



The Kings Hedges Family Support Project – Welcome Pack January 2021

**WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT
FAMILIES IN CAMBRIDGE**

Registered Charity No: 1107581

**The Kings Hedges Family Support Project is a
registered Charity that is governed by its
Constitution dated 16th November 2004**

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Welcome

History

The Kings Hedges Family Support Project was originally designed and set up in 1994 by a steering group of local professionals following a £10,000 grant given by Central Government, for targeted communities / areas defined as experiencing need and deprivation. This grant was administered through, the then, Social Services department.



The steering group looked together at the best use of this money and felt that sessions aimed at local families with babies and the very young, supporting them with their parenting and their child/ren's early crucial years, was the best way forward. These sessions would enable families to come together in their local community, gaining in informal advice, guidance, skill development, companionship, 'normalisation' and fun. A place where families feel supported and not judged, are able to access family support services and high-quality play and learning opportunities for themselves and their children together, where sign posting and specialist referrals could be made and where families can grow, learning together and from each other, enriching families' relationships and lives.

The project aim was declared as:

Confident parenting – Happier children

and The Kings Hedges Family Support Project was officially born in 1995. The steering group then set about creating the sessions and registered the project with the Charity Commission (Registered Charity No: 1107581). As a registered Charity we are governed by our constitution (dated 16th November 2004) which sets out the Charity's objectives which we must work within, as:

- 1) To educate families and the public in better standards of childcare and in the importance of sound relationships between parents and children for the maintenance and enrichment of family life.
- 2) The relief of poverty and the provision of recreational facilities or other leisure time occupation in the interest of social welfare with the objective of improving the conditions of life of persons having need of these facilities by reason of their youth, poverty or social and economic circumstances.





Initially the project started with **Wednesdays Together** based at Colleges Nursery in Kings Hedges and **Thursdays Together** based at Echo House in East Chesterton. Since then Thursdays Together has moved from Echo House into Brown's Field Youth and Community Centre in East Chesterton which has enabled more families to attend as it is a much bigger venue. Wednesdays Together now operates out of the North Cambridge Child and Family Centre which is on the same site as Colleges Nursery which has expanded over the years. **Mondays Together** operates out of The Fields Child and Family Centre in Abbey. We also have a small office base within Browns Field Youth and Community Centre which we moved into in 2017.

Funding – Past to present

Wednesdays and Thursdays Together continued to be funded, after the initial grant, by Social Services remaining on the £10,000 grant for several years until the Local Sure Start Programme came to Cambridge. At this point we were successful in receiving a grant to continue Wednesdays Together and were commissioned to open **Mondays Together** in the Abbey Ward in recognition that there were no similar projects within this area and our ability to provide effective family support within local communities. So Mondays Together was officially opened in Oct 2004 as our third days' provision.

With no further funding available for Thursdays Together we made our first application to The Big Lottery Fund and were successful in gaining 5 year's full funding (April 2007 to March 2012). Following this 5 year grant we were invited to apply for a 'Change and Impact' grant from The Big Lottery to enable us to review our work and make further funding applications. In September 2012 we heard we had received a further full 5 years funding for December 2012 – December 2017, totalling £186,576 for Thursdays Together from The Big Lottery Fund. Since December 2017 we have been successful in securing a combination of smaller grants and awards to continue our valuable work, including funding through Cambridgeshire Community Foundation, Cambridge City Council Area Committee and Santander.

With Government changes, the transition from Local Sure Start Programmes to Children's Centre's and funding for projects like ours being withdrawn we applied to The Big Lottery Fund for 5 years funding for the continuation and expansion of Mondays and Wednesdays Together, which was successful (April 2010 – March 2015) and then again another 5 years April 2015 – March 2020. Following the completion of this final grant from the Lottery we are now successfully adding to our funding streams with a combination of various grants, corporate sponsorship and our own fundraising income.

Our Values

Through a Building Capabilities grant from the National Lottery in 2017/2018 we were able to spend some time consolidating the growth of the project since it started and ensuring that we are a sustainable project that not only delivers on what we say we do but looks to the future to ensure we continue to work alongside our communities providing the support that they need. In April 2018 we developed a clear narrative of the charities values;

- We believe that confident parenting makes for happier children
- We aim to help parents to feel confident to make the choices that are important to them
- We work in a welcoming and non-judgemental way
- Our staff are kind, approachable and knowledgeable
- We help to reduce feelings of isolation and increase a sense of community and offer a high quality, safe place to play, relax and talk
- We work actively with partners and connect families to them, ensuring they have access to relevant information and advice



In addition to our values, within our current grants we have set and are accountable for delivering against the following outcomes:

- 1) Children 0 – 3 yrs will have increased social and emotional learning potential, through play, better preparing them for school.
- 2) Families with children 0 – 3 yrs have increased health and well being
- 3) Parents / primary care givers are more confident, building better family relationships
- 4) Parents / carers will gain in confidence and new skills that increase their life chances, making them stronger and economically independent

Financial Governance

The project employs a book keeper whose role it is to undertake the entire efficient book keeping for the project including pay roll, monitoring grant spends and producing regular financial reports for the trustees. This is monitored by the project manager and treasurer and ultimately by the committee. Our end of year accounts are independently reviewed and signed off by an accountant and submitted to grant award funders and the Charity Commission as part of the Annual Return.

