dry, lay out some newspaper, apply PVA glue to any parts of the cone you like and shake the glitter over, allow the glue to dry, you can use one colour or add some more PVA in different areas and shake a different colour glitter over, you can add as many different colours as you like. Once dry, use the ribbon or fabric to make a loop on the cone by tying to the top. You can make as many of these as you like and when the fairy lights are on they twinkle beautifully.

Victorian Christmas Decoration

You will need:

1 medium size orange
Whole cloves
Ribbon
Pins

Cut 2 pieces of ribbon, and leave a bit extra to make a loop.

Use a pin to fasten the ribbon to the orange, with one piece of ribbon crossing over the other piece at the top and bottom. You will now have 4 quarters to fill with cloves. Push the cloves in to make a pattern, if necessary make holes in the orange first with a skewer or knitting needle.

It looks fantastic, use to hang on the tree or give as a present, they smell gorgeous!

The Late Elizabeth Scott

Elizabeth Scott, who tragically died recently, made express wishes that upon her death part of her estate was to go to an organisation that delivered services to young children with disabilities. Elizabeth's cousin, Yvonne Roach, put in an enormous amount of time and effort in order to carry out Elizabeth's wishes, we are extremely honored that the Centre was chosen to receive a large donation of £5,155. All the staff, families and children at the Centre would like to extend our sincere thanks to both Yvonne and her mother Daphne Squire. You will see when you enter the reception area at the Centre a lovely photograph of Elizabeth.

Toy Library

Hello everyone, I would like to introduce myself, I am Lisa Jephcote, and I work for the Centre as Toy Library Assistant. Children learn to co-ordinate their bodies, express themselves and develop their minds. Most importantly, they use toys to have fun. Unfortunately for parents, toys can be expensive. The Toy Library hopes to help parents to overcome this cost. I would love for you to visit the Toy Library to see if any of the toys we hold could stimulate your child's needs. Please feel free to come along on Tuesdays between 9am and 3pm or if inconvenient please phone for a chat. Your child's happiness is our priority.



Opportunities

Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity
Centre
Bowens Hill Road
Coleford
Gloucester
GL16 8DU

Phone: 01594-837552

Fax: 01594-837662

Email: admin@childoc.org.uk

www.childoc.org.uk

**Support for children and families
with special needs**

Useful contacts

Family Mapping- Free resource for those who want to think about how their family is working, for example how to solve a problem – <http://tinyurl.com/34qvwph>.

Parley is a young charity- providing information support and internet forum on many topics to parents and relatives of a child who has a medical condition, who has to undergo surgery or has impairments or disabilities.

<http://www.parleyonline.co.uk/> 28 Leigh Road, Worthing, BN14 9HQ

Video of actor Charley Boorman- about his experience of Dyslexia

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10553942>

Downloadable books and colouring sheets- for early years, featuring disabilities, some free- <http://tinyurl.com/2uz2679> (Scope Charity)

Free tickets to selected major attractions- for children who are seriously ill, disabled or disadvantaged, and accompanying parent/helper. Merlin's Magic Wand Charity, application form at- <http://www.merlinsmagicwand.org/> or from Applications Manager, 3 Market Close, Poole Dorset BH15 1NQ

Ten things you should never buy new- includes sources of free software, books and furniture <http://tinyurl.com/2wet8h4> (lovemoney.com, a private company)

Staff List

**Who's who at The Opportunity Centre
?**

Marilyn Smith—Centre Manager

Georgina Ford – Trusts & Grants Fundraiser

Hayley Badman – Lead Early Years Practitioner

Kerry Smith—Deputy Early Years Practitioner

Kelly Smith – Early Years Practitioner

Maxine Jolly-Burton—Marketing Co-ordinator

Gordon Cruickshank – Finance & Facilities Co-ordinator

Paula Smith – Receptionist Administrator

Lisa Jephcote – Toy Library Assistant

Louisa Davies – Volunteer Receptionist

Lindsey Neil - Cleaner

Anne Richards-Crèche Worker

Phil Sargeant – Minibus Driver & Volunteer Creche Worker

Donations & Thanks

We would all like to give a huge thank you to the following for their very kind and generous donations over the last 3 months:

Morrison's, Ross-on-Wye for donating the use of a carpet shapooer, **Adam Winter**, The Leadership Trust for donating the use of a partition for Miss Felicia's Disco Divas show, **Nigel Chambers** for raising **£70** in sponsorship for completing the Pass'Portes du Soleil 2010 Mountain Bike Race, **customers at Scoops Cards**, Coleford & Cinderford for collecting **£36.34**, **Monmouth School** for donating **£15**