

# Smart Start



Giving Warwickshire's children the best start in life

**Between February and May 2016**



**1,127 Parents and Carers had their say!**

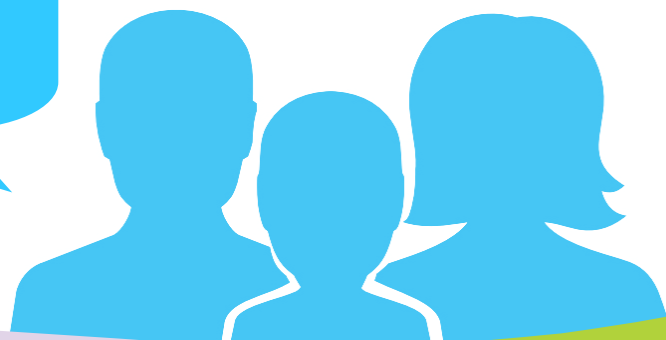
about bringing up babies and young children in Warwickshire, what services and support they found useful, what was missing and what might help.

**Thank You!**

For taking part in this research – we have learnt a lot from you and your ideas have been passed onto Warwickshire County Council to help shape future activities and services.

September 2016

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# A snapshot of what you told us

## Somewhere to go

You told us it was important to have somewhere to go in your local area, a place that feels welcoming and affordable, where you can get the support you need, without having to repeat your story.

Feeling low, fear of criticism or rejection sometimes prevents you from asking for help or trying new activities.

You value free and low cost activities.

Over **40%** of parents and carers said groups and activities offered by a children's centre had been most useful. Many of you were concerned about cuts in children's centre services.

Around **20%** of parents and carers said a playgroup or activity run by a community group or place of worship had been most useful.

If you live outside of a town, in rural areas, it's more difficult to keep appointments, use services and join in activities, especially if you use public transport.

Many of you, especially if you are working, would like services and activities to be offered in the evening or at weekends.

## Someone to listen

Many of you said how important it was to have someone to listen when you had concerns.

**70%** of parents and carers said support from family and friends was very important.

But you also wanted the opportunity to build relationships with knowledgeable staff, who you can trust, helping you to feel confident about using activities and services.

You appreciate staff who help you find solutions to your worries, who are not judgemental and have time to listen.



## Midwifery and Antenatal Support

### Many of you said

You found your midwives very helpful.

That things would be better if you could see the same midwife throughout your pregnancy.

That you would like more preparation for the birth and for being a parent.

That free antenatal classes offered in your area would be helpful.

## Post Natal Support

### Many of you said

That midwives and health visitors had been very helpful.

That friends you made through antenatal classes were very important, supporting you in the early days after birth.

But **30%** of you said you had needed more support after your baby was born, and you said that many professionals didn't understand the effects of postnatal depression.

## Families with children with additional needs

Some of you felt that medical professionals had not taken your concerns seriously.

You often described life as being very stressful and isolating and feeling quite alone.

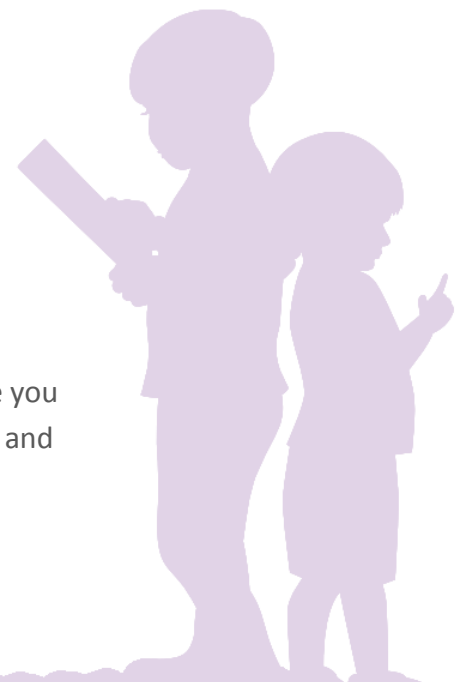
Finding childcare and nursery provision is often very difficult.

## Activities and services for everyone

You said when services and activities are being planned, fathers, grandparents and parents and carers who speak English as an additional language, need to be taken into account.

## Finding out about 'what's on'

Many of you said you wanted up to date information in one place, where you could easily find out about services and activities for families with babies and young children.





If you want to find out more about the views and opinions of parents and carers you can read our full report on the WCAVA website <http://www.wcava.org.uk/reports-and-publications>

# Smart Start

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Smart Start is a three year programme run by Warwickshire County Council looking at how families and children aged 0 to 5 are currently supported and how we can work together to ensure all young children in Warwickshire get the best start in life.

The Smart Start programme will be informed by the views of parents, carers, communities and professionals working with families across Warwickshire.

For more information about Smart Start or how you can get involved look on [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SmartStart](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/SmartStart)