

'Solihull Approach' Online Courses for Parents

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are we offering online courses to parents?

Our parents want more learning opportunities

Research undertaken in 2016 with over 1,127 Warwickshire mums and dads highlighted the need for more opportunities to learn about becoming a parent, particularly during pregnancy and the early days after birth. Parents want information that will help build their confidence.

Building parent-infant relationships

We know we need to *act earlier* in Warwickshire to help grow parents' responsiveness and relationships with their infants.

Research on parent-infant attachment shows that roughly 60% of children develop what's called a 'secure attachment' with their parents or other important caregivers. A less secure attachment can have an impact on infant and child wellbeing.

2. What's the Solihull Approach?

In essence, it provides a framework for understanding and supporting the development and maintenance of sensitive, attuned relationships between parents and their infants/children. Emotional attunement in turn enables infants/children to develop emotional and behavioural self-regulation skills for life, thereby increasing long-term resilience and mental health and wellbeing.

3. How long has the Solihull Approach been around?

It's very well established. The Solihull Approach model was developed jointly by Solihull health visitors and psychotherapists in 1996.

4. What's the evidence for the Solihull Approach?

It is a nationally recognised model, and is recommended within the Department of Health's Healthy Child Programme.

The Solihull Approach is an evidence-based programme, supported by numerous evaluations, 19 research publications and a random controlled trial (RCT) - currently in progress.

In terms of the online Solihull Approach courses, a study has recently been completed for the 'Understanding Your Child's Behaviour' online course which showed positive results: 77% of study respondents who undertook the online course said their relationship (attunement) had strengthened with their infant/child as a result. Note: there is very little research – nationally or globally - on online courses for parents.

5. What courses does the Solihull Approach offer?

The Solihull Approach Programme began with three face to face courses for parents, which have been well evaluated. Over the last 3 years, these courses have been adapted into

online courses.

The three online courses are:

- Understanding your Pregnancy, Labour, Birth and your Baby (9 modules)
- Understanding Your Baby (11 modules)
- Understanding Your Child (11 modules for parents of children aged 6 months to 18 years).

6. Is the Solihull Approach suitable for all parents?

The Solihull Approach is a *universal* approach for all parents. It's also suitable for grandparents and other care-givers.

The 'Understanding Your Pregnancy' and 'Understanding Your Child' courses both have an automatic audio facility (this can be turned off). This will also soon be available for the 'Understanding Your Baby' course.

Currently all three online courses are only offered in English.

7. How long do the courses take to complete?

All three courses can be completed flexibly, at the parents own pace, to suit family life. Each module takes between 15-20 minutes to complete.

8. What's the common perception of parenting courses?

Despite nearly universal acknowledgement of the difficulties of parenting and a wealth of evidence supporting the far-reaching benefits of parent 'education', there continues to be some stigma associated with 'parenting courses'.

Seeking these types of courses is viewed by some parents as a sign that there's something about their parent-child relationship that is problematic. 'Parenting courses' are also associated by some parents as being punitive and linked to social care services.

This is supported by findings from research with 1,127 parents in 2016, which highlighted the need to 'normalise' the perception of courses for parents through effective and appealing marketing approaches, and co-production of the promotional narrative: *"We've got to normalise it so every parent goes on a course. There needs to be a positive shift, where it's not seen as criticising, but that everyone does it as a matter of course."* (Housing worker).

9. Will these online courses appeal to Warwickshire parents?

We have been working with Coventry University to undertake social marketing research with parents to see how best to market these courses in Warwickshire.

The messages and images recommended by parents as being most appealing have been included within all promotional collateral for the launch of these Solihull Approach online courses. Key frontline workers will be sent a promotional leaflet and posters to share, as well as a 'launch resource pack' with printable formats so that organisations can arrange further print-runs, as required.

10. Why we're recommending these online courses in particular?

All health visitors and a lot of children's centre and family support staff in Warwickshire are already trained in the Solihull Approach, so the three online courses are consistent with messages already being shared by these professionals.

11. Is there a cost to parents?

No. The courses are FREE to all Warwickshire parents, grandparents and carers.

12. How do parents access the courses?

The three courses can be accessed via any PC, Mac, iPad, laptop or smartphone.

Steps to access:

- a) Visit <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/parentguides>
- b) Find Warwickshire's FREE registration codes for each course.
- c) Complete a few monitoring questions

From the Warwickshire page they will then need to:

- d) Click through to www.inourplace.co.uk
- e) Create an account using an email address and own password
- f) Click on 'Take Course' in the course of your choice
- g) Click on 'Already got a discount coupon?'
- h) Insert the relevant FREE Warwickshire registration code, and click 'Apply coupon'
- i) Access the course!

On returning to www.inourplace.co.uk and signing in, the user can click 'take course' to resume their learning. 's account will 'remember' that they have access to the course, and will resume where they had got up to if they click 'take course'.

Once registered for one course there is no need for them to return to the <http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/parentguides>, as the remaining two courses can all be accessed within In Our Place - using the relevant Warwickshire code/s.

13. Are online courses as good as face to face ones?

We know online courses won't suit all parents, but they can play a very useful role within a mix of different learning options, particularly for working parents.

The Solihull Approach Programme includes a good number of universal face to face courses and one-off workshops. These are currently not delivered within Warwickshire, but this is something that will be considered for implementation in the future, as part of Warwickshire's 'Putting Children at the Heart' Stepped Approach.

14. What about parents that do not have internet access?

We know from research in 2016 that at least 30% of workless families in Warwickshire do not have access to the internet. With this in mind, we plan to pilot ways in which parents can access online courses in group settings – offering

opportunities for parents to meet together, build peer networks, have a cup of tea, and try the Solihull Approach online courses, as well as the Baby Box syllabus (see information on Baby Box below).

15. How do these courses relate to the Baby Box online learning?

Baby Box, which launched in Warwickshire and Coventry on 19 July, includes an online syllabus of 15 fact video clips on a wide range of topics relevant to expectant and new parents. This is an excellent online stepping stone to the three Solihull Approach courses, which provide more detailed learning and also help to build the confidence of expectant and new parents.

16. Can I get training in the Solihull Approach?

There are a range of Solihull Approach trainings courses for frontline staff. There are also a number of staff trained as trainers within Warwickshire.

See <https://solihullapproachparenting.com/trainings/>

Or contact Public Health Admin phadmin@warwickshire.gov.uk for information on local training options.