Scotland and the Solihull Approach

Introduction
A current belief on the subject of “good parenting” and their importance to the children of the future change as more and more research is carried out. In line with this; government reports, policies and initiatives on the needs of families are affected by research findings, political beliefs and financial constraints.

It is difficult as a parenting practitioner to keep up to date with all the initiatives and trends across Britain. However, what does seem consistent is the theory that a child’s parents and their extended networks affect the child’s emotional and physical health in their early years (Repetti et al, 2000).

Scotland, although a part of the United Kingdom, has many different government initiatives that are targeted at the needs of its own population. The declared aspiration is for Scotland to be best place in the world to grow up in. To achieve this the Scottish Government does not want to dictate how to parent, but help reassure parents that help is available if and when they need support.

Some of the key topical Scottish reports and initiatives are outlined below:

**Growing Up in Scotland (GUS), 2005 to 2011**
This initiative was set up by the Scottish Government to provide current information that could help influence policy making that relates to children and their families. Their longitudinal research included exploring whether parenting behaviours vary according to family circumstances. GUS discusses how well parents are parenting, what influences parenting and how parenting styles impact children.

In 2010 measures of family adversity constructs were developed, findings included:
- Differences in parenting styles can affect a child’s behaviour;
- Parents with high adversity in their lives were less warm or able to place appropriate boundaries on their children’s behaviour;
- High parenting skill reduced the association between adversity and health by 33%;
- The likelihood of children having behaviour issues were 11 times higher where parents had low parenting skills;
- Play is an important part of a child’s emotional and educational process.

This Scottish reports findings include:
- The reaffirmation that mental well-being affects children’s behaviour, ability to learn and achieve, as well as their physical health;
- 10% of Scottish children and young people “have mental health problems which are so substantial that they have difficulties with their thoughts, their feelings, their behaviour, their learning, and their relationships on a day to day basis”;
- Confirmation that good parenting is fundamental for the development of a child’s mental health and well being;
- Acknowledgement that parents need support when having difficulties and need to know where to access it. This support should include interventions, which promote the mother-infant bond and their attachment.

Its summary findings agree with other organisations, including the Solihull Approach, that if preventative help is given to families early enough problems do not escalate.
**Health for All Children, (2005)**

Although this document covered the whole United Kingdom, Scotland highlighted the importance regarding children's needs. The Scottish documents following on from the main document referred to the importance of a child's caregivers to provide:

- "good basic care, stimulation and emotional warmth, guidance and boundaries, safety and stability".
- "first and foremost, the rights and responsibilities to provide for their children’s health and welfare rest with parents”;
- "a range of services provided by the NHS, local authorities and voluntary and independent organizations.... have a vital role in helping parents to ensure their child’s healthy development and maximise their potential.”

**Hands on Scotland - commissioned by Heads Up Scotland, (2007)**

This on-line toolkit was developed in response to recommendations from the Scottish Needs Assessments Programme (SNAP) Report on Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS) in 2003. An aim was to provide a guide for professionals working with vulnerable families that had been referred to specialist services but had not yet been taken on.

The two main sections covered examples and ideas on:
- current information into how to deal with children's troubled behaviour;
- and how to help a child flourish.

**Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), (2008-9)**

This organisation produced three social policy frameworks.

Each addresses the health and social welfare of children.

Early intervention is one of the priorities

**Early Years Framework**

Pre-birth to eight all children should receive:
- Co-ordinated support services, including high quality relationships;
- A renewed focus on the 0-3 year period as the time a child needs most support;
- Play and its importance are vital in the beginning of a child's life.

**Equally Well**

This document agrees with current evidence that deprivation and chronic stress affect the way a child’s brain develops. To help the children develop appropriately it advocates:
- a community based integrated school health team approach;
- well trained professionals to support school staff;
- the development of support services for families.

Priorities to aid, this also included the need to:
- promote consistent parenting;
- build a parents self-esteem;
- provide good social networks for children;
- deal with poverty issues such as decent housing.

**Achieving Your Potential**

To help people out of poverty, equal housing, education etc.
Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), (2008 to 2012)
This important document and its principles are currently being incorporated in to all policy, practice, strategy and legislation affecting children and their families. Heath visitors in Scotland use the GIRFEC model to record progress in the child’s red book.

This approach was adopted after exploring many relevant documents including the inequalities highlighted in the Equally Well report, children’s views in the Children’s Charter 2004, what children need to be safe & protected and The United Nations conventions views on the Rights of the Child. It advocates that children’s caregivers should provide “good basic care, stimulation, emotional warmth, guidance and boundaries, safety and stability”. Further priorities included:
- Children should be healthy, nurtured, active, respected;
- Practitioners should be at the centre of all care; and staff should use common tools, languages and processes to help parents;
- A co-ordinated care approach based on well-being indicators.

Examples of tools to use would include the:
- My World Triangle (a mental map and assessment to help practitioners understand a young persons world);
- The Resilience Matrix (a support to practitioners to plot more complex information they gather).

This strategy investigated the wider issues that affect a parent providing a nurturing environment for their child. Parents should have easy access to clear information to help develop their parenting skills. Extra support should be provided to vulnerable families and “Parenting and courses are needed to help build communication and confidence” (Pg 24).

In line with the above targets, different sectors were set up which included the:
Curriculum for Excellence (2011)
- to enrich a child’s education to improve their life and career prospects, ultimately helping society in the future.

The Early Years Taskforce (2011)
- To ensure better working relationships and better leadership across sectors.

The Early Years Collaborative
- A multi-agency quality improvement programme bringing together good practice across Scotland.

(Set up by NHS Education of Scotland (NESS), helped roll out The Psychology of Parenting Project (POPP))
- One of the aims included improving the availability of good evidence based parenting programmes for families (as mentioned previously 10% of preschool children in Scotland display atypical and persisting behaviour problems);
- This initiative targets 3-4 year olds with high levels of behaviour problems and focuses on two well researched parenting programmes, Triple P and The Incredible Years.
References

Growing up in Scotland

Health for all 2005 Implementation in Scotland
The National parenting Strategy 2012

Hands on Scotland/Commissioned by Heads Up Scotland - 2007


The Millennium cohort Study - Hobcraft and Kiernon 2010
http://www.york.ac.uk/iee/assets/HobcraftKiernan2010PredictiveFactorsChildrensDevelopmentMillenniumCohort.pdf

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Report via SNAP

Reppetti