Policies and Procedures

The Kings Hedges Family Support Project has a full set of robust policies and procedures (P&P) in place which all staff, volunteers and trustees must work within to ensure the Charity is compliant, legal and safe. These P&P include Confidentiality, Safeguarding, Financial Controls and Measures and Health and Safety. Every year these are reviewed and distributed to all staff, volunteers and trustees to sign and agree to adhere to.

Community and partnerships

The Kings Hedges Family Support Project works closely with its 'sister' Charity, The Meadows Children and Family Wing (MCFW). When the MCFW was being built and designed staff and trustees from the Kings Hedges Family Support Project were heavily involved in its direction and work: with the MCFW drop-ins being based on the Kings Hedges Family Support Project successful model. Today we share resources, expertise, and some staff which enables local families to access staff not only within each project's operational days but across 5 days a week.



We work in partnership with other professionals and organisations for the benefit of our families including, Health, Social Care, ChYpPS, The Cambridge City Foodbank and Child and Family Centre's. We are very fortunate that partners from a range of organisations also attend our sessions to share information and skills with families such as The Community Fire Safety champions, Oral health, Adult Education and the library service. The project also commissions some services directly for families such as basic First Aid training and Zumba classes. We work with partner agencies supporting identified families as part of formalised plans, along with making specialist referrals to and, receiving referrals, from partners.

As we are providing family support the project is open to the child's primary care giver e.g. mum, dad, and grandparent but is not open to paid professionals such as childminders or Nannies. The project is open 50 weeks a year, only closing for two weeks over the Christmas holiday, and on bank holidays when the buildings we operate out of are closed.

Operations During the Coronavirus Pandemic

In March 2020, in line with government guidance, The Kings Hedges Family Support Project temporarily closed the doors on operating our family support drop-ins from our venues. However, we adapted quickly, asking what our parents needed and how we could continue supporting them best. During the spring and summer of 2020, we moved to virtual and telephone support for our families and our operations included;

- A WhatsApp group for parents with support, advice and signposting
- Alongside our normal public Facebook group, a private group where families share activity ideas for their children
- Signposting and information on community food hubs across the city
- Regular phone calls to parents that needed extra support
- Doorstep visits to drop foodbank vouchers and supermarket vouchers to those that needed them
- Craft packs delivered to families
- Toys and activities for older siblings delivered
- Zoom sessions including story time and singing, pediatric first aid, baby massage and breastfeeding support
- Baby signing Facebook live groups
- Mental health and wellbeing packs delivered
- Craft packs from the Fitzwilliam Museum delivered



In September 2020, as restrictions relaxed, we were able to meet individual families for walks. We were also able to re-start our Thursdays Together group at Browns Field Youth and Community Centre, with fewer families attending and with covid-safe measures in place. Demand for a baby group for those born just before or during the lockdown period was high so in addition to Thursdays Together we opened a Monday group for babies under 1 year and their parents. Alongside these face-to-face groups we continued our Facebook and WhatsApp presence and some breastfeeding support sessions on Zoom. In December 2020 we worked alongside Penningtons Manches Cooper LLP Charitable Foundation, Cambridge City Foodbank, Cambridge Sustainable Food, Cambridge City Council, The Red Hen Project, Cambridge Aid and ChYpPS to ensure families had the presents, food and essentials they needed to enjoy their Christmas.

As we move into 2021 and face another national lockdown, we again have had to close our groups temporarily. We now have the systems in place to continue supporting our families with anything they need and are hopeful that, when we can do so in a safe way, we will be able to see our families enjoying their time at our groups once again.

Project Governance

As a registered Charity all our work is overseen / governed by a committee of **Trustees** who are people who serve on the governing body of the charity.

The Current Staff Team

- Jo Hunt – Project Manager
- Marie Grimwood – Family Support Worker
- Karen Doherty – Family Support Worker
- Bernie Webb – Play Worker
- Justina Gaikwad – Administrator and Data Input
- Hannah Chong – Fundraising and Development Worker
- Julie Wentworth – Book Keeper
- Volunteers;
 - Julie Wilson
 - Angelina Muller
 - Kelly Farrington
- Jacqui Barratt – Cover Family Support Worker
- Duncan Gaffney – Cover Play Worker