Welcome to Hitherfield Children's Centre

Welcome to Hitherfield Children’s Centre.

We are open Mondays to Fridays, 48 weeks a year between 8.00am and 6.00pm to all parents and carers with children under 5.

Our services are delivered across two Children’s Centre sites at Hitherfield Primary School and at Hillside Park Gardens, both of which are in the Streatham area and less than 10 minutes walking distance apart.

Our service is based on supporting the needs of young families in the community, embracing its social, cultural and ethnic diversity.

We are committed to working together with families, local and sometimes national organisations to ensure that all families with children aged between 0 and 5 years in our community have the best possible start.

Better Start Programme at Hitherfield Children’s Centre

- Better Start is a Lambeth wide initiative which aims to improve the life chances of babies and very young children by making all the necessary support services and information easier to access.
- The Better Start Programme will focus on social and emotional development, communication and language, diet and nutrition in the early years.
- Hitherfield Children’s Centre is committed to ensuring that all families have access to relevant information about what is happening in our centre and local community. We work in close partnership with other service providers to ensure that families in greatest need are supported to access the services and information they need in order to progress.
- We can provide support for issues relating to finance, housing, benefits, childcare, child health, education and development.
- We will arrange an appointment with you to discuss your concerns in confidence and work with you, making links with other organisations to help you to find the right solutions for your needs.
- If there is an issue that we cannot help you with directly we will provide the necessary support for you to access services ensuring that you receive the right help. Our aim is to bring essential services closer to you, making it easier for you and your family to get the help you need in a welcoming and friendly environment.
- If you would like more information about our Better Start services please make an appointment to see Phyllis Hayden, Centre Manager and Better Start Worker on 0208 835 9569.
How Can The Children’s Centre Help Me?

The Centre is a great place to meet new people and make new friends. Regularly taking part in activities also creates opportunities for you to network with other parents who have young children just like yours, with whom you can share ideas, experiences and the challenges of being a parent.

Sometimes more time and space is needed to discuss concerns privately, with a view to finding the right help and solution for the issue in hand. If that is the case, you can make an appointment with Phyllis Hayden, Centre Manager and Better Start Worker, for confidential advice and family support for a range of different issues such as finding out about childcare options, concerns regarding your child’s health and development, obtaining foodbank vouchers, difficulties in relationships, loneliness, and isolation. We can also advocate on your behalf or help to refer you to a particular service as necessary.

For more information or to make an appointment please speak to a member of staff in the Children’s Centre.

You can also call the Centre directly: 0208 835 9569.

Other Services Available

- **Access to Employment and Training Advice** - All the advice and support you may need if you are thinking about going back to work, changing your career or in need of benefit guidance.

- **Access to Self Development & Parenting, ESOL, Computer Skills and Family Learning Courses.** A range of workshops, activities and courses commissioned by Lambeth to promote ongoing learning and self development for parents and carers. Crèche services are available as appropriate.

- **Health Services:** We facilitate regular activities with a range of caring and experienced specialist practitioners who offer sensitive support and advice relating to child health and development:
  - Speech and Language Therapists to promote language and communication development in the Early Years.
  - Midwives who offer Breast Feeding Support.
  - Early Years Nutritionists offering the opportunity to discuss and support your growing baby’s dietary needs.
  - Oral Hygienists promoting dental care for young children.
  - Health Visitors who provide the most up-to-date information to promote child health, development and family well-being.
  - Special Educational Needs Practitioners who provide support for children who may have an additional need.
One of the main ways in which we meet and engage with families is through the provision of a wide range of play activities and opportunities that are appropriate for all children aged between 0-5 years. We believe that play is an essential way in which children learn and develop. Therefore facilitating play opportunities and positive experiences for children and supporting families to understand its significance is fundamental to our work.

Through play children can learn to manage their own emotions and develop an increased awareness of the needs of others. Children learn to be creative, discover new things about themselves, their peers and their environment; all the time growing greater in independence and confidence, knowledge and understanding about their own identities and the diverse community in which they live.

Through play children develop skills in concentration, co-operation and problem solving. Positive play opportunities provides a platform for children to express themselves freely. Play also helps to encourage the development of rich imagination and the opportunity to learn and practice using new words in context, therefore building their vocabulary, enabling them to articulate their thoughts, feelings and ideas.

We provide opportunities for play to take place safely indoors and outdoors, as this is where children are able to freely explore, experiment and discover different environments during different seasons and in different ways. Outdoor active play particularly supports the development of physical strength, agility and wellbeing.

For most children play is natural and uninhibited, but the play experience can also be enhanced with guidance, support and interaction from trusted adults. Our timetable reflects our commitment to empowering parents to support and enhance their children’s growth and development. We have a variety of activities which will offer your child the opportunity to practice existing skills, try new things and learn in a range of different ways.

We ask that during our stay and play sessions all adults are focused on their children, ready to provide the necessary support and encouragement they need to ensure that their play is a positive and satisfying experience for everyone. Therefore the use of mobile phones and other devices that might be a distraction are not permitted during our sessions.

Taking part in activities with other children on a regular basis will also help your child to make new friends and develop the necessary social, emotional and communication skills in preparation for nursery school and beyond.