

Family Information Service

Autumn Newsletter for Families and Professionals in Blaenau Gwent



Edition 2: October 2024

Welcome to the Blaenau Gwent FIS Newsletter! Here you will find loads of information on local events/groups; what our teams have been up too recently; helpful information and advice; some activities you can do with your little ones; and lots more!

Breastfeeding Campaign 2024

The Flying Start Team have been proud to promote Breastfeeding Awareness Week this year. To help promote this week, they hosted a Teddy's Bear Picnic in Bedwelty House.

We want to say thank you to the over 350 people who attended our Teddy's Bear Picnic. It was an amazing event that kicked off Breastfeeding Awareness Week 2024!

During this event, we prompted the benefits of breastfeeding, provided some equipment to families and spread the word about our campaign. We were lucky enough to be joined by a range of services who were there to hold informative discussions about the numerous benefits of breastfeeding.

We know that as well as health benefits to both you and baby, there are also environmental benefits and cost savings advantages!

To support our Breastfeeding Campaign, we have also recently reached out to Mams and Nans across Blaenau Gwent to volunteer for a new Breastfeeding Support Group! Any Mams and Nans who volunteer will receive free training before attending groups and clinics to support new mams with their breastfeeding journey. If you are interested in joining our breastfeeding peer support group and have experience in breastfeeding; drop us an email at FIS@Blaenau-Gwent.gov.uk.

During the growth of this campaign, the Flying Start Team have also listened to the views of the community. People had expressed that they felt there were not enough Responsive Feeding Groups in the area. Over the last few months we have created numerous new groups! Check out our timetable below to see what's on offer across the borough:

For more information on our campaign; check out the dedicated section on our website: <https://bgfis.org.uk/>

ERIC Training

ERIC is the national charity dedicated to improving children's bowel and bladder health. Their mission is to reduce the impact of continence problems on children and their families.

Recently, out childcare providers attended a training session from ERIC. This training aimed to develop the understanding of promotion of healthy bladders and bowels in children; increase knowledge of up-to-date facts on childhood bowel and bladder problems; improve knowledge of the treatments available and when to use them; and to increase confidence in managing these conditions in the community.

Our settings had an amazing experience attending this training and have taken away some valuable information.

You can find out more about what ERIC do here: <https://eric.org.uk/>

08000 32 33 39 | fis@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk | www.bgfis.org.uk

Integrated Children's Centre, High Street, Blaina. NP13 3BN

Summer of Play

On August 7th 2024; our fantastic Play Team welcome over 1000 people to Bedwellty House and Park for National Play Day. The Play Team hosted an amazing event with messy play; a slip and slide; arts and crafts; Wild Tots; and lots more! We were also joined by some amazing services who were able to promote themselves within the community.

We also want to thank everyone who attended the event as these events would not be possible without all the people who support them.

Alongside Play Day, our play team have been incredibly busy with lots of other Play sessions! Throughout the summer, our team (including 20 play volunteers), delivered a 6-week summer holiday play programme. This included a staggering 41 open access play sessions and 11 Wild Tot sessions across 13 different locations in Blaenau Gwent! The play team were also able to provide a range of snacks at each session, including: sandwiches, fresh fruit, cereal bars and bottled water. They also offered a range of activities at these sessions including: themed sessions with games, arts & crafts, sand and water play, messy play, imagination playground and sports.

Finally, we want to say an enormous thank you to our amazing play volunteers. We wouldn't be able to run so many amazing sessions across the summer without these incredible people giving up their own time!



Multiply Team

Our Multiply Team have been extremely busy over the last few months. During the summer term they offered a range of courses across the borough. This included their brand new DIY course as well as a new Cooking Agored – meaning our amazing participants achieved the first steps to a qualification!

We would also like to introduce you to Beyzanur! Beyzanur is one of our amazing participants who has completed 2 courses with us so far! She started on our 'First Steps to English' course and then went on to complete our 'Measure for Cooking' where she also achieved part of an Agored Qualification.

Check out what Beyzanur had to say below:

"Hi, my name is Beyzanur. I wasn't feeling confident about my skills but as soon as I joined this group I felt more confident and achieved my skills with Multiply's help. Now I can speak better English also my cooking skills improved with new food recipes. Thanks to everyone!"

During the summer holidays, we also worked alongside Cookstars and Aneurin Leisure to deliver Family Cook Sessions! These sessions allowed parents and their little ones to cook healthy recipes together and support their little one's numeracy skills!

Multiply will be offering the below courses from September:

- > Launch your child's learning
- > Cooking on a Budget
- > Child Development
- > Measure for Cooking
- > Beginners DIY
- > Making Confidence Count
- > Cooking for Guys

If you are interested in attending one of our courses, you can see what is on offer here: <https://bgfis.org.uk/en/support-for-children-and-families/multiply/>

Tiggywinkles' 30th Birthday

Happy 30th Birthday to Tiggywinkles Day Nursery from all of us at Blaenau Gwent Council! This Year, Tiggywinkles Day Nursery is celebrating their 30th Birthday.

Tiggywinkles was opened in 1994 by Shirley Phillips and Dawn Vaughan (who now owns Puddleducks). After some years, Shirley also went on to open a second site in Bryn Bach School called Tiggy's Day Care!

Here is what the amazing staff at Tiggywinkles had to say: 'Shirley's 30 years' experience of working in the childcare sector has been invaluable to many families, children and staff. She has ensured we have become well established nurseries throughout the local authority and continues to support both settings to strive to be the best we can for all the children we care for.

Each and every child has been part of the Tiggywinkles family leaving for their next adventure with lovely memories of their time with us makes everything we do so very worthwhile. Without Shirley's vision all those years ago this nursery wouldn't be where it is today so again from all the staff at both nurseries'

Oral Health - Is your child registered with a dentist?

Children under the age of 5 need adult assistance to brush their teeth twice a day using fluoride toothpaste. Establishing good oral hygiene practices early helps children develop strong, healthy teeth. Limiting sugary snacks and drinks, and providing a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and water, also contributes to their oral health.

Baby teeth are prone to decay, which can cause pain, infection, and even impact the development of permanent teeth. Schedule your child's first dental visit by their first birthday and continue with regular check-ups every six months.

To find out more good oral hygiene for your children please visit: <https://www.gov.wales/designed-smile-improving-childrens-dental-health>

We Care Wales Campaign

During August the Blaenau Gwent Childcare and Play team were pleased to once again take part in the WeCare Wales campaign to help shine a light on childcare, play and early years' services in Wales.


This is the second year the campaign was run and we aimed to build on some of the lovely content shared last year. Thanks to some of our brilliant local settings that took part by providing testimonials, photos and stories we could share on social media to raise the profile of the important work they do.



Blaenau Gwent Family Information Service Website

Have you had a chance to check out our new website yet? You can now find an up to date list of parent and toddler groups in the area; a list of all childcare providers in the area; advice on schemes to help you pay for childcare; frequently asked questions; and a list of upcoming events!

Visit us at: <https://bgfis.org.uk/> you can also follow us on social media as well:

 Blaenau Gwent Family Information Service

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Autumnal Recipe

With Autumn just around the corner, why not try this new, healthy and exciting recipe!

Classic Cottage Pie that will feed a family of Four People!

What you'll Need:

- > 1kg of potatoes (chopped to medium chunks)
- > 350g extra-lean (if possible) minced beef
- > 1 Small Onion (chopped into very small pieces)
- > 1 Medium Carrot (chopped into small pieces)
- > 1 Courgette (chopped into small pieces)
- > 100g Green Beans (washed and chopped)
- > 1 teaspoon of mixed herbs
- > 1 pinch of Black Pepper
- > 450ml Cold Water
- > 4 Teaspoons of Gravy Granules
- > 50g of Sweetcorn

What you'll need to do:

1. Cook the potatoes in a large saucepan of boiling water for 20 minutes.
2. While the potatoes are cooking, heat a large saucepan. Add the minced beef and cook until browned.
3. Stir in the onion, carrot, courgette, green beans and mixed herbs and then add 450ml water.
4. Bring to the boil, and then turn down the heat and simmer for 20 minutes, until the veg is soft.
5. Turn the grill on to preheat.
6. While the grill is heating, drain and mash the potatoes. Add the pepper into the mashed potatoes.
7. Add the sweetcorn to the mince and then sprinkle in the gravy granules. Stir until it has thickened.
8. Tip the into the baking dish. Spoon the mash on top, spreading it out to cover the mince, then put it under the grill.
9. Once the top of the potatoes has browned, remove from the grill using oven gloves and leave to cool for a couple of minutes.

For more healthy recipes, visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/>

Online Safety

Creating a positive environment for technology at home can be challenging for parents. Creating family rules can help to promote the safe and responsible use of electronic devices in the home.

Working with Each Other

Creating rules with your little one can help them to feel more involved and to encourage them to take ownership of their own actions. account!

Agree Time limits

Agreeing realistic time limits with your little one can help them to regulate their own time on devices. Remember to think about when screen time begins and what is considered as screen time.

Agree on Tech Free Zone in the house

With your little one, you can agree on areas in the house that need to remain tech free! These might be the bathroom, bedroom or the dinner table!

Discuss Online Safety Regularly

Discussing the key ways to stay safe online with your little one is really important! Remember to remind them to keep their personal information safe; to be respectful to other people online; keep passwords safe; and not to speak to strangers.

Agree on Consequence

Finally, it can be beneficial to agree on consequences for breaking the rules. You can set these with your child to ensure they are fair and so your child is aware. When setting these, it can be a great opportunity to discuss why having rules is important!

For more information, visit: [Free Online Safety Guide](#) | [WhatsApp \(nationalcollege.com\)](#)

Families First Team

The Families First programme is funded by the Welsh Government to help families who are facing difficulties. The Families First team offers different types of support depending on need. You can now contact the team on **01495 369621** or by emailing: familiesfirstduty@blaenau-gwent.gov.uk.